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News Briefs

Pope's schedule is set for Baltic trip

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Updating the schedule for Pope Francis' trip to the Baltics Sept. 22-25, the Vatican said the trip will include a prayer in Vilnius, Lithuania, at a monument to members of the city's Jewish community who perished under Nazi occupation.

The Vatican published a detailed schedule for the pope's trip to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, adding times for events that had been listed without them when the first schedule was published in early July.

The only addition to the itinerary, which includes visits to important Marian shrines and to places commemorating the nations' fight for liberty, is the stop for prayer Sept. 23 at the monument to victims forced by the Nazis into the Vilnius Ghetto. Under Nazi occupation, the city's Jewish population went from an estimated 40,000 to zero; most were taken in groups to the woods outside the city and shot.

Pope hopes to visit Japan next year

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis told a group of Japanese visitors to the Vatican that he wants to visit Japan in 2019.

"Taking advantage of your visit, I would like to announce my desire to visit Japan next year. We hope it is possible to do," the pope said during a meeting with members of Japan's Tensho Kenoh Shisetsu Kenshoukai, a cultural association.

Pope Francis has received several invitations to visit Japan, including an invitation in 2013 from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

A more recent invitation, according to the Japanese daily The Asahi Shimbun, came from the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in May; they asked him to visit the two cities that were decimated by atomic bombs in August 1945 and use the occasion to urge world leaders to abolish nuclear weapons.

"The number of 'hibakusha' ('survivors of the atomic bomb attack') who had been exposed to radiation after the dropping of the atomic bombs is declining every year. Please come to Nagasaki and encourage the A-bomb survivors," Nagasaki mayor Tomihisa Taue reportedly told the pope.

St. John Paul II visited Japan in 1981, including the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During his visit to the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, St. John Paul called on government leaders to stop stockpiling nuclear weapons.

"To those who hold political and economic power, I say: let us pledge ourselves to peace through justice; let us take a solemn decision, now, that war will never be tolerated or sought as a means of resolving differences; let us promise our fellow human beings that we will work untiringly for disarmament and the banishing of all nuclear weapons; let us replace violence and hate with confidence and caring," St. John Paul said Feb. 25, 1981.



Rosary Congresses
Ironton, Marietta,
Steubenville
Oct. 6-12
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Diocese's 'Decree on Child Protection' reviewed



Members of the Diocese of Steubenville Child Protection Review Board stand with Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, fifth from left, at a workshop held at St. Mary Church, St. Clairsville, Sept. 6, for clerics, religious and laypeople who minister to children and young people in the diocese. Pictured, from left, are St. Clairsville Attorney Sandra Nicholoff; Permanent Deacon Paul D. Ward, director, diocesan Office of Christian Formation and Schools; Father James M. Dunfee, diocesan vicar general; Belmont County Prosecuting Attorney Daniel P. Fry; Michele A. Santin, director, diocesan Office of Catholic Charities and Social Concerns, pictured right of the bishop; and Belmont County Common Pleas Court Judge Frank A. Fregiato. (Photo by DiCenzo)

By Matthew A. DiCenzo
Staff writer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — A review of the Diocese of Steubenville's "Decree on Child Protection" and its "Safe Environment Program" was presented at St. Mary Church, St. Clairsville, Sept. 6, during a workshop for clerics, religious and laypeople who minister to children and young people in the diocese. The workshop is one of four held annually throughout the diocese. Other locations included Wintersville and Gallipolis. A workshop will be held Sept. 27 at the

Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta.

Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton opened the workshop with a prayer. Father James M. Dunfee, diocesan vicar general, welcomed attendees, who included active and retired priests, deacons, parochial school principals, catechetical leaders and trainers. The trainers will return to their parishes and schools to present the decree to those who work with children and young people. Bishop Monforton said, "I am grateful for all of you being here; it

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Bishop Monforton addresses clerical sex abuse

By Dino Orsatti
Editor

STEUBENVILLE — Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton addressed the recent revelations of clerical sexual abuse and the cover-up in the Roman Catholic Church.

Bishop Monforton promoted healing in the lives of the victims of abuse. As instructed, this letter was read at all parishes the weekend of Sept. 8-9:

My Dear Friends in Christ:

As we share our common Christian pilgrimage, we continue to be reminded of the reprehensible actions by church leaders, most especially by priests and bishops here in the United States. While expression of sorrow for such actions is both appropriate and necessary, I say again to the victims and to all, for the actions of those with the care of souls who have acted in these horrible ways, as your bishop and as your brother, I am very sorry.

Furthermore, as a people of faith, we have a role to promote healing in the lives of the victims, as well as to provide a strong spiritual foundation in our local church of Steubenville, as we move forward. Again, let me reiterate that the Catholic Church must pursue truth and justice in our time, especially in matters of church governance.

As many of you already know, I have designated the Masses for Saturday morning, Sept. 15, as Masses of Reparation for these sins committed by church officials, as well as to promote healing for all victims of abuse. Furthermore, guided by the solemn penitential Season of Lent, I personally will embrace the three pillars of Lent, namely, fasting, almsgiving and prayer.

Concerning fasting, I will observe a day of fasting each week, until Holy Week of 2019, that will follow the same guidelines as on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Regarding almsgiving, I will offer time, treasure and talent as a sacrificial offering for victims of abuse, the poor and the youth.

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Diocese's 'Decree on Child Protection'

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does not go unnoticed."

The decree, originally instituted in the diocese in 2003, and updated in 2009 and again in 2014, was drafted at the mandate of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who wrote a "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The decree and charter were a response to sex abuse by some clergy, nationwide.

The decree is meant to prevent abuse. Child abuse is defined in the decree as sexual activity, endangering or injuring a child, providing a child with alcohol or illegal drugs, physical or mental abuse or using demeaning language.

Belmont County Common Pleas Court Judge Frank A. Fregiato, who chairs the Steubenville Diocese's Child Protection Review Board, presented an overview of the decree during a slideshow presentation via PowerPoint.

Fregiato said, "This presentation is merely a very rough, brief summary of the decree. You must read the decree yourself." He reiterated to attendees throughout the workshop how the decree is not only meant to protect children, but it also protects those who work with children from unfounded allegations.

Fregiato added, "The decree basically has two purposes. First, it is intended to prevent the abuse of children through education and screening. Second, it provides for assistance for handling incidents of abuse after they occur, which includes: reporting the incidents to civil authorities, assessing the allegations, caring for the victim and the victim's family, acting appropriately with the accused and attending to the affected church community." Fregiato said that all incidents are taken seriously, and the central theme is



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton speaks to clerics, religious and laypeople, who minister to children and young people in the diocese, at a workshop held Sept. 6 at St. Mary Church, St. Clairsville. Belmont County Common Pleas Court Judge Frank A. Fregiato, who chairs the Steubenville Diocese's Child Protection Review Board, visible at left, looks on. (Photo by DiCenzo)

to act immediately.

Clerics, regular volunteers and paid employees who work with children must have a criminal background check, with fingerprinting, from federal and Ohio authorities, as well, every five years. The volunteers and employees, too, must provide three references, which are checked and complete an applicant's certification form.

Permanent Deacon Paul D. Ward, director, diocesan Office of Christian Formation and Schools, presented the diocese's "Safe Environment Program," which can be viewed, like the decree, on the diocesan website – www.diosteub.org. Deacon Ward explained to attendees how

the website includes a "report an incident" page, documents, forms, resources and a link to the PowerPoint presentation shown.

Deacon Ward also discussed and answered questions about a binder that was given to each pastor who is assigned to a parish. Deacon Ward said the binder will serve as an organized way to keep forms and to make sure each parish is following the diocese's "Safe Environment Program."

In addition to the binder, Deacon Ward introduced new communications technology policies and procedures pertaining to the appropriate boundaries when ministering to or working with minors. He said that this is "always one of the issues" that has

come up and the review board "wanted to look at and address" it. Attendees were given an outline of the revision as well as a new form regarding the new policies. The handout reads that one-on-one or private electronic communications by employees or adult volunteers with a minor is "prohibited except to the extent that such communications are explicitly permitted in a written consent form that has been executed by the minor's parent or guardian prior to any such communications." It reads, "all electronic communications (social media, emailing, texting, tweeting, blogging and other forms of cyber communication) between adult leaders and minors shall be transparent and for legitimate ministry/school related purposes only. Using these types of communication with minors shall never be used for personal matters." He stated that a parent must be copied in the message to a minor, and the form is for electronic communication with a minor. Deacon Ward said, "All adults are responsible for keeping children safe."

Bishop Monforton spoke about the current abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, stating: "No one is above the law. We need truth and justice!" The bishop added that there is a need for accountability when it comes to leadership, especially for the episcopacy. Bishop Monforton ended the workshop with a prayer and blessing.

Any victim or victims harmed by a priest or anyone serving on behalf of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Steubenville or anyone who suspects child abuse should contact diocesan and secular authorities. Father Dunfee, who administers the decree, can be reached at the chancery at 422 Washington St., Steubenville; via telephone (740) 282-3631; or email jdunfee@diosteub.org.

Bishop Monforton addresses

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Finally, for prayer, I will add an additional Holy Hour to my weekly prayer life, devoted to the healing of abuse victims and for the promotion of holiness in the Catholic Church. If you are able, I invite you to embrace one or all of these pillars individually, or as a family.

I instruct all parishes to pray the prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that was penned by St. John Paul II March 25, 1984, from the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This prayer requests intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for our deliverance from evil.

Please pray that prayer in its entirety, or in part, at the discretion of the priest presider

at every Sunday Mass until Holy Week of 2019. Some of you are already praying the prayer of St. Michael the Archangel. It is admirable and acceptable to pray the St. Michael prayer as well as the Immaculate Heart prayer.

As the week of Oct. 9 for the rosary congress approaches in our diocese, I ask that the congress itself be dedicated to the victims of abuse from church officials and for the building up of the church in its call to holiness as Jesus instructed his apostles.

As fellow members in the mystical body of Christ, we all have a critical role to heal and to promote holiness of life.

In closing, please pray for our priests, my brothers, that they may not be discouraged

or demoralized in these challenging times, as they live out the life of the Good Shepherd. Also, pray for our seminarians, that they keep their eyes fixed on Jesus and his most Sacred Heart in their desire to serve you as good and holy priests.

We are missionary disciples and share a common call to holiness. History instructs that in the church's most difficult times, God has provided us with some of the greatest saints with unparalleled resolve,

from St. Francis of Assisi to St. Catherine of Siena. May the Immaculate Heart of Mary intercede for us and enable us to be beacons of hope in a world in great need of Jesus Christ's enduring healing presence. I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Jeffrey M. Monforton
Bishop of Steubenville

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Diocesan youth conference plans are finalized

By Dino Orsatti
Editor

STEUBENVILLE — The 16th annual “Rise Up! Let Your Light Shine” Diocese of Steubenville youth conference is scheduled Oct. 14, from 10:15 a.m.-5:30 p.m., at St. Benedict Church, 701 Gomber Ave., Cambridge.

Emmanuel C. Ambrose, catechetical consultant, Diocese of Steubenville Office of Christian Formation and Schools, said the theme for this year’s diocesan youth conference is “I will serve.”

Students in grades seven through 12 can register online at www.eventbrite.com/e/rise-up-let-your-light-shine-catholic-youth-conference-tickets-49653316406 for the conference and transportation. Youth ministers/group leaders can register by parish or by area. Cost of the conference is \$15 per youth and adults; \$35 per family, up to three members, with each additional person \$5. Registration fees include the cost of lunch.

Registration deadline is Oct. 8, but tickets will be on sale until Oct. 13. Late registration costs are \$20 for youth and adult; a family, up to three, \$45, with additional family members \$7. Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and have completed their safe environment training.

Transportation to the conference will be free, with buses provided for participants throughout the diocese. Four buses are expected to depart to the conference.

Two buses are expected to pickup participants at Catholic Central High School, 320 West View Ave., and travel from Steubenville to St. Benedict Church, Cambridge.

Another bus is expected to pickup students at St. Joseph Central High School, 912 S. Sixth St., Ironton; St. Ann Church, 310 Third Ave., Chesapeake; and St. Louis Church, 85 State St., Gallipolis.

A fourth bus will pickup participants at St. Mary School, 320 Marion St., Marietta.

Bus routes and pickup times will be determined closer to the conference, depending on the number of groups registering for the event.

The diocese will also reimburse any group who takes vans to the conference.

Ambrose said the keynote speaker for the event will be Taylor Schroll, who will speak at both the morning and afternoon sessions. The title of his talks are “I will follow.” He intends on speaking to the youth about what being a good disciple of Christ looks like, confession and spiritual warfare. Schroll is a missionary, youth minister, worship leader, speaker and radio show host.

Ambrose said Schroll went to a Steubenville youth conference in Southern Louisiana when he was a freshman in high school. It was there that he decided to take all that he had learned intellectually about his Catholic faith and let it touch his heart. “I gave my heart, mind and soul to God that day and have been committed to following him ever since. No matter how many times I have slipped up since then, and believe me it was quite a lot (ask my mom or my wife), God has always been



Taylor Schroll

(Photo provided)

there to catch me, brush me off and push me forward,” said Schroll.

Upon graduation Schroll married Samantha, and they moved to Ohio, so he could attend Franciscan University of Steubenville.

In the summer of 2015, Schroll and his family decided to move to Bryan, Texas, to join ABLAZE Ministries as missionaries. His role with ABLAZE is director of youth ministries and conference team coordinator.

Schroll became active in ministry during his time at the University of the Incarnate Word. He was in campus ministry there and helped co-found a new Catholic ministry called Breathe.

Schroll also joined a ministry in the San Antonio area called Tongues of Fire and led the worship team for a few years. He led worship for nights of praise, retreats, parish events and the yearly Youth Explosion conference with more than 1,250 teens.

Ambrose said other speakers at the conference will include Bobbyjon Bauman, whose talk is titled, “cultivating a life of service,” and Savannah McCarty-Gibson, who will be discussing service and romance. Franciscan Sister Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorowful Mother Chiara Joan Riffon, and a diocesan seminarian will conduct workshops dealing with religious vocations.

Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton will hold a town hall meeting at 3 p.m. At 3:45 p.m., a Marian procession will lead to the celebration of Mass at St. Benedict Church. Bishop Monforton will celebrate the Mass at 4 p.m. Following the celebration of Mass, a Holy Half-Hour with eucharistic adoration will take place to close the conference.

For additional information about the “Rise Up! Let Your Light Shine” diocesan youth conference, telephone Ambrose at the chancery, (740) 282-3631 or email eambrose@diosteub.org.

Bishop Monforton’s Schedule

- Sept. 22 Mass, Respect Life Conference, Holy Family Church, Steubenville, 11:30 a.m.
- 23 Mass, “Totus Tuus” conference, Apostolate for Family Consecration, Bloomingdale, 10 a.m.
- 25 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.
- 26-30 Rome visit
- 27 Diaconate ordination, St. Peter Basilica, Rome, Italy, 10 a.m.
- Oct. 2 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.
Catholic Conference of Ohio conference call, 2 p.m.
Franciscan University of Steubenville, 6 p.m.
- 6 Mass, St. John Vianney Church, Powhatan Point, 6 p.m.



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Rosary conferences will be held next month in three diocesan locations

By Dino Orsatti
Editor

IRONTON/MARIETTA/STEUBENVILLE — Rosary congresses will be held Oct. 6-12 in three locations in the Diocese of Steubenville again this year, under the direction of Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton.

They will be dedicated this year to the promotion of holiness of life and to the healing for victims of abuse.

Congresses will be held simultaneously in the diocese: St. Joseph Church in Ironton; the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption in Marietta; and Triumph of the Cross (Holy Rosary Church) Steubenville.

The rosary congresses are part of a movement of prayer spreading across the country that organizers say is designed to encourage Catholics to pray for life and peace in our cities, our country and our world.

One of the organizers, Peggy Downs, said the congresses “will include seven days and nights of eucharistic adoration, Masses, hourly rosaries and Divine Mercy chaplets, confessions, conferences and processions.”

Downs said the rosary congress began in 1978 in Poland. “The people there offered



Students from St. Mary School, Marietta, and St. Sylvester Central School, Woodsfield, pray the rosary at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, in 2017. (Photo provided)

seven days and nights of continual adoration in petition to the Blessed Mother to intercede for then Pope John Paul II, so that he would be allowed to visit the communist country. On the seventh day of the congress, the government relented and lifted all bans on the pope’s visit, and he was able to travel

freely,” according to Downs.

Ten years later the rosary congress was brought to the United States at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., where hundreds of people from around the country came to participate in the weeklong event.

The rosary congresses are making a comeback with the passing of the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima in 2017. Eighteen rosary congresses were held in the United States last year, including the three in the Diocese of Steubenville.

This year, in Steubenville, Father

Thomas R. Nau, pastor, Triumph of the Cross Parish, will celebrate the opening Mass at Holy Rosary Church, Oct. 6, at 4 p.m. The Mass will be followed by a Marian procession. Bishop Monforton is expected to celebrate Mass at 8:30 a.m., Oct. 8. Other highlights include a healing Mass, 7 p.m., Oct. 9; a special youth Mass, 7 p.m., Oct. 10, and a candlelight procession, 8 p.m., Oct. 11. Father Nau will celebrate the closing Mass in honor of the family and consecration of the family to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at 7 p.m., Oct. 12.

In Ironton, an opening Mass will be celebrated at 5:15 p.m., Oct. 6 at St. Joseph Church. A closing Mass is scheduled for 6 p.m., Oct. 12, at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, near St. Joseph and St. Lawrence O’Toole churches, Ironton, and St. Mary Mission, Pine Grove. Father David L. Huffman, pastor of the parishes and administrator of the mission, will celebrate the Masses.

In Marietta, the opening Mass will be celebrated at 5:30 p.m., Oct. 6, at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, by Msgr. John Michael Campbell, rector of the basilica. It will be followed by a Marian procession around the basilica and adoration. The closing Mass will be celebrated at 7 p.m., Oct. 12, in honor of the family.

Additional information on the rosary congresses and the schedule of events in Ironton, Marietta and Steubenville is available at www.rosarycongressusa.org.

Youngstown bishop is ‘cancer-free’

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (CNS) — On his first day back at work Sept. 4, Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown spoke happily of his return, but he also addressed the somber subject of the sex abuse crisis now in the news.

In April, he was diagnosed with acute leukemia and admitted to the Cleveland Clinic, where he received aggressive chemotherapy for a month. After his discharge, he received follow-up treatment and spent time resting and recovering.

Speaking to reporters at St. Columba Cathedral Parish hall, Youngstown, Bishop Murry said he was “100 percent cancer-free” following a bone marrow scan.

He thanked all those who supported him and provided his medical care.

“My energy level is almost back to normal. I look forward to returning to work and reconnecting with the people of the diocese – part time, for a short time, then later, full time,” Bishop Murry said.

The next day, he presided at a weekly prayer service for diocesan staff at St. Columba Cathedral that began after his diagnosis, expressing gratitude to all for their prayers.

“Prayer is powerful. That is what got me through,” he said.

The bishop also thanked diocesan leaders and staff for keeping the diocese running smoothly.

On the broader church level, he said files relating to Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick should be “opened to a group of competent laypeople, to determine how his predatory behavior went unreported.”

“At the same time mechanisms must be developed to report allegations against other bishops so that they can be adequately investigated,” he added.

In response to a question about the “testimony” from Archbishop Carlo Vigano, former papal nuncio to the United States, which accused Pope Francis of covering up allegations about Archbishop McCarrick, Bishop Murry said the letter seems to have a tone of “settling scores” and “nothing he said is substantiated.”

He also encouraged Pope Francis to more fully explain his position.

Bishop Murry, taking questions about his health, expressed gratitude for all who supported him and said the experience strengthened his faith.

He said he was overwhelmed by the many people “who sent any cards, letters, emails, books, prayer chains, homemade gifts and food.”



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A \$5,000 grant is awarded to Christ Our Light Parish, Cambridge, from the National Council of the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Pictured, from left, is Brenda Caldwell, parish secretary; Cathy McIntire, grant writer; and Holly Rauch, treasurer for the Christ Our Light conference in Guernsey County. (Photo provided)

CAMBRIDGE — The less fortunate in Guernsey County will receive much-needed financial assistance with transitional housing thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the National Council of the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The money is part of St. Vincent de Paul's Friends of the Poor Grant Program, and will be disbursed by the Christ Our Light conference.

"The Friends of the Poor grant will be used to provide funding for transitional housing for homeless people who have a job or are actively looking for work and need housing for one to two weeks while their application for permanent housing is being processed by our county," said Cathy McIntire, member of the Christ Our Light conference. "With this grant, we are hopeful it will provide funding to assist at least seven individuals or households in need during the upcoming year. This grant will fill a gap in our county's efforts to assist homeless people who have shown initiative to quickly get off the streets."

The Christ Our Light St. Vincent de Paul Conference was established in 2017, with assistance from Father Paul E. Hrezo, pastor, Christ Our Light Parish. The conference is located in an area where 31.2 percent of families live below the poverty rate. Currently, the Christ Our Light conference has 24 active members. They provide assistance to people in need that local public agencies are unable to meet, primarily because of government budget cuts and other restrictions.

This grant was one of 14 distributed through the program around the country. Grant applications are evaluated and awarded quarterly on a regional basis by a Vincentian review committee. Funding is provided by the general public and the society's members, and is targeted to specific needs in each community.

"We are pleased to be able to assist local conferences as they work to help those in need," said Dave Barringer, CEO of the society. "Our local conferences are a great example of how a dedicated group of people can make a difference in alleviating suffering," he added.

One of the largest charitable organizations in the world, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (www.svdpusa.org) is an international, nonprofit, Catholic lay organization of about 800,000 men and women who voluntarily join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to the less fortunate and suffering in 150 countries on five continents. With the U.S. headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, membership in the United States totals nearly 100,000 in 4,400 communities.

The society offers a variety of programs and services, including home visits, housing assistance, disaster relief, education and mentoring, and rent and utility costs. The society also works to provide care for the sick, the incarcerated and the elderly.

Over the past year, it has provided more than \$1.2 billion in tangible and in-kind services to those in need, made more than 1.7 million personal visits (homes, hospitals, prisons and elder care facilities) and helped nearly 21 million people regardless of race, religion or national origin.

Bishop Monforton celebrates sixth Blue Mass



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton is seated center, prior to celebrating a sixth annual Blue Mass with first responders at St. Peter's Church, Steubenville. Seated, from left, are Ed Lulla, agent, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification; Jim Mavromatis, Steubenville city manager; Carlo Capaldi, chief, Steubenville Fire Department; and Eric Hart, patrolman, Steubenville Police Department. Standing, in the second row, from left, are Ryan Lulla, patrolman, SPD; Chris Blackburn, SFD; Jessica Moore, emergency medical technician-firefighter, Wintersville Fire and Rescue; Chris Takach, assistant chief, SFD; Dave Cordonado, firefighter, SFD; Justin Boley, firefighter, SFD; Capt. Steve Bowers, SFD; Joel-Michael Recznik, patrolman, SPD; Ken Porter, EMT, Ambulance Service Inc.; Rachael Huntsman, EMT, Ambulance Service; Shawn Scott, patrolman, SPD chaplain. Standing, in back, from left, Captain-inspector Thomas Burchfield, SFD; Jason Hanlin, patrolman, SPD; John DiBacco, deputy, Jefferson County Sheriff's Department; Tyler Barrett, patrolman SPD; Capt. John Lemal, SPD; Matthew Bailey, SPD; Dave Fortunato, firefighter, SFD; Rob Gaffney, Ambulance Service, J.P. Rigaud, agent, Ohio BCI; and Harry Fair, chief, New Alexandria. (Photo by Orsatti)

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St. John Paul II The Church in Parables

By Diocese of Steubenville
Bishop Emeritus Gilbert I. Sheldon

St. John Paul II tells us: "The Gospel texts document Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God in relation to the church." The "kingdom of God" refers to God's plan for all of creation, both visible and invisible, both on earth and in heaven. On earth, that plan is expressed in the church, through which God's human creatures are to achieve their salvation, eternal life. Much of that teaching is found in the *parables* of Jesus; simple stories that have far-reaching application. The pope calls attention first to the parable of the wedding feast (see, Matthew, Chapter 22, Verses 1-14). The story is of a king who throws a feast for his son's wedding. He invites initially the distinguished notables of his realm. However, when they receive the word, they decline the invitation, one after another, with various excuses. Angry, the king sends his servants out to invite everyone they can find, so that the banquet hall will be filled. The lesson is intended primarily for the Jewish leadership, the ones who should have been the first to welcome Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ. As we know, they rejected Jesus, along with most of the chosen people of his time. The invitation then goes out to the whole world. "Many will come from east and west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be driven out into the outer darkness" (Mt 8:11-12). The chosen people were to be the first to receive Christ's message of salvation, but having rejected it, the invitation now goes immediately to everyone else. The kingdom of God is *universal*, for all mankind. The call to faith and baptism goes to all through God's servants, the missionaries who preach and practice his word.

However there is a further detail in the parable: the "wedding garment." Whatever that was in the time of Jesus, we don't know, but it certainly refers to proper attire, both then and now. After all, who comes to a wedding celebration in shorts and a T-shirt? Symbolically, the wedding garment is the state of grace, without which one cannot enter heaven. Baptism is the invitation, but we must live up to our baptism, too! In the parable of the last judgment (see, Matthew, Chapter 25, Verses 31-46), love of one's neighbor is the criterion of admittance into heaven: ("I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, etc."). Of course, love of neighbor is one part of the great commandment of charity: love of both God and neighbor. Love of God includes keeping *all* of his commandments.

Another aspect of the call to God's kingdom is that it is never too late to answer his invitation. This is the theme of the parable of the workers in the vineyard (see, Matthew, Chapter 20, Verses 1-16): Workers are admitted who came late in the day along with those who labored all day. It is not only the "born-Catholic" who is welcome to the

church. Two parables point out the value of membership in God's kingdom: those of the treasure buried in a field (see, Matthew, Chapter 13, Verse 44) and the pearl of great price (see, Matthew, Chapter 13, Verses 45-46). Both show that such membership surpasses the value of all else, and is worth any sacrifice.

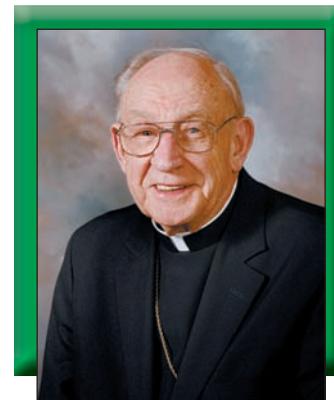
The parable of the sower (see, Matthew, Chapter 13, Verses 18-23) is an important one in this consideration. It illustrates the fact that there are two sides to God's invitation to his kingdom: There is his invitation that comes to us, as St. Paul says, "through hearing" (Rom 10:17). That's the seed in the parable. It's good seed in every case, but the results are not always the same. That's because of the other side – the soil – our receptivity of the word we hear. Some are open to it, some are not; some waver about it. Like the soil, they vary in receptivity. A similar parable is that of the wheat and weeds (see, Matthew, Chapter 13, Verses 24-30). In this one is illustrated the fact that there are enemies of God and his kingdom, opposing it by ideology or by plain hatred – with help from the devil, himself, in some cases. The church has always been confronted by them, and always will.

The parables of the mustard seed and of the leaven (yeast) (see, Matthew, Chapter 13, Verses 31-33) predicted the gradual growth of the kingdom from the original Twelve

Apostles to today's church of more than a billion members throughout the world. That it would be such was hinted at by Jesus when he told Peter that he was the Rock on which the church

would be built. Jesus was looking to the future, to events that would take place after his death and resurrection. In the 40 days that he spent on earth after the resurrection, he put the finishing touches on the instructions that he had been giving the apostles throughout his public life. Even then, the apostles were not completely sure of what it all meant, and what their part was to be. But, Jesus assured them that with the coming to them of the Holy Spirit, it would all become clear. We see Our Lord's prediction played out in the event of the first Pentecost and the initial "sowing of the seed" through their hearing of Peter's address. "Those who accepted the message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day" (see, Acts, Chapter 2, Verses 14-41): a veritable "jump-start" to the church! Peter and the other apostles understood very well, of course, that, as St. Paul would put it later: "Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who causes the growth" (1 Cor 3:7). John Paul points out, "Through the action of the Spirit, the kingdom grows in souls by the vital force coming from Jesus' death and resurrection. The kingdom continues to grow until the time foreseen by God himself. Quoting St. Paul again: "Then comes the end, when Christ hands over the kingdom to his Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24). "When everything is

subjected to him, then the Son, himself, will also be subjected to the One who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:27-28). The pope explains: "From beginning to end, the church is situated within this marvelous eschatological perspective of God's kingdom, and her history unfolds from the first day to the last."



Bishop Sheldon

"The kingdom of God is universal, for all mankind."

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email: register@diosteub.org

Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, publisher

Dino Orsatti, editor
dorsatti@diosteub.org
Janice M. Ward, circulation/advertising
jward@diosteub.org
Matthew A. DiCenzo,
staff writer, social media coordinator
mdicenzo@diosteub.org

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Getting to the Top 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B

By Father Paul J. Walker

It is a consistent theme in the Gospels that the Twelve Apostles are somewhat slow in putting together the pieces that reveal the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth. This is particularly true of Mark's Gospel. In this Sunday's Gospel, Sept. 23, (see, Mark, Chapter 9, Verses 30-37), Jesus offers another prediction of his passion and death. They are on their way to Jerusalem, where these events will unfold, and their response to Jesus' question regarding their arguing about something or other reveals they are still

quite clueless about the mystery that now enfolds them. But to better understand this consistent thematic in Mark's narrative, it may be helpful to step back from the scene presented here and examine a more basic picture that the Gospels are striving to paint for us. This picture involves the nature and the attributes (perhaps "*attitudes*" is a better word) of the God of Israel.

When one considers the image or vision of God that the Hebrew Scriptures paint, what is striking as that picture unfolds is that Israel's God is nothing like the gods of the

Our Christian Vocation

By Diocese of Steubenville
Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton

“Are you unaware that we who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (Rom 6:3).

St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans is quite direct: You and I are baptized into Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Each one of us has been plunged into Jesus Christ, for each one of us has been plunged into his mystery. At baptism, the words are, “You have put on Christ,” so, in fact, you and I are cloaked in Christ in a unique and personal way. We are acutely aware from the Gospel stories that God the Father, who cannot be pleased with anyone but his son Jesus, recognizes the faith of Jesus in you and in me, thus saying, “You are my beloved son (or daughter); in you I find my delight” (Mk 1:11).

A reminder from this Christian pilgrimage is for us to “put on” this uniquely personal relationship with Jesus Christ to the stature of maturity. The vocation you and I have received is not an abstract concept or personal ideal. Our personal vocation is a person, a person who is Jesus Christ. Sacred Scripture is full of descriptions: Jesus is the good samaritan. Jesus is the shepherd who leaves behind the 99 sheep, in order to find the lost one. Jesus is the one who dies on the cross for all humanity.

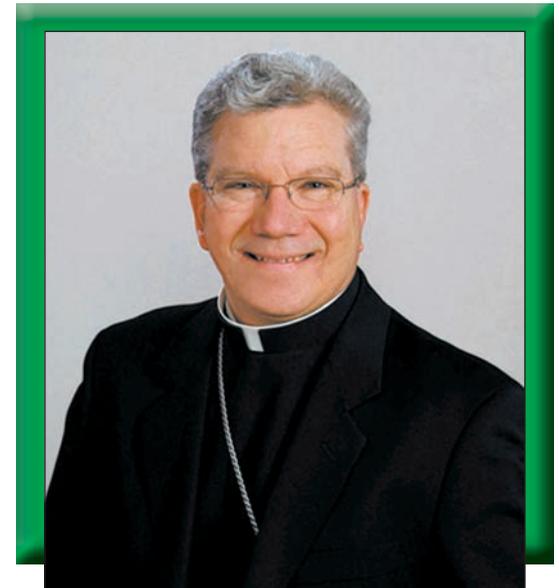
St. Paul employs underlying themes in his letters, especially in his Letter to the Colossians indicating that Jesus is the alpha and omega of all creation and all recreation. Jesus is the only meaning there is for God the Father and Jesus is the only way for us to the Father. Each one of us has our unique way of being Christian, namely, to embrace our common call to holiness in the Catholic Church. We are religious, priests, deacons, married, single – all uniquely

Christian, and our vocation extends beyond function. Vocation is not mere doing, it is being, and Jesus Christ has given meaning to that being.

We learn from the New Testament that the distinctive character of being Christian is self-gift and self-surrender. This most certainly was underscored by Jesus in his words to the apostles last Sunday (Sept. 16, 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B), as he invited each and every one of us to take up our cross (see, Mark, Chapter 8, Verses 27-35). Each one of us has a manner in which we surrender ourselves, namely, taking up our cross. There is the old saying that pessimists complain about the wind, optimists hope it will change, and realists adjust the sails. In other words, you and I make life changing decisions in order to follow Our Lord Jesus Christ, and that entails to embrace the cross.

You and I need to “know thyself.” We need to trust God that he knows what he is doing. Each one of us has learned up to now that we will not get all of the memos or text messages that we had hoped from heaven. It comes down to our own attitude, our attitude in response to God. Our attitude makes all the difference in how we respond to God’s invitation. We must recall that discouragement or despair obscure our vision of, and receptiveness toward, God’s invitation; whereas joy provides us the essential bridge to welcome the Lord into our hearts.

By knowing and appreciating who gave us our vocation makes us “available for mission,” to become familiar with our own ministerial service in the church. How many times have you and I embraced the expression of “finding God in all things?” We must never forget that to close in on ourselves is not realization of self, but instead we are exhorted to be open to Our Lord’s invitation. You and I, through the gift of baptism, are united with Christ and our



Bishop Monforton

response should be to surrender our own selves, to give up our own selves to Our Lord’s will as Mary, the mother of the church did in her visit with the angel Gabriel at the annunciation.

To this end, only then do you and I recognize that, in baptism, Jesus has most certainly freed our hearts to see him in all things, because in our baptism, we discover the fullness of our vocation. In the eyes of God, no one is simply a footnote in the history of humanity; you and I had been made lovingly by God who has willed us into existence. As I mention to people time and time again, from the schools to the nursing homes, no one is a mistake. The sacrament of baptism reminds us that each one of us has been called by God.

Why Remain Catholic? (With So Much Scandal)

By Bishop Robert Barron

Note: The text below has been transcribed from a Word on Fire Catholic Ministries YouTube video, published Aug. 29.

Hey everybody, this is Bishop Barron. I wanted to speak to you again about this terrible crisis we’re passing through in the church, this crisis of sexual abuse and the countenancing of it by some bishops. I know I spoke to you a couple of days ago. But, what’s been striking me recently is the number of people who seem to be calling for the abandonment of the church: “Because of this crisis, it’s time for us to leave the church. We’ve simply had enough.”

Now, can I just say this? I totally understand people’s feelings. I share them – the feelings of anger and frustration. I get it. I get it. But, can I also suggest I think this is precisely the wrong strategy at this moment in the church’s life. Leaving is not what we ought to be doing. What we ought to be doing is fighting.



Bishop Barron

Let me explain that with a little historical reference. One of my great heroes is Abraham Lincoln. And, Lincoln, of course, operated politically at one of the most convulsive times in our national history, when slavery was threatening the very foundations of American democracy. Lincoln

knew from the beginning of his career that the nation, as he put it, couldn’t survive half slave and half free. But, he saw more profoundly, too, that slavery as an institution was repugnant to the very principles of American democracy.

Now, we can hear that in the Gettysburg Address. And in a way it’s sad that that’s become so cliché, that we all memorize it in high school. But, let’s go back to those words: “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Notice he’s articulating the principles that define American democracy: freedom and equality.

Then he says, “Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.” He knew what was at stake in the war was American democracy itself. He knew that slavery was a kind of cancer that would undermine American ideals.

Now, I suppose at the time an option would have been simply to give up on the American experiment. “I’m leaving the country. I’ve had it. This thing is a disaster. I’m giving up.” But, Lincoln wouldn’t take that option. In fact, he led the country down the other path toward fighting – fighting for the ideals of American democracy.

Now, can I suggest, everybody, I think something similar is at stake right now. The Catholic Church, its great principles and ideals; the Catholic Church, grounded in Jesus Christ, the love of God made manifest in him in his dying and his rising; the Catholic Church, in all of its power and beauty and perfection, is indeed threatened by this terrible scourge of sexual abuse. It is indeed a blight upon the church. It is appropriate that people feel anger, frustration.

I suppose the option is on the table: leave. “I’ve had it.

The thing is just too corrupt. I’m out of here.” But, see, I want to suggest everybody, that is not what is called for. Rather, what’s called for is the Lincoln option: fighting for the church that we believe in so powerfully; seeing this blight, naming it clearly, unambiguously, but then fighting to set things right. It’s not the moment for cutting and running. It’s the moment for getting into the fight.

And you say, “Well okay, bishop, I get it. But, how do I fight?” Look: You fight through your own righteous anger. You fight by writing a letter to your bishop, a letter to the pope. You fight by your very presence at Mass. You fight by keeping people’s feet to the fire. You fight by organizing your fellow Catholics. Fight any way you can. But, you fight because you believe in the church; you love the church; and you realize that despite this terrible blight, it’s worth fighting for.

You know, keep in mind everybody, we are not Catholics because of the moral excellence of our leaders. I mean, God help us if we were. We want our leaders – indeed, we expect our leaders – to be morally excellent. But, we are not Catholics because of that moral excellence. We’re Catholics because of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead. We’re Catholics because of the Trinitarian love of God. We’re Catholics because of the mystical body of Christ. We’re Catholics because of the sacraments. We’re Catholics especially because of the Eucharist. We’re Catholics because of the Blessed Mother. We’re Catholics because of the saints. Even as leaders in the church fail morally, the Catholic Church remains the mystical body of Christ, the bride of Christ. And she’s worth fighting for.

Keep this in mind, too, everybody: Every baptized person is priest, prophet and king. A couple of days ago,

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Getting to the Top

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pagan nations that surround her. This goes well beyond the move from polytheism to monotheism, for it goes to the heart of God's very being – his personality, if you will.

The psalmist sings about this God: "... the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." Israel's God, theologian Father John Shea, once noted in a lecture, is an insomniac – he restlessly paces the night skies, seeking our folks, for he has a plan. He comes to people in dreams and visions – often in the nitty gritty of their daily lives, because he has

a plan: "Abraham, I've got a plan ... Moses, I've got a plan ... Joseph, got a plan ... Mary, got a plan. ..."

But as biblical revelation moves into the Christian Scriptures, it is becoming clearer that this plan does not settle very well into Israel's messianic expectations. Simply put, the plan is Jesus of Nazareth. It is within the shape of this

particular life (Jesus') that he now calls out to people with his plan – to restore all things in Christ. So: He calls, through Jesus, low-income fishermen and a tax collector to preach truth and freedom to

the world; he will ask 12-year-old Agnes and 86-year-old Polycarp to shed their blood; he will ask Anthony to quit the city and Augustine to humanize it. He will call people like Martin Luther King Jr. and Oscar Romero to pour the judgment of the Gospel into the seats of earthly power and oppression.

This brings us to this 25th Sunday's Gospel. On their way to Jerusalem, it is becoming clearer that Jesus and the Twelve are not exactly in sync with one another. Upon inquiry into what was apparently a

lively conversation, Jesus discovers their discussions have been focused on themselves – on who of their group is the greatest. Silence reigns. Embarrassment. Once again, their misconception of God's kingdom is out there for them to consider: They continue to see a kingdom of power and grandeur, a kingdom where it matters who is at

the right or left of the king; a kingdom of influence and power where your political savvy can make you influential and powerful. Jesus breaks their myopic bubble by placing in their midst a child – the least

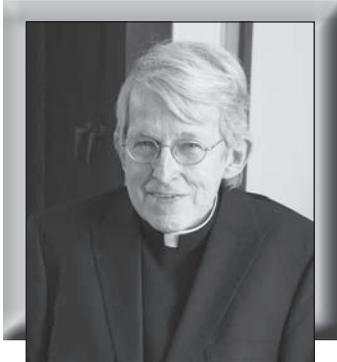
and most vulnerable in a community. So, quite contrary to their blueprint, the true disciple "receives" the child i.e., accepts responsibility of service to the least and most vulnerable. The old paradox surfaces once more: It is in serving the least that one is the greatest in the kingdom of God. The seats of importance in such a kingdom are not at the right or left of the rich and powerful, but at the feet of the poor and powerless – the place of service! This switch of perspective moves the focus away from one of priority or pre-eminence to one of service and availability – no superior status in the reign of God! What they are hearing from Jesus is that whenever they follow him in his mysterious ways of winning, by losing and finding life, by letting go of it, they are not going to end up at the top of the heap, but in the very depth and dregs of the human condition.

This insomniac, night-striding God, with his mysterious purposes and plans, has wrapped himself in the fabric of our humanity and our history. No remote, unconnected, disinterested God he; closer to us than we to ourselves, Augustine reminds us. "Where can I go to escape his presence," the psalmist asks (Ps 139:7). He cannot neglect or forget us, engraved as we are on the palms of his hands (see, Isaiah, Chapter 49, Verse 16).

The church in every age can, like the Twelve, misread (or not read at all) the blueprint. I misread it because often my concerns are me-centered: will I get credit? Will I be perceived as important? Will folks "that matter" take notice of me? Will I go higher up the ladder? etc.

Yes, this Jesus is forever walking onto the stage of my life story; he carries an agenda (the Gospel); and he is not alone, for he carries with him all the poor and lowly of the earth – the marginal people, out there at the edge, in the shadows, people of no importance. He also carries the rich, the important, the powerful – although they don't know it. My importance begins to shrink, is of less consequence, as I try to welcome Jesus and his agenda. Opening myself in welcome, I discover my agenda is of little or no importance. John the Baptist spoke it most simply, yet eloquently: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3:30).

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. He regularly writes a column for The Steubenville Register.



Father Walker

Why Remain Catholic?

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I talked about the kingly office. Can I talk now about the prophetic office? When Israel got off the rails – read the Old Testament, it happened on a regular basis: This community was meant to reflect the will of God into the world, Israel, the chosen people of God, but frequently its leaders failed, frequently its people fell into sin, frequently it fell away from the Torah and the Temple – what did God do? He called forth prophets: people like Jeremiah, people like Isaiah, people like Amos and Ezekiel, people like Zechariah. And they raised their voices – sometimes, yes, in

very angry protest – about these corruptions within Israel.

You're a prophet. Every one of you listening to me right now who is baptized into Jesus Christ is a prophet. Raise your voice! Prophets didn't cut and run when Israel was in trouble; the prophets spoke out. That's all of our responsibility, all of us who bear the prophetic charism.

You know, perhaps a last thought here. I said it a couple of days ago, I'll say it again. Whom are we fighting for? We're not fighting primarily to save our institutions. See, I'm with my old mentor Cardinal (Francis) George of happy memory. In the last talk

he ever gave to all the priests of Chicago, he said, "Remember, at the beginning of the church, there were no parishes. There were no schools, hospitals, institutions. There were evangelists," he reminded us. "There were proclaimers of the word." But, the point was the church does not depend ultimately on institutions. We're not fighting primarily for that aspect of the church's life. We are fighting for the victims of these terrible crimes. We're fighting for people who were sexually assaulted, sexually abused. If we cut and run precisely at this challenging time, who will be the prophetic voice on behalf of these victims?

So that's my little "cri de coeur," everybody – my cry from the heart. I get it. I get the frustration people feel. I share it. But, this is not the moment to abandon the church. This is the moment to fight for the church.

May God bless you all.

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.

Head of Mother Teresa's order: She was always like 'a mother to me'

ROME, Italy (CNA/EWTN News) — For Sister Mary Prema Pierick, Mother Teresa's impact did not come from her outward appearance, but from a personal encounter with the woman's unconditional and mother-like love and acceptance.

According to the Missionary of Charity, Mother Teresa's greatness defied her short stature, residing "inside" her. Upon meeting Mother Teresa for the first time, Sister Prema said, "It was not appearance, but it was the way she related to me," that was most striking. "That was an experience of a person who loves, and who accepts me, and who wants me, and is a mother to me."

Sister Prema was in her late 20s when she first met Mother Teresa in Berlin, Germany in 1980. She said she was inspired to meet the foundress of the Missionaries of Charity after reading the biography of her life, "Something Beautiful for God," by Malcolm Muggeridge. "I was impressed by the simplicity of life the sisters were having in Calcutta, and I could not forget about it," Sister Prema said.



St. Teresa of Calcutta

(Photo provided)

After this encounter with Mother Teresa, Sister Prema continued to feel called to join the Missionaries of Charity. "Then slowly,

as I became richer in my prayer life, I knew that I wanted to give all, all for Jesus," she said. "And I didn't look for a congregation

where I could compromise, having things for myself or conveniences, but I wanted to follow Jesus in this radical way of life."

Elected to the position of superior general of the Missionaries of Charity in 2009, Sister Prema is the second to take over the order after Mother Teresa's death in 1997.

Spiritual suffering is a "real deep, deep suffering," Sister Prema said. "For those who are in the blindness of sin, but also for those who are suffering the consequences of those sins."

The solution, to Mother Teresa, was simply to love Jesus and to practice mercy. "Mercy was like a second nature to Mother because of the love she had for Jesus. And she invited everybody to put their hands, and especially their hearts, to love."

To those thinking they may be called to a vocation to the religious or priesthood, Sister Prema shared, "Do not be afraid to love and to give yourself."

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning nun, Mother Teresa, was canonized by Pope Francis in 2016.

Pro-life pregnancy centers served nearly 2 million people last year

WASHINGTON (CNA/EWTN News) — Pro-life pregnancy centers drew nearly 2 million clients in 2017 and provided more than \$161 million in free services, according to a new report recently released.

“Pregnancy centers exist to serve and support mothers in the courageous decision to give their children life, even under the most difficult circumstances,” said Chuck Donovan, president of the Charles Lozier Institute. “This report calculates the impact of their mission of love in concrete terms.”

The institute is the research arm of the Susan B. Anthony List, which advocates for pro-life political candidates.

The report, compiled by Charles Lozier Institute staff, draws on national survey data from 2,600 pregnancy centers that are part of networks like Care Net, Heartbeat International, and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, as well as smaller provider networks. These pregnancy centers completed an online survey distributed by their national network, parent organization, state coalition or regional leader.

According to 2017 figures, pregnancy centers provided nearly 2 million people with free services, at an estimated annual savings to the community of \$161 million. Free ultrasounds alone make up an estimated \$100 million of those savings, not including the hours worked by registered nurse or medical sonographer hours, estimated at \$14.1 million.

Over 70 percent of centers offer free ultrasounds, an increase from 24 percent in 2010. There are 100 mobile ultrasound units affiliated with the centers.

Last year, credentialed nurse sonographers and registered diagnostic medical sonographers volunteered more than 400,000 hours of free services. In addition, over 67,000 volunteers, including 7,500 medical professionals, donated



Mother and child (Photo by Karnavalfoto Shutterstock CNA)

their time and skills to pregnancy centers.

The centers carried out close to 680,000 free pregnancy tests and provided close to 300,000 mothers and fathers with parenting classes.

More than 24,000 clients received support after an abortion, including counseling and referral to professional help when needed.

“Thousands of centers around the country provide a multitude of free services for millions of women, as well as tens of thousands of men, saving communities nearly \$161 million annually,” Donovan continued. “Nine in 10 people involved at pregnancy centers are volunteers, including an estimated 7,500 medical professionals. Beyond numbers like these is the incalculable value of lives saved, families strengthened, and women and men finding healing from the trauma of abortion.”

The Charles Lozier Institute report is the third edition of reports published in 2009 and 2011 by the Family

Research Council.

The latest edition includes an historical overview of pregnancy centers, as well as stories about individuals and families who have benefited from them. Initial efforts to help pregnant women were largely led by Catholic individuals and groups, the report said.

One section of the report addresses ethical and medical standards. Affiliates of the three largest national pregnancy center networks, Care Net, Heartbeat International and National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, in addition to eight other networks, follow a code of ethics called “Our Commitment of Care and Competence.”

The code, last updated in 2009, addresses “truthfulness in all communications; client information confidentiality; and compliance with all legal requirements regarding employment, fundraising, financial management, taxation, public reporting and financial disclosure.”

Under the code, all medical services must be under the supervision and direction of a licensed physician, following relevant medical standards. The ethics code covers scientific and medical accuracy, truthfulness in advertising, nondiscrimination, kindness and compassion for clients and a consistent life ethic, the report says.

Some pro-abortion rights groups have pushed for stronger regulation of pregnancy centers, claiming that they provide false information or misrepresent themselves as abortion providers.

In June 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked a California law and ordered a lower court to reconsider its ruling in favor of the law, which required pro-life pregnancy centers to post information on programs to obtain free or low-cost abortions. The court said the pro-life centers were likely to succeed in their claims the law violates their First Amendment rights.

Grandparents have essential role in families when it comes to faith

By Dan Russo

WAVERLY, Iowa (CNS) — Now more than ever, grandparents have an essential role in their families, particularly when it comes to passing on the faith to future generations.

“We had to realize that while society doesn’t value grandparents, God does,” said Crystal Crocker, to a group of about 120 people at St. Mary Church in Waverly. “You’re needed. You still have a job to do.”

Crocker, director of the Office of Evangelization for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, was the keynote speaker at a daylong conference called “Grandparenting: Leaving a Legacy of Faith”—the first event of its kind in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa.

Crocker is known for spearheading one of the first diocesan ministries in the nation focused on grandparents. She realized it was necessary to reach out to the elder members of the church because of the unique wisdom they can provide their families.

“You have to be a spiritual grandparent,” urged Crocker. “Our goal is to get our children and grandchildren to heaven.”

She spoke to the conference participants on God’s call to grandparents and on passing on a legacy of faith. The day also featured Mass with Dubuque Archbishop Michael O. Jackels and three breakout sessions that focused on tough questions facing grandparents such as: What do you do if your adult children have stopped practicing their faith?

Deacon Gary and Kay Aitchison, two pioneers in grandparenting ministry in the archdiocese, were joined by other archdiocesan church leaders: Mary Pedersen, director of Adult Faith Formation, and Matt Selby, director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

“Fifty-four percent of Americans over 50 are grandparents,” said Deacon Aitchison.

“We like to think that grandparents are blessings and anchors to our grandchildren,” his wife added.

In his homily, Archbishop Jackels shared some of his own experiences with family members who are not practicing the faith, saying that he could identify with many at the conference as one of six children who were raised Catholic.

“I’m the only one who still goes to church,” he said.

He encouraged people to show people the truth and power of Jesus’ love by their own actions.

“The wagging finger doesn’t work so well with adult children,” said the archbishop. “The most effective thing is the example, the imitation of Christ.”

Some of the attendees, like Jill and Dean Rowell of St. Isidore Parish in Springville, Iowa, were brand new grandparents.

“We have a 3-month-old grandson,” said Jill. “Our son did have his baby baptized, but they aren’t actively attending Mass, so we’re hoping to hear some ideas on how to encourage him and our grandson in faith and knowing God.”

During his session, Selby, a convert to Catholicism from evangelical Protestantism, offered guidance on reaching out to adult children and other family members.

“Don’t blame yourself,” said Selby. “There’s free will involved. You’ve got to recognize their free will and don’t beat yourself up.”

He and Crocker offered several practical “do’s and don’ts,” when reaching out to adult children and other family members who are not practicing their faith.

Both speakers emphasized the importance of prayer, fasting and sacrificing for children and grandchildren. They also offered this tip: Let parents be parents.

“Let the parents discipline and you can come in and be the consoler,” said Crocker. “Understand that it’s tough to be a parent. You can continue to influence, but you no longer have control. We can’t change people. God can change them.”

Bishop Monforton celebrates fourth White Mass



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, center, gathers with health care workers after a White Mass in the chapel at Trinity Medical Center West, Steubenville. The Mass is named for the color worn by those in the healing profession. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Diann Schmitt, Annie Fortunato, Michael Gromczewski, Annie McKenna, Kristen Burchell, Sara Henry, Rossli Kuanka and Yvonne Rozman. Shown in the back, from left, are Khoa Nguyen, Paula Grosc, Jeff Blake, Jim Mirasola, Lori Damis, Andrew Henry, Patty Milhoan, Steve Craig and Ann Craig. (Photo by Orsatti)

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Adena — Small zippers, large buttons, bright, soft material and very small stuffed animals/trinkets are being collected by St. Casimir Parish CWC. The items will be made into activity pads for individuals suffering from Alzheimer's and will be donated to Valley Hospice. For additional information, telephone the parish office at (740) 546-3463.

Athens — The Athens Catholic community women's study group will meet Thursdays, from 9:15-10:45 a.m., at Holy Family Center, which is located at Christ the King University Parish, to discuss "Pope John Paul II's Letter to Women, An Introduction to the New Feminism." To register or to order the book, visit www.Endowgroups.org. For additional information on the study group, telephone Eileen Sirois at (910) 545-8783.

Bellaire — St. John Central Grade and High School will hold an annual luminary memorial service at 6:30 p.m., Nov. 2, the feast of All Souls, at St. John Church. Luminaries, which cost \$5, will remain in the church throughout weekend Masses, Nov. 3-4. Copies of photos or poems can be turned in with the purchase of a luminary; names need to be marked on the back of the photos. For additional information or to purchase a luminary, telephone (740) 676-4932.

Belle Valley — Corpus Christi Parish will sponsor a hog roast from 10:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., Oct. 7.

Caldwell — A catechist's meeting on the "Decree on Child Protection" will be held at 6 p.m., Oct. 7, at St. Stephen Church.

New officers recently elected to St. Stephen CWC include: Beth Delancey, president; Angela Ackley, vice president; Lori Minyo, secretary; Krista Schoppner, treasurer; and Phyllis Davidson, historian. Commission officers include: Jean Lowe, spirituality; Judy Robinson, service; and Carolyn Estadt, leadership.

Cambridge — A Mass of anointing will be celebrated at 1:30 p.m., Sept. 22, at St. Benedict Church social hall. The Mass is for anyone in need of physical, mental, spiritual, psychological or emotional healing. It is also for those weakened by age, facing surgery or with a life-threatening illness, a heart condition or a chronic ailment. The sacrament is for healing, strength and comfort. A reception will follow.

Carrollton — Mass will be celebrated for the anniversary of the dedication of the new Our Lady of Mercy Church at 7 p.m., Sept. 24.

A life chain, to commemorate Life Chain Sunday, a pro-life movement, will form Oct. 7, from 2-3 p.m., on Ohio Route 43, across from Speedway. A reception will follow in the former Our Lady of Mercy Church hall. For additional information, telephone Dan Hitchcock at (330) 324-7635.

Fulda — Bible study will be held at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church rectory, Wednesdays, at 6:30 p.m. For additional information, telephone Carol Schell at (740) 783-3565.

Glouster — A bake sale will be held at Holy Cross Church, to support CWC activities, following the celebration of the 6:30 p.m., Oct. 6 Mass and the Oct. 7, 11 a.m. Mass.

Ironton — A "Decree on Child Protection" meeting will be held at 7 p.m., Sept. 23, in St. Joseph Church undercroft.

Marietta — Throughout the months of September and October, Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption parishioners will partner with Cross Catholic Outreach to fill "Boxes of Joy," for less fortunate children. Filled boxes should be returned to the basilica prior to Nov. 1.

Richmond — St. John Fisher Parish will hold an annual Oktoberfest celebration from noon-4 p.m., Oct. 14, at the church, 7457 Ohio Route 152. The menu includes roasted turkey and pork loin, haluski, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, stuffing, applesauce, salad, bread and desserts. Coffee, tea, punch and water will also be available. Cost for the dinner is \$10 for adults; \$5

St. Mary, St. Clairsville, book and bake sale



A book and bake sale, sponsored by the Women of St. Mary's, will be held from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Oct. 4 and Oct. 5, and from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Oct. 6, at St. Mary Church Marian Hall, St. Clairsville. Hardback books cost \$1; paperbacks cost 50 cents. Announcing the event are, seated from left, Vita Norris, Anne Farnario, Lucille Riley and Marie Berher. Standing, from left, are Helen Vascura, Linda Vicker, Bonnie Vazquez, Jean Sylvestri and Pat Tolbert. For additional information, telephone Vascura at (740) 695-5782 or Berher at (740) 695-1315.

for children ages 3-11; children under the age of 3 eat for free. Takeout is available by telephoning (740) 765-4142. Live music, 50/50 raffle, basket raffle and country kitchen, with homemade crafts and treats, will be part of the event.

St. Clairsville — Engaged couples planning to marry in a Catholic church in the diocese can attend an upcoming marriage preparation workshop from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., Oct. 20, at St. Mary Church Marian Hall. At the close of the workshop, the couple's engagement will be blessed. The workshop fulfills the diocesan marriage preparation. For additional information or to register for the day, telephone Michael Zabrecky, director of religious education at St. Mary Parish, at (740) 695-9993.

Toronto — The Toronto Catholic community CWC will join with Mother of Hope Deanery Council of Catholic Women to sponsor a "Box of Joy" Christmas collection for less fortunate children

around the world. Items, for boys and girls from 5-9 years of age, will be collected. Deadline for donations is Oct. 21. For additional information, telephone Beth DeGarmo at (740) 537-2962.

Wintersville — Our Lady of Lourdes Hospitality North American Volunteers, founded in the Syracuse Diocese, New York, in 2002, will present a "Two-hour Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience" at 1 p.m., Sept. 30, at Blessed Sacrament Church. The virtual tour of Lourdes will include a viewing of a piece of the Grotto rock from Lourdes, a bottle of Lourdes water, a eucharistic blessing and the praying of the rosary. A plenary indulgence will be granted to participants, under the usual conditions, who attend the event. Information about Our Lady of Lourdes Hospitality North American Volunteers is available at www.lourdesvolunteers.org. For additional information about the event, telephone Laura Zaleski at (740) 424-1237.

Around and About

Athens — The annual Pregnancy Resource Center fundraising banquet will be held Sept. 27, in the Baker University Center ballroom, on the Ohio University campus. The guest speaker for the event will be Melissa Ohden, the survivor of a failed 1977 saline infusion abortion. For additional information, telephone the center at (740) 592-4700 or email info@athensprc.com.

Athens — The Habitat for Humanity fall 5K fun run will be held Sept. 22, beginning at 9 a.m., at Peden Stadium, 200 Richland Ave. Registration fee is \$25 or \$10 for children 13 years of age and under. For additional information or to register, telephone George Bain at (740) 592-3828 or email gbain45701@yahoo.com.

Carey, Ohio — "Family Day" will be celebrated at the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation, 315 Clay St., Sept. 30. Mass will be

celebrated at noon; confessions will be heard prior to Mass. Benediction and prayers for healing will follow an outdoor rosary procession at 2:30 p.m. For additional information, telephone the shrine at (419) 396-7107 or visit www.olcshrine.com.

St. Clairsville — A euchre tournament will be held from 6-9 p.m., Sept. 24, at the Knights of Columbus Our Lady of Peace Council 4243 hall, National Road. Cost is \$5 per person; 25 cent euchre fee. Registration is required. For additional information or to register, telephone Bernie Costain at (740) 695-0124.

Steubenville — A "Vocations Awareness Day" will be held from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Oct. 12, in Finnegan Fieldhouse, located on the campus of Franciscan University of Steubenville. The event, sponsored by the university's priestly discernment program, To Page 11

Around and About

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will give anyone discerning a call to the priesthood or religious life an opportunity to meet with members of religious communities or dioceses. Admission is free. For additional information about the event, email vocationsday@franciscan.edu.

Steubenville — A hero 5K run/walk will be held Sept. 29, at Jim Wood Park, Canterbury Boulevard, to benefit the AIM Women's Center. In addition to the run/walk, the event will include a free 1K run for children, games, food and face painting. Participants can dress as their favorite superhero. Registration begins at 8 a.m. The 5K run will begin at 9 a.m.; the 1K fun run at 10 a.m.; and the 2K walk at 10:30 a.m. To register online, visit EverydayHero5k.com.

Steubenville — A natural family planning class will be offered by NFP International Sept. 29, at St. Peter Church. For additional information or to register, telephone Steve or Ann Craig at (740) 457-9663. An online course is also available at www.nfpandmore.org.

Steubenville — Starkdale Presbyterian Church, 4600 Sunset Blvd., will hold a 21st annual "Hymn Fest" at 7 p.m., Oct. 7, at the church. A dessert reception will follow in fellowship hall.

Steubenville — Franciscan University of Steubenville will celebrate homecoming weekend Oct. 5-7, beginning with the celebration of a 4:45 p.m. Mass, in Finnegan Fieldhouse, Oct. 5. An alumni awards ceremony will follow at 6 p.m., in the Tony and Nina Gentile Gallery, J.C.

Williams Center, and a student talent show will begin at 7:30 p.m., in the fieldhouse. Oct. 6 will feature the Kelly Roggensack memorial races, beginning at 8 a.m., with the blessing of animals at 2:45 p.m., near the Portiuncula Chapel. The St. Francis festival will be held from noon-4 p.m. in front of the J.C. Williams Center; a festival of praise will begin at 8 p.m., in the fieldhouse. Sporting events will occur throughout the weekend.

Steubenville — A "Vocations Day" will be held Sept. 29, at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Oratory, 700 Lovers Lane, with the celebration of Mass at 11 a.m. A lunch will be held at 12:30 p.m. A "DOY-MAR Day" will be held Sept. 30. Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m., refreshments will follow at 11:30 a.m. On Oct. 1, the Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus will celebrate their 65th anniversary of profession of their foundress, Mother Maria de Jesus Velarde, and the 20th anniversary of their pontifical approval, with the celebration of a 10 a.m. Mass by Father Thomas A. Chillog, pastor of St. Mary Parish, St. Clairsville, as well as Diocese of

Steubenville episcopal vicar for pastoral planning and personnel. The Mass will be celebrated in Spanish.

Toronto — A "Share His Mercy Benefit Banquet," sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother, will be held from 5:30-8:30 p.m., Oct. 20, at St. Florian Hall, 286 Luray Drive, Wintersville. The banquet will include a dinner and auctions. A vigil Mass will be celebrated at 4 p.m., Oct. 19, at Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery, Father of Mercy Chapel, at the Toronto motherhouse, which is located on Little Church Road. Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton will be the celebrant. Reservations for the banquet are required. For additional information or to make reservations, telephone (740) 544-5542, extension 115, or visit franciscansistersTOR.org/share-his-mercy-benefit-banquet-2018.

Wheeling, W.Va. — The annual novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague will be prayed Mondays, through Nov. 12, at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, 1300 Eoff St. Each week will include Benediction, a homily, music and prayers.

St. John Central remembers Sept. 11



A ceremony, remembering the terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States Sept. 11, 2001, was held at St. John Central High School, Bellaire. The ceremony included prayer, music and a reflection of the attacks. (Photo provided)

Theology of the Body conference planned Oct. 27 in Steubenville

STEUBENVILLE — A "Walking With Christ: Living Discipleship through the Theology of the Body" conference will be held Oct. 27 at Holy Family Church, Steubenville.

The conference begins at 8:30 a.m., with the celebration of Mass. Msgr. Gerald E. Calovini, pastor of Holy Family Parish, will be the celebrant and Father Thomas Loya, a Byzantine Catholic priest and the host of radio programs for EWTN, will be the homilist.

The first presentation, "The Theology of the Body and the Eucharist," will be presented by Father Loya. "Theology of the Body: So What? Who Cares? And What's In It For Me?" will be presented by Greg and Lisa Popcak. The Popcaks are authors and speakers, who both host a EWTN show on radio. The third presentation, "The Holy Family: Inspiration for Discipleship in

Modern Families," will be presented by Cindy Costello. Costello is a teacher, catechist and speaker, who assists with the women's ministry at Franciscan University of Steubenville.

The conference will conclude at 2 p.m.

Admission costs include lunch. Cost for admission is \$20 per person, \$30 per couple, before Oct. 15; cost is \$25 per person, \$35 per couple, after Oct. 15. Cost for students is \$10 and clergy or religious will be admitted for free. Checks can be made payable to the Diocese of Steubenville. Groups rates may be available.

For additional information, contact Joseph A. Schmidt, director, diocesan Office of Marriage, Family and Respect Life, at (740) 373-3643 or email jschmidt@diosteub.org. Information is also available on the diocesan website, www.diosteub.org/family.

Obituaries

Peter L. Barilla, 91, Triumph of the Cross, Steubenville, Sept. 15.

Dolores E. Dooley, 95, Steubenville, Holy Family, Aug. 23.

Rosaline "Dolly" Falasca, 94, Steubenville, Holy Family, Sept. 12.

Ernest P. Gampolo, 94, Steubenville, Holy Family, Sept. 12.

Rita M. Gyarmaty, 85, Triumph of the Cross, Steubenville, Sept. 4.

Carol J. Locascio, 79, Follansbee, West Virginia, Holy Family, Steubenville, Aug. 16.

James W. Marquis, 78, Steubenville,

Holy Family, Sept. 6.

Bonnie Parrish, 63, St. Gabriel, Minerva, Sept. 3.

Jose F. Poyo, 98, Steubenville, Holy Family, Aug. 18.

Rose R. Sczrubka, 100, Triumph of the Cross, Steubenville, Sept. 14.

Vincent "Jim" J. Talamonti, 57, Triumph of the Cross, Steubenville, Sept. 6.

Lawrence "Larry" Thompson, 76, Steubenville, Holy Family, Sept. 12.

Michael J. Walkosky, 78, Steubenville, Holy Family, Aug. 27.

 **Sacred Heart Making a Difference Dinner & Holy Hour**

Dinner & Holy Hour
October 16th

6:00 p.m. Dinner
7:00 p.m. Holy Hour

Holy Rosary Church
Marian Room
and Church
204 Rosemont Ave.
Steubenville, Ohio

Future Dates:
Nov. 13
& Dec. 11



*Be empowered by God's love through prayer
and make a difference in the Church,
in the revitalization of our city,
and for those suffering.*

RSVP www.sacredheartcenterofhope.org/events

Pope orders investigation into the allegations against Wheeling's bishop

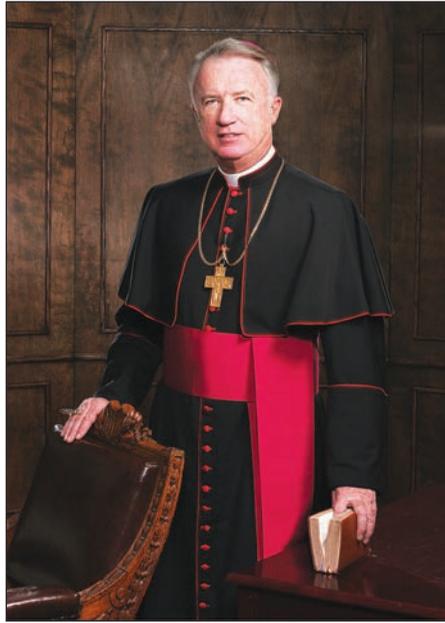
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, and has instructed Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore to conduct an investigation into allegations that Bishop Bransfield sexually harassed adults.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Vatican nuncio to the United States, announced Bishop Bransfield's retirement Sept. 13 and the appointment of Archbishop Lori as apostolic administrator of Wheeling-Charleston.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore released the news that Archbishop Lori had received a specific charge from the pope to investigate allegations against the bishop.

In his celebration of Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, in Wheeling, Sept. 15, Archbishop Lori said he will be with the Catholics of West Virginia on the journey to "healing and reconciliation."

"It will be my duty, privilege and joy to serve as your shepherd — to care for you as members of the Lord's flock and to journey with you toward healing, reconciliation and a hopeful future," Archbishop Lori said. "We have all been jarred by the news regarding Bishop Bransfield, in particular, the allegations of sexual harassment of adults leveled against him, allegations



(Photo provided)

Bishop Michael J. Bransfield

which must now be carefully and fairly investigated.

"I assure you that this investigation will begin promptly and, while I have been asked to oversee it, it will actually be conducted by competent laypersons with the necessary skills," he continued. "The goal of this investigation is to arrive at the truth and justice for the good of individuals involved and for the common good of the

church we love."

In response, the diocese established a hotline — (833) 272-4225 — for people wanting to share information related to the investigation.

Bishop Bransfield had headed the state-wide diocese since his episcopal ordination and installation in February 2005.

A Philadelphia native, Bishop Bransfield is 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to turn in their resignation.

In 2012, Bishop Bransfield criticized what he called "false hearsay statements" that were made during a Philadelphia trial of two priests on sex abuse-related charges.

The bishop wrote in a letter to priests and people of his diocese that a "hearsay allegation" that he had engaged in improper conduct with a high school student in the 1970s "has been put to rest" by the student in question and others.

"I can only repeat what I have stated before publicly: I have never abused anyone," the bishop said then.

The allegation surfaced during the trial of Msgr. William Lynn, former secretary of clergy in the Philadelphia Archdiocese, on charges of child endangerment; he was later found guilty of one count and sentenced to a prison term.

At the trial, a witness testified that a now-defrocked priest had told him that a young

man in a car with then-Father Bransfield was being abused by Father Bransfield. Ronald Rock, a Philadelphia business executive, later publicly identified himself as that young man.

The diocese said in a news release accompanying the bishop's letter that Rock confirmed he was the boy in the car and that nothing inappropriate occurred. A second student who was present during the weekend in question also confirmed no inappropriate conduct occurred.

Bishop Bransfield also said at the time that another allegation raised in 2007, by a former student, and dating back to the 1970s had been investigated by the Philadelphia Archdiocese and that Cardinal Justin Rigali, head of the archdiocese at the time, "issued a formal determination that the allegation had not been substantiated."

After looking into the allegation, local prosecutors decided not to bring charges.

Bishop Bransfield was ordained in 1971 by Cardinal John J. Krol. His assignments included teacher, chaplain and chairman of the religion department at Lansdale Catholic High School. In 1980 he joined the staff of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, first as assistant director of liturgy and finally as rector before being appointed to West Virginia.

US bishops tell Pope Francis that abuse scandal 'lacerated' the church

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The leaders of the U.S. bishops' conference said they shared with Pope Francis how the church in the United States has been "lacerated by the evil of sexual abuse."

"He listened very deeply from the heart," said a statement released after the meeting Sept. 13.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, met the pope at the Vatican along with Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors; Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the USCCB; and Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield, general secretary of the conference.

The USCCB statement described the encounter as "a lengthy, fruitful and good exchange," but did not enter into details about what was discussed or whether any concrete measures were taken or promised.

"We look forward to actively continuing our discernment together, identifying the most effective next steps," the statement said.

Cardinal DiNardo originally announced that he was requesting a meeting with Pope Francis Aug. 16. The request followed the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report on sexual abuse cases in six Pennsylvania dioceses and the announcement of credible allegations of child sexual abuse committed by Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, the former cardinal-archbishop of Washington.

Two dioceses also had announced allegations of inappropriate contact between Archbishop McCarrick and seminarians, resulting in settlements totaling more than \$100,000.

In his Aug. 16 statement, Cardinal DiNardo said that the USCCB Executive

Committee had established three goals: "an investigation into the questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick; an opening of new and confidential channels for reporting complaints against bishops; and advocacy for more effective resolution of future complaints."

The U.S. bishops specifically requested the Vatican to conduct an apostolic visitation into questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick. Opening a new process for reporting complaints against bishops and the more effective resolution of such complaints also would require the support and involvement of the Vatican, since only the pope has the authority to discipline or remove bishops.

Following allegations by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano that Pope Benedict XVI had imposed sanctions on Archbishop McCarrick and that those sanctions had been ignored by Pope Francis, Cardinal DiNardo issued another statement Aug. 27 reiterating his call "for a prompt and thorough examination into how the grave moral failings of a brother bishop could have been tolerated for so long."

Archbishop Vigano's statement "brings particular focus and urgency to this examination," the cardinal's statement said. "The questions raised deserve answers that are conclusive and based on evidence."

Meanwhile, Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington has told the priests of the archdiocese that he will meet soon with Pope Francis to request that he accept the resignation the cardinal submitted three years ago when he turned 75.

The cardinal said this meeting is one part of a two-fold response he has concluded is the best way to serve the church as it moves into the future. The second is to participate in a process of healing for all those who



Pope Francis meets with officials representing the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at the Vatican Sept. 13. Pictured from left are Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the conference; Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of conference; Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors; and Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield, general secretary of the conference. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

have suffered abuse.

"It was clear that some decision, sooner rather than later, on my part is an essential aspect, so that this archdiocesan church we all love can move forward," the cardinal said in his letter.

Cardinal Wuerl said this action is a "fruit of our discernment" following the prayers and discussion that he held with priests of the archdiocese at a Labor Day gathering.

Cardinal Wuerl has been under heavy criticism following the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report in mid-August that detailed sexual abuse that more than 1,000 survivors alleged they suffered at

the hands of 300 priests and other church workers over the past seven decades in six dioceses in that state.

The dioceses included Pittsburgh, which was headed by then-Bishop Wuerl from 1988 until he was named archbishop of Washington in 2006.

After the grand jury report was issued, Cardinal Wuerl expressed sorrow for the suffering of abuse survivors, and he also defended his record in Pittsburgh, saying he reached out to survivors there, removed all priests credibly accused of abuse from parish ministry, and enacted strong child protection measures.