



INSIDE



Eucharistic Revival: Be an intentional disciple and learn to "Know Him."

PAGE 23



Be not afraid — register for March's The WELL Men's Conference.

PAGE 24



Bishop Kulick to March for Life.

PAGES 24



Parishioners enjoy "Prayer and Perfect Pairings," "Spirited" Women's Conference.

PAGE 25



JOHN ZYLKA THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Catholic school students gather for the annual Catholic Schools Mass Oct. 5 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

TOP Student program makes a Catholic education possible for many families

Editor's note: Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

By Cliff Gorski
Executive Editor

GREENSBURG — After nearly a decade of sending their older children to public school, Phil and Susan Jenkins never considered a Catholic education for their younger children, thinking it wouldn't fit into their budget. Then they heard about the St. Pope John Paul II Tuition Opportunity Partnership (TOP). Now, their five children are enrolled in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg, and their parents couldn't be happier.

"Being in the TOP program has afforded us the ability to give our children a top-notch education

that we would likely not be able to afford," Susan said.

The TOP Student initiative was founded by anonymous donors from the local business community who received Catholic educations and were profoundly influenced by St. Pope John Paul II. The donors believe that their Catholic faith, education and moral foundation gave them a great advantage in life. Those donors, along with more than 100 others, have become strong supporters of Catholic schools. Their commitment, combined with existing funds the Diocese has received from donors participating in Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program, now makes \$20 million in scholarships and tuition assistance available for the 12 Catholic

schools in the Diocese of Greensburg.

For the Jenkins family, the desire to send their children to a Catholic school began when Susan was pregnant with her first child in 2005.

"I was going through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), and I was so on fire with my faith, and I remember telling my husband that I wanted to send our child to Catholic school. But we thought it was financially out of reach for us," she said.

Years later, they were overjoyed to learn about the TOP Student program.

"It was a breath of fresh air, in the way Catholic schools are run as opposed to our experience in the public schools," Susan said.

Continued on page 3



Bishop Larry J. Kulick offers a Mass for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who died Dec. 31.

PAGE 26

THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG,
PENNSYLVANIA

Mission: Faith is a gift.
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Vision: Create a more connected,
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inspire a deep spiritual connection,
mobilize clergy as change agents
and strengthen faith formation and
evangelization.



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OFFICIAL

His Excellency, The Most Reverend Larry J. Kulick, JCL, Bishop of Greensburg, has made the following announcements and appointments:

Effective Nov. 18, 2022

MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

The Reverend Mark R. Dunmire has been granted a six-month leave of absence for medical reasons with a residence at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg. Father Dunmire is relieved of his assignments as Parochial Vicar of the Parishes of Saint Paul, Greensburg, and Saint Bruno, South Greensburg, emergency coverage to Saint Anne Home, Greensburg, and Chaplain to Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School. Coverage for those positions will be determined in the near future.

Effective Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023

RESIGNATION:

The Reverend William G. Berkey

has resigned as Pastor of Saint Rose Parish and Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Latrobe, for health reasons. Father Berkey will maintain weekend duties at Westmoreland Manor, Greensburg, and his residence will remain at the Neumann House, located at Christ our Shepherd Center, Greensburg.

ADMINISTRATOR:

The Reverend Richard J. Kosisko, JCL, will remain as Administrator of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Latrobe, while remaining Pastor of Holy Family Parish, Latrobe, and in all other Diocesan appointments.

The Reverend Rodel Molina will remain as Administrator of Saint Rose Parish, Latrobe, with his residence moving from Holy Family Rectory,

Latrobe, to St. John the Evangelist Parish Rectory, Latrobe, effective March 24, 2023.

At the recommendation of The Right Reverend Martin R. Bartel, OSB., His Excellency, The Most Reverend Larry J. Kulick, JCL, Bishop of Greensburg, has made the following appointment:

Effective Monday, Jan. 2, 2023

SACRAMENTAL ASSISTANCE:

The Reverend Peter Augustine Pierjok, OSB, to sacramental assistance at the Parishes of Saint Paul, Greensburg, and Saint Bruno, South Greensburg, with residence at Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe.

OBITUARIES (additional obituaries on page 26)

Father Lawrence L. Hoppe, dies at 88

GREENSBURG — Father Lawrence L. Hoppe, retired priest of the Diocese of Greensburg, died Oct. 19, 2022, at St. Anne Home. He was 88.

Father Hoppe was born April 13, 1934, in Detroit., Mich., a son of the late Theophilus and Veronica (Purol) Hoppe.

He earned a bachelor's degree at St. Mary and SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Mich., a master's degree at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, and a doctoral degree at the University of Pittsburgh. He majored in moral theology at the University of St. Thomas, Rome, Italy, in 1983 and 1985.

Father Hoppe was ordained to the

priesthood May 28, 1960, at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg, by Bishop William G. Connare.

He served as Parochial Vicar of St. Hubert Parish, Point Marion, St. John the Evangelist Parish and Holy Family Parish, Latrobe, St. Agnes Parish, North Huntingdon, and the former Transfiguration Parish, Mount Pleasant, before being named principal of Greensburg Central Catholic High School in June 1966. He later served as Pastor of the former St. James Parish, Maxwell, and its former mission of St. Julian, Isabella, and the former St. Hedwig Parish, Smock, and its former missions at Brier Hill and Keisterville.

In 1976, he became coordinator of schools in the Diocese of Sioux Falls, S.D., later serving as spiritual director for schools and assistant to the chancellor of Orchard Lake Schools in Michigan.

Father Hoppe returned to the Diocese in 1984. He served as Pastor of the former St. Hyacinth Parish, Monessen, the former St. Michael Parish, Glen Campbell, and its former mission in Arcadia, the former St. Thomas Parish, Footedale, and the former St. Francis Parish, Coral, and administrator of the former St. Francis of Paola Parish, Ford City. He retired in August 2004.

He is survived by siblings George, David, Norbert and Thomas Hoppe and Bernadette Kenjorski.

A funeral Mass was held Oct. 24, with burial planned in Posen, Mich.



Father Hoppe

Father Damian J. Warnock, OSB **Father Cornelius P. Chang, OSB**

LATROBE — Benedictine Father Damian J. Warnock, 89, a monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey, died Oct. 28, 2022.

Father Damian was ordained a priest May 19, 1979.



Father Damian

He served the Archabbey, Seminary and College in a variety of capacities, including as director of the Saint Vincent Archabbey Press, dean of students at Saint Vincent Seminary, manager of the Saint Vincent Post Office and director of the Office of the Porter at the Archabbey. He also served as chaplain at Latrobe Area Hospital.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 4, with burial in the Mary, Mother of Mercy Mausoleum Chapel at Saint Vincent Cemetery.

LATROBE — Benedictine Father Cornelius P. Chang, 91, a monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey, died Nov. 25, 2022.

He was ordained a priest June 3, 1962.



Father Cornelius

Father Cornelius was serving in the Archdiocese of New York. He was a scholar and teacher at Columbia University, and was director and pastor of the Korean Catholic Apostolate for the Archdiocese. At Saint Vincent he served as socius of novices for the Archabbey, Foreign Students Advisor and director of the Patrons of Arts Program.

A funeral Mass was held Dec. 3, with burial in the Mary, Mother of Mercy Mausoleum Chapel at Saint Vincent Cemetery.

CONDOLENCES

To Father Alexander L. Pleban, retired priest of the Diocese, on the death of his brother, Father Leo John Pleban, who died Dec. 6, 2022.

CORRECTION: Sincere apologies to longtime Catholic Charities donor Walter J. Kubish Jr., whose gift should have appeared under the Cherubim \$5,000-\$9,999 giving level in "Messages of Charity" in the October issue of *The Catholic Accent*.

Catholic schools: 'Stronger Together'

By Dr. Nancy Rottler

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

I am so very excited to celebrate my first Catholic Schools Week as Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Greensburg! In traveling out to our schools and meeting with parents, teachers and administrators, I am overwhelmed with the welcome I have received. The commitment to high quality academics and the dedication to the student enrolled in our Catholic schools is evident. I am so proud of every member of our school communities and am grateful for the exemplary work they do in helping guide our children on their journey to becoming Disciples of Christ.

When I think about the upcoming celebration of our Catholic schools during Catholic Schools Week, I know that each school will be celebrating its accomplishments in their own unique ways, but we will also be celebrating the blessing of our collective strengths as a larger faith community.

This year, after conversations with school leaders, educators and families, I am excited to share with you a new mindset that we are embracing called "Stronger Together." We know that when we work as a team, anything is possible, and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together!

With the "Stronger Together" mantra in mind, the 12 Catholic schools of the Diocese of Greensburg wanted to find a way to work together on a project that would maximize their impact across the entire Diocese. After



a very robust discussion, the group of principals decided that they wanted to focus on the corporal works of mercy and develop a diocesan-wide project around "Visit the Sick." I am proud to share that our students are planning visits to local care homes in their communities to give residents

gift bags that contain items collected by the students. Included in each bag will be a personalized note from a student. In addition to reaching out to local care homes, some schools are designing and distributing personalized cards to the homebound throughout the Diocese and have made regular visits to local care homes to offer musical performances for the residents. I am sure this project will be a welcome addition to these existing relationships.

I am so proud of this effort. I congratulate the principals, teachers and parents for helping the children with these projects. I am delighted with the fact that they understand that our Catholic schools are "Stronger Together" as we all work together to be daily examples of Christ's love and mercy.

Train the young, and they will not swerve

By Bishop Larry J. Kulick

Recently I watched an interview with Father Anthony Onoko, one of the 20 international priests serving the Diocese of Greensburg. Father Onoko was discussing with gratitude his early youth and formation and the education, guidance and inspiration he received from the Irish missionary priests who came to his village in Nigeria.

Father Onoko said it was the guidance from the Irish priests and a quote from Proverbs 22:6 that guided him to his vocation.

Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it.

I pondered Father's comments, and I think in our world today, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg exemplify that proverb through mission, education, formation and, most importantly, teaching the love, compassion and mercy of Christ.

It is our responsibility to show, through the example of Christ, the path our children should take.

As Catholic Schools Week approaches, I prayerfully ask that you consider visiting a Catholic school in your area. Talk with the teachers and administrators. Meet with parents. Think about providing a faith-filled life from which your children will not swerve.

The facts clearly show that 100% of students in our Catholic schools graduate high school, and 97% attend college. It's no secret that students in our Catholic schools receive an exemplary education. That's why it is very easy to point to the countless alumni who have become physicians, lawyers, teachers, scientists and, in some cases, priests and nuns.

What makes our Catholic schools unique is the presence of Christ in each classroom and the desire of parents and grandparents to have their children be spiritually fed. Our focus is always on the truth of Christ and not on the distractions from the outside world. Most importantly,

“It is our responsibility to show, through the example of Christ, the path our children should take.”

our mission in our Catholic schools is to insure the salvation of souls.

It has not been without challenges. History may reveal that the pandemic caused an education gap for many young students who were out of the classroom because of COVID-19. That may not be the case for students in Catholic schools.

I was delighted to read a study from the National

Assessment of Educational Progress. It shows that Catholic school students performed at or near the top in reading and math compared to their counterparts coming out of the pandemic. The study also reveals that Catholic schools are near the top in learning outcomes for students receiving free and reduced-price lunches and demonstrating commitment to underprivileged students.

In the Diocese of Greensburg, we have made the commitment that the cost of a Catholic education should not be a barrier for enrollment. Through the Saint Pope John Paul II Tuition Opportunity Partnership (TOP), anonymous donors from the local business community believe that their Catholic faith, education and moral foundation gave them a great advantage in life. TOP provides \$20 million in assistance for parents who want their children to have the same opportunities and a Catholic education.

I am always grateful for our teachers and administrators and their intentional effort to grow the faith in their students to form them into lifelong service as disciples of Christ. I ask that you keep them, our students, parents and our volunteers in your prayers as we continue to move forward this year in faith and with hope.



Schools celebration to honor educators, students

The Diocese of Greensburg will honor outstanding teachers and students at the "A Celebration of Catholic Schools Breakfast" March 23 at 8 a.m. at Stratigos Banquet Centre, North Huntingdon.

The fifth annual Golden Apple Awards will be presented to three teachers within the 12 schools of the Diocese of Greensburg. Student achievement will be recognized through Student Spotlight Awards. Recipients are featured in this issue; comments about them were provided by their teachers and principals.

REGISTER OR BECOME A SPONSOR:
DioceseofGreensburg.org/GoldenAppleAwards



TOP Student program makes Catholic education possible

Continued from page 1

After COVID-19 shut down schools and their children learned remotely from home, the couple carefully considered whether they wanted to return their children to their public schools when they reopened — whether it was the best learning environment for them.

"It forced us to take a step back and look at the education that we were giving our kids," Susan said. "Not just sending them to school to learn academics but learning how to be a good person and how to interact with others."

Now, she says, her children come home from school each day and share with their parents the new things that they are learning about their faith.

"I love the idea of sending my children to school

every day knowing that they are going to be prayed over and supported in their faith," she said.

The children have also taken a more active role within their parish community.

"There are so many volunteer opportunities in every corner of the Diocese, and it's a nice change," Susan said. "I don't have to talk my kids into volunteering because they know it's benefitting them and it's benefitting the Catholic Church."

Most importantly, their Catholic education is not only benefitting them in their faith lives, but in their everyday social and emotional development, too, she said.

"They are becoming well rounded and emotionally adjusted, which benefits them for their overall futures."

To apply to the TOP Student program, parents or guardian should call 724-552-2565 or visit catholicsschoolsguide.org to arrange an interview with

an outreach and admissions coordinator.

Families must demonstrate financial need, be willing to provide some financial contribution to the cost of the education and agree to support the child's academic progress. Alternative sources of funding, such as EITC assistance, may be used for tuition assistance as well. Families do not have to qualify for low-income assistance to be eligible.

Students must demonstrate evidence of academic commitment, enthusiasm for learning and willingness to participate in at least one parish or faith community activity. Families must demonstrate commitment to both the school and their parish or church through the donation of time, talent or treasure. Families must be registered members, or be willing to become members, of a parish or other local church community.

AQUINAS ACADEMY, GREENSBURG

Students on a mission for community service

GREENSBURG — Aquinas Academy has always focused on service to the community, but this year students have taken service projects a step further.

Each grade selected and researched a nonprofit organization and was given a month to execute a plan to provide assistance. They then coordinate school donation drives.

Students gain an understanding of the importance of the organizations and what they need.

First-graders chose The Kentucky Project, a mission of St. Barbara Parish, Harrison City.

“My mom and dad donated to this project for years. I wanted to honor them and thought this would be the perfect place,” said teacher Annette Ustazewski.

Parishioners have been taking monthly truckloads of donations to the most distressed regions of Kentucky for 16 years. Donations provide for basic needs of more than 300 families. Aquinas Academy students gathered personal care products for Christmas hygiene bags. The students are proud of how much was collected, and it made them happy that they could help others.

— Submitted



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Aquinas Academy students with items collected for the Kentucky Project.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



**Nataleen Huynh, Grade 6
Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish,
Greensburg
Parents: Nghia Huynh and Thuy Tran**

Nataleen is an exceptionally kind and dedicated student. Her concern for others and willingness to assist her peers is unmatched. She is motivated and dedicated, working consistently to improve herself and her peers. She is always ready with a smile and kindness toward others. She is involved in the Tutoring Club and Drama Guild and is an altar server at her parish.

ready with a smile and kindness toward others. She is involved in the Tutoring Club and Drama Guild and is an altar server at her parish.



AQUINAS ACADEMY

340 North Main Street, Greensburg, PA 15601

Time to Shine



OPEN HOUSE FEB 26 • 1-3 PM

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS PRE-K to 6th GRADE
REGISTER ONLINE

AquinasAcademy.org

CHRIST THE DIVINE TEACHER SCHOOL, LATROBE

CDT's classical curriculum sets school apart

Christ the Divine Teacher School Principal Teresa Tallarico says she's often told that the school's students stand out. There's just something about their mannerisms that catch the attention of others.

"They are used to standing up and talking in front of others, looking others in the eye, and have the ability to easily write an essay and articulate," she said.

The school is continuing to grow, with a 20% enrollment hike over the past two years.

Seven years ago, the school instituted a classical education curriculum, which sets it apart from others. Tallarico said the curriculum teaches students to speak and think well and has a focus on history.

"Everything comes from history as the basis. Children have taken Latin since it is the root of not only our language but many other languages," she said.

The school is separated into lower grammar for prekindergarten through second grade, upper grammar for third through fifth grades, and logic school for sixth through eighth grades. Students study history, literature, nature, grammar, religion, Latin, logic and math. They are immersed in hands-on learning experiences,



PHOTO SUBMITTED

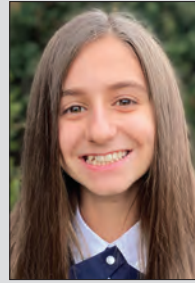
student-led dialogues and creative opportunities which offer ways to explore and strengthen their spirituality and relationship with God. Rigorous academics paired with an engaging, religious learning environment prepare students for the 21st century.

Students are engaged and communicate well with others. Once they graduate, they leave as confident young individuals ready for the next step, Tallarico said.

"Our students and families are amazing. I couldn't ask for a better faculty. I'm very proud of our school and how we've helped create well-rounded students," she said.

— *Melissa Williams Brown*,
Contributing Writer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Adele Kelly, Grade 8
St. Florian Parish, United
Parents: Aaron and Mandy Kelly

Adele is a dedicated, hard-working student who always strives to do her very best. Her humble disposition epitomizes that of a Catholic school student. Adele strives for perfection in all her endeavors, both academic and those outside the classroom. A greater definition of her character is that she is a kind, talented and helpful young lady. Her many talents are shown through her special gifts received from God.

Her activities include: cantor and/or instrumentalist for school Masses, prayer services, pep rallies, concerts and recitals and at her parish; Seton Hill University Youth Honors Band; WCMEA Chorus Festivals, Diocesan Youth Choir; school play and community musical productions; student government; cross country team; and volunteer at the End Hunger Café and other sites.

Alum considering seminary

Thomas Oldenburg's principal at Christ the Divine Teacher School, Teresa Tallarico, who was also his kindergarten teacher, saw something special in him early on. She's not surprised that he is discerning the priesthood.

"The respect he has for his peers and adults and the love he has for his religion and Jesus comes out," she said.

Oldenburg, a senior at Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School, is applying to enter the seminary. He credits Father Tyler J. Bandura, Director for the Office



Thomas Oldenburg

of Priestly Vocations, for introducing him to Diocesan Quo Vadis discernment retreats. Attending one as a junior was a turning point for him. Also key is the support of his family, friends and Diocesan priests. He is a son of Jennifer and Christopher Oldenburg and has four siblings; they are parishioners of Holy Family Parish, Latrobe.

Oldenburg is a member of Columbian Squires, an international youth organization arm of the Knights of Columbus.

— *Melissa Williams Brown*

time to shine

Christ the Divine Teacher School

OPEN HOUSE WED FEB 1, 10-11AM • 6-8PM

323 Chestnut Street,
Latrobe, PA 15650

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS
PRE-K to 8th grade

REGISTER ONLINE
CDTschool.org

CONN-AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL, CONNELLSVILLE

Students called to serve

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

— Acts 20:28

Conn-Area Catholic School students know what it means to lead: Every student, whether in preschool or sixth grade, has a job. They apply for and interview for their job and then receive a schedule to follow. They are learning leadership qualities through service to others – the way Jesus demonstrated His leadership.

The school mission is “... to develop these God-given gifts in order that each child realizes his or her full potential, enabling them to serve our Lord through His intended purpose.”

Third-grader Logan Collins gives up his recess time on occasion to bag leaves at the school entrance. First-grader Jameson Pounds organizes the bookshelf in his classroom. Fifth-grader Gianna Herman raises the flag each morning. Third-grader Cecilia Lukowsky packs up items for the school’s food drives.

First-grader Avalee Richter says her job is important “because when you leave the room, you need to turn out the lights.”

Children carefully select the jobs they feel called to do. Remembering to do their jobs is their responsibility. It gives them a sense of self-worth and commits them to their school in ways that are meaningful to the whole community.

As part of the school’s initiative to create leaders who serve, the entire student body gathers every morning in the hallway for prayers. Afterward, students are recognized for their accomplishments either in their school leadership jobs or outside achievements, such as Scout badges, karate belts or ministries in their parishes.

Students are also taught Stephen Covey’s eight habits: Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, Put First Things First, Think Win-Win, Seek First to Understand and Then to be Understood, Synergize, Sharpen the Saw, Find Your Voice and Inspire Others to Find Theirs. These habits are taught in conjunction with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus calls us to serve. As baptized Christians, we have a responsibility to be disciples of our Lord, through leadership centered in Christ. Conn-Area Catholic School students are up for the challenge and are happy to answer His call.

— Submitted



CATHOLIC ACCENT FILE PHOTO

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Natalia Lukowsky, Grade 6
Immaculate Conception Parish, Connellsville
Parents: Elizabeth and James Lukowsky

Natalia is a leader whose passion is to help others. She is kind to everyone she meets and often takes on the role of peacemaker. She is a straight-A student who puts a great deal of effort in producing quality work. She addresses challenges with enthusiasm, persistence and joy. She prefers to use her recess time to tutor other students, work as a preschool helper or work on school projects. Her faith is important to her. She is an active member of the Connellsville Catholic Churches’ Youth Group.

Natalia is a member of the Sixth Grade Leadership Team, Diocesan Reading Club, Performing Arts Club and Cantor Choir. She serves as a preschool helper every day. Last summer, Natalia helped with landscaping around the school, unpacking and labeling books, and organizing supplies. She helps sell the school’s calendar tickets after weekend Masses. She also plays soccer. Natalia has donated her hair to organizations that produce wigs for cancer patients.

Natalia is happiest when she is helping others. It genuinely brings her joy to be a leader who serves. She truly lives her life in the spirit that Jesus intended.

time to shine

CONNAREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Centered In Christ

613 E. Crawford Avenue
Connellsville, PA 15425

OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 5
1-3 PM

Prospective Students
PRE-K to 6th grade
REGISTER ONLINE

ConnAreaCatholic.org

THE DIVINE REDEEMER CATHOLIC SCHOOL, FORD CITY

Priest's faith journey began with school 'family'

Father Tyler J. Bandura's first memory as a student at The Divine Redeemer Catholic School is walking down a hallway to his prekindergarten classroom and being warmly greeted by his teacher. The staff's welcoming attitude made it easier for him to separate from his parents for the first time and overcome the fears that the first day of school can bring.

As he traveled those same hallways until sixth grade, the atmosphere was always very much like a family.

"It was a family that was very Catholic," he said. "That's where I learned a lot of the devotional practices that are still part of my life today."

He recalled the entire school gathering for the lighting of Advent candles and participating in the Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent.

"Together we learned and prayed and had fun," he said.

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg are on a mission to form students to be disciples of Christ. Father Bandura, who is now pastor of St. James Parish, New Alexandria, and Director of Priestly Vocations for the Diocese, said his faith formation in those early years at the school taught him how to live out



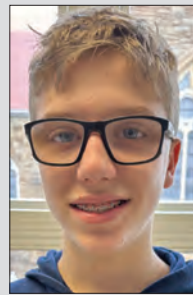
Father Tyler J. Bandura

what the Gospel calls us to do.

"A lot of that influence made me who I am today," he said. "It was there that I learned the foundation of what Christian love is and how we are called to share that through baptism. Looking back, I think I realize the wisdom and the dedication of the teachers as they worked with us each day to form us to become future holy men and women."

It was at The Divine Redeemer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Steven Edwards, Grade 6
St. Ambrose Parish, Avonmore
Parents: Steven and Angela Edwards

Steven's teachers have seen a growth in all aspects of his academic and social development. He is diligent, courteous and responsible and shows empathy toward others. He is involved in the Robotics Club and serves as a lector for school Masses. Outside of school, he plays baseball. Steven is a model of Christianity for today's youth.

Catholic School where Father Bandura first thought about a vocation to the priesthood. When he was in fifth grade, the late Father William Kiel and a religious sister came to his classroom to talk about vocations.

"Father Kiel asked us, 'Who wants to be a priest?' and all of the boys raised their hands," he recalled. "I know I raised my hand, but I also know that in no way at that time had I even thought about the priesthood. That was the first invitation I received."

When he was in sixth grade, a substitute teacher told him he would make a great priest.

The Ford City area has provided the Diocese of Greensburg with a number of vocations, including Father Eric J. Dinga, Pastor of Christ, Prince of Peace Parish, Ford City, and St. Lawrence Parish, Cadogan, and Deacon Andrew Hamilton, who will be ordained in June.

Father Bandura believes that community support sustains those considering a vocation. When he was ordained, classmates and teachers from The Divine Redeemer Catholic School attended the Mass, along with friends from high school and college.

As a priest, Father Bandura has played a part in the lives of his former classmates, too.

"Those relationships were very important, and they had roots beyond our six years in the school," he said.

He said he has been excited to be able to continue to remain part of fellow classmates' lives while presiding over weddings and baptisms.

"It is always a great blessing because all of them in some way had something to do with me considering the priesthood or even who I am today."

— Cliff Gorski, Executive Editor



The Divine Redeemer School

726 Fourth Avenue
Ford City, PA 16226

Time to Shine



OPEN HOUSE

TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 21 • 6-8 PM

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS
PRE-K to 6th GRADE

REGISTER ONLINE
DivineRedeemer.org

GEIBEL CATHOLIC JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, CONNELLSVILLE

Alumni happy to have children attend alma mater

Of all they learned at Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, the thing that stands out most for Nicole and John Holonich is faith.

"Obviously, to learn about our faith was so important but to also learn about others and the different ideas," Nicole said.

"We were exposed to a lot of faith then," John added. "And learned about several ideas."

The Holoniches, who graduated in 1994, met at Geibel Catholic. Nicole is the owner of RENEW Counseling Services, and John is a pharmacist in Connellsville.

Their daughter Audra graduated from Geibel Catholic last spring, and daughter Gianna is a current student.

Nicole was a member of the band, and John was the band manager and a member of the ski club.

"I loved my time at Geibel," Nicole said. "I enjoyed everything I was exposed to and really like how as a parent we have a say in the education and can, without worry or concern, ask a question or shoot an email to a teacher or administrator."

"We wanted to send our kids to Geibel because of the great experiences we had there," she added. "Because of what we were exposed to in school, we were confident our girls would get the



PHOTO SUBMITTED

John and Nicole Holonich

same exposure in their school days."

She said she was impressed with how Geibel Catholic handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Geibel was prepared to educate our children virtually, and that was a huge advantage for our children in continuing to learn," she said. "That was a tough time and we had to wait it out. But our kids never lost or didn't have the ability to continue to learn. It was because Geibel had everything in place to teach virtually."

— John Sacco, Contributing Writer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Maia Stevenson, Grade 12
St. Therese, Little Flower of Jesus Parish, Uniontown
Parents: Dr. Justin and Melissa Stevenson

Maia's demeanor demonstrates a perfect blend of youthful exuberance and maturity beyond her years.

Academically, Maia embraces every opportunity presented to her. She is president of the National Honor Society and vice president of Student Council and French National Honor Society. She participates in Math League competitions and was a first-place winner in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition.

Maia has served as student director of Geibel Catholic's musicals and is captain of three varsity sports. She was chosen as GATOR student of the month by her classmates and teachers and was chosen as 2022 homecoming queen.

Maia spends hours volunteering in the community and at school. She has served as a student ambassador, assists with liturgical duties at the school, plans community outreach projects, assists with Conn-Area Catholic School's Performing Arts Club, and serves as a CYO volleyball referee. This fall, she helped plant trees in East End Park in Connellsville with the Shade Tree Commission.

Maia is fiercely strong and approachable at the same time. Her wisdom, solid moral character and willingness to serve make her an outstanding leader.



Geibel Catholic's 2022 homecoming court included, from left, Emily Manack, Abby Karas, Jillian Balena, Gracie Rodriguez and queen Maia Stevenson.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

MAKE A CONNECTION AT A CATHOLIC SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Aquinas Academy

SUNDAY, FEB. 26, 1-3 PM

Grades PK-6
340 N. Main St., Greensburg
AquinasAcademy.org
Kelly Watkins, principal
724-834-7940
kwatkins@aquinasacademy.org

Christ the Divine Teacher School

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 1

10-11 AM and 6-8 PM
Grades PK-8
323 Chestnut St., Latrobe
CDTschool.org
Teresa Tallarico, principal
724-539-1561
ttallarico@cdtschool.org

Conn-Area Catholic School

SUNDAY, FEB. 5, 1-3 PM

Grades PK-6
613 E. Crawford Ave., Connellsville
ConnAreaCatholic.org
Cecilia Solan, principal
724-628-5090
csolan@connareacatholic.org

The Divine Redeemer Catholic School

TUESDAY, FEB. 21, 6-8 PM

Grades PK-6
726 Fourth Ave., Ford City
DivineRedeemer.org
Dr. John A. Giancola Jr., principal
724-763-3761
jgiancola@divineredeemer.org



Register for an open house or schedule a private tour at CatholicSchoolsGuide.org

Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School

THURSDAY, FEB. 16, 6-8 PM

Grades 7-12
611 E. Crawford Ave., Connellsville
GeibelCatholic.org
Robert Fetter, principal
724-628-5600
rfetter@geibelcatholic.org

Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School

SUNDAY, MAR. 5, 1-3 PM

Grades 7-12
911 Armory Drive, Greensburg
GCChs.org
J. Kevin Frye, principal
724-834-0310, ext. 4214
kfrye@gcchs.org

Mary Queen of Apostles School

SUNDAY, JAN. 29, 1-2:30 PM

Grades PS-8
Two sites:
110 Elmtree Road (Greenwald site) and
100 Freeport Road, New Kensington
MQAschool.org
Cathy Collett, principal
724-339-4411
ccollett@mqaaschool.org

Mother of Sorrows School

SUNDAY, JAN. 29, 10:30-2 PM

Grades PK-8
3264 Evergreen Drive, Murrysville
MosSchool.org
Theresa Szmed, principal
724-733-8840
tszmed@mosschool.org

Queen of Angels Catholic School

SUNDAY, FEB. 26, 1-2:30 PM

Grades PK-8
One Main Street, North Huntingdon
QueenofAngelsSch.org
Jennifer Filak, principal
724-978-0144
jfilak@queenofangelssch.org

St. Bernard Regional Catholic School

SUNDAY, JAN. 29, NOON-2 PM

Grades PS-8
300 Clairvaux Drive, Indiana
StBernardlc.org
Tina Bucci, principal
724-465-7139
tbucci@stbernardlc.org

St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School

SUNDAY, JAN. 29, NOON-2 PM

Grades PK-8
52 Jefferson St., Uniontown
StJohnEvangelistSchool.org
Christine Roskovensky, principal
724-438-8598
croskovensky@stjohnevangelistschool.org

St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School

SUNDAY, JAN. 29, 11:30-1:30 PM

Grades PK-8
815 Broad Ave., Belle Vernon
sssbv.org
Carole Aiello, principal
724-929-5143
or caiello@sssbv.org

GEIBEL CATHOLIC JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



Time to Shine



OPEN HOUSE

THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 16 • 6-8 PM

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS 7-12 GRADE

611 E. Crawford Avenue
Connellsville, PA 15425

REGISTER ONLINE
GeibelCatholic.org

GREENSBURG CENTRAL CATHOLIC JUNIOR-SENIOR SCHOOL

Junior gets jump start on science career

Last summer, Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School junior Franco Alvarez spent eight weeks engaged in cutting-edge cancer research through the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Academy, a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program that helps prepare students for successful careers in science and medicine.



Franco Alvarez

“Few people have the chance to participate in ‘real’ research until after completion of an undergraduate degree, so having this experience while still in high school has opened my sights to where I can go in the future,” Franco said.

His research investigated the effects of the amino acid methionine on osteoblast (bone-forming cells) differentiation. His research involved using a qPCR machine, which measures the amount of gene expression in DNA.

“I love molecular biology, so being able to see what kind of technology is used in the real world

“I believe Franco has a very deep passion for learning in general but definitely a vested interest in the sciences. He is motivated, inquisitive, brilliant and extremely hard-working — in essence, all of the qualities needed to be a successful scientist.”

— SCIENCE TEACHER PAM CULLEN

was exciting to experience,” he said.

Franco worked in a lab, toured clinical facilities and participated in journal clubs. He said he loved bonding with other high school students from across Pennsylvania.

What really brought them together was their “common fear that we may not be smart enough to understand anything that is happening, but the participating laboratories really do a great job presenting background information and mentoring students until we felt confident,” he said.

GCC science teacher Pam Cullen said the school is proud to claim Franco as one of its own.

“I believe Franco has a very deep passion for learning in general

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Carlo Denis, Grade 12
Our Lady of Grace Parish, Greensburg
Parents: Bernard and Lori Denis

Carlo is an exceptional student, athlete and young man of faith. He is one of the top students in his class with a GPA of 4.35; he has been named to the highest honor roll every quarter. He is also an exceptional soccer player and holds the school record for most goals in school history (154). Carlo was named the 2022 Tribune-Review Westmoreland Boys Soccer

Player of the Year. He will attend Grove City College next year and play soccer. Despite his many gifts and public adulation, Carlo is a humble and giving person. He is a quiet leader who sets an example for others to follow.

He is a member of the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, German Honor Society, student council, men’s soccer team, and track and field team.

As a member of the Columbian Squires since his freshman year, Carlo has been committed to service here at school as well as in our local parishes and community. He participates in Mass set-up at school and is an altar server. His spirit of generosity is a most defining testament to his strength of character and portends his future as a leader with purpose and principle.

but definitely a vested interest in the sciences. He is motivated, inquisitive, brilliant and extremely hard-working — in essence, all of the qualities needed to be a successful scientist.”

She noted that Franco is

competing for scholarships and prizes by presenting his research at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition and the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair.

— Submitted

GCC GREENSBURG CENTRAL CATHOLIC
911 Armory Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601



OPEN HOUSE
PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS • 7-11 GRADE
SUNDAY • MARCH 5 • 1-3 PM

REGISTER ONLINE
GCChs.org

GREENSBURG CENTRAL CATHOLIC JUNIOR-SENIOR SCHOOL

Students give back during You've Got a Friend Day

Nineteen juniors and seniors from Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School spent Oct. 5 assisting with You've Got a Friend Day at Twin Lakes Park.

The annual event hosted by the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation provides activities for several hundred special needs children. Hundreds of student volunteers from area schools serve as buddies to the children, accompanying them throughout the day.

GCC students Gabby Gombos and Michael McCready were paired with

a wheelchair-bound student. Afterward, his teacher at Clairview School, Kristen Mulheren, told Principal Kevin Frye that they were "phenomenal."

"They never once hesitated to take over and asked questions about what to do in different situations. A few co-workers came up to me to let me know they saw Mike and Gabby playing games with him and helping him participate by lifting his arms. They even pushed him up to the wheelchair bus and wanted to help load him onto the lift. They went above and beyond

to make his day great, and he had a blast!"

Service opportunities such as You've Got a Friend Day allow students to learn more about themselves as well as others in the community who have different life experiences than their own.

Junior Grace Kindel said the day made her realize "how the little things that we overlook each day can mean the world to those who don't experience them in the same way we do, even just a short brisk walk for those who can't walk on their own."

— Story and photos submitted



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MARY QUEEN OF APOSTLES SCHOOL, NEW KENSINGTON

Arts are back and thriving

Attendees at Mary Queen of Apostles School's band and chorus Christmas recital and Nativity presentation found standing room only. Residents at two long-term care facilities thoroughly enjoyed students' Christmas caroling visits. The school's fall musical performers encountered enthusiastic audiences, too.

Principal Cathy Collett said the fine arts department is thriving at MQA after a pause for the pandemic.

"It is nice to have the arts back in full swing," Collett said.

Students didn't seem to lose any momentum, said music teacher Tamara Bernot.

"During the time when singing was not permitted, students chanted and hummed songs and focused on learning rhythmic patterns, so the essence of performance was never dimmed," Bernot said.

MQA concerts returned in December 2021 with a masked seventh- and eighth-grade chorus singing to socially distanced immediate family members in the school gym. In the spring of 2022, just the seventh- and eighth-grade chorus performed, this time maskless. It was an all-school affair this December.

Bernot said events like the concerts at the care facilities build character.

"It is important for students to learn that performing at nursing homes is

an act of compassion and charity. It's also one of many ways to express joy and happiness with others," she said. "Students also engage in conversation with folks, and this enhances skills in communication."

At MQA, band is offered to fifth- through eighth-graders, and chorus is offered to sixth- through eighth-graders. Musical theater is available to students in grades 4-8.

The fall musical was co-directed by three alumni who are now juniors at St. Joseph High School, Natrona Heights. The stage manager was an MQA alum from St. Joseph.

MQA students have also excelled in visual arts. Students in fourth through eighth grades participate in the Missionary Childhood Association's annual nationwide Christmas card contest. Two students won honors in 2022. The school has had eight of its cards win over the past seven years.

MQA art teacher Judy Young said statistics show that students who participate in the arts are more likely to be high academic achievers.

"Art helps children develop motor skills, teaches them to try new things, to think and be creative. It helps reduce stress and develop social, emotional and interpersonal skills," Young said. "MQA sees the arts as important for students."

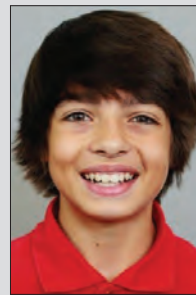
— Maria Guzzo, Contributing Writer



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The choir sings at the Mary Queen of Apostles School's Christmas recital.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Vincent Guerrini, Grade 8
St. Joseph Parish, New Kensington
Parents: Mark and Kelly Guerrini

The first thing you notice about Vincent is his smile! There is not a person on staff who has not been given a greeting, thank-you or farewell from Vincent each day. Vincent is a gifted student with an exceptional work ethic. He is an accomplished athlete in a variety of sports and shows leadership both at school and on the field. He volunteers when asked regardless of the work involved. Vincent is kind to all, follows a strong moral code and is a faithful Catholic.

Vincent is a member of the stage crew for this year's school musical and has performed in the past. He is on the cross-country and track teams and plays club soccer and futsal. He is also an avid hunter. He is an altar server, cantor and reader for school Masses and an altar server at his parish.

Vincent is a kind, generous, well-mannered student with an exceptional academic record. Vincent represents our school in body, mind and spirit.

Advertisement for Mary Queen of Apostles School Open House. Features the text 'time to shine', 'Mary Queen of Apostles SCHOOL', '110 Elmtree Road New Kensington, PA 15068', 'OPEN HOUSE', 'SUN • JAN 29 1-2:30 PM', 'Prospective Students Preschool to 8th grade', 'REGISTER ONLINE', and 'MQAschool.org'. Includes a photo of four students.

**MARY QUEEN OF APOSTLES SCHOOL,
NEW KENSINGTON**



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Father Christopher Pujol, then a seventh-grader, with future Bishop Larry J. Kulick and Bishop Emeritus Lawrence E. Brandt.

Teacher, principal glimpsed Father Pujol's calling

Of the hundreds of graduates of Mary Queen of Apostles School during her tenure as principal, Cathy Collett said the alum she's most proud of right now is Father Christopher J. Pujol, the Diocese of Greensburg's most recently ordained priest.

"I believe that Father Pujol was called by God to his vocation," Collett said.

Testimony from former teacher Janet Casper gives credit to her impression.

Casper recalls seeing Father Pujol in a school hallway years ago.

"I heard a tiny voice in my head that said, 'He has a vocation.' I was taken aback momentarily, but then dismissed it," she said.

Casper said three of his school friends independently commented to her that they thought he would become a priest. Remembering that voice in her head, and with Collett's

permission, she phoned the Diocesan vocations director, who visited Father Pujol at the school.

Father Pujol remembers the visit, and that he didn't specifically say "no," but said he didn't listen to the call until late in college.

"It was more just that I wasn't ready, but I knew deep down," he said.

Father Pujol said his time and education at Mary Queen of Apostles School and its predecessor, Mount St. Peter School, formed him to be a man of prayer, where Christ was present throughout the day.

"MQA allowed me to live out my faith, along with my friends, so we could be the future of the Church no matter what our calling was," he said.

What's more, he said, those three grade school friends attended his ordination.

— Maria Guzzo, Contributing Writer

Students win forensics honors

Members of the Mary Queen of Apostles forensic team took honors in a forensic league tournament Dec. 3 at Archangel Gabriel Catholic School, Robinson. Results are below.

- Sixth-graders Hadassah Cardaro, first and second, poetry; Aby Farmer, two seconds, poetry; Ava Myers, two seconds, drama; Julia Skowronski, first and second, prose.

- Seventh-grader Emmalin Domiano, first and second, prose.

- Team of sixth-graders Evan Crimmins, Joelle Ondriezek and Carson Gray and seventh-graders Greta Magnusen and Bria Domiano, two firsts, multiple reading.

- Team of sixth-grader Addyson Gouza and fifth-graders Martha Palumbo and Zoey Farmer, first and second, multiple reading.

— Submitted



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MOTHER OF SORROWS SCHOOL, MURRYSVILLE

Celebrating 60 years

When parents register their children for prekindergarten or kindergarten at Mother of Sorrows School, it usually doesn't take them long to figure out the school is thriving, and they instantly register them through eighth grade to assure they attend the full eight years.

"They fall in love with the school," said Principal Theresa Szmed.

Mother of Sorrows School continues to thrive and grow as it celebrated its 60th anniversary.

The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill staffed the school when it opened for three grades in September 1962. The school continued to grow over the years, with an addition built in 2004.

Today, there is a waiting list. When Szmed started as principal in 2016, enrollment was 219 students. Today, it is 389. Many families have students following in the footsteps of parents and grandparents.

"What strikes me the most is the family atmosphere," Szmed said. "We all take care of one another. Parents are supportive of teachers, and we are all so concerned about making their child's education a spiritual experience throughout their entire life. There is a great level of commitment. We all really enjoy being here."

Katie Kelly, a 2009 graduate, had such a positive experience that she returned to Mother of Sorrows School as a teacher. She said teachers are incredibly loving and inspired her to become a teacher.

"Being given the opportunity to be enriched with learning how to grow with God really opened my heart," Kelly said. "My experiences here have been nothing short of amazing. Teaching preschool my first year, kindergarten my second year and now first grade for four years, I'm truly blessed to be part of this special family."

— *Melissa Williams Brown, Contributing Writer*



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Students work on robotics projects.

County's first female president judge has fond memories of time teaching

Rita Donovan Hathaway holds the distinction of being the first female president judge in Westmoreland County.

The path that led her to Duquesne University School of Law to earn a juris doctorate degree was through Mother of Sorrows School, where she taught third grade for three years.

"I loved teaching at Mother of Sorrows School, talking about Jesus to my students, praying together and taking them to Mass at Mother of Sorrows Church," said Hathaway.

Her husband George's work at Giant Eagle took them from the suburbs of Boston to Murrysville. Hathaway, who has a bachelor's degree in elementary education, volunteered at Mother of Sorrows School before teaching there. Her son, John, and daughter, Jill, were students. She is a parishioner of Mother of Sorrows Parish.

Hathaway earned her law degree at Duquesne when she was 35, then served as a prosecutor for 10 years. She has been a judge for 25 years.

She said her 12 years of Catholic education played an important role in the development of her faith. She's taken her love for children and deep Catholic faith into the courtroom. Prayer gets her through some tough cases.

"I always pray that God will guide me in my decisions," said Hathaway.

— *Melissa Williams Brown, Contributing Writer*

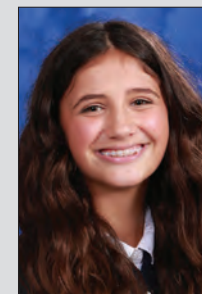


PHOTO SUBMITTED

President Judge Rita Donovan Hathaway stands for a portrait in the Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Annemarie Falce, Grade 8
Mother of Sorrows Parish,
Murrysville
Parents: Stephanie
and Steve Falce



Annemarie embodies the purest spirit of the Catholic faith in her everyday actions. She is thoughtful, generous with her time and talents, artistic, helpful, and unfailingly kind.

Her beautiful heart shines through in all her interactions, whether they be with classmates, teachers or little ones. She quietly models Christ's love while being active in the school and church community.

Annemarie is involved in volleyball, basketball, musicals, student council and choir. Outside of school, she participates in dance, acting, swimming, diving and tennis. Annemarie has volunteered at many school events, including the Mother of Sorrows School Light Up Night and Breakfast with Santa.

Annemarie says, "Catholic education has taught me the importance of being a good person in and out of school."



MOTHER OF SORROWS SCHOOL

Time to shine



OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY JAN 29, 2023
10:30-2 PM

PRE-K to 8th grade

TOURS • INFORMATION • REGISTRATION

3264 Evergreen Drive
Murrysville, PA 15668

MosSchool.org

QUEEN OF ANGELS CATHOLIC SCHOOL, NORTH HUNTINGDON

Community, collaboration fuel growth

Queen of Angels Catholic School continues to grow by leaps and bounds.

Enrollment increased from 169 to 225 last year.

“Preschool and kindergarten have taken off and continue to grow. Parents are very happy with our school,” said Principal Jennifer Filak. “When you walk through our doors, you can tell something very special is happening within these walls. We have a lot of legacy families, alumni whose children are now students. We want them to have the same experiences.”

The past few years, educators have focused on the “four Cs” of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity.

What was once a traditional computer lab with rows of desktop computers has been replaced with a Makerspace, a work space for making, learning, sharing and exploring technology where students can collaborate and work as teams. A digital lab is in the works, with space for students to create newscasts, broadcasts and podcasts.

“Students are collaborating with one another, communicating with one another and using project-based learning in classrooms,” Filak said.

Through Odyssey of the Mind, students try to solve real-world problems. The school also focuses on creative writing and visual arts. Outdoor learning



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Students learn in the outdoor greenhouse area.

happens at a greenhouse and trail bordering a creek.

“It’s been rewarding to see our students working together and feeling comfortable in presenting

their work and digging into competitions, real world problems, and thinking critically,” Filak said.

— Melissa Williams Brown, Contributing Writer

Good works benefit people in need locally, around world

Queen of Angels Catholic School students’ good works extend beyond the classroom. Their corporal works of mercy every month feature service projects to help others.

Students recently packed and decorated bags for children for the

St. Vincent de Paul Society food bank; collected money for Catholic Relief Services for a water security program; donated hats and gloves; and collected money for votes on decorated classroom doors to raise money for Beverly’s Birthdays.

Dress-down days benefit a cause each month; recent ones were providing paper product donations for the St. Vincent de Paul Society and donations to families in need in Kentucky.

— Melissa Williams Brown

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Thomas Dlugos, Grade 6
St. Regis Parish, Trafford
Parents: Robert and Julia Dlugos

Tommy is an outstanding student who never fails to set a great example for others to follow. His



positive attitude and diligent work ethic not only encourage others to strive to perform their best but allow him to persevere during more

difficult tasks, which he does with dignity and humbleness.

He has integrity and a strong moral compass. Tommy’s supportive and inclusive mindset cause his peers to gravitate toward him, and they try to emulate his respectful-to-all attitude. He has the accountability and maturity of a student many years his senior.

Tommy also plays multiple sports. He is a bright, positive, strong, faith-filled young man whose hard working and ethical approach to learning is a shining example for our school community.

Time to Shine

Queen of Angels Catholic School
est. 1992

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OPEN HOUSE
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1-2:30 PM
Prospective Students
PRE-K to 8th grade
REGISTER ONLINE
QueenofAngelsSch.org

ST. BERNARD REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, INDIANA

Upgraded technology enhances learning

While classrooms at St. Bernard Regional Catholic School still have traditional chalkboards, now interactive smart boards also embellish the walls, and each student's desk is outfitted with an iPad or a laptop.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school took advantage of an American Rescue Plan Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools grant to purchase the smart boards for each classroom, which are linked to all the student computers. Students in preschool through first grade have iPads, and students in second through eighth grade have laptops.

"It was something positive that came out of a horrible situation," said Principal Tina Bucci.

The technology upgrade helped students keep up with lessons during the pandemic and continues to enhance their education, allowing them to work at their own pace, she said.

The smart board displays offer grade-appropriate interactive lessons, and teachers can review student responses to questions and determine whether additional instruction would improve comprehension, according to Christine Palmer, the school's Spanish, library and technology teacher.

"A child who hasn't mastered something can continue to work on things," Palmer said. "It enhances learning and makes it more



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Second-graders work on their laptops during class.

personalized to each student."

Among the smart board lessons is computer coding, which not only teaches how to program a computer, but also encourages creativity, communication, teamwork and problem-solving.

"They are developing life skills they can use in the future," Palmer said.

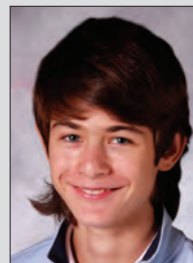
Additionally, the iPads and laptops enable learning off-site if necessary.

"If they're out sick, they have their laptops so they can access classroom work or Zoom into a classroom," Bucci said. "It really decreases interruption in instruction."

— Maria Guzzo, Contributing Writer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Joseph Pittman, Grade 8
St. Thomas More University/St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parishes, Indiana
Parents: Joe and Gina Pittman



Joe's love of God and family are demonstrated by his daily actions. A student since preschool, he volunteers for various service activities, including the annual Lenten Fish Fry; plays the trumpet for the school's veterans' recognition program; helps assemble materials for the school's annual fund; and assists younger students, including his own siblings, with school activities. He serves as a lector for student Masses, participates in band and chorus, is an altar server at the Indiana parishes, and plays Little League baseball.

Time to Shine
OPEN HOUSE

SAINT BERNARD
REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
300 Clairvaux Drive
Indiana, PA 15701

SUNDAY
JAN 29
12-2 PM

Preschool through
8th Grade
PHONE
724-465-7139

MORE INFORMATION OR REGISTER ONLINE
stbernardlc.org

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, UNIONTOWN

Grads trace success back to school days

Dr. Justine Blout remembers how she was taught at St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School — intense individual attention and instruction. Her education prepared her well for



PHOTO SUBMITTED
Blout

her career as a veterinarian. She said her parents chose a Catholic education because it aligned with their core values. Blout said teachers paid attention to students' differences and tailored their

teaching to each child's strengths, which provided a strong foundation for growth.

"I was in a large class. As I got towards seventh and eighth grade, I realized some of the class work was not challenging enough for me. My teachers were always accommodating, seeking out more difficult tasks to continue to expand my mind," she said.

Teachers did such a good job with French that Blout was able to bypass freshman high school French and go straight into the second-year level.

"These early interactions contributed to my love of learning — something I still pursue," she said. "The staff had such a positive effect on my life that to

this day, when I see any one of them, I make it a point to talk to them.

"St John's has always stressed care for your fellow man and community," she added. "Many different events took place over the years that reinforced this concept and have shaped my thought process to always try to help when I can."

Blout attended Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, Connellsville, and Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine in Philadelphia.

Alumnus Jonathan Garlow says he was always motivated and focused. He was long intrigued by the company his father founded in 1991, Ford Business Machines.

"Those first formative years of my education at St. John's were instrumental in molding my ability to communicate with my teachers and my peers,"

Garlow said. "They instilled family values and taught us respect and tolerance for others that became engrained in our heads. All the success I have had can be attributed to the education and values instilled by



PHOTO SUBMITTED
Garlow

St. John's and the role models I was surrounded by."

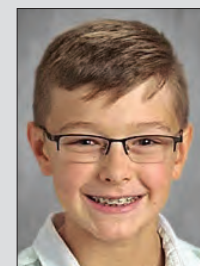
In 2018, Garlow, a Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, Connellsville, and Penn State graduate, took over the daily operation of Ford Business Machines. In the past five years, the company has grown from one location to five.

Garlow is active in supporting the area's youth, as well as business development. An Eagle Scout, he is a member of the Westmoreland Fayette Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Rotary Club, YMCA board, Challenge Program board, and the Redevelopment Authority of Fayette County.

— John Sacco, Contributing Writer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Eli Rittenhouse, Grade 6
St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar
Parents: Todd and Julie Rittenhouse



Eli is a true example of what a Catholic school student should be. He excels academically, serves others in his school

and community, and is active in his parish, where he is an altar server. He is a member of the Leo Club and a Boy Scout with Troop 180.

Grant enables STEM lab

With the help of EANS (Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools) grant funding, St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School has converted its computer lab into a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) lab. All students are given personal devices, so the need for a computer lab was eliminated. Students in kindergarten through third grade receive iPads, and students in grades 4-8 receive laptops.

A certified STEM teacher works in the lab. Students learn basic computer and iPad skills and explore engineering, coding, electricity and circuitry, and green energy. Additional grant money will help purchase 3D, laser and sublimation printers, a heat press, and table monitors for sharing work from students' devices.

— Submitted

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time to Shine

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ST. SEBASTIAN REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BELLE VERNON

Students bring love, joy to care home residents

Nothing can bring joy into one's heart quite like helping to place joy in the hearts of others.

Students in third through eighth grades are finding that out at St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School.

The upper-grade religion classes are reaching out with love to residents of the Country Care Manor Assisted Living facility in Fayette City during the school year. Religion teacher

Maureen Ruschak said the students are taking turns creating festive gifts for the residents.

More than 32 residents have received Halloween goodie bags or autumn-themed wall hangings, all accompanied by handmade cards.

Taking time from regular class work to complete these projects reinforces the lessons of selfless love that the students learn at the school. During the Christmas season, students sang

carols at Country Care Manor and gave the residents handmade crafts.

The goal is to foster an outreach of love, Ruschak said.

Fourth-graders Emilia Fouch and Evan Wolfgang said the experience made them smile and feel happy and said they are looking forward to more visits.

"We made crafts with them, and I think it made them feel good," Emilia said.

"We handed out blankets and some of the people cried," Evan said. "Some of them smiled."

Ruschak said she and students talked beforehand about the importance of the visits for both the residents and the students. More visits are planned.

"Some of them had visited there before so they had an idea," she said. "The kids really did so well."

— John Sacco, Contributing Writer



CATHOLIC ACCENT FILE PHOTOS

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Primo James Altomari, Grade 6
The Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Monessen
Parents: Patsy and Liza Altomari

Primo shines as a role model student. He was awarded the school's Student of the Month for December. He is kind, smart and helpful with others and demonstrates patience and perseverance when faced with a challenge. He is willing to go the extra mile for anything that is asked of him. When there is a school function, Primo can be counted on to be in attendance. He wears his religion on his sleeve and is always happy to show you the cross he always has on him. Primo is highly competitive, determined to be successful and has a great sense of humor.

Primo is a leader in School Buddy Day activities, sings in the school choir, plays baseball and basketball, and volunteers for school and church functions. His favorite events to help with are the parish festival and the school's Breakfast with Santa. He does community service at the Hallsworth House.

The Altomari family lives by the following quote: "Unity is our strength, where we go one, we go all."

time to shine


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mqaschool.org




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aquinasacademy.org




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gcchs.org




St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School
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ssbv.org



St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School
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stjohnevangelistschool.org



Conn-Area Catholic School
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 Grades PK-6
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connareacatholic.org



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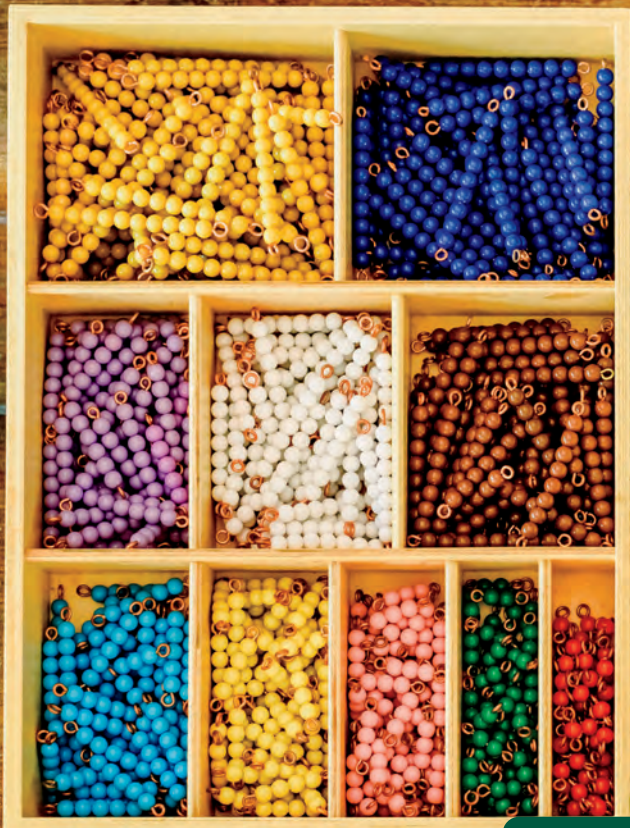
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Diocese of Greensburg Plan for Eucharistic Revival

By Jennifer Miele

Chief Communications Officer

GREENSBURG — Eucharistic Revival is a three-year process initiated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to invite the faithful to reflect upon the mystery and meaning of the sacrament of the Eucharist in our lives.

Year one is a year of Diocesan Revival. We plan to begin our efforts from the inside out, first offering formational and devotional opportunities for staff throughout 2023, culminating with a Eucharistic Congress next summer.

Year two is a year of Parish and Deanery Revival, where we hope to foster Eucharistic devotion at the parish level, strengthening our liturgical life through faithful celebration of the Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, missions, resources, preaching and organic movements of the Holy Spirit.

Year three involves a National Eucharistic Congress and, around the feast of Pentecost 2025, having enkindled a missionary fire in the hearts of the American faithful, the Holy Spirit will send us out on mission to share the gift of our Eucharistic Lord.

As Catholics, we are both blessed and broken. His Real Presence in the Eucharist can transform our hearts. Jesus left us this gift! In a world that is so hurried, we must all slow down and do a deep dive to reflect upon it.

First we will be offering formational and devotional opportunities for staff throughout 2023 culminating with a Eucharistic Congress next summer. After that, we hope they are better prepared to help create a more Eucharistic Community, founding new and innovative ministries focused on reconnecting to the disenfranchised and creating experiential evangelization opportunities that interest and engage our young people. One-to-one personal invitations will be an important part of the process.

In October 2022, regional meetings with the Bishop, clergy and staff were held and intended to help explain and emphasize the importance of Eucharistic Revival and invite each of you to walk the path of Jesus throughout 2023.

The Diocese is also working on a plan for four yearly “Know Him” gatherings. These experiential evangelization events will help us all grow closer to Christ by learning about his life and the lessons it taught the world. We are working to create short but engaging events that include speakers, multimedia content, witness testimony and interactive activities for the “Know Him” series to be held at Christ Our Shepherd Center. The events are specifically designed for Diocesan and parish staff members, but will be open to public registration as well.



Faithful Challenges



Challenge Yourself to Be an Intentional Disciple!

Commit to offering up a small part of yourself each week to bring your heart closer to Christ.

January Challenges focus on ways to become a pro-life example in our community:

- **Reach out to someone who is sick or homebound. Send a card, call or text them. It's an opportunity for you to show them the mercy and compassion of Christ by letting them know that they are not forgotten.**
- **Say a prayer for the most vulnerable in our community. Ask the Lord to provide them with his abundance as they face their daily struggles.**
- **Say a prayer for a world where every life is celebrated, valued and protected.**
- **Reach out to your parish office and learn how you can use your gifts to serve as a minister to the homebound, or donate to a parish ministry that serves a need in your faith community.**

January Prayer

God of all life,

Help us to appreciate the great gift that is human life formed in your image, a reflection of your holiness.

Help us to recognize you in all whom you have created: children not yet born, families affected by poverty and war, people of different abilities, people from other lands, and all who are victims of hatred and racism.

Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom you have created, regardless of stage of life, or wealth, or ability, or color, or creed, for every person is fully equal in your loving eyes.

Share with us your holy knowledge that we are all your children, each bestowed with inherent dignity.

May your justice reign forever!
Amen.

—USCCB



Eucharistic Revival is a three-year process initiated by the USCCB to invite the faithful to reflect upon the mystery and meaning of the sacrament of the Eucharist in our lives. While much of year one involves providing devotional and formational opportunities for parish and Diocesan staff, you, too, can be a part of Eucharistic Revival right now! Visit the Diocese of Greensburg Facebook page every Thursday to participate in a Faithful Challenge, and hopefully you will feel yourself growing in a relationship with Christ. Visit the Eucharistic Revival resource page at DioceseofGreensburg.org/EucharisticRevival for videos, prayers and gathering dates. Consider Bishop Kulick's invitation to become an intentional disciple this year!

Topics for the “Know Him” series

- **The Last Supper and the Gift of the Eucharist**, March 9, 6 p.m.
- **Jesus' Transfiguration and Our Own Transformation**, June 1, 6 p.m.
- **Stunned Disciples: Their Perspective of Jesus' Death and Resurrection**, Sept. 14, 6 p.m.
- **What We Know About the Birth of Jesus and the Wonder of the Nativity**, date TBA December 2023

“Know Him” sessions will be held at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg

Register online at DioceseofGreensburg.org/EucharisticRevival

Giving men confidence to express ‘actionable faith’

By **Jerry Zufelt**
Contributing Writer

GREENSBURG — As a means of helping people reengage with their faith in the wake of COVID-19, the Diocese of Greensburg is hosting a conference to help men gain the confidence they need to be active, engaged men of faith in their families, workplaces and parishes.

THE WELL: “Be Not Afraid” will be held March 25 beginning at 9 a.m. at Christ Our Shepherd Center (registration begins at 8 a.m.).

The day will include Eucharistic adoration and close with Mass, celebrated by

Bishop Larry J. Kulick, at 4 p.m.

Registration is \$50 and includes coffee and doughnuts in the morning and a box lunch.

Full financial assistance is available through the Diocese’s Francis Fund. Registration and the Francis Fund application are available at DioceseofGreensburg.org/THEWELL.

“Because of COVID, people have become used to not engaging in their faith,” said John Dolan, co-chair of the conference planning committee. “I hope this conference helps men reengage to strengthen the family and ultimately our faith communities — parishes and the Diocese.”

Co-chair Chuck Boyer added, “We need to stop being lukewarm about our faith. We need to be on fire for God and our faith.”

That fire will come from Deacon Ralph Poyo and a series of 10 other speakers.

Deacon Poyo, who founded New Evangelization Ministries in 2007, said he wants to call the conference attendees to “actionable faith.”

“Men learn things about God, but that does not mean they are growing in faith,” said Deacon Poyo, who will present the keynote address,

Registration Now Open!

THE WELL
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MEN'S CONFERENCE
March 25, 2023
Christ Our Shepherd Center

Keynote Speaker:
Deacon Ralph Poyo

Mass with Bishop Larry J. Kulick,
Breakout Speakers, Adoration,
and Reconciliation

Register online at DioceseofGreensburg.org/TheWell

provide a closing talk and preside at Eucharistic adoration. “We need to put into practice in our homes and everyday life a faith that is visible and actionable.

“We have to begin living the truth of what we profess to be as disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to yield our will to God’s will and not yield to what other men might think of us.”

Deacon Poyo served as a full-time youth minister in parishes in Miami, Fla., and Raleigh, N.C., and was ordained a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Raleigh in 2005 while serving as a director of faith

formation at a parish in North Raleigh.

In 2007, he and his wife, Susan, and their five daughters moved to Steubenville, Ohio, where he began New Evangelization Ministries, which takes him around the country to work with parishes and speak at conferences.

After the men’s conference, he will lead a three-night mission at St. Thomas More University Parish, Indiana, on how to see Jesus in the Eucharist.

Boyer said Deacon Poyo was asked to be the main speaker at the

men’s conference because he has a unique and lively way of connecting with men. His keynote address will be “I Will Be With You Always,” and his closing talk will be “The Faith to Move Through Fear,” Boyer said.

“Deacon Poyo is very good at challenging men to not be lukewarm about their faith,” Boyer said. “We want the conference to boost men’s confidence so they become better individuals, husbands, fathers and parishioners.”

At registration, men will be able to select three talks they want to attend from a group of speakers.

Bishop Kulick to celebrate Mass at March for Life Jan. 19-20

GREENSBURG — Bishop Larry J. Kulick will travel to Washington, D.C., Jan. 19-20 to participate with the faithful in the annual March For Life.

With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* last year by the United States Supreme Court, organizers of the march say they will continue to rally to change laws at the state and federal levels and to ultimately make abortion unthinkable.

On Jan. 19, Bishop Kulick will join in the opening Mass and National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Both will be broadcast live on EWTN.

On Jan. 20, he will gather with the faithful who have traveled from the Diocese of Greensburg to participate in the march. He will celebrate Mass at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at 10:30 a.m.

For those not traveling to the March

for Life, the Greensburg Diocesan Council of the National Council of Catholic Women will host a “Pray for Life Day” Jan. 20 at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg, beginning with Rosary for Priests at 11:30 a.m. Mass will be celebrated by Father Eric J. Dinga, pastor of the partner parishes of Christ Prince of Peace, Ford City, and St. Lawrence, Cadogan. The day’s schedule also includes Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Rosary for Life at 1:30 p.m., Stations of the Cross — “A Reflection on the Trafficking of Human Persons” at 2:15 p.m., Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m., Litany for Life at 3:30 p.m., and closing prayer and Benediction at 4 p.m.

Donations of diapers, other baby items and money will be collected for pro-life organizations. For information, contact Millie Krinock, 724-537-2064.

— *The Catholic Accent*



MARY SEAMANS THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Young people from the Diocese participate in last year’s March for Life.

Prayer and Perfect Pairings

was held Nov. 10 at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg. More than 350 people attended this fundraising event to support Eucharistic Revival efforts in the Diocese of Greensburg. The five-course dinner was prepared with recipes from local priests, and each course was paired with wine.

PHOTOS BY MARY SEAMANS AND JORDAN WHITEKO



Spirited, the 2022 Diocesan Women's Conference,

was held Nov. 12 at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg. More than 300 women attended the event, which included praise and worship, Mass with Bishop Larry J. Kulick, speakers, witness testimonies, crafts, prizes and lunch. The event was chaired by Carolyn Cannizzaro.





PHOTOS SUBMITTED

POLICE CHIEF LAID TO REST: Thousands of police officers from around the area, state and nation gathered for the funeral service for fallen Brackenridge Police Chief Justin McIntire Jan. 11 at Mount St. Peter Parish, New Kensington. Bishop Larry J. Kulick spoke to the family and others in attendance about McIntire's commitment to protecting his community and of his great sacrifice. McIntire was killed Jan. 2 by an armed suspect he was chasing; Tarentum Police Officer Jordan Shrecengost was wounded but is recovering. A portrait of McIntire can be seen at left.

Bishop offers remembrance Mass for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

By Jennifer Miele
Chief Communications Officer

GREENSBURG — Bishop Larry J. Kulick held a Mass for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, the mother church of the Diocese of Greensburg, Jan. 2.

Bishop Kulick met Pope Emeritus Benedict, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, when he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He remembers a humble and faithful servant to the Church who served St. Pope John Paul II for many years before becoming Pope. The Pope died Dec. 31.

Many parishioners in attendance were teary-eyed, leaning forward in their pews, listening intently to Bishop Kulick's homily.

The Bishop talked about the significance of red vestments worn by clergy that day, along with clergy and the Pope Emeritus on the day of his funeral.

"Red because it's the color of martyrdom. And red because the Holy Father is the successor of St. Peter. Red reminds him that as St. Peter gave himself for the Church, gave himself for Christ, and so must he in that office be giving of himself. In every time and every age, not just popes, bishops, priests and

deacons, but all of you, too, as laity know, martyrdom comes in many fashions, and we must remember this during the challenges we are called to embrace," Bishop Kulick said.

One of the concelebrants was Father Daniel J. Ulishney, Pastor of St. John Baptist de La Salle Parish, Delmont, and St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Export.

He met Pope Emeritus Benedict several times, including at an audience at the Vatican for the 150th anniversary of the Pontifical North American College in 2009.

"He was gracious and humble, and his writings were so profound. I think we will be reading his works for centuries," Father Ulishney said.

Bishop Kulick said the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict calls us as a faith community into a time of remembrance and a time of prayer.

"I join with the faithful in the Diocese of Greensburg and Catholics throughout the world as we mourn the loss of our Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI," he said. "He dedicated his life to serving the Church in a variety of capacities.

He was a consummate theologian and one of the great intellectual lights of the Post-Conciliar Church.

He faced many modern-day challenges in his papacy and proved himself to be a gentle shepherd. May God grant him eternal rest and peace."

Pope Francis became the first Pope in modern history to preside as Pope at the funeral of his predecessor. The Requiem Mass took place Jan. 5 in St. Peter's Square. Pope Emeritus Benedict was laid to rest, as he requested, in the grottoes beneath the Basilica, in the tomb where St. John Paul II had been buried before his beatification.

In accordance with his wishes, the funeral and the accompanying rites and ceremonies were marked by the same simplicity that characterized the life of this "humble servant in the Lord's vineyard."

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI was elected in 2005 after the death of St. Pope John Paul II. He was born in what is now Germany and was drafted into the Nazi military. According to his biography, he deserted and was held captive by American troops. He became a priest in Bavaria in 1951. He served as the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church from 2005 to 2013.

Although most popes since the 1400s have served until their death, he stepped down citing health issues.

OBITUARIES

Sister Mary Michael Burns, SC



GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Mary Michael Burns, 92, died Oct. 17, 2022, at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. She was in her 74th year of religious life.

Sister Mary Michael taught kindergarten and primary grades in schools in the dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh and others.

A funeral Mass was held Oct. 19.

Sister Marcella Mary Burgunder, SC



GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Marcella Mary Burgunder, 100, died Nov. 1, 2022, at Caritas Christi, motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. She was in her 72nd year of religious life.

Sister Marcella Mary taught primary students in schools of the Greensburg and Pittsburgh dioceses. A funeral Mass was held Nov. 4.

Sister Mary Urban Handte, CSJ



BADEN — Sister of St. Joseph Mary Urban Handte, 96, died Nov. 22, 2022. She was in her 78th year of religious life.

For more than 40 years, Sister Mary Urban served as a teacher in the dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh, Altoona-Johnstown and others.

A funeral Mass was held Nov. 29.

Sister Nancy Jane Gerken, SC



GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Nancy Jane Gerken, formerly Sister John Bosco, 87, died Dec. 10 at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. She was in her 69th year of religious life.

Sister Nancy Jane was a primary school teacher and pastoral minister for many years. A funeral Mass was held Dec. 14.

Sister Regina Marie Boslet, SC



GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Regina Marie Boslet, 88, died Dec. 30, 2022, at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. She was in her 70th year of religious life.

Sister Regina Marie taught in schools in the Altoona-Johnstown, Phoenix, Pittsburgh and Tucson, Ariz., dioceses, and the Archdiocese of Washington.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 4.

Special collections set in February

GREENSBURG — The Diocesan Mission Office reminds parishioners of two upcoming national collections.

The Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe will be taken at all Masses Feb. 4-5. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops uses the proceeds to "help to renew vital aspects of Church life and to aid and support seminaries; family education ministries; construction of and rebuilding of churches; and renewal of community life." Contributions help 29 countries in Central and Eastern Europe to "Restore the Church, Build the Future."

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal is made yearly at the beginning of Lent, this year Feb. 25-26. This collection, taken at all Masses, helps provide material support and spiritual aid to U.S. dioceses in need. "Strengthening the Church at Home" is this year's theme. Proceeds will be used to promote vocations; assist dioceses and parishes; safeguard human life and dignity; provide faith formation; strengthen marriage and family life; and recognize cultural diversity.

Generous donors make Catholic education possible

By William Barnes
*Director of Special Projects,
Office of Catholic Schools*

GREENSBURG — As you read this, you are probably making your preparations and gathering your information to file your state and federal taxes for 2022. What you may not know is that you can turn your Pennsylvania tax dollars into scholarship dollars for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides tax credits under the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. These tax credits redirect donor tax dollars to qualifying private schools and educational programs. Individuals and businesses receive tax credits (not deductions)

equal to 90% of their contribution for a two-year charitable commitment, or 75% of their contribution for a one-year commitment, up to \$750,000 per tax year.

EITC provides children and families with a choice in their education.

So how exactly does this work? You, as the taxpayer, may select the Catholic school(s) in the Diocese of Greensburg to which you would like to make a contribution in exchange for Pennsylvania state tax credits. You must have a minimum Pennsylvania tax liability of \$3,500 to participate. This roughly equates to \$115,000 in earnings. Business or individuals receive credits against state taxes for 90% of that amount for a two-year commitment. Business or individuals may receive a federal tax benefit for the remaining 10%.

The good news is that the school you choose will receive 100% of your contribution for tuition assistance in the next year.

For example, the Smith family contributed \$10,000 through the EITC program as part of a two-year commitment and received \$9,000 in state tax credits for that tax year. The remaining \$1,000 may be claimed as a charitable contribution. The Smiths have reduced their state tax burden and get a charitable giving deduction on federal taxes while making a Catholic school education affordable for qualified families.

Before you participate, we would encourage you to consult your tax professional for professional advice.

Nearly 60% of the K-12 students in Catholic schools in the Diocese

of Greensburg are eligible to receive EITC scholarships. EITC helps Catholic schools level the playing field to keep Catholic education affordable.

Families benefiting from the funding must meet financial requirements. Each of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg uses a third-party tuition management system to evaluate and determine families' needs. Students are eligible for scholarships from this state-sponsored program if their household income is not more than \$123,697 (for a family with one child). That eligibility requirement rises \$18,514 for each additional child.

If you would like to learn more about the EITC program, please contact me at 724-552-2589 or wbarnes@dioceseofgreensburg.org.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED



CONFIRMATION: Bishop Larry J. Kulick visited parishes throughout the Diocese in recent months for confirmations of young people. At top, St. Sebastian Parish, Belle Vernon, with The Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Monessen, St. John the Baptist Parish, Perryopolis, St. Peter Parish, Brownsville, St. Cecilia Parish, Grindstone, St. Anne Parish, Rostraver, and Holy Family Parish, West Newton. Above left, at St. Paul Parish, Greensburg, with St. Bruno Parish, South Greensburg, and Holy Cross Parish, Youngwood. Above right, St. Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Kittanning, with St. Mary, Mother of God Parish, Yatesboro, St. Patrick Parish, Brady's Bend, Christ, Prince of Peace Parish, Ford City, and St. Lawrence Parish, Cadogan. Left, at Immaculate Conception Parish, Connellsville, with St. John the Evangelist Parish and St. Rita Parish, Connellsville, and St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar.

New Diocesan leaders named

GREENSBURG — Vincent J. Reilly has been named Managing Director of Faith, Family and Discipleship for the Diocese of Greensburg, and Robert R. Baum Jr. has been hired as Director of Counseling Services for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg.

Reilly is part of a 21-person cohort of Catholic leaders from across the country selected by the McGrath Institute at Notre Dame to develop a plan for a nationwide Eucharistic Revival effort. In the Diocese of Greensburg, he will work with clergy and local parish leaders to develop comprehensive faith formation programs in Armstrong, Fayette, Indiana and Westmoreland counties for every child and every adult who wants to learn and live the Catholic faith.



Reilly

Reilly has served in ministry in various capacities for 26 years. He was most recently Director of Faith Formation at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Orange Park, Fla., where he oversaw religious education programs, sacramental preparation, adult formation and retreats.

Bishop Larry J. Kulick's announcement of Reilly's hiring comes after the completion of a yearlong faith formation study in the Diocese of Greensburg called "Christ Is the Truth," in which listening sessions were conducted and surveys distributed in order to discover the thoughts and needs of those most directly involved with providing faith formation throughout the Diocese. Input regarding faith formation was gleaned from Synodal listening sessions as well.

"Much of the feedback we received centered around the need for creative catechesis programming, collaboration among parishes and schools and encountering Christ," Bishop Kulick said. "Vincent's demonstrated success in creating and executing pastoral plans that engage entire families using various forms of faith formation makes him a perfect fit for this

position. We will be blessed to have him in our faith community."

The listening sessions and the surveys supported the need for enhanced catechetical offerings, communication, collaboration and outreach in and among the parishes in the Diocese of Greensburg. The fulfillment of many of these needs will help the leaders of our parishes to bring Christ to the people.

"I look forward to developing creative and appealing catechetical efforts in the months ahead, so we can best form disciples who have personally encountered Christ in our parishes," Reilly said.

Baum most recently served as Dean of Students at Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, also supervising the Wellness and Counseling Center, Residence Life, and Student Conduct and Activities. Previously, he was Director of Residence Life and Student Conduct and Development Officer.



Baum

"Robert has more than 23 years of experience in working with clients of all ages in Catholic higher education, mental health and behavioral management," said Bishop Kulick. "We are delighted to be able to add his depth of experience in leading the counseling services provided at Catholic Charities."

Melaney Hegyes, Managing Director for Catholic Charities, said, "We look forward to his expertise as Catholic Charities continues to deliver compassionate, competent and professional services that strengthen and support individuals, families and communities. We are fortunate to have him lead our Counseling Services department."

Baum said, "I look forward to being part of a supportive and caring community where placing the needs of families and individuals of all backgrounds is the primary focus and center of the organization."

— *The Catholic Accent*



PHOTO SUBMITTED

WINDOWS BLESSED: Bishop Larry J. Kulick blesses newly restored stained glass windows of the Blessed Mother and St. Luke Jan. 1 at St. Mary, Mother of God Parish, Freeport. The Bishop celebrated Mass on the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Bishop Kulick gathers with members of the Our Lady of the Assumption Legacy Society Nov. 6 after an appreciation Mass.

Bishop Kulick honors legacy donors at appreciation Mass

GREENSBURG — Bishop Larry J. Kulick celebrated an Appreciation Mass for members of the Our Lady of the Assumption Legacy Society Nov. 6 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Greensburg provides

special recognition for those who have who have named their parish, Catholic school, Catholic Charities or the Diocese of Greensburg as a beneficiary in their will or trust, retirement account, charitable gift annuity or charitable trust, life

insurance policy, or through the establishment of an endowed fund. With their gift, they are inducted into the Our Lady of the Assumption Legacy Society. Members of the society are presented with a pin that features the artwork of the

Assumption mural at the cathedral.

For information on how to become a member or additional information on planned giving, contact Holly DiCesare at 724-552-2504 or hdicesare@dioceseofgreensburg.org.

— *The Catholic Accent*

St. Mary of Czestochowa church building reopens

By **Cliff Gorski**
Executive Editor

NEW KENSINGTON — Nov. 27 was a great day for rejoicing at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church as Bishop Larry J. Kulick celebrated a Reopening Mass.

During the Mass, Bishop Kulick announced that the last issues regarding repair of the roof and bell tower on the church have been settled, and completion of the restoration of the church building is now in sight.

In April 2020, a tornado with winds of up to 100 miles an hour tore off a section of the roof and caused damage to the bell tower. Heavy rains and high winds stalled over the area for several days, resulting in interior damage. The storm caused over \$3 million in damage to the church building, bell tower and roof.

Restoration work began in December 2021. Last August, Bishop Kulick announced the interior restoration work had progressed enough to safely reopen the church with a Mass on Nov. 27.

After blessing the renovated walls, sanctuary, tabernacle and altar, Bishop Kulick told the more than 330 people in attendance that on the first day of Advent, as the Church begins a new liturgical year, the parish begins a new future.



CLIFF GORSKI THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Parishioners attend the Reopening Mass at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, New Kensington.

Bishop Kulick thanked the parishioners for their patience and their faith, as work was delayed by COVID-19, supply and labor shortages, and insurance delays.

In recalling the generations of Polish immigrants who were a unifying force in building the parish, Bishop Kulick likened the storm and its damage to their long history of

overcoming obstacles through faith.

“This restoration is much more than the restoration of a beautiful edifice. This restoration is a sign that we are a people of faith and we put our faith in God,” he said.

The Bishop asked the faithful to think about the music and prayers that have been absorbed into the walls over the decades and instructed

parishioners that they now have a responsibility to fill the pews.

Father Kenneth G. Zaccagnini, Pastor, said 85 parishioners died between the closure and the reopening. Funeral Masses were held at other parishes within the New Kensington Catholic community. A “coming home” Mass is planned March 25.

Parents again: When grandparents raise grandchildren

By **Cliff Gorski**
Executive Editor

WHITNEY — One in 10 grandparents has been the primary support of a grandchild at some point in their lives. Pennsylvania ranks seventh among the 50 states in the number of children under 18 living in a grandparent-headed household.

Those numbers, gathered by Penn State Extension five years ago, point to an unexpected, life-changing trend for seniors.

“We have a tremendous problem with opioid addiction in this area,” said Benedictine Father James F. Podlesny, Pastor of the partner parishes of St. Cecilia in Whitney and Sacred Heart in Youngstown. “With so many families with opioid crises, you don’t really think about what happens to the family. There are just so many of these parents who are incarcerated or incapacitated, incompetent or have died. Who’s going to take their children? It’s the grandparent.”

Oftentimes, the caregiver is a single grandparent on a fixed income. Added to the financial and legal complications they face are the societal changes that have occurred since they were parents.

“All of the things that they dealt with years ago are all



CLIFF GORSKI THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Benedictine Father James F. Podlesny gathers with grandparents at a recent Grandparents Raising Grandchildren meeting at St. Cecilia Parish, Whitney.

different now,” Father James said.

In 2019, in an effort to become a resource of information and support, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren began. The group was formed through an ecumenical collaboration between Trinity Lutheran Church in Latrobe and the two parishes. Monthly meetings rotate between the churches.

Kathy Ferlin is a retired teacher from the Greater Latrobe School District, where she worked with the federal Title I program that aids students struggling with poverty, homelessness and isolation as obstacles to their education. She found that

more and more grandparents were seeking assistance.

She and her husband, Mark, wanted to work together to help. Kathy is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church; Mark is a parishioner of St. Cecilia Parish studying to become a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Greensburg and is serving at Holy Trinity Parish in Ligonier. They knew it was time to get their churches involved.

“It’s not only an energy issue at that age but a financial one,” said Kathy, who serves as the support group’s chairperson.

At many meetings, grandparents gather to just share experiences and let off steam, she said.

“There is nobody for them to talk to,” she said. “Their friends, who aren’t raising grandkids, have no idea what they’re going through, and their grandchildren’s friends’ parents are 40 to 50 years younger and don’t have anything in common.”

On a recent fall evening, grandparents and their grandchildren were warmly welcomed to St. Cecilia Parish’s social hall by Father James and volunteers. At each meeting, families receive a hot dinner; afterward, the grandparents gather for a program while the children enjoy an activity, supervised by Saint Vincent College students. On this particular

night, Catholic Charities’ Melaney Hegyes, Managing Director, and Donna Hagan, Director of Information and Referral Services, provided information on the resources available to the grandparents.

Many grandparents were not aware that Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Greensburg can help them with utility bills, housing, clothing, baby supplies, glasses and, in some cases, prescription refills.

“We want you to know that we are ready to help you,” Hegyes said. “You can call us for assistance during regular business hours, and we have a 24-hour help line after hours, so please don’t feel as though you are alone as you care for your grandchildren.”

Father James hopes the program can be duplicated across the Diocese. For now, any area grandparents or extended family caring for children, regardless of religious affiliation, are invited to attend. For meeting dates and times, contact Kathy Ferlin at 724-875-8301.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is funded through donations. Donations can be sent to Lori Rullo, Financial Secretary, Trinity Lutheran Church, 331 Weldon St., Latrobe, PA 15650.

THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

2023 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Publication Date Deadline to Submit Material

*Feb. 16 (Faith and Food) April 6 (Easter)	Jan. 22 March 16
*May 18 (Summer Events) July 20 (Jubilarian)	April 13 July 6
*Aug. 17 (TBD) Oct. 19	July 13 Oct. 5
*Nov. 16 (Christmas)	Oct. 12

The Catholic Accent is published monthly on the third Thursday of the following months: January, February, April, May, July, August, October and November. The publication is magazine style (listed in bold) once a quarter and newspaper style the other four months. Please observe the deadlines for submitting advertising and editorial material for each issue.

*The Around the Diocese events and announcements are NOT included in the magazine issues (bold). Please plan accordingly to have events submitted in time to be included in newspaper issues.

Information: news@dioceseofgreensburg.org or 724-834-4010.

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BINGOS

East Vandergrift — Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish, will hold bingo in the social hall Jan. 22, Feb. 5 and 19 and March 5 at 2 p.m.

Harrison City — St. Barbara Parish will hold bingo Feb. 2, in the social hall. Upcoming dates are March 1 and April 13. Doors open at 5 p.m., with games at 6:45. Information: 724-744-4584 or 724-744-7474.

Latrobe — St. John the Evangelist Parish will host bingo Jan. 22. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., with “warm up” at 1 p.m. Sponsors are needed. Information: 724-537-8909.

Whitney — St. Cecilia Parish holds bingo the first Sunday of each month. Upcoming dates are Feb. 5, March 5 and April 2. Doors open at 12:30 p.m., with bingo at 2. Information: 724-423-3777.

BREAKFAST

Jeannette — Sacred Heart and Ascension Parishes will host a

Super Bowl pancake and sausage breakfast Feb. 12 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in Mersinger Hall. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 6-10 (free for those under 5). Tickets: 724-527-1430 or 724-244-5104.

CARD PARTY

Apollo — St. James Parish will hold a card party in the activities center Jan. 18 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person (groups of four players). Table prizes will be awarded, 50/50 drawings will be held and food will be available. Information: 724-882-8776.

CASH BASH

East Vandergrift — Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish will hold a cash bash (21 and over) Feb. 11 in the social hall. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the first number will be drawn at 7 p.m. The \$25 donation includes food and beverages. Pull tabs, 50/50s, a scratch-off lottery board and theme baskets will be available. Tickets are available after Sunday Mass, at the parish office in Apollo or by calling 724-882-9212.

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EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CASH BASH

Scottdale — The partner parishes of St. John the Baptist, Scottdale, and St. Joseph, Everson, will host a cash bash Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. in the St. John social hall. Doors open at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$25 (only 333 tickets sold). Food and beer will be provided, and tip boards for designer purses will be included. Tickets: 724-887-6321.

DINNER/DANCE

Jeannette — Sacred Heart Parish will host a Valentine's Day dinner and dance Feb. 11 from 6-10 p.m. (doors open at 5:30) in the Sacred Heart cafeteria. Tickets are \$20 and only 200 will be sold. Food will be provided by Rizzo's Malabar Inn, and beverages will be available to purchase. There will also be basket raffles and a lottery board. Tickets: John Cramer, 724-396-9737, or Kelly Dowd, 724-875-2437.

MAGNIFICAT BREAKFAST

Crabtree — The Greensburg Chapter of Magnificat — A Ministry to Catholic Women will hold a breakfast at Rizzo's Malabar Inn banquet hall Jan. 28 from 9 a.m.-noon. Speaker will be Mallory Hurley, a Catholic artist who finds that art helps her understand her faith and come closer to God. Cost is \$25 (students \$20). Registration (by Jan. 23): Brenda Concannon, 724-836-2094 or visit magnificatgreensburg.com (download a registration form; no online registration).

MASSES

Jeannette — Sacred Heart Parish will host a First Saturday Mass Feb. 4 at 9 a.m. (rosary at 8:30 a.m.). The Mass is in response to the world bishops' statement calling on all Catholics to pray for an end to the war in the Ukraine. Confessions will follow Mass.

Jeannette — All are invited to Mass

in Spanish Sundays at 6 p.m. at Ascension Parish, Jeannette, with reconciliation at 5 p.m. Todos están invitados a la Misa Espanol en Domingos en Jeannette: La Santa Misa en Espanol, Todo los Domingos a 6 p.m., reconciliación a 5 p.m., Iglesia La Ascensión.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Latrobe — The Oblates of St. Benedict, Latrobe Deanery, will meet Feb. 19, from 3-4:15 p.m. in Brownfield 202 at Saint Vincent Seminary. Benedictine Father Justin Nolan will speak on "On the Road to God." Upcoming dates are March 12 (Benedictine Father Shawn Matthew Anderson, "Stability in Benedictine Spirituality") and April 16 (Benedictine Brother Francisco Whittaker, "Conversatio morum"). For reservations, call Benedictine Father Donald Raila, 724-805-2291. Attendees may also attend vespers at 5 p.m. and supper at 5:35 p.m.; an additional session is available at 6:45 p.m. Call Father Donald to register for supper and evening events.

Latrobe — The Secular Discalced Carmelites of Latrobe (Community of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) are lay men and women and diocesan priests who live out a vocation of prayer and apostolic activity in the world in the spirit of St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The community is open to practicing Catholics. Information: Stephanie Malley, 412-373-1915 or ocdspa07@gmail.com.

RUMMAGE SALES

East Vandergrift — Rummage sales are held Mondays from noon-3 p.m., plus Feb. 4 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Feb. 5 from noon-1 p.m., at Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish.

SUPER BOWL "SOUPER"

Herminie — Edward Parish will hold a Super Bowl "Souper" Feb. 12 from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The meal will include all-you-can-eat sampling of more than 20 different homemade soups, plus sandwiches, desserts and beverages. There will also be a basket raffle and 50/50 drawing. Cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children under 10; leftover soup will be available for \$5. Information: 724-446-5197.

SUPPORT

Freeport — GriefShare, a weekly grief support group, will be held Sundays 6-7:30 p.m. beginning Jan. 29 at St. Mary, Mother of God Parish. Registration: 724-295-2281.

Harrison City — The St. Peregrine cancer support group meets monthly (usually the third Wednesday at 7 p.m.) at St. Barbara Parish. Cancer survivors and caregivers are welcome.

Latrobe — Meetings for Always God's Children, a ministry for LGBTQ Catholics and their families, are held in-person and virtually the second Thursday of every month from 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Vincent Basilica Parish, Latrobe. Information: Kristina Davies, 724-539-8629, ext. 19, or kristina.davies@stvincent.edu.

Whitney — St. Cecilia Parish, along with Sacred Heart Parish, Youngstown,

and Trinity Lutheran Church, Latrobe, hosts monthly meetings of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Meetings offer information and time to interact. Dinner and child care are provided. Information: 724-423-3777 or 724-537-7358.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Mount Pleasant — Laurelville Retreat Center is offering Sunday youth gatherings (6-8 p.m.) for students in seventh through 12th grade through March 26. The gatherings are intended to be a support network for small churches to create a space for youth. Information/registration: leah@laurelville.org or 724-423-2429.



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