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# The Steubenville REGISTER

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## News Briefs

### Archbishop to lead first-ever dialogue

WASHINGTON — Archbishop Blase J. Cupich of Chicago will serve as the first Catholic co-chair of a new National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue, sponsored by the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The bishops' ecumenical and interreligious committee has co-sponsored three regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues for over two decades. Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Massachusetts, chair of the committee, said the time is right to begin a national dialogue.

The current regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues are the Mid-Atlantic (partnering with the Islamic Circle of North America), Midwest (partnering with the Islamic Society of North America) and West Coast (partnering with the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California and the Islamic Educational Center of Orange County). Each is co-chaired by a bishop and a Muslim leader from the corresponding regional organization. These dialogues will continue to meet and will work collaboratively with the members of the new national dialogue.

### Vatican appeals for more aid to Syria

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican joined international appeals for raising money to provide emergency and long-term assistance to the millions of people affected by the crisis in Syria.

Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, Vatican secretary for relations with states, attended the Syria Donors Conference Feb. 4 in London and said the Catholic Church would continue to help the region through its fundraising efforts.

The meeting – co-hosted by the United Kingdom, Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations – was meant to gather together leaders from world governments and NGOs to raise funding and support to address the six-year-long humanitarian crisis.

## Lenten message

*“Then Jesus approached (the disciples) and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations’” (Mt 28:20).*

This Lenten season is a “baptismal reannouncement.” As the first disciples witnessed Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection thus transforming them in God’s grace, we, too, are transformed in God’s enduring love throughout our Lenten journey. This “reannouncement” assists us in looking beyond our selfish limitations, instead to gaze into and to embrace God’s faithful love.

• Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton  
Diocese of Steubenville



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton and diocesan staff – from left, James G. Piazza, executive assistant to the bishop; Family of Jacopa Sister Mary Brigid Callan, stewardship and development director; Martin B. Thompson, information and technology director and Diocesan/Parish Share Campaign associate director; and Msgr. Kurt H. Kemo, vicar general, parish pastor and DPSC director – welcome Belmont County Common Pleas Court Judge Frank A. Fregiato, second from right, to the DPSC major gift dinner Feb. 4 at Undo’s, St. Clairsville. (Photo by DeFrancis)

## As 2016 Diocesan/Parish Share Campaign opens, bishop praises parishioners for their generosity

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — When Diocese of Steubenville parishioners gathered at major gift dinners, diocesan Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton praised them for their generosity – which he called a symbol of their love – to the annual Diocesan/Parish Share Campaign.

The 29th annual DPSC opened Feb. 1 in Ironton. As is customary, then, dinners moved northward in the diocese and were held in Athens, Feb. 2, Marietta, Feb. 3, and St. Clairsville, Feb. 4. The major gift dinners concluded, also as is tradition, in the northern part of the diocese. The final major gift dinner was held Feb. 8 in Mingo Junction.

Once diners had settled in, at Undo’s, St. Clairsville, Msgr. Kurt H. Kemo, diocesan vicar general and director of the DPSC, detailed the annual campaign. The diocese uses the dollars from the DPSC for the education of seminarians; assistance to the poor and needy; technology; health care for retired priests and Bishop Emeritus Gilbert I. Sheldon; support to parochial schools and parish schools of religion; publication of the diocesan newspaper, The Steubenville Register, and its mailing to virtually every Catholic household in the diocese, as well as making it available online; and liturgical renewal.

“When I say the word ‘stewardship,’ what word comes to

mind – money, right? Well, in fact, wrong. Stewardship is a way of life in which money plays only a part,” Msgr. Kemo told those seated around tables in the various locales in the diocese.

“Sometimes, stewardship is explained as ‘a sharing of our time, talent and treasure.’ And, that’s a nice way to remember it – three Ts. However, as I said, it is a way of life.”

An essay he said that he read by Sondra Wheeler has what Msgr. Kemo called a very good description of the connection between faith and stewardship. “She writes: ‘Christian faith does not begin with human beings; not with their condition or their actions, not with their duties or with the often pathetic character of their performance of them. Rather, Christian faith begins with and rests wholly upon what God has done: freely, preemptively, gratuitously, with no thinkable antecedent but God’s sovereign mercy.’”

“Faith,” Msgr. Kemo continued, “does not begin with us. It begins with the generosity of God. And, in return, I want to be generous because my heavenly Father is generous to me.

“Out of all of these definitions, in my opinion, the best explanation is found in the theme for this year’s DPSC: ‘Give  
To Page 4

## First-ever junior high rally March 9 in St. Clairsville

STEUBENVILLE — The first-ever junior high rally will be held from 6-8:30 p.m., March 9, at St. Mary Central School, St. Clairsville.

Alyson M. Radford, catechetical consultant, coordinator of youth ministry, Diocese of Steubenville Office of Christian Formation and Schools, announced the event, which will feature Bob Perron, Stooze 4 Christ, as the featured speaker.

A Steubenville resident, Perron is the director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (West Virginia). He has spoken at diocesan youth conferences and parish missions in more than 40 states, as well as several countries, Radford said. He,

too, has served as a parish youth minister, parish director of religious education and camp director.

Students in grades six through eight and their parents or youth leaders are invited to the event, which Radford said will include food – pizza – fun and fellowship, as well as Perron’s presentation. She encouraged youth who attend public or private schools or are home-schooled and those who are part of a youth group or are not affiliated with one to sign-up for the free evening. To register, telephone Radford by March 1 at her 422 Washington St. chancery office, (740) 282-3631, or email her, aradford@diosteub.org.

Youth attending the event must have a chaperone.

## 'Ask the Bishop'

STEUBENVILLE — Kindergarten through 12th-graders in the Diocese of Steubenville "Ask the Bishop," Jeffrey M. Monforton.

**Q:** Why do cardinals and bishops wear different colors?

**Kelly Gallagher  
Barnesville**

**A:** Many wonder why the cardinals, bishops and priests wear specific attire. For one, the color of the attire indicates one's office in the Church.

For instance, you will see me wearing a magenta (a type of purple) cassock for liturgies. This color has ancient roots, royal origins. The color magenta illustrates my role as a successor of the Apostles, as I have been entrusted with the sacred tasks to teach, to sanctify and to govern as Jesus instructed the first Apostles.

You, also, will see me wearing from time-to-time a black cassock with a magenta sash and red buttons and piping. The red, of course, is a witness to Jesus Christ's passion and death, while the 33 buttons on the front of my cassock are for the 33 years of Jesus' walking on this earth. The five buttons on each one of my sleeves are for the five wounds of Jesus Christ at his crucifixion.

Members of the College of Cardinals wear red, bearing witness to the passion of Jesus as well as to the sacred nature of martyrdom for Jesus Christ and his Church. The cardinal red is a striking reminder of the Apostle's reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

**Q:** How long can you stay a priest?

**Aubrey Sutton  
Ironton**

**A:** When a man receives the sacrament of priestly ordination the gift he receives is

an indelible gift, namely, it is permanent. He has been configured to Christ in a sacramental way to represent Jesus Christ.

For those who have attended a priestly ordination, you may remember the "laying on of hands," in which the communication of the gift of the Holy Spirit is imparted upon the candidate. At this point the priest is configured to Christ sacramentally and he shares in Jesus Christ's mission and is made one with him.

The priest's work is to share the kingdom of God, which one would say is here and not yet namely the eschatological mission of reconciliation of the world to Jesus Christ continues.

Please pray for all our priests who have been entrusted with the gifts to preach the Gospel, to shepherd the faithful and to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries.

**Q:** Why do we have both the Nicene and Apostles' Creed?

**Benjamin Shields  
St. Clairsville**

**A:** This is another excellent question, for those familiar with the Roman Missal, which we use at Mass, recognize that either creed may be an option for us to profess, depending on the circumstances. Make no mistake, neither creed is in conflict with the other.

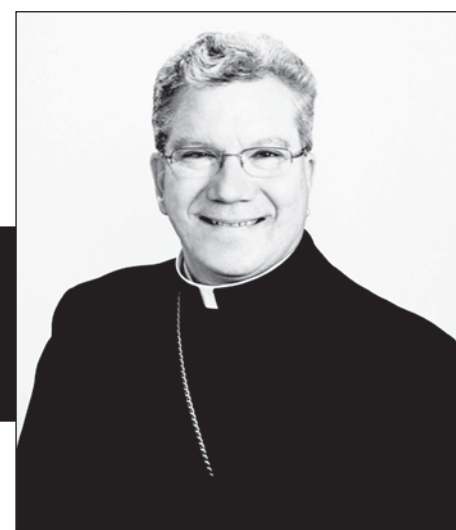
The Apostles' Creed is more ancient, for it is attributed to the era of the Apostles themselves. We must recall that in the early Church it was necessary to articulate the gift of the deposit of faith (treasury of faith), that Jesus entrusted to his Apostles and, in turn, they shared with their successors. So we begin the Apostles' Creed with the acknowledgement that there are three persons and one God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This truth is fundamental to our Christian identity.

While the Apostles' Creed enjoys ancient roots to the early days of our Church, we also profess the Nicene Creed.

The first Council of Nicaea (in present-day Turkey) occurred in the year A.D. 325. The principal reason for this council

to be convened was to address the heresy of Arius, who denied the reality of the truth of Jesus Christ's divinity. The council itself expressed quite pointedly that Jesus is consubstantial, or one in being with God the Father, sharing the same divine nature. Jesus Christ is begotten, not made or created. Furthermore, as Our Lady, Mary, received the gift of the Holy Spirit and became pregnant with Jesus, we have also the truth that Jesus Christ became man. Therefore, Jesus is both God and man.

The Nicene Creed was formulated in order to confront the Arian heresy and other misconceptions about Jesus' identity. Unfortunately, even now there are those who mistakenly believe that Jesus was just an angel or a super-human being when, in fact, it is because of Jesus being both God



**Bishop Monforton**

and man through which humanity realizes its true identity and its eternal salvation.

As we begin our season of Lent, may we find consolation that it is our Lord Jesus who walks with us as we climb the Easter Mountain. *May this season be a source of grace to you and your family.*

To "Ask the Bishop," address questions to Joseph M. Taylor, catechetical consultant, Diocese of Steubenville Office of Christian Formation and Schools. Taylor can be reached via the U.S. Postal Service, P.O. Box 969, Steubenville, OH 43952; email, jtaylor@diosteub.org or telephone, (740) 282-3631.

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**Msgr. John Michael Campbell, Diocese of Steubenville delegate for religious and rector of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, right, processes in the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Oratory, Steubenville, to begin the closing Mass for the Year of Consecrated Life. (Photo by DeFrancis)**

## Year of Consecrated Life ends with Feb. 2 Mass

STEUBENVILLE — On the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, religious and laypeople gathered in the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Oratory at the invitation of the Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus to celebrate the closing of the Year of Consecrated Life.

Pope Francis declared the Year of Consecrated Life that began the First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 30, 2014, and closed on the World Day of Consecrated Life, Feb. 2.

Msgr. John Michael Campbell, delegate for religious for the Diocese of Steubenville and rector of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, celebrated the Mass that concluded the Year of Consecrated Life in the diocese.

He said, “At this celebration of the conclusion of the Year of Consecrated Life, we are grateful to you religious because you are the exceptions to what our society values. At the heart of religious life is the call to seek God and be available to his mission. The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience – the mark of consecrated life – are frequently perceived as vows of having no money, having no relationships of any depth, and having no free will. The perception is obviously negative and incorrect. Your vows are entirely positive. They are a call to an attitude of joy in sharing our material goods and a spirituality of love; a commitment to right relationships with all others, with all that exists and with God; and a commitment to careful listening to the voice of God in our lives through prayerful attention.”

The evening’s celebration, Msgr. Campbell said, was to

gather and laud “the good news that there are people in this world who are living examples for all of us to imitate and there are people in this world who take commitment seriously – you who are examples of consecrated life serving the Lord and his church in our Diocese of Steubenville.”

He pointed out that “since the end of the early Christian persecutions, the church has never lived without consecrated persons – those who witness to radical discipleship by leaving everything to follow Christ in poverty, chastity and obedience. These witnesses were called to respond fully to the mystery of God’s call – a gift from God. Without this great sign – which includes each one of you – the church would grow cold, the Gospel would become stagnant and the ‘salt’ of faith would lose its savor.

“You religious are prophetic since you are, as Pope Francis wrote in the letter that launched this year, ‘Beholden to no one but God.’ You live the gospel without knowing what the future may bring. God leads you day-by-day back home to the house of our Father. You live your mission and ministry as Pope Francis exhorts today – cheerfully. You do ordinary things, extraordinarily well. You read into the ordinary circumstances of life and speak into them, with commitment, energy, hope and determination, bringing into reality the work of gospel justice. You roll up your sleeves and do the ordinary but extraordinary work of God’s mission. You live well, and leave behind a transformed world for those who will come after us.

As he expressed his thank you to the religious, Msgr. Campbell said to them, “The church needs you religious. ...”

## Bishop Monforton’s Schedule

### February

- 14 Mass, St. Joseph Church, Toronto, 9 a.m.  
Rites of Election and Recognition of Candidates for Full Initiation in the Church, St. Agnes Church, Mingo Junction, 2 p.m.
- 15 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 8:30 a.m.  
Luncheon with priests, Steubenville, noon
- 16 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.  
Priests’ Personnel Board meeting, St. Clairsville, 1:30 p.m.
- 17 Mass and seminarian candidacy, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, 7 a.m.
- 18 WAOB radio segment, 7:40 a.m., 8:40 a.m. and 6:40 p.m.
- 21 Rites of Election and Recognition of Candidates for Full Initiation in the Church, the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, 2:30 p.m.
- 22 Mass, the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, 7:45 a.m.
- 23 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.
- 24 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 8:30 a.m.
- 26 Diocesan staff retreat for Year of Mercy, Franciscan Sisters Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother Motherhouse, Toronto, 9 a.m.
- 27 Diocesan Men’s Day of Renewal Mass, St. Stephen Church, Caldwell, 2 p.m.

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Remit check or money order for \$15 per book payable to St. Nicholas Church, 410 Sixth St., McKeesport, PA 15132; do not call on Sundays.

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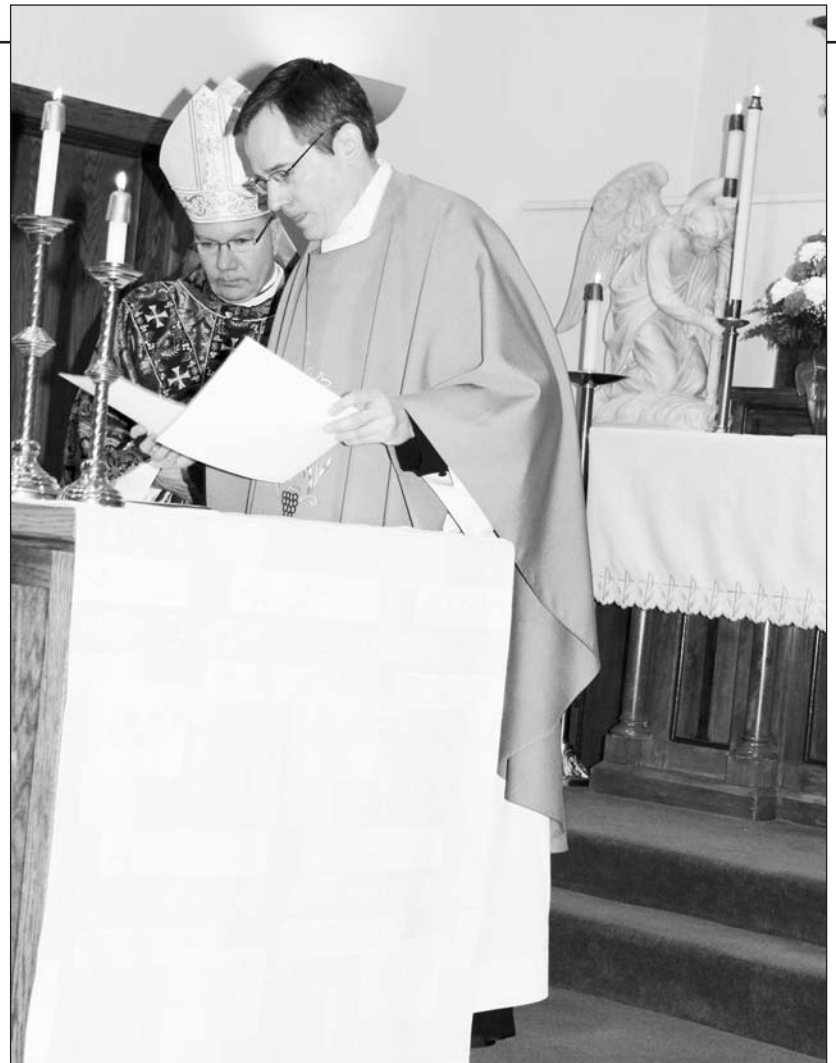
FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

World Marriage Day Feb. 14

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Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton blesses the throat of a resident of Summit Acres Inc. Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation. Feb. 3 is the feast day of St. Blaise of Sebaste, who reputedly miraculously cured a little boy who nearly died of a fish bone in his throat. The bishop, along with Father Wayne E. Morris, right, singing as he and Father Chester J. Pabin, left, process, celebrated Mass Feb. 4 at the Caldwell facility to a full chapel. Father Morris is pastor of the Noble County Catholic community, which includes the parishes of Corpus Christi, Belle Valley, St. Stephen, Caldwell, St. Michael, Carlisle, and St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Fulda. Father Pabin is parochial vicar to Father Morris. During the Year of Mercy, Bishop Monforton is visiting the shut-ins in the 13 counties – Athens, Belmont, Carroll, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Jefferson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble and Washington – of the diocese. To the residents of the facility, their families, skilled nursing and rehabilitation staff and volunteers, Bishop Monforton reminded that the treasure they shared was one another. He encouraged them to continue to spread the good news, through their actions, out of love. (Photos by DeFrancis)



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton and Father Daniel Heusel examine documents the two signed Feb. 7 at the altar at Sacred Heart Church, Neffs. The signings formalized the installation of Father Heusel as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish. Bishop Monforton presided at the installation Mass. Father Heusel, also, is pastor of St. John Parish, Bellaire, pastoral administrator of St. John Central (Grade) School, Bellaire, and serves as a defender of the bond and ecclesiastical notary in the diocesan Office of Church Law. (Photo by DeFrancis)

## As 2016 Diocesan/Parish Share Campaign opens

From Page 1

to the Most High as he has given to you.’  
“We are generous with our time in helping others in the world, because God has helped us. We are generous in doing acts of mercy, because God has been merciful to us. We are generous with our treasure (yes, money), because God has given us his greatest treasure, Jesus Christ. We are trustworthy and moral, because God has given us the truth.”

The diocese is dependent on the generosity of parishioners. “By your generosity in supporting the

DPSC again this year, you are allowing the diocese to move forward in the name of Christ, to minister to those in need, to teach in the name of Jesus, to lead in a troubled, immoral world, and to be a sign of better things to come in the life of resurrection,” Msgr. Kemo said.

He asked parishioners to, “Think of all the ways in which your parish has supported you in years past through baptism, first Communion, confirmation, weddings, funerals. ...” If not for the diocese, parishes would not exist, Msgr. Kemo added.

“This is the Year of Mercy, as declared by our Holy Father, Pope Francis. He has asked us to each day focus on ways in which we can show mercy,” Msgr. Kemo

said. A generous pledge or contribution to the DPSC shows gratitude for God “by allowing us to continue his mission on earth,” he said.

Msgr. Kemo, too, had praise for the diocesan staff. “They give of their talents. Our employees are here to serve you and the needs of your parishes and schools.” Now, he continued, the staff is working under a five-year strategic plan done “under the direction of our bishop that keeps us focused on moving forward in a thoughtful and meaningful

“Give to the Most High as he has given to you” manner. We worked on it in small groups,

each group analyzing different areas of need in our diocese. It was a chore, but it has mighty results.”

Diocesan employees, priests and religious began the first phase of this year’s campaign by pledging approximately \$105,000.

The goal for this year’s campaign is \$1,240,000, unchanged from the 2015 DPSC. “This is good for both the diocese and the parishes since by keeping the goal the same, parishes will receive a larger rebate than if the goal were raised,” Msgr. Kemo said. Money pledged and collected above a parish’s goal is returned to it. In the 2015 campaign, nearly \$950,000 was rebated to parishes, David A. Franklin, diocesan comptroller said.



Though Msgr. Kemo acknowledged that times are difficult, he asked parishioners to be part of the Year of Mercy and put their trust in God to provide for their needs. “The sacrifice, which you make, will not go unnoticed by our Lord. He will continue to bless you in ways, which you did not even expect. ... Each of us ... is a recipient of the mercy and gifts of the Most High – even to the point of sacrificing his only Son for our salvation. It is our responsibility to show our gratitude to him for all he has given to us. ...”

The annual campaign will continue with a taped message from Bishop Monforton that will be played in parishes and with parishioners in the pew asked to make

pledges to the DPSC.

DPSC pledges or one-time gifts to the campaign should be made in parishes, Martin B. Thompson, DPSC associate director, stressed. Pledge cards will be mailed to parishioners, or will be available at parishes.

Pledges can be paid with cash, a personal check or with a credit card or automatic fund transfer from a checking account by clicking [onlinepayments.diosteub.org](http://onlinepayments.diosteub.org).

Questions on the DPSC can be addressed to Msgr. Kemo at the chancery, (740) 282-3631 or via email, [kkemo@diosteub.org](mailto:kkemo@diosteub.org), or Thompson, also, at the chancery or email, [mthompson@diosteub.org](mailto:mthompson@diosteub.org).

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**Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary School, Steubenville, students had a “Soup’er Bowl Competition” and collected nonperishable items for distribution by the Samaritan House in downtown Steubenville. Classes competed with each other and fifth-graders were the winners. The students from the two fifth-grade classrooms with their teachers, Angela Younce, left, and Marian Barker, right, show off some of the 1,167 canned and boxed foods they collected. Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary School students collected 4,161 items, in all. (Photo provided)**

## Applications open for dollars for school tuition

STEUBENVILLE — Parents or guardians who want assistance from the Immaculate Heart Fund for their child or children who attend a parochial school in the Diocese of Steubenville face deadlines.

Paul D. Ward, director, diocesan Office of Christian Formation and Schools, said Immaculate Heart Fund disbursements for the 2016-17 school year will be made in coming months at the direction of Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton.

In a letter to parents and/or guardians, Ward said, “Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing a Catholic education for your child or children. Your investment in the future and faith of your family is commendable. Catholic schools have an outstanding track record of success. This success can be attributed to a number of factors.” He included three categories – a rigorous curriculum, a Christian focus and commitment to parents.

“Catholic schools establish very clear academic goals,” Ward wrote. “We set high expectations for our students, and believe that every child has the potential to meet those expectations. On average, nationwide, about 94 percent of all Catholic school graduates also graduate from college.”

“Catholic schools seek to develop the Christ-like person,” Ward said. “Catholic school students are taught to recognize the presence of Christ in them and in each other. This reverence permeates all aspects of school life.”

“Catholic schools,” too, Ward wrote, “recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children. The school serves the parents and works with them for the good of the children.”

To apply for financial assistance, parents must either complete a paper application or apply online at [www.online.factsmgt.com/aid](http://www.online.factsmgt.com/aid). The diocese utilizes the FACTS Management Co. to assist in how to best allocate financial assistance to families, Ward explained. There is no fee for the application, if application is made on or before the April 25 application deadline.

“We are strongly encouraging families to use the online

application format,” wrote Ward. However, if that is not possible, parents or guardians should contact schools or the Office of Christian Formation and Schools, 422 Washington St., for a paper application. Ward stressed that applicants must complete all required fields in the application and send all required documentation with the form.

“Missing the deadline will affect eligibility,” Ward said.

Once the application has been made, applicants may be asked to provide additional documentation to verify information submitted, Ward said. FACTS usually requests this through the email address indicated on the application, he pointed out. All verification information required must be received by FACTS no later than May 16.

Applications that have missing data or missing requested verification information after the May deadline will not be considered for an Immaculate Heart Fund award.

Assistance in completing the form or questions should be addressed to FACTS Applicant Service Center, (866) 315-9262. Questions to Ward can be directed to him at his chancery office, telephone (740) 282-3631.

The Immaculate Heart Fund was created by former Steubenville Bishop R. Daniel Conlon to provide tuition assistance to fill gaps that occur for parents of Catholic schoolchildren not satisfied by other means, such as parishes or schools.

The fund was established through private donations after it was determined that cost is the biggest factor that prevents parents or guardians from sending their child or children to parochial schools in the diocese.

A special collection will be taken Sept. 25 in parishes to support the fund.

Awards to the Immaculate Heart Fund will be announced in June. To date, 1,758 applications have been made to the fund, from which 1,044 awards have been made for \$243,891, said David A. Franklin, diocesan comptroller. During the most recent year, 243 applied for the dollars that were awarded to 144 students in the 13 parochial schools in the diocese.

## Bishop follows ‘decree’

STEUBENVILLE — In accord with the Diocese of Steubenville “Decree on Child Protection,” a diocesan seminarian has been suspended from his studies.

Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton took the action immediately upon learning that Joel A. Wright had been arrested in California for allegedly traveling with the intent to engage in a sexual act with a minor.

Wright was a first-year pre-theology student at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio. He began his studies there in the fall of 2015. His arrest came in late January, shortly after the start of the second semester of the 2015-16 school year. Wright, who grew up in Vermont, has not spent time in a Diocese of Steubenville parish. The 23-year-old made application to the diocese to study for ordination to the priesthood after receiving an undergraduate degree from a Kentucky college and spending a year as a graduate student in theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville.

A seminarian is accepted for study with the diocese after a screening process, which includes psychological testing and a background check by state and federal law enforcement. During study, usually six years, sometimes eight, at a seminary, the seminarian continues to be evaluated before he is ordained to the priesthood.

The diocesan “Decree on Child Protection” was drafted in 2003. The decree is supported by a Diocese of Steubenville Child Protection Review Board. The decree is proposed to prevent the abuse of children and adolescents, as well as provide a system for handling incidents of abuse after they occur. Anyone who is a religious or in a paid or volunteer position who suspects child abuse should contact Msgr. Kurt H. Kemo, diocesan vicar general, and civilian authorities. Any victim harmed by a priest or anyone serving on behalf of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Steubenville is urged to contact diocesan and local secular authorities. Msgr. Kemo can be reached at the chancery in Steubenville – telephone (740) 282-3631 or email, [kkemo@diosteub.org](mailto:kkemo@diosteub.org).

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## St. John Paul II

# Death of Christ: A Fact of History

By Diocese of Steubenville  
Bishop Emeritus Gilbert I. Sheldon

There is something very unusual about the creeds that we use, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, etc. They all mention the name of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea under whom Jesus was crucified. It is the only place in the church's liturgy where a secular official is actually named. His existence can be verified in Roman history, entirely independent of the Bible. It shows, among other things, that the account of Jesus' death was an historical fact. It was not a myth made up by over-zealous believers.

It raises the question: just why was Jesus put to death? Mark's Gospel tells us that he was "delivered up by the chief priest out of envy," and that Pilate was aware of that fact and considered Jesus innocent (Mk 5:10). Why this envy? He was a threat to their own prestige and power: he spoke "as one with authority and not like the scribes" (Mk 1:22), and, of course, he worked miracles!

From the very beginning of his public life, Jesus encountered opposition. When he began his preaching career in the synagogue at his hometown of Nazareth, he declared openly that the prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in their hearing – by none other than himself. The reaction of his townsfolk was to take him to the edge of an adjoining cliff and throw him over – but he walked away unharmed (see, Lk 4:14-3). This was but the first of three attempts on his life previous to his trial before Pilate.

The Jews of his day believed in miracles. They were familiar with the stories of the prophets in the Old Testament. Unwilling to believe that Jesus was such a prophet, they accused him of being in league with Beelzebul, a sarcastic name for Satan (Mt 12:22-28). When he told a paralytic, before curing him, that his sins were forgiven, he was accused of blasphemy: "Who but God can forgive sin?" the Pharisees asked (see, Lk 5:17-26). They also found fault with his curing people on the Sabbath, apparently unwilling to concede that such power must come from God himself. "... (T)he Pharisees ... began to plot against him to find a

way to destroy him" (Mt 12: 9-14). Jesus was again accused of blasphemy because of his words that indicated identity with God the Father: When he said, "I solemnly declare it: before Abraham came to be, I AM. They picked up rocks to throw at him, but he hid himself and slipped out of the temple precincts" (Jn 8:56-58). On the occasion of a feast of the Jews, Jesus was speaking in the temple area when in the course of his remarks he declared, "I and the Father are one." Some of the Jews reached for rocks to throw at him. Jesus asked: "Many good deeds have I shown you from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" The Jews responded that it was not for any good deed, "But for blaspheming. You who are only a man are making yourself God." Jesus answered, "... (P)ut faith in my works, so as to realize what it means that the Father is in me and I in him." At these words they again tried to arrest him, but he eluded their grasp" (Jn 10:30-39).

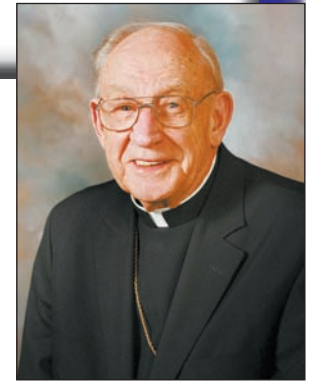
Note that in each case the charge that was brought against Jesus was that of blasphemy, which means, in effect, insulting God. Under Mosaic Law this called for the death penalty (similar to Islamic law today!). It was considered such an insult if a mere human being claimed to be God.

Things would come to a climax after the event of his coming to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration, the occasion we celebrate on Palm Sunday. Jesus' friend, Lazarus, had died. He deliberately delayed coming to him before his death. When he came, as we know, Jesus brought Lazarus back to life. This was the final straw as far as the Jewish leadership was concerned. They were determined to have him put to death and conspired with one of his own Apostles, Judas, to lead their enforcers to him. Next, there follows the scene in the garden with his arrest. He was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews. The Romans allowed local government up to a point. The Sanhedrin was composed of the caste of high priests, some influential Sadducees, and, by the time of Christ, some leading Pharisees. The charge they brought was precisely that of blasphemy. "I adjure you by the living God," the presiding judge, Caiaphas, said, "tell us if you are

the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus replied, "You have said so," meaning, of course, "You got it right," or words to that effect. Without asking Jesus if he could prove it, the high priest said to the court, "You have all heard the blasphemy. What is your verdict? They answered, 'He deserves death!'" (Mt 26: 63-67). This time, Jesus chose not to escape; his time had come.

The authority that the Romans accorded the Jews was limited. They reserved to themselves certain matters, including the death sentence. The Jewish leadership had to refer the case to Pilate. Meantime, they aroused a mob to cry for the blood of Jesus when he stood before Pilate: "Crucify him!" they shouted (Mt 27: 22-23). The charge of blasphemy did not mean much in Roman law, since the Romans ignored most local religious practices, as long as the Roman emperor was given his due. The high priests had to twist the facts around a bit. They accused Jesus of claiming to be the Messiah and, therefore, a king. That would get the attention of the Romans, especially when the Jews declared, "We have no king but Caesar." Against his better judgment, Pilate acceded to their wishes and allowed the execution of Jesus, although declaring his own distancing from the matter by ceremoniously washing his hands (Mt 27:24). He was not about to risk his career over what must have seemed to him a mere provincial squabble.

Who was actually responsible for the death of Jesus? It was the Jewish leaders that demanded it. It was Pilate who allowed it. But in the words of St. John Paul, viewing the matter in the light of God's eternal plan, "God asked from his beloved Son the offering of himself as a victim for the sins of all humanity. In the light of this higher perspective, we realize that, because of our sins, we are all responsible for Christ's death. All of us, to the extent that we sin, contribute to causing Christ's death – in expiation for those sins!



Bishop Sheldon

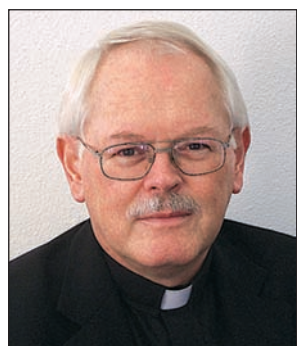
*From the very beginning of his public life, Jesus encountered opposition.*

## The Kiss of God on the Soul

By Father Ron Rolheiser

What is the real root of human loneliness? A flaw within our makeup? Inadequacy and sin? Or, does Augustine's famous line, "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you," say it all?

Augustine's adage, for all its merit, is not quite enough. We are infinite souls inside finite lives and that alone should be enough to explain our incessant and insatiable aching; except there is something else, that is, our souls enter the world bearing the brand of eternity and this gives all of our aching a particularized coloring.



Father Rolheiser

There are various explanations of this: For example, Bernard Lonergan, the much-esteemed theologian and philosopher, suggests that the human soul does not come into the world as a "tabula rasa," a pure, clean

sheet of paper onto which anything can be written. Rather, for him, "We are born with the brand of the first principles indelibly stamped inside our souls." What does he mean by this?

Classical theology and philosophy name four things, which they call transcendental, meaning that they are somehow true of everything that exists, namely, *oneness, truth, goodness and beauty*. Everything that exists somehow bears these four qualities. However, these qualities are perfect only inside of God. God, alone, is perfect oneness, perfect truth, perfect goodness and perfect beauty. However, for Lonergan, God brands these four things, in their perfection, into the core of the human soul.

Hence we come into the world already knowing, however dimly, perfect oneness, perfect truth, perfect goodness and perfect beauty because they already lie inside us like an ineradicable brand. Thus, we can tell right from wrong, because we already know perfect truth and goodness in the core of our souls, just as we also instinctively recognize love and beauty, because we already know them in a perfect way, however darkly, inside ourselves. In this life, we don't learn truth, we recognize it; we don't learn love, we recognize it; and we don't learn what is good, we recognize

it. We recognize these because we already possess them in the core of our souls.

Some mystics gave this a mythical expression: They taught that the human soul comes from God and that the

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## Facing the Evil One (First Sunday of Lent)

By Father Paul J. Walker

I've said so often that the Gospel stories are not history or biography – they are stories of faith. They are, thus, our stories, for our story and Jesus' story are one. Nowhere is this more true than in the accounts given by Matthew and Luke of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. (Mark's Gospel is short, not naming the temptations; and John's high Christology doesn't allow it.)

Matthew and Luke are almost identical, save that the last two temptations are shifted sequentially. Here on the First Sunday of Lent, Feb. 14, Luke's story offers us a kind of "road map" for our 40-day retreat as well as for our entire life's pilgrimage. Jesus' lot is our lot. These temptations concern an interior experience that would be part of Jesus' entire public ministry ("... he left him, to await another opportunity"). This ongoing experience of Jesus characterizes our own personal journeys and the journey of the church at large. Opportunities abound for the tempter to offer Jesus an easier path for his journey. The tempter will even engage Simon Peter in offering Jesus another way (see, Matthew, Chapter 16, Verse 33). Jesus' greatest struggle is waged in Gethsemane, where sweating blood, he prayed that he not have to drink this cup of suffering.

As I noted earlier, the story that Luke paints for us recalls an interior experience of Jesus that remained through his public ministry. It does not offer an objectively verifiable event that could have been recorded had the audio-video technology been available in first-century Palestine.

Part of a problem we have in "owning" this story for ourselves is the way in which we picture evil operating in the world and in our lives. The early '70s saw the publication of William Peter Blatty's popular novel "The Exorcist" and its subsequent follow-up as a movie. The movie sired at least three sequels and a "prequel," and it released a tidal wave of novels and films that show a fascination with the devil, evil, demonic forces and the apparent helplessness of humankind when confronted by these elements from

the "dark side." When the church (usually the Roman Catholic one) is represented in many of these stories and films, it is made to appear foolish and irrelevant. Priests, and religion in general, are portrayed as inept and powerless – anachronisms that are soon subdued or eliminated by the evil portrayed. In both literature and film, Satan and evil are depicted as ugly and terrifying. The old images of ugly creatures with horns and pitchforks are recast in even more horrific images. Evil is presented as scary and repulsive, something we fear and from which we flee. Quite the opposite is true – evil is alluring and seductive. It confirms our basest instincts and draws us in until we are trapped. The tempter wasn't trying to scare Jesus, there in the wilderness, he was trying to seduce him!

The tools of seduction remain as alluring now as they were in Jesus' time. Luke tells us Jesus has just come from being baptized by John and hearing his Father's voice affirm him and his mission. Jesus is led into the desert to be tempted for 40 days. Why the desert? It's because the desert is the place of solitude and silence, a place of self confrontation.

It is here, in the lonely place, where Jesus is tempted by the devil. He is tempted along the lines of his vocation: how to best be the Messiah, the anointed of God. The tempter knows the weak spots of the human heart, the places where we are most vulnerable. It is along these lines that Jesus is tempted: power, prestige and possessions – they are the power base of the evil one.

• **Power:** "Command this stone. ..." Use your power selfishly, create a "show"; give people material things, so they follow you for what they can get from it. It is a temptation to power for us – who is in control, in charge? Whether it is national policy, church policy or in our own relationships, power drives, consumes and blinds.

• **Prestige:** "If you are the Son of God ...," surely God will protect his own Son. For us it is the temptation to be somebody, be noticed, be held in esteem, not just part of the herd. Many people today feel a numbing isolation.

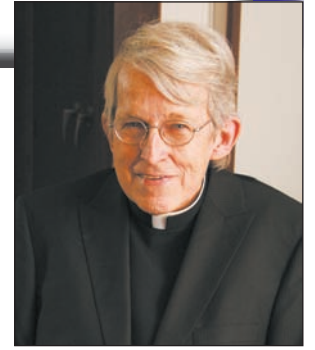
Parents want their children to "be somebody," to be successful. Many go to radical lengths to make it so.

• **Possessions:** Jesus is offered, "all the kingdoms of the world ...," the price being that he fall down before the devil. Our path will many times lead us into the wilderness where we have to face the same temptations: the need to be successful, the need to be righteous or religious and the need to have power and get everything (including others) under control.

Luke tells us the tempter departed "... for a time." So this struggle did not disappear; it returned again and again for Jesus, as it will for us. At rock bottom these are all part of the temptation to come to terms with the world, instead of uncompromisingly presenting God's demands to it. It is the effort to try to change the world by becoming like the world. But Jesus was certain that we can never defeat evil by compromising with evil – a Christian cannot stoop to the level of the world, but must lift the world to something higher!

So Jesus made his decision alone, in the desert. He decided that there could be no compromise in the message he preached and in the faith he demanded. Our journey holds the same temptations, warns against the compromises and promises the ultimate victory. Our inner road map is already drawn. Our path, dappled with both shadow and sunlight is redeemed. Jesus has already walked this way and awaits us at every turn of the journey.

**Father Walker is a Diocese of Steubenville priest, retired from active parish ministry. However, he continues to reside in his hometown, McConnellsville, and celebrates weekday and Sunday Masses at St. James Church there, as well as writes a regular column for The Steubenville Register.**

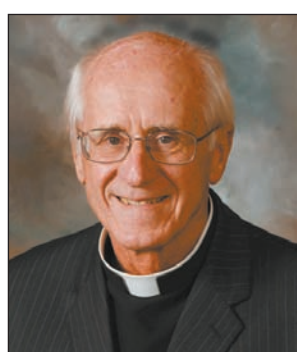


Father Walker

## Jubilee of Mercy Part 3

By Msgr. Thomas C. Petronek

All three synoptic Gospels relate the dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer regarding the heart of the Old Testament law. Matthew and Mark position their telling amongst the disputations in Jerusalem toward the end of Jesus' ministry – Mark, Chapter 12, Verses 28-31, and Matthew, Chapter 22, Verses 34-40. Luke, on the other hand, positions the story near the beginning of his great journey narrative (see, Chapter 9, Verse 51- Chapter 18, Verse 14) in Chapter 10, Verses 25-37.



Msgr. Petronek

In both Mark and Matthew, the question posed to Jesus by the lawyer is about the first or greatest commandment of the law. Jesus answers by quoting from Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5 – wholehearted love of God. And Jesus is the one who adds that there is a Second Commandment that cannot be left out of the discussion, namely love of

neighbor (see, Leviticus, Chapter 19, Verse 18).

Luke frames the issue a little differently by having the lawyer pose the question in terms of inheriting eternal life. Jesus says the answer is found in the Mosaic Law – how does the lawyer read? The lawyer answers by quoting Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5, and Leviticus, Chapter 19, Verse 18. So, Jesus is not unique in thinking love of God and love of neighbor is the heart of the law and the path to eternal life.

Luke continues the dialogue by having Jesus answer the lawyer's question: "And who is my neighbor?" One's brother, an acquaintance, a friend, a stranger, even an enemy? It is the introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan. Luke is unique in having Jesus tell this parable of mercy.

The story revolves around the issue of the man who was robbed and beaten being near death. Can someone be in contact with a dying man without risking defilement? The priest and the Levite are faced with the alternative of observing the laws of ritual purity or helping a dying man. Actually, cultural norms would dictate that both of them help the dying man. But they do not.

The Samaritan, according to Jewish thinking, is unclean and a foreigner. What the priest and Levite fail to do is

done by an enemy. Jesus says that when the Samaritan saw the dying man, he was moved with *compassion*. The description of what the Samaritan was thinking and feeling – compassion – is key to listing this parable among Luke's parables of mercy.

And, it is not a perfunctory act of compassion. The Samaritan bandages the man's wounds. He uses wine and oil as medicine. He then positions the man on his own donkey and takes him to Jericho where he entrusts an innkeeper with his care – paying up front whatever the innkeeper demands until the Samaritan starts back up the road to Jerusalem. The Samaritan is apparently going to make sure the man gets back to Jerusalem after some rest at the inn. The Samaritan is pretty obviously a man of means: cloth for bandages, wine and oil, a donkey and money for the expenses of the innkeeper. All this lavish and personal care by an enemy!

Now, listen as Jesus refocuses the identity of the "neighbor" in the parable. Aren't we inclined to label the man robbed and beaten as the neighbor, according to the commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself"? But, Jesus asks: "Which of these three (priest, Levite, Samaritan) do you think proved neighbor to the man who

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# Death penalty limbo: Supreme Court, states give laws another look

By Carol Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The death penalty in the United States is repeatedly getting hit by the pause button — which doesn't mean it is going away anytime soon, but at the very least it is getting a second look by state legislatures, courts and the U.S. Supreme Court.

This year, several states are looking at legislative reform of the death penalty and some are considering repealing it. In early February, both Delaware and Florida announced they were halting executions until the states' Supreme Courts determine the constitutionality of death penalty laws.

And already this year, the U.S. Supreme Court has weighed in a few times, with mixed messages, on capital punishment. In mid-January, the court declared Florida's death penalty statute unconstitutional, a decision that came five days after the state executed a man who had been on death row for 23 years.

The justices struck down Florida's system of imposing death sentences because the state allows judges, rather than juries, to determine whether a convicted criminal should get a death sentence.

Less than two weeks later, the Supreme Court reinstated death sentences for three convicted Kansas murderers, reversing the state Supreme Court's decision of tossing out the death penalty on the men known for the "Wichita Massacre" in 2000 for procedural reasons.

The two rulings, one which seemed to fa-

vor capital punishment and the other which didn't, did not make major waves in the ongoing debate since they were essentially focused on procedures, not the death penalty as a whole.

Raising more questions about how the court might address the issue down the road was a dissent by Justices Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the majority of the court upholding a controversial lethal injection protocol — they suggested the death penalty may violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

This year, the court chose not to act on individual pleas by death-row inmates, including a plea by an Alabama prisoner who was put to death in January and an appeal by a Pennsylvania death-row inmate asking the court to consider banning the death penalty across the United States. Another appeal, from a Texas death-row inmate, was just filed with the court Feb. 4.



**A guard escorts a hearing-impaired inmate down a corridor during a media tour of death row at San Quentin State Prison in California. (CNS photo/Stephen Lam, Reuters)**

There have been five death penalty executions so far this year: two in Texas, one in Florida, one in Alabama and most recently, one in Georgia — the Feb. 2 execution of a 72-year-old man who spent the past 36 years on death row.

Currently, 31 states have the death penalty, but the number of executions each year has been decreasing, according to the Death Penalty Information Center.

There also has been plenty of debate and discussion about the death penalty at the state level, where state Catholic conferences are urging legislators to repeal the death penalty or at the very least, as in Virginia and California, be transparent about the source of drugs used in lethal-injection executions.

The California Catholic Conference also is urging people to voice opposition to the state's new death penalty protocols — open to public comment until Feb. 22.

During a hearing in late January on this topic, Father George Horan, a volunteer chaplain at the Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles, said he disagreed with the new rule that spiritual advisers must leave three hours before an execution takes place. He also noted that in accordance with Catholic teaching and canon law, confessions with inmates cannot be conducted by phone.

The priest also stressed that the new protocols should offer more counseling to everyone who witnesses an execution.

"To me, it just seems insane that we invite people to witness executions," he said. "Gang members don't do that."

States such as Kentucky that do not have death penalty legislation on the upcoming docket will likely look at the issue in upcoming sessions, said Father Patrick Delahanty, a retired priest who is chair of the board of the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

A Jan. 28 editorial in *The Record*, archdiocesan newspaper of Louisville, pointed out that the priest is cautiously optimistic about the death penalty law

changing in the state and that he and other advocates continue to grow more encouraged about it.

In Delaware, a bill to abolish the death penalty failed to get enough votes in the state House Jan. 28, but the measure is expected to be reconsidered.

In Missouri, a bill to repeal the death penalty moved to the Senate in late January, supported by the state's Catholic conference.

In South Dakota, a Republican state senator, who is a retired circuit judge, is sponsoring a bill not only to repeal the death penalty but to commute current death sentences to life sentences without the possibility of parole.

The senator, Art Rusch, told the *Yankton Daily Press* and *Dakotan* newspaper that his views stem from his experience as a judge and sentencing a man to death in 1997.

"Doing that changes how one looks at the death penalty. It's too hard on the people who have to participate in it — it's too expensive — and it doesn't work."

He also gave credit to the pope, saying: "Pope Francis has designated 2016 as the Year of Mercy. I can't think of a better thing to do this year than repeal the death penalty."

*Follow Zimmermann on Twitter @carolmaczim.*

## The Kiss of God

From Page 6

last thing that God does before putting a soul into the body is to kiss the soul. The soul then goes through life always dimly remembering that kiss, a kiss of perfect love, and the soul measures all of life's loves and kisses against that primordial perfect kiss.

The ancient Greek Stoics taught something similar. They taught that souls pre-existed inside of God and that God, before putting a soul into a body, would blot out the memory of its pre-existence. But the soul would then be always unconsciously drawn toward God because, having come from God, the soul would always dimly remember its real home, God, and ache to return there.

In one, rather interesting version of this notion, they taught that God put the soul into the body only when the baby was already fully formed in its mother's womb. Immediately after putting the soul into the body, God would seal off the memory of its pre-existence by physically shutting the baby's lips against its ever speaking of its pre-existence. That's why we have a little cleft under our noses, just above the center of our lips. It's where God's finger sealed our lips. That is why whenever we are struggling to remember something, our index finger instinctually rises to that cleft under our nose. We are trying to retrieve a primordial memory.

Perhaps a metaphor might be helpful here: We commonly speak of things as "ringing true" or "ringing false." But, only bells ring. Is there a bell inside us

that somehow rings in a certain way when things are true and in another when they are false? In essence, yes! We nurse an unconscious memory of once having known love, goodness and beauty perfectly. Hence things will ring true or false, depending upon whether or not they are measuring up to the love, goodness and beauty that already reside in a perfect form at the core of our souls.

And that core, that center, that place in our souls where we have been branded with the first principles and where we unconsciously remember the kiss of God before we were born, is the real seat of that congenital ache inside us which, in this life, can never be fully assuaged. We bear the dark memory, as Henri Nouwen says, of once having been caressed by hands far gentler than we ever meet in this life.

Our souls dimly remember once having known perfect love and perfect beauty. But, in this life, we never quite encounter that perfection, even as we forever ache for someone or something to meet us at that depth. This creates in us a moral loneliness, a longing for what we term a *soulmate*, namely, a longing for someone who can genuinely recognize, share and respect what's deepest in us.

**Father Rolheiser is a missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate priest, president of the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, lecturer, author, retreat master and widely circulated newspaper columnist. His website is [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com).**

## Jubilee of Mercy

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fell among the robbers?"

So the Samaritan is the good neighbor. And the lawyer puts the finishing touch to the parable by answering Jesus' question about who was the neighbor: "The one who showed him *mercy*."

In the parable itself, Jesus says that the Samaritan showed the man *compassion*. Here we find the word *mercy*. Two different words are used to give substance to one's "love of neighbor."

In the previous article in this series, we heard of Jesus forgiving the penitent woman's sins. We considered that story among the uniquely Lucan parables of mercy, even though the word "mercy" was not used. In

the parable of the Good Samaritan, we are confronted with the qualities of being a good neighbor — mercy and compassion.

On display in these two stories — unique to Luke's Gospel — we see that according to Luke, the Jubilee Year of Mercy has two distinct yet very much related aspects — mercy that forgives sin and mercy that makes love of neighbor very real.

**Msgr. Petronek is a Diocese of Steubenville priest, retired from active parish ministry. He resides in Wheeling, West Virginia. A regular columnist for *The Steubenville Register*, he is a former two-time director of the diocesan Office of Worship and missionary priest.**



## More than 1,000 missionaries of mercy will receive a special mandate

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — More than 1,000 “missionaries of mercy” from all over the world will receive a special mandate from Pope Francis to preach and teach about God’s mercy, said Archbishop Rino Fisichella.

About 700 of the missionaries who were chosen by Pope Francis were expected to be in Rome to receive their special mandate in person during an Ash Wednesday ceremony in St. Peter’s Basilica Feb. 10, said the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, the office organizing events for the Year of Mercy.

For the holy year, which runs until Nov. 20, Pope Francis said he would designate “missionaries of mercy” to be unique signs of God’s mercy. He is also giving them special authority to pardon sins that carry penalties that only the Holy See can lift.

During a news conference at the Vatican Jan. 29, Archbishop Fisichella said there had been a huge response from priests and religious men who – with permission from their bishops or superiors – requested to serve as these special missionaries.

The original plan was to have just 800 missionaries, however, the number of requests was so great, 1,071 men ended up being chosen, Archbishop Fisichella said. The missionaries will serve in their own dioceses, but they may be invited by other bishops to visit other dioceses as well.

The pontifical council will send out to all the world’s bishops a list of the names and personal contact information of all the missionaries appointed by the pope, the archbishop said.

It will then be up to an individual bishop to reach out to a missionary on the list to invite him to his diocese, as well as cover expenses and provide what may be needed for his stay, the archbishop said.

Missionaries were chosen from all over the world, he said, including China, United Arab Emirates and East Timor.

There are to be 125 missionaries from the United States and 10 missionaries from Canada, the council said.

“It is only the pope who nominates these missionaries, not the bishops, and it is he who entrusts them with the mandate to announce the beauty of the mercy of God while being humble and wise confessors who possess a great

capacity to forgive those who approach the confessional,” the archbishop said.

Those who wanted to serve as special missionaries, but were not chosen, are encouraged to “work as witnesses of mercy in their own daily missions, in the parishes, institutes, and other communities where they offer their service with love,” the council said on its website, [www.im.va](http://www.im.va).

The appointed missionaries were invited to Rome for a special meeting with the pope Feb. 9. They were to receive their papal mandate the next day during a ceremony in St. Peter’s Square in the presence of the relics of Sts. Padre Pio and Leopold Mandic – both Capuchin priests who spent 14 hours or more a day hearing people’s confessions.

It will be the first time their relics come to Rome, Archbishop Fisichella said. The relics were to be brought to St. Peter’s Basilica by procession Feb. 5 and remain in the central nave in front of the Altar of the Confession until Feb. 11.

The pope requested their relics be exposed for veneration in the basilica, according to jubilee organizers, to be a sign for the missionaries of how God welcomes those who seek forgiveness.

## US scholar: Bible texts taken out of context lead to fundamentalism

By Michael Swan

TORONTO (CNS) — Most people have never heard a homily preached on Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, Verses 10-18. It’s kind of difficult to apply these God-given rules of war to daily life in the 21st century.

The part about enslaving the women and killing all the men and boys if the village resists attack has little application when asking a boss for a raise or negotiating a mortgage renewal.

The Bible was written in a very different place at a very different time by people whose self-understanding and world view was formed by forces people today might understand intellectually but struggle to feel deep inside.

Fortunately for Catholics, the war codes in Deuteronomy never quite make it into the Lectionary for Sunday readings. Nobody has to preach on them.

Father Elias Mallon, a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, said it need not be so: It is possible to find some deeper Christian meaning in difficult texts from the Bible. But it requires study and an understanding of the history embedded in biblical literature, which was collected over a 1,000-year span and finally accepted as part of the Bible more than 17 centuries ago.

Father Mallon was recently in Toronto for a three-way discussion among Catholics, Muslims and Jews about reading and interpreting difficult texts. The event was hosted by the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The New York priest has spent a lifetime reading, translating and understanding the ancient languages which, once mastered, gave him insights into the Bible and the monotheistic cultures of the three Abrahamic religions. He’s been a contributor to Muslim-Christian dialogue since 1985, and he is the author of “Islam: What Catholics Need to Know.” He also serves as external affairs officer of Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

Learning to interpret tricky, terrible and difficult texts in sacred Scriptures is not some obscure, academic challenge. When preachers and ordinary believers misinterpret their sacred texts, the result is almost always fundamentalism,

Father Mallon said.

“Fundamentalism is probably, and I mean this sarcastically, the ecumenical reality,” he said. “We all have it. It’s a problem for all of us – Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists. Right down the line, that’s the problem.”

Fundamentalism is usually the result of reading an ancient, sacred text as if it were a newspaper or a modern textbook – reading the words without any awareness of the culture or the historical circumstances in which they were first spoken, he said.

“All of our texts are ancient. All of our texts come out of a context,” Father Mallon said. “It’s a world that wasn’t pluralistic. It was more violent.”

The Islamic State, Boko Haram, al-Shabab, Ian Paisley’s “defensive militia” in Northern Ireland, Lebanon’s Phalange militias in the 1980s, volunteer militias in Jewish West Bank settlements all insist on plucking out bits of sacred texts to justify violence. The only way to prevent violent, fundamentalist readings of the Bible and Quran is to know and preach a more accurate, more sophisticated reading,



**Atonement Father Elias Mallon is a scholar of ancient Near East languages and culture who insists Catholics need to do a better job of reading the difficult texts in the Bible. (CNS photo/Michael Swan, The Catholic Register)**

Father Mallon said.

When Moses urges the people of Israel to take “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe,” the Bible is not urging vengeance, he said; it’s trying to limit the violence that was a feature of almost every dispute in the cultures of the ancient world. Blood feuds at that time demanded complete annihilation of an enemy. Every insult was met with the threat of murder extending to entire families. “Eye for eye” was a way of limiting the violence.

A thousand years later, Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that limiting the violence was not enough.

“Somebody said once – and I wish it had been me – as soon as you find God loving the things you love and the people you love and hating the things you hate and the people you hate, then you know it’s not God,” Father Mallon said.

The worst readings of sacred literature often come from people trying to read the other religion’s holy book and explain it, he said. When an angry Catholic tells you what the Quran says, a resentful Jew interprets the New Testament or a paranoid Muslim picks at the Bible, one can be sure there is a dangerous

misunderstanding.

“A sacred text needs a prayerful, believing reader,” said Father Mallon.

*Swan is associate editor of the Toronto-based Catholic Register.*

## Open God’s heart with prayer, Pope Francis tells Padre Pio Prayer Groups

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Praying is not like taking an aspirin, something one does just to feel a little better, Pope Francis told thousands of members of Padre Pio Prayer Groups from around the world.

Prayer is not a business negotiation with God, either, the pope told more than 60,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square Feb. 6. Prayer is a “work of spiritual mercy,” a time to entrust everything to the heart of God, he said.

The pilgrims were in Rome for the Year of Mercy and a week of special events that included veneration of the relics

of St. Padre Pio and St. Leopold Mandic, both Capuchin friars who often spent more than 12 hours a day hearing confessions.

Although many faithful believe the body of Padre Pio, who died in 1968, is incorrupt, church officials have never made such a claim. When his body was exhumed in 2008, church officials said it was in “fair condition.” Chemicals were used to ensure its long-term preservation and the face was covered with a silicone mask.

Pushed through the center of Rome Feb. 5 in glass cof-

fers on rolling platforms, the relics of Padre Pio and St. Leopold were escorted by Italian military police, dozens of Capuchin friars and thousands of faithful.

When the procession reached St. Peter’s Square – the boundary of Vatican City State – the Italian police stood at attention and the Swiss Guard took over the honor-guard duties. Cardinal Angelo Comastri, archpriest of St. Peter’s, welcomed the relics, blessed them with incense and accompanied them into St. Peter’s Basilica where they were to stay for veneration until Feb. 11.

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**Adena** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 3 p.m., Feb. 12, Feb. 26 and March 11, at St. Casimir Church.

**Athens** — Msgr. Donald E. Horak, a Diocese of Steubenville priest retired from active parish ministry, will hold an autograph-signing session featuring his new book "Unless Your Faith Is Strong" from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 20, at Little Professor Book Center, 65 S. Court St. For anyone unable to attend the signing, but still wanting a copy of the autographed book, telephone the store at (740) 592-4418, for additional information.

**Athens** — Fish fry dinners will be held from 4:30-7 p.m., every Friday during Lent, with the exception of Good Friday, at Holy Family Center, located at Christ the King University Parish. Proceeds will benefit the organizations of the Athens Catholic community.

A St. Patrick's Day celebration will be held at 6:30 p.m., March 19, at Holy Family Center, Christ the King University Parish, 85 Stewart St. Cost to attend is \$25 per person. An Irish dinner, dessert and beverages will be served. Entertainment will be provided by the Ohio Valley School of Celtic Dance. There will also be live music by John Healey; a silent auction will be held. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Athens Catholic Scholarship Fund and CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates. For additional information or to purchase a ticket, telephone Wanda Sheridan at (740) 591-5607.

**Belle Valley** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 p.m., Feb. 18, Feb. 25 and March 3 at Corpus Christi Church.

**Buchtel** — St. Mary of the Hills Parish School of Religion will hold a bake sale following the celebration of the 11 a.m. Mass, Feb. 21, in the church hall. Proceeds will help raise money to purchase a picnic table for the courtyard.

**Buchtel/Glouster** — "Our Father's Plan," an EWTN 13-week video Bible study, will be presented following the celebration of the 6:30 p.m. Mass, Tuesdays, beginning Feb. 16 at St. Mary of the Hills Church hall, Buchtel, and following the celebration of the 11 a.m. Mass, Mondays, beginning Feb. 15 in Holy Cross Church basement, Glouster.

**Caldwell** — There will be adoration from 8:30 a.m.-noon, from 5-7 p.m. and from 7:30-8:30 p.m., Feb. 12, and Feb. 19, Feb. 26 and March 4 at St. Stephen Church; Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 p.m.

**Cambridge** — A soup luncheon, consisting of homemade soups, breads, desserts and beverages, will be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 12 at St. Benedict Athletic and Events Center, corner of North Seventh Street and Steubenville Avenue; takeout orders will also be available. To order lunch for pickup, telephone (740) 995-0605. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Samaritan Center for Transitional Housing.

**Carlisle** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at St. Michael Church at 7 p.m., Feb. 18, Feb. 25 and March 3.

**Carrollton** — Throughout the Fridays of Lent, Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Mercy Church; confessions will follow.

**Chesapeake** — St. Ann Social Committee will sponsor Lenten night meals, consisting of meatless soup and bread, at 6 p.m., Feb. 12 through March 18 in the church hall; monetary donations will be accepted. Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 p.m. at the church.

**Dillonvale** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 3 p.m., Feb. 19, March 4 and March 18 at St. Adalbert Church.

**Fulda** — Mass will be celebrated and Stations of the Cross will be prayed beginning at 7 p.m., Feb. 12, Feb. 19 and Feb. 26 at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church.

**Gallipolis** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 p.m., on the Fridays of Lent, at St. Louis Church.



**Nancy Doerr, a registered nurse and St. John Fisher, Richmond, parishioner and Catholic Woman's Club president, takes Father John J. "Jack" McCoy's blood pressure. As part of "heart health" month, members of the St. John Fisher CWC will conduct blood pressure screenings after 6 p.m. Feb. 13 and 9 a.m. Feb. 14 Masses at the church, 7457 State Highway 152, Richmond. The women, too, will distribute a pamphlet on blood pressure. Coffee and tea will be served to those waiting for the screening. Father McCoy is pastor of St. John Fisher Parish, as well as St. Joseph Parish, Amsterdam. (Photo provided)**

In response to Pope Francis' request for parishes throughout the world to set aside 24 hours in celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, St. Louis parishioners will begin with praying the Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m., March 4, followed by eucharistic exposition and adoration, concluding with the celebration of the 5:30 p.m. Mass, March 5. At 9 a.m., noon and 3 p.m., March 5, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy will be recited and confessions will follow.

**Glouster** — Holy Cross Parish CWC will sponsor a valentine potluck dinner and bingo, Feb. 17, following the celebration of the 6 p.m. Mass, in the church hall. Those attending can bring a covered dish to share and a gift for bingo.

**Ironton** — The Ironton Catholic community Lenten mission will be held at 7 p.m., Feb. 22 through Feb. 24, at St. Joseph Church. Titled "Discovering, Living and Sharing Our Mission," the presenter will be Elizabeth Ficocelli, speaker, author and radio host. Refreshments will be served each evening. A presentation for St. Joseph Central High School students "Bleeding Hands, Weeping Stone" will be presented Feb. 24.

**Lore City** — "Monday Nights of Grace" will be held throughout Lent, beginning Feb. 15 at Sts. Peter and Paul Oratory. The Feb. 15 evening will begin with Stations of the Cross at 6:30 p.m., followed at 7 p.m., with a "Rediscover Jesus" discussion group. Following Mondays will begin at 5:45 p.m., with the sacrament of reconciliation; Stations of the Cross, at 6:30 p.m.; and the "Rediscover Jesus" discussion group, at 7 p.m.

**Malvern** — St. Francis Xavier Parish will sponsor Lenten fish dinners from 5-7 p.m., Feb. 12 through March 18 at the church hall.

"Praying the Stations with Pope Francis" will take place at 7 p.m., Feb. 24, March 9 and March 23 at St. Francis Xavier Church.

**Malvern/Minerva** — A video, "Untold Blessing: Three Paths To Holiness" by Bishop Robert Barron, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, will be presented at St. Francis Xavier Church, Malvern, and St. Gabriel Church, Minerva. The Lenten sessions will be held Wednesdays, Feb. 24, March 9 and March 23 at St. Francis Xavier, and Feb. 17, March 2 and March 16 at St. Gabriel, following the

7 p.m. "Praying the Stations with Pope Francis," and on the Thursdays of Lent from 1-2:30 p.m. in the St. Gabriel annex rooms.

**Martins Ferry** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed on Mondays during Lent, beginning Feb. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary Church.

As Lenten works of mercy, St. Mary parishioners will donate nonfood items, weekly, to the Daily Bread Center. Toilet paper will be collected Feb. 14; hand soap and bar soap, Feb. 21; dish soap, Feb. 28; toothpaste and toothbrushes, March 6; deodorant and shampoo, March 13, and laundry detergent, March 20.

**McConnelsville** — Lenten services will take place on the Thursdays of Lent, beginning Feb. 18 at 6:30 p.m. at St. James Church. The evening will include praying the Stations of the Cross, Communion, Benediction, a spiritual talk and discussion.

Throughout the month of February, St. James Parish CWC will sponsor a food collection for the benefit of the food pantry, which is operated by Morgan County United Ministries. Donations can be taken to the church.

**Minerva** — St. Gabriel Parish will sponsor a fish dinner from 4:30-7 p.m., March 11, in the church annex.

"Praying the Stations with Pope Francis" will take place at 7 p.m., Feb. 17, March 2 and March 16 at St. Gabriel Church.

**Pomeroy** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7:30 p.m., every Friday during Lent, at Sacred Heart Church.

**St. Clairsville** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 6:30 p.m., Fridays during Lent, at St. Mary Church.

Mass will be celebrated in Spanish on the third Sunday of each month, beginning Feb. 21, at 2 p.m. at St. Mary Church. Confessions will precede Mass at 1:30 p.m.

**St. Clairsville** — St. Mary Central School is accepting registrations for students in the preschool and prekindergarten programs. Preschoolers must be 3 years old and prekindergarten students must be 4 years old, by Sept. 1. For additional information or to schedule a meeting, telephone the school office at (740) 695-3189.

**Steubenville** — Stations of the Cross will be

## Around and About

**Athens** — Natural family planning classes will begin Feb. 20, at Holy Family Center, located at Christ the King University Parish, Stewart Street. For additional information, contact Bob or Sharon Colvin at colvin.sl@gmail.com or (740) 707-0882. Register for the classes at ccli.org.

**Canton, Ohio** — The Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration at Sancta Clara Monastery, 4200 N. Market Ave., will sponsor an Easter bread sale March 18 and March 19. For additional information, telephone (330) 492-1171 or visit the website, www.poorclares.org.

**Carrollton** — Knights of Columbus Our Lady of Carroll County Council 15401 will sponsor a fish fry from 4-7 p.m., Fridays during Lent, at Our Lady of Mercy Church hall.

**Columbus, Ohio** — The Columbus Catholic Women's Conference will be held from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Feb. 20, at the Ohio Expo Center, 717 E. 17th Ave.

**Erie, Pa.** — A third annual Erie Men's Conference will be hosted by 2232 Men, an evangelization outgrowth of The Reason For Our Hope Foundation, Erie, Pennsylvania. The half-day conference will be held from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., March 12, at Warner Theater, Erie. Permanent Deacon Ralph Poyo, a Steubenville resident, will be a featured speaker at the event. Cost for the conference is \$40 and includes lunch and parking. Group rates and student rates are also available. For additional information

or to register, visit www.2232men.com or telephone (814) 455-7364.

**Gallipolis** — Knights of Columbus St. Louis Council 3335 will sponsor a breakfast following the celebration of the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses, Feb. 14, at St. Louis Church, in Lourdes Hall.

**Martins Ferry** — Knights of Columbus Mother of God Council 1421 will sponsor fish fries, on all Fridays during Lent, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the council home, 25 N. Fourth St. Eat in or take out will be available. To place an order, call (740) 633-0528.

**Minerva** — The annual blood analysis, sponsored by the Minerva Rotary, will be held from 6:30-9:30 a.m., March 12, at 687 Lynwood Drive. To make a reservation, telephone (800) 234-8888.

**Mingo Junction** — Fish fries will be held from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and from 4-6:30 p.m., every Friday during Lent, through March 18, at the Knights of Columbus Msgr. Joseph F. Dooley Council 4361 hall, 117 Legion Drive. Eat in or carryout orders will be available; delivery will be available from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. To place an order, telephone (740) 535-8037.

**St. Clairsville** — The first gathering of "Soup and Sermon," sponsored by the St. Clairsville Council of Churches, will begin at noon, Feb. 17, at Calvary Presbyterian Church, 100 S. Marietta St. The March 2 gathering will be held at St. Mary Church, 212 W. Main St. Each week during Lent, a different church provides lunch consisting

of soup and bread, and the pastor delivers a short sermon. There is no charge to attend.

**St. Clairsville** — Knights of Columbus Our Lady of Peace Council 4243 will sponsor an annual spaghetti dinner March 5, in St. Mary Church Marian Hall, 212 W. Main St. Meals will be served from 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; takeouts will be available. Adult tickets can be purchased in advance for \$8. For additional information or to purchase tickets, telephone John Swan at (740) 695-0366 or Jeff Turner at (740) 695-2121.

**Steubenville** — Knights of Columbus St. John Neumann Council 11828 will host a monthly charity pancake breakfast from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., Feb. 14, in St. Peter Church lower hall. Proceeds will benefit the Harmonium Project, an organization established by Franciscan University of Steubenville alumni, which provides musical instruments and lessons for inner-city children. Cost for the breakfast is \$7 for adults; \$3 for children under the age of 12; and \$30, family maximum charge.

**Steubenville** — Natural family planning will begin a three-part meeting series at 3 p.m., Feb. 21, at Franciscan University of Steubenville, in the J.C. Williams Center. For more information, visit www.ccli.org.

**Toronto** — The Franciscan Sisters Third

Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother will sponsor a Lenten retreat from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., March 19, at Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery, 369 Little Church Road. The retreat will include prayer, discussions, the celebration of Mass, lunch, eucharistic adoration, Benediction, confessions and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Registration is required by March 7; suggested donation is \$15. Register online at www.franciscansisterstor.org or telephone (740) 544-5542, extension 112.

**Weirton, W.Va.** — Fish fries will be held from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., every Friday in Lent, at St. Paul Parish cafeteria, 140 Walnut St. To place an order, telephone (304) 797-1182. Eat in, take out and delivery will be available.

**Weirton, W.Va.** — Sacred Heart of Mary Parish will sponsor Lenten dinners from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., every Wednesday through March 16, at the church hall, 200 Preston Ave.; takeouts will be available.

**Wheeling, W.Va.** — Youth Services System Inc., an organization which assists the less fortunate youth of the area, is accepting bedding, slippers, towels, washcloths, etc. Items will be accepted between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the 18th Street facility. For additional information, telephone (304) 233-9628.

## Up and Down the Diocese

From Page 10

prayed at noon and 7 p.m., Fridays, during the Lenten season, at Holy Rosary Church.

**Steubenville** — An annual open house will be held from noon until 2 p.m., Feb. 28, at Bishop John King Mussio Central Junior High School and Catholic Central High School, 320 West View Ave., and from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary School, 100 Etta Ave.

**Steubenville/Wintersville** — A Lenten series titled "Reflections on the Year of Mercy" will begin at St. Peter Church, Steubenville, Feb. 17. Sessions will also be held at Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville,

Feb. 24; and Blessed Sacrament Church, Wintersville, March 2. Presenter for the series, which begin with the celebration of Mass at 5:15 p.m., is Marians of the Immaculate Conception Father Angelo Casimiro. He currently serves as the postulant director and prefect of students at the Marian House of Studies, Steubenville. Following the 6 p.m. presentations, soup and bread will be served in the social hall of the churches. Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton will celebrate the March 2 Mass, at Blessed Sacrament Church.

**Wintersville** — Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 p.m., Fridays during Lent, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church.



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## Obituaries

**Father Carl F. Peltz**, 64, who was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Steubenville, but later incardinated into the Diocese of Kalamazoo, Michigan, has died.

Born April 1, 1951, in Martins Ferry, Father Peltz was the oldest of five children of William and Theresa Peltz of Dillonvale.

He attended St. Adalbert School, Dillonvale; St. John Central High School, Bellaire; St. John Vianney Seminary, Bloomingdale, and The College of Steubenville.

He was ordained to the priesthood May 13, 1977, at St. Adalbert Church, Dillonvale, by Bishop John King Mussio.

Father Peltz died Dec. 26, 2015. Mass of Christian burial was celebrated Jan. 7 at St. Augustine Cathedral, Kalamazoo.

Burial followed in Fort Custer National Cemetery, Augusta, Michigan.

He was a lieutenant in the United States Navy.

**Permanent Deacon Lawrence Murphy**, 91, of Woodsfield has died.

Deacon Murphy was born in Buffalo, New York, Sept. 17, 1924, a son of the late Joseph and Julianna Schuster Murphy.

He was a deacon of the El Paso (Texas) Diocese, prior to relocating to Woodsfield.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated Feb. 3 at St. Sylvester Church, Woodsfield. Burial followed at the church cemetery.

Murphy was preceded in death by his wife, Bernadette. He is survived by five children, Martie, William, Isabelle, James and Joseph, 13 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

**Frederick L. Anson**, 85, 807 S. Fourth St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Dec. 15, 2015.

**Steven F. Bodmer**, 61, 1520 S. Seventh St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Jan. 22.

**Eric J. "OP" Collins**, 43, 602 S. Fifth St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Jan. 5.

**Vondora Cosgrave**, 82, Athens, St. James, McConnelsville, Dec. 17, 2015.

**Craig D. Creamer**, 53, Steubenville, Holy Family, Feb. 4.

**Mary Lou Grubb Doan**, 87, the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, Jan. 27.

**Joan C. Gallagher**, 76, Lynchburg, Virginia, St. Peter, Steubenville, Jan. 17.

**Glenn R. "Bob" Holmes**, 82, 1315 S. 10th St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Jan. 11.

**Robert J. Janiszewski**, 62, 69910 Brady Road, Martins Ferry, St. Mary, Jan. 24.

**Stella "Staci" Wolen Kogut**, 84, St. Clairsville, St. Joseph, Bridgeport, Jan. 27.

**John Makuch**, 88, Dillonvale, St. Adalbert, Jan. 31.

**Donna Malone**, 87, Pedro, Ohio, St. Mary, Pine Grove, Jan. 11.

**Thomas L. Manion**, 82, Martins Ferry, St. Joseph, Bridgeport, Jan. 28.

**Rose H. Medinger McFann**, 97, 916 Lorain St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Jan. 2.

**Joanne Shell Modreck**, 85, Bridgeport, St. Anthony of Padua, Feb. 1.

**Lee Ann O'Neill**, 92, 615 Center St., Ironton, St. Lawrence O'Toole, Jan. 12.

**James R. Orler**, 83, Blessed Sacrament, Wintersville, Jan. 19.

**Edward R. Polli**, 88, St. Anthony of Padua, Bridgeport, Jan. 28.

**Dale G. Saunders**, 73, 2507 S. 11th St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Dec. 29, 2015.

**Phyllis Turner**, 72, 2012 S. Sixth St., Ironton, St. Joseph, Dec. 23, 2015.

## Cuba, Mexico papal itinerary updated

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis is scheduled to have more than two hours alone with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow in Cuba in addition to signing a declaration with the patriarch before flying on to Mexico for a Feb. 12-17 visit.

The Vatican announced the pope-patriarch meeting Feb. 5 and, on Feb. 8, released an updated itinerary for Pope Francis' trip. The pope will leave Rome almost five hours earlier than originally scheduled so that the meeting in Havana with Patriarch Kirill will not impact his schedule in Mexico.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told reporters that in addition to official events on the schedule in Mexico, the papal motorcades are expected to be long and lively. For example, he said, the route from the airport to the nunciature in Mexico City, where the pope will sleep, is about 12 miles, and people are expected to line most of the route when he arrives from Cuba.

Five popemobiles will be on hand because papal flights to San Cristobal de Las Casas, Morelia and Ciudad Juarez would make it difficult to move the vehicles efficiently each day. Two of the popemobiles are being shipped down from the United States where they were used in September, the spokesman said.

No evening event is planned for Feb. 13 after Pope Francis' Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the spokesman said. Instead, the pope will have all the

time he wants and needs to pray before the image of Mary preserved there, something the pope said he wanted to do.

"He did not want to feel under pressure because of his program," Father Lombardi said.

The trip was designed for the pope and his entourage to return each night to Mexico City and avoid having to sleep in a different city each night, "something which is rather tiring and complicated," the spokesman said.

Another key in the design, he said, was to fulfill Pope Francis' desire to visit cities and dioceses that did not have a chance to host either St. John Paul II or Pope Benedict XVI.

The pope's outdoor morning Mass Feb. 14 has been delayed by one hour. The Mass will be celebrated in Ecatepec, a diocese just outside Mexico City; the indigenous name "Ecatepec" means "windy hill" and overnight temperatures are frigid. Father Lombardi said the Mass was delayed until 11:30 a.m. to allow people to arrive in the morning without attempting to spend the night at the site.

A meeting with "representatives of culture" in Mexico City originally scheduled for the evening of Feb. 14 has been canceled, Father Lombardi said, mainly because of the hour delay of the entire day's program because of the Mass.

Pope Francis has made it a tradition to invite a lay Vatican employee to join his entourage on trips abroad. This time, Father Lombardi said, it will be one of the Vatican firefighters. "Let's hope he won't have to work," the spokesman joked.

## Marian Shrines of Western Europe



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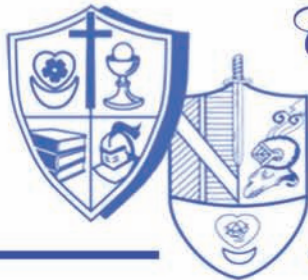
Consider a pilgrimage to celebrate the Year of Mercy!

*"Together let us pray to the Virgin Mary that she helps us ... to walk in faith and charity, ever trusting in the Lord's mercy; He always awaits us, loves us, has pardoned us with His Blood and pardons us every time we go to Him to ask His forgiveness.*

*Let us trust in His mercy!" ~ Pope Francis*

For a full-color brochure, please contact:  
Father James M. Dunfee, St. Agnes Church  
Telephone: 740-535-1491 or  
Email: [frjmd1984@stagnesmingo.org](mailto:frjmd1984@stagnesmingo.org)

*Come to a slide show presentation in St. Agnes  
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**Sunday, February 28, 2016**

**CCHS & BJKM JH 12-2pm / BJKM Elem. 1:30-3:30pm**

**CCHS**  
320 Westview  
Ave. 740.264.5538

**BJKM Junior High**  
320 Westview Ave., Suite 2  
740.346.0028 Parent Mtg at 12:30pm

**BJKM Elementary**  
100 Etta Ave.  
740.264.2550

*Please Note: The ED Choice Expansion Program is an income-based scholarship which covers 100% tuition that can follow your student through 12th grade.*