

Returning to Mexico
Diocese says farewell to Father Jorge Villegas, page 3.



FaithLife

Happily ever after

Eric couple called 'Longest Married' in state by WWME, page 4.



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BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

March 13, 2011

Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



- March 17 St. Patrick (c.389-481), bishop, patron of Ireland and the Diocese of Erie
- March 18 St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315-386), bishop, doctor of the church
- March 19 St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patron of the universal church
- March 23 St. Toribio de Mogrovejo (1538-1606), bishop of Lima
- March 25 The Annunciation of the Lord

Rite of Election - March 13

Candidates and catechumens participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program at their respective parishes in the Diocese of Erie will celebrate the Rite of Election on Sunday, March 13, the first Sunday of Lent. The Rite of Election will be celebrated at 3 p.m. at two locations: St. Peter Cathedral in Erie and St. Callistus Parish in Kane.

All new members of the Catholic Church will be received into their own parishes at the Easter Vigil on April 23.

The Rite of Election formally acknowledges the readiness of those preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation—baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.



Brianna Polley, a catechumen from Our Lady Queen of the Americas Parish in Conneaut Lake, signs the Book of the Elect while her sponsor looks on during last year's Rite of Election at St. Peter Cathedral.

Clergy appointments

The Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL, Bishop of Erie, announces the following clergy appointments:



Father Amilcar Matias Rosado-Sosa, appointed pastor of St. Stephen of Hungary Parish (Iglesia De San Esteban), Erie, for a term of six years. Effective February, 26, 2011.

The new Roman Missal

Places for silence during the liturgy

The prayer of liturgy unfolds in a rhythm of sound and silence. Silence is not simply the absence of sound, but a time for prayer, recollection, and meditation. Whenever there is an invitation to silence — for example, "Let us pray" — then we become quiet and speak to our caring God in the depths of our hearts.

Notice that we take more care in praying silently during the opening of Mass. This is required by the liturgy so that we may recognize Christ's presence in our lives more deeply.

COUNTDOWN: There are 259 days to the implementation of the new Roman Missal (as of March 13)

Pax Christi headquarters to leave Erie

Peace group heads to Washington

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE — Pax Christi USA, the U.S. branch of the international Catholic peace movement, is moving its national headquarters from Erie to Washington, D.C.

The non-profit agency made the announcement Feb. 18 through a news release.

"The growth of our movement, the dire need for voices holding up nonviolence and our ever deepening commitment to speak truth to power call us to a new movement," said Sister Josie Chrosniak,

HM, Pax Christi USA national council chairperson, in a statement. "It's an exciting step forward for Pax Christi USA."

Pax Christi USA was established in 1972 by a small group of U.S. Catholics, mostly lay, the original Pax Christi was founded in France in 1945. The entire U.S. office was set up in two spare rooms of a Chicago convent. There was no national office or full-time staff person until 1979.

In 1985, Pax Christi USA asked Sister Mary Lou

Kowacki, OSB, of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, to become its national coordinator. Sister Mary Lou had been on Pax Christi's national council. She agreed under one condition: That the national office would move to Erie.

"We were able to stabilize the movement," Sister Mary Lou recalls. "(The Benedictines) have a charism of peace and have worked for peace. The word pax, which means peace, is on all monasteries."

A few of the sisters were added to the staff, she said, giving the group some stability by providing support and

Pax Christi USA statement of purpose

Pax Christi USA strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring, articulating and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. This work begins in personal life and extends to communities of reflection and action to transform structures of society. Pax Christi USA rejects war, preparations for war and every form of violence and domination. It advocates primacy of conscience, economic and social justice and respect for creation.

resources.

"The experience of the Benedictine sisters gave it a real spiritual foundation," Sister Mary Lou said. "It's not just action. The action comes out of prayer and the Gospel

of Jesus."

In 1991, Sister Mary Lou stepped down as national coordinator.

See PAX CHRISTI, page 3

Pope says Lent is a time to renounce selfishness

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Lent is a time for self-examination and to let go of all traces of selfishness, which is the root of violence, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"The greed of possession leads to violence, exploitation and death," which is why during Lent the church encourages almsgiving, "which is the capacity to share," the pope said in his annual message for Lent.

The text of the pope's message for Lent 2011, which began March 9 for Latin-rite Catholics, was released at a Vatican news conference Feb. 22.

Guinean Cardinal Robert Sarah, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, which promotes Catholic charitable giving, told reporters, "Intense misery leads to economic and political instability, creating a vacuum for conflict and unrest that produce a vicious circle of deepening hardship, especially for the most vulnerable."

The cardinal said the pope's message underscores the fact that "the encounter with Christ in the word and the sacraments manifests itself in concrete works of mercy."

The theme of the pope's message was taken from the

Letter to the Colossians: "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him."

Pope Benedict said Lent is a special time for people either to prepare for baptism or to strengthen the commitment to following Christ originally made at baptism.

"The fact that in most cases baptism is received in infancy highlights how it is a gift of God: No one earns eternal life through their own efforts," the pope said.

In his message, the pope took the year's Lenten Sunday Gospels and used them to draw lessons he said would be helpful in making the Lenten journey toward Christian conversion.

The Gospel account of Jesus' victory over temptation in the desert "is an invitation to become aware of our own fragility in order to accept the grace that frees from sin and infuses new strength," he said.

The story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well is a reminder that all people, like the woman, desire the "water" of eternal life, he said. Only the water offered by Jesus "can irrigate the deserts of our restless and unsatisfied soul until



selfishness



Pope Benedict XVI waves as he leaves a general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican. In his message for Lent, the pope said encountering Christ in the word and sacraments leads to doing works of mercy.

it 'finds rest in God,'" as St. Augustine said.

The Gospel account of Jesus healing the man born blind "is a sign that Christ wants not only to give us sight, but also to open our interior vision so that our faith may become ever deeper and we may recognize him as our only savior," the pope said.

The story of the raising of Lazarus, read on the fifth Sunday of Lent, reminds Christians that their destiny

is eternal life with God, who "created men and women for resurrection and life," he said.

The Lenten process of conversion, he said, is designed "to free our hearts every day from the burden of material things, from a self-centered relationship with the 'world' that impoverishes us and prevents us from being available and open to God and our neighbor," Pope Benedict wrote.

Through fasting, almsgiving and prayer, he said, "Lent teaches us how to live the love of Christ in an ever more radical way."

Fasting helps people overcome selfishness and self-centeredness; almsgiving is a reminder of the sharing that should mark each day of a Christian's life; and time dedicated to prayer is a reminder that time belongs to God and his desire is for people to spend eternity with him.

Middle East leaders discuss popular desire for democracy, equality

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

ROME — The political changes spreading across North Africa and the Middle East show the people's desire for democracy and equality, said Christian and Muslim leaders, including several from Egypt where popular demonstrations toppled the government of President Hosni Mubarak.

Speaking Feb. 23 at the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio, Catholic bishops and Muslim leaders from around the region admitted they did not know exactly what the future would hold, but the grass-roots democracy movements seemed to indicate a growing recognition that when one religious or ethnic group suffers systematic discrimination, true democracy does not exist for anyone in the country.

The religious leaders, scholars and diplomats participating in the Sant'Egidio discussion about Christian-Muslim coexistence in the Middle East stood for a moment of silence to honor the victims of the recent push for democratic reforms.

ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS have swept across North Africa and the Middle East since January in an effort to oust authoritarian leaders and improve economic conditions.

MOROCCO Demonstrations called for reforms to re-energize after King Mohammed VI slowed their pace after an initial push in 1999.

TUNISIA President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali was forced out Jan. 14. Demonstrators continued to gather airing grievances and demands as an interim government took hold.

LEBANON Remained quiet after Sunni Muslims rallied against government leadership changes. Other protesters focused on the economy and support for Egyptian demonstrators.



ALGERIA Government lifted state of emergency after 19 years and instituted other reforms, but protesters seek broader overhaul.

LIBYA Violent clashes between opponents of leader Moammar Gadhafi and his supporters claimed hundreds of lives.

EGYPT President Hosni Mubarak resigned Feb. 11 after 18 days of nonviolent protests.

BAHRAIN Protests fueled by an underlying resentment toward the monarchy over the lack of social programs that other oil-rich Arab nations enjoy.

YEMEN President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in power for 32 years, granted concessions to two groups of demonstrators but protests continued.

Franco Frattini, Italy's foreign minister, told the group that unlike in Egypt and Tunisia where protests

were largely peaceful, in Col. Moammar Gadhafi's Libya, "there has been horrible bloodshed ... with the deaths

of more than 1,000 Libyans." The Egyptian protests, which saw Muslims and Christians standing side by

side calling for democracy and constitutional reforms, See MIDDLE EAST, page 2



IN THE U.S.

Pro-lifers hail passage of regulations for Virginia abortion clinics

The Virginia Senate Feb. 24 passed a measure that requires the state Board of Health to regulate abortion clinics as hospitals rather than as physicians offices, a bill long sought by pro-life supporters. In a statement, the Virginia Catholic Conference, which represents the state's bishops on policy concerns, called it a "common-sense, long-overdue measure" that has been "a top priority of the Virginia Catholic Conference and its pro-life allies." Virginia Gov. Robert McDonnell has said he will sign it into law and it would go into effect July 1.

Los Angeles receives Archbishop Gomez as Cardinal Mahony retires

More than 6,000 people assembled for two Masses Feb. 27 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to observe a historic — and rare — transition of leadership in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. On the day Cardinal Roger Mahony celebrated his 75th birthday — the age at which bishops are canonically required to submit their resignations to the pope — Archbishop Jose Gomez was welcomed as the new leader of the church of Los Angeles. Archbishop Gomez was named last spring by Pope Benedict XVI as coadjutor archbishop for Los Angeles. On March 1, Pope Benedict XVI accepted the cardinal's resignation. Cardinal Mahony, the first native Angeleno to serve as archbishop of Los Angeles, was installed in September 1985 to lead the nation's most populous archdiocese, now numbering nearly 5 million Catholics.

AROUND THE WORLD

Strong earthquake puts Diocese of Christchurch 'out of action'

A devastating midday earthquake Feb. 22 caused more than 100 deaths, seriously damaged the Catholic Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament and put the Diocese of Christchurch "out of action." The magnitude 6.3 jolt struck the city of 350,000 during the bustling noon hour, sending many buildings tumbling and people rushing into the streets. The earth-

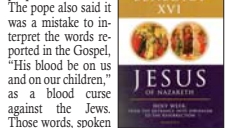
quake was the second to hit Christchurch, located on the east coast of New Zealand's South Island, since Sept. 4. A magnitude 7.1 tremor shook the region then. In addition to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, several of the city's historic churches were damaged or destroyed. Among them was the iconic Anglican Christ Church Cathedral in the city center, which lost its 200-foot steeple. Christchurch Bishop Barry Jones said that diocesan headquarters was "out of action."



Rubble is seen in front of the severely damaged Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch, New Zealand.

In book, pope says Jesus' death cannot be blamed on Jewish people

In his latest volume of "Jesus of Nazareth," Pope Benedict XVI says the condemnation of Christ had complex political and religious causes and cannot be blamed on the Jewish people as a whole. The pope also said it was a mistake to interpret the words reported in the Gospel, "His blood be on us and on our children," as a blood curse against the Jews. Those words, spoken by the mob that demanded Jesus' death, were a mistake to interpret the words reported in the Gospel, "His blood be on us and on our children," as a blood curse against the Jews.



The cover of Pope Benedict XVI's latest volume of "Jesus of Nazareth." The pope wrote. They do not cry out for vengeance, but for reconciliation, he said. The pope's treatment of the events of the Passion form the core of his new book, "Jesus of Nazareth. Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection." It was officially presented at the Vatican March 10 and released worldwide.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Pope names Harrisburg priest to be an auxiliary bishop of Pittsburgh

Pope Benedict XVI has named Father William Waltersheid, secretary for clergy and consecrated life of the Diocese of Harrisburg, as auxiliary bishop of Pittsburgh. The appointment was announced in Washington Feb. 25 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States. Father William Waltersheid, 54, has held his current post in the Harrisburg Diocese since 2006. He also has been a parochial vicar, a pastor and vice rector of the Pontifical North American College, 2000-2003, and before that the college's director of pastoral formation. His episcopal ordination is scheduled for Easter Monday, April 25, at St. Paul Cathedral in Pittsburgh.



Father William Waltersheid

Dr. Nathanson, abortion proponent turned pro-life advocate, dies at 84

Dr. Bernard Nathanson, once a leading figure in the movement to legalize abortion and to keep it legal, spent the last decades of his life raising awareness about the horrors of abortion and repenting for the tens of thousands of abortions for which he felt responsible. Nathanson, who died of cancer Feb. 21 in New York, also described himself for many years as a Jewish atheist but was baptized a Catholic in 1996 by Cardinal John O'Connor, then the archbishop of New York. Nathanson, who was 84, was one of the founders of the organization now known as NARAL Pro-Choice America (originally the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws) and director of New York's Center for Reproductive and Sexual Health, which he described as the largest abortion facility in the Western world.

By the Way...

The people at St. Leo Parish in Ridgway are a few weeks from getting their newly renovated church back. Weekend Masses have been held at the Ridgway Area High/Middle School auditorium while the church has gone through a renovation and restoration effort.



Jason Koshinski

"This is a very exciting time for St. Leo's Parish for two specific reasons," says pastor Father Brian Vossler. "The first is our refurbishing of our worship space."

Since December, the church has been closed for refurbishing which will include: Restoration of the pews with cushions and new kneelers, baptismal font, main altar, back altar with a built in tabernacle, pulpit, presider's chair, statues, columns, sanctuary and votive candles, upper ceiling glass and windows, inside and outside lights, sound system, painting and floors.

The rededication ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, April 14 at 7 p.m. with Bishop Donald Trautman presiding.

"Our second reason for being excited is the purchase of the land across from our school to make it into a new parking lot," Father Vossler says. "St. Leo's School is in a land lock and parking is at a premium. Soon we hope to have approximately 25 new parking spots available."

The new spaces will benefit Catholic school teachers, parents of religious education students who are dropping off and picking up their children and parishioners and guests who attend weekend Masses. The new spots will hopefully alleviate some of the congestion that can sometimes occur on Depot Street, where the church is located.

Plans are falling into place for Bishop-elect Mark Bartchak's ordination and consecration as the eighth bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. St. Stanislaus Parish in Erie, where the bishop-elect has served for nearly 20 years, is sending two buses to the installation Mass April 19 at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona. A bus of co-workers and friends from St. Mark Catholic Center, where Bishop-elect Bartchak served in the marriage tribunal, is headed to the event, as well.

The bishop-elect recently participated in a photo shoot at the parish of St. Stanislaus where he wore some of his episcopal garments, including his cassock, zucchetto and pectoral cross, for the first time. The cross was borrowed from Bishop Trautman, as his had not yet arrived.

Some of the photos will be used in a commemorative edition of FaithLife honoring the new bishop, which is scheduled to arrive in parishes the weekend of May 14-15. The issue will include coverage of the installation Mass, as well.

Also, WIAC-TV and WWCP-TV in Johnstown will carry the installation Mass live. Parishioners who live in Cameron, Clearfield, Elk and Jefferson counties will be able to watch through their local cable providers.

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

Middle East leaders discuss popular desire for democracy

MIDDLE EAST, from page 1

demonstrated that "the more democracy and freedom there is, the more the freedom of each individual is respected and guaranteed," Fratini said.

Mohammed Esslimani, a Muslim theologian, was in Cairo during the protests and read from the diary he kept at the end of January and beginning of February. The diary was filled with stories of Christians and Muslims standing together in Tahrir Square and helping one another.

"I was able to live the most beautiful days of my life," he said.

Muhammad Rifaa al-Tahtawi, who was the spokesman for Cairo's al-Azhar University until he quit in early February to join the demonstrators, told the conference that many of the Christian-Muslim tensions and violence in Egypt were the fault of Mubarak's government.

"A despotic regime tried to convince the Christians that they needed its protection and convince the Muslims that Christians were the agents of the West," he said.

But when the demonstrators, mostly young Egyptians, took to the streets calling for democracy,



CNS photo

Young people wave flags atop an army vehicle at Tahrir Square in Cairo Feb. 12, a day after the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak.

"they forgot their rifts," he said.

Cardinal Antonios Naguib, the Coptic Catholic patriarch of Alexandria, told reporters at the conference that the government change in Egypt was driven by the dreams of the country's young people expressing "their desire for values like justice, freedom, peace and equality."

A danger exists that power could fall into the hands of those who want to impose their interpretation of Islam on the whole country, he said, but those who rallied for change will not accept that easily.

In his address to the conference, he said Christians and Muslims, recognizing they share belief in one God and in the importance of prayer and of putting the precepts of their faith into

practice, need to invest more time and money in projects that promote mutual understanding and concrete action to help society as a whole.

Tarek Mitri, a Greek Orthodox professor at the American University in Beirut, told the conference that people throughout the region are beginning to understand that full citizenship means not letting one's confessional identity automatically dictate political choices.

"The lessons of modern history and the recent unexpected and powerful emergence of popular movements" across the region encourage people to recognize they are citizens of the same country largely facing the same fate, he said.

"We live in a region where

civic identity is weak — it's starting to change now, but it will require time," Mitri said. In the meantime, educators and leaders must help the region's people understand that citizenship is based on the individual's belonging and not on his or her allegiance to a particular religious or ethnic group.

Muhammad al-Sammak, adviser to the chief mufti of Lebanon, told the conference that the Middle East is changing, but it is not clear exactly how the changes will impact the region's Christian minority.

"Liberal democracy is advancing, but the question is: Do political freedom and religious freedom always go together?" he asked.

Al-Sammak said the answer may not always be "yes," and he pointed to the countries of the former Soviet bloc where the post-1989 freedoms have led to a surge in secularism and materialism, not religiosity.

Pro-democracy demonstrators in Egypt were very careful to focus on the fact of citizenship and on bringing Muslims and Christians together, he said, "but this does not mean that the (extreme) Islamists won't try to hijack the process."

Parish missions

Our Lady of the Lake, Edinboro

EDINBORO — Our Lady of the Lake Parish, located at 128 Sunset Drive in Edinboro, is sponsoring a spiritual spring break March 27, 28 and 29.

Father Philip Chircop, S.J., a dynamic spiritual director, will be the presenter. Father Chircop's theme will be "Can You Spare Some Change?" It will deal with the changes in our lives and the fears that block us from evolving and growing into the best versions of ourselves.

All are invited to attend the mission which will begin at 7 p.m. each evening.

St. Callistus, Kane

KANE — St. Callistus Parish, located at 342 Chase St. in Kane, is sponsoring a parish retreat March 28, 29 and 30.

Father Raphael Bonanno, OFM, of the Franciscan Ministry of the World, will offer a presentation focusing on the theme of "Awakening Our Faith in Challenging Times."

The retreat will begin at 7 p.m. each evening and will be a time of song, prayer, ritual and reflection. All are welcome.

Blessed Sacrament, Erie

ERIE — Blessed Sacrament Parish, located at 1626 W. 26th St. in Erie, is sponsoring a parish mission April 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Father Sean McGillicuddy, C.S.R., of The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province, will be the presenter.

Each evening will begin with the rosary at 6:30 p.m., mission service at 7 and Benediction at 7:45. The mission will close on April 14 with the rosary at 6:30 p.m. and Mass in honor of Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, at 7. Reconciliation will be available each evening.

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General Information: (814) 824-1161
Fax: (814) 824-1170
E-Mail: FaithLife@ErieRCD.org
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AN INVITATION TO ADVERTISE WITH US

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, has appointed a priest of the Diocese of Erie, **Rev. Mark L. Bartchak**, to be the bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

FaithLife will publish a special commemorative issue to congratulate **Bishop-Elect Bartchak**.

The ad deadline for this May 15 issue is **April 10**. For advertising rates and specifications, call 814.824.1168 or 800.374.3723 x168 or e-mail bwilliams@ErieRCD.org.

Spring Fiesta and Casino Night

Saturday, April 2, 2011 • 6:30 - 11:00
MPS Cafeteria and Gym, (538 E. Grandview Blvd.)

The \$25 ticket price entitles you to admission, live entertainment, deliciously prepared food and desserts from the Mercyhurst College NE Culinary Arts department, plus...wine, beer, and a whole lot more!

Call Ruth Alberstadt at 824-2161 or email rualberstadt@mplsakers.com for more information and tickets.

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Must be 21 or older to attend.

Lenten offerings

OLP offers Lenten series

ERIE - Our Lady of Peace Parish, 2401 W. 38th Street, Erie, will host a weekly Lenten series each Wednesday beginning March 16. All are invited to participate in the entire evening of events or just a part. The sessions are being offered free of charge although donations will be accepted.

The evenings begin with confession from 4 to 5 p.m. and Mass at 5:15. A simple supper of two kinds of homemade soup (one vegetarian), salad and bread will follow at 5:45.

From 6:15 to 7 p.m. each week, Father Mike DeMartini will give a presentation on God's covenant relationships with people throughout salvation history including: Adam and Eve; Noah and his family; Abraham and his clan; Moses and the 12 Tribes of Israel; David and the Kingdom of God's people; and Jesus and the worldwide church.

St. Luke offers soup and discussion series

ERIE - St. Luke Parish in Erie will host four weeks of faith and food, "Simple Food for Body & Soul," on Wednesdays during Lent beginning March 23.

Sessions will be held in the St. Luke School Cafeteria, 421 E. 38th St., Erie, with Father Tom Aleksa leading the discussions. Each session begins with a simple soup and bread supper at 6 p.m. followed by a talk and discussion at 6:30. There is no charge.

The dates and discussion topics are as follows:

- March 23 - "What We Believe & Why"
- March 30 - "Sacraments & Sacramentality"
- April 6 - "Church with a Capital 'C' & a Small 'c'"
- April 13 - "Ask Your Questions"

Lenten vigils at Mount St. Benedict

ERIE - Lenten vigils will take place every Saturday during Lent at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, 6101 East Lake Road in Erie. Join the Benedictine Sisters of Erie in prayer.

Vigils begin at 7 p.m.

Reflections will be given by:

- March 12 - Sister Sallie Harrington, OSB
- March 19 - Sister Rose Ann Kolbas, OSB
- March 26 - Sister Claire Marie Surmik, OSB
- April 2 - Janice Etchison, oblate
- April 9 - Sister Mary Miller, OSB
- April 16 - Sister Carolyn Gorny-Kopkowski, OSB

Briefly

'Pippin' presented by VMA, Cathedral Prep

ERIE - The Villa Maria Academy and Cathedral Prep performing arts departments will present "Pippin," a musical comedy, March 17-20.

Written by Stephen Schwartz, "Pippin" is about the fictionalized life of the son of Charlemagne.

Performances will be held March 17-19 at 7:30 p.m. and March 20 at 2 p.m. at Villa Maria Academy Auditorium, 2401 W. Eighth St., Erie.

The show stars Chris Fessler as Pippin, Drevell Showers as the Leading Player and Nathalie Rahner as Catherine; directed by Almi Clerkin; produced by Andrew Alessio.

Cost is \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors.

L'Arche Erie to receive Romero Award

ERIE - The L'Arche Erie community will be the recipient of this year's Oscar Romero Award. The award is presented annually by Mercyhurst College and its Department of Religious Studies.

L'Arche Erie is a faith-based community where life is shared between people with and without intellectual disabilities.

Father George Strohmeier, who founded L'Arche Erie, will accept the award on behalf of the community. Father Strohmeier will also present the Romero Lecture at Mercyhurst College on Thursday, March 24. His talk, at 7:30 p.m. in Mercy Heritage Hall on the campus of Mercyhurst College, is titled "L'Arche: Parable of Community in a Troubled World." This event is free and open to the public.



Father George Strohmeier

NPM songfest to focus on Roman Missal

EDINBORO - The National Pastoral Musicians (NPM) Erie Chapter will present its spring songfest and banquet on Sunday, April 3 at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edinboro.

Registration will begin at 3 p.m., with the song fest starting at 3:15. Dinner will follow at 5 p.m. The theme is "Let This Be the Time." Father Bill Sutherland, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake, and the parish will host the event for diocesan clergy, religious and musicians.

A number of new and revised Mass parts for the new Roman Missal will be introduced, as well as ideas for presenting new music to congregations.

The price for the entire afternoon is \$10 for Erie NPM Chapter members and \$15 for guests. Musicians and others interested in music are invited. For more information, contact Bernie Comely at 814.734.5446.

Roman Missal presentation

ERIE - Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman, C. PPS., Ph.D., S.T.D., a noted liturgist, will offer two talks on the Roman Missal on Thursday, April 7 sponsored by the Diocese of Erie's Office of Worship in collaboration with the Center for Mercy & Catholic Studies at Mercyhurst College.

Sister Joyce Ann is the founder and director of the Institute for Liturgical Ministry in Dayton, Ohio.

The afternoon session, titled "Leadership for Liturgy: Building Blocks to Help Implement the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal," is designed for diocesan clergy and lay liturgy/music leaders. This session will be held in Mercy Heritage Hall on the campus of Mercyhurst College from 2 to 4 p.m.

The evening session, titled "Learning About and Praying Liturgy Better: An Introduction to the New Roman Missal," is open to the public and will run from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in the Walker Rectal Hall. Both events are free.

Reservations for the afternoon session must be made by March 30 with Mary Hembrow Snyder, Ph.D., director of the Center for Mercy & Catholic Studies. She may be reached at msnyder@mercyhurst.edu or at 814.824.3105.



Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman

Diocese says farewell to Father Jorge Villegas

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE - After nearly 20 years of service to the Diocese of Erie, Father Jorge Villegas is returning to his native home in Mexico.

The diocesan family gathered Feb. 20 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie for a farewell Mass for Father Villegas. The congregation included members of both the English and Spanish speaking communities at St. Stephen Parish in Erie, where Father Jorge has served as pastor, along with a number of priests, friends and well-wishers.

Father Villegas, who came to the diocese in 1995 as administrator of its Hispanic Apostolate, had previously visited as part of the Mission of Friendship, a formalized exchange between the Diocese of Erie and the Archdiocese of Yucatan, Mexico.

"This is a thanksgiving day," Bishop Donald Trautman said in his remarks. "We thank Father Jorge for being a good shepherd. We thank him for his hard work and loving care of St. Stephen



Father Jorge Villegas celebrates his farewell Mass Feb. 20 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie with Father Matias Rosado-Sosa (right) and Deacon Miguel Alvarez (left) assisting. Father Villegas is returning to his native home in Mexico after serving Erie's Hispanic Catholics for nearly 20 years.

Parish. He knows his people, and he cares for his people. He is a true shepherd."

Under Father Jorge's leadership, Bishop Trautman said new people came to Mass, he organized many social celebrations and St. Stephen's church has been renovated and a new handicapped-accessible elevator installed. He also became a friend to many of the diocese's priests and celebrated

the sacraments including hearing confessions at area parishes.

"Father Jorge has been a great gift of God, a true blessing for the Hispanic people," Bishop Trautman said. "May God reward him with abundant graces."

The bishop also welcomed Father Matias Rosado-Sosa as the new pastor of St. Stephen. Father Matias is from La Purisima Concepcion Parish in Baca, Mexico, which is the sister parish of Sacred Heart Parish in Sharon. He has served as a missionary in Angola, Africa.

As a sign of gratitude to Father Jorge, Bishop Trautman announced that the diocese has made possible a four-year scholarship for an Hispanic boy or girl to attend one of the area's Catholic high schools, which will be donated in Father Jorge's name.

Pat Marshall, director of dioc-

esan and international missions, read a letter in Spanish from Msgr. Jan Olowin, one of the founder's of the Mission of Friendship, who was unable to attend.

"In this Mass, the Diocese of Erie joins with our bishop in thanking you for your many years of service at St. Stephen and prison ministry throughout the diocese," Marshall said.

Marshall also noted that this year marks the Mission of Friendship's 40th anniversary.

In his closing remarks, Father Jorge thanked both the English and Spanish speaking communities at St. Stephen.

"We accomplished a lot together," he said. "If you asked me for the secret of success at St. Stephen, I would say keep both communities together. There are differences in languages and culture. But the Lord has a perfect plan



Altar servers lead the procession during the diocesan farewell Mass for Father Jorge Villegas at St. Peter Cathedral.

for St. Stephen and both communities. My wish today is that St. Stephen continues to grow under the guidance of Father Matias. And I believe in him. And it will happen with the cooperation of both communities."



Choir members from St. Stephen Parish in Erie sing during Father Jorge Villegas' farewell Mass Feb. 20.

Pax Christi headquarters to leave Erie

PAX CHRISTI, from page 1

"I felt it was in a good position to turn it over to someone else," she said.

Over the years, the organization has continued to grow. In 2002, Pax Christi USA established a Washington office to direct policy, build coalitions and coordinate and supervise a new internship program. It recently expanded that presence by moving to the Center of Concern and initiating a live-in community as part of the internship program.

Now the headquarters will join the Washington office.

"They have a good staff in Washington, and I think this will give them new life," Sister Mary Lou said. "It puts them closer, for better or worse, to some of the issues."

Pax Christi USA's national council determined to make the move at this time as an effort to enhance the organization's ability to influence the content and tone of the national political and religious conversation on issues which are at the heart of the group's mission, according to a release.

In the past 10 years, Pax Christi officials said staff members have increasingly been called to meet with governmental leaders in Washington and collaborate with other national and international

organizations based in the D.C. area. Priority areas of Pax Christi USA include: spirituality of non-violence and peacemaking; disarmament and demilitarization; economic and interracial justice in the United States; and human rights.

The Erie office, located at 532 W. Eighth St., will be maintained through July before being transitioned to Washington.

"It's the right time and the right move," Pax Christi USA President, Bishop Gabino Zavala, said in a statement. "Pax Christi USA has been blessed by the sup-

port we have received in Erie over the years, including the remarkable Erie-based staff and the local peace community, particularly that of the Erie Benedictines. We move forward with this next step in our journey confident that the seeds planted and lovingly nurtured there will continue to thrive and flourish in the soil of our nation's capital."

For more information on Pax Christi USA, visit www.paxchristiusa.org.

Catholic News Service contributed to this report.



Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB

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All parishes, missions, schools and groups are encouraged to choose a correspondent who can regularly e-mail news items to "Around the Erie Diocese" at FaithLife@ErieRCD.org

Visit ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp to download quick and easy photo tips on a wallet-size card.



St. Marys confirmation students perform works of mercy



Confirmation students are shown with some of their Valentine's Day guests.

ST. MARYS - Candidates from the 2011 confirmation class from the Inter-parish Faith Formation Program in St. Marys recently participated in works of mercy.

Students held a "Souper Bowl" collection during the weekend of Feb. 5-6 at Masses at Queen of the World, Sacred Heart and St. Mary parishes in St. Marys. The collection raised \$5,837.62, with

proceeds going to the St. Marys Christian Food Bank. The total is an all-time high for the six years in which confirmation students have taken up the collection.

The remaining funds, which totaled more than \$330, were presented to Chris Jovenniti, founder and director of Letters From Home, in honor of Bishop

Donald Trautman. Letters From Home sends messages of support including letters, cards and artwork to soldiers overseas.

More than 40 confirmation candidates held a Valentine's Day ball Feb. 12 for residents of Pincrest Manor, a local nursing facility. This is also the sixth year in which students have sponsored this event in the area.

Catholic Foundation grants impact schools across diocese

The Catholic Foundation's Education and Formation Endowments Board recently awarded more than \$30,000 for diocesan-wide educational initiatives.

Diocesan schools are now implementing SMART technology at all elementary, middle and high schools through the SMART Initiative. Grant dollars through The Catholic Foundation have helped 12 schools to purchase SMART Slates, laptop computers, projectors and carts to increase the technological capacity.

These schools include: Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, Erie; Our Lady of Peace School, Erie; Our Lady's Christian School, Erie; St. Bernard School, Bradford; St. Boniface School, Kersey; St. George School, Erie; St. Gregory School, North East; St. Leo School, Ridgway; Notre Dame School, Hermitage; St. Cosmas & Damian School, Punxsutawney; and Villa Maria Elementary,



Father Nicholas Rouch, Vicar for Education, and Kim Lytle, director of curriculum and teacher personnel for the diocese, receive a check for \$30,500 from Dr. Emma Lee McCloskey (right), president of The Catholic Foundation, for technology that will help Catholic school teachers and their students across the diocese.

Erie.

These funds are made available through The Catholic Foundation as the result of the faithful people of the Diocese of Erie

who contributed generously to the diocesan capital campaign and who regularly support the annual Catholic Education Collection.

Benedictine art show celebrates Women's History Month

ERIE - The Benedictine Sisters of Erie have announced that their Spring Art Show will run from March 6 through April 10 in the Chapter 57 Gallery at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, 6101 East Lake Road, Erie.

Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, is the program director for the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House and the manager of Chapter 57, the fine arts gift shop at Mount St. Benedict. She said the annual show celebrates Women's History Month by showcasing the artwork of Benedictine sisters, oblates and invited women artists.

Hours coincide with Chapter 57 gift shop hours: Sundays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3 to 5 p.m.; and Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3 to 4:30 p.m.



"Sun and Snow," a digital photograph by Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, is one of many works that is included in the Benedictine Sisters of Erie Spring Art Show. Sister Margaret Ann works in photography, ceramics and stained glass.

Erie couple called 'Longest Married' in state by WWME

ERIE - Worldwide Marriage Encounter recently conducted a national search for "The Longest Married Couple in the U.S."

From more than 300 nominations, the recognition went to Marshall and Winner Kuykendall of New Mexico, who celebrated their 82nd anniversary on Valentine's Day.

"The Longest Married Couple" of each state was also recognized. In Pennsylvania, Joyce and Mark Kulyk, WWME regional leaders, had the privilege of visiting Charles and Mary Ventrello of Erie and presently residing at Manchester Presbyterian Lodge, Fairview. At 75 years, they are the longest married couple in Pennsylvania. Charles, 98, and Mary, 97, are members of Blessed Sacrament Parish where they were married in 1935.



Photo by Jim Dalessandro

Mary and Charles Ventrello pose with their recognition certificate from Worldwide Marriage Encounter as "The Longest Married Couple" in Pennsylvania.

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