



Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. Cyril and St. Methodius

St. Polycarp

- Feb. 14 St. Cyril and St. Methodius
- Feb. 17 Seven founders of the Order of Servites
- Feb. 21 St. Peter Damian
- Feb. 23 St. Polycarp
- Feb. 25 Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday - Feb. 25

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. It is a season of penance, reflection and fasting which prepares us for Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, through which we attain redemption.



Why we receive the ashes

Following the example of the Ninevites, who did penance in sackcloth and ashes, our foreheads are marked with ashes to humble our hearts and remind us that life passes away on Earth. We remember this when we are told, "Remember, man is dust, and unto dust you shall return."

Ashes are a symbol of penance made sacramental by the blessing of the Church, and they help us develop a spirit of humility and sacrifice.

The distribution of ashes comes from a ceremony of ages past. Christians who had committed grave faults performed public penance. On Ash Wednesday, the bishop blessed the hair shirts which they were to wear during the forty days of penance, and sprinkled over them ashes made from the palms from the previous year. Then, while the faithful recited the seven penitential psalms, the penitents were turned out of the church because of their sins — just as Adam, the first man, was turned out of paradise because of his disobedience. The penitents did not enter the church again until Maundy Thursday after having won reconciliation by the toil of forty days' penance and sacramental absolution. Later, all Christians, whether public or secret penitents, came to receive ashes out of devotion. In earlier times, the distribution of ashes was followed by a penitential procession.

The ashes

The ashes are made from the blessed palms used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year. The ashes are christened with holy water and are scented by exposure to incense. While the ashes symbolize penance and contrition, they are also a reminder that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts. His divine mercy is of utmost importance during the season of Lent, and the Church calls on us to seek that mercy during the entire Lenten season with reflection, prayer and penance. — www.catholic.org



Too Sweet

2.2 million couples marry each year in the U.S.

196,420 couples married in U.S. Catholic churches last year — about 9% of all marriages.

California, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas have the most number of Catholic marriages

6% of currently married women have been married for at least 50 years.

57% women
60% men who are 18 or older and married in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Census and The Official Catholic Directory ©2009 CNS

Diocese welcomes chastity speaker Jason Evert

The Erie Diocese will welcome nationally known chastity speaker Jason Evert for a series of presentations March 2-3. Funding for the visit was provided in part by a donation from the Knights of Columbus.

Evert is a staff apologist with Catholic Answers, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the Catholic faith through all forms of media. Evert, 31, earned a master's degree in theology and undergraduate degrees in counseling and theology, with a minor in philosophy at Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is the

author of many books including "Pure Love," which challenges young people to embrace the virtue of chastity. Jason and his wife, Crystalina, are on the board of advisers for the National Abstinence Clearinghouse and are frequent guests on radio programs throughout the country. Their television appearances include Donahue, Fox News, BBC, WGN and EWTN. Two of Evert's presenta-



Jason Evert

tions are open to the public. Eighth graders and their parents are invited to attend at St. Peter Cathedral School, Erie, at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 2. Registrations are appreciated and can be made by calling Linda Kuhn at 814.824.1210 or by e-mail at kuhn@erie-rd.org. High school students and their parents are invited to attend at St. Leo Parish, Ridgway, at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3. Registrations are appreciated and can be made by calling St. Leo at

Jason Evert visit
Open to the public:

Monday, March 2 — St. Peter Cathedral, Erie, at 7 p.m.
Tuesday, March 3 — St. Leo, Ridgway, at 7 p.m.

Other events:
Kennedy Catholic High School, Hermitage;
DuBois Central Catholic High School, DuBois
Cathedral Prep, Erie
Villa Maria Academy, Erie

814.772.3135 or by e-mail at samitcos@att.net.

Evert will also be speaking at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage, DuBois Central Catholic High School

in DuBois and Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy in Erie.

For more information about Evert and his presentation, visit www.catholic.com.

Lenten regulations

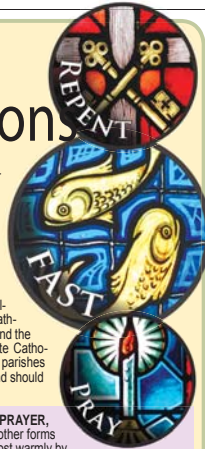
The season of Lent begins this year on Ash Wednesday, February 25 and concludes when the Paschal Triduum of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord begins prior to the start of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening, April 9.

The following regulations are promulgated and binding for all Latin Rite Catholics in the Diocese of Erie for Lent and the Paschal Triduum, 2009. Eastern Rite Catholics who may be attending Latin Rite parishes have their own proper regulations and should consult their own eparchy or parish.

1. Traditional Lenten practices of **PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING** and other forms of self-denial are recommended most warmly by the Church.
2. The faithful observance of Lent should manifest itself especially in the imitation of Christ in daily life and in the readiness to sacrifice time and talent whenever possible in personal, parish and community efforts on behalf of those in spiritual or material need. The spiritual hunger of the unchurched locally and in mission lands can be the focus of prayer and charitable giving.
3. **ASH WEDNESDAY** and **GOOD FRIDAY** are days of abstinence from meat for those 14 years of age and older. They are also days of fasting for those ages 18 to 59 inclusive. (Those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength according to one's needs, are also permitted. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or work is seriously affected, the law does not oblige.)
4. **ALL FRIDAYS IN LENT** are days of abstinence from meat for those 14 years of age and older. In their planning for observances, organizations and individuals are requested to offer meatless alternatives for Catholics in attendance.
5. **ALL FRIDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR** (except solemnities) outside of Lent remain days of penance. The United States bishops highly recommend the traditional abstinence from meat, together with fasting, for the cause of peace in the world. However, some other practices of voluntary self-denial or personal penance may be substituted.

By order of the Most Reverend Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL
Bishop of Erie

Donald W. Trautman



Adoration anniversary Perpetual adoration chapel celebrates five years



Photo by Art Becker

ERIE — Ash Wednesday will mark the five-year anniversary of the perpetual adoration chapel at St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community in Erie.

The chapel, located next to the church at the St. Joseph Community Center, 147 W. 24th St., is the only perpetual chapel in the Erie Diocese. People come to pray at the chapel 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hundreds of parishioners and non-parishioners are signed up to pray one hour a week.

"It's been a great place of healing," said Father Larry Richards, pastor of St. Joseph/Bread of Life. "That's what I hear more than anything else. And that was one of the hopes we had when we started the chapel five years ago."

Approximately 600 people visit the chapel each week. That number includes committed adorers responsible for a time slot, as well as visitors just stopping by.

"Many people, if they're hurting in the middle of the night, have a place to come and be in the presence of God," Father Richards said. "Where else can you do that?"

The chapel is open to the public weekdays from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and other times with a special security code.

For more information on the chapel, visit www.stjoesbol.org or call the parish office at 814.452.2982.

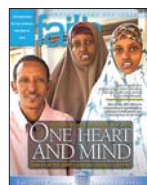
One heart and mind

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

For the past two years, donors have set records for the Erie Diocese's annual Catholic Services Appeal.

But with a sluggish economy, high unemployment and financial uncertainty, it's hard to envision what the 2009 Catholic Services Appeal will look like.

"The CSA the last few years has been wonderful," said Joseph Hoag, director of the diocese's Stewardship and Development Office. "Our dollar numbers have been great. (But) the total number of donors has not been as good as it could be. We know there are people who have supported the Catholic Services Appeal in prior years



A special issue of Faith magazine outlining the 2009 Catholic Services Appeal was mailed to all registered homes in the Erie Diocese earlier this month.

The annual appeal helps fund the diocese's ministries and provides support for health and social services,

education, diocesan administration and pastoral services that serve 13 counties in northwest Pennsylvania. Parishes also benefit from the appeal. Every dollar pledged that exceeds a parish's financial goal stays within the parish.

In 2008, the diocese had 21,524 donors to the CSA, which was comparable to 2007.

Hoag noted that since 2006, a number of donors have not participated consistently. A core of a few thousand families have made a gift to the appeal each year since 2006, but a significant number of donor families supported the effort just once in that span.



Catholic Services Appeal Commitment Sunday - Feb. 21-22

He said this year that families who have given generously to the CSA may find that they can't give quite at the level they have in the past, which is understandable.

To offset any potential decreases, parishes will focus on participation in 2009 to get a greater percentage of parishioners to give again.

With more than 21,000 donors last year, the average number of families in the diocese's 120 parishes contributing to the Catholic Services Appeal is 34 percent. Some parishes, including many smaller ones, have gone above and beyond that percentage.

St. Luke Parish in Youngsville, which lists 167 families as members, had the highest participation percentage in the diocese at 78 percent.

"We are pretty transparent in showing the goals of the diocese and what our goals are for the parish," said Father John Neff, pastor of St. Luke. "They have an idea of why their money is needed and where it's going."

With a parish goal of nearly \$14,000, donors more than doubled that amount by pledging almost \$33,000. The difference of more than



IN THE U.S.

■ **Pro-life activists quickly denounced President Barack Obama's Jan. 23 signing of an executive order reversing the Mexico City policy, a move that clears the way for the federal government to provide aid to programs that promote or perform abortion overseas.** "It is clear that the provisions of the Mexico City policy are unnecessarily broad and unwarranted under current law, and for the past eight years they have undermined efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning in developing countries," Obama said. Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, called the reversal "very disappointing." Cardinal Rigali said, "An administration that wants to reduce abortions should not divert U.S. funds to groups that promote abortions." According to a new poll by USA Today/Gallup conducted Jan. 30-Feb. 1, only 35 percent were in favor of Obama's decision to reverse the Mexico City policy, a ban on federal funding of abortion-providing groups abroad that was first instituted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984.



President Barack Obama



Cardinal Justin Rigali

■ **This Lent and Easter "thousands of inactive Catholics" will go to church** "and some will be open to an invitation to reconnect with their Catholic faith," said a Paulist priest who is a leader in evangelization. Extending that invitation are the Paulist Fathers through a new nationwide campaign, said Father Frank DeSiano, president of the Washington-based Paulist National Catholic

Evangelization Association. The campaign, titled "Awakening Faith: Reconnecting With Your Catholic Faith," has its own Web site: www.awakeningfaith.org. Through the site a number of tools are available for parishes to use to connect with inactive Catholics and invite them to participate in parish life.

■ **The Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Death Penalty**, launched Jan. 25 in Harrisburg, is not just another initiative of the bishops but instead represents lay Catholics at the grass-roots level "taking up the challenge" put forth in bishops' documents, statements and actions over the past three decades. That's how John Carr, executive director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, described the network. The network, which will operate independently from the USCCB, will be designed particularly to reach out to young people and Hispanic Catholics on the issue of capital punishment.

■ **Citing population shifts, dwindling finances and overworked priests, among other factors**, Bishop Joseph Martino of Scranton announced a major parish restructuring plan that will close some parishes and merge others. Every parish in the 11-county diocese is affected in some way.

At the start of the process, the diocese had 224 parishes. The number of parishes that will remain open will not be known for at least two years as the communities begin to close, merge or partner in sharing ministries. Implementation of the plan will begin in July. Bishop Martino said that some people would probably prefer to leave well enough alone but he explained that was not feasible. "Unfortunately," he said, "many of our institutions are not 'well enough.' Our society and our diocese are experiencing changes. Populations are shifting.

Financial resources are diminishing. Many Catholics are not actively practicing their faith or supporting the church. Our priests are serving too many parishes at one time."

AROUND THE WORLD

■ **Pope Benedict XVI has accepted an invitation to visit the Czech Republic in September**, said Czech state and Catholic Church officials. "Official preparations are under way and the Vatican will confirm the dates and itinerary once these are complete," said Jiri Gracka, the Czech bishops' conference spokesman. Gracka said that the main emphasis of the pope's visit will be pastoral. The pope was expected to travel to Prague Sept. 28, then to the country's Catholic region of Moravia and to Stara Boleslav, where St. Wenceslas was martyred Sept. 28, 935.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

■ **The Vatican has initiated an apostolic visitation of institutes for women religious in the United States to find out why the numbers of their members have decreased during the past 40 years and to look at the quality of life in the communities.** The announcement was made Jan. 30 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington by Sister Evmaria Ackerman, a member of the American province of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George. She will assist Mother Mary Clare Milica, a Connecticut native who is superior general of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, an international religious institute that has its headquarters in Rome.



By the Way...



Jason Koshinski

The regional Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship for children ages 10 to 14 will be held on Sunday, Feb. 22 at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage. The top five boys and top five girls from each of the 14 districts which include 65 knight councils in the Erie Diocese are expected to participate.

"Our primary goal is to make money for charity with this event," says Grand Knight Tony DeMartins, who noted a pancake breakfast will be held before the event at the school from 8 a.m. to noon. Admission to the Free Throw Championship is free; the contests begin at noon.

The top five boys and top five girls at the competition will advance to the state contest. State winners' scores will then be forwarded to the Supreme Council office and international champions will be determined based on the scores submitted.

The confirmation season in the Erie Diocese begins March 9 at St. Boniface Parish in Erie. Bishop Donald Trautman's schedule is booked solid from March through June then picks up again in the fall. It marks the beginning of another busy time of year during which the bishop will put the bulk of more than 35,000 miles on his car visiting parishes throughout the 13-county diocese.

Actor Liam Neeson, whose latest film "Taken" was the top box-office draw in the United States the first weekend of its release Jan. 30-Feb. 1, has narrated a version of the Way of the Cross written by St. Alphonsus Liguori. "Praying the Way of the Cross" was scheduled to be available Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25. The CD, available at www.littlelambmusic.com, is a project of the Denver province of the Redemptorists, the religious order founded by St. Alphonsus. Proceeds from sales will help the Redemptorists' missions in Brazil and Nigeria.

"I had heard about the Redemptorists and their missionary work in the Amazon rain forest of Brazil and in the slums of Lagos and Ibadan, Nigeria," Neeson said. "I was moved to help because the Redemptorists are living the Gospel message in some of the poorest parts of the world, offering hope to families who have been forgotten or abandoned."

Jason Koshinski is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at JKoshinski@ErieRCD.org or 814.824.1171.

Pope lifts excommunication of Lefebvrite bishops

Bishop's comments cause controversy

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI has lifted the excommunication of four bishops ordained against papal orders in 1988 by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. The move, considered a major concession to the archbishop's traditionalist followers, has been met with much controversy.

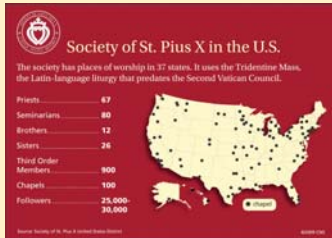
The Vatican said the decree removing the excommunication, signed Jan. 21 and made public three days later, marked an important step toward full communion with the Society of St. Pius X, founded by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1970.

However, the move came after one of the illicitly ordained bishops, British-born Bishop Richard Williamson, provoked Jewish protests with assertions that the Holocaust was exaggerated and that no Jews died in Nazi gas chambers. He spoke in a TV interview recorded in November and aired the day the pope lifted the excommunications of all four bishops.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said emphatically that the Vatican did not share Bishop Williamson's views, but that it was a completely separate issue from the lifting of the excommunication.

Bishop Williamson later apologized for creating the controversy, but did not retract his assertions.

Pope Benedict condemned the Holocaust denials in remarks issued Jan. 30, but did not directly address Bishop Wil-



liamson's role in the controversy.

On Feb. 3 a Vatican spokesman said the pope, in past and recent statements, had clearly distanced himself from comments by the bishop.

A Vatican statement Feb. 4 said Pope Benedict did not know about the controversial statements by Bishop Williamson when he lifted the excommunication.

The head of the Swiss-based society, Bishop Bernard Fellay, had requested the removal of the excommunication in a letter Dec. 15. Bishop Fellay wrote that he and the three other bishops illicitly ordained in 1988 were determined to remain Catholic and accepted the teachings of Pope Benedict "with filial spirit."

The Vatican said the pope had responded positively to the request in order to promote "the unity in charity of the universal church and succeed in removing the scandal of division."

The removal of the excommunication was a key condition of the Society of St. Pius X in its on-again, off-again talks with the Vatican over reconciliation. In 2007 the pope granted another of the society's requests, widening the possibility for use of the Tridentine rite, the form of the Mass used before the Second Vatican

Council.

Archbishop Lefebvre rejected several important teachings of the Second Vatican Council, including those related to religious liberty, ecumenism and liturgy. The Vatican statements did not mention the council's teachings, and Father Lombardi had no comment on whether the society was asked to adhere to them.

In a letter written Jan. 21, Bishop Fellay commented on Bishop Williamson's comments about the Holocaust, saying the bishop had spoken for himself, not the society. Bishop Fellay had introduced the topic "with the obvious intention of misrepresenting and maligning the activity of our religious society."

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, labeled Bishop Williamson's remarks as "deeply offensive and utterly false."

"No Catholic, whether layperson, priest or bishop, can ever negate the memory of the Shoah, just as no Catholic should ever tolerate expressions of anti-Semitism and religious bigotry," Cardinal George said in a Feb. 3 statement.

Vatican launches video news channel on YouTube

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican launched a video channel on YouTube that will feature news coverage of Pope Benedict XVI and major Vatican events.

It marked the start of the Vatican's strategic vision of working "to be present wherever people are," said Archbishop Claudio Celli, head of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

The Vatican officially unveiled the new channel Jan. 23 during a press conference that presented Pope Benedict's message for World Communications Day, which was dedicated to new media technology.

Addressing pilgrims in St. Peter's Square Jan. 25, the pope said he hoped the YouTube channel "will reach a wide range of people — including those who have yet to find a response to their spiritual yearning — through the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ."

The new Vatican initiative will make information and news about the Vatican more readily accessible on the Internet, the pope said at the end of his midday Angelus address.

The wise use of online networking technology can help

people form new communities in ways that promote the search for truth, the good and the beautiful, transcending geographical boundaries and ethnic divisions," he said.

The Vatican channel is the

only seemed natural to start offering the news clips "not only to a prevalently Catholic audience, but to a much larger, practically global audience."

He said it was important to offer these services to people who



(CNS photo)

The Vatican's YouTube video news channel features news clips of Pope Benedict XVI and major Vatican events.

The channel, www.youtube.com/vatican, was unveiled Jan. 23.

result of a new partnership the Vatican Television Center and Vatican Radio forged with the Internet giant Google and its video-sharing Web site, YouTube.

The Vatican's television and radio operations had been collaborating for the past year and a half to produce short news videos that are aired on the Vatican Radio Web site.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, head of the Vatican's television and radio offices, said during the Jan. 23 press conference it

are looking for the pronouncements and position of "a high-level moral authority like the pope and, in general, the Catholic Church" concerning the burning issues in the world today.

"Therefore, choosing YouTube as an appropriate platform for establishing a presence on the Web" made sense, he said, especially given that so much information on the pope and the Vatican was already appearing in fragmented, out-of-context forms and scattered over multiple venues.

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Briefly

Mercy Center on Aging accepting small electronics for recycling

ERIE — The Mercy Center on Aging is collecting and recycling cell phones and small electronics to save landfills.

The holidays are when a large percentage of people receive new cell phones, iPods and other small electronics, leaving many older electronics unused and abandoned. These obsolete electronics can be recycled through the Mercy Center on Aging.

To help the senior center and the environment, the following electronics can be brought to the center, located at 444 E. Grandview Blvd. in Erie: cell phones, iPods and mp3 players, laptops, cameras and video game consoles.

For more information, contact Sister Mary Dolores Jablonski, RSM, at 814.824.2214.



Mercyhurst opens 'We Shall Overcome: Freedom Songs & Exhibit'

ERIE — Mercyhurst College is celebrating a yearlong observance called "Beyond the Dream," an initiative designed to examine the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the occasion of what would have been his 80th birthday.

Mercyhurst kicks off its 2009 series of "Beyond the Dream" events with a thought-provoking exhibit followed by an uplifting concert. The timing of this particular event coincides with the celebration of Black History Month, as well.

"We Shall Overcome: Freedom Songs & Exhibit" will open Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7 - 9 p.m. at the Cummings Gallery & Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center (PAC) at Mercyhurst College.

Exhibit opening reception: "Hateful Things" — Images and artifacts from the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia on loan from Ferris State University, Cummings Gallery (7 p.m.)

Choral performance: "Freedom Songs" — Slave songs and Civil Rights songs sung by The Martin Luther King Choir, The Mercyhurst College Concert Choir and The Carpe Diem Women and community soloists. Directed by Rebecca Ryan, PAC (8 p.m.)

Gannon to celebrate Catholic Colleges Week Feb. 22-26

ERIE — Gannon University in Erie will host a series of events for students and administrators, as well as some for the general public, Feb. 22-26 for National Catholic Colleges Week.

The schedule of campus events is as follows:

Sunday, Feb. 22 — A "Knight of Fellowship" will allow invited educators to visit campus overnight and to take part in a private dinner at 6:30 p.m. in the Waldron Campus Center. Participants and the general public also may attend a 9 p.m. Mass at the University's Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, 520 Peach St.

Monday, Feb. 23 — Monday has been designated as Archbishop Gannon Day and is intended for students from local and regional Catholic high schools as well as other students of the Catholic faith. Archbishop Gannon Day will include meetings with and presentations by Gannon's Admissions and Financial Aid offices, Campus Ministry, the Center for Social Concerns, athletics, Student Organizations and Leadership Development (SOLD) and the arts.

Tuesday, Feb. 24 — Bishop Donald Trautman will give a lecture titled "The Value of Catholic Education in These Troubled Times," at 7:30 p.m. in the Yell Room of the Waldron Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Wednesday, Feb. 25 — Ash Wednesday liturgies will be offered at 8 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 4:35 p.m. in the Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel. In addition, an ecumenical worship service will be offered at 7 p.m. in the chapel.

Thursday, Feb. 26 — Gannon's community Mass will be celebrated by Father Nicholas Rouch, STD, Erie diocesan vicar of education, at 11 a.m. in the chapel. The Mass will include a commissioning of Gannon students who will be going on service trips during Gannon's spring break week.

Retrouvaille

During these challenging economic times, many couples find that financial problems cause them to grow apart rather than closer together. Retrouvaille is a helpful, confidential program designed for couples who are experiencing difficulties of many kinds in their marriages. The next Retrouvaille weekend will be held March 6-8 in Erie County, for registration information call 814.437.9377 or visit www.retrouvaille.org. Retrouvaille is supported by Catholic Charities.

Gannon SBDG Presents...
The 2nd Annual -W.I.L.D. Women in Leadership Development Conference
Friday, March 27th
 7:30 AM to 4PM
 -Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center
 7792 Peach Street, Erie
 -Breakfast, Lunch & Gift Bag Included
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Catholic Services Appeal Commitment Sunday – Feb. 21-22

CSA, from page 1

\$19,000 stayed within the parish.

Last year's parish projects included construction of a picnic pavilion, paving of the church parking lot and carpeting for the rectory. Any overage this year will go toward new tables for the parish social hall, continued repair of the parking lot and painting the interior of the rectory.

"Parishioners have been very generous," Father Neff said. "They also understand that stewardship isn't just about money. It's the time and talent they give to support the parish. They've been very giving."

Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish in Lewis Run lists 156 families. Last year, the parish had 60 percent (93 gifts) participation.

"I sent out a letter last year saying basically that the Catholic Services Appeal starts with us," said Father Sam Slocum, pastor of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. "I said we have a portion that we have to pay. Parishes can't operate without the diocese, and we should look at our role in the op-

"Parishioners have been very generous. They also understand that stewardship isn't just about money. It's the time and talent they give to support the parish. They've been very giving."

- Father John Neff, pastor of St. Luke Parish, Youngsville



Renovations to the Rev. John P. Kennedy Anthonian Hall at Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish in Lewis Run were made possible by the parish's overage funds from last year's Catholic Services Appeal. Every dollar pledged that exceeds a parish's financial goal for the CSA stays within the parish.

eration of the diocese. This is our share of what we have to give."

Parishioners responded. With a goal of almost \$10,000, pledges more than doubled that to nearly \$22,000. The overage of more than \$12,000 went toward the remodeling of the parish social hall.

"It was in pretty bad shape," Father Slocum said.

The building's facelift included a new stucco coating along with shrubbery and landscaping.

"It looks like a brand new building," he said. "Everybody's pretty happy with it."

Father Slocum said it's important for the parish to give back for

the services it receives, such as the regional office of Catholic Charities in Bradford.

"Every parish has a responsibility to make the church work at the diocesan level," Father Slocum said. "We aren't a parish without them."

Executive authority yields 'Mexico City' reversal

Citizens must stand formed about actions that affect the common good

By Amy B. Hill
 Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

Most people understand at an elementary level how a bill becomes a law. At the federal level, an elected representative (a senator or congressman) writes an idea into a piece of legislation. Congress passes the bill and the president signs it. The statute then takes effect as prescribed. Statutes then require us to do or not to do many things, like file our tax returns by April 15 or stop at a red light.

Our judicial system also governs our daily lives. Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court and other courts provide the framework from within statutes must operate or provide the means for constitutional interpretations which have the force of law. By way of example, as a result of judicial decisions, gladly, our children at-

tend integrated schools but sadly, abortion became the "law of the land."

An often ignored source of law are rules and regulations that stem from the executive authority of the president or a governor. The president may issue executive orders or memoranda to clarify existing laws or direct his cabinet officers in how to manage the federal government. By this process, the Homeland Security Department was created and, for now, tax dollars cannot be spent on the immoral destruction of human embryos for research. The latter executive action could soon change with the stroke of a pen.

In his first few days of office, President Barack Obama signed a few significant executive orders. One executive order bans torture. Bishop Howard Hubbard of Alba-



Amy B. Hill

ny, chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) said, "Based upon the teachings of the Catholic Church, our conference of bishops welcomes the executive order. Together with other religious leaders, we had pressed for this step to protect human dignity and help restore the moral and legal standing of the United States in the world."

However, the USCCB met another presidential action with deep disappointment. President Obama rescinded the so-called "Mexico City Policy" which for the past eight years had funded U.S. tax dollars from funding organizations that perform and promote abortion as a family planning method in developing nations.

Such executive orders are just the beginning of the many actions the president will likely take in the next four years. While the Church is vigilant about legislation being considered in Congress or the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and as we pray for the courts to

consider the dignity of the human person in pertinent cases, we must pay careful attention to possible executive actions, too.

As citizens, we have a responsibility to stay informed about all actions that affect the common good. Learn everything you can about current affairs. Speak up and take action. Although he receives tens of thousands of e-mails, you may express your comments to the president at www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

Communicate your concerns to your members of Congress; ask them to put pressure on the White House on important issues. Most importantly, pray for God's protection and guidance for all who devote themselves to the common good, working for justice and peace at home and around the world. (See Prayer after an Election, www.faithfulcitizenship.org)

Amy B. Hill is communications director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference—the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania's Catholic Bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.

Diocese celebrates Year of St. Paul

Continuing to celebrate the Year of St. Paul, two diocesan Masses for the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul were held the weekend of Jan. 24-25.

Bishop Donald Trautman celebrated Mass for the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul at St. Bartholomew Parish in Sharpville Jan. 24 and at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie Jan. 25.

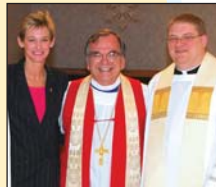


From left to right are Father Nicholas Rouch, Deacon Jeff Swanson and Bishop Trautman Jan. 25 at St. Peter Cathedral.



During the Mass for the Conversion of St. Paul at St. Bartholomew, Bishop Trautman received a spiritual bouquet made by members of the parish.

The bishop also received a gift, a statue of Jesus with children, which was presented by confirmation candidates Nicole Wallace and Michael Kaldy.



St. Paul's writings are often the focus of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Jan. 18-24. Pictured are local Sharpville pastors after a Mass for Christian unity at St. Bartholomew. From left to right, Rev. Lori Holstein of the First Presbyterian Church of Sharpville, Rt. Rev. Robert Duncan from the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and Father Matthew Kujawinski, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Sharpville.

Knights of Columbus Council #4003
Our Lady of the Valley
 Sponsoring the Pre-Lenten Pancake and Sausage Breakfast on **February 22**
 8:00 am - 12:00 pm.
 Located at the Kennedy Catholic High School
 \$6 for adults, \$3 for students, free under age 6

In conjunction with the **Knights of Columbus Regional Free Throw Championship**.
 Registration starts at noon.

The Knights of Columbus, Youngsville
Shrove Tuesday (February 24) Pancake Supper
 Location: St. Luke Catholic Church, Youngsville, 420 N. Main Ave.

- Cost: \$6.00/person
- Serving time: 5-7 p.m.
- Benefits the Marching Band Students of St. Luke Church
- More info/questions?
- Call 814-563-4432

Travel to Italy-Switzerland; Ireland; Greece
 (April 13-25) / April 18-26 / (May 2-14) / (May 17-29)
 (June 6-18) / June 27-July 5 / (June 27-July 9) / July 18-26
 Aug. 1-9 / (Sept. 5-17) / Sept. 19-27 / (Oct. 3-15) / (Oct. 19-29)

COST: \$3,300 (\$3,890) Air Fare Included
 Rome * Venice * Tuscany * Florence
 (Milan * Lake Como * Amalfi Coast
 Capri * Sorrento * Pompeii)

Anthony Nachev, PhD (Theology)
 508-340-9370, Toll free: 877-99-Italy
 e-mail: an@catholicteachings.org
 web: www.TourOfItaly.us

Sacred Heart 56th Annual Spaghetti Dinner
 Auditorium, W. 25th and Liberty Streets, Erie
Sunday, March 8
Noon - 6pm

Directed by Lorraine Squaglia
 with Lisa Lopez-Zamierowski and Lin Lopez Rater

Savory spaghetti with meatballs, Italian tossed salad, bread, butter, dessert and beverage.

Adults: \$6.00
 Children (6-12): \$3.00
 Under 6: FREE

Takeouts available at 11:30 am. Please bring your own containers.

