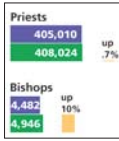


Priest progress

Number of priests showing steady, moderate increase, Vatican says, page 2.



FaithLife

Pope visits Africa

Trip includes encounters with bishops, youths, disabled, page 2.



www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

March 15, 2009

Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. Patrick



Annunciation of the Lord

- March 17 St. Patrick (bishop, patron of Ireland)
- March 18 St. Cyril of Jerusalem (bishop, doctor of the church)
- March 19 St. Joseph (patron of the universal church, fathers, carpenters and social justice)
- March 23 St. Toribio de Mogrovejo (Benedictine oblate, mystic)
- March 25 Annunciation of the Lord

Confirmation schedule

St. Bartholomew, Sharpsville – Sunday, March 15 at 4:30 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Bartholomew, Sharpsville, and Good Shepherd, West Middlesex.



St. Mary, Crown – Sunday, March 22 at 3 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Mary, Crown; St. Michael, Fryburg; and St. Joseph, Lucida.

Sacred Heart, St. Marys – Saturday, March 28 at 10:30 a.m.

St. Mary, St. Marys – Saturday, March 28 at 1:30 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Mary, St. Marys, and Queen of the World, St. Marys.

Lent

For a printable Lenten calendar, visit the Erie Diocese's official Web site at www.ErieRCD.org. Sponsored by Catholic Charities' Office of Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life, the calendar provides a Scripture verse, reflection and activity suggestion for each day of Lent.



The official Lenten regulations from Bishop Donald Trautman are available on the Web site, as well.

Profession of final vows for Sister Pia Terese – March 21

Sister Pia Terese, OCD, will make her solemn profession and veiling at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 21 at Carmel of the Holy Family Monastery, 510 E. Gore Road in Erie. Sister Pia Terese will become the newest member of the Carmelite Sisters, a cloistered contemplative community.

Bishop Donald Trautman will preside at the Eucharistic liturgy.

Clergy appointments



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

Msr. Joseph Bobal, appointed parochial administrator of St. Mary Parish, Reynoldsville. Effective February 24, 2009.

Msr. Desmond McGee, appointed parochial administrator of St. Timothy Parish, Curwensville, and St. Bonaventure Parish, Grampan. Effective February 25, 2009.

Diocese doubles elementary school tuition assistance for 2009-10

Deadline to apply extended to March 31

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

In light of the difficult economic situation affecting so many families, the Erie Diocese has announced its own stimulus package regarding Catholic elementary schools. The diocese announced it will double the amount of financial aid dollars available to parents enrolling their children in diocesan Catholic elementary schools for the 2009-10 academic year. The announcement was made by Bishop Donald Trautman at a news conference March 4 at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie.

Approximately \$500,000 will become available to help parents enroll or keep their children in Catholic schools. The amount includes a special \$200 incentive for families enrolling students in kindergarten at all but a handful of schools where subsidies are already in place.

According to the diocese's

Office of Education, there are approximately 5,800 students in 31 Catholic elementary schools throughout the Erie Diocese.

The tuition assistance funds are being assembled from accumulated savings in various educational reserves, Bishop Trautman said, noting that diocesan subsidies and tuition assistance to Catholic high schools will remain the same.

"We are interested in helping families meet the challenges of Catholic education and in strengthening the viability of our schools for now and well into the future," Bishop Trautman said.

To offer the added financial aid to as many families as possible, the diocese has extended the deadline to apply for tuition assistance to Tuesday, March 31. Parents who have already applied for tuition aid do not need to reapply. Tuition aid application forms are available at all Catholic elementary schools, as well as the diocese's Web site at www.ErieRCD.org.



Media outlets help spread the word after Bishop Donald Trautman's announcement that the diocese will double its elementary school tuition assistance for the 2009-10 school year.

[ErieRCD.org](http://www.ErieRCD.org).

The aid is available to all students: Catholic and non-Catholic, parishioners and non-parishioners.

In regard to making extra funds available, Bishop Trautman called Catholic education's importance to northwestern Pennsylvania "critical."

"We're very proud of the quality of education and faith

formation that we offer," he said. "It is critical that we make these extra funds available and go the extra mile now to help parents with the sacrifice of providing a Catholic education for their children."

Endowments currently allow the diocese to provide approximately \$250,000 in financial aid for students at

diocesan Catholic elementary schools each year. Another \$270,000 is available annually through the Bishop's Tuition Assistance Program for students in secondary schools. In addition, the Erie Diocese's STAR Foundation provides more than \$1 million in tuition assistance each year through Pennsylvania's EITC tax credit program.

Pro-life postcard campaign aimed at FOCA

Erie Diocese joins national campaign

From staff and wire reports

Beginning this weekend, the faithful of northwest Pennsylvania can have their say on the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA).

The Erie Diocese will add to the tens of millions of postcards already distributed to Catholic schools and parishes, non-Catholic churches and civic organizations throughout the United States as part of a national campaign to convince Congress not to reverse current pro-life policies.

Approximately 40,000 sets of postcards will be distributed through all Diocese of Erie parishes at Masses this weekend, March 14-15. Each set is made up of three postcards: one

each to be delivered to Pennsylvania Senators Arlen Specter and Robert Casey Jr., and depending on area of residence, either U.S. Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper (3rd District) or Glenn Thompson (5th District).

The national postcard campaign, launched by the U.S. bishops Jan. 24-25, asks members of Congress to oppose any measures similar to the Freedom of Choice Act, which would overturn many existing widely supported policies.

The text of the postcards reads, in part:

"At this time of serious national challenges, Americans should unite to serve the good of all, born and unborn. The Freedom of Choice

Dear Senator,

At this time of serious national challenges, Americans should unite to serve the good of all, born and unborn. The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), the most radical and divisive bill ever introduced in Congress, would create a "fundamental right" to abortion that would overturn many existing widely supported policies, including laws protecting parental involvement and those preventing partial-birth abortion and taxpayer funding of abortion.

Please oppose FOCA or any similar measure, and retain laws against federal funding of abortion. As your constituent, I would appreciate a written response telling me how you voted on these matters.

Respectfully,

Print Name _____

Act (FOCA), the most radical and divisive pro-abortion bill ever introduced in Congress, would create a "fundamental right" to abortion that government could not limit but would have to support. FOCA would overturn many existing widely supported policies, including laws protecting parental involvement and conscience rights and those preventing partial-birth abortion and taxpayer funding of abortion.

See FOCA, page 3

Rite of Election

Church prepares to welcome candidates, catechumens at Easter Vigil

The Diocese of Erie will welcome 228 people preparing to be baptized or entering into full communion with the church this spring.

Eighty-one catechumens and 147 candidates, along with their sponsors, family and friends filled St. Peter Cathedral in Erie and Sacred Heart Parish in St. Marys for the Rite of Election ceremony March 1. About 1,000 people participated in both locations. Bishop Donald Trautman presided over services at the cathedral. Msgr. Robert Smith, vicar general of the Erie Diocese, presided at Sacred Heart.

The Rite of Election, celebrated annually in cathedrals and churches around the world on the first Sunday of Lent, formally acknowledges the readiness of those preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation — baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist — at the Easter Vigil, this year on April 11. Candidates and catechumens are participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) at their parishes.



During the ceremony, candidates are called and come forth to greet the bishop. Catechumens are called and, accompanied by their godparents, come forth to sign the Book of the Elect. The godparent places his or her right hand on the shoulder of the catechumen as the book is signed.

For catechumens, people not yet baptized, the final part of the journey



At left, catechumen Tammy Harvey of St. Peter Cathedral, Erie, signs the Book of the Elect as her sponsor Arlen Twerdok looks on. Above, a candidate comes forward and is greeting by Bishop Donald Trautman.

began with a Rite of Election on or near the first Sunday of Lent.

For candidates, who are already baptized Christians, the start of Lent means participating in a call to continuing conversion. Many candidates

were raised in a different faith.

Catechumens will receive baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Candidates will enter full communion with the church by receiving confirmation and first Eucharist.



Jason Koshinski

Jason Evert spoke to several hundred students and parents during his visit to the Erie Diocese March 2-4. Evert, an internationally known chastity speaker, presented his highly popular seminar "Romance Without Regret" blending humor and church teaching, providing uplifting and compelling reasons for embracing chastity.

Evert spoke to 8th graders and parents at St. Peter Cathedral School in Erie March 2 and high school students and parents at St. Leo School in Ridgway March 3. He also gave his talk at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage, DuBois Central Catholic High School in DuBois and Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy in Erie.

Presenting his message to teens around the globe, we asked Evert if "another sex talk" is a tough sell.

"Not at all," he says. "Young people know when they're being lied to and when someone's telling them the truth. They're really hungry for (truth). They appreciate the honesty and are open to hearing about something that won't leave them feeling empty. If you ask people what the church teaches about sex, they'll give you a list of no's. You can't do this, this and this. They need to know what they can say to do."

And after his talks, young people stick around to talk to Evert, 33, and ask him questions. "It's really the time when I learn the most," he says.

A story about Evert's visit will be featured in the September/October teen issue of *Faith* magazine. View a video of his talk from Kennedy Catholic at www.ErieRCD.org or find out more about his message at www.chastity.com.

In covering this story, we got to visit with the students and faculty at Kennedy Catholic and came away inspired with their faith. Each morning, students gather at 7:30 for Mass before school then pray the Divine Mercy chapel.

News of Archbishop Timothy Dolan's Feb. 23 appointment to head the Archdiocese of New York was greeted with joy and appreciation by his old friends in his hometown of St. Louis. The archbishop, head of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee since 2002, is a former parishioner, priest, vicar general and auxiliary bishop of the St. Louis Archdiocese.

But it was also well received in the Erie Diocese. Archbishop Dolan served as rector of North American College in Rome from 1994-2001 when a number of priests from the diocese studied as seminarians. Several priests that he spoke with praised the archbishop for his enthusiasm and love of the priesthood.

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

IN THE U.S.

■ **A Catholic governor whose archbishop has told her not to receive Communion until she changes her stand on abortion is President Barack Obama's latest choice for secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.** The nomination of Gov. Kathleen Sebelius as HHS secretary was announced March 2 at a White House news conference. The 60-year-old Sebelius has been governor of Kansas since 2003. Sebelius has drawn strong criticism from Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., who said in 2008 that she should not present herself for Communion until she publicly repudiates her support for abortion. But even before Sebelius' nomination was formally announced, a group called Catholics for Sebelius had launched a Web site — www.catholicsforsebelius.org — touting the governor's Catholic background and her actions in support of "the common good."



Gov. Kathleen Sebelius

■ **The losses incurred by Catholic institutions in the stock market since last autumn are roughly the same as the hits taken by other investors, according to a financier who estimates he gives investment advice to more U.S. dioceses than any other firm.** Losses of about 25 percent in an investment portfolio "would certainly have been in the ballpark" for "Catholic foundations, endowments and pension plans, but also corporate and public endowment plans" across the country, said Steve Schott, a managing principal at CapTrust in Miami. Schott offered a guarded prognosis for church-based investors in 2009. He acknowledged that nobody had a crystal ball to see

that the bottom would drop out of the financial markets at the end of 2008, and repeated a familiar mantra that the outlook "may get worse before it gets better" this year.

■ **The Archdiocese of Washington has launched a Lenten campaign encouraging Catholics to personally invite a family member or friend who may have drifted from the faith to return home to the Catholic Church.** In his new pastoral letter, "Belonging to God's Family," Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl said, "This Lent, across the archdiocese we will make a special effort to say to our family, our friends and our neighbors who no longer attend Mass, 'We miss you. You used to be with us at Mass on Sunday. We invite you back to your home — your spiritual home.'" About 50,000 invitations will be made available at all 140 parishes for people to give to loved ones and friends to invite them to come back to the church.

AROUND THE WORLD

■ **The Vatican said Bishop Richard Williamson's statement of protest for denying the extent of the Holocaust does not meet the Vatican's demand that he publicly recant his position.** "The declaration of the bishop does not seem to respect the conditions established in the note of the Secretariat of State of Feb. 4, 2009, where it says that he 'must distance himself in an absolutely unequivocal and public way from his positions regarding the Shoah,'" Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said Feb. 27. The Vatican had said Bishop Williamson would not be allowed to function as a bishop in the church unless he disavowed his remarks about the Holocaust and publicly apologized. He is one of four traditionalist bishops whose excommunication was lifted in January by Pope Benedict XVI.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

■ **Blessed Damien de Veuster, a missionary priest who served patients with leprosy in Hawaii, will be canonized**

by Pope Benedict XVI Oct. 11 at the Vatican, according to officials. The same day the pope will also canonize Blessed Jeanne Jugan, who founded the Little Sisters of the Poor, and three others. The canonizations will take place during the Synod of Bishops for Africa and are expected to be celebrated in St. Peter's Square. The pope presided over a Feb. 21 consistory that gave final approval for the canonization of 10 people, including Blessed Damien, a Belgian-born member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Born in 1840, Blessed Damien spent the last 16 years of his life caring for patients with leprosy on the island of Molokai.



Blessed Damien de Veuster is depicted in a painting from St. Joseph's Chapel in Louvain, Belgium. The chapel houses the tomb of the Belgian-born missionary priest who served patients with leprosy on the Hawaiian island of Molokai.

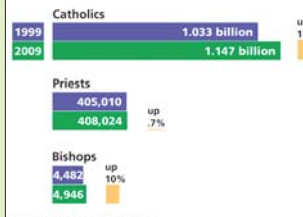
This year, parishioners at St. Joseph Church in Modesto, Calif., are more excited than usual about Easter. That's because 40 of them, along with their pastor, will be in Rome during Holy Week, and one person in their group, Heidi Sierras, will be baptized by the pope during the Easter Vigil at St. Peter's Basilica. Sierras will be in a group of five — representing different areas of the world — who will be baptized by Pope Benedict XVI April 11. The 29-year-old mother of four put into words how she feels. "I feel honored. It's an amazing opportunity."

Priest progress

Number of priests showing steady, moderate increase, Vatican says

Decade View

In the last 10 years the number of priests worldwide has increased only slightly, much behind the growth rate for Catholics.



Sources: 1999 Statistical Yearbook of the Church and the Vatican ©2009 CNS

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The latest church statistics show that the number of priests and seminarians around the world has been showing a modest, yet steady increase.

The statistics from the end of 2007 also showed that the number of Catholics remains stable at 1.147 billion people across the globe.

The sampling of statistics was released Feb. 28 in connection with the presentation of the 2009 edition of the Vatican yearbook, known as the *Anuario Pontificio*, which catalogs the church's presence in each diocese.

The Vatican said the global Catholic population increased during 2007 by 1.4 percent, which more or less kept pace with the 1.1 percent global birthrate that year.

For the past two years, Catholics have made up 17.3 per-

cent of the world's population, it said.

The number of priests in the world also rose, but just by 0.18 percent. At the end of 2007 there were 408,024 priests in the world, 762 more than at the beginning of the year.

The figure on the number of priests was showing a continued "trend of moderate growth which began in 2000 after more than 20 years of disappointing results," the Vatican report said.

However, that growth has been confined to Africa and Asia, which showed substantial increases in ordinations with 27.6 percent growth and 21.1 percent growth, respectively, it said.

The number of priests has remained more or less the same in the Americas, while Europe registered a 6.8 percent decline and Oceania reported a 5.5 percent decrease in the total number of priests since 2000, said the Vatican.

Pope's Africa trip includes encounters with bishops, youths, disabled

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — On his first trip to Africa, Pope Benedict XVI will meet with the continent's bishops, visit a church-run center for the disabled in Cameroon and address young people in a stadium in Angola, the Vatican said.

The trip March 17-23 will focus on preparations for the Synod of Bishops for Africa, to be held in Rome in October. The pope's schedule calls for him to release the synod's working document when he celebrates Mass and meets with synod planners March 19.

The pope's program calls for encounters with political leaders, representatives of other Christian churches and Muslims in Cameroon, the first leg of his visit.

In Angola, where the pope will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the country's evangelization, he plans to talk to regional bishops, celebrate Mass for pastoral workers and meet with Catholic movements engaged in women's promotion.

Angola enjoys growth but still recovers from deadly civil war

One of Africa's major oil producers, Angola is also one of the world's poorest countries. Most people live on less than \$1 per day, and more than half of the population is unemployed. The average life expectancy is about 38 years.

Angola gained independence from Portugal in 1975 and is still recovering from the physical, social and political repercussions of a 27-year civil war that broke out soon after.

According to reports by Human Rights Watch and the U.S. State Department, Angola's human rights record is marred by a string of abuses, including unlawful killings by police, forced eviction without compensation, restrictions on freedom of speech and press, and the arbitrary detention and torture of civilians by the Angolan army.

Catholics in Angola number about 8.6 million, more than half of the 15.5 million total population. The ratio of priests to Catholics in the country is 1-to-10,800, one of the highest in Africa.

The latest Vatican statistics show there are

18 hospitals in Angola owned or administered by the Catholic Church, as well as 42 orphanages, four marriage-counseling centers and 25 centers for social education. In total the church runs 454 social-service institutions in Angola.

Near the end of the war, church leaders in Angola promoted peace efforts by holding national and diocesan councils to establish humanitarian programs and help rebuild the country. The bishops' conference of Angola and Sao Tome joined with other Christian churches at an ecumenical peace forum in 1999 to bring Angolan churches together to work for peace and to encourage dialogue with the international community.

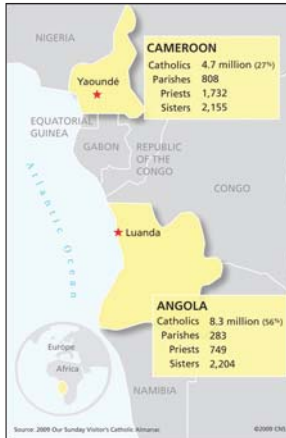
Cameroon, seen as stable country, is also seen as highly corrupt

Cameroon was created in 1961 by the unification of French Cameroon and part of British Cameroon.

Situated on the West coast of Central Africa, the country's general stability and fertile land have brought about the development of agriculture, infrastructure and a profitable petroleum industry. Its economy is dependent on commodity exports, per capita income is about \$2,000 a year.

According to the U.S. State Department, the country's corruption level is among the highest in the world. A report issued in December 2007 by Transparency International, the global coalition against corruption, said more than 80 percent of Cameroonians surveyed considered the nation's police and political parties to be corrupt.

The number of Catholics in Cameroon is rising steadily. In the 40-year period from 1920 to 1960, the number of Catholics rose from 60,000 to 700,000. The most recent Vatican statistics tally about 4.8 million Catholics,



Pope Benedict XVI is set to visit Cameroon and Angola March 17-23. It will be his first visit to Africa and his 11th trip outside Italy since the beginning of his pontificate in April 2005.

roughly 26 percent of Cameroon's 18.2 million total population.

The first indigenous priests were ordained in 1935. In 1988, Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi was the first Cameroonian named to the College of Cardinals.

Vatican statistics show there are 23 hospitals owned or administered by the Catholic Church. The church runs 10 centers for the care of people with Hansen's disease, 12 orphanages and 18 centers for social education. In total there are 460 social-service centers run by the church in Cameroon.

Cameroon's literacy rate is among the highest in Africa. More than 400,000 students are enrolled in schools, including universities, run by the Catholic Church.

FaithLife
The official news bulletin of the Catholic Diocese of Erie
Volume 5, Issue 5
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Advertising: (814) 824-1168

Member of the Catholic Press Association.
Published bi-weekly. Owned and operated by the Bishop of Erie.
Subscription \$10/year.
For more information, call (814) 824-1161.
The Office of Communications has been serving Catholics in the Diocese of Erie since 1974. Offices are located at:
St. Mark Catholic Center
429 East Grandview Blvd., Erie, Pa.
Periodical postage paid at Erie, Pa.
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Briefly

Marriage Encounter weekend March 27-29

The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend will be held March 27-29 at the Chautauqua Retreat Center in Bemus Point, N.Y.

The emphasis of the Marriage Encounter weekend is on the communication between husbands and wives. The weekend provides a conducive environment for couples to spend time together, away from the distractions and tensions of everyday life, while encouraging them to focus on each other and their relationship.

It's not a retreat, marriage clinic, group sensitivity or a substitute for counseling; it's a unique approach aimed at revitalizing marriage.

For more information or to register, contact Ed or Sue Hudson at 814.823.4600.

Marriage Encounter is sponsored by the Erie Diocese's Family Life Office.

View a short video that describes a Marriage Encounter weekend at www.ErieRCD.org. Use it as a way to invite others.

Middle school youth rally April 18

BRADFORD — The 2009 middle school youth rally will be held Saturday, April 18 at St. Bernard School in Bradford. This year's theme, "I Have Chosen You," is taken from the 15th chapter of John's Gospel and is a reminder to young people that chosen them for a life of holiness, happiness and service to other.

To lead through that theme, the diocese welcomes back singer, songwriter and storyteller Jesse Manibusan as keynote presenter.

To register, visit the new youth and young adult ministry Web page at www.ErieRCD.org/vine.asp or contact Linda Leccc, program coordinator, at 814.824.1218 or e-mail lleccc@eriercd.org.

Faith delivered this week

"I'm a cover girl!" says Elaine Sayre, a resident at Christ the King Manor in DuBois who generously agreed to appear on the front of the March/April edition of *Faith* magazine. Sayre and her family are featured in a lengthy piece about the two nursing homes run by the Erie Diocese, Christ the King and John XXIII, located in Hermitage.

The issue, which spans both Lent and the Easter season, also includes an article about the Apostolate of Suffering, recently introduced by the Office of Vocations. Regular columnists address topics ranging from healing and listening to God in prayer to finding a ministry that suits your personality, paying attention to the seasons of your marriage and committing to prayer for your children.

The March/April edition of *Faith* magazine will arrive in homes near St. Patrick's Day.



March/April edition of *Faith*

Pro-life postcard campaign aimed at FOCA

FOCA, from page 1

are participating. The campaign is expected to exceed any sponsored by the Catholic bishops in the past.

"While FOCA would accomplish the abortion promotion agenda all at once, other bills could realize the same agenda in a piecemeal fashion," McQuade said.

"For example, widely supported pro-life measures in appropriations bills are already at risk, including the long-standing Hyde amendment, which has prohibited the use of taxpayer funds for most abortions, and the Hyde/Weldon amendment preventing government discrimination against health care providers who do not perform or refer for abortions," she added.

Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, expressed similar concerns in a Feb. 5 letter urging members of Congress to retain pro-life provisions in the appropriations bills they must approve to keep the government funded past March 5.

"While an extreme proposal

Obama says new policy on stem-cell funds makes up for 'lost ground'

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Saying that the previous policy had forced "a false choice between sound science and moral values," President Barack Obama signed an executive order March 9 overturning former President George W. Bush's limits on federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research.

Obama also urged Congress to consider further expansion of funding for such research, including the creation of new embryonic stem-cell lines, but said he would work to ensure that "our government never opens the door to the use of cloning for human reproduction."

He said a "majority of Americans — from across the political spectrum, and of all backgrounds and beliefs — have come to a consensus that we should pursue" embryonic stem-cell research.

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, had encouraged Obama not to change the policy on funding of embryonic stem-cell research, saying it "could be a terrible mistake — morally, politically and in terms of advancing the solidarity and well-being of our nation's people."

Obama said he "cannot guarantee that we will find the treatments and cures we seek. No president can promise that."

"But I can promise that we will seek them — actively, responsibly and with the urgency required to make up for lost ground," he added.

The Bush policy had allowed funding of embryonic stem-cell research only when the stem-cell line had been created before Aug. 9, 2001. The executive order Obama signed permits federal funding of stem-cell lines created since then, but would not allow funding of the creation of new lines.

like FOCA would overturn hundreds of pro-life laws at once, we are equally concerned that such laws may be overturned one at a time during Congress' appropriations process," he wrote.

Among the specific provisions he cited were:

- The Hyde amendment to the bill funding the departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, as well as parallel provisions barring taxpayer funding of abortions in military hospitals, federal employees' health benefits, foreign assistance and other circumstances.

- The Dickey/Wicker amendment to the Labor/HHS appropriations bill, which bars federal funding of research involving the creation or destruction of human embryos or harm to them.

- The Hyde/Weldon amendment guaranteeing the conscience rights of physicians and nurses who choose not to partici-

pate in abortions and hospitals that do not offer them.

- The Kemp/Kasten amendment to the State/Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which prohibits U.S. funding of organizations that promote coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization overtures.

FOCA has not yet been introduced in the 111th Congress.

For a fact sheet on FOCA from the U.S. bishops, visit www.ErieRCD.org.

DEATH NOTICE

Sister Eliane of the Mother of God, OCD, dies at 96

One of the original Carmelite nuns in Erie

Sister Eliane of the Mother of God, OCD, (Margaret Cooper), 96, of the Carmelite Monastery of Erie, died February 26, 2009.

She was born Nov. 27, 1912 in Phoenix, Ariz., a daughter of the late Carl and Harriet May (McKay) Cooper. Her family relocated to southern California where Sister Eliane converted to the Catholic faith while studying at Ramona Convent Secondary School. She attended Mills College.

Her family lived close to the

Carmelite Nuns and Friars in Alhambra, Calif., and their friendship strongly influenced her desire to enter the Carmelite order. Sister Eliane was directed to the Carmel in Wheeling, W. Va. At age 21, she took leave of her family and friends, boarded a bus by herself and travelled cross-country to enter the Carmelite Monastery in Wheeling on December 7, 1933. She was clothed with the holy habit of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on October 3, 1934, and made her profession of solemn vows on

December 14, 1938.

She was given the name Eliane, after the 9th-century BC, Hebrew prophet St. Elijah (also called Elias), leader and father of the Carmelites. Holy Scripture describes Elijah's encounter with the living God on Mount Carmel, in present-day northwestern Israel. His words are the Carmelite motto: "With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts."

Sister Eliane was unsurpassable in zeal, holding many responsible positions in Wheeling, including the office of prioress. In

1957, after 24 years in Wheeling, Sister Eliane was chosen as one of the original foundresses of the Carmel of Holy Family Monastery in Erie. Sister Eliane helped design and maintain the monastery and held various positions throughout her 32 years in Erie, including the office of prioress. At the time of her death, Sister Eliane held the following offices: prioress, first council sister, novice mistress, turn sister or portress (greeting through the covered gate all who visited the monastery), infirmarian, provisor, bookkeeper.

The moral obligation to cover the uninsured

By Amy B. Hill
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

Next time you go to Mass, look around you. Ask yourself, who among these churchgoers is uninsured? The young family with two squirming toddlers, the middle-aged empty nesters in the next pew or the recent college graduate singing in the choir — are they covered?

Nearly 90 percent of Pennsylvanians are lucky enough to have health insurance paid by their employers, themselves or other programs. Be thankful if you are in that group. However, more than 1 million men, women and children in the commonwealth lack health insurance coverage. Many more are uninsured; their coverage does not go very far in the event of a serious illness or accident.

The *Vision for Health Care Reform* by the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania affirms that, "every person, including the poor and vulnerable, has a right to adequate health care, a right that flows from the sanctity of life and human dignity. The dignity of the human person requires pursuit of the common good." We have a moral obligation as citizens to pursue this common good.

Health care reform competes with many issues in Harrisburg and Washington. Congress and the Pennsylvania General Assembly are considering numerous proposals. The

Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association (PCHA) and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) will evaluate each one carefully.

PCHA and PCC will measure each proposal utilizing the principles of the *Vision*.

Public policy must ensure broad community participation in identifying health care needs, in establishing priorities to determine basic comprehensive benefits and in creating standards and mechanisms for assessing the health care system's responsiveness to these priorities.

Does the plan give everyone access to a standard health care benefit package, especially the poor? Is there coordination among providers?

To help promote the common good, the benefits provided should be sufficient to maintain and foster good health and to treat disease and disability. Educational programs that encourage health and wellness should be mandatory components of the health care delivery system.

Will mental and behavioral health services be treated like other health care services in the plan? Does the plan include a continuum of long-term care services?



Amy B. Hill

Financing the delivery of comprehensive health care services is a societal obligation. The government must ensure that a financing mechanism will be based on an equitable formula for providers, consumers and as necessary, taxpayers.

Does the plan include credible expenditure controls?

Will the plan respect human dignity and the religious destiny of a person? Important questions.

The debate on how to ensure access to health care for all, restrain costs and increase quality is timely and imperative. The Catholic Church and all the faithful must continue advocacy for a system that upholds the sanctity of human life and guarantees access to essential health care services.

Cover the Uninsured Week will be observed March 22-29 to raise awareness that living without health insurance is a risk no one should have to take. On behalf of the young family, the empty nesters, the recent graduate and all our uninsured friends, neighbors and relatives, we must urge our elected officials to pass legislation to provide meaningful health coverage for everyone.

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.

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Mass for the Year of St. Paul in Ridgway

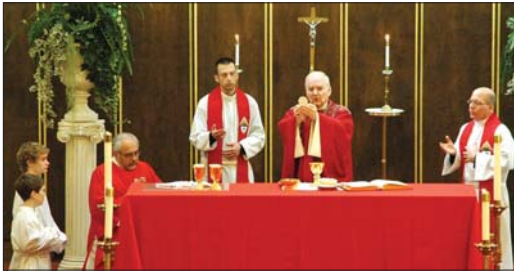
RIDGWAY — Bishop Donald Trautman was the presider at the 10 a.m. Mass Feb. 15 at St. Leo Parish in Ridgway to celebrate the Year of St. Paul and to note the church as a pilgrimage site in the Erie Diocese.

Pope Benedict XVI has dedicated a special jubilee year to St. Paul from June 28, 2008 through June 29, 2009, to mark the approximately 2,000th anniversary of the saint's birth. St. Leo in Ridgway and St. Paul in Erie are two churches that have been selected as pilgrimage destinations in the Erie Diocese during the Year of St. Paul. Each location has a simple shrine to St. Paul, and a plenary indulgence is also attached to these pilgrimages.

For Year of St. Paul resources, visit www.ErieRCD.org.



From left to right: Father Ed Lohse, chancellor; Father David Perry; Father Ted Marconi, pastor of St. Leo Parish in Ridgway; Bishop Donald Trautman; and Deacon Lawrence Gaggos.



Holy Redeemer participates in Souper Bowl

WARREN — Confirmation students at Holy Redeemer Parish in Warren participated in the national Souper Bowl of Caring project, which is held annually on Super Bowl weekend.

Students collected \$581.26 after Masses on the weekend of January 31-Feb. 1, which was given to the St. Joseph Soup Kitchen in Warren where many Holy Redeemer students volunteer.

Presenting the check are confirmation students Liz Harrington, Sandy Theim, Sarah Tarpening and Josh Leonard, along with St. Joseph Soup Kitchen volunteers Mary Creek,



Marilyn Cole and Ann Wortman. Holy Redeemer has participated in the Souper Bowl project for the past seven years. Information about the project is available at www.souper-bowl.org.

Gannon celebrates National Catholic Colleges Week

ERIE — Gannon University hosted a series of events for students, administrators and the public Feb. 22-26 for National Catholic Colleges Week.

One of the featured events included Bishop Donald Trautman's public lecture on "The Value of Catholic Education in These Troubled Times" held Feb. 24 in the Yehli Room of the Waldron Campus Center.

"Many of you are already vitally involved in Catholic education as pastors, teachers, administrators and parents, and I thank you for all that you do to make Catholic education the best way to hand on the faith," Bishop Trautman said opening his talk.

"Catholic education is already in your hands. It is a reflection of your convictions and efforts and generosity. Catholic schools from kindergarten to the university speak of the meaning of life, of values and of Christ's teachings that look to the eternal destiny of the student. That emphasis on the eternal destiny of each student is unique to Catholic education."

Noting that the Catholic Church in the United States has the largest private faith-based education system in the world, the bishop said the Diocese of Erie is proud of the fact that it offers Catholic education from kindergarten to the university level, trying to make it affordable for all.

"Why do we promote Catho-



From left to right, Deacon Stephen Washek, director of Campus Ministry; Matthew Durney, Catholic House coordinator; and R.C. Griffin, associate director of Campus Ministry, prepare hot dogs in A.J.'s Way during National Catholic Colleges Week.



Bishop Donald Trautman

lic education?" Bishop Trautman asked. "Why is Catholic education the highest priority in parish

budgets and in diocesan budgets? Why do we operate a private diocesan Catholic university? Christ said to his first disciples: 'Go forth and teach all nations. Teach the Good News.' This is the essential truth that motivates us to sustain and expand Catholic education. The truths and values that Jesus revealed and brought to us, we pass on to the next generation. We are involved in a quest for people's minds and hearts and souls."

To read a complete copy of Bishop Trautman's lecture, visit www.ErieRCD.org or to view a video of the event, visit www.gannon.edu.

St. Luke students make blankets for veterans, donate to food pantry

ERIE — Students at St. Luke School in Erie created 30 fleece blankets that were donated to the Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center as a service for those who have served our country. Pictured are students Jake and McKayla Sundin with their mother, Melissa, who works for the VA center.

Students also recently collected canned food items to benefit the St. Luke Parish food pantry. Students donated more than 300 canned food items and paper goods. The parish food pantry provides the community with food twice per month. Pictured are students Sarah Andres and Noah Weber with Bob Jenkins from the food pantry.



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