



FaithLife

Bi-weekly news bulletin of the Catholic Diocese of Erie September 11, 2005 www.ErieRCD.org

Diocese announces collection for Katrina relief

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

In the wake of the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, Bishop Donald Trautman has authorized a special collection that will benefit victims in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast. The collection will be taken up in parishes located in the 13-county Erie Diocese at the discretion of pastors within the next several weeks.

All proceeds sent to the diocesan Catholic Charities Office will be forwarded to Catholic Charities USA. No portion of these funds will be used for local administrative costs.

"All of us have been deeply moved by the tragedy that continues to unfold in New Orleans and all along the Gulf coast," Bishop Trautman said. "I ask you to join with me in offering prayers and making personal sacrifices on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are suffering greatly in the face of a very long and difficult journey to recovery."

In addition to authorizing the collection of relief funds, Bishop Trautman announced he has writ-

ten Archbishop Alfred Hughes of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, who is currently in Baton Rouge, inviting him to consider sending his college seminarians to St. Mark Seminary in Erie where they would be able to attend Gannon University.

"We're all members of the Body of Christ," Bishop

Hurricane Katrina relief

Donations should be sent to:
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie
429 E. Grandview Blvd.
P.O. Box 10397
Erie, PA 16514
Attn: Katrina Collection

Trautman said. "We all say we are brothers and sisters of the Lord. This is an occasion for us to prove that identity that we are one in the Lord. We grieve with our own hearts. We offer our prayers. We reach out to those who are suffering. But we are family; we want to respond to our family members."

Bishop Trautman said it is not easy for a bishop to come to his



CNS photo from Reuters

An aerial view taken Aug. 30 shows the devastation caused by high winds and heavy flooding in greater New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina ripped into the U.S. Gulf Coast area Aug. 29. Floodwaters poured into low-lying New Orleans through levees battered by the powerful hurricane.

people time and again asking for support, acknowledging many people throughout the diocese face their own economic hardship. But he says he is encouraged by the record-breaking response of the people in the diocese to

those affected in December by the tsunami in southeast Asia and by the recent donations to help those facing starvation in Niger.

"For those who are able to give I say thank you in the Lord's name," Bishop Trautman said. "I

thank you in advance for your generosity. But again, I ask everyone to consider the deep need for prayer and fasting and other acts of sacrifice at this time, so that we are truly in solidarity with those in need."

Catechetical Sunday Sept. 18 themed 'Life is Christ'

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

"Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ." (Phil 1:20-21)

Each year, parishes across the country set aside time during the weekend liturgies of Catechetical Sunday to recognize those men and women who have accepted the church's call to serve as catechists. As part of this annual celebration, those involved in this ministry are often asked to stand and come forward to the altar. There, in front of the Catholic community, these men and women are commissioned in the name of the church to teach others what it means to follow Christ. This public commissioning also reminds parishioners of their responsibility to be witnesses of Jesus' Good News. Many parishes also recognize parents as the primary catechists of their children and for their efforts to raise them in the faith.

The theme for Catechetical Sunday 2005 Sept. 17-18 is Life is Christ, which is taken from the Letter to the Philippians (1:21), the second reading for Sept. 18. This theme is rich in imagery and reminds us of the abundance of God's gifts and the wonder of Christ's loving presence among us. — USCCB

FaithLife profiles several catechists from the Erie Diocese this

week, showing a glimpse of how catechetical ministries have increased the faith of those to whom they minister.

Sylvia Smith, coordinator for religious education, Holy Cross Parish, Fairview

After teaching catechetics from 1985 to 1999, Smith became coordinator of the religious education program at Holy Cross Parish, Fairview. In this role she ministers to everyone "from womb to tomb," she says.

She enjoying imparting the faith to all ages, but those enrolled in confirmation and adult education programs bring her a special joy.

"You can converse with them, you can share Scripture," she says. "It's neat to be able to share at that level and hear their questions."

Smith says her ministry is going on every day, not just Saturday or Sunday or when programs are running.

"Talking with people after Mass, you form friendships," she says. "I gain more than I give, probably twice as much, I know that."

Her work is realized in seeing those whom she has ministered to now minister to others.

"When you see people who have gone through RCIA who are now the catechists, musicians and lectors, you feel they are a part of the parish family," she says. "They're becoming the stronghold

Accredited religious education programs in the Erie Diocese

Parishes throughout the Diocese of Erie are continuing to work on accreditation of their religious education programs, a designation which indicates a parish meets diocesan quality standards. The diocesan goal is to have each parish accredited every six years. The following listing includes parishes that have been accredited to date:

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| All Saints, Erie | St. Hippolyte, Guys Mills |
| Beloved Disciple, Grove City | St. John the Evangelist, Girard |
| Good Shepherd, West Middlesex | St. Joseph, Force |
| Holy Cross, Fairview | St. Joseph, Lucinda |
| Holy Rosary, Erie | St. Leo Magnus, Ridgway |
| Immaculate Conception, Clarion | St. Mark, Emporium |
| Immaculate Conception, Brookville | St. Mary, St. Marys |
| Immaculate Conception, Osceola Mills | St. Mary, Reynoldsville |
| Notre Dame, Hermitage | St. Mary, Crown |
| Our Lady of Lourdes, Cochranon | St. Michael, Fryburg |
| Our Lady of Mercy, Harborcreek | St. Patrick, Erie |
| Our Lady Queen of the Americas, Conneaut Lake | St. Philip, Linesville |
| Queen of the World, St. Marys | St. Raphael, Eldred |
| Sacred Heart, St. Marys | St. Severin, Drifting |
| St. Ann, Marienville | St. Teresa, Union City |
| St. Basil the Great, Coalport | St. Theresa, Shinglehouse |
| St. Bonaventure, Grampian | St. Timothy, Curwensville |
| St. Brigid, Meadville | St. Tobias, Brockway |
| St. Callistus, Kane | Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Punxsutawney |
| St. Francis Xavier, McKean | Ss. Peter & Paul, Grassflat |

of the parish. It's pretty special."

Aaron Phoutz, youth minister, Queen of the World, Sacred Heart and St. Mary parishes, St. Marys

As the youth minister for three parishes, Aaron Phoutz works with many high school and middle school students. His task, he says, is to bring the Gospel message and make it alive for teens.

"It's a life-changing experience," he says. "To take them to Christ in the Eucharist, in others and in their community, they become alive."

In the five years he's been involved with youth ministry, he says he's always amazed to watch teens witness to others about their faith.

"We have some kids in public schools who kneel at their lockers

to pray," he says. "Others invite friends to catechesis and youth groups. They wear Catholic T-shirts to public high schools and write Christian music. They want to take Christ to others."

Marialyce Garvis, outreach and sacramental preparation coordinator, Beloved Disciple Parish, Grove City

Ever since she got married 20 years ago, Marialyce Garvis has been involved with religious education programs in her parish.

She and her husband started out volunteering as 7th grade catechists. Over the years, she has worked with many spectrums of the faith including sacramental preparation and adult and youth formation.

"I have to say that I learn as much as I teach," she says. "I'm always pleasantly pleased how much I take away from it."

She enjoys working with parents in the sacramental program, watching them share their faith with other parents.

"It's rewarding to see that what you're bringing to the forefront for them or what they're learning for the first time, they're able to pass along to their family," she says.

She's been touched by the faith of many of her students she has contact with but knows others are also out there living the Gospel.

"The seeds you plant sometimes you don't see," she says.

Word of Life presents charismatic conferences

Fr. Bob Bedard's message to those gathered at a recent charismatic conference at St. Mark Catholic Center was simple.

"You and I need to understand what this baptism of the Holy Spirit is all about," Fr. Bedard told the audience. "If you can get someone's ear, try to explain this whole Holy Spirit thing. It's perfectly spelled out in the New Testament. Living in the experience, the blessing, is holiness. Your task is to bring people into the experience."



Fr. Bob Bedard

Fr. Bedard, founder of Companions of the Cross, a group of Spirit-filled priests in Canada, was the featured speaker at a charismatic conference called A Great Gathering Aug. 20. The event

was sponsored by Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center of the Erie Diocese.

Fr. Bedard spoke about his own experiences with the Holy Spirit.

"There was a time when I just didn't pray, not even the breviary," he said. "Now I pray without distraction for an hour-and-a-half. The Lord has changed my whole personality."

Word of Life will sponsor the 15th annual Catholic Charismatic Conference Oct. 7-8 at St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie. This year's theme is "Moving in the Power of the Holy Spirit." The featured speaker is Fr. John Gordon of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.

Registration for this two-day conference is \$35 for adults, \$10 for students. Contact the Word of Life Center at 814.824.1286 or e-mail wolccrc@aol.com.

Women religious should be 'oaks of justice,' says LCWR head

ANAHEIM, Calif. (CNS) — Serving God by correcting the world's inequalities requires women religious to be "oaks of justice" even if it means suffering and death, said Sr. Christine Vladimiroff, president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

The Old Testament taught that to proclaim the sovereignty of God "allegiances had to be shifted from the structures, systems and institutions that characterized the older order of oppression to a new way of living," she said on the opening day of the conference's Aug. 19-23 annual assembly in Anaheim.

Sr. Vladimiroff noted that this year's assembly marks the 49th year of the organization's founding and that in the Old Testament the 49th year was considered a jubilee year which, she said, "beckons us to make real God's dream for our

world here and now."

The conference was founded in 1956 as the Conference of Major Superiors of Women. It changed its name to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in 1971. Its approximately 1,000 members represent about 95 percent of the 73,000 women religious in the United States.

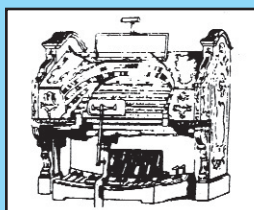
"Jubilee is not a time to paternalistically 'take care of the poor,' but rather to dismantle the structures of injustice that render people poor," said Sr. Vladimiroff.

She said that the term "oaks of justice" comes from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah who said they were people "planted by the Lord to show his glory."



Sr. Christine Vladimiroff

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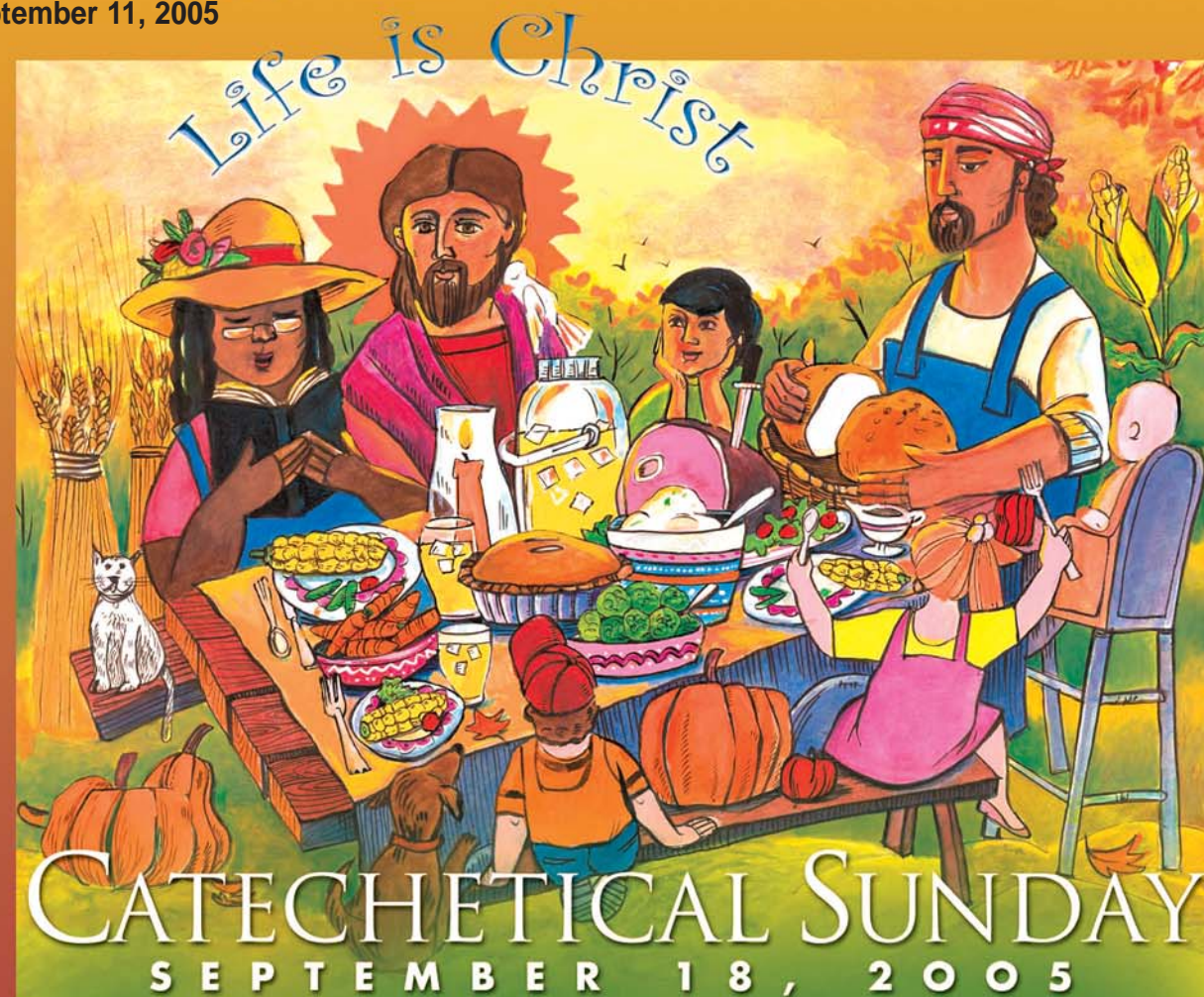
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Catholic Education Collection to aid REEF grants