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Official

Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton announced that **Father Thomas A. Chillog**, pastor of St. Mary Parish, St. Clairsville, and episcopal vicar for pastoral planning and personnel for the Diocese of Steubenville, has been appointed parochial administrator pro tem of St. Mary Parish, Shadyside, and St. John Vianney Parish, Powhatan Point.

News Briefs

Cardinal calls for pro-life campaign

WASHINGTON (CNS) — New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, called for a national prayer campaign effort that "the change in the U.S. Supreme Court will move our nation closer to the day when every human being is protected in law and welcomed in life."

"As soon as Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy announced his retirement, pro-abortion groups began lobbying the U.S. Senate to reject any nominee who does not promise to endorse *Roe v. Wade*," the cardinal said.

"While the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops does not support or oppose the confirmation of any presidential nominee," he said, "we can and should raise grave concerns about a confirmation process which is being grossly distorted by efforts to subject judicial nominees to a litmus test of support for *Roe v. Wade*. And we must pray."

He invited all people of goodwill to pray each Friday through Sept. 28 in a "Novena for the Legal Protection of Human Life." The USCCB said "Call to Prayer" materials will be accessible at <https://bit.ly/2JBU1MH>.

Those wishing to join this nine-week prayer effort can sign up at www.usccb.org/pray to participate in this and subsequent Call to Prayer initiatives via email or text message.

"May Our Lady of Guadalupe intercede for the healing of our nation and our people from decades of abortion on demand," Cardinal Dolan said.

President Donald Trump announced July 9 that his nominee for the Supreme Court is Judge Brett Kavanaugh, a federal appeals court judge in Washington and a Catholic.

Knights urge members to join novenas

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Motivated by the plea from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the upcoming change on the Supreme Court, the Knights of Columbus is urging its members and all Catholics to join in a novena to pray for the protection of human life in the law.

Carl Anderson, the CEO of the Knights of Columbus, said: "We join our pastors in praying that the confirmation process will help lead to a Court that upholds the right to life of every person, as it is the prerequisite for all other rights guaranteed by our Constitution."

Those participating are asked to fast on Fridays and say an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for the intention.

Father Saprano retires from active ministry

By Dino Orsatti
Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE/STEUBENVILLE — Father Samuel R. Saprano retired from active parish ministry, July 25, after 47 years in the Diocese of Steubenville.

Father Saprano, 75, was pastor of St. John Vianney Parish, Powhatan Point and St. Mary Parish, Shadyside, since 2007.

He has been dealing with health issues and mobility issues over the past few months and will undergo a knee replacement at the end of August. "I thought I could work longer, but I just can't get around like I should. I put the future in God's hands," said Father Saprano.

Father Saprano, born in Mansfield, Ohio, is the son of the late Joseph and Tinera Miragliotta Saprano. He has a sister, two nieces and a nephew; a brother is deceased.

He attended St. Mary Grade School, Mansfield; St. Peter High School, Mansfield; St. Meinrad College, St. Meinrad, Indiana; Mount St. Mary's, Cincinnati, and St. John Vianney Seminary, Bloomingdale.

May 14, 1971, he was ordained to the priesthood at St. John Vianney Seminary by Bishop John King Mussio.

Following ordination, Father Saprano was assigned as a teacher at St. Joseph Central High School, Ironton, with residency at St. Lawrence O'Toole and St. Joseph, Ironton. Then he was named a teacher at St. John Central High School, Bellaire, with residency at St. Joseph Parish, Bridgeport.

His assignments included assistant pastor at Blessed Sacrament, Wintersville, and St. Mary, St. Clairsville; administrator, St. John the Baptist, Miltonsburg, and Immaculate Conception Mission, Ozark; pastor, St. John the Baptist, Miltonsburg; St. Joseph, Burkhardt; St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Fulda, and St. Michael, Carlisle.

He served as moderator for Visitation Deanery Council



Father Samuel R. Saprano

(File photo)

of Catholic Woman and a member of the diocesan Presbyteral Council. Father Saprano said, "It has been a privilege to minister to the people of the diocese for so many years."

Reactions from the Diocese of Steubenville Facebook page included: "Aw! God bless him in his retirement. He was such a great supporter when I was at St. John Central Grade School, Bellaire." – Vicki Nurczyk; "A wonderful man!!!" – Lynne Smithberger; "He is such a sweet person. He loved his church. He loved family. He did so much for us. Will miss him." – Diane Lortz Leonard; "God bless Father Saprano. Hope all goes well for him in his retirement." – Gene Mailot; "Prayers for Father Sam as he retires from active ministry." – Mary Jo Yanda; "Father was very interested in his parishioners. I know everyone from St. Mary's is going to miss him." – Doris Rejonis Goff.

Ground is broken for new parish hall in Malvern



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton attends the groundbreaking for the new parish life center for St. Francis Xavier Parish, Malvern, and St. Gabriel Parish, Minerva, outside St. Francis Church. Pictured from left are, D. Scott Yarman, diocesan director, facilities and property; James G. Piazza, executive assistant to the bishop; Father Victor P. Cinson, pastor of both parishes; Bishop Monforton; John Pavlis, contractor, St. Clair/Pavlis Group; and Michelle Catlett, vice president, business development officer, Consumers National Bank. (Photo by Orsatti)

By Dino Orsatti
Editor

MALVERN — For the Catholic community in Carroll County, there was much to celebrate in Malvern, Aug. 4, after 10 years of hoping and planning. The faithful of St. Francis Xavier Parish, Malvern, and St. Gabriel Parish, Minerva, gathered outside St. Francis Church for the

groundbreaking and the blessing from Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton for the new parish life center.

Following the groundbreaking ceremony, Bishop Monforton celebrated Mass at St. Francis Church, assisted by Father Victor P. Cinson, pastor of both parishes.

To Page 12

'Ask the Bishop'

STEUBENVILLE — Students in kindergarten through 12th grade in the Diocese of Steubenville "Ask the Bishop" Jeffrey M. Monforton.

Q: Why does the priest kiss the altar?

**Felicity Englefield
Steubenville**

A: We live in a world of symbolism, especially human gestures. One of the most sacred gestures is the kissing of the altar by the priest celebrant at the beginning and at the end of the "Holy Sacrifice of the Mass." This act of reverence has a double meaning and is steeped in Catholic tradition.

For one, the priest celebrant, as well as the concelebrating priests, kiss the altar at the beginning of Mass to honor the very sacrifice which will occur during the eucharistic prayer, and that is the real presence of Jesus' body and blood. Another purpose of kissing the altar is that each altar should possess a sacred relic of a saint. In reverencing the altar, the priest also honors the saint.

You see, we can go back in Catholic tradition to the first century of Christianity in which relics were venerated and the symbol of the kiss possessed the highest and deepest of reverential meaning. This sacred tradition of reverencing the altar has been maintained throughout the centuries — though remember the next time you see the priest kiss the altar, he is not simply practicing a tradition millennia old. He honors the real presence of Jesus Christ at the altar as well as the saint whose life pointed directly to Jesus himself.

Q: When was the last time the Ark of the

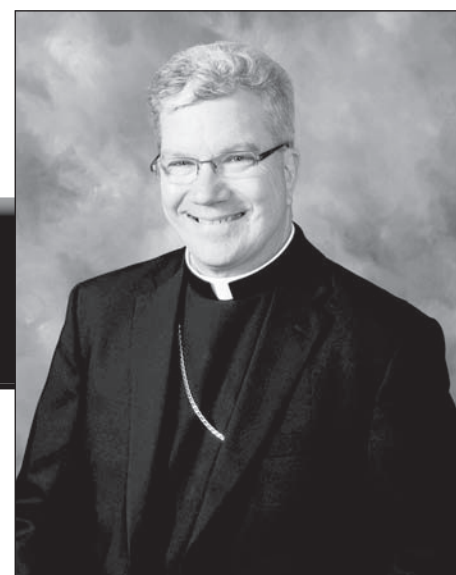
Covenant was seen?

**Makenna Moran
St. Clairsville**

A: Here is a very good question for anybody who has had the opportunity to watch the first "Indiana Jones," namely "The Raiders of the Lost Ark" and has perhaps asked the question to himself or herself, "Just where did it go?" We know that the Ark of the Covenant was built in the time of Moses and it held the Ten Commandments produced by God himself. This Ark of the Covenant therefore possessed the very covenant between God and his chosen people and, therefore, the ark itself possessed significant power as outlined in the Old Testament and the travels of the chosen people into the Promised Land.

The last scriptural referenced for the existence of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem, namely in the Temple, dates from around the seventh century B.C. in Isaiah, Chapter 37, Verses 14-16, which is approximately seven centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. Another reference in Second Chronicles, Chapter 35, Verses 3, which would be a decade and a half later, speaks of the Ark of the Covenant, but there is also the confirmation that it had been removed from the Temple. Much archeological discussion has occurred regarding the ark, whether it was moved to Egypt or to another location. Still, its disappearance makes for a riveting story not to mention a popular movie.

Let us not forget that with Mary's "yes" to God to be the mother of his Son that Mary herself became the Ark of the Covenant, for Our Lord Jesus Christ grew up in her womb before he was born. Therefore,



Bishop Monforton

we are grateful to God as he provided us with the eternal promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ through the fidelity of Mary, the Ark of the Covenant.

Q: On the roof of our church (St. John the Baptist, Churchtown) there are the letters "I.H.S."

**Mason Strahler
Fleming**

A: The short answer to this question is that "I.H.S." is a monogram of the name of Jesus. We have information from the third century of Christianity that the name of Jesus Christ was shortened particularly in Christian inscriptions namely as abbreviations, but also as a symbol. Perhaps you and I can look at it this way as we live in the era of text messaging, there are many ways we can convey meanings through just three letters such as "BFF" or "LOL."

To understand what our brothers and sisters did in abbreviating Jesus' name, we only need to look through our text messaging lens to see how it would have been much easier for people to share the meaning of who they were sharing. There are, of course, different interpretations of the meaning of each letter of which some make a bit of a stretch, but all converge on at least one meaning: Jesus Christ.

Also, the Society of Jesus congregation, also known as the Jesuits, adopted these

three letters, as well as a symbol, for their order. May you and I recognize these three letters are a promise to each and every one of us of God's enduring love and to find comfort that Jesus' name is celebrated throughout the world in numerous cultures, but with a common abbreviation. As for St. John, Churchtown, as you see the letters "I.H.S." on the rooftop, be reminded that Jesus Christ lives here and welcomes us into his warm embrace as members of his family.

As we quickly approach the new school year, may God keep your family in his protective care as we celebrate Our Lord's presence among us each and every day. God bless you all.

Questions for "Ask the Bishop" are channeled through the Diocese of Steubenville Office of Christian Formation and Schools, Permanent Deacon Paul D. Ward, director.

To "Ask the Bishop," contact Emmanuel C. Ambrose, catechetical consultant, Diocese of Steubenville Office of Christian Formation and Schools, P.O. Box 969, Steubenville, OH 43952; 422 Washington St., Steubenville; telephone (740) 282-3631; email eambrose@diosteub.org.

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Vacation Bible school held in Marietta



The Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, and St. Mary School, 320 Marion St., Marietta, held a vacation Bible school July 30-Aug. 2, at St. Mary School. The program had 91 children who participated, 36 young adults who volunteered, and 25 adults who served as leaders. The theme was "Cathletics: Training to be Champions for Christ." (Photo provided)

Sister June Bell makes first profession of vows



Franciscan Sister Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother June Benedicta Bell, center, made her first profession of vows Aug. 6 at Father of Mercy Chapel, at the Toronto motherhouse. She is pictured with Mother Mary Ann Kessler, right, and Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, who celebrated the Mass. (Photo provided)

TORONTO — Franciscan Sister Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother June Benedicta Bell made her first profession of vows at Father of Mercy Chapel, Aug. 6, at the Toronto motherhouse.

Sister June Benedicta (Patricia) Bell made vows at a Mass celebrated by Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton. She professed the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience for one year, a commitment that will be renewed for about five successive years, before she makes her perpetual profession.

Sister June, a native of Poughkeepsie, New York, is the daughter of John W. and Natalie M. Bell, both deceased. She has two sisters and four brothers, one of whom is deceased.

Sister June graduated from St. Rose College, Albany, New York, with a bachelor's degree in communication disorders. She also holds a master's degree in special education from SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, New York, and a master's in theology from the Institute of Religious Studies, Yonkers, New York. She worked as a special education teacher for 12 years and later taught theology for the diaconate program at the Archdiocese of New York and at a Catholic high school. "While I practiced my faith from my childhood, it wasn't until my early 20s that I really experienced a personal relationship with Christ," she said. "Around that time I started attending daily Mass and praying regularly throughout the day. The thought of religious life crossed my mind, but I didn't get the sense that the Lord was calling me to it."

About six months later, the desire for religious life returned. "There were several communities I was attracted to," she said, "but the particular mission of our community,

to glorify God and to make known his merciful love, really resonated with me. Our community also takes its stance with Mary at the foot of the cross. I felt a deep longing in my heart to console the heart of Christ pierced open out of love for us."

Sister June entered the community in 2015, and said, "These three years in the community have been some of the most blessed of my life. The Lord has truly been teaching me how to let him be everything for me. That's his desire for every one of us. How that is lived out is different for each person, of course, but it remains the reality no matter what vocation we are called to."

This coming year, Sister June will continue her formation as a junior sister and move to Heart of Mary House of Prayer and Service, a mission house that serves the poor in downtown Steubenville. There, she will serve at the Samaritan House, a thrift store and emergency food bank, and at LAMP, a bimonthly soup kitchen.

For additional information about the Franciscan Sisters Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother, visit their website at www.franciscansisterstor.org.

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Bishop Monforton's Schedule

August

- 20 "Misa con Hermanas," Mass with Spanish Sisters, Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus, at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Oratory, Lovers Lane, Steubenville, 9 a.m.
- 22 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.
- 24 Oath of Fidelity Mass, Franciscan University of Steubenville, 4 p.m.

Pope Francis prays that Blessed Paul VI will intercede for the "church he loved so much"

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On the 40th anniversary of the death of Blessed Paul VI, Pope Francis went into the grotto under St. Peter's Basilica to pray at his predecessor's simple tomb.

The pope who oversaw the last sessions of the Second Vatican Council and began implementing its teachings, died Aug. 6, 1978, at Castel Gandolfo, the papal summer residence outside of Rome.


He was buried six days later in the basilica's grotto. Unlike most of the popes buried there, his tomb is in the earth — rather than elevated — and is covered with a simple travertine marble slab.

Reciting the Angelus prayer Aug. 5 with visitors in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis reminded them of the anniversary and of the fact that he plans to canonize his predecessor Oct. 14.


"From heaven may he intercede for the church he loved so much and for peace in the world," Pope Francis said.

The pope called and asked the people in the square to join him in a round of applause for "this great pope of modernity."

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Diocese of Steubenville permanent deacons attend national conference

By Matthew A. DiCenzo
Staff writer

STEUBENVILLE/NEW ORLEANS — Permanent deacons from the Diocese of Steubenville joined deacons from throughout the United States and the world to attend the 2018 National Diaconate Congress July 22-26 in New Orleans.

According to Catholic News Service, around 2,800 people – including approximately 1,300 deacons and their wives and children – attended the congress, which was held at the New Orleans Marriott and Sheraton hotels. The congress, which was themed “Christ the Servant: Yesterday, Today and Forever,” has been held three times since the inaugural diaconate congress in New Orleans in 1994, according to CNS.

The National Diaconate Congress was planned by the National Association of Diaconate Directors, with support of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, and the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

According to the National Diaconate Congress website, the congress celebrated the 50th anniversary of the permanent diaconate being restored. The Vatican website reads that with the apostolic letter “Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem” in June 1967, Blessed Paul VI implemented the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council and restored the permanent diaconate in the Latin rite. It also reads that the apostolic constitution “Pontificalis Romani Recognitio” in June 1968 approved the new rite of conferring the sacred orders of the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate, which determined the matter and form of these sacramental ordinations.

According to the program from the congress, bishops and deacons from various locations in the United States celebrated Mass or were keynote speakers, including Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States; Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo (born in Steubenville) of Galveston-Houston, president of the US-CCB; and Bishop Frederick F. Campbell of Columbus, Ohio. The schedule included workshops, sessions and the celebration of Mass each day.

Diocese of Steubenville Permanent Deacons Mark A. Erste, Charles J. “Chuck” Schneider, Edward G. Kovach (and his wife, Martha) and Mark Miravalle attended the National Diaconate Congress. Permanent Deacon Dominic Cerrato, who was ordained in the Diocese of Steubenville and



The 2018 National Diaconate Congress was held July 22-26 in New Orleans. Approximately 2,800 people attended the gathering, including permanent deacons from the Diocese of Steubenville. Pictured above, from left, are Permanent Deacon Dominic Cerrato, who was ordained in the Steubenville Diocese and is currently in the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois; Permanent Deacons Mark Miravalle, Charles J. “Chuck” Schneider, Mark A. Erste and Edward G. Kovach, with his wife, Martha, who also attended the event. (Photo provided)

is currently in the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois, was also in attendance in New Orleans.

When reflecting on the congress, Deacon Schneider said, “Wow! There is really no other way for me to say it. Or, I could just say, amazing! It is hard to imagine what went into all the logistics to make the congress happen. A job well done by all involved. It was an experience of a lifetime and I am truly glad I took the opportunity to be a part of it.”

He added: “The speakers were phenomenal, from the opening address to the closing homily, speaking about the history of the permanent diaconate, the present day and the future, what we are and how we serve presently and the possibilities of how we can serve in the future. Just as Christ came ‘to serve, not to be served,’ we are also called ‘to serve, not to be served.’ We are called to be ‘Christ-like’ in all our ministries. As Cardinal (Joseph) Tobin (of Newark) stated, ‘The deacon is called to be the example of the worship of God and the loving care of others. ...’”

Deacon Schneider said he was “looking forward to the next deacon congress, whenever that may be.” He also said that spending time with the deacons from Steubenville and the ride to New Orleans was an “enjoyable experience in itself,”

stating they got to know each other better through conversation.

Deacon Erste said: “To meet deacons from around the country and world who dealt with many of the same issues as the deacons in Steubenville was very affirming and encouraging. But, I was particularly edified that so many cardinals and bishops came to spend time with us. At Mass each day, there were usually a half-dozen bishops. When they spoke, they showed their genuine love for the church and the diaconate.”

He said Cardinal DiNardo closed the congress with a call to “pray, pray, pray” and each speaker delivered that same message with a different emphasis. Deacon Erste said, “I came back with a renewed desire to deepen my relationship with the Lord.”

Deacon Erste stated: “The time spent with other deacons from the Steubenville Diocese was also a highlight. Our time together strengthened our relationships and deepened our respect for each other and for the work we do serving the people of our diocese. I look forward to sharing the fruit of this congress with the deacons

who couldn’t be there, and I hope they are able to attend in the future.”

Deacon Kovach said the congress was a time of a deepening realization of the implication of his diaconal vocation in terms of his relationship with the Trinity, his wife and family, friends and his secular profession. He said, “It challenged me to deepen my prayer life and to strive to be holier. The effectiveness of my vocation will flow out of my identity as a beloved son of God, conformed by my diaconal ordination to Christ, the servant. I am a cleric in the world, a bridge between the priests and the people of God. Even in my secular work and with my family, I must reflect Christ, the servant, to all I meet.”

Deacon Kovach also reflected on the deacon’s place in the Catholic Church. He stated: “A friend once commented that the bishops wanted deacons because there are not enough priests. The congress demonstrated this view is incorrect. The reason that the permanent diaconate was restored is not that there is a shortage of priests, but that there is a shortage of deacons. Deacons have an essential ministry, different, but complimentary, to the ministry of the priest.”

He said, “The council fathers at Trent called for the restoration of the permanent diaconate; it took 400 years and Vatican Council II to respond to that call. Hearing the bishops and speakers affirm the uniqueness and the importance of our diaconal vocation demonstrated that I am more than just a glorified altar server or a social worker.”

Deacon Kovach added, “Deacons are one of the best ‘buys’ in the church. It costs so little to train them and they ‘work’ for free.” He, like Deacons Schneider and Erste, said that the fellowship of the deacons from Steubenville at the congress and the travel together were meaningful to him.

Martha Kovach said she has the impression that the diaconate, at 50 years old, is in its infancy and will continue to grow and develop if we are faithful to prayer. She said that several speakers spoke of deacon couples being vital to marriage preparation, accompanying newly married couples and how the ongoing formation for deacons and wives was needed.

According to CNS, there were 18,287 permanent deacons in the United States as of 2017, about 40 percent of all permanent deacons worldwide.

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Mingo Junction native named president of Wheeling Jesuit University

WHEELING, W.Va. — Michael P. Mihalyo Jr. has been elected as the 12th president of Wheeling Jesuit University, effective Aug. 15, announced Msgr. Kevin M. Quirk, chair of the board of trustees at Wheeling Jesuit University, Wheeling, West Virginia. Mihalyo replaces Debra Townsley, who recently stepped down after serving as interim president of Wheeling Jesuit University since Feb. 2017.

Msgr. Quirk said: "In May 2017, Wheeling Jesuit's board of trustees approved a strategy to realign, renew and reinvest in the future of Jesuit, Catholic higher education in West Virginia. This new strategy was made possible through the commitment of (Bishop) Michael J. Bransfield of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the important leadership of Townsley, and the continuing commitment of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to serve at Wheeling Jesuit University."

He added, "When it came time to identify a new president, the board of trustees sought a committed Catholic with successful experience in the administration of small, private academic institutions who would be willing to continue the strategy of realignment, renewal and reinvestment in order to bolster enrollment, build on important partnerships and ensure a vibrant future. We also wanted an individual who would make a commitment to Wheeling Jesuit and to the region to be a vital part of campus and community life. I am confident that we have found that person in Michael Mihalyo."

Mihalyo has more than two decades of experience in higher education. He currently serves as provost and vice president of academic affairs at Rockford University, Rockford, Illinois. Prior to his time at Rockford, he served as president of the Kentucky-based Appalachian College Association. In addition, he served as president,



Michael P. Mihalyo Jr. (Photo provided)

chancellor and provost at Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia, and as vice president for academic affairs and a faculty member at Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia.

Mihalyo's upper Ohio Valley roots are strong, as he originally hails from Mingo Junction, the son of Michael and the late Marianne Brody Mihalyo. An accomplished musician, Mihalyo enjoyed an active career in chamber and church music. Among the highlights of his music ministry career, he conducted a series of services and concerts in Italy, including Vatican City, Rome, and the surrounding area with the St. Peter Festival Choir of Pittsburgh. Mihalyo holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, and master's and

bachelor's degrees from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, each in piano performance.

Mihalyo said, "I am honored to be invited to serve as president of Wheeling Jesuit University. It is well known the university has a strong tradition of academic excellence, leadership and service that permeates throughout the university in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition. Throughout my own career in higher education, I have worked primarily at, or on behalf of, private, faith-based institutions in the Appalachian region, all with similar focus. I am delighted to have the opportunity to return home to use my skills and affiliations to enhance the learning environment and to lead the dynamic team that will bring to fruition many exciting initiatives at WJU."

"Mihalyo's connection to the region, his strong Catholic faith, and his valuable experiences at other similar institutions that recently faced similar challenges to WJU allowed him to rise above the rest of the candidates reviewed by the search committee," said Jesuit Father James R. Conroy, rector of the Jesuit community at WJU and member of the presidential search committee.

Bishop Bransfield said, "A tremendous amount has been accomplished at Wheeling Jesuit during the past 18 months. Now the university prepares to welcome a wonderful new class of students, thanks to the important work done by the enrollment team. I am grateful to know that I am also able to welcome Mihalyo as the university's new president. I look forward to seeing him build on the strong foundation Townsley and the board of trustees have laid this year, so that Wheeling Jesuit University continues its mission of forming the human mind and heart of its students for service to others and success in their personal, professional, and family life."

Society of Sisters of the Holy Cross elevated to institute of pontifical right

CARROLLTON — The Society of Sisters of the Holy Cross, which are stationed in the Diocese of Steubenville on Apollo Road, Carrollton, was elevated this year from a diocesan institute of consecrated life to an institute of pontifical right.

With the authorization of Pope Francis, the Congregation for Religious promulgated the decree of pontifical recognition on the feast of St. Mark, April 25. The decree was announced on June 1.

The sisters said they are confirmed in their way of life and mission in the church, and are more firmly anchored to the rock of Peter, to whom they pledge their fidelity.

With its motherhouse in Innsbruck, Austria, the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Opus Angelorum was founded on the feast of the Assumption in the year 1964, and was canonically erected as a diocesan Institute of Consecrated Life on Nov. 9, 2002, by the decree of the Bishop of Innsbruck Alois Kochgasser.

Because of its international character — they are already present in 10 countries — his successor, Bishop Manfred Scheuer, requested in October 2015, that the institute would be raised to an institute of pontifical right, directly under the supervision of the Holy Father and the Congregation for Religious.

Beginning from their own total surrender to God, seeking the glorification of the triune God through a life in imitation of Christ and of sharing in his salvific mission, the sisters devote themselves by prayer, eucharistic adoration, sacrifice and service to the sanctification of the priesthood



The Society of Sisters of the Holy Cross stand by a cross overlooking construction of a convent. (Photo provided)

and religious state.

The sisters said they are particularly devoted to the Passion of Christ, which they commemorate weekly. The sisters are aggregated to the Order of Canons Regular of the Holy Cross, the order responsible for the apostolate, "Opus Angelorum" ("Work of the Holy Angels"). In the apostolate, the sisters assist priests in spreading the awareness and devotion to the holy angels, along with a church-approved consecration to the angels through retreats, missions and family apostolate.

After living 15 years at an inner city parish in Detroit, the sisters are presently building their first convent in the United States in Carrollton, where the Order of Canons Regular also live in temporary housing until both the monastery and convent are completed. The convent is expected to be completed by the end of fall.

The sisters said that the faithful are invited to come every first Saturday for eucharistic adoration, confessions, rosary and Mass, followed by a potluck dinner and fellowship. For additional information, visit the Opus Angelorum website at www.opusangelorum.org.

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St. John Paul II Church and Jesus: Inseparable

By Diocese of Steubenville
Bishop Emeritus Gilbert I. Sheldon

There are many today who would make a distinction between Jesus Christ and the church, affirming their acceptance of Jesus, but rejecting the church as having any claim on them. Pope John Paul II addresses this position forcefully. We have already seen the clear evidence of the Gospels that Jesus intended to establish a church on earth, a visible, functioning organization founded on the apostles with Peter, the “Rock,” at their head. The pope points out that such an organization reflects the Incarnation of the second person of the blessed Trinity itself in that it, as he, would be both divine and human: “The divine and human reality of the church is organically joined to the divine and human reality of Christ himself. The church is in a certain sense the continuation of the mystery of the Incarnation. The apostle Paul actually spoke of the church as the body of Christ (see, 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, Verse 27; Ephesians, Chapter 1, Verse 23; Colossians, Chapter 1, Verse 24), just as Jesus compared the Christic-ecclesial ‘whole’ to the unity of a vine with its branches (see, John, Chapter 15, Verses 1-5).” The “whole” of which he speaks is the living body of Christian believers, the baptized, those humans who have received a share in the divine nature of Jesus through the grace of baptism and now live it in their daily lives.

Accepting Jesus as the son and spokesperson for God the Father implies accepting – saying “yes” – to what Jesus had to tell us. It makes no sense to claim to say “yes” to Christ, but “no” to what he

had to say, or to the church that speaks for him. One might object on the grounds that the church harbors sinners. The clerical abuse scandals of the past few decades may be cited as a case in point. Is it possible to believe in such a church and its claim to speak for Christ? The pope answers: “It (the church) is a reality, which like any human thing, has its limitations, imperfections and sinfulness on the part of the persons who belong to every level of her institutional structure: laypeople as well as ecclesiastics, even among the pastors of the church, without anyone being excluded

“The purpose of the church is to bring redemption to those who need it – which includes all of us!”

from this sad inheritance of Adam.” Peter himself, the “Rock” on which Jesus chose to base his church, was himself far from perfect, as we have already seen. Was it not Peter who declared that he would never permit Jesus to be put to death (see, Matthew, Chapter 16, Verses 21-23), but caved in and denied knowing him not once but three times when confronted (see, Matthew, Chapter 26, Verses 31-35; Luke, Chapter 22, Verses 54-63)? Was it not Peter who said to Jesus, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk 5: 8)? What does this prove? Only that Jesus knew the human nature that he came to redeem. As he said to the Pharisees when they challenged him about associating with Matthew, the publican: “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. ... I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mt 9:12-13). John Paul commenting on Peter, says: “(O)ne notices that Peter acquired a new maturity through his contrition for his sin, so that after the resurrection he balanced his triple denial with a triple confession (of his love for Jesus)” (Jn 21:15). Such is the very point of calling sinful human beings: to change and be redeemed! The purpose of the church is to bring redemption to those who need it – which includes all of us!

The pope comments: “The logic of the incarnation ... entails acceptance of everything that is human in Christ, in virtue, if the fact that the Son of God assumed human nature in solidarity with the nature tainted by the sin of Adam’s race. Although he was absolutely without sin, Christ took on himself all of humanity’s sin. ... Therefore, the sinfulness of Christians ...

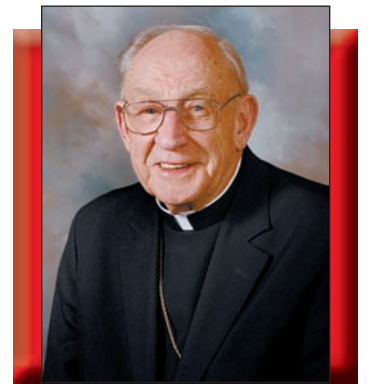
should not elicit a pharisaical attitude of separation and rejection. Rather, it should compel us to a more generous and trusting acceptance of the church. ...” He goes on to explain that it is precisely through the church that the sinfulness of all, members of the church or otherwise, becomes an object of God’s forgiveness. To those who would cast blame on the church for the failings of its members, we might well ask how they explain the fidelity and virtue of so many other of its members and what about its acknowledged saints?

“One thing is certain,” the pope says, “the life which

Jesus Christ and the church ... proposes to man is full of moral demands. ...” He asks whether, in the case of those who reject the church, it is not really the church itself, but its moral demands that they reject? This is especially the case in these days when those demands call for restraint in the face of the “sexual revolution!”

Another possibility is a kind of “allergy” on the part of some to the very notion of *mediation* between God and man. They would rather relate to God without any other human beings involved, e.g., pope, bishops and priests. In effect, they prefer to deal with God on their own terms. But, what are God’s terms? Here, again, we must refer to the Incarnation: God chose to redeem mankind through the *mediatorship of human nature!* The Son of God took on that nature and used it as the instrument of redemption. That he would associate other human beings in this work should not be surprising or objectionable. Such, after all, were God’s terms, not man’s. Are not those who say *no* to the church really saying *no* to God and Christ? God offers us forgiveness and eternal life. Is that not eminently acceptable *on whatever terms?*

One further consideration: Mankind today considers itself modern or even “postmodern,” that is, superior to all that has gone before with its views and beliefs, desires and philosophies; even its accomplishments! John Paul says: “At the bottom ... is a psychology characterized by the will for total autonomy, originating in a sense of personal or collective self-sufficiency.” That autonomy means freedom to do his own thing, to be the architect of his own destiny, to live his life *without God!* God and religion are seen as enemies of human freedom. There is really nothing new in this attitude. Adam and Eve introduced it in the Garden of Eden when they fell for Satan’s pitch: “You will be like God ...” (Gen 3: 4-5). Modern man likes that: He can worship himself!



Bishop Sheldon

To the Friends I’ve Known

By Father Ron Rolheiser

Recently, reading *Commonweal* magazine, I was struck by this line by Jerry Ryan, a Little Brother of Jesus: “I have lost contact with so many people who meant a lot to me at different stages of my life, people I loved dearly and really cared for and who had given me so much and made me what I am.”

That’s so true for me and, I suspect, for most of us. People enter our lives, friendships develop, and then some of those friends disappear from our lives. Sometimes we move away, sometimes they move away, sometimes things

change and we drift apart, or sometimes the affective bonds that held us together disintegrate and they, and we, move on. To the degree that we’re sensitive, there’s always some pain and guilt in this. It’s not an unhealthy thing to feel the loneliness of that loss, nor is it unhealthy

to feel that somehow we’ve failed and been less than attentive.

Indeed, sometimes we have been less than faithful, but mostly the blame for that (to the extent that some applies) lies inside our inculpable inadequacy. Only God is adequate. Only God has a heart big enough to be attentive to everyone personally and intimately at the same time. Only God never moves away or grows tired. And, only God has the strength to forever be faithful. We cannot not be inadequate.

I struggle mightily with that inadequacy. Being a missionary, given the work I do, and given the quirks of my personality, I find myself perennially overwhelmed by my inadequacy in the area of staying close to family and friends, including very dear friends. The task isn’t easy.

First, I come from a very large family which through the generations has expanded into a virtual tribe. It could be a full-time job just staying in touch with family. Next, I’ve been ministering for more than 40 years, and during that time have lived inside various Oblate houses with almost 200 different people. Community is family, and, again, it would be a full-time task just staying in meaningful touch with them all. Then, during my years of doing graduate work, I had the privileged opportunity to develop long-lasting friendships with a number of classmates from

different parts of the world. Finally, during all those years of ministry, I’ve met hundreds of students in classrooms and thousands of people doing workshops and retreats.

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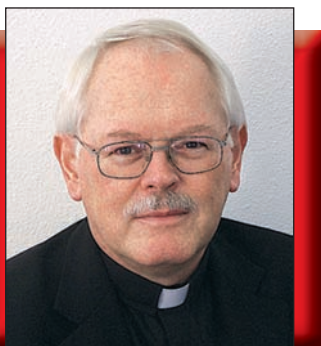
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Father Rolheiser

Science and Religion: Asking the Right Questions

By Father Paul J. Walker

A few weeks ago I watched a special on the Science Channel about the Voyager spacecraft I and II launched in the late 70s. Each carried a golden phonograph record with greetings in 60 human languages, one whale language, an evolutionary audio essay, 116 pictures of life on Earth and 90 minutes of music from diverse cultures of the Earth. Scientists project a one-billion-year shelf life for the golden phonograph records. The Voyager spacecraft are now beyond the outermost planets headed for the open sea of interstellar space. They are traveling 40,000 miles per hour toward the stars and a destiny shrouded in hope and mystery. One record begins with a child's voice, "Greetings from the children of earth." Forty years have passed and I am still filled with wonder and religious awe at this endeavor. So let me reflect a bit on science and religion.

First of all, a disclaimer: I am not an astronomer or cosmologist, nor am I a geologist, anthropologist or evolutionary biologist. I do, however, have great interest in these fields of study and research and have done (still do) extensive reading in all of them, especially astronomy/cosmology.

Scientific investigation and theological investigation both need to be contextualized. In this case we are asking questions, seeking insight (and wisdom) in a cosmos that is vast beyond imagining and one that is everywhere permeated with God's glory in the risen and exalted word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of "... the fullness of him who fills the universe in all its parts" (Eph 1:23, New American Bible). Also translated "...who is filled all in all" (New Jerusalem Bible), – it is suggesting something of limitless size. For this Christ there are no restrictions of time or space (place). The prayer at the Easter Vigil with which the paschal candle is blessed and marked reflects this:

- *Christ yesterday and today;*
- *the beginning and the end;*
- *Alpha;*
- *and Omega;*
- *all time belongs to him;*
- *and all the ages;*
- *to him be glory and power;*
- *through every age forever.*

The late astronomer Carl Sagan begins what many consider to be his "magnum opus," "Cosmos" and the PBS series based on it, this way, "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be. Our feeblest contemplations of the cosmos stir us – there is a tingling of the spine, a catch in the voice, a faint sensation, as if a distant memory, of falling from a height. We know we are approaching the greatest of mysteries" ("Cosmos," Sagan, 1980, Page 4.)

Perhaps this "greatest of mysteries" is the common ground where the concerns of science and religion converge. Yet, we know that there is an arrogance of science and an arrogance of religion (especially within fundamentalism) that remain blind to these points of convergence and simply entrench themselves in a stubborn intransigence

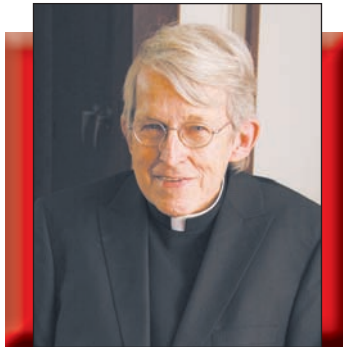
that either denies transcendence or refuses to acknowledge the wonders that scientific inquiry presents or the questions it poses for religious belief. Solid scientific inquiry and authentic religion have nothing to fear from one another.

The late Sagan, astronomy professor at Cornell University, had the gift of making the findings of astronomy and cosmology accessible to nonprofessionals and laypersons in a way that evoked wonder and awe rather than the merely dispassionate presentation of raw data! Although professing to be a nonbeliever, Sagan's style and language are profoundly religious while avoiding classic religious language!

I remember well watching the 13 installments of "Cosmos" in the PBS presentation and reading the 13 chapters of the book both of which appeared in the early 1980s. The narration by Sagan that accompanied the 13 TV installments, the cinematography and the book with its text and pictures, provided for me a genuinely religious experience. One cannot help but be awed, overwhelmed by the vast distances among the stars that we see on a clear and moonless night. These distances are so vast that some of the starlight crossing the void of interstellar space is only now reaching our sight. So what we view in that clear night sky is light from stars that have "burned out" and no longer exist (as stars) – we see what *was*, not what *is*! One of the most "religious" or "sacred" experiences for me has always been lying or sitting outside on a clear and cold night allowing my eyes to feast on the banquet spread out above me. Enhancing that experience has been the data that scientific investigation presents: galaxies thousands of light years from us whose light is only now reaching us: (a light year is the distance light will travel in one year at the speed of approximately 186,000 miles per second); the "Big Bang" occurring some 14 to 17 billion years ago; a universe that is still traveling and expanding; finding planets orbiting other stars than our own sun.

This kind of data does not merely *inform*; rather it *transforms* a person of genuinely religious faith – a transformation from a kind of arrogance and short sightedness that would have us believe that the human race is the only intelligence with self-awareness in the whole cosmos – it is almost impossible to wrap our mind and imagination around such numbers and distances. We can only deal with these numbers exponentially and even then we stand in wonder and awe at something so vast and ancient as the cosmos!

Religious faith and scientific inquiry need to realize they are on the same journey toward understanding, always seeking the truth. Both need to admit that this understanding will never be fully realized; that the quest, the journey may never end. What we learn from the natural sciences must point us beyond to religious insight which cannot be



Father Walker

quantified. They journey together – science and religion – each can draw insight, vision from one another, discovering their relationship is not adversarial but symbiotic, which is to say their association is one of mutual advantage.

The object of religious faith cannot be quantified, while the object of scientific investigation is quantifiable and open to further and more precise examination. Both invite us to further investigation, drawing us forward because we sense there is still "more" that awaits us. Science and religious faith, if they respect one another's parameters, lay before us a life-long journey of discovery and growth. The data of scientific investigation can now offer what the poet Wordsworth (1770-1850) called "*Intimations of Immortality*," for hidden just below the surface of such data is the signature of the divine.

As a species, humankind, we stand now on what Sagan has termed "the shores of the cosmic ocean" (Sagan, op. cit., Page 3). Religious faith and scientific inquiry approach the same mystery. Both have waded in only a small step. Human footprints now mark the surface of the moon and the tracks of robotic rovers criss-cross the sands of Mars. The two Voyager missions carrying the human race's signature have left our Solar System and now cross that "cosmic ocean." Religion and science can only continue to move farther into that "ocean"; not as adversaries, but as fellow travelers. The demarcation lines of science and religion are perhaps best laid out in the words of Jewish scholar and rabbi, Abraham Joshua Heschel:

*"The search of reason ends
at the shore of the known;
on the immense expanse beyond
it only the sense of the ineffable can glide.
It alone knows the route to that
which is remote from experience
and understanding. Neither of them
is amphibious: reason cannot go
beyond the shore, and the sense
of the ineffable is out of place
where we measure, where we weigh,*

*"We do not leave the shore of the known
in search of adventure or suspense
or because of the failure of reason to answer
our questions. We sail because our
mind is like a fantastic sea shell, and when
applying our ear to its lips we hear
a perpetual murmur
from the waves beyond the shore."*

("Man Is Not Alone," Heschel, 1951, Page 8)

Father Walker is a Diocese of Steubenville priest and a former director of the diocesan Office of Worship. Retired from active parish ministry, he continues to reside in his hometown, McConnelsville, where he often celebrates Mass at St. James Church. Father Walker regularly writes a column for The Steubenville Register.

Getting Out of the Sacristy: A Look at Our Pastoral Priorities

By Bishop Robert Barron

For the past several days, I've been with my Word on Fire team, filming for the Flannery O'Connor and Fulton Sheen episodes of our "Pivotal Players" series. Our journey has taken us from Chicago to New York to Washington, D.C., and finally to Savannah and Millidgeville, Georgia. At

every step of the way, we have met numerous people who have been affected by Word on Fire materials: sermons, podcasts, YouTube videos, and the "Catholicism" series. Many have told me that their exposure to Word on Fire started a process that led them back to the church. Now I'm telling you this not as an advertisement for my media ministry, but rather as an occasion to muse about what

I consider to be a needful change in the way the church thinks about its essential work.

Throughout all the years of my involvement with the church, the parish has been taken as the crucial ecclesial institution. Talk to almost anyone involved in Catholic ministry over the past 50 years, and you will hear ample

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To the Friends

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Most of those encounters were temporary and casual, but through the years a good number of meaningful friendships developed there as well. And, while all this was happening, I've lived and worked in four different countries and made friends in each of those places.

Then, today, there's the further struggle to stay in touch with all the contacts that one necessarily has to deal with on social media.

How does one keep meaningful contact with everyone? How does one not betray friends by simple neglect?

Even as I'm deeply thankful to have so rich a treasury of family and friends, not infrequently I'm overwhelmed with

the task of staying in meaningful contact with them and at those times I feel some guilt about forever being out of touch with so many people I was once close to. Sometimes friends whom I have been out of touch with remind me, and not always delicately, of my neglect of our friendship. But, as the years go by and the problem grows larger, rather than smaller, I am making more peace with my inadequacy and guilt – if not always with some of my neglected friends.

What helps is to remind myself constantly of what a great grace it is to have so large a family and to have such a large number of friends. There are few things for which to be more grateful. Next, I do try to stay in meaningful touch with them

to the extent that time, energy and distance allow. Most importantly, though, given my inadequacy, I try to meet my family and friends at a place where time, energy and distance are eclipsed by an immediate, intimate presence. There's one place where we're not inadequate, where we can be at more places than one at the same time and where we can love countless people individually and intimately, namely, inside the body of Christ.

Scripture tells us that, as believers, we form together a body that, as much as any living body, is a true living organism, with all parts affecting all other parts. Inside that body we're present to each other, not fully consciously, of course, but, deeply, truly, actually. And to the extent that we're

living our lives faithfully and sharing honest friendship and fellowship with those who are immediately around us, we're not only healthy enzymes helping bring health to the body, we're also present to each other, affectively, in a way that touches us at the deepest level of our souls. There is a place where we are not neglecting each other.

And so, to all my friends: We're still together!

Father Rolheiser, a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate priest, is president of the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, an author, a retreat master and a newspaper columnist. More information about his ministry is available on his website: www.ronrolheiser.com.

Getting Out of the Sacristy

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criticism of lots of aspects of church life, but, you will, almost without exception, hear praise of the parish. I think here of Father Andrew Greeley's lyrical evocations of the parish as a uniquely successful social and religious institution. Certainly within the context of diocesan priesthood, parish work is the unquestioned default position. Ministry outside of the parochial setting – hospital work, seminary work, teaching, administration, etc., – is acceptable, but, it is generally seen as not quite what a diocesan priest ought to be doing. I think it's fair to say that the overwhelming amount of our money, time, energy and personnel go into the maintenance of parish structures.

Now please don't misunderstand me: I love the parish and believe in its importance passionately. Worship, instruction in discipleship, the building up of the community, formation for mission – all of this happens typically within the parish. I did full-time parish work for

several years, and I've been involved in numerous parishes for the full 32 years of my priesthood. Now, as a regional bishop in the largest archdiocese in the country, I supervise and regularly visit roughly 40 parishes. However, I do wonder whether, given the unique demands of our time, it might be wise to ask a few questions about our hyperstress on the parish.

Survey after survey has shown that the number of the "nones," or the religiously unaffiliated, is increasing dramatically in our country. Whereas in the early 1970s, those claiming no religion was around 3 percent, today it is close to 25 percent. And among the young, the figures are even more alarming: 40 percent of those under 40 have no religious affiliation, and fully 50 percent of Catholics under 40 claim to be "nones." For every one person who joins the Catholic Church today, roughly six are leaving. And, even those who identify as Catholic are spending very little time in and around parishes. Most studies indicate that perhaps

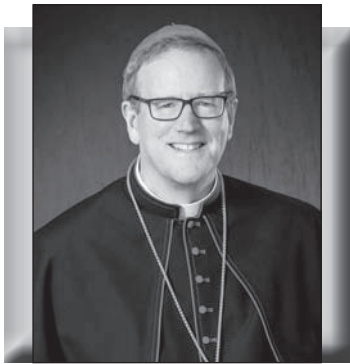
20 to 25 percent of baptized Catholics attend Mass on a regular basis, and the numbers of those receiving the sacraments – especially baptism, confirmation, marriage – are in noticeable decline. Furthermore, objective analysis reveals – and I can testify from a good deal of personal experience – that a tiny percentage of the already small percentage who attend Mass typically participate in parish programs of education, social service and spiritual renewal. The point – and again, this is to say absolutely nothing against those who do wonderful work within the parish – is that perhaps we should reconsider our priorities and focus, above all, on active evangelization, the great mission ad extra.

Pope Francis memorably told us to "get out of the sacristies and into the streets," and to go "to the existential margins." Especially in our western context, the streets and the existential margins are where we find the "nones." Two or three generations ago, we could trust that many people (Catholics certainly) would come to our institutions – schools, seminaries and parishes – to be evangelized, but we absolutely cannot assume that today. But yet, we still seem to devote most of our money, time and attention to the

maintenance of these institutions and their programs. Might it not be wiser to redirect our energies, money and personnel outward, so that we might move into the space where the unevangelized, the fallen away, the unaffiliated dwell? My humble suggestion is that a serious investment in social media and the formation of an army of young priests specifically educated and equipped to evangelize the culture through these means would be a desideratum. But that's a subject for another column.

The last time Cardinal (Francis) George addressed the priests of Chicago, at a convocation just about nine months before his death, he made a prophetic remark. He told the Chicago presbyterate that, at the beginning of the church, there were no dioceses, no schools, no seminaries and no parishes. But there were evangelists. He said that, in light of our present challenges, this is worth thinking about. He was right.

Bishop Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He is the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, headquartered in Des Plaines, Illinois. A nonprofit global media apostolate, additional information is available at www.wordonfire.org.



Bishop Barron

Names of former Harrisburg bishops will be removed from buildings

HARRISBURG, Pa. (CNS) — Harrisburg Bishop Ronald W. Gainer released information from the diocese's own internal investigation on child sex abuse, including a list of the names of 71 clergy, both dead and alive, accused of abuse.

He also ordered removal from buildings, halls and rooms the names of former diocesan bishops going back to 1947.

The name ban extends to anyone who appears on the diocese's list and has been accused of sexual misconduct, and also to any position of honor in the diocese given those named.

"It is my most unwelcome, yet necessary, duty to visit a sorry chapter of the Diocese of Harrisburg's history, the one concerning the sexual abuse of minors," Bishop Gainer said.

"As has been the subject of much public discussion," he continued, "the diocese has unfortunately at times been the home of men originally called to the service of God who,

for reasons unknown and unfathomable, instead ignored that summons and turned to the pursuit of heinous personal ends.

"That conduct has left a legacy of pain and sorrow that is still being felt," Bishop Gainer said. "On behalf of the Diocese of Harrisburg, I apologize for these actions."

While these harms of the past "cannot be undone," he said, "it is my hope that today I can do my part as the present chief shepherd of the diocese to salve some of these historic wounds with the healing touch of transparency."

He released a detailed list giving the names of 71 clergy and seminarians credibly accused of abuse, with a description of the alleged abuse, ranging from indecent behavior to inappropriate "communication with children." As he said, the information is not an assessment of guilt, but provides historic details of the accusations.

Among those named are vowed religious

who served in the diocese and diocesan priests accused of misconduct in another diocese.

As a result of a review of historical cases, conducted by professional investigators and outside counsel, "it was also clear that the leadership of the church did not in every case take adequate measures when handling matters related to offending clerics," a diocesan statement said.

The bishop's release of pages of detailed information – which is being called unprecedented – comes ahead of the expected release of a redacted version of a grand jury report based on a months-long investigation by the state's attorney general into sexual abuse claims in six Pennsylvania dioceses. Many of the claims go back decades.

Besides Harrisburg, the dioceses are Pittsburgh, Allentown, Scranton, Erie and Greensburg.

Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik said, "Permit me the opportunity to prepare you for the public release of this report. I want

you to know that our diocese has cooperated with the Attorney General's Office and the grand jury. We have not attempted to block the report."

Nearly 90 percent of all reported incidents of abuse in the Pittsburgh Diocese covered by the report occurred before 1990, Bishop Zubik said, but he added: "Every act of child sexual abuse is horrific, no matter how long ago it occurred."

In the diocese today, he said, "I can assure you that there is no priest or deacon in public ministry against whom a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse has been made."

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled July 27 the redacted report should be released.

The court said the report will be edited to protect the identities of those challenging its release and the redacted version can be made available to the public no later than Aug. 14.

Many urge more accountability by church after sex abuse revelations

By Mark Pattison

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The sexual abuse allegations surrounding now-former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick have prompted some church figures to call for a more thorough reckoning of the U.S. church's clerical sexual abuse policies.

"We can — and I am confident that we will — strengthen the rules and regulations and sanctions against any trying to fly under the radar or to 'get away with' such evil and destructive behaviors," said Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger of Albany, New York, in a July 27 letter to clergy in his diocese. "But, at its heart, this is much more than a challenge of law enforcement; it is a profoundly spiritual crisis."

"In negative terms, and as clearly and directly as I can repeat our church teaching, it is a grave sin to be 'sexually active' outside of a real marriage covenant. A cardinal is not excused from what a layperson or another member of the clergy is not," Bishop Scharfenberger said.

"A member of the clergy who pledges to live a celibate life must remain as chaste in his relationship with all whom he serves as spouses within a marriage. This is what our faith teaches and what we are held to in practice. There is no 'third way,'" he added.

Bishop Scharfenberger said, "Abuse of authority — in this case, with strong sexual overtones — with vulnerable persons is hardly less reprehensible than the sexual abuse of minors, which the USCCB (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) attempted to address in 2002. Unfortunately, at that time — something I never understood — the 'Charter' ('for the Protection of Children and Young People') did not go far enough so as to hold cardinals, archbishops and bishops equally, if not more, accountable than priests and deacons."

He said he believes the "vast majority of clergy — priests, deacons and bishops alike — live, or, at least are striving to live holy and admirable lifestyles. I am ashamed of those of my brothers, such as the cardinal, who do not and have not."

With his resignation July 28 from the College of Cardinals, McCarrick retains the title of archbishop. However, "his prompt reduction canonically to the laity should be strongly deliberated," said a July 28 statement by Bishop Michael F. Olson of Fort Worth, Texas.

"As each day passes, we learn that the former cardinal not only allegedly perpetrated abuse against minors but also against subordinates including priests, seminarians and members of the laity. The evil effects of these actions were multiplied by the fact that financial settlements were arranged with victims without transparency or restrictions on the former cardinal's ministry," Bishop Olson said.

"Justice also requires that all of those in church leadership who knew of the former cardinal's alleged crimes and sexual misconduct and did nothing be held accountable for their refusal to act thereby enabling others to be hurt."

Trinity Washington University president Patricia McGuire, in a July 27 blog post titled "Cardinal Sins," reflected on the allegations against Archbishop McCarrick through the prism of her mother's late-in-life dread that she may have exposed her



Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, delivers the homily in 2009 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Pope Francis has accepted the resignation from the College of Cardinals of Archbishop McCarrick, after accusations that he sexually abused minors. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

young sons to abusive clergy.

"As the tawdry, tragic stories of priests committing appalling acts of abuse spread from Boston to Philadelphia and parishes and dioceses nationwide, the mothers of the altar boys, in particular, suffered silent grief and suspicion, leading to a sense of betrayal and then alienation from the church to which they had devoted unquestioning loyalty throughout their lives," McGuire said.

In the year before McGuire's mother died, "the abuse scandal left her bitter about the hypocrisy of priests and bishops; she wondered aloud about her own father, my grandfather who, as a young man in Milan (Italy), had been in the seminary for a while. He left the seminary and came to America and, in my mother's memory, he would not set foot inside a church. 'All's right between God and me,' he would say to her," she wrote.

"The emergence of the American abuse scandal made her wonder if something had happened to her father even so long ago in the Italian seminary; again, no evidence, but the scandal created more doubts, caused more anguish, like a rapidly spreading toxic algae bloom."

McGuire added, "The church's response to the massive sex abuse crisis has always seemed to lack a certain level of deep, urgent understanding of the gravity of the sin against children and other victims. Certainly, words have cascaded, gestures made, money paid out. But, somehow, the words and gestures and checks have all seemed more self-protective of the organization than truly penitential at the most profound level."

"As a father, I am appalled and angry. As a Catholic, I feel ashamed and betrayed," said a statement from John Carr, director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University, Washington, who had worked closely with Archbishop McCarrick on various policy initiatives when Carr worked at USCCB headquarters in Washington. "As a friend of former Cardinal McCarrick, I am devastated, especially for the victims and their

families," Carr added. "I pray that these horrific developments can help end this evil of clerical sex abuse and dismantle the culture that permitted it within our family of faith."

Msgr. Owen Campion, former editor of the national newspaper *Our Sunday Visitor* and now chaplain of *OSV Newsweekly*, said he felt dismay, revulsion, heartsickness, anger and — for once — weariness upon learning of the accusations lodged against Archbishop McCarrick.

"I am weary of trying to make excuses, of trying to find something to say," Msgr. Campion wrote July 18.

"I am tired of stepping away from restrooms in restaurants until a youth has emerged. I am tired of watching my every move and calculating my every word if a young person is present. I am tired of calling my diocese when I have been invited to preach in another location, asking for a letter stating that I have never been in trouble."

He added that he is tired of making the point that "sexual abuse is a vast problem in our culture," because he is "assailed for concocting excuses." "But I make it again," he said.

Sexual abuse "hardly only involves clergy. Our society's insanity when it comes to satisfying erotic desires in the most selfish of circumstances, and our increasing disregard for morality in any setting, is sickening and frightening because of where it is taking us," Msgr. Campion said. "We must face this fact."

Msgr. Campion said, "One excuse that I have offered with increasing lack of enthusiasm is the Dallas 'Charter,' a policy created by U.S. bishops to right the wrongs. The charter, whether it is followed or not, spoke of children, but attention must also be given to the wide sexual abuse of adults."

He added, "A seminarian would have to

be very brave to accuse an archbishop, let alone a cardinal. The seminarian, however persuasive his story, would not enjoy the benefit of the doubt. Quite likely, he could forget about being a priest."

In Baltimore, Archbishop William E. Lori said allegations against Archbishop McCarrick "have shaken our church to its core."

"That we find ourselves in this place again is tragic and heart wrenching — for the victims; for their families and friends; for all Catholics; and for our neighbors whom we are called to serve in truth and love," he said in a July 30 statement.

He said he strongly supports Pope Francis' response to Archbishop McCarrick's case and other recent cases, including accepting the resignation of several Chilean bishops, and praised the pope's "determination to hold accountable all those who have sexually abused others or failed to report allegations of sexual abuse, regardless of their position or rank in the church."

Building on those efforts "to strengthen the accountability of bishops," Archbishop Lori said, "some bishops in the United States are discussing proposals to do the same, (including) measures that can be implemented in each diocese to ensure that victims can easily report allegations of abuse by any member of the church, including bishops, and can confidently expect that those allegations will get a full and fair hearing."

"I will contribute actively to those discussions and will fully implement their results in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to best protect those in our local Catholic community and all those we serve," he said, pledging his "continued diligent oversight of the measures currently in place" and renewing his commitment "to do all I can to build a culture of accountability and transparency."

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Belle Valley/Caldwell/Carlisle/Fulda — Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults will begin in September in the Noble County Catholic community. Anyone interested in learning more about the Catholic faith can telephone Father Wayne E. Morris, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish, Belle Valley; St. Stephen Parish, Caldwell; St. Michael Parish, Carlisle; and St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Fulda; or Father Chester J. Pabin, parochial vicar to Father Morris, at (740) 732-4129 or (740) 732-4576.

Cambridge/Lore City — Christ Our Light Parish will sponsor a youth group, "Christ Our Life," for high school students. For additional information, telephone or text Jack Goggin at (740) 255-4602 or Karen Goggin at (740) 680-0476.

Churchtown — A "History of our Roman Liturgy" presentation will be given by Father Cassian Folsom, a Benedictine monk from Norcia, Italy, at 7 p.m., Sept. 10, at St. John Central School, 17654 Ohio Route 676.

Fulda — An 88th annual Labor Day homecoming picnic will be held Sept. 3, at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church. The day begins with the celebration of Mass at 9 a.m. Dinners will be served from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; takeout is available. A cornhole tournament will begin at 1 p.m., weather permitting. The event will also include games, a 50/50 drawing, bingo and refreshments. Baked goods and homemade noodles will be available for sale. Quilts and cash prizes will be raffled. For additional information, telephone the parish office at (740) 732-4129.

Marietta — Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults will begin at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption. A session for anyone interested in learning more about the Catholic faith will be held at 7 p.m., Aug. 29, in the basilica social hall. For additional information, telephone Cathy Rauch at (740) 896-2901 or the rectory office at (740) 373-3643.

Marietta — A "Welcome Back to School" open house will be held from 4-6 p.m., Aug. 20, at St. Mary School, 320 Marion St.

Milonsburg/Sardis/Woodsfield — Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults will begin in the Monroe County Catholic community. Anyone interested in learning more about the Catholic faith can telephone Father David L. Gaydosik, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Milonsburg; St. Sylvester Parish, Woodsfield; and administrator of St. John Bosco Mission, Sardis, at (740) 472-0187.

St. Clairsville — Following the celebration of Masses Aug. 18-19, at St. Mary Church, a reception will be held in Marian Hall to welcome Father Matthew W. J. Gossett as parochial vicar to Father Thomas A. Chillog, pastor of St. Mary Parish. A farewell to Father Edward A. Maxfield Jr., who previously served as parochial vicar to Father Chillog and has been assigned to doctoral studies in liturgy at Pontifical North American College, Rome, will also be held at the reception.

Mass will be celebrated in Spanish at St. Mary Church at 2:30 p.m., Aug. 19. Confessions in Spanish will precede the Mass at 2 p.m.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults will be held at St. Mary Parish. Sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m., Aug. 30. Anyone interested in learning more about the Catholic faith can telephone the parish office at (740) 695-9993.

A Wednesday evening Bible study, themed "Introduction Into the Old Testament and the Book of Genesis," will begin at 6:30 p.m., Sept. 3, in St. Mary Church parish offices. For additional information, telephone the parish office at (740) 695-9993.

A Friday morning Bible study, themed "Leviticus: The 'Handbook' for the Hebrew people - To Help the Individual Person in His/Her Quest for Holiness," will begin Sept. 7, from 9:30-11:30 a.m., in the St. Mary Church parish offices. For additional information, telephone Uli Heiby at (740) 695-5501 or the parish office at (740) 695-9993.

Steubenville — Registration for half-day preschool

St. Joseph and St. Lucy vacation Bible school



St. Joseph Parish, Tiltonsville, and St. Lucy Parish, Yorkville, held a one-day vacation Bible school, Aug. 3, at St. Joseph Church hall/parish center. The theme was "Blazing a Trail to Heaven." Father William D. Cross, pastor of the parishes, and Diocese of Steubenville judicial vicar, started the event with an opening prayer. The day continued with Scripture and story time, crafts, snacks, music and games. Lunch was provided after the closing ceremony. (Photo by DiCenzo)

programs at Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary School, 100 Etta Ave, are being held. Preschool for children 3 years of age is held five days a week from 7:45-11 a.m.; preschool for children 4 years of age is held five days a week from 11:30 a.m.-2:40 p.m. Full-day preschool classes are full for children 3 and 4 years of age, but a waiting list is available. For more information or to register, telephone the school office at (740) 264-2550.

Wintersville — A golf outing, in memory of Josh Merriman, will be held Aug. 19, at Steubenville Country Club, 413 Lovers Lane, Steubenville. Registration will begin at 11:30 a.m.; tee time is at 1 p.m. The four-man scramble costs \$400 per team, which includes 18 holes, golfer gifts, course beverages

and a steak dinner. Those who do not wish to golf can purchase a dinner for \$40. Sponsorships will be available. The event will benefit the Josh Merriman Foundation, with proceeds supporting mental health, suicide prevention and concussion awareness. Merriman was a former parishioner of Blessed Sacrament Parish. For additional information, telephone Bob Merriman at (740) 632-3673; Michael Barber, (740) 424-3909; Tony Barber, (740) 424-7654; or Nathan Paulman, (740) 424-6617.

Woodsfield — Registrations for the 2018-19 school at St. Sylvester Central School, 119 Wayne St., are being accepted. For additional information, telephone the school office at (740) 472-0321; leave a message.

Around and About

Carey, Ohio — A "Latino Day" will be held Sept. 23, at the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation, 315 Clay St. The day will include confessions, Mass, celebrated in Spanish, at noon, food and an outdoor rosary procession. For additional information, telephone (419) 396-7107 or visit www.olcshrine.com.

Carrollton — A fourth annual St. John's Villa car show will be held Aug. 25, at the Villa, which is located at 701 Crest St. Registration begins at 9 a.m. The car show will begin at 11 a.m. and continue until 3 p.m. Registration fee for the car show is \$10. There will also be a peddle car/tractor show the day of the event. Concessions will be available throughout the event, as well as a 50/50 raffle. For additional information, telephone Susan Williamson or Dianne Holt at (330) 627-9789.

St. John Villa's annual "Jon Capri Classic Memorial Golf Outing" will be held Sept. 14, at Arrowhead Golf Club, 1500 Rogwin Circle SW, North Canton, Ohio. The day will begin at 8 a.m. with registration, coffee and donuts; the shotgun scramble will begin at 8:30 a.m. The event will conclude with a steak dinner and awarding of trophies. For additional information or to register for the event, telephone Susan Williamson or Dianne Holt at (330) 627-9789.

North Canton, Ohio — Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth Chapter of Magnificat will sponsor a breakfast celebration Sept. 8, at Walsh University,

Barrette Center, 2020 E. Maple St. Doors open at 8:30 a.m.; breakfast will be served at 9 a.m. Cost is \$18; make checks payable to Magnificat of Stark County and mail to Vicki Vasto, 8735 Glenarden Circle NW, Massillon, OH 44646. Reservation deadline is Sept. 1. Mass will be celebrated in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel, Walsh University, at 8 a.m. For additional information, telephone Joan Spieth at (330) 933-8778.

Steubenville — The Secular Carmelite community of Steubenville will sponsor a "Day of Reflection" Sept. 8, at Holy Family Church. The day begins at 8:30 a.m. with Mass celebrated by Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton. The day will include prayer, presentations and eucharistic adoration and will conclude at 3 p.m. Cost is free, but participants must bring their own lunch. Coffee and a light breakfast will be provided. To register, contact Marie Hosdil by emailing mom22miracles@gmail.com or by telephoning (740) 457-7357.

Steubenville — An annual rosary vigil Mass for the feast of the Assumption, sponsored by Knights of Columbus councils, will be celebrated at 7:30 p.m., Aug. 14, at Sacred Heart Villa, Sunshine Park, 36 Villa Drive. Father Liam Dunne of Ireland and Father John J. "Jack" McCoy, pastor of St. John Fisher Parish, Richmond, and St. Joseph Parish, Amsterdam, will be the celebrants. Mass is celebrated rain or shine.

Franciscan University of Steubenville's chapel renovations are completed

STEUBENVILLE — Christ the King Chapel, the central place of worship at Franciscan University of Steubenville since 1969, was closed for nearly a month

this summer for interior renovations and refurbishing.

Pews were sanded down and stained, the walls and ceiling were repainted in

new hues and new carpeting and tile in the sanctuary were installed.

"These upgrades couldn't wait for the construction of a new chapel, which is still in our long-range plans," said Third Order Regular Franciscan Father Nathan Malavolti, Franciscan University's chief evangelization officer. "Guiding all our decisions, primacy of thought was given to focusing our attention where it should be, on the sanctuary."

The new paint on the ceiling and walls accentuates the San Damiano cross that overlooks the sanctuary and leads the eye to gaze upon the altar, said Father Malavolti.

Two noticeable changes were to move the musicians' space to the back of the chapel and to move the tabernacle from the side chapel to an altar of repose against the back wall in the center of the sanctuary.

Like the other renovations, moving the tabernacle now "draws one's attention to the sanctuary, the sacred space," said Third Order Regular Father Shawn Roberson, chaplain. Likewise, the centrally located tabernacle prompts greater reverence after Mass, when it is a Franciscan University tradition to remain in quiet thanksgiving for a few minutes.

Joseph Rooney, a 2017 theology and philosophy graduate and current Master

of Business Administration student, said, "What struck me as I walked in the first time is that Christ is at the center of our lives here at Franciscan, and I saw that reality with the renovation. There is a beautiful simplicity and intimacy to the chapel space that is conducive to prayer."

Computer science professor David Dombrowski said, "There's a sense of sanctity and of the sanctuary truly containing the Lord, the source and summit of our life on campus."

A new tabernacle, 23 inches high, allows room for two lunas and the ciboria used for large Masses in Finnegan Fieldhouse. The former eucharistic chapel will be used for additional seating at Masses and is now a shrine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

During the school year, Christ the King Chapel offers confessions five days a week, 21 Masses weekly; monthly Spanish and Latin extraordinary form Masses, bimonthly Masses, and numerous Holy Hours for faith households and other campus groups.

"We are most grateful to our physical plant services work crews who labored under a very tight deadline to complete this project," added Father Malavolti.

The chapel renovations were approved by Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton.

Catholic Charities receives donations



Sydney Ford, pictured left, and Jessica Flores, deliver school supplies to the Diocese of Steubenville Office of Catholic Charities and Social Concerns, from the Franciscan University of Steubenville Outreach office. The items were donated by attendees at the university's youth conference. (Photo by DiCenzo)

Faith formation seminar planned

STEUBENVILLE — Catechists and Catholic school teachers in the Diocese of Steubenville can earn credit toward their initial or ongoing catechist's certification and Catholic identity contact hours during an Aug. 13-14 faith formation seminar at St. John Church, 3745 Tallman Ave., Bellaire.

A brochure sent out to catechists and Catholic school teachers reads: "This year, our topics are focused on the reality of man and aspects concerning this, such as a deeper understanding of sin and grace, the plan for human sexuality revealed by God and a deeper grasp of the human person, who ultimately desires union with God."

The first session, Aug. 13, titled "Essential Christian Principles Parts I and II," will be presented by Transitional Deacon Drake A. McCalister, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults director at Franciscan University of Steubenville. A brochure for the seminar reads that the workshop will help Catholic school teachers explain "a simple understanding of how we are saved, how to remain in that state (of being saved) and how our works relate to the process."

The second session, Aug. 13, titled "Human Sexuality – In Light of Divine Revelation, Part I," will be presented by Michael Waldstein, a theology professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville. The brochure reads that Waldstein will present "on human sexuality and how sex is viewed in light of God's Revelation." Part II of the presentation will continue, Aug. 14.

The third session, "Mystery and Morality of Man, Parts I and II," will be presented by Kevin Miller, an assistant professor of theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville. The brochure reads that Miller will discuss the human person made in the image and likeness of God and that "God's plan for restoring us to union with himself involves the suffering of Jesus Christ and our own acceptance of a share in that suffering."

For additional information about the faith formation seminar or to make reservations, contact Emmanuel C. Ambrose, catechetical consultant, Diocese of Steubenville Office of Christian Formation and Schools, by emailing eambrose@diosteub.org or by telephoning (740) 282-3631, extension 155.

K of C council presents scholarships



Knights of Columbus Our Lady of Peace Council 4243, St. Clairsville, awarded two \$500 scholarships to recent graduates Gianna Swan, second from left, and Isabella Trouten. Presenting the scholarships are Tom Hauner, council trustee, pictured at left, and John Swan, council president, at right. (Photo provided)

Obituaries

Ruth E. Gillespie, 90, St. Peter, Steubenville, Aug. 4.

Mary Kay Hallock, 92, St. Peter, Steubenville, Aug. 5.

Lavay Sweeney Nunley, 86, Ironton, St. Lawrence O'Toole, July 4.

Margaret C. Boll Schwab, 97, Ironton, St. Mary, Pine Grove, July 3.

Robert R. Smith, 83, Ironton, St. Joseph, July 6.

Kimberly A. Williamson, 21, Carrollton, St. Francis of Assisi, Toronto, July 14.

Ground is broken



Sketch of the new St. Francis Xavier and St. Gabriel Parish Life Center

(Scanned photo)

From Page 1

Bishop Monforton said, "The work at this site should enliven our faith and make us grateful. We know the familiar words of the psalm: 'If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor.'"

Father Cinson shared the bishop's enthusiasm, "This is a very exciting and life-giving time for us. We are focused on so much more than replacing an antiquated building. It's about making certain that we have an on-going and vibrant presence in a Catholic community in Carroll County." The pastor went on to say, "It is about honoring the legacy of those who created our two parishes and leave that legacy to our children and grandchildren."

Amy Rutledge, executive director of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, said, "The new social hall will be a wonderful addition to the facilities we have in Carroll County. There is no other meeting facility in our county with adequate parking that can seat 350 guests. The hall will be perfect for large meetings, business expositions, and it will allow us to attract more business and professional conferences to the county."

Father Cinson said the old parish hall was nearly 70 years old and could no longer be repaired. He said, "The new 8,300 square foot facility will give both parishes ample space for educational programs, outreach services to help those in need, parish social gatherings and for fundraising

events needed to keep our parishes strong." It will also feature state of the art audiovisual equipment and a wireless network.

Father Cinson said the hall will be available to rent for many occasions including weddings, reunions and job fairs. He said this project, "is about taking responsibility and taking the actions necessary to ensure we have a bright future for the Roman Catholic Church in our communities as a whole and not a future of uncertainty and doubt."

Church records indicate more than \$815,000 in pledges and gifts have made this groundbreaking possible. The plans included the demolition of the old hall, which began Aug. 6. The pastor said the life center, a joint venture of both parishes, is scheduled to be completed late March 2019. Father Cinson added, "Your continued prayers and positive support are vital for us to carry out this work of the Lord."



Parishioners of St. Francis Xavier Parish, Malvern, and St. Gabriel Parish, Minerva, gather for the groundbreaking of the new parish life center, Malvern. (Photo by Orsatti)

Pope Francis revises catechism to say death penalty is 'inadmissible'

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Building on the development of Catholic Church teaching against capital punishment, Pope Francis has ordered a revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to assert "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person" and to commit the church to working toward its abolition worldwide.

The catechism's paragraph on capital punishment, 2267, already had been updated by St. John Paul II in 1997 to strengthen its skepticism about the need to use the death penalty in the modern world and, particularly, to affirm the importance of protecting all human life.

Announcing the change Aug. 2, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said, "The new text, following in the footsteps of the teaching of John Paul II in 'Evangelium Vitae,' affirms that ending the life of a criminal as punishment for a crime is inadmissible because it attacks the dignity of the person, a dignity that is not lost even after having committed the most serious crimes."

"Evangelium Vitae" ("The Gospel of Life") was St. John Paul's 1995 encyclical on the dignity and sacredness of all human life. The encyclical led to an updating of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which he originally promulgated in 1992 and which recognized "the right and duty of legitimate public authority to punish malefactors by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime, not excluding, in cases of extreme gravity, the death penalty."

At the same time, the original version of the catechism still urged the use of "bloodless means" when possible to punish criminals and protect citizens.

The catechism now will read: "Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

"Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal



Pope Francis gestures before speaking about the death penalty at an event marking the 25th anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, at the Vatican in this Oct. 11, 2017, file photo. The pope ordered a revision to the catechism to state that the death penalty is inadmissible and he committed the church to its abolition. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption," the new section continues.

Pope Francis' change to the text concludes: "Consequently, the church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,' and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide."

In his statement, Cardinal Ladaria noted how St. John Paul, retired Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis had all spoken out against capital punishment and appealed for clemency for death-row inmates on numerous occasions.

The development of church doctrine away from seeing the death penalty as a possibly legitimate punishment for the most serious crimes, the cardinal said, "centers principally on the clearer awareness of the church for the respect due to every human life. Along this line, John Paul II affirmed: 'Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this.'"

Pope Francis specifically requested the change to the

catechism in October during a speech at the Vatican commemorating the 25th anniversary of the text's promulgation.

The death penalty, no matter how it is carried out, he had said, "is, in itself, contrary to the Gospel, because a decision is voluntarily made to suppress a human life, which is always sacred in the eyes of the Creator and of whom, in the last analysis, only God can be the true judge and guarantor."

Cardinal Ladaria also noted that the popes were not the only Catholics to become increasingly aware of how the modern use of the death penalty conflicted with church teaching on the dignity of human life; the same position, he said, has been "expressed ever more widely in the teaching of pastors and in the sensibility of the people of God."

In particular, he said, Catholic opposition to the death penalty is based on an "understanding that the dignity of a person is not lost even after committing the most serious crimes," a deeper understanding that criminal penalties should aim at the rehabilitation of the criminal and a recognition that governments have the ability to detain criminals effectively, thereby protecting their citizens.

The cardinal's note also cited a letter Pope Francis wrote in 2015 to the International Commission Against the Death Penalty. In the letter, the pope called capital punishment "cruel, inhumane and degrading" and said it "does not bring justice to the victims, but only foments revenge."

Furthermore, in a modern "state of law, the death penalty represents a failure" because it obliges the state to kill in the name of justice, the pope had written. On the other hand, he said, it is a method frequently used by "totalitarian regimes and fanatical groups" to do away with "political dissidents, minorities" and any other person deemed a threat to their power and to their goals.

In addition, Pope Francis noted that "human justice is imperfect" and said the death penalty loses all legitimacy in penal systems where judicial error is possible.

"The new formulation of number 2267 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church," Cardinal Ladaria said, "desires to give energy to a movement toward a decisive commitment to favor a mentality that recognizes the dignity of every human life and, in respectful dialogue with civil authorities, to encourage the creation of conditions that allow for the elimination of the death penalty where it is still in effect."