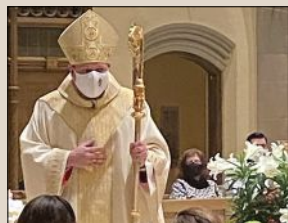


INSIDE



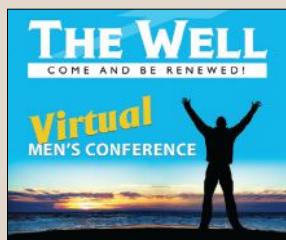
"Hybrid" Holy Week has in-person, online viewers.

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Then and now: A look at Diocese of Greensburg's 70th anniversary.

PAGE 5



First-ever virtual men's conference followed by September event.

PAGE 6



Bishop addresses Catholic Charities board, sets agenda for future.

PAGE 7



Mass Around the Diocese

with Bishop Kulick

Streaming every weekend at DioceseofGreensburg.org

APRIL

Sunday, April 18

St. Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Kittanning 9:00AM

Sunday, April 25

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Connellsville, 11:30AM

MAY

Saturday, May 1

Our Lady of Grace Parish, Greensburg, 4:00PM

Sunday, May 9

Church of the Good Shepherd Parish, Kent, 9:30AM

Sunday, May 16

St. Vincent Basilica Parish, Latrobe, 9:30AM

Sunday, May 23

St. Barbara Parish, Harrison City, 10:30AM

Sunday, May 30 Bishop's Mass is PRERECORDED

Immaculate Conception Parish, Irwin, STREAMS 8:00AM

JUNE

Sunday, June 6

Mother of Sorrows Parish, Murrysburg, 11:00AM

Sunday, June 13

St. James Parish, New Alexandria, 10:00AM

Saturday, June 19

Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Monessen, 4:00PM

Saturday, June 26

St. Therese, Little Flower of Jesus Parish, Uniontown, 4:00PM



By Paul Pattera
Editor

GREENSBURG — Bishop Larry J. Kulick announced plans this week to celebrate virtual Masses at parishes across the Diocese of Greensburg in April, May and June. Each can be found online at www.dioceseofgreensburg.org.

At the beginning of each stream, pastors will give a welcome to both the in-person and virtual audiences. Each was selected because of its existing media connectivity, which will enable the Bishop to preach to the entire Diocese of Greensburg. Each parish has continued to stream Mass, even though the world is slowly reopening.

Bishop Kulick's series of Masses around the Diocese begins April 18 with the 9 a.m. Mass at St. Mary, Our

Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Kittanning and concludes with the 4 p.m. Mass June 26 at St. Therese, Little Flower of Jesus Parish in Uniontown.

In between, he will celebrate Mass at parishes in each of the four counties of the Diocese — Armstrong, Fayette, Indiana and Westmoreland.

The dispensation of the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is still in place. But when that dispensation is lifted, and when COVID-19 finally runs its course, pastors will encourage the faithful to think about coming back to be physically present in the House of God. Each is expected to ask parishioners to reflect on what physically receiving the Body and Blood of Christ means to each person and the important difference of attending Mass in person

and watching it from home.

The physical presence of a community gathered in prayer has always been an important component of the Catholic faith. There is a huge need for all of the faithful to be in the presence of God and receive the presence of God. Catholics need that physical connection with the Lord and with each other.

If you are vaccinated, and starting to feel more comfortable venturing out, the parishes of the Diocese of Greensburg welcome you. Each continues to seat people socially distanced, requires masks or face coverings, and cleans and sanitizes between each Mass.

"As the pandemic passes, I pray that your desire for Communion with the Lord through the Eucharist and in-person worship remains strong," Bishop Kulick said.



St. Barbara Parish opens its doors to help bring COVID-19 vaccines to the community.

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THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG,
PENNSYLVANIA

Mission: Faith is a gift.
Our mission is to share it.

Vision: Create a more connected,
accessible Catholic Church,
inspire a deep spiritual connection,
mobilize clergy as change agents
and strengthen faith formation and
evangelization.



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www.dioceseofgreensburg.org

OBITUARIES

Sister Marie Bernard Martino, CSJ



BADEN — Sister of St. Joseph Marie
Bernard Martino, 88, died Feb. 3, 2021, in
her 70th year of religious life. She entered
the congregation from St. Anthony Parish
in Windber.

Sister Marie Bernard served as a teacher
in the dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh
and Altoona-Johnstown, including the
former St. Mary School in Kittanning
(1967-75).

A memorial Mass will be scheduled.

Sister Eileen (Carina) Sweeney, CSJ



BADEN — Sister of St. Joseph Eileen
(Carina) Sweeney, 91, died Feb. 26, 2021,
in her 74th year of religious life. She
entered the congregation from St. Raphael
Parish, Pittsburgh.

Sister Eileen served as a teacher in the
dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh and
Altoona-Johnstown, including St. John
the Evangelist Regional Catholic School,
Uniontown (1980-94).

A memorial Mass will be scheduled.

Sister Leona Stumpf, RSM



PITTSBURGH — Sister of Mercy Leona
Stumpf (Jean Frances Stumpf), 88, died Feb.
15, 2021, at the Convent of Mercy. She was in
her 59th year of religious life.

Born in Latrobe, she entered the Sisters of
Mercy from Holy Family Parish, Latrobe, in
1961. She taught at a number of area Catho-
lic schools, including the former Holy Family
School in Latrobe.

Funeral arrangements were private.

Sister Mary Louise (Ignatius Loyola) Simmons, CSJ



BADEN — Sister of St. Joseph Mary
Louise (Ignatius Loyola) Simmons, 92,
died March 16, 2021, in her 74th year of
religious life. She entered the congregation
from St. Raphael Parish, Pittsburgh.

She was a teacher and principal in the
dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh and
Altoona-Johnstown, including principal
of the former St. Margaret Mary School,
Lower Burrell (1978-80), and assistant
principal of the former Queen of Angels
School, Greensburg (1993-94).

A memorial Mass will be scheduled.

In memoriam

- Freda Ellen (Walton) Frescura, Jan. 19, 2020; mother of Deacon F. Daniel Frescura.
- Mary Ann Duda, 89, Jan. 25, 2020; grandmother of Father Daniel J. Ulishney, pastor of St. John Baptist de La Salle Parish, Delmont, and St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Export.
- John Pleban, 83, Jan. 31, 2020; brother of Fathers Alexander L. Pleban (retired priest of the diocese) and Leo Pleban, a priest of the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio.

THE MELCHIZEDEK PROJECT

Discernment Group for Young Adults 18+
An evening with prayer, discussion and fellowship

Join us if you are interested in learning how to discover God's will for your life and are open to discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

• APR 25
• MAY 23

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Saint Rose Church
4969 Route 982
Latrobe, PA 15650

PRIESTLY VOCATIONS
DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

For more information or to register for an event go to gbgvocations.org

Exploring God's Call

Discernment Group for Grades 9-12
An evening with prayer, discussion, dinner and fellowship

Join us if you are interested in learning how to discover God's will for your life and are open to discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

• APR 18
• MAY 16

Greensburg Central Catholic High School
911 Armory Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601

PRIESTLY VOCATIONS
DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

For more information or to register for an event go to gbgvocations.org

HOLY WEEK AT BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHEDRAL



ROBIN MULL THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

PALM SUNDAY: Bishop Larry J. Kulick holds an arrangement of palms on Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.



SCREEN CAPTURE FROM LIVESTREAMED MASS

HOLY THURSDAY: Bishop Kulick celebrates the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday, Thursday of the Lord's Supper.



JENNIFER MIELE THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

GOOD FRIDAY: Msgr. Raymond E. Riffle, cathedral rector, presents the cross for veneration on Good Friday, the Friday of the Passion of Our Lord.



KATIE ZUZYK FOR THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

EASTER VIGIL: Bishop Kulick lights the Easter candle during the Easter Vigil.



SCREEN CAPTURE FROM TV BROADCAST

EASTER SUNDAY

Bishop Kulick blesses students from Aquinas Academy, Greensburg, and Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School with holy water during Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, in a prerecorded televised Easter Sunday Mass.

Catholic Charities remains charitable arm of Bishop

By Jennifer Miele

Chief Communications Officer

GREENSBURG — The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg was a “hybrid” event for the first time in the organization’s 67-year history. About half of the staff and a third of the trustees joined via video conference, while the rest gathered at Rizzo’s Malabar Inn, Crabtree, for their first in-person meeting with Bishop Larry J. Kulick.

Dr. Paul Niemiec, Interim Managing Director of Catholic Charities, detailed the swift and well-coordinated response made by staff and volunteers to those in need during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than \$250,000 of relief funds were distributed for clothing, food, utilities, rent and other needs.

“I am proud of the excellent work being done to support the community during this unprecedented time,” Niemiec said.

Bishop Kulick echoed his comments.

“As we move forward, and as it has been for 67 years, the structure of Catholic Charities is going to remain as the charitable arm of the Bishop in the good works of the Diocese,” Bishop Kulick said. “It will be the instrument by which we bring the corporal works of mercy to the people of the Diocese.”

Just after being ordained and installed, Bishop Kulick selected Msgr. Raymond E. Riffle as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia. Msgr. Riff-

le had served as Managing Director of Catholic Charities since June 21, 1995. Since his ordination on May 5, 1979, he has held a number of positions in the Diocese and its parishes.

During his entire time as Managing Director, Msgr. Riffle was assisted by Executive Secretary Sharon Grabowski. She was hired March 20, 1972, and was celebrated at the meeting for her 49-year tenure.

Board President Tom Gothie announced that Catholic Charities’ annual Paul R. Smiy Memorial Golf Outing is scheduled for Aug. 6, starting at 10 a.m. at Ligonier Country Club. The annual Designer Purse Bash and Crystal Bake Sale is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 7 at the Barn in Ligonier. More information will be posted soon at www.ccharitiesgreensburg.org.



JENNIFER MIELE THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Among those attending the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg were, top from left: Hollie Uccellini, Secretary for the board; Dr. Ralph May, Vice President; Bishop Larry J. Kulick; Thomas Gothie, president; and Charles Deluzio, treasurer. Above from left are Kimberly Landa, Therapist; Sharon Grabowski, Executive Secretary; Dr. Paul Niemiec, Interim Managing Director; and Heather Rady, Director of Community Relations and Special Events.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS IN ARMSTRONG COUNTY: Easter meals prepared by the Knights of Columbus Council 17178, Ford City/Cadogan, were delivered to the homebound on Holy Saturday. Funding for the meal was provided by the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Ford City, and area parishioners and the Loyal Christian Benefit Association 1425 also pitched in to make the effort a success. Above, parishioners of the partnered parishes of Christ Prince of Peace and St. Lawrence, Cadogan, prepare packages that included a loaf of paska bread, a Little White Book, a piece of blessed palm, a St. Joseph prayer card and a bottle of Holy Water.





MARY SEAMANS THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Bishop Larry J. Kulick celebrates a Mass commemorating the Diocese's 70th anniversary March 10 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

Diocese of Greensburg celebrates 70-year milestone

By Paul Paterra
Editor

GREENSBURG — The Diocese of Greensburg celebrated its 70th anniversary March 10.

The event was commemorated with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Larry J. Kulick at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral that was livestreamed on the Diocese website, DioceseofGreensburg.org, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

"We come together to give thanks to God for the blessings of these past 70 years, and we come together to ask God's continued blessing as we move forward, entrusted with the mission of the Church in proclaiming the Gospel and being faithful disciples of our Lord," Bishop Kulick said during his homily.

On March 10, 1951, Pope Pius XII created the Diocese of Greensburg, taking the counties of Armstrong, Indiana, Fayette and Westmoreland from the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Also on that day, Most Holy Sacrament Parish, which had been staffed for decades by the Benedictine Fathers

of Saint Vincent Archabbey, was raised to the status of a cathedral — Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

Bishop Hugh L. Lamb, an auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, was appointed as the first Bishop of the Diocese.

With a nod to that history, Bishop Kulick used Bishop Lamb's crozier (pastoral staff) during the celebration of the anniversary Mass. In Bishop Kulick's mind, the crozier made of solid brass was built to last, just like the Diocese of Greensburg.

"Over the last 70 years, our Diocese has been a part of the changing landscape of our region," Bishop Kulick said. "It has stood witness to the monumental historical moments of the times, as well as journeyed with the faithful through their everyday joys and sorrows, their triumphs and challenges, and together we have witnessed miraculous and amazing achievements."

"We've been able to celebrate key spiritual moments in our faith communities, and we have time after time over these years reached out in care for the less fortunate and underprivileged

"(The Diocese) has stood witness to the monumental historical moments of the times, as well as journeyed with the faithful through their everyday joys and sorrows, their triumphs and challenges, and together we have witnessed miraculous and amazing achievements."

— BISHOP LARRY J. KULICK

of the greater community, educating our youth and pastorally caring for all, including the sick and the dying, those on the fringes of society, the immigrants and the migrants, all the while bearing witness to Christ's love, his mercy and his justice in the world."

Bishop Kulick called for the faithful of the Diocese to continue to move forward, taking the lessons learned throughout its history and working to shape a positive future, educationally and spiritually.

"We know that there have been

times when we as a church have not lived up to the expectations that Christ has called us to," he said. "We know too well some of our institutional, parochial and personal failures, but we strive to move forward with a renewed sense of hope, utilizing the knowledge we have gleaned through careful discernment, oriented to purposeful and meaningful reform to correct our failures and moving even more committed into the future to fulfill the mission entrusted to us by Christ and to help shape the future of our parishes, our Diocese, our local communities, and even our nation and the world itself."

Bishop Kulick also stressed that the mission of the Diocese remains the same as it was on March 10, 1951, and will always stay the same.

"We are called united in faith, nurtured by God's grace and resilient in hope to fulfill the mission that Christ has entrusted to us through the Church," Bishop Kulick said. "As his disciples, we are called to proclaim the Gospel, to serve his people and to embrace the gift of eternal salvation."

Powerful testimony given at THE WELL men's conference

By Paul Paterra
Editor

GREENSBURG — The theme for the Diocese of Greensburg's 2021 men's conference THE WELL was "Jesus is Knocking: Open the Door."

That message was prevalent throughout the virtual conference held March 20, as many members of the Diocese's Men's Ministry team testified as to how they opened the door and let Jesus into their lives.

Nearly 900 people participated in the conference, which is still available to view at DioceseofGreensburg.org and on the Diocese Facebook page and YouTube channel.

"If it tugs on one man's heart and helps him have a change in his life, then that's all good," said Chuck Boyer, Co-chairman of THE WELL and a parishioner of Our Lady of Grace Parish, Greensburg. "The feedback I've gotten was absolutely wonderful. The good thing about the way we did it is people can continue to go back to it. I've shared it a number of times. Everyone who I've spoken to who's viewed it was very pleased with what they saw."

Bishop Larry J. Kulick reminded those who participated that while Jesus may be knocking, the choice lies with each one of us to let him in.

"Jesus is knocking, knocking at the doors of our homes, knocking at the doors of our hearts," Bishop Kulick said. "Your presence here shows that you have answered his call, and you want to share your relationship with Jesus with other men who have answered that call. You want to establish a relationship with them and learn about their relationship with Christ, which can only strengthen your own relationship with the Lord."

One man who answered the knock was St. Joseph — the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster father of Jesus. Pope Francis declared this The Year of St. Joseph, marking the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph being declared the patron of the Universal Church.

THE WELL took place the day after the Solemnity of St. Joseph, who was the topic of discussion for the conference's two featured speakers: Mike Aquilina of Bridgeville, an award-winning author of more than 50 books on Catholic history, and Benedictine Father Boniface Hicks,

"When you have a band of brothers around you, you almost can't put it into words how impactful it is. There is so much power in men coming together and just bearing honestly their struggles, their successes."

— DAN LIEBERUM, MEN'S MINISTRY TEAM MEMBER

Director of Spiritual Formation at Saint Vincent Seminary, Latrobe.

"St. Joseph is the one person the church calls by the title, 'The Worker,' Aquilina explained. "His work was not biblical interpretation or preaching or teaching or philosophy or theology. Obviously, he was known for his work. God had chosen Joseph for the greatest mission ever ... He's the earthly father of Jesus."

"St. Joseph is the man who lived closest to God for the longest time," added Father Boniface. "(He was) called to be the father to the Son of God, an incredible vocation, a vocation beyond our imagination in some way and a vocation that makes him a great model for us as a man ... He wants to be a father for you, a friend for you, a model for you, a protector for you — so turn to him, ask him to help you."

Strong testimony was offered by team members, with some of the most powerful coming from the late Michael Walker, organizer of the 2019 conference to whom this year's conference was dedicated. Walker, who died in 2019 after a battle with brain cancer, was seen on taped footage from that year.

"You grow a little closer to God each day," Walker said of his battle. "My faith rests in God. My trust is with him. I believe him. There are moments of doubt. There are moments when I'll break down and cry. It's not an easy thing to be told you'll die soon, but I'm to do what every husband and father is to do, provide and protect. The lesson God is allowing me to learn is savor the moment."

Team member Dan Lieberum, a parishioner of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish, Greensburg, talked about the effect attendance at a retreat had on him.

"I had a deep, deep encounter with Jesus at



SCREEN CAPTURES FROM STREAMED EVENT

Benedictine Father Boniface Hicks and author Mike Aquilina speak at THE WELL men's conference.

that retreat," Lieberum said. "When you have a band of brothers around you, you almost can't put it into words how impactful it is. There is so much power in men coming together and just bearing honestly their struggles, their successes. It's a beautiful thing to see men together in a men's group just

hold each other accountable, to be encouragement for one another."

An in-person conference is scheduled for Sept. 25 at Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg. Aquilina and Father Boniface are scheduled to speak, as well as Father Christopher Cuddy and Father Austin Litke,

Dominicans from the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

Details about registration for the in-person conference will be forthcoming. Men who registered for the 2020 conference and want to remain for the in-person 2021 conference do not need to take any action.

New Kensington parish to begin restoration of church

By Paul Pattera
Editor

NEW KENSINGTON — Bishop Larry J. Kulick made a series of announcements recently that will help St. Mary of Czestochowa Parish begin restoring its church building.

On April 8, 2020, the church was struck by a tornado, damaging the bell tower, steeple and roof. Immediate steps were taken to secure the church, including a temporary roof to prevent further damage to the interior.

Over the last several months, working alongside Msgr. Michael J. Begolly, Pastor of St. Mary of Czestochowa Parish, Bishop Kulick has devised a comprehensive strategy.

Bishop Kulick has granted permission for the church building to be restored utilizing approximately \$2.5 million in insurance funds received by the parish.

He said he is extremely thankful for the leadership Msgr. Begolly has provided to the faith community during this difficult time, including constant communication about the status of the church building.

"Compounding the devastation of this tragic storm was its timing. The tornado damaged the church during

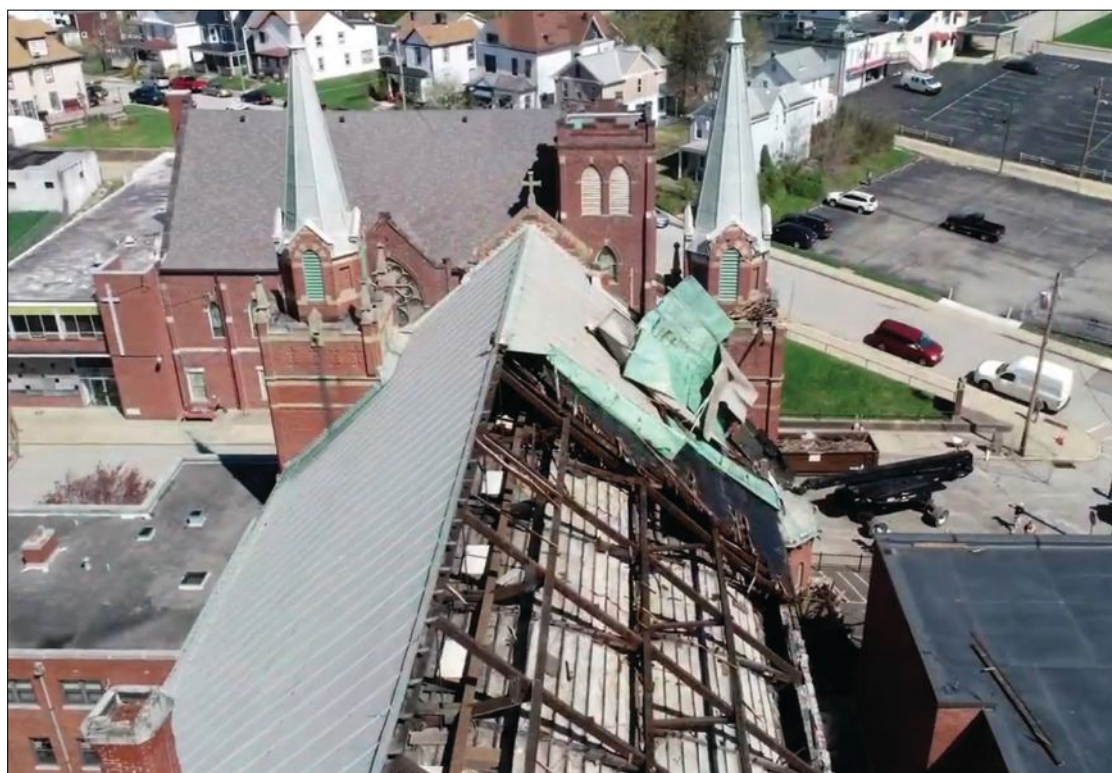
Holy Week of 2020, a time when most of the world was locked down due to the COVID-19 pandemic," Bishop Kulick said. "My prayers have been with Msgr. Begolly and the parishioners, and I thank them for their patience, understanding and cooperation. They have remained a parish, even without a church building, for almost a year."

The rebuilding process is expected to be complex, and reinvigorating the parish community will be an important priority. Both Bishop Kulick and Msgr. Begolly believe this is an optimal time to transition leadership in an effort to provide long-term continuity and stability for the New Kensington region.

To that end, Bishop Kulick also made the following announcements:

Effective with the summer clergy appointments, Msgr. Begolly will be appointed Pastor of Mother of Sorrows Parish, Murrysburg, replacing Msgr. James T. Gaston who, at age 75, requested and was granted retirement.

To replace Msgr. Begolly this summer, Bishop Kulick has appointed Father Kenneth G. Zaccagnini as Pastor of St. Mary of Czestochowa Parish, St. Joseph Parish and Mount St. Peter Parish, all in New Kensington, while re-



THE CATHOLIC ACCENT FILE PHOTO

The roof of St. Mary of Czestochowa Church is seen following damage done by a tornado in April 2020.

maining pastor of St. Margaret Mary Parish, Lower Burrell.

While the summer clergy appointments are still several weeks away, Bishop Kulick wants to expedite the restoration process. As a result, Father Zaccagnini will assume the role of Bishop's Liaison for Restoration effective immediately.

"I am grateful to the faithful

people of New Kensington for their support over the last year as we worked side by side with the Diocese of Greensburg, insurance adjustors and building inspectors to assess the damage and determine next steps. I believe we have built a strong team to begin the restoration process," Msgr. Begolly said.

He chose to make the

transition this summer, as did Father Zaccagnini.

"I am thankful to Msgr. Begolly, who oversaw many important details, especially encasing the beautiful wooden carved altars to preserve them. I look forward to seeing the church restored and the pews full of parishioners as soon as possible," said Father Zaccagnini.

Red Cross sets blood donation dates

Opportunities for blood donations are available this month throughout the four counties of the Diocese of Greensburg. Appointments can be made by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting www.RedCrossBlood.org or calling 800-733-2767.

Armstrong County

- Manor Township Volunteer Fire Company, McGrann, April 22, noon-6 p.m.
- Gilpin Township Volunteer Fire Department, April 27, 2:30-6 p.m.

Fayette County

- Pleasant Valley Masonic Lodge, Connellsville, April 17,

8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Uniontown Volunteer Firemen's Social Hall, April 20, noon-6 p.m.
- Asbury United Methodist Church, Uniontown, April 22, 1:30-7 p.m.

Indiana County

- Indiana Mall, April 23, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Trinity United Methodist Church, Indiana, April 26, 1-6:30 p.m.
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania, April 27, noon-5 p.m.

Westmoreland County

- St. Michael of the Valley Episcopal Church, Rector,

April 15, 1-6 p.m.

- Export Volunteer Fire Department, April 16, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Greensburg, April 21, 1-6:30 p.m.
- Holy Cross Parish, Youngwood, April 21, 1:30-7 p.m.
- Hempfield Township Athletic Complex, April 22, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Zion Lutheran Church, Greensburg, April 24, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- American Legion Post No. 515, Latrobe, April 26, 12:30 p.m.-5 p.m.
- Greensburg Blood Donation Center, April 28 and 30, noon-6 p.m.

Catechesis of Good Shepherd courses scheduled

INDIANA — Registrations are being accepted for the summer and fall Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level I formation courses being offered at St. Thomas More University Parish.

The summer course will be offered in two parts, July 19-24, 2021, and July 18-23, 2022. The fall course is Nov. 20-21, 2021, and continuing in 2022 on Jan. 15, Feb. 19, March 19,

April 17, May 7 and 21, June 11, and July 16 and 29-30. Cost is \$300. Francis Fund scholarships are available; apply at DioceseofGreensburg.org by May 1 for summer and Sept. 1 for fall.

For course information, contact Mary Beth Palko, mpalko@DioceseofGreensburg.org, or Diane Cawley, dcawley@DioceseofGreensburg.org, or 724-463-2277.

THE CATHOLIC ACCENT⁺ 2021 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Publication Date	Deadline to Submit Material
*May 20 (Summer Events)	April 15
June 17	June 3
July 15	July 1
*Aug. 19 (magazine)	July 15
Sept. 16	Sept. 2
Oct. 21	Oct. 7
*Nov. 18 (Christmas Traditions)	Oct. 14
Dec. 16 (Christmas)	Dec. 2

The Catholic Accent is published monthly on the third Thursday of the month. The publication is magazine style (listed in bold) once a quarter and newspaper style the other eight 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 (in bold). Please plan accordingly to have events submitted in time to be included in the newspaper issues.

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

Faithful across Diocese respond to annual Lenten Appeal

By Jennifer Miele
Chief Communications Officer

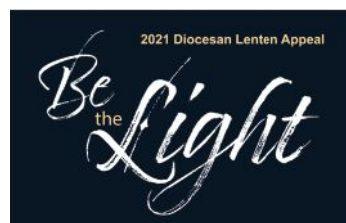
FREEMONT — Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, parishioners at St. Mary, Mother of God Parish have responded to the call for assistance from their Pastor, Msgr. Gilbert Gente, helping to exceed their fundraising goal by nearly \$100,000 in pledges.

Msgr. Gente made an impassioned case to fund a new bereavement ministry that would extend support to the entire community, including parishioners in need and beyond, to believers of all faiths who benefit from the love and compassion of Jesus.

His Diocesan Lenten Appeal Chairman, Jeff Polana, stressed the word “foundation” when discussing why the parish received such a strong response this year.

“The people of our parish, somehow, always exceed our target because they have a strong foundation built on their love of God, faith and their Church,” Polana said.

“Not to mention that one of this year’s projects focuses on the actual foundation of our church: resealing the



foundation that was built 195 years ago,” he continued. “We have a strong leadership group starting with our pastor, our pastoral and finance councils, and we set realistic, achievable goals related to projects our parishioners can see and support during the Diocesan Lenten Appeal.”

“In the context of a pandemic, it gives us great faith that God provides for us,” said Michael Lucotch, Director of Development at the Diocese of Greensburg.

COVID-19 relief efforts at parishes across the Diocese, including material assistance, cleaning and streamlining Mass ministries, are also supported by the Diocesan Lenten Appeal.

Lucotch believes parishioners are motivated to assist in those efforts, which is probably why 45 parishes had reached their targets by Easter 2021, compared to just 18 at the same time



MARY SEAMANS THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

Jeff Polana and Msgr. Gilbert Gente examine stones in the foundation of St. Mary, Mother of God Church.

last year. Just prior to Easter, nearly \$600,000 was pledged specifically for parish needs across the Diocese.

This year’s appeal, “Be the Light” reminds the faithful that even a small gift can make a big difference

for those in need.

To make a donation, visit www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/BeTheLight.

Diocese’s newest Filipino priest ready for ministry here

By Mary Pickles
Contributing Writer

GREENSBURG — Father Segundino R. Laude flew thousands of miles and spent two weeks in quarantine en route to joining the Diocese of Greensburg’s International Priests’ Program.

He arrived in Greensburg March 22, and is busy learning about the new diocese where he will share his faith.

Father Laude, 49, is from the Philippines. He was ordained a priest in 1998, and has served in various capacities in the Diocese of San Jose de Antique.

“It was my bishop who requested me to come here and take part in the program,” said Father Laude.

“In the Philippines, our ministry revolves around what kind of work we are supposed to do,” he said. “That work can include celebrating the sacraments of students in the Diocese’s schools to celebrating baptisms and weddings within small Christian community parishes. Our work really relies so much on programs set by the diocese, parish and schools where we are assigned.”

He is enjoying what he calls his “OTJ” (on the job) training.

“I immerse myself in it. Every situation calls for an open mind, to learn to adjust, to deal with people. That’s our life — we serve the needs of the people,



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Father Segundino R. Laude in his residence.

of course, always under the guidance of the bishop,” Father Laude said.

He jokes that his fellow priests “have baptized me with (the nickname) Dino.”

And he is convinced that his lengthy travels and quarantine held some purpose in his serving with the Diocese of Greensburg.

“I was blessed to have left the coun-

try just before COVID spiked again,” Father Laude said. “God must have intervened in my coming here. It’s really God’s plan.”

Following an orientation to life and ministry in the Diocese of Greensburg, he will receive a pastoral appointment, said Msgr. Richard G. Curci, associate director of the Diocesan International Priests’ Program.

“I immerse myself in it. Every situation calls for an open mind, to learn to adjust, to deal with people. That’s our life — we serve the needs of the people.”

— FATHER SEGUNDINO R. LAUDE

“Part of my responsibility is to acquaint him with all levels of the Diocese,” he said.

The international priests, many of whom are from the Philippines, enjoy each other’s company and have “a great sense of fraternity,” Msgr. Curci said.

“In our areas, because of clustering — Uniontown, New Kensington, Connelville and Lower Burrell — they tend to work with pastors in charge of several parishes,” he added.

The Diocese expects that international priests will, as our local clergy do, serve the sacramental needs of the people, Msgr. Curci said.

“I think (parishioners) are really grateful. They find (international) priests very likable and friendly, and are inspired by their sacrifice,” he said.

“They provide a challenge to consider the priority of faith in our lives. They remind us that they have been called to serve.”



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Giovanni Cicala plans to study accounting and computer science.

Parishioner wins SVC's Wimmer Scholarship

LATROBE — Giovanni Cicala, a senior at The Kiski School, Saltsburg, and parishioner of St. Ambrose Parish, Avonmore, has been awarded a four-year, full-tuition scholarship in Saint Vincent College's 40th annual Wimmer Scholarship Competition. The scholarship is valued at more than \$150,000.

At The Kiski School, Cicala is involved in speech and debate and theater. He was recognized with The Kiski School's 2019-20 King Award for posting the highest GPA in the junior class, while also winning the school's Science Achievement Award and earning induction into the Cum Laude Honor Society.

The son of John (a 1988 Saint Vincent College graduate) and Debra Cicala, Cicala plans to study accounting and computer science and eventually attend law school.

Geibel Catholic to host virtual auction

By Paul Paterra
Editor

CONNELLSVILLE — Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School's annual auction will be a little different this year: It will be held virtually May 1 and 2 and, in reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be called the "Mask"querade Virtual Showcase and Online Auction.

"This is our first ever virtual auction," said Tiffany Zylka, Geibel Catholic Business Manager. "We normally do an in-person auction. We have a committee of parents who decided they would be willing to take this over and do it virtually."

The committee is composed of Christina Waggett, Nikki Holonich and Richelle Swenglish.

"We just wanted to play off of the mask theme of 2020-21," Waggett said. "Last year, we had been planning our auction full force, but COVID had different plans. We ended up just doing a Day of Giving. Instead of just



doing the Day of Giving this year, we thought we'd give the online auction a try. Any little bit helps."

Waggett, a 2001 Geibel Catholic graduate, has been involved in the auction for the last few years. Her daughter Elizabeth graduated from Geibel Catholic in 2020, and her daughter Madison is a seventh-grader.

The virtual event will include a showcase of past Geibel Catholic musicals, with about a dozen former and current students performing songs from those musicals.

Waggett said the musicals are popular extracurricular activities at Geibel Catholic. Music teacher Nick Bell would

have directed his 20th musical in 2020, but it was canceled as a result of the pandemic.

"While the auction is live, (participants) will be able to watch different things from musicals and other things aside from just going online to bid," Zylka said.

The online auction will feature designer purses, possibly vacation getaways and other items, plus baskets created by both local businesses and students. Each class is putting together a basket: a gardening basket by the seniors, a "staycation" basket by the juniors, a spa basket by the sophomores, a coffee and tea basket by the freshmen, and a lottery basket by the junior high students. There also will be a 50/50 raffle.

"They've always been successful in the past," Zylka said of previous auctions. "We're hoping to get a lot of participation from the families. Normally, for the auction they have to buy tickets because there is a dinner. With this, you just go on and bid."

Two named Distinguished Centurions

By Paul Paterra
Editor

GREENSBURG — Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School's Distinguished Centurions for 2021 are an impressive duo.

Thomas Appleby, Class of 1976, is the Distinguished Centurion for Service, and Dr. Heather (Heinrichs) Walker, Class of 1991, is the Distinguished Centurion for Achievement. Both are Greensburg residents.

The awards honor individuals who have made significant contributions to their community, workplace or Greensburg Central Catholic and provide a positive model for GCC students.

Appleby and Walker received their awards at UnMasked: One Night — One Cause, GCC's annual auction and awards ceremony, which was held virtually March 18.

After earning a bachelor's degree in geology at Waynesburg University, where he played on the baseball team, Appleby worked as a petroleum geologist, focusing his career on the exploration and development of oil and natural gas reserves. He currently operates his own company, Discovery Natural Resources LLC.

Appleby has given back to his alma mater through his love of baseball. He spent several years as the head girls softball coach and is currently head baseball coach.

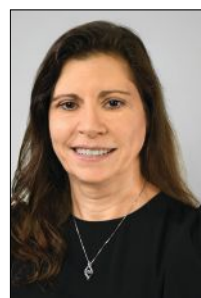
"Here at GCC we're truly preparing our young men and our young women to have a positive influence in our society," Appleby said. "This is a reflection of the parents, the teachers, our administration and all they do for the children."

"I've been witness to numerous acts of kind-

ness throughout my years here at Central. Some are small, some are life-changing moments. They all came from the same place, God's spirit in each of these students, making a positive difference in the lives of others."

He and his wife Mary Beth (Class of 1978) have four children; three are GCC graduates and one is a current Centurion.

Walker earned a bachelor's degree in science, medicine and health care at the University of



Walker

Pittsburgh, then went on to earn her medical degree there. She now serves as Assistant Director of the Excelsa Emergency Department at Westmoreland. In addition, she is the Excelsa Health and Mutual Aid Ambulance Medical Director and a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

In 2020, she was elected President of the Excelsa

Health medical staff and is a member of Excelsa Health Board of Trustees.

Walker is a frequent guest lecturer in GCC's medical perspectives class. She also serves as the West Point Little League Safety Director.

"Some people equate achievement and success, but in my family they're actually quite different," Walker said. "Achievement is striving to your personal best, working to fulfill the gifts that you've been given."

"Success is actually something quite larger. It's something I learned first from my family, but then every day at Central. Success is about what kind of person you've become. It's how you take your gifts and use them to improve the lives of the people around you."

Walker and her husband Brad have one son, Sean, a GCC student.

GCC virtual auction, awards ceremony success

GREENSBURG — UnMasked: One Night — One Cause can be deemed a success.

Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School's annual auction and Distinguished Centurion Awards ceremony was held virtually March 18 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dennis Cremonese, Greensburg Central Catholic's Director of Institutional Advancement, does not yet know the total raised, but did say he was pleased.

"It was our first effort at a virtual event, and people responded favorably," he said.

The event included raffles and behind-the-scenes looks at Greensburg Central Catholic activities.

Proceeds from the event go toward keeping the students in school five days a week, as well as helping GCC stay up to date technologically.

"We students want you to know that we truly appreciate the many enhancements to our school campus that your contributions made possible," senior Dylan Sebek, Student Council President, said on the video. "Your patronage has brought many improvements to our classrooms, as well as to our programs in the performing and visual arts."

There were some impressive items on which participants could bid: use of a condominium in Breckenridge, Colo.; use of a condominium from a choice of Hilton Grand Vacations locations; a patio set and firepit from Westmoreland Pools; and a multi-course Italian dinner (Una Cena Romana) for up to six people prepared by Father Dan Ulishney (GCC Class of 2005), Pastor of St. Mary Parish, Export, and St. John Baptist de La Salle Parish, Delmont.

"Every item we had did have a bidder," Cremonese said. "I think overall we were pretty successful given the way we did it. People responded from more than just the area. We had alums and others from outside the area bidding on items and buying raffles."

Tom Mizikar, GCC Class of 1988, served as master of ceremonies. Jen Kratzenberg and Connie David were co-chairs.

— Paul Paterra



Appleby



PHOTOS BY PAUL PATERRA THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

People wait in line for vaccines April 5 at St. Barbara Parish.

Harrison City Parish helps get vaccines out

By Paul Paterra
Editor

HARRISON CITY — On Mondays and Wednesdays each week, people line up at St. Barbara Parish to get their COVID-19 vaccinations.

The parish has served as a vaccination site since January, with vaccinations provided by Bushy Run Pharmacy, a subsidiary of Mainline Pharmacy.

Father Michael P. Sikon, Pastor, said he felt it was important to be involved in the process.

"The church has a history of always recognizing that the only way you can make an impact in people's spiritual lives is to first respond to their most basic needs," Father Sikon said. "Right now, this seems to be an absolute necessity, allowing people to get back to a normal way of living and having good health."

About 1,200-1,500 vaccinations, both Moderna and Pfizer, are being administered at each clinic.

"It's been absolutely incredible," Father Sikon said. "You never see people so happy to get a shot. It's nice to be able to play a role in making that happen."

Parishioner Dr. Kevin Wong, who has been volunteering at the clinics, said people have come from as far away as Erie and Philadelphia to be vaccinated.

"The community has been well served," Wong said. "The parish and the people have just been so supportive. It's a community effort. That's what it's all about."

Wong said retired doctors, as well as retired nurses from the former Jeannette District Memorial Hospital and parishioners, are among those who have volunteered to help with the vaccinations.

Wong said the average wait time for the first shot is less than 10 minutes, and less than five minutes for the second shot.

"We've been doing two clinics a week for the past month," said Jack Moschgat, a pharmacist at Bushy Run Pharmacy.



At top, preparing vaccines are Abigail Harvey, left, Matt Kalafsky and Allyson Smathers. Above, Dan Casey receives a vaccination from retired nurse Betty Yeager.

"We've probably given 15,000 or 20,000 doses here. It's been overwhelmingly positive.

"We've probably given a couple months' worth of second doses," he said. "It has been busy."

Moschgat said people's initial hesitancy about receiving the vaccination seems to be lessening.

"People wanted to wait and see a little bit," he said. "I think now that people have seen how many people have gotten it, and people that they know have gotten it and are fine, that makes them a

little more comfortable with it.

"You have to go out and get the community done so things can start opening back up and people can start doing what they like to do."

Wong, who has been in practice in the area for nearly 40 years, said the vaccinations will be administered at the church as long as necessary.

"I'm hoping by May we see the end of the push here," he said. "Nothing like this has even been seen in our lifetime. Hopefully, we never see anything like this in our lifetime again."

Diocesan Scouts to be honored at May 2 Mass

By Paul Paterra
Editor

GREENSBURG — Each year, the Diocese of Greensburg recognizes local Scouts at the annual Scout Convocation Mass.

This year's celebration of Catholic Scouting in the Diocese is scheduled for May 2 at 1 p.m. at St. Paul Parish, Greensburg. Bishop Larry J. Kulick will celebrate Mass.

Father E. George Saletrik, Diocesan Scout Chaplain, said the highlight of the Mass is the presentation of Scout emblems by the Bishop.

This year's emblem awardees are:

Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania

- St. Kateri Tekakwitha Emblem: Emma Hrbek, Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish, Greensburg, and Trixie Lim, Mother of Sorrows Parish, Murrysville. (The emblem is for sixth-graders to help advance religious knowledge and spiritual formation.)

- Mary, The First Disciple (Marian) Emblem: Riley Campbell and Paige Kline, Our Lady of Grace Parish, Greensburg, and Zilola Giaramita and Penelope Lim, Mother of Sorrows Parish. (The emblem is for seventh- and eighth-graders to encourage the understanding of Mary as a model of openness and spirituality.)

Boy Scouts of America, Westmoreland-Fayette Council

- Pope Pius XII Emblem: Joseph Kudla, St. Anne Parish, Rostraver, Troop 1543; Parker Lilloock, St. Anne Parish, Troop 1448. (The emblem encourages high school boys to examine how being a Christian affects daily living and provides them with an opportunity to share their faith among peers.)

The Mass is open to the public, but attendance will be limited due to COVID-19 regulations. This year, adults will not be honored, and there will be no reception afterward.

There are also less recipients.

"Getting together to work on an emblem was a bit more challenging," Father Saletrik said. "We don't have quite as many kids as we normally do receiving emblems, just because it's hard to get them together."

Groups that started projects but were unable to finish in time for this year's Mass will receive emblems in 2022 if work is completed, he said.

Athlete's 'Hitting for Hope' initiative gets pro-life message out

By Paul Pattera
Editor

IRWIN — Ryan Scavnicky wants to make a difference.

It appears the senior at Norwin High School is doing just that with his Hitting for Hope initiative, which he started in the spring of 2020 to provide support and encouragement to women facing unexpected pregnancies.

With every hit he tallies this season for the Norwin baseball team, he will donate one "Love Box" care package to encourage a mother at a local pregnancy center.

"This is my idea to take my talents and use them to serve others, to help others and to glorify God," Scavnicky said. "I'm pretty sure it was God who placed this desire in my heart to do this."

Each "Love Box" contains a personal invitation to a church-hosted support group, stories from a parenting mom and birth mom, a letter of hope, a journal with entries encouraging the woman to be fearless, a "Best Gift Ever" onesie, and a copy of the book "A Bump in Life" by Amy Ford, which offers hope to single and pregnant moms.

The 18-year-old parishioner of Immaculate Conception Parish in Irwin said he worked with Father John A. Moineau, Pastor, to start his quest in 2020.

"I was struggling with how to get the word out. Someone mentioned to me to reach

out to Father John," Scavnicky recalled. "I talked to him, and the next week he had a flyer in the bulletin and he was passing it out to everyone."

Scavnicky participated in a baseball league last summer with students from many area high schools and collected 16 hits. He raised more than \$5,000 to provide 280 "Love Boxes."

The pro-life message is important to Scavnicky, who is president of his school's Knights for Life Club. He has participated in the annual March for Life at Washington D.C., as well as life chains and his school's "sock wall."

"We'll put a baby sock on the wall in the cafeteria for every abortion that happens in an hour," said Scavnicky, adding that it's a number that nears 100. "It's just a way to spread the word."

Scavnicky and some of his fellow Knights for Life members delivered "Love Boxes" to area pregnancy centers.

"It was nice," Scavnicky recalled. "We met with some of the directors; some showed us around the centers and showed us what it was like."

His efforts give Scavnicky a feeling of satisfaction that he is helping people.

"It's definitely fulfilling," he said. "It gives me an extra sense of purpose and that feeling that I'm playing for something more than myself."

Two of Ryan's biggest supporters have been his parents — Louis and Stephanie Scav-



PHOTO COURTESY RYAN SCAVNICKY

Ryan Scavnicky takes a break from assembling "Love Boxes."

nicky. They organized a party last year in which members of Knights for Life and Immaculate Conception parishioners packed the "Love Boxes."

Christie Smith, Director of Youth Ministry for the Diocese, admires Scavnicky and his efforts.

"Ryan is an outstanding young man full of energy and passion for his faith," she said. "He has a true servant's heart, which has shown through in turning his giftedness in baseball into serving others. He is a true example of a young disciple walking with Christ for youth and adults alike."

Susan Cheplic, Regional Coordinator of Youth Ministry for the parish, said she has known Scavnicky since he

was a quiet eighth-grader and has enjoyed watching him grow into a strong leader.

"While he still isn't always the man of the most words, his authenticity of faith and the strength of his action make others want to follow where he leads," she said.

Cheplic said she is impressed with Hitting for Hope.

"I love that Ryan thought outside the box to create such a meaningful and successful project," Cheplic said.

"During youth ministry, we talk about how we can use our gifts and talents to give glory to God, and this has been such an inspirational way to see a teen step up and do just that. Rather than leave his passion and talent for

baseball on the field, he saw a way to use his leadership position as an athlete to do something for the most vulnerable in our society, which is just so amazing on so many levels."

Scavnicky plans to attend Franciscan University of Steubenville in the fall to study theology and philosophy, as well as play baseball.

He would like to reach \$10,000 this year, but that's not his priority.

"It's not about how much, it's more about the message and being able to help people, serve people and glorify God," he said. "That's what I'm trying to do."

To donate, visit www.hittingforhope.com.

SCHOOL BRIEFS

Members of the forensics team at Mary Queen of Apostles School, New Kensington, won awards in two virtual Southwestern Pennsylvania Forensic League tournaments:

- Fifth-grader **Greta Magnusen** and eighth-graders **Maggie Nesko** and **Abby Ruffini**, two first-place finishes each in poetry both Feb. 25 and March 10.

- Eighth-grader **Lily Junod**, second and third in poetry Feb. 25; first and second in poetry March 10.

- Sixth-grader **Emma Yingling**, two seconds in poetry Feb. 25, two seconds in drama March 10.

- Seventh-graders **Niviah Andree**, **Mia Jackson** and **Elissa Mlinarcik** and sixth-graders **Avery Nix** and **Louisa Palumbo**, two firsts each in drama at both competitions.

- Seventh-grader **Bella Graff**, two firsts in declamation at both competitions.

- Seventh-grader **Thomas Locke** and sixth-grader **Logan Polito**, two firsts each in prose at both competitions.

- Sixth-grader **Danica Santucci**, two firsts in impromptu Feb. 25; first and

second in impromptu March 10.

Maggie Nesko was also the winner of the school's Mary Fahey Award for dedication to forensics.

Winners in AlternativesYes pregnancy support center's 2021 Pro-Life Essay Contest were:

- From St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School, Uniontown: **Michael Miller**, eighth grade, first place; **Nicole Barrera**, seventh grade, third; and **Sophia Fisher**, eighth grade, and **Vivianna Savona**, sixth grade, honorable mention.

- From Conn-Area Catholic School, Connellsville: **Reese Workman**, sixth grade, honorable mention.

Janna Bloch, an eighth-grader at Mary Queen of Apostles School, was named a 2021 Carson Scholar and won a \$1,000 scholarship.

Students from Mary Queen of Apostles School were poetry winners in an education contest sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court New Kensington 860:

fifth-graders **Tommy Lecker**, first, and **Ava Shumaker**, honorable mention; sixth-graders **Mary Huth**, first, and **Louisa Palumbo**, honorable mention; and eighth-grader **Faith Durci**, honorable mention.

Middle school students from St. Bernard Regional Catholic School, Indiana, participated in two recent science fairs.

In the 2021 virtual Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair, eighth-grader **Joselle Cribbs** won a sponsorship award from FedEx; her sister, sixth-grader **Bella Cribbs**, received a PPG sponsorship award. Sixth-grader **Irene Dillaman** placed fourth in the consumer science junior division.

Joselle Cribbs and eighth-grader **Bridget Waterhouse** have earned the title junior scientist by participating in the fair in sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

In the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition, **Isaac Bennett** won a first-place award and **Eva Nealen** earned a second. Both are seventh-graders. Isaac will compete at the state level in May.

The "Radioactive Readers" team from St. Bernard Regional Catholic School took fourth place in the recent virtual Westmoreland Interscholastic Reading Competition. Members are eighth-graders **Kenna Colatch**, **Bridget Waterhouse** and **Joselle Cribbs**, seventh-graders **Isaac Bennett**, **Sara Gornick** and **Eva Nealen**, and sixth-graders **Irene Dillaman** and **Sullivan Waterhouse**.

Brody Porter, a senior at St. Joseph High School, Natrona Heights, and a parishioner of St. Margaret Mary Parish, Lower Burrell, received the Prudential Spirit of Community President's Volunteer Service Award.

Students from Mary Queen of Apostles School were grade-level winners in the Zaner-Bloser National Handwriting Contest: **Lillian Gray** (kindergarten), **Aaron Troiano** (first grade), **Samuel Litz** (second grade), **Colleen Gray** (third grade), **Ava Shumaker** (fifth grade) and **Vincent Guerrini** (sixth grade). They will compete at the state and national levels.

New head football coach finds GCC a perfect match

By Paul Pattera
Editor

GREENSBURG — Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School is a fit for new football coach Marko Thomas for many reasons.

First, the 40-year-old Thomas' mother, Joanne (Wtorkowski) Thomas, is a 1968 GCC graduate.

Also, he is taking over a team that has its share of athletes who are hungry to return to the gridiron after a 2-5 season in 2020.

Plus, there's the proximity to his home. Thomas spent the last four years as head coach at Connellsville Area High School, meaning he was putting a lot of miles on his Jeep traveling from his home in Claridge to Connellsville each day. His new coaching job cuts the trip from 40 minutes one way to just 18 minutes.

Yes, it seems to be a great fit. Thomas said he checked scores for GCC football games quite frequently in his younger days.

"It's always been in the back of my mind," Thomas said of coaching at GCC. "I always thought it would be a great place to coach."

Thomas faced many challenges at Connellsville, which he feels will help him at GCC.

"It seemed like things would never go the way I planned it," Thomas said. "The first year, I lost four quarterbacks in the first five games. The next year,



PHOTO SUBMITTED

New GCC football coach Marko Thomas, left, is shown with his father, Sonny Thomas, who will serve as defensive coordinator at GCC, and his brother, Brad, at a Connellsville Area High School game at Fox Chapel High School in 2019.

it was four running backs over seven games.

"Things aren't always going to go your way. You have to keep things positive and going in the right direction. I learned a lot and grew a lot there. I think the reason I was put there was to get those kinds of experiences."

Thomas has been coaching high school football for 15 years. He is a graduate of Penn-Trafford High School,

where he played football. He and his wife of 13 years, Kerri, have three sons, Landon, Jaxon and Nolan. He is a sixth-grade math and social studies teacher in the Yough School District, and he and his wife own Early Foundations Inc., a preschool and day care center in Jeannette.

Athletic Director Dan Mahoney said there were 19 applicants for the job, five of whom were interviewed. He said

it was a strong group, but something about Thomas stood out.

"His energy and his passion for coaching football," Mahoney said. "He wants to be at Greensburg Central Catholic. That was very evident in the interview process. All five we interviewed did a great job, but he just had a few things extra."

Thomas started working with his players almost immediately upon being hired and has been working with them steadily ever since.

"I love it," Thomas said. "They're not just in it for themselves. They're cheering each other on. They're picking each other up. It's just a tremendous atmosphere. They want to do better. They're working hard to try to make it happen."

Thomas has put together his coaching staff, which will include his father Sonny Thomas as defensive coordinator and some other members of his staff at Connellsville.

"I think I've got 10 guys who are all on the same page, all have the same goals in mind and are going to make these kids want to play for them," he said.

One thing is for sure: Thomas is anxious to kick off the season.

"I'm excited, but we've got a lot to do," he said. "We're a small school where every sport is sharing players. We don't have a ton of days when we're getting everybody together, but when we do, we try to fit in as much as we can."

GCC boys basketball team ends season with strong finish

By Paul Pattera
Editor

GREENSBURG — The successful sports year at Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School continued in the winter season as the boys basketball team advanced to the WPIAL Class 2A championship game.

The Centurions won the championship of Section 3 (2A) with a 9-1 record, going 16-4 overall.

The team lost in the WPIAL title game to eventual state champion Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, 71-52, March 13 in Peters Township. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart became only the 14th boys basketball team in WPIAL history to finish the season undefeated.

"It was a good year," said Christian Hyland, a 2014 GCC graduate in his second year as the Centurions' basketball coach. "The kids were a lot of fun. They were great to work with. When you have a good group of kids and a good staff, that makes for a good year."

Hyland said the level of comfort among the members of the team went a long way toward its success.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The GCC boys basketball team with Assistant Coach Ed Zimmerlink.

"The kids really enjoyed being with one another," he said. "They realized pretty quickly that they could have a strong year."

Junior forward Brevan Williams averaged about 20.5 points a game, and senior guard Christian McGowan chipped in with about 13.5 points a game. Hyland said

McGowan was the "rock" of the team — someone who he relied on a lot.

Rounding out the starting lineup were senior guard Dylan Sebek, junior guard Dylan Parsons and senior forward Ryan Appleby. Key reserves were freshman Tyree Turner, sophomore Nate Dlugos and juniors Dan Dlugos

and Garrett Sherwin.

"It was an awesome run for them," said Athletic Director Dan Mahoney. "The whole atmosphere and chemistry of that group was tremendous throughout the season. It was a very unselfish group of guys, and the core of the team is back next year. We're looking forward to that as well."

“The kids really enjoyed being with one another. They realized pretty quickly that they could have a strong year.”

COACH CHRISTIAN HYLAND

A strong nucleus does return next season for Hyland, who was a member of the last Centurion team to reach the WPIAL championship game. Hyland said those students are ready to play another season now.

The success of the boys team came on the heels of an incredible fall season in which the boys and girls soccer teams won WPIAL titles and the girls volleyball team advanced to the WPIAL championship game.

"That's just what's expected," Hyland said of Greensburg Central Catholic athletics. "The kids are confident. At small schools, kids play three to four different sports. That goes a long way in those tight games. They've been through those experiences. They just want to keep being successful. It's fun to win."



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EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADDICTION SUPPORT

Irwin — Sage's Army offers the following groups/meetings (at Greensburg site unless otherwise noted):

- Family reinforcement/recovery, Thursdays, 6:30-8 p.m.
 - GRASP grief group, second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, 6:30-8 p.m., Irwin headquarters.
 - Coffee Break for women (on hold; check website for updates).
 - Veteran "X," Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m.
 - Recovery Life Group, Mondays, 5:30-7 p.m.
 - Gamblers Anonymous, Mondays, 7:30-9 p.m.
 - Changed Forever prayer gathering, second Tuesday of every month, 6 p.m.
 - Dual Recovery Anonymous, Mondays, 2 p.m.
 - All Recovery, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 2 p.m.
 - SMART Recovery, Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
 - Assiduous Rumination and Renewal Round Table, first and last Saturday morning of every month.
 - Recovery Chess Club, first and third Friday of every month, 5 p.m.
- Information: sagesarmy.com or 724-863-5433.

BIBLE STUDY

Dunbar — St. Aloysius Parish is hosting a virtual Bible study Fridays from 9:30-10:45 a.m. Registration: molli.vassar@gmail.com or 724-366-9552.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELING

Greensburg — Catholic Charities is offering virtual counseling to help people address anxiety, depression, interpersonal conflict, grief and more. Information: 724-837-1840 or counseling@dioceseofgreensburg.org.

CRAFT/VENDOR SHOW

New Alexandria — St. James Parish will hold an outdoor craft/vendor show, with a Chinese auction, May 15 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Masks required.

GOLF OUTING

Connellsville — Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School will hold its annual golf outing May 29 at Pleasant Valley Golf Club with an 8 a.m. shotgun start. Information: Tiffany Zylka, 724-628-5600.

LECTURES

Greensburg — The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill will host a free virtual talk, "We Cannot Quarantine Compassion," by author/history professor Catherine O'Donnell, April 17 at 7 p.m. Registration: <https://scsh.org>.

Greensburg — The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill are offering speaker programs to parishes and organizations. For topics or to schedule a speaker, contact Sister of Charity Colette Hanlon, 724-836-0406, ext. 6616, or chanlon@scsh.org.

LGBTQ MINISTRY

Latrobe — St. Vincent Basilica Parish hosts virtual meetings for Always God's Children, a ministry for LGBTQ people and their families, the second Thursday of each month from 7-8:30 p.m. Information: Kristina Davies, 724-539-8629, ext. 19, or Kristina.davies@stvincent.edu.

NOVENA

Jeannette — A Novena to St. Anthony will be prayed at Ascension Parish Tuesdays at 7 p.m. through June 8, with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. Events will be livestreamed on the "Deacon Bill Newhouse" Facebook page at www.facebook.com/100343101625071.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Latrobe — The Oblates of St. Benedict, Latrobe Deanery, will meet April 18 (speaker Dr. Catherine Petran, "Prayer: The Psalms"), May 16 (Benedictine Father Justin Matro, "Purity of Heart") and June 13 (Benedictine Brother Gregory Visca, "Conversatio morum") from 3-4:15 p.m. in the Archabbey Basilica Crypt. Reservations: Benedictine Father Donald Raila, 724-805-2291. Supper at 5:35 p.m. and additional sessions at 6:30 p.m. may be added; call two weeks in advance to register for evening events.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Jeannette — Ascension Parish will hold a takeout spaghetti dinner April 27 from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. in Mersinger Hall. Cost: \$10 for dinner, \$10 for six meatballs with sauce, \$5 for a quart of sauce. Orders: 724-527-2659.

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