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# FaithLife

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BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

September 21, 2008

## Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

### Feast days



- Sept. 23 St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)
- Sept. 26 St. Cosmas and St. Damian
- Sept. 27 St. Vincent de Paul
- Sept. 29 St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael
- Sept. 30 St. Jerome
- Oct. 1 St. Therese of the Child Jesus
- Oct. 2 The Guardian Angels
- Oct. 4 St. Francis of Assisi
- Oct. 5 Respect Life Sunday

### Confirmation schedule

St. Bonaventure, Grampian — Sunday, Oct. 5 at 2 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Timothy, Curwensville, and St. Bonaventure, Grampian.

### Why Catholic? retreats

The yearly retreat for parishes involved in the *Why Catholic?* program will be held Sept. 23-27 in several locations throughout the Erie Diocese.

Retreats are for all members of all parishes involved in the *Why Catholic?* program. Parishioners do not have to belong to a small group to attend.

The theme of the retreats is "Sitting by the Well: Meeting Jesus in Prayer." Each retreat will be divided into several parts and includes prayer, reflection on Scripture, quiet time and faith sharing. The schedule is as follows:

- Tues., Sept. 23 at St. Brigit, Meadville, from 7-9 p.m.
- Wed., Sept. 24 at St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie, from 7-9 p.m.
- Thurs., Sept. 25 at Notre Dame, Hermitage, from 7-9 p.m.
- Sat., Sept. 27 at St. Leo, Ridgway, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

*Why Catholic?* is a four-year program that focuses on Scripture related to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Small faith-sharing groups meet once a week during two six-week sessions each year. Most groups will begin the second six-week session for 2008 on Oct. 5.

### Humanae Vitae celebration — Oct. 4

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's encyclical "Humanae Vitae," the Erie Diocese's Natural Family Planning/Chastity Education Office will present "Beauty in the Eyes of the Beholder: Humanae Vitae Today—A Blossoming Truth" on Sat., Oct. 4.

The evening begins with 5:15 p.m. Mass at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie with Bishop Donald Trautman followed by a 7 p.m. banquet in the Yehll Room of Gannon University. The guest speaker is Mary Ellen Stanford, MTS, of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family.

This event is by invitation only. To add your name to the invitation list or for more information about the program, contact the NFP/Chastity Education Office at 800.374.3723 Ext. 259, 814.824.1259 or e-mail [tburken@ErieRCD.org](mailto:tburken@ErieRCD.org).

## Clergy appointments

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

Father Raymond Hahn, appointed temporary parochial administrator of St. Julia Parish, Erie. Effective September 22, 2008.

Father Mark O'Hern, appointed pastor of St. Brigit Parish, Meadville, for a term of six years. Effective September 2, 2008.

Father Nicholas Rouch, STD, granted temporary leave from duties at Gannon University while remaining the diocese's vicar for education and vice rector of St. Mark Seminary. Effective October 1, 2008.

Father Stephen Schreiber, appointed director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for a term of five years while continuing as associate director of vocations. Effective September 2, 2008.

## 'The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church'

### Catechetical Sunday marks commissioning of catechists in diocese

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

Each year, the third Sunday of September has been designated by the U.S. Catholic bishops as Catechetical Sunday, a national celebration which honors those involved in catechetical ministry.

This year Catechetical Sunday, September 21, will focus on the theme, "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church."

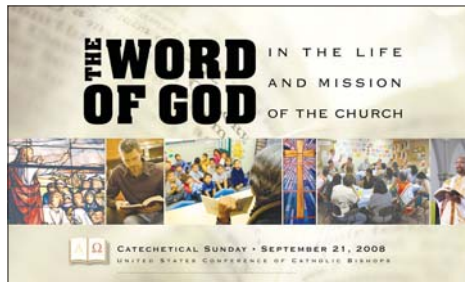
In parishes throughout the Erie Diocese, those who have been delegated by the community to serve as catechists will be called forth

and commissioned for their ministry.

Approximately 1,800 catechists will serve religious education programs in the diocese during the 2008-09 school year.

Nearly 20,000 students participate in religious education programs in the diocese each year.

Catechetical Sunday is an opportunity to reflect upon the role that each person plays by virtue of their baptism in handing on the faith, said Sister Mary Elizabeth Oettel, OSB, the diocese's associate director of religious education in the Eastern Vicariate.



"I'm always inspired by the people who teach and direct our religious education programs, especially those who stay with the ministry and come back year after year," Sister Mary Elizabeth said.

"Last year and for this coming year, a number of new religious education leaders

have come into it enthused and eager to do the ministry."

She added that there is a lot of enthusiasm in the diocese about whole community catechesis and reaching the entire parish and family, not just children.

"That is really edifying," she said.

## Theology on Tap returns, targets young adults

### Father Mike Allison to kick off series with 'Everything you ever wanted to ask about Catholicism'

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

ERIE — When Father Mike Allison opens his *Theology on Tap* discussion on "Everything you ever wanted to ask about Catholicism," he says he'll explore some of what he thinks are the things that make us Catholic—structure, ritual and what we believe. But mostly he says he'll open the floor up, expecting a lively Q & A session with the young adults in attendance.

"I want to explore some things that will hopefully get some good discussion started," Father Allison said.

The Erie Diocese's Office of Young Adult Ministry will host a series of *Theology on Tap* discussions at The Brewery at Union Station in downtown Erie from the first

Thursday in October, November, January and February. Father Allison's discussion will take place Oct. 2.

A popular outreach to young adult Catholics, *Theology on Tap* targets singles and married couples for faith-inspired discussions in a pub style setting. *Theology on Tap* returns on the heels of last year's sessions when the diocese sponsored events in the spring and fall.

The Catholic Church defines a young adult as someone between the ages of 21-40, a rather large demographic which makes up approximately 40 percent of the Catholic population.

With such a large number of people

See *THEOLOGY ON TAP*, page 4

## Pet blessings

The feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and ecology, is celebrated October 4. Parishes throughout the diocese will hold pet blessings on or near the feast day. As a reminder, please make sure all animals are leashed, caged or restrained.



■ St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Linesville  
Sunday, Oct. 5 at 2 p.m. in upper parking lot

■ Our Lady Queen of the Americas Parish, Comeau Lake  
Sunday, Oct. 5 at 1 p.m.

■ St. Peter Cathedral School, Erie  
Saturday, Oct. 4 at 9 a.m. on front lawn

■ Our Lady of Peace School, Erie  
Friday, Oct. 3 at 2:15 p.m. by St. Francis shrine in front of school

■ Beloved Disciple Parish, Grove City  
Saturday, Oct. 4 at 3:30 p.m. near bell tower

■ St. Titus Parish, Titusville  
Sunday, Oct. 5 at 1 p.m. in Christian Activities Center

■ St. Callistus Parish, Kane  
Saturday, Oct. 4 at 1 p.m. on rectory lawn (parish social hall if raining)

■ St. Thomas Parish, Corry  
Sunday, Oct. 4 at 1 p.m.

For more information on St. Francis of Assisi and Franciscan features, stories and spirituality, visit [www.americancatholic.org/features/francis](http://www.americancatholic.org/features/francis).

## Diocese to distribute more than \$1M in STAR Foundation education grants in 2008-09

### Tax credit program allows businesses to assist with Catholic education

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

The Diocese of Erie will distribute more than \$1 million in tuition grants to students in its 40 schools during the 2008-09 academic year through the STAR Foundation, a program that provides state tax credits to businesses for donations toward education.

A non-profit scholarship organization established by the diocese, the STAR (Student Tuition Assistance Resource) Foundation is made possible by donations from businesses that participate in Pennsylvania's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program.

Since its inception in 2001, the STAR Foundation has distributed nearly \$6 million in financial assistance to students attending Catholic schools in the diocese.

"It gives underprivileged children an opportunity for a Catholic education," said Charles Banducci, diocesan director of school finance. "Kids who would not otherwise be able to attend a Catholic school are afforded the opportunity through the STAR Foundation. It helps children throughout the diocese and over the years has aided thousands of kids."

In 2001, the Pennsylvania General As-

sembly passed the EITC program, which provides that corporations and businesses qualify for state tax credits when contributions are made to scholarship organizations approved by the state for primary and secondary students.

The tax implications for businesses have been great, Banducci said.

For a one-year contribution, the EITC program provides companies with a 75 percent tax credit for donations to a non-profit scholarship organization, like the STAR Foundation. If the company commits to making the same donations for two consecutive years, the tax credit increases to 90 percent.

"If we can get businesses interested in this program knowing that instead of giving the money to the state that they're actually giving money to disadvantaged children to help them, that would be a great benefit to everybody," Banducci said. "It's a win-win situation, for the business and the kids."

This year, the state legislature voted to increase the amount of tax credit allowance per business from \$200,000 to \$300,000 and the pre-kindergarten tax credit limit from

## STAR Foundation awards distributed in 2007-08

County	No. of scholarships Pre-K-K-12	Total amount awarded
Clearfield	45 (Pre-K)	\$35,595
	284 (K-12)	\$404,914
Crawford	2	\$2,000
	10	\$3,940
Elk	53	\$21,763
	169	\$89,121
Erie	59	\$27,199
	247	\$133,450
Jefferson	3	\$771
	62	\$89,848
McKean	1	\$573
	7	\$2,955
Mercer	11	\$3,111
	52	\$27,650
Venango	3	\$1,094
	33	\$17,730
Warren	2	\$597
	9	\$4,925
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>\$92,703</b>
	<b>873</b>	<b>\$774,533</b>

Clarion grants are distributed through the Children's Scholarship Fund, another EITC beneficiary.



## IN THE U.S.

■ **From the Horn of Africa to Haiti, rising food prices are driving millions of families to the brink of starvation.** Catholic Relief Services has set aside an initial \$1 million to help hungry people in a half-dozen countries buy food and prepare for the next planting season. "This food crisis is just beginning. By early next year, it will be deeper and broader as more segments of society are pushed into poverty by the combination of higher prices for food and energy worldwide. We must act now," said CRS President Ken Hackett. "CRS staff members around the world have heard stories of families who are stretched to the limits of life itself by the high price of food," said Sean Callahan, CRS' executive vice president. "Some families must make do with eating less at each meal. They are already skipping meals, or even not eating on a particular day." This initial response will help the poorest people buy food and spur agricultural productivity by targeting countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe.

■ **The Catholic Church has joined an interfaith effort to change U.S. immigration law.** To prepare for that effort in the next Congress, it is also joining the 17-city Tour of the Faithful, an educational effort during September and October to convince people of faith to support changes in U.S. immigration policy. "We're in a dark period," said Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration. "Our current national immigration policy ... consists of work-site enforcement raids" that result in, among other things, "the dislocation of U.S. citizen children from their parents," he added. "As a nation — a nation of immigrants, I might add — we cannot accept the labor of immigrants while undermining their basic human dignity," Bishop Wester said. Through the Tour of the Faithful, he said, "we hope to lift

our voices to call attention to this important issue in the days and weeks ahead so that a new president and new Congress can address these issues early in 2009."

## AROUND THE WORLD

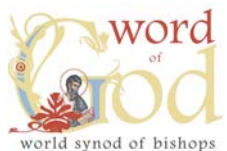
■ **After decades of widespread global acceptance of the cessation of all brain function — brain death — as true death, new questions are being raised,** said an article in the Vatican newspaper. However, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said the article did not reflect a change in the Catholic Church's position that a person declared brain dead really is dead. In a Sept. 2 statement he said the article "cannot be considered a position of the magisterium (teaching authority) of the church," but was simply a contribution to an ongoing discussion. Forty years ago a committee of the Harvard Medical School published a report recommending the adoption of brain death as the criterion for declaring a person dead, and noted the front-page article by Lucretia Scarnafina, a professor of contemporary history and frequent contributor to the Vatican newspaper. In the article published Sept. 2 in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Scarnafina said acceptance of the Harvard report meant that the cessation of heart and lung function were no longer the only criteria for declaring someone dead, opening the way to a wider acceptance of harvesting transplantable organs from a person whose body functions continued because of a respirator.

■ **Although St. Paul was not one of the initial companions and followers of Jesus, he was a true apostle,** Pope Benedict XVI said. "St. Paul dedicated his entire existence to the Gospel, 24 hours a day," the pope said at his Sept. 10 weekly general audience at the Vatican. The pope said St. Paul makes clear in his letters that he did not place himself on the same level as the original Twelve Apostles who were

called personally by Jesus and were his companions during his earthly ministry.

Yet St. Paul's encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus "led to his mission; he could not continue as before, but was charged by the Lord to proclaim the resurrection, the Gospel, to be an apostle." Pope Benedict has been talking about St. Paul during the Wednesday audiences as part of the church's celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of St. Paul's birth.

## PEOPLE OF FAITH



■ **Choosing men and women from every part of the world and from a wide variety of professional spheres,** Pope Benedict XVI nominated 32 voting members, 41 experts and 37 observers for the upcoming world Synod of Bishops. The nomination of six female scholars as experts and of 19 women as observers will give the Oct. 5-26 Synod of Bishops on the Bible the largest bloc of women ever participating in a Catholic synod. The 32 clerics Pope Benedict named as full members of the synod will join about 180 bishops who were elected by their national bishops' conferences, 10 priests elected by the Union of Superiors General and about two dozen cardinals and archbishops, heads of Vatican congregations and councils, who automatically are members of the synod.

## By the Way...



Jason Koshinski

The Spiritual Family The Work, the new religious community in the Erie Diocese, will hold a series of open houses at its Julia House, located at 608 Walnut St. in Erie.

Religious and priests will be welcomed from 1-5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 20; staff, faculty and students of Gannon University are invited on Monday, Sept. 22 from 4-7 p.m.; and St. George Parish, friends and neighbors will be greeted Sunday, Sept. 28 from 2-5 p.m. Should visitors be unable to come on the day proposed, please feel free to choose from the schedule.

Sister Kathleen Dietz, FSO, and Sister Josephine Vuodi, FSO, members of The Work, arrived in mid-June and reside in a house near the Gannon campus.

Sister Kathleen, who has completed her doctorate in theology, will teach part time at Gannon in the Theology Department. Sister Josephine will serve as a pastoral associate at St. George Parish in Erie.

Julia House is named after Mother Julia Verhaeghe, who founded the community in 1938.

For more information on The Work, contact Julia House at 814.871.5756 or e-mail [theworkerie@catholic.org](mailto:theworkerie@catholic.org).

Sept. 5 marked the 40th anniversary of the death of Archbishop John Mark Gannon. His tremendous witness and the ministry of his many years as bishop of the Diocese of Erie is still evident throughout the diocese today.

During the 46 years of Archbishop Gannon's episcopate (1920-66), the physical expansion and the spiritual development of the diocese was unprecedented. Before his resignation in September, 1966, Bishop Gannon had witnessed the Catholic population in the Erie Diocese grow to 212,000. Catholic schools had opened their doors to 30,000 students. There were more than 1,000 nuns of various communities working in the diocese.

In 1953, Bishop Gannon was honored with the title of archbishop in recognition of his many accomplishments both at home and abroad.

Msgr. Robert Barcio, diocesan archivist, authored the definitive biography of the archbishop, "That You Love One Another," published by Meridian Creative Group in 1996.

Jason Koshinski is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at [JKoshinski@ErieCatholic.org](mailto:JKoshinski@ErieCatholic.org) or 814.824.1171.

# At Lourdes, pope tells pilgrims Mary leads to Christ

## Mass celebrates 150th anniversary of Mary's appearances to St. Bernadette

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

LOURDES, France — Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass for 150,000 international pilgrims at the Marian sanctuaries of Lourdes and told them that humble prayer to Mary was a true path to Christ.

The pope said Mary had appeared at Lourdes to invite everyone who suffers, physically or spiritually, to "raise their eyes toward the cross of Jesus" and recognize a love that is stronger than death or sin.

"The power of love is stronger than the evil that threatens us," he said Sept. 14.

The pope traveled to Lourdes, a town in the French Pyrenees, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Mary's appearances to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a 14-year-old peasant girl.

In his sermon, the pope placed himself among the pilgrim population, saying he, too, had come to pray at the feet of Mary, "eager to learn from her alongside little Bernadette."

Then he made a point he has consistently emphasized when speaking of Marian devotion: that

Mary turns one's gaze to Christ. He noted that Mary's first gesture to St. Bernadette was to make the sign of the cross — an initiation into the mysteries of faith in Christ, he said.

"Mary comes to remind us

**"This is the path which Mary opens up for man. To give oneself fully to God is to find the path of true freedom."**

— Pope Benedict XVI

that prayer which is humble and intense, trusting and persevering, must have a central place in our Christian lives," the pope said. "Prayer is indispensable if we are to receive Christ's power," he said.

At Lourdes, he said, Mary also revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception, a person conceived without sin. In this way, she is

"beauty transfigured, the image of the new humanity," he said.

This special grace inspires people by reminding them that they are "marked by sin but saved in hope," the hope of salvation that allows them to face daily life, he said.

"This is the path which Mary opens up for man. To give oneself fully to God is to find the path of true freedom," he said.

Many came to the papal Mass in wheelchairs or on stretchers, part of a perennial pilgrimage of the sick who travel to Lourdes for spiritual or physical healing.

The assembly was multicultural and multi-lingual, and the liturgy featured readings, prayers and responses in 10 languages, including Chinese.

At the Angelus blessing following Mass, the pope spoke about the motives that lead some 6 million people to Lourdes every year. The main reason, he said, is that they feel they can entrust to Mary their most intimate thoughts.

"That which many, either because of embarrassment or

## Chronicle of Lourdes

The effects of Mary's appearance at Lourdes have been reconciliation, healing and devotion to the Immaculate Conception, a dogma not known to the young visionary Bernadette.

- 1854** Pope Pius IX declares the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that Mary was born without original sin.
- 1858** A woman holding a rosary appears 18 times to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous at the Massabielle grotto. In the visions, Mary asks that a chapel be built at the grotto and identifies herself as the Immaculate Conception. She directs Bernadette to drink from a spring, which is later associated with healings.
- 1862** The local bishop proclaims the visions authentic and the first healings connected with Lourdes are recognized as miraculous.
- 1866** Bernadette leaves Lourdes and enters the Sisters of Charity and Christian Instruction in Nevers. Construction begins on the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.
- 1879** Bernadette dies in Nevers April 16.
- 1933** Bernadette is canonized by Pope Pius XI Dec. 8.



modesty, do not confide to their nearest and dearest, they confide to her who is all pure, to her Immaculate Heart: with simplicity, without frills, in truth," he said.

"Before Mary, by virtue of her very purity, man does not hesitate to reveal his weakness, to express his questions and his doubts, to formulate his most secret hopes

and desires," he said.

Arriving in Lourdes following a two-day stop in Paris, the pope immediately joined in the jubilee pilgrimage established to mark the 150th anniversary of the apparitions.

Cheered by tens of thousands who packed the streets of the mountain town, the pope first stopped at the parish church where St. Bernadette was baptized, then visited the small house — a former prison not much bigger than a cell — where the girl and her family lived in the mid-19th century. There, he kissed her rosary and said a prayer.

Next the pope went to the grotto at the base of a rocky cliff, where Bernadette experienced 18 apparitions of Mary from Feb. 11 to July 16, 1858. Like millions of pilgrims each year, he paused to take a drink of water from the spring she discovered there, a spring said to have miraculous powers.

Later that night, the pope closed a torchlight evening procession in Rosary Square. Addressing the overflow crowd of pilgrims, he paid tribute to simple devotion.

At Lourdes, he said, Mary stirred hope and love "by giving pride of place to the sick, the poor and the little ones."

"In this shrine at Lourdes ... we are invited to discover the simplicity of our vocation: It is enough to love," he said.

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2009: Feb. 14-22 / Feb. 28-March 8 / April 18-26  
(May 2-14) / (May 17-29) / (June 6-18)  
(June 27-July 5) / Aug. 1-9 / (Sept. 5-17)

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## Discussions on Faithful Citizenship

ERIE — Leading up to Election Day Nov. 4, discussions on the U.S. bishops' document "Faithful Citizenship" will take place at several locations in Erie. To read the bishops' document, visit [www.faicitizenship.org](http://www.faicitizenship.org).

■ Father Johnathan Schmetz, parochial vicar of St. Jude Parish in Erie, will lead discussions on the role of faith in our lives as American citizens.

Using the document from the U.S. Catholic bishops, "Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility," the group will explore what the church has to say about human life, family issues, social justice, global solidarity and immigration.

The discussions will take place on Sept. 22 and Oct. 6 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. and Sept. 29 from 6-7 p.m. in the Founders Room (rectory). For more information or to register, call the office at 814.833.0927.

■ Msgr. Tom McSweeney, director of the Office of Evangelization for Communications, will speak on Faithful Citizenship at the Alex Theatre on the campus of Mercyhurst Northeast, Wed., Sept. 24 at 7:30 p.m. The presentation, free and open to the public, is part of a series the campus is sponsoring prior to the election. Msgr. McSweeney will also appear as part of an interreligious panel at Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst's main campus on Tuesday, Oct. 21.

■ The diocese's Office of Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life, in conjunction with Sister Dorothy Stoner, OSB, will host a series of seminars on the U.S. bishops' document "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship." The first two seminars will be held at Mount St. Benedict in Erie on Sun., Oct. 5 at 11:45 a.m. and Tues., Oct. 14 at 7 p.m.

■ St. Mark Catholic Center will also host discussions on Tues., Oct. 14 at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., with discussions led by Sister Dorothy and Erin Landini-Grogan, directory of Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life.

## Briefly

### NPM musicians retreat Sept. 27 in Oil City

OIL CITY — The Erie Diocese Chapter of NPM musicians retreat will be held at St. Stephen Parish in Oil City on Sat., Sept. 27 from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

The retreat master will be Father John Murphy, pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Port Allegany. The theme is "Prayer: the Heart of our Ministry."

Registration is open to all diocesan musicians and friends. Cost is \$8 for chapter members and \$10 for non-members. This price includes morning coffee and a luncheon. For more information or to make a reservation, contact Carolyn Melby at [cmelby@zoominternet.net](mailto:cmelby@zoominternet.net).

### Father David Poulson to speak at Charismatic Conference Oct. 3-4

ERIE — The 18th annual Catholic Charismatic Conference will be held on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 3-4 at St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd. in Erie.

The featured speaker is Father David Poulson, who was a former moderator at Bread of Life Community, a Catholic charismatic community. He is currently pastor of St. Michael Parish in Fryburg.

The theme for this year's conference is "Renewed by the Holy Spirit—A Future Full of Hope." Friday evening's activities begin at 6:30 p.m. and end with a healing service at approximately 9:45 p.m. Saturday's schedule, which begins at 9 a.m., includes Mass, praise and worship, talks by Father Poulson and a commissioning ending at 3:45 p.m.

Reservations can be made by contacting the Word of Life Center at 814.824.1286. The cost for the conference is \$35, and an optional lunch is available for an additional \$6.

### 14th annual rosary march to be held Oct. 12 in Erie

ERIE — The 14th annual rosary march, sponsored by the Erie Diocese's World Apostolate of Fatima, will take place on Sunday, Oct. 12 beginning at 2 p.m. at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie.

The rosary procession will extend through the downtown area before returning to the cathedral. For those unable to participate in the march, the rosary will also be prayed in the cathedral.

The guest homilist is Father Joseph Campbell, parochial vicar of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Clearfield. The program also includes exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

### Theology of the Body course offered in Meadville

MEADVILLE — Father Steve Schreiber will offer a two-part course on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body at St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville from 6:30-9 p.m. on Mondays, Oct. 20 and 27.

The sessions will explore the true meaning of life, love, relationships and human sexuality through the lens of the late pope's extensive document.

For more information or to register, call 814.824.1259 or 1.800.374.3723 Ext. 259. Registration is accepted but not required.

### Liturgical composer Marty Haugen to lead workshops Oct. 25 in Edinboro

EDINBORO — Liturgical music composer and recording artist Marty Haugen will lead two workshops on Sat., Oct. 25 at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edinboro.

Doors open at 8:30 a.m., and the first workshop begins at 9:30. The day includes the workshops, a tour of the church, optional lunch and a songfest with Haugen.

For details on the schedule, reservation or group pricing information, contact Kevin Cole at 814.398.4950 or [kkole56@yahoo.com](mailto:kkole56@yahoo.com) or Cindy Groszkievicz at 814.734.4910.

## SSJ Spirit of Courage awards

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania will host the 12th Annual SSJ Spirit of Courage dinner on Tuesday, Oct. 7 at the Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center in Erie.

WSEE's Raychel Vendetti, a previous Spirit of Courage honoree, will again emcee the event along with Sister Jean Baptiste DiLuzio, SSJ.

The SSJ Spirit of Courage Awards honor individuals who have shown remarkable courage in overcoming adversity. Secondly, the event raises funds to support various ministries and community service projects of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

"We're looking for those individuals in our own community who have beaten the odds, who have overcome incredible obstacles and persevered," said Sister Margaret Ann Hardner, SSJ. "It's those people—the ordinary people who refused to give up in the face of illness, injury or other adversity—who represent courage in its truest form. They are the heart of the SSJ Spirit of Courage."

This year's honorees are Amber L. Austin, Richard F. Fischer, Tom Hogan, Katy Holland and Jodi Rae Stankowski Schersten. WSEE will air a preview of each honoree's story on Tuesdays during its 6 p.m. newscast through Sept. 30.

Amber L. Austin was sexually abused and impregnated by the age of 12. She was placed in a shelter and her son in foster care, while she went through intensive



12th annual awards dinner  
Tuesday, October 7  
Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center in Erie

For more information on the SSJ Spirit of Courage, go to [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org) or to make reservations for this year's dinner (\$30 per person), contact Kristina Huber at 814.636.4202 or e-mail [kristina.huber@ssjerie.org](mailto:kristina.huber@ssjerie.org).



Amber L. Austin

therapy and attended parenting classes. She was reunited with her son and writes poetry to cope with all that has happened. In addition, she courageously asked to share her story in a news report.

Richard F. Fischer says, "No one will ever be able to say that I died of cancer." Despite nine years of grueling chemotherapy sessions and its after-effects, Dick lives an active life. In addition to

day-to-day responsibilities, he and his wife care for their special needs daughter, who is in her 30s, at home. Recurring setbacks do not deter his courage.

Tom Hogan has had primary progressive Multiple Sclerosis for 30 years. The debilitating disease landed him in a nursing home, but he eventually chose to move into his own home with an attendant. He became a peer supporter for the National MS Society and, with a phone strapped to his chest, he is able to blow into the receiver and get connected to a special operator who dials numbers for him. Tom sees all good things in life and courageously shows others how to live a happy life.



Tom Hogan

Katy Holland was born with a congenital heart defect that caused her to receive 11 catheterizations before she was in sixth

## 12th annual awards to honor five individuals for overcoming adversity

grade. With the heart problems came additional medical issues. The Cleveland Clinic Web site says, "Her bright smile prevailed through endless doctor visits, multiple surgeries and a daily struggle to live a normal life." This senior in high school has lived a whole life and shows courage beyond her years.

Jodi Rae Stankowski Schersten was born with the disfiguring Teacher Collins Syndrome. She had no airway from the back of her nose to her throat and no outer ears or cheekbones. Despite being taunted for looking different and getting behind in school, Jodi persevered and graduated from Edinboro University with a music degree. As the independent living services manager for Voices for Independence, she serves as an example of grace and courage despite adversity.



Jodi Rae Stankowski Schersten

Katy Holland was born with a congenital heart defect that caused her to receive 11 catheterizations before she was in sixth

## The well-informed witness

By Amy B. Hill  
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

The sacrament of confirmation "gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1303)

What does it mean to be a true witness? How do we know we are being true?

Recently a prominent Catholic politician made a statement on national television that misrepresented the church's teaching about abortion. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and many individual bishops issued statements correcting her misstatements and explaining the true theology.

It is easy to see the trouble that could result from a Catholic public figure who improperly characterizes the teachings of the church. By virtue of a politician's notoriety, that person may lead other Catholics astray in their thinking about church teaching or confuse non-Catholics about the church's understanding of the truth. But what about the rest of us?

Most of us will never have the opportunity to discuss controversial moral issues on television, but we might be asked our opinion at a dinner party or in the company break room. Can you respond with courage and

confidence, knowing what the church teaches about that issue and why? Will you seize the opportunity to teach people something they didn't know about the Catholic faith? Or will you shrug your shoulders and say "I'm personally opposed, BUT..." or "It's just one issue...?"

In their November 2007 statement on *Faithful Citizenship*, the U.S. bishops remind us that it is the "moral responsibility of each Catholic to hear, receive and act upon the church's teaching in the lifelong task of forming his or her own conscience."

Learning about our faith doesn't end when confirmation class is over. We must continually and prayerfully ask God for enlightenment about his will in our own lives and for the world.

Dust off your catechism or buy yourself a new one. Pull the Bible off the shelf. Log on to the wealth of Internet resources to seek answers to your questions from reputable Catholic Web sites. Visit the Vatican on the Web ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)) and read many church documents in English (including the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*). The Web site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is also informative ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)). Seek knowledge from official resources of the church. They are easy to locate.

So what does the church teach about abortion? Do you have a 10-second water cooler response to that question?

## Do you have a Catholic response to important questions?

The catechism says, "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of its existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. Since the first century the church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law." (CCC No. 2270-2271)

The 10-second sound bite: "The church opposes abortion because the life of a new and unique person begins at conception. Every individual, no matter who he or she may be, deserves to live. Why? Because God loves us... all of us."

There you have it. Now let's all work together to be true, well-informed witnesses of our faith.

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

## Diocese to distribute more than \$1M in STAR Foundation education grants in 2008-09

STAR FOUNDATION  
from page 1

\$100,000 to \$150,000. Subchapter S corporations that pay state business taxes under the personal income tax on Pennsylvania business income can now fully participate in the FITC program.

"The changes will allow businesses to increase the amount they can give, but the number of

donors who give that amount are few," Banducci said. "Most of our contributions are under \$100,000 as it is."

He said the diocese will target national corporations that do business in Pennsylvania for larger amounts, but small businesses give 90 percent of the STAR Foundation's contributions.

"The grants we give out are

partial grants, but they are significant," Banducci said. "We try to make them significant, at least 25 percent of tuition. In most cases, we're able to give at least that amount."

Other education assistance programs in the diocese include the Bishop's Tuition Assistance Fund for both elementary and secondary education, as well as individual school endowment funds.

For more information on how businesses can contribute, contact Charles Banducci at 814.824.1188, Joseph Hoag at 814.824.1192 or e-mail [starfund@erierd.org](mailto:starfund@erierd.org).

## STAR Foundation contribution history

Year	Contributions
2001-02	\$733,260
2002-03	\$748,272
2003-04	\$660,882
2004-05	\$682,147
2005-06	\$1,035,784
2006-07	\$986,969
2007-08	\$1,081,513
Total	\$5,928,827

Contributions are distributed during the following school year

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## The 18th Annual Catholic Charismatic Conference

Friday, October 3rd, and Saturday, October 4th  
St. Mark Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd. Erie

SPEAKER: Fr. David Poulson was a former moderator at Bread of Life Community, a Catholic charismatic community. He is currently pastor of St. Michael Church in Fryburg, PA.

THEME: "Renewed by the Holy Spirit — Our Hope for the Future." The conference begins Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. and ends with a healing service at approximately 9:45 p.m. Saturday's schedule, which begins at 9 a.m., includes a Mass, praise and worship, talks by Fr. Poulson, and a commissioning ending at 3:45 p.m.

RESERVATIONS: Contact the Word of Life Center, P.O. Box 10397, Erie, PA 16514-0397, phone (814) 824-1286. The cost for the conference is \$35.00, and an optional lunch is available for an additional \$6.00.





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](mailto:FaithLife@ErieRCD.org)

Visit [ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp](http://ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp) to download quick and easy photo tips on a wallet-size card.

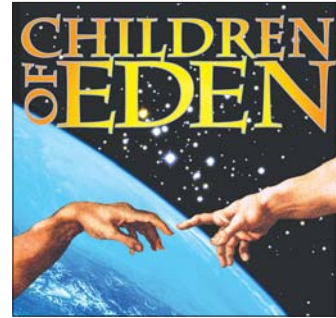


### OLP Playhouse presents 'Children of Eden' Sept. 26-28

ERIE — From the creator of "Wicked" and "Godspell," (Stephen Schwartz) and from the creator of "Les Miserables," (John Caird) The OLP Playhouse will present "Children of Eden" Sept. 26-28 at the Our Lady of Peace Auditorium, 2401 W. 38th St. in Erie.

With the book written by Caird and music and lyrics by Schwartz, "Children of Eden" is loosely based on the Book of Genesis and has been described as a frank, heartfelt, moving and often humorous examination of the age old conflict between parents and children. Picture Adam and Eve as children, and God as their father tucking them into bed at night.

Under the direction of Father Mike DeMartinis, assisted by Rick Muller and Judy Bosner, produced by Mary Ann Muller, musical direction by Katrina Foltz and vocal direction by Lesley Lopez, a cast of almost 100 adults and students will perform the No. 1 produced musical in the Musical Theater International



sale tickets will be available at the church office starting September 11. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$4 for children and seniors. For more information and group rates, call Bob Pfister at \$14.218.9703.

### St. Bernard receives grant from Catholic Holy Family Society

BRADFORD — St. Bernard Parish in Bradford recently received a \$3,000 grant from the Catholic Holy Family Society to aid its project of putting in a handicap-accessible walkway and restroom at the church.

The grant entry for St. Bernard's was sent in by Daniel Kloss, a Camp Hill resident member St. Bernard.

"I'm a native of Bradford, and three generations of my family have gone through St. Bernard's church," Kloss said. "My grandparents helped build that church. I like doing things for my home parish."

Pictured are Kloss with Father Leo Gallina, pastor of St. Bernard.

While the restroom and walkway have been completed, plans also call to use the remainder of the grant to move the parish's St. Bernard statue into a rose



garden, similar to its original shrine.

A fraternal benefit organization, Catholic Holy Family Society has been dedicated to the

service of the Catholic home, family and community since 1915. To learn more about the society's grant program, visit [www.chfsociety.org](http://www.chfsociety.org).

### Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit at Gannon University

ERIE — Students and faculty gathered at Friendship Green on the campus of Gannon University Sept. 11 for the Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit, which was presided over by Bishop Donald Trautman. During this annual tradition, the community asks the Holy Spirit to bless the new academic year.

Mercyhurst College held its Opening Mass on the same day.



### Women raise \$1,000 for Cursillo

Four women from Cursillo No. 201 created a handmade quilt which was raffled off at the Cursillo movement's annual summer picnic. Pictured from left to right are: Father John Jacquet, co-spiritual director, Teresa Wilczynski, Patti Matczak, Debbie Bartone, Maureen Hart and Father Bill Sutherland, co-spiritual director. The raffle raised \$1,000 to benefit Cursillo. The winner of the quilt was Doris Marshall.



### Theology on Tap returns, targets young adults

THEOLOGY ON TAP from page 1  
ple who are at different places in their lives, young adult ministry presents quite a challenge for the church, said Father Allison, pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Lawrence Park.

"I think a lot of times, young adults spend those mid-years trying to find a faith community," he said. "We need to be welcoming."

He said the young adults at his parish tell him they're there because they feel welcome. He attributes that to the spirit of hos-

**"Theology on Tap" SESSIONS**  
7-9 p.m. on Thursdays  
Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Jan. 15 and Feb. 12  
The Brewerie at Union Station  
123 W. 14th St., downtown Erie  
7 p.m. — gathering, food and drinks  
7:30 — talk, discussion, Q & A session  
9 until? — social  
No registration required

"Parishes have to recognize that you might not have these folks for a lot of years because they may be beginning their professional careers and on the move," Father Allison said. "That presents challenges to both the parishioner and the parish to respond to each other's needs."

pitality and the witness of older generations.

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**St. Stanislaus Church**  
**Annual Parish Day**  
Sunday, October 5, Noon-6pm  
Parish Hall: 520 E.13 St. (handicap accessible)

**"Polish Platter Dinner"**  
(includes kielbasa, golabki, pierogi, and more)  
Homemade czarina and noodles for sale as takeout  
Adults: \$8, Children 6-12: \$3.50, 5 and under: FREE

- Cash Prizes
- Bake Sale
- Children's Games
- Chinese Auction
- Raffles
- Theme Baskets
- Proceeds benefit St. Stanislaus Parish

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**Sacred Heart Parish Day & Dinner**  
Sunday, October 5, 2008  
Noon-5:30pm  
Roast Beef Dinner  
Adults: \$7.50, Children: \$4.50

Instant Bingo • Theme Baskets • Baked Goods

**14th Annual Rosary March**  
Sunday, October 12, 2008  
Assemble at 2:00pm at St. Peter Cathedral  
March begins at 2:30pm  
Pray the Rosary with us (Rain or shine)

More information: John Walsh, 814-868-1100  
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**CONGRATULATIONS FR. ROBERT LEVIS**

on your 60 plus years of priesthood and may God grant you many more. We appreciate the years of dedication, leadership, example and direction in the many devotions you have assisted in the Apostolate of Our Blessed Mother including the Home Enthronements, Masses, retreats, Rosary processions and attendance in some of our meetings. Thank you and may God grant you the health to continue assisting us.

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