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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK!



eSPORTS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SPIRITUAL FORMATION

A CATHOLIC EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Catholic schools embrace esports

By Cliff Gorski
Editor

GREENSBURG — After school, most kids have a snack and then head off to finish homework, or attend after-school athletic practices. Many Catholic school students in the Diocese of Greensburg have another option: They jump into a gaming chair with a handheld controller and take advantage of esports, a new technology that allows them to use and hone their skills in science, technology, engineering, art and math.

Educators say students who

participate in esports also develop other skills, such as teamwork, sportsmanship, strategic thinking and leadership.

Esports teams are in full play at Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School and Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior-High School, Connellsville. There are also middle school teams at Conn-Area Catholic School, Connellsville, and St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School, Uniontown.

Teams use the approved popular game Rocket League, which could be described as soccer combined with a

demolition derby. Four players guide rocket-powered battle cars to hit a large ball toward their opponent's goal. Each match takes about five minutes. Teams from Catholic schools of the Diocese of Greensburg play teams from other Pennsylvania schools. There are leagues and referees, and the season runs through the fall, but matches can occur in both pre-and post-seasons.

Matthew Very teaches educational technology and Makerspace classes at GCC and is coach of the Centurions esports team.

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GUIDE**

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THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG,
PENNSYLVANIA

Mission: Faith is a gift.
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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 appointments and announcements:*

Effective Thursday, January 4, 2024

Completion of Term:

The Reverend Monsignor Gilbert Gente concludes his duties as Pastor of St. Mary, Mother of God Parish, Freeport, with the completion of his five-year term of ministry in the United States and is returning to the Diocese of Ipil in the Philippines.

The Reverend Elmer Q. Alforque concludes his duties as Administrator of St. John the Baptist Parish, Scottdale, and St. Joseph Parish, Everson, with the completion of his five-year term of ministry in the United States and is returning to the Diocese of Ipil in the Philippines.

Administrator:

The Very Reverend Kenneth G. Zaccagnini, VF, as Administrator *Pro Tem* of St. Mary, Mother of God Parish, Freeport, while remaining Pastor of St. Margaret Mary Parish, Lower Burrell, and St. Joseph, Mount St. Peter and St. Mary of Czestochowa Parishes, New Kensington. He continues as Vicar

Forane of Deanery III and remains in all other Diocesan appointments.

The Very Reverend Paul A. Lisik, VF, as Administrator of St. John the Baptist Parish, Scottdale, and St. Joseph Parish, Everson, while remaining Pastor of St. Rita, Immaculate Conception and St. John the Evangelist Parishes, Connellsville, and St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar, and Administrator of St. Pius X and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes, Mount Pleasant. He continues as Vicar Forane of Deanery VI and remains in all other Diocesan appointments.

Parochial Vicar:

The Reverend Edwin Rubido to Parochial Vicar of St. John the Baptist Parish, Scottdale, and St. Joseph Parish, Everson, while remaining Parochial Vicar of St. Rita, Immaculate Conception and St. John the Evangelist Parishes, Connellsville, and St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar, with residence in St. John the Evangelist Parish Rectory.

The Reverend Peter Guardiano to Parochial Vicar of St. John the Baptist

Parish, Scottdale, and St. Joseph Parish, Everson, while remaining Parochial Vicar of St. Rita, Immaculate Conception and St. John the Evangelist Parishes, Connellsville, and St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar, with residence in St. Aloysius Parish Rectory.

The Reverend Mark R. Dunmire, to Parochial Vicar of St. Rita, Immaculate Conception and St. John the Evangelist Parishes, Connellsville, and St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar, St. John the Baptist Parish, Scottdale, and St. Joseph Parish, Everson, with residence in St. John the Evangelist Parish Rectory.

Transitional Deacon:

Deacon John Torres is assigned as a Transitional Deacon to St. John the Baptist Parish, Scottdale, and St. Joseph Parish, Everson, while remaining in his Diaconal assignment at St. Rita, Immaculate Conception and St. John the Evangelist Parishes, Connellsville, St. Aloysius Parish, Dunbar, and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Pius X Parishes, Mount Pleasant, with residence in St. Joseph Parish Rectory.

OBITUARIES *(additional obituaries on page 29)*

Father Cyprian Constantine, OSB

LATROBE — Benedictine Father Cyprian Constantine, 74, a monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey for 48 years, died Nov. 12, 2023.

A native of Boulder, Colo., he was an assistant professor at Saint Vincent College, where he chaired, at various times, both the music and fine arts departments, and at Saint Vincent Seminary, where he also served as academic dean (2004-07), director of liturgical formation (2007-23) and, for the past 20 years, as schola director.



He was concert master, first violinist and principal keyboardist in the Archabbey Baroque Ensemble, schola director for the Archabbey and a former director of the Saint Vincent Camerata.

Father Cyprian professed his final vows as a Benedictine in 1975 at Saint Vincent Archabbey. He earned a

Master of Divinity degree from Saint Vincent Seminary in 1976 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1977.

Father Cyprian appeared many times

as organ recitalist in the Saint Vincent College concert series, and in other series around the country.

He served as associate director of Admissions and Financial Aid and assistant director of the Opportunity Program at Saint Vincent College. In 1990, he was invited to serve as secretary to the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order, headquartered at the Collegio di Sant' Anselmo, Rome, Italy.

A funeral Mass was held Nov. 17, followed by burial in the Mary Mother of Mercy Mausoleum Chapel at Saint Vincent Cemetery.

Father Alvin E. Cabungcal



LUCBAN, QUEZON, PHILIPPINES

— Father Alvin E. Cabungcal, an international priest who served in the Diocese of Greensburg for five years, died Jan. 5, 2024, at the age of 54.

Born Nov. 3, 1969, Father Alvin attended seminary at St. Alphonse School of Theology in Isabang, Lucena City, Philippines.

He was ordained to the priesthood Sept. 3, 1996, by Bishop Ruben T. Profugo.

Father Alvin served as pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Perryopolis, and parochial vicar of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Fayette County, and was parochial vicar of Immaculate Conception Parish, Irwin, during his time in Greensburg between 2013 and 2018, when he returned to the Philippines.

A funeral Mass was held Jan. 15 in Lucban, Quezon.

DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Diocese of Greensburg Finance Department is commissioned by the diocesan Bishop to carry out his stewardship of the local Church through the care, management, and development of its temporal goods. We achieve this mission by providing accounting, stewardship,

and facilities management services for parishes, schools, and Diocesan offices.

We invite you to view the Annual Report for fiscal year 2022-23 and the audited financial statements online at DioceseofGreensburg.org/finance.

Forming next generation of Christ's disciples

By Bishop Larry J. Kulick

I am always amazed when I preview the Catholic Schools Week edition of *The Catholic Accent* before it goes to print. Each year, I thoroughly enjoy reading the stories of the exemplary accomplishments made by each of the 12 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg.

I am grateful for the vision of our Superintendent, Dr. Nancy Rottler, and her staff



in the Office of Catholic Schools, as well as the administrators, teachers and staff. Their ongoing commitment, dedication and sacrifice are unmatched, and it shows in our students.

I must also point out that these accomplishments in the past year would not have happened without the support of parents, grandparents and guardians. The support and generosity of our clergy, parishes and each parishioner are a critical way we are able to help fund Catholic education in the Diocese of Greensburg. Together, so many have sacrificed in numerous ways to assure that our young people receive a magnificent Catholic education. Many families have made the choice to give a priceless gift that invests in not only futures, careers and families, but, most importantly, eternal salvation. That is the real purpose of a Catholic education.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg place an important emphasis on forming Christ's disciples. Through curriculum, faith formation and community service, our schools work hand in hand with parents to form a new generation of leaders for our families, for our communities, for our nation and for our world. We are forming disciples of Christ who are holy and serve as His examples in thought, word and deed.

During my pastoral or school visits in our Diocese, I am often asked about our increases in enrollment over the past few years. Perhaps a significant reason is that parents and guardians are finding that through the St. John Paul II Tuition Opportunity Partnership (TOP) program, Catholic education is within their financial reach despite the varied demographic and socio-economic conditions in many places across the four-county region. I am grateful for the generosity of our donors who continue to make this wonderful opportunity possible.

I also think that our increasing enrollment is telling us something else. In a world where right seems to be wrong and wrong seems to be right, Catholic schools in our Diocese offer formation that sets us apart from the world and places a very different priority among our students than other educational environments today. Contrary to our culture today, we believe that sacrifice, hard work, discipline and faith are effective. It is a recipe for success which our Catholic schools have found and continue to perpetuate.

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, I ask you to join me in keeping our students, their families and our teachers, administrators and staff in your prayers. Also, please pray that we continue to have tremendous success as we form the next generation of Christ's disciples.

Celebrating our schools' successes

By Dr. Nancy Rottler
Superintendent of
Catholic Schools

It is simply not an understatement to report that we have had an exciting year in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Greensburg.

I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you during my visits to the 12 schools, sporting events, plays and other special occasions that are so very important to our students. Outside of the classroom, I have been humbled by the warm welcome many of you have provided to me when I've visited parishes to talk about our exemplary, Christ-centered education.

I am extremely proud of our principals, teachers, school staff and families. I love to speak to parents and guardians who are considering a Catholic education for their children because it gives me the opportunity to share my enthusiasm for our collective accomplishments, which I am grateful to be able to share as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week.

When I became Superintendent, my vision was to create a plan that outlined a continuum of Catholic education from pre-K through 12th grade. We have 10 outstanding grade schools and two exemplary high schools.

Earlier this year, we partnered with Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh to provide a bridge from our schools in the Alle-Kiski Valley to Saint Joseph High School in Natrona Heights in the Pittsburgh Diocese and Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School. Students graduating from the eighth grade at Mary Queen of the Apostles School in New Kensington now have a choice to attend Greensburg Central Catholic or Saint Joseph. One of the cornerstones of this program was the removal of the financial barriers for parents considering one of these two schools. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, tuition assistance through the St. John Paul II Tuition Opportunity Partnership (TOP) program is available to families in the Diocese of Greensburg to attend Saint Joseph and Greensburg Central Catholic.

Financial assistance for our families to obtain a Catholic education is robust, thanks to the TOP and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) programs. Many parents, grandparents, business owners and donors have generously supported the EITC program. I want to thank William Barnes, our Director of Special Projects, for his leadership of this program. Bill has met with

many of you, and I am delighted to say that his efforts and your generosity have provided Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg with a projected \$2

million in added tuition assistance for families across the Diocese. You can read more about the EITC program in this edition of *The Catholic Accent*. Bill is also leading efforts to secure multiple financial resources for our families beyond EITC programs.

While we are all excited with our growing enrollment and the availability of financial aid, it is also my strategic goal to continue to attract students who advance the Catholic identity of our schools. While each of our schools is unique, they all have the same mission that combines Catholic faith and teachings with academic excellence, a partnership with parents in the faith formation of their children, higher standards for student achievement, and an academic curriculum that integrates faith, leadership and preparation for a life of discipleship. This is simply not up for compromise.

As you will see in this edition of *The Catholic Accent*, our schools are preparing students for the future. Our robust high school curriculum is strategically designed to prepare students for college as well as paths leading to employment and trades.

This year, we began an innovative esports extracurricular program for students. This is a new learning platform for students at the middle and high school levels that mixes video gaming and esports capabilities with learning curriculums rooted in STEM to engage, interact and educate students in a fun way. Beyond esports, students are encouraged to participate in a multitude of leadership opportunities including forensics, honor societies, service groups, campus ministry and athletics.

Many of our students were able to participate in the Eucharistic Revival in the Diocese when they attended the KNOW HIM events at Christ Our Shepherd Center. To expand student participation, we brought these immersive experiences to Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School in Connellsville, where students were joined by students from St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School in Uniontown, Conn-Area Catholic School in Connellsville and St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School in Belle Vernon. We collaborated with Saint Joseph High School, where students from The Divine Redeemer Catholic School in Ford City and Mary



Queen of Apostles School in New Kensington participated. With this approach, student representatives from all 12 of our Catholic schools were part of these events that brought them into the presence of Christ. I was delighted that so many students were able to participate in these wonderful experiences because it provides a way for our Catholic schools community to build One Body in Christ.

We have also developed a plan to ensure the emotional well-being of our students is part of our plan for our students and families. Over the past year, we have partnered with Catholic Charities to provide counseling services in our schools. While you can read about this partnership in this edition of *The Catholic Accent*, simply, sometimes students just need to talk. They may be having an issue in school or in the home and need another trusted ear to hear them. Catholic Charities therapists are available to help and to provide coping mechanisms for students.

And finally, the safety of our students is paramount. It was my vision, and with support from Bishop Larry J. Kulick, that we developed a plan to make sure our schools and parishes are safe places. Earlier this year, Ryan Maher, a retired Pennsylvania State Police lieutenant, was hired and tasked with creating a Diocesan Police Department. This is significant because the Diocese of Greensburg is the first Diocese in the commonwealth to form a private police department that will have a centralized uniformed presence in each of our schools. This is more than a security operation. These officers will get to know the students and be a trusting presence in their lives.

Over the past year, we surveyed our students and parents, using their answers to guide an extensive strategic planning session for our Catholic schools. The Catholic Schools Office, Diocesan staff, principals, parents and community members played a significant part in this process, and I am looking forward to sharing this plan with you in the near future. I believe it will support our continuum of education from pre-K through high school and beyond.

As you can see, many wonderful things are happening in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Greensburg. We owe that to our dedicated teachers, principals, staff and support employees, and especially our Catholic school families.

As we move toward spring, I will be traveling to many parishes to share our accomplishments. I look forward to seeing you and celebrating this great news with you.

New security director's mission: Keep schools safe

By Cliff Gorski
Editor

GREENSBURG — When he retired in July after 25 years with the Pennsylvania State Police, Lt. Ryan Maher didn't have much downtime.

A few days later, he began his new job as Director of Security for the Diocese of Greensburg with the mission of ensuring that its 12 Catholic schools are safe environments for students, faculty and staff.

Hired to carry out the vision of Dr. Nancy Rottler, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and Bishop Larry J. Kulick of having a trained police officer in every school, Maher spent the summer assembling a police department. One of his first orders of business was to classify the new Diocesan department under Pennsylvania Title 22, which creates a private police department. The formation provides full police



Maher

authority on Diocesan property, parishes and Catholic schools.

The application process is underway to obtain an originating agency identifier (ORI) from the state police, which is required of all police departments, municipal and private, in order to file charges through Pennsylvania courts.

"Basically, we are a protection force," Maher said. "We are there to protect the kids and parishioners. We are not actively looking to conduct investigations, but we need the ability to follow through with that if the need arises. If something happens, we need to be able to go hands on and do what we need to do."

Maher is continuing to staff schools with police officers in school buildings and at sporting events. All officers currently serving the Diocese are retired from the Pennsylvania State Police or a municipal police force and graduated from an Act 120 police academy.

Maher said his requirement is that a candidate have a minimum of 10 years of law enforcement experience. Those already hired all have 20 or more years of experience. Candidates must undergo a rigorous screening process and be a good fit for the school and parish environment.

"We are looking for officers who want to become members of that school community. They want to build relationships not only with the students, but with the families," he said. "It is those relationships that create the conduit of information back to us that is going to help to prevent the issues that we are looking to prevent. We want to be viewed as a trusted adult that a child can bring information to so that we can conduct an investigation, and whatever the case may be, we want to be able to take action and stop a situation from happening."

While the Diocese of Greensburg is the first Catholic Diocese in Pennsylvania to form a police force,

other school districts across the commonwealth and the nation have already taken the step. Maher said he is looking to the best practices from those departments and adding what is needed to make them more robust for the Catholic school environment.

The role of the officer in Catholic schools and at parishes and Diocesan events is to provide safety, protection and preparation.

"It's sad that we live in the times that we do; however, we can't put our heads in the sand and pretend that it's not going on. Unfortunately, school shootings and school violence are going on everywhere, and the Catholic schools are not immune to that," Maher said. "Bishop Kulick is very proactive in that."

"Parents wanted this in place yesterday," he said. "Now that we have the officers in the schools and folks are starting to ... see the way we are doing business and see the relationships that we are building in the schools, they're even more excited about it."

Officers now on the job in Diocesan Catholic schools

Below are the officers currently serving in Diocesan Catholic schools:

Officer Scott Williams is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with two decades of experience in law enforcement. He is assigned to Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School.

Officer Kevin Gabrosvek is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with 25 years of experience. He is assigned to St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School, Belle Vernon.

Officer Daniel Peck is a retired municipal police officer with 23 years of experience in the Kittanning Borough, Frazer Township, Allegheny County and Brackenridge Borough police departments. He is assigned to The Divine Redeemer Catholic School, Ford City.

Officer Joe Alessandro is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with 26 years of experience. He is assigned to Queen of Angels Catholic School, North Huntingdon.

Officer Sam Ferguson is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with 25 years of experience. He is assigned to St. Bernard Regional Catholic School, Indiana.

Officer Brian Kendgia is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with 25 years of experience. He is assigned to Mother of Sorrows Catholic School, Murrysville.

Officer Tim Steel is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with 25 years of experience. He is assigned to Christ the Divine Teacher School, Latrobe.

Officer Randy Gardner is a retired Pennsylvania State Police officer with 25 years of experience. He is assigned to several schools on a part-time basis.



Top: left, Kendgia at Mother of Sorrows Catholic School; right, Peck at The Divine Redeemer Catholic School. Center: left, Ferguson at St. Bernard Regional Catholic School; center, Alessandro at Queen of Angels Catholic School; right, Steel at Christ the Divine Teacher School. Bottom: Gabrosvek at St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

EITC makes Catholic school education possible for many

By Phil Brown
Contributing Writer

FORD CITY — Businessman Alan Buriak was amazed when he learned of a Pennsylvania program that enabled him to turn state tax liability into financial support for students of his beloved alma mater, The Divine Redeemer Catholic School in Ford City.

Since then, the Armstrong County native has become a vocal proponent of the state Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program, which provides tax credits for contributions from businesses and individuals to Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg and throughout the state.

Catholic schools are then able to use up to 100% of those contributions to provide direct tuition assistance for students in need.

"When you understand the full impact of your donation as a business, it's an easy decision to make because it helps Catholic schools succeed," Buriak explained. "The miraculous part of the program is that it's a way to keep state tax money at home and have control over how it's spent. That doesn't happen very often."

Contributors can redirect state tax credit dollars to one or more of the 12 Catholic schools in the Diocese or direct funds directly to the Diocese to use as needed for tuition assistance.

"On the religious side, we're thankful that we still have Catholic education available to our children when many communities do not, so we're doing what we can to make sure the school survives and thrives," explained Buriak, who attends Christ, Prince of Peace Parish, Ford City.

Buriak, who has four children attending The Divine Redeemer Catholic School, said many families in his working-class community qualify for tuition assistance under the program. But families need not be low-income to qualify.

Currently, students are eligible for scholarships if their household income is not more than \$123,687 for a family with one child, according to the Department of Community and Economic Development. That eligibility requirement increases by \$18,514 for each additional child.

Parents who have taken advantage of the program and received scholarships for their children are beginning to spread the word about

the added value it brings to quality Catholic education. As a result, more families are taking advantage of the program.

"We're starting to get momentum with that," Buriak said.

Buriak hopes to extend his outreach to more local businesses and families to expand the program's financial impact for students at The Divine Redeemer Catholic School. He is also reaching out to alumni of the school with hopes of increasing contributions.

"We're just trying to grow our base for this school," he said. "It sells itself after you see how it works. It's great leverage for the donor's money."

For Dr. Greg Bisignani, an orthopedic surgeon in the Greensburg area, his mission is about tearing down obstacles for families who value Catholic school education for their children but worry about the cost.

Bisignani, who chairs the advisory council for Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School, said

the EITC program has opened the school's doors to many families in his community and has boosted the school's enrollment.

"The biggest frustration for many families was they couldn't afford (a Catholic education)," he said. "There's way more financial aid now, so the excuse of 'I can't afford it' has been largely eliminated."

"To be able to offer that to students and families is a fantastic thing," Bisignani said. "How huge is this for parents considering Catholic schools for their children or struggling to keep them in Catholic schools through high school?"

Like Buriak, Bisignani is working aggressively to spread the good news about the tax benefits of EITC to potential donors and help increase the amount of money available for scholarships.

He said he would like to see town hall-style meetings for those interested in contributing to the program or taking advantage of financial help for tuition.

For eligibility and application questions for the EITC program, visit catholicchoolsguide.org to arrange an in-person interview with an outreach and admissions coordinator.

Any businesses and individuals with a Pennsylvania tax liability can participate. For information, contact Bill Barnes, Director of Special Projects, at 724-552-2589.



Buriak



Bisignani



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AQUINAS ACADEMY, GREENSBURG



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Students go all in on ‘penny wars’ to benefit animals

Aquinas Academy’s Fourth Grade Book Club hosted special furry visitors at the school in December: A small team of therapy dogs came to the school to meet with members, who presented them with a donation they raised through a “penny wars” event.

Classrooms in preschool through sixth grade competed to see which grade could bring in the most coins. The money raised was divided between the Top Dog Therapy Team, a volunteer group based in Westmoreland County, and Animal Friends, a shelter in Allegheny County.

The nonprofits were fitting recipients for the money. The idea for the “penny wars” sprung from a book the club had read, Alyssa Milano’s “Project Animal Rescue,” in which the main character, Hope, raises money to save her local animal shelter. Club members wondered whether kids could really raise enough money to help an animal shelter, so they decided to give it a try. They were shocked to raise nearly \$2,000.

So, who won the war? First grade, sixth grade and the entire fourth grade were the top three contributing classrooms.

— Submitted

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Lucas Shaner, Grade 6
Our Lady of Grace Parish, Greensburg
Parents: Stacey Barrick and William Shaner

Lucas is an outstanding student, role model and active participant in our school. He is kind to everyone and puts forth his best effort in everything he does.

He is a member of the Drama Guild, performing lead roles in several school musicals. He is in the choir and will participate in county choir, and takes piano lessons. He plays inline and ice hockey and volunteers for a charity that raises funds by playing hockey.

Lucas accepts every challenge that comes his way, and he puts his heart and soul into everything.

Turning trash into treasure

As plastic pollution continues to pose a significant threat to our environment, it is important for communities to take proactive steps toward combating this pervasive problem. Aquinas Academy is proud to be taking on an initiative that not only addresses the issue of plastic waste but also promotes sustainability: the creation of a bench using recycled plastic bags.

Aquinas Academy’s mission is to collect and recycle 1,000 pounds of plastic bags, transforming them into a durable, environmentally friendly bench that will benefit the school for years to come.

The project contributes to the circular economy, minimizing the environmental impact of plastic waste and having a positive impact on the school community, and also educates students about the importance of recycling and responsible waste management.

— Submitted by Melissa Ruehl

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CHRIST THE DIVINE TEACHER SCHOOL, LATROBE



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Back row, Maribelle Concannon and Patrick Cogan. Front row, Matthew Turton, Harper Rule, center, and Nora Manual.

Putting virtues in practice

By Phil Brown
Contributing Writer

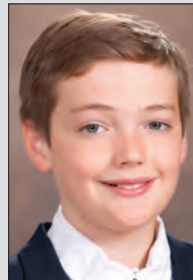
Students at Christ the Divine Teacher Catholic School (CDT) are learning how to apply the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity in their everyday lives with the help of the church's holy saints.

All CDT students participate in the Virtues in Practice curriculum designed to help them grow closer to Jesus by imitating his life and virtues.

Students study 27 virtues over three years. Studies focus on a year of faith, a year of hope and a year of charity.

Students study a Virtue of the Month, learn a Bible verse related to

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Timothy Foss, Grade 8
Holy Family Parish, Latrobe
Parents: Jerome and Karen Foss

Timothy sets a great example for his peers. He's responsible, kind and very inclusive. He also exemplifies many virtuous Christian values: integrity, kindness and responsibility. He uses his time and talents to help others and serve the Lord.

He is a student government house representative and altar server; is on the cross country and CYO basketball teams; and participates in chess, Drama Club, choir chimes and select chorus.

that virtue in both English and Latin, and explore the life of a saint whose story is an example of the virtue.

Third-grade teacher Sara Powell said the program has had a unifying effect on the school.

"Regardless of what we are studying in our individual religion curriculums, we are all focusing on the same virtue each month," Powell said. "Our Virtue of the Month is read over morning announcements, posted in all of our classrooms as well as on our central bulletin board, and is often included in our Mass intentions. I try to incorporate the virtues into lessons across the curriculum."

The saint examples are tailored to meet the understanding of virtue in each age group.

"The students seem to enjoy learning about the lives of saints and often relate to their struggles," Powell

said. "By the time they come to me in the third grade, they already have a rather mature understanding of what a saint is. They know that sainthood is a goal for all of us, and they understand how our canonized saints can aid us both as role models and as intercessors."

Teresa Tallarico, CDT principal, said Virtues in Practice moves Christian values, pushed to the wayside by society, to the center of students' lives and educations.

She said she loves to praise students when she witnesses them applying a virtue learned in the program.

Tallarico said students are in awe of the saints. Because they are exposed to the saints' suffering, they gain an appreciation of the blessings they enjoy in their own lives.

"It opens their eyes to what people did for the faith," Tallarico said.



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PRE-K to 8th grade**

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CDTschool.org**

CONN-AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL, CONNELLSVILLE



PHOTO SUBMITTED
Kindergarteners Clara Heald, left, and Abigail Coholich pray in the school chapel.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Addison Casini, Grade 6
Holy Cross Parish, Youngwood
Parents: A.J. and Brianna Casini

Addison exemplifies what it means to be a star student. Her leadership demeanor and positive attitude are obvious to those around her. She is conscientious about her work, going above and beyond with academics and earning straight As. She is respectful, always greets faculty and staff by name. She is quick to offer her assistance and exudes joy in doing so, including helping her peers when they struggle with learning. She takes leadership responsibilities seriously and wants to do her best.

Addison can always be counted on to carry out a task with great reliability. She is a pleasure to have in our school and is a great role model to all who know her.

Addison dances competitively and plays basketball on the Conn-Area Catholic School team. At her parish, she is a lector, is active in youth ministry and assists the kindergarten teacher with CCD classes. She and a friend organized “Blessing Bags,” where they collected donations and created bags for those in need in Fayette County.

Prayer life remains at center of school community

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Mt 19:14)

Conn-Area Catholic School students know the importance of connecting with Jesus. Students and staff gather in the hallway each morning to start off the day with prayer, reading prayer intentions

students and staff have added to the school’s prayer book.

Nurturing prayer life is one of our most important components in developing students “Centered in Christ.” The goal is to make it second nature to students so they automatically seek out the Lord no matter the emotions they are feeling at any given moment.

Attending Mass is a valuable part of this goal. Students are active participants in the liturgy, as cantors, lectors, gift bearers and acolytes. Through these acts of discipleship they become stewards of the Church.

While we cherish the liturgy celebrated together as a school family, kindergarteners and preschoolers usually go to the school’s Blessed

Pier Giorgio Frassati Chapel for a prayer service geared more to 4- and 5-year-olds. The prayer services are led by their teachers and take on a special feeling, being in the chapel, with stained glass windows, the altar, and the liturgical surroundings that promote a tranquil and holy experience.

— Submitted

A

CONN/AREA

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Education Makes a Difference!

613 E. Crawford Avenue
Connellsville, PA 15425

OPEN HOUSE

SUN • FEB 4

1:00 PM

Prospective Students
PRE-K to 6th grade

REGISTER ONLINE

ConnAreaCatholic.org

THE DIVINE REDEEMER CATHOLIC SCHOOL, FORD CITY

Five generations and counting attend school

By Maria Guzzo
Contributing Writer

When Jim Milligan and his wife were ready to start a family, they bought a home just a block away from The Divine Redeemer Catholic School in Ford City, where five generations of his family have attended.

"We ended up living on the next street over from the school, which was purposeful because we knew when we had kids they would attend Divine Redeemer," Milligan said.

The first to attend was Milligan's great-grandmother, whose parents settled in Ford City after immigrating from Austria. Her daughter, Milligan's grandmother, attended next, followed by Milligan's mother, Patricia, then Milligan. Milligan's son graduated from Divine Redeemer and moved to Armstrong Junior-Senior High School, and his daughter is a Divine Redeemer sixth-grader.

"The No. 1 reason is because of our Catholic faith," Milligan said. "We wanted to have our kids grow up in that atmosphere. I don't know if we'd make the decision if the education wasn't great, but the education is fantastic. There are small class sizes, activities, everyone knows my children and

there's such a sense of community."

The original school was St. Mary's, built in 1891. It was razed in 1958 to construct the building in use today. In 1973, its name became Ford City Catholic. In 1997, it was renamed Divine Redeemer.

Principal John Giancola said it's a testament to the strength of the school that the first generation attended, as the legacy of Catholic education continues.

"The school has progressed and improved, and they continue to send their children here," he said, noting that a third of current students have parents who attended Divine Redeemer.

Giancola said there is room for both public and private education, but there is a difference.

"Everybody here is vested," he said. "Everyone is all-in; parents, teachers all support all the efforts. That's our strength."

He also touted small class sizes, Title 1 reading support, guidance counseling, art, music, clubs, sports and weekly Mass.

"We all live those Christian principles when we're here, and continue them our whole lives," he said.

He said new funding sources encourage parents to send their children to Catholic schools.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Lila Guthrie, Grade 6
St. Mary Ukrainian Church, Ford City
Parents: Samuel and Lori Guthrie

Lila is a well-rounded individual who excels academically and socially. She stands out as a natural-born leader and is willing to take charge in any task. She is a model student and a true servant of God exemplifying compassion, generosity and patience.

She is a server, cantor and lector for Masses at school and church. She is involved with cross country and the bowling, drama, STEM and robotics clubs. Outside of school, she takes dance classes and plays softball.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Members of the Milligan family with St. Nicholas.

A Divine Redeemer Education Makes a Difference!



The Divine Redeemer School

726 Fourth Avenue
Ford City, PA 16226

OPEN HOUSE

TUES • FEB 13
6-8 PM

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS
PRE-K to 6th GRADE

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GEIBEL CATHOLIC JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, CONNELLSVILLE

Geibel Catholic launch pad for athlete's career success

By John Sacco
Contributing Writer

Her time spent at Geibel Catholic High School “set the foundation” for Mia White Irungu’s educational, athletic and professional lives.

“It was the launching pad of my higher education,” she said. “The great education I received helped me get into Carnegie Mellon University.

“I was able to take advanced classes and even earn college credit while at Geibel, which was invaluable. I was even able to graduate college a semester early, and without Geibel, that wouldn’t have been possible.”

White Irungu parlayed her Geibel experience and CMU education into an exciting and enviable professional career as a senior data strategist for the National Basketball Association. The Monessen native lives in Mount Lebanon and works remotely.

After playing basketball, soccer and softball at Geibel Catholic, she played on the CMU women’s basketball team, but gave it up to focus on education. She graduated in December 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in economics.

While at CMU, White got her



White Irungu

start in professional sports, working for the Pittsburgh Pirates as a game-day usher and then in a guest relations internship. After graduating, she was hired by the Pirates, eventually working in customer relationship management and analytics for six years. She then worked for the New York Red Bulls, a Major League Soccer team in New Jersey, the

NBA’s Miami Heat and Major League Baseball.

“Every place I have attended or worked has taught me something. I think learning from every experience you have and maintaining good relationships is an extremely important factor in longevity,” she said.

Geibel Catholic was the starting point.

“I was able to grow as an athlete and even was able to play basketball at the collegiate level. I truly loved my Geibel experience and am forever grateful for it,” she said.

White Irungu also is enjoying another role — being a mom. She and her husband, Tony, welcomed their first child, daughter Giuliana, Oct. 11.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Ivy Flesik, Grade 11
St. Rita Parish, Connellsville
Parents: Troy and Suzy Flesik

Ivy is a standout student. She has been on honor roll every quarter. A member of the National Honor Society, she is enrolled in five College in High School courses and two honors courses while maintaining a 4.6 GPA. Ivy balances herself with a friendly demeanor and academic approach to school. Her school spirit, willingness to serve in any way, and inspiring work ethic make her an ideal role model for other students.

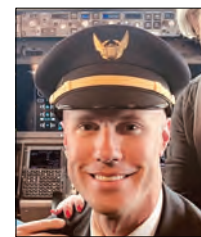
Ivy is on the cheerleading squad and volleyball and track teams, and she performs in musicals. She was named Gator of the Month at Geibel Catholic and Student of the Month by the Connellsville Mozart Club. She serves as a student ambassador and was the junior high Christmas Concert mentor.

Alum’s gratitude goes viral

Jason Schuessler, a 2004 Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, Connellsville, graduate, wanted to fly since he was 4. Today, he is a pilot with United Airlines.

The St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School, Uniontown, alumnus, says he couldn’t have done it without the support of his family. That gratitude has garnered him national attention.

When Schuessler’s parents, Johanna and Jeffery, were on one of his flights for the first time in November, he took



Schuessler

the intercom and thanked them for their sacrifices. His message was recorded and went viral, viewed over 36,000 times. It caught the attention of Newsweek and “Good Morning America.” You can see the video at theaccentonline.org

“We ... never expected so much attention,” said his mother. “We really couldn’t believe what we were seeing and the amount of appreciation. It really made our hearts warm.”

— Lori Padilla



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7-12 GRADE**

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GeibelCatholic.org

GREENSBURG CENTRAL CATHOLIC JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Szmed leads GCC as its new principal

GREENSBURG — Theresa Szmed is the new principal of Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School. She served as principal of Mother of Sorrows School, Murrysville, since 2016.

“Mrs. Szmed is uniquely qualified to assume this new role because of her career-long dedication to Catholic education, her experience and training in K-12 administration, and her keen focus on faculty development,” said Dr. Nancy Rottler, Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg.

A parishioner of St. John the Baptist de La Salle Parish, Delmont, Szmed has been a teacher and administrator for more than 30 years. She holds a master’s degree in education and a K-12 education and administration certificate from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. She earned her bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Pittsburgh after graduating from the former

“Mrs. Szmed is uniquely qualified to assume this new role because of her career-long dedication to Catholic education.”

— DR. NANCY ROTTLER,
SUPERINTENDENT OF
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Divine Providence Academy in Pittsburgh.

Keenly focused on faculty development, at Mother of Sorrows School Szmed implemented “Rigor for All” sessions which provide roadmaps to immediately increase rigor in any lesson; “Future Ready Schools,” a research-based framework that emphasizes collaborative leadership and the creation of an innovative school culture; and the StrengthsFinder faculty assessment, a personal development tool that builds a more cohesive faculty.

During her tenure, those academic advancements have helped to increase enrollment at the school by 30%.

Szmed has devoted her entire career to Catholic education. She served as principal of St. John the Baptist School in Plum, where she taught middle school science and held the position of program director for 16 years. She also taught middle school science at St. Raphael School in Pittsburgh and middle school English at St. Joseph School in Verona.

During the search for a new principal at Mother of Sorrows School, Patricia Visnick has been named interim principal. Visnick has been a teacher in the Diocese of Greensburg for 18 years, five of them at Mother of Sorrows School, where she has served as a sixth grade teacher, kindergarten teacher and assistant principal. Mary Osche, a Spanish teacher since 2000, will serve as interim assistant principal.

“Both of these individuals know and love the school community deeply, and I know they are committed to the continuing success of MOSS,” Dr. Rottler said.

— *The Catholic Accent*



PHOTO SUBMITTED

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Joseph Kudla II, Grade 12
St. Anne Parish, Rostraver
Parents: Joseph and Regina Kudla

Joe embodies the mission of the Catholic Church with his service to Church and school. He possesses great leadership skills in school, athletics and extracurricular activities. He is spiritually driven, and his service to church is exemplary. We admire Joe’s selfless demeanor and his ability to reach out to those in need without hesitation.

His activities include Scouts (Eagle Scout, Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 1543, active in Troop service projects), AQT, Student Government (senior class president), Mock Trial, Columbian Squires, football (captain), bowling, track and field, and school religious events. At his parish, he has been an altar server since fourth grade.



CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEERS:

Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School junior Sean Walker hands gifts to a recipient of Catholic Charities’ annual teen Christmas program in December. GCC students volunteered to help with the distribution of gifts at the Catholic Charities offices.

PHOTO SUBMITTED



Christmas brigade provides gifts for Ukrainian refugees

General Carbide, led by Chief Operating Officer Mona Pappafava-Ray and her daughter Caroline Ray, a sophomore at Greensburg Central Catholic, spearheaded a company-wide Christmas brigade, also aided by their friends and family. Just before Christmas, four Ukrainian families were visited by the brigade and received dozens of gifts.

Pappafava-Ray’s grandparents were immigrants to the United States and did not speak English. Two generations later, she is now the CEO of a multi-million dollar company. The Pappafava-Ray foundation has been a leading supporter of Catholic Charities’ efforts to assist in refugee relocation efforts.

The Pappafava-Ray family also donated \$10,000 to the GCC family whose home was destroyed by fire in December. The Pappafava-Ray Foundation has pledged more than \$100,000 to Catholic Charities over 2024 to assist Ukrainian immigrants in the Diocese of Greensburg.

— *Story and photo by Jennifer Miele*



GREENSBURG CENTRAL CATHOLIC

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SUNDAY • MARCH 10 • 1-3 PM

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GCChs.org

MARY QUEEN OF APOSTLES SCHOOL, NEW KENSINGTON

Service projects reach people around the world

By Melissa Williams Brown
Contributing Writer

NEW KENSINGTON — Students and faculty at Mary Queen of Apostles Catholic School are always thinking of innovative ways to help others, and their efforts haven't gone unnoticed.

In November, Specialist 4 Karen Lemon, who served as a chaplain assistant in the U.S. Army First Infantry Division Forward in Germany from 1975-78, presented a U.S. Army "challenge coin" to Principal Cathy Collett in recognition of the school's annual "Salute to Veterans" program which includes lunch for veterans and guests and a patriotic performance by the school's band and choir.

Lemon explained that the coins are shared usually between military members and veterans to show mutual support and appreciation. Many are commemorative for units or locations where soldiers were stationed.

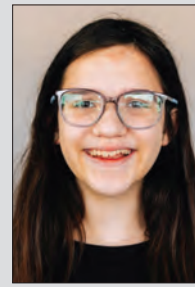
"As a female Army veteran from the Vietnam era and the Cold War, being recognized and appreciated by others is very meaningful," she said. "Most Vietnam veterans were not welcomed home after that conflict, and even years later, to be thanked, especially

by the students of Mary Queen of Apostles Catholic School, was very special. The challenge coin is a small token of appreciation for your school and the special program on Veterans Day for local veterans."

Collett said she is proud of the students' good works that impact people locally and across the globe. Throughout the year, they raise funds to help build schools and improve conditions in Haiti and collect money for a Ukrainian orphanage. Closer to home, they provide gift bags and cards for Thank a Police Officer Day every September; support the Light of Life Rescue Mission for the homeless during Thanksgiving; collect baby gifts and donations for the TryLife Center at Advent; support the Knead Community Cafe in New Kensington by making placemats and uplifting messages and donating healthy meals; and support parish food banks.

Members of the school's Girl Scout, Brownie and Daisy troops also complete service projects throughout the year, including making "go bags" for the homeless, cards for nursing home residents and birdfeeders for scout camp, and collecting lanternflies for a research study.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Abygail Farmer, Grade 7
Mount St. Peter Parish, New Kensington
Parents: Jeremy and Karan Farmer

Aby has a speech and language concern that makes it challenging for her to communicate effectively with others, both verbally and in writing. She works tirelessly to overcome this obstacle, embracing her challenges rather than letting them define her. Aby is always positive, with a smile on her face and a kind word for others. She has a strong work ethic that helps her maintain excellent grades.

Aby is a member of the forensic team, winning multiple awards at tournaments. As a member of the extracurricular science club, she is working on a project for the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Sciences competition, "I Teach My AI Abynesse." She plays flute in the band and is on the cheer squad and volleyball team. She volunteers with the nonprofit Superheroes Believe in Miracles.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Scouts pack "go bags" for homeless people at the school.



A Mary Queen of Apostles

SCHOOL

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OPEN HOUSE

SUN • JAN 28
1:00-3:00 PM

Prospective Students
Preschool to 8th grade

Greenwald Site
110 Elmtree Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

MQAschool.org

MOTHER OF SORROWS SCHOOL, MURRYSVILLE



PHOTO SUBMITTED
FBLA members work on business projects.

MOSS students in business

By Melissa Williams Brown
Contributing Writer

Members of the Mother of Sorrows School's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) have been getting down to business for three years now, getting a head start as savvy entrepreneurs.

Twenty-five sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders have been busy wrapping their heads around what constitutes a good business.

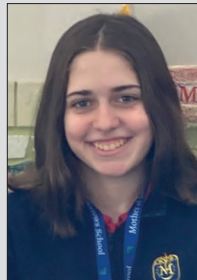
"The members started the year by planning, stocking and operating the fall opening of the Mother of Sorrows School store called The Nest, with \$300 in profits donated to the MOSS food bank," said

Patricia Visnick, interim principal. Members then moved onto merchandising and helping to operate the school's Santa Shoppe in December.

"They have learned so much about what sells and what customer service looks like," Visnick said. "The FBLA members will continue in 2024 with business leaders as guest speakers and competing in business topic competitive events sponsored through the national and Pennsylvania FBLA organization.

"And of course, students are already looking forward to the opening of The Nest in the spring and seeing what new merchandise is trending in the halls of MOSS."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Lauren Bell, Grade 8
Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish, Monroeville
Parents: Michael Bell and Kristen Radage

Lauren has many excellent qualities that stand out among her peers. She is a hard worker who always tries her best and has great success academically. She is always willing to help out classmates and teachers. She has the unique ability of recognizing when help is needed and steps up to the task. Lauren is humble and kind to all. Despite the trials of middle school, she is always able to avoid drama and provide a calm voice of reassurance.

Lauren has been involved in Student Council, school musicals, volleyball, Future Business Leaders of America and cheerleading. She assists with tasks during school, including helping teachers and reading with younger students.

Students bond through prayer

Every year, students at Mother of Sorrows School, Murrysville, bond with new friends of different ages who share the same commonality.

In the Prayer Partners program, middle school classes partner with elementary classes.

"This tradition helps establish camaraderie among students and strengthens faith through formation activities," said Patricia A. Visnick, interim principal. "Activities include making miniature rosaries, praying a decade of the rosary together, creating placemats for the residents of St. Anne Home in Greensburg, and sitting together during Mass so the older students can answer questions and mentor the younger students through parts of the liturgy."

Students also practice the act of kindness by making crafts for each other, including ornaments for Christmas.

The friendships don't end once the holidays are over.

"These partners enjoy learning from each other and have a special bond throughout their years at MOSS," said Visnick.

— Submitted



A MOTHER OF SORROWS SCHOOL EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

SUN • JAN 28 • 2024

MASS 9:30 AM
OPEN HOUSE 10:30–1:30 PM



Mother of Sorrows School
3264 Evergreen Drive
Murrysville, PA 15668

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MosSchool.org

QUEEN OF ANGELS CATHOLIC SCHOOL, NORTH HUNTINGDON



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Ecology Club members cook on the Charlie Cart.

Students learn healthy eating, sustainability

By Lori Padilla
Contributing Writer

The Ecology Club at Queen of Angels Catholic School, North Huntingdon, is preparing students for healthier and more sustainable lives.

Through a program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Penn State, students are learning about local food systems and how they impact their lives.

"We are developing our environmental education program at Queen of Angels," said teacher Christine Salvi. "One of our missions is to teach the kids about how our food is grown and produced, sustainability and stewardship."

At the beginning of the school year, students were tasked with caring for three hens. They have produced 12 dozen eggs, according to Salvi.

Caring for the chickens led to the

students learning about anatomy.

"It was interesting to find out that chickens have the closest relationship to the T-Rex," said club member James McHugh.

The students marked the beginning of the school year with the "Harvest of the Month initiative," focusing on a different vegetable each month.

"With the eggs, we were able to make omelets and scrambled eggs with all the fixings for the fourth grade," said club

member Natalie Wassell.

Through a grant, the school purchased a Charlie Cart, a "kitchen on wheels." Students are learning how to use a hot plate, toaster oven, mixer, griddle and blender. The cart also has a sink for clean-up.

"I really hope the students gather an understanding of sustainability — support local, eat local, skill in cooking safely and eating better for themselves," Salvi said.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Luca Holderbaum, Grade 6
Immaculate Conception Parish, Irwin
Parents: Jason and Suzanne Holderbaum

Luca is a very conscientious student. He has an impressive work ethic that is evident in his academic accomplishments. Luca does not shy away from challenges; he embraces them with an open mind and an eagerness to learn and succeed.

He participated in the Odyssey of the Mind competition, the Invention Convention and the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair.

Luca is dedicated to his school and local community. He has been an integral member of the Ecology Club and has organized activities for younger students to help them learn about sustainability and stewardship.

Luca acts as a role model for his peers, paying special attention to the youngest students. As an older member of the cross country team, he took time to work with and encourage his younger teammates.

With teachers and staff members, Luca is always polite, positive, and an excellent example. At his parish, he volunteers to help the children's liturgists. He also takes an active role in the liturgy, serving as a lector, praying, leading psalms and singing hymns.

A Queen of Angels Education Makes a Difference!



One Main Street
North Huntingdon • PA 15642

OPEN HOUSE

THUR • FEB 1
5:15-6:15 PM

Prospective Students
PRE-K to 8th grade

REGISTER ONLINE

QueenofAngelsSch.org



ST. BERNARD REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, INDIANA

New classroom space keeps students focused

By Maria Guzzo
Contributing Writer

Student population growth was a good problem to have at St. Bernard Regional Catholic School, and administrators this year solved the challenge by installing a modular classroom next to the school building.

Over the past couple years, adding a second pre-school class and splitting a classroom of sixth- through eighth-graders into two classes necessitated that library and tech territory be revamped as classroom space.

"All the teachers have been very flexible this past school year," Principal Tina Bucci said. "The technology teacher went on the move into each class since she lost her room. But now everybody has their space back."

The new unit includes two classrooms, which grades 4-8 rotate into through the course of the school day. One classroom is used to teach social studies and health. The other is used primarily for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Bucci said the specified classrooms motivate students to concentrate on individual subjects. The STEM classroom has a sink, locked cabinets for chemicals used in experiments and

a greenhouse, while the social studies/health room has geography maps and health posters.

"It does help students stay more focused," she said.

To fund the new space, administrators had to stay focused on the process of applying for a grant from the Emergency Assistance to Non-public Schools (EANS) program, which offers funding to provide services or assistance to address the impact of COVID-19.

The \$355,000 EANS grant paid for not only the modular unit, but also cleaning products, furnace filters, floor cleaners, air purifiers, touchless faucets and furniture.

Local Knights of Columbus assembled new desks, which also were purchased through the grant, and moved them into the new classrooms.

Bucci said the grant funded a two-year lease of the modular classroom unit, solving the immediate need, but after the grant is depleted, Bucci said the school will take over the lease as their own expense.

"Although we have not ruled out in the future a permanent addition to the building, that will require additional fundraising and a capital campaign," she said.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Emily Ferguson, Grade 7
SS. Simon and Jude Parish, Blairsville
Parents: Samuel and Kimberly Ferguson

Emily always displays a positive attitude. She is respectful and eager to help her classmates and teachers. Her smile is radiant throughout the school day. Everything she does, she does with a smile.

She volunteers daily to lead school-wide prayers, the Pledge of Allegiance and announcements and participates in weekly Masses as a cantor, lector and altar server. She plays saxophone in the school band, chosen to participate in county band this year, and is a member of the St. Bernard School Singers Ensemble and Chorus.

At her parish, Emily is an altar server and a member of the women's choir. Outside of school, she participates in dance and takes golf lessons.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Students learn in the new modular classroom.



A SAINT BERNARD EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY JAN 28
12-2 PM
Preschool through 8th Grade

St. Bernard Regional Catholic School
300 Clairvaux Drive, Indiana, PA 15701

StBernardlc.org



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, UNIONTOWN

St. John honored as best

Fayette County has 15 private schools, including two Catholic grade schools and one Catholic high school. But only one of them has the distinction of being named 2023 Best in Fayette County.

St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School in Uniontown won that distinction after being nominated for Best in Fayette 2023 awards presented by Nemaconlin. On Nov. 9, Bishop Larry J. Kulick celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. John the Evangelist Parish to congratulate administrators, parents and guardians, and students.

During his homily, Bishop Kulick said students at the school are being built up as a dwelling place for God with dignity and purpose.

"That is why I believe St. John received this award, Bishop Kulick said. "I am also sure the judges made the award for a number of reasons, like the outstanding administration and faculty, tremendous students, excellent education, and STEM and sporting programs."

The award was presented during a ceremony at the Nemaconlin resort this fall. In presenting the award, the judges said the school is a well-respected, outstanding faith-based school. They highlighted its one-

on-one initiative and newly created STEM lab, which allow students to keep up to date with technology. The administration and faculty are well qualified and dedicated to the success of every child, they said.

"We work really hard, and the faculty is awesome, and the kids are wonderful, and our parents are second to none," said Principal Christine Roskovensky. "It means so much to be No. 1 in Fayette County. It sounds like just a number, but after all these years and all of the hard work all of us have put in, it just means the world to us."

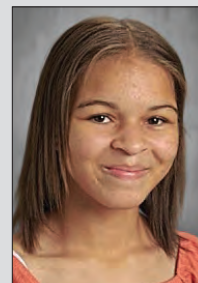
Following the Mass, students gathered in the gymnasium for a special video presentation for Bishop Kulick and Dr. Nancy Rottler, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese. The Bishop was also presented with cards made by students for Diocesan priests.

Roskovensky said the faculty, staff, students and parents are like family, which sets the school apart.

"I have an outstanding faculty. I could ask them anything, and they will do what I ask them to do," she said. "They work hard, they love the kids and I am blessed to be principal of such a fabulous place."

— Submitted

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Imari Wilson, Grade 7
St. Paul AME Church, Uniontown
Grandparents: Ramona Reeves/Semori Wilson

Imari exemplifies the ideals set forth by St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School. She is kind, compassionate, witty and artistic

She is a member of the basketball, volleyball, cross country and cheerleading teams and the student council.

At her church, she volunteers for the after school care program, tutoring students, and works there in the summer. She also helps with the SKW Foundation, founded in memory of her father, which helps children who have lost a parent to gun violence. She helps with bingo, walks and National Night Out, and gathers supplies and packs backpacks for needy children.

Imari is a true team player: Team work makes the dream work.



PHOTO SUBMITTED



**BESTⁱⁿ
FAYETTE
2023**

A ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!





OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY JAN 28
12-2 PM
PRE-K to 8th grade

St. John the Evangelist Regional Catholic School
52 Jefferson Street, Uniontown, PA 15401

MORE INFORMATION OR REGISTER ONLINE
StJohnEvangelistSchool.org

ST. SEBASTIAN REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BELLE VERNON

Lettuce and students growing in science class

New things are growing at St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School — lettuce, that is.

Upper grade science teacher Emma Cox this year added to her classroom a hydroponic farmstand that grows 24 varieties of lettuce and herbs, including parsley, cilantro, and romaine and butter lettuce, as well as some unique vegetables such as hot cakes stalk (an edible flower) and pomegranate crunch romaine.

"I've been excited to incorporate unique forms of learning into our everyday curriculum. Students are very eager to learn about the growth and the processes that make this happen," Cox said.

The science of hydroponics is now part of their everyday classroom life. Sixth-graders are tasked with adding nutrients to the water to enhance the growing life of the seedlings. Students are learning about using a PH scale; each week one student tests and adjusts the PH of the water.

Fifth-graders are assigned seedlings, recording and observing changes weekly and comparing results with each other.

"It is really cool to see how the plants change each week. It seems like overnight some of them grow



PHOTO SUBMITTED

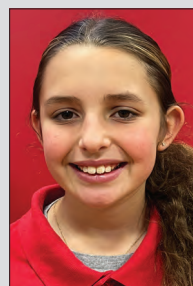
Fifth-graders Liam Jones and Lacey Weinhofer, above; at right, Jadynn Anderson..

sometimes," said fifth-grader Jadynn Anderson.

Seventh- and eighth-graders oversee harvesting, and the lettuce and herbs will be shared with students and staff.

The science of hydroponics

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Briella Smith, Grade 5
The Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Monessen
Parent: Brandy Greene Smith

Briella exemplifies the values and mission statement of St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School. She is always bubbly and keeps a positive outlook on life. Her faith is something she does not shy away from and fully lives by God's Golden Rule. She is a strong academic and role model for others. She is known for her kindness, always

making sure others are welcomed and accepted. She is everyone's friend and never likes to see someone upset or having a bad day.

She has been playing soccer for seven years, currently with a travel team with the Belle Vernon Area Youth Soccer Association and an indoor team in the off season. She is the official "ball girl" for the Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School girls soccer team, having participated in every game they've played, including state semifinal matches. At school, she plays volleyball, is a cheerleader, has been in the play production club and is an altar server. She is an altar server at her parish.

goes along with their lessons of photosynthesis and the knowledge of what is required for plants to survive. Just-sprouted seedlings arrive in the mail and are then planted in cups. Glow rings provide lighting essential for the plants to grow. A pump keeps plants constantly watered.

The farmstand is a fool-proof vessel that exposes students to gardening with ease, providing many different learning experiences for students.

— Submitted



A ST. SEBASTIAN
Education Makes
a Difference!

OPEN HOUSE
SUN • JAN 28
12-2 PM

GRADES PK-8

ST. SEBASTIAN
REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
815 Broad Avenue
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

PHONE

724-929-5143

INFORMATION • REGISTER ONLINE

sssbv.org





**The Divine Redeemer
Catholic School**
Ford City
Grades PK-6
724-763-3761
divineredeemer.org



**St. Bernard Regional
Catholic School**
Indiana
Grades PK3-8
724-465-7139
stbernardlc.org

**Mary Queen
of Apostles
SCHOOL**

**Mary Queen of Apostles
School**
New Kensington
Grades PS-8
724-339-4411
mqaschool.org



**Mother of Sorrows
School**
Murrysville
Grades PK-8
724-733-8840
mosschool.org



**Christ
the Divine Teacher
School**
Latrobe
Grades PK-8
724-539-1561
cdtschool.org



**Queen of Angels
Catholic School**
North Huntingdon
Grades PK-8
724-978-0144
queenofangelssch.org



**St. Sebastian
Regional Catholic School**
Belle Vernon
Grades PK-8
724-929-5143
sssbv.org



**St. John the Evangelist
Regional Catholic School**
Uniontown
Grades PK-8
724-438-8598
stjohnevangelistschool.org

**CONNAREA
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**
Centered In Christ

**Conn-Area Catholic
School**
Connellsville
Grades PK-6
724-628-5090
connareacatholic.org



**Greensburg Central
Catholic Junior-Senior
High School**
Greensburg
Grades 7-12
724-834-0310
gcchs.org



Aquinas Academy
Greensburg
Grades PK-6
724-834-7940
aquinasacademy.org

**GEIBEL
CATHOLIC**
JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

**Geibel Catholic
Junior-Senior
High School**
Connellsville
Grades 7-12
724-628-5600
geibelcatholic.org

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Clelian Heights School for
Exceptional Children
Greensburg
Grades: PK-12+
Principal: Sister Charlene Celli,
ASCJ
724-837-8120
clelianheights.org

Elizabeth Seton
Montessori School
Greensburg
Grades PK-K
Director: Linda Fidazzo
724-837-8500

Verna Montessori School
Mount Pleasant
Grades PK-8
Principal: Sister Juliana Tengia
724-887-8810
srjuliana@vernamountessorischool.org

Catholic Charities, schools offer counseling for students

By Melissa Williams Brown
Contributing Writer

GREENSBURG — Through a collaboration with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg, the 12 Catholic schools of the Diocese can now provide on-site mental health counselors for students rather than having them referred for outpatient therapy.

Dr. Nancy Rottler, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, says the partnership is a way to remove barriers and challenges students may face in the classroom and at home.

"I see this as an effort to support academic success and student development by providing an additional trusted adult to help students build their confidence, develop conflict resolution skills and strengthen their emotional resiliency," Dr. Rottler said.

"Our mission is to get children into school, provide them with the programs

and services they need to develop healthy and happy lives, and assist families in building and maintaining a safe home environment," said Melaney Hegyes, Managing Director of Catholic Charities.

"A school counselor can offer immediate relief to distressed students when they are struggling at school," she said. "On-site services eliminate the barriers of transportation and the stigma often associated with utilizing mental health services."

Robert Baum, Director of Counseling Services for Catholic Charities, notes that an estimated 30% of school-aged children will experience a behavioral, mental or developmental issue in any given year. Nationally, one in 10 young people who are covered under private insurance do not have coverage for mental or emotional difficulties. More than one in 10 young people in the U.S. experience depression that severely impairs their

ability to function at school, work or home, or in their social lives.

"The counselor's focus is to assist all students in acquiring skills they need to be successful, such as social skills and interpersonal skills. This enhanced support will assist the student's efforts toward mastery of these skills and growth in self-sufficiency as they mature to graduation," Baum said.

In establishing the Catholic Charities School Based Counseling Program, Catholic Charities and school leaders consulted and collaborated with other Catholic Charities organizations that had established school counseling programs.

"The program implements a curriculum or curriculums based on age of the student to further develop their behavioral and social skills and address emotional and socially unresponsiveness or disconnect, bullying, disrespect and oppositional behaviors, and absenteeism," Hegyes said.

Baum said staff members look forward to working to improve and uplift the program.

"Their hope is after the first year is completed, they can show the program's positive effects on students attending Diocesan schools, such as attendance retention, positive experiences, improved academics and the trickle-down benefit for diocesan principals, teachers and improved coordination with parents at home," he said.

This would open up opportunities to expand the time counselors have at schools, allowing more time for group work, skill building, trainings or parental support, he said.

"This would allow parents to have the convenient option for students and family support without leaving Diocesan support," Baum said. "The feedback from staff, students and families has been extremely positive and aided greatly to the program coming to fruition."

Schools embracing esports

Continued from page 1

"Video games are a very strong incentive towards technology," Very said. "A lot of people go into software development or maybe graphic design because of their interest in video games."

Some of Very's programming students have been developing low-level game design, which he sees as a pipeline into programming careers.

Esports athletes who compete at the top of their game can score scholarships from colleges and universities that have competitive teams. Professional gamers — those who make their living playing video games competitively — can earn a significant payday. According to Statista, Johan Sundstein of Denmark, known in esports circles as "N0tail," earned \$7.18 million during his gaming career.

GCC senior Ben Tropeano isn't looking to make a career in esports. While he says this year was a developmental season for the GCC team, he's looking for the program to provide life skills.

"What I hope this does for me in the future is make me a better teammate and more comfortable in a leadership position," he said.

Ben began playing Rocket League at home in 2017, took a break, and got back into the game in school last year.

His teammate, freshman Owen Ryan, has been playing since 2020 and has over 500 hours of play time.

"I hope this opens us more opportunities in college and to be placed on a resume, too," Owen said.

At Geibel Catholic, Rocket League is headquartered behind the stage curtain in the gymnasium, where gaming stations with computers, controllers, screens and chairs line the wall. The gaming space was created by Sam Hutchinson, head of maintenance.

Jeffrey Love, whose daughter attends Geibel Catholic, coaches the esports team, the largest in the Diocese. A gamer in college, he works with young people as a Fayette County probation officer and also coaches the CYO cross country team.

"Both sports are fast paced and you need to think on your feet," Love said. "The difference is, when you are handling something as unique as esports, you really need to be open-minded, and you need to be willing to learn on the go."

Love had a lot to learn in a short period of time: setting up virtual rosters, navigating the Rocket League website, coordinating matches with other schools and downloading the app to stream the games, which includes play-by-play broadcasts.

"This is a real life sport and they have real life events that people pay to see," Love said.

Geibel Catholic freshman Rosalie Cromwell said she enjoys playing and meeting new friends.

"All of these kids on the team, I may have interacted once or twice in my classes but never actually talked to them or hung out with them until esports," she said.

Principal Robert Fetter said the interaction between the students is a critical and tangible benefit for the program at his school and the esports area in the school is the first place potential students are taken to see.

Fetter said the esports program brings together students with varied interests or those who don't participate because they haven't found an interest.

"We know we have kids who are athletes. We know we have kids who are artists. Some are both and some are neither. But every kid has to have a place," Fetter said.

"Now that we've brought video gaming into the school, the esports team makes them all feel like part of things and builds camaraderie."

Educators, students to be honored

The Diocese of Greensburg will honor outstanding teachers and students at the "A Celebration of Catholic Schools Breakfast" March 14 at 8:30 a.m. at Stratigos Banquet Centre, North Huntingdon.

The sixth annual Golden Apple Awards will be presented to three Diocesan Catholic school teachers. Student achievement will be recognized through Student Spotlight Awards. Recipients are featured in this issue; comments were provided by teachers and principals.



REGISTER OR BECOME A SPONSOR:
DioceseofGreensburg.org/GoldenAppleAwards



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Teacher Goldie Lohr works with Conn-Area Catholic School students.

Teacher nears 50-year mark

CONNELLSVILLE — Goldie Lohr couldn't see herself in any other profession or working for any other employer. She's proud to have taught three generations of students over the past 47 years at Conn-Area Catholic School.

"I love my job, my principal, my fellow teachers, office personnel and students. We all get along and we all help each other," said Lohr. "Conn-Area is just wonderful. Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing."

Lohr, a parishioner of St. Pius X Parish in Mount Pleasant, teaches second-grade language arts, math and religion, fifth-grade religion, pre-

kindergarten Spanish and first-grade art.

Principal Cecilia Solan said the school has been blessed to have had Lohr on staff for so many years.

"She has grown with the school, just as a member of the family grows with the family. She has experienced its trials and tribulations and celebrates the Lord through it all," Solan said. "There is nothing she would not do for the school and its community."

"Her love for the school is evident in her selfless dedication to its students and their families, as well as to the faculty and staff."

—Melissa Williams Brown

Flag football, cross country part of CYO expansion

By John Sacco
Contributing Writer

GREENSBURG —The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) athletics program, which offers students enrolled in Diocese of Greensburg Catholic schools and parishioners of Diocesan parishes the opportunity to participate in various sports, has seen significant growth over the last five years.

Fall co-ed cross country and flag football programs have been added, and some sports, including cheerleading and cross country, are now available to children as young as kindergarten age.

The CYO program aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive team environment that helps develop players' mind, body and moral character. Conducting these activities within a Christ-centered environment makes the CYO program unique. The goal is to make sports fun for everyone and build teams in which all children feel accepted and cared for.

The first year of the flag football program included 160 participants and 16 teams across four age divisions. Coaches and players said the experience was positive and expressed a desire to continue the program next year.

"These programs are special and are very much a partnership between the programs and their coaches," said Amanda Iwinski, Coordinator of Catholic Schools. "It is 'all hands on deck' with our coaches. We've taken a team approach with the coaches, seeking feedback and guidance from them as we develop this new sport."

Games are played at Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School and Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, Connellsville.

In the inaugural year of co-ed cross country in 2016, there were 101 participants. This year, there were 306 participants.

"That is an increase of more than three times the amount the first year," Iwinski said.

The cross-country championship is held at Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, while meets are held at GCC, Geibel Catholic and Kunkle Park in Washington Township.

Basketball, volleyball and cheerleading have been staples of the CYO program. Girls' basketball is played in the fall, while the boys play in the winter. Volleyball begins in March, and cheerleading is a year-round sport. Soccer has not been played in several years, but it may return depending on interest levels.

"Playing in the CYO leagues has been life-changing. It has developed me in so many ways."

— EIGHTH-GRADER GEORGIA EVANS

The additional programs have made an impact on student-athletes.

"Playing in the CYO leagues has been life-changing," said Georgia Evans, an eighth-grader at Christ the Divine Teacher School, Latrobe, who participates in basketball and cross country. "It has developed me in so many ways. The sport itself, team-building opportunities and the opportunity to lift the comradery between teammates is really important to me."

Ethan Stevenson, an eighth-grader at Geibel Catholic, said he had fun playing flag football.

"It definitely helps me develop my friendships and to share the sport with my friends," Ethan said. "I played a lot of positions, rotating from quarterback and running back. I liked having the ball in my hands."

Iwinski said cross country and flag football have helped make the CYO program better.

"We meet with the athletic

directors throughout the year to discuss issues and dialogue about what improvements we can make to the program. We're always having conversations about ways to enhance the children's experience and develop a more cohesive league," she said. "The flag football program and cross country programs were both true grassroots efforts that were proposed by school athletic directors."

Iwinski said all coaches are trained in the University of Notre Dame's Play Like a Champion Today program, which offers a one-of-a-kind, interactive clinic that educates coaches on how to foster the full development of athletes through building cohesive teams. The Play Like a Champion Today coaching philosophy involves protecting the joyful dimensions of sports as competitive play and the educational dimension of sports as fostering children's physical, social, emotional and moral development. The Play Like a Champion Today program was implemented in the Diocese of Greensburg in 2016.

"We want every child who participates in CYO to have an opportunity to play and to walk away having had a good experience," Iwinski said.

MOSS, CDT win CYO girls basketball championship



The Mother of Sorrows Eagles were varsity winners in the CYO girls basketball championship held Nov. 18 at Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School. Junior varsity champions were the Christ the Divine Teacher School Celtics. Results are below.

JUNIOR VARSITY
OPENING ROUND
Aquinas Academy 29,
Mary Queen of Apostles 15

High scorers:
AA, Jailyn Wren 14, Fiona Lim 13; MQA, Danica Jones 9

Queen of Angels 28, Conn Area Catholic 12
High scorers: QA, Irle Brozeski 8; CAC: Adelyn Bell 6

Christ the Divine Teacher 30,
St. John the Evangelist 6
High scorers: CDT, Nikala Levrio 10; SJE, Madelyn Borek 4

SEMIFINALS
Mother of Sorrows 21, Aquinas Academy 7
High scorers: MOS, Gia Garofalo 12; AA, Maria Gacek 4

Christ the Divine Teacher 31,
Queen of Angels 15
High scorers: CDT, Lilah Evans 24; QA, Irle Brozeski 6

CHAMPIONSHIP
Christ the Divine Teacher 38,
Mother of Sorrows 32
High scorers: CDT, Nikala Levrio 19; MOS, Gia Garofalo 12

VARSITY
SEMIFINALS
St. John the Evangelist/Geibel 32,
Mary Queen of Apostles 13
High scorers: SJE/G, Mallory Clemmer 22; MQA, Greta Magnusen and K'Mya Middlebrook 4

CHAMPIONSHIP
Mother of Sorrows 35,
St. John the Evangelist/Geibel 24
High scorers: MOS, Isabella Dumbroski 21; SJE/G, Mallory Clemmer 14



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Top: Mother of Sorrows Eagles; bottom: Christ the Divine Teacher School Celtics.



The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg is currently accepting applications for the position of Assistant Superintendent.

The qualified candidate must be a practicing Catholic with a strong commitment to the philosophy of Catholic education and spiritual formation. The candidate must possess a Master's degree or equivalent in the area of school administration, experience in educational administration, and curricular leadership. The candidate will also possess superior analytical, listening, and conflict-resolution skills.

In addition, the qualified candidate will possess strong organizational and communication skills and can work effectively as a liaison with federal, state, and local educational agencies.

The incumbent will collaborate with school constituencies of the diocese including principals, teachers, parents, and students. The incumbent will assist in the comprehensive strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services. The candidate will provide leadership in formulating and directing policies, procedures, goals, and objectives

for programmatic and professional development, and educational support services. Furthermore, the candidate will direct and assist with coordinating and completing grant activities within the Office of Catholic Schools and the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Greensburg. Experience as a Catholic School principal and teacher is preferred.

Applicants are requested to submit a letter of interest, a current resume, and a letter from his/her pastor to hr@dioceseofgreensburg.org. Visit DioceseofGreensburg.org/Employment to see other open positions.

2024 FISH FRY GUIDE

This listing includes parishes that submitted information. Ash Wednesday is Feb. 14. The Fridays of Lent are Feb. 16 and 23 and March 1, 8, 15 and 22. Good Friday is March 29. Fish fries are not held Good Friday except where noted.



MOUNT PLEASANT

St. Pius X Parish
Parish hall, 222 Summit St.
Fridays, 4-7 p.m.

Menu: Every Friday, baked or fried fish, green beans, cole slaw, breadstick, dessert and drink, fish sandwich on homemade bun, kids menu (same as adult menu), plus pierogies on Feb. 16 and March 1 and 15, haluski on Feb. 23 and March 8 and 22, gnocchi on Feb. 23 and March 22

Dine in or takeout
Information: 724-547-1911



BROWNSVILLE

St. Peter Parish
St. Mary's Social Hall, 118 Church St.
Fish dinners, Ash Wednesday and Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. (dine in or takeout)
Orders: 724-364-7070 (by 5:30 p.m.)

CRABTREE

St. Bartholomew Parish
with Crabtree Volunteer Fire Department
Marian Hall, 2538 Route 119
Ash Wednesday and Fridays, including Good Friday, 4:30-7 p.m. (dine in or takeout)
Menu: fried cod fish sandwich, baked cod fish dinner, fried butterfly shrimp, pierogies, French fries, macaroni and cheese, haluski, cole slaw, dessert
Orders: 724-834-9789 or 724-834-1028

DONEGAL

St. Raymond of the Mountains Parish
Parish hall, 164 Schoolhouse Lane
Fridays, 4-6:30 p.m.

EAST VANDERGRIFT

Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish
Parish hall, 411 McKinley Avenue
Ash Wednesday, noon-6:30 p.m.;
Fridays, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

ERNEST/CLYMER/ROSSITER/ GLEN CAMPBELL

Church of the Resurrection Parish
Feb. 16, 4-7 p.m., Ernest site basement, 755 Main St.
March 1, 4-7 p.m., Clymer site hall, 349 Morris St.
March 8, 4-7 p.m., Clymer site hall
March 8, 4-7 p.m., Rossiter Volunteer Fire Department Hall, 517 Central St.
March 22, 4-6:30 p.m., Glen Campbell site hall, 155 First Ave.
Takeout only

FOOTEDALE

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Parish hall, 528 Footedale Road
Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. (dine in or takeout)

GREENSBURG

Our Lady of Grace Parish
Parish hall, 1011 Mount Pleasant Road
Fridays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-7 p.m.; drive-thru only (order on site or online by credit card by 4 p.m. Thursdays; for lunch, orders can be called in from 9:30 a.m.-noon)
Menu: Half-pound fried cod sandwich with cole slaw, half-pound baked cod dinner with cole slaw, roll and side; half-pound fried cod dinner with cole slaw and one side; sides include French fries, macaroni and cheese, pierogies, haluski
Information/orders: 724-836-8157

GREENSBURG

St. Bruno Parish
Parish hall, 1729 Poplar St.
Fridays, 4-7 p.m., Good Friday, 2:30-7 p.m. (dine in or takeout)
Menu: fried fish dinners and sandwiches, baked weekly specials, fried shrimp, crabcakes, kids' meals, desserts
Information: 724-836-0690

HARRISON CITY

St. Barbara Parish
Parish hall, 111 Raymaley Road
Ash Wednesday and Fridays, 4-7 p.m.

JEANNETTE

Sacred Heart Parish
School cafeteria, 504 Cowan Ave.
Fridays, 4-7 p.m. (dine in or takeout)
Orders (starting 2 p.m.): 724-527-9940

KITTANNING

St. Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
Parish hall, 101 High St.
Fridays, 4-6:30 p.m.
Information: stmarykittanning.org

MONESSEN

The Epiphany of Our Lord Parish
Parish hall, 44 Pennsylvania Blvd.
Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. (free local delivery 11 a.m.-1 p.m.); Good Friday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. (drive-thru only)
Menu: Fried breaded cod, baked haddock, fried breaded shrimp, personal pizza, haluski, pierogies, side dishes, specials, bake sale
Dine in or takeout

NORTH HUNTINGDON

St. Agnes Parish
Parish hall, 11400 St. Agnes Lane
Fridays, March 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2-6 p.m. (drive-thru takeout only)

PERRYOPOLIS

St. John the Baptist Parish
Parish hall, 3332 Pittsburgh Road
Ash Wednesday, 3-6 p.m.;
Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Menu: Ash Wednesday, fried fish sandwich and fries; Fridays, fried and baked fish, pierogies and haluski, fried shrimp, fries
Orders: sjbperry.org or call 724-736-0675 during serving hours

SCOTTDALE

Partner Parishes of St. John the Baptist and St. Joseph
St. John school hall, 501 S. Broadway St.
Ash Wednesday and Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Menu: fried or baked fish dinners and sandwiches, pierogies, cabbage and noodles
Dine in or takeout
Information: 724-887-6321

YATESBORO

St. Mary, Mother of God Parish
Parish hall, 327 Second St.
Fridays, 4-7 p.m.

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, KENT

100 GOOD SHEPHERD DR., KENT, PA 15752
724.479.3881

2024 LENTEN DINNER MENU

DINE IN OR DRIVE-THRU
FRIDAYS DURING LENT
EXCEPT GOOD FRIDAY
4 PM-7PM



Full-Size Dinner: \$14 Half-Size Dinner: \$8

FRIED FISH DINNER

8 oz. Crispy Cod Fillet with side of Tartar Sauce

BAKED FISH DINNER

8 oz. Cod Fillet Baked to Perfection

STEAMED SALMON DINNER

6 oz. Salmon Filet with
side of Creamy Dill Sauce

6 FRIED SHRIMP DINNER

6 Crispy Fried Fantail Shrimp
with side of Cocktail Sauce

PIEROGI DINNER

6 Homemade Potato-Cheese Pierogi
(served with Green Beans)



Fish Dinners or Shrimp Dinners Served with Green Beans,
2 Pierogi, and Scalloped Potatoes.

All Dinners include Cole Slaw, Roll w/ Butter, Complimentary
Dessert.

Frozen Pierogi are also available
2 Dozen Pierogi for \$14

Holy Communion under both species returns

GREENSBURG — After consultation with the Diocesan Priest Council, Bishop Larry J. Kulick is restoring the option for the faithful to receive holy Communion under both species on the first weekend of Lent, Feb. 17-18.

Monsignor Raymond E. Riffle, Diocesan Vicar General and Rector at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg, made the announcement to priests in the Diocese to allow them to take any actions needed to restore this practice in their parishes.

"Although the option for reception of the Precious Blood is being restored, it is not required that every parish implement this action," Monsignor Riffle said. "This practice is to be instituted at the discretion of the pastor or administrator on a parish-by-parish basis. It is also not required that every Mass at a parish offer this option. That decision should be based on the ability to provide appropriate Communion ministers for the distribution of the Precious Body and the Precious Blood."

With the restoration of the reception of the Precious Blood, a practice suspended during the COVID-19 outbreak, Monsignor Riffle said it might be an opportune time for pastors to remind the faithful that when they receive holy Communion under either species, they receive the fullness of both the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

With the restoration of the reception of the Precious Blood, Monsignor Riffle said a number of other liturgical practices, implemented in response to the coronavirus pandemic, continue to be strongly recommended, especially sanitization procedures.

"It is recommended that sanitizing stations remain in place for the distribution of holy Communion. The celebrant and all other Communion ministers are urged to sanitize their hands before the distribution of holy Communion, following physical contact with any communicant and following the distribution to those communicants who receive on the tongue," he said. "It is also recommended that the vessels containing the bread and wine be covered in those cases where they are presented in the procession of gifts."

Parishes wishing to add new extraordinary ministers of holy Communion must be provided appropriate catechesis and have all of their clearances and trainings in place before they can receive a Mandatum from Bishop Kulick to serve.

— *The Catholic Accent*

THE CATHOLIC ACCENT

2024 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

March:	Magazine, Easter edition (submissions due Feb. 9)
April:	Newspaper (submissions due April 4)
June:	Magazine, Summer Event Guide (submissions due May 3)
July:	Newspaper (submissions due July 3)
September:	Magazine (submissions due Aug. 9)
October:	Newspaper (submissions due Oct. 3)
November:	Magazine (submissions due Oct. 25)

Communities of Salt, Light Award winners announced

GREENSBURG — Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg has announced the winners of the 24th annual Communities of Salt and Light Awards.

Edward L. Antonacci, a parishioner of Ascension Parish, Jeannette, will receive the Humanitarian award, and Joseph A. Valero, a parishioner of St. Sylvester Parish, Slickville, will receive the Philanthropy award at the annual awards dinner April 18 at 6 p.m. at Stratigos Banquet Centre, North Huntingdon.

Over the last 24 years, the Communities of Salt and Light Awards Dinner has raised more than \$1 million, which Catholic Charities has used to help nearly 9,000 individuals and families in the Diocese's four-county area.

For tickets and sponsorship details, visit ccharitiesgreensburg.org and click on "Fundraisers."

DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG SAINT JOSEPH PILGRIMAGE MARCH 18 & 19, 2024

Bishop Larry J. Kulick will lead a pilgrimage to the four Saint Joseph parishes and Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, to dedicate the Diocese of Greensburg to the guardianship and protection of Saint Joseph for the Eucharistic Revival Year of Mission in 2024, the Jubilee Year of 2025, and the 75th Anniversary of the Diocese of Greensburg in 2026. Patron of the Universal Church, Families, Workers, Immigrants, and a Happy Death, Saint Joseph nurtured the child Jesus in the first Eucharistic Adoration Chapel in his home in Nazareth, responded with faith each time he was called by God, and is a model to us of faithful discipleship as we live our mission as Eucharistic people. Each site along the pilgrimage will focus on a different aspect as Joseph as a faithful disciple, helping us to strengthen and rededicate our own relationship with Jesus Christ.

SAINT JOSEPH: PATRON OF WORKERS

Monday, March 18, 6 PM

Saint Joseph Parish, New Kensington

Evening Prayer with special presentation on Saint Joseph the Worker by author Mike Aquilina from the Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology.

SAINT JOSEPH: PATRON OF A HAPPY DEATH

Tuesday, March 19, 9 AM

Saint Joseph Parish, Derry

Morning Prayer for Saint Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, with presentation on estate and funeral planning.

MASS FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

Tuesday, March 19, 11:45 AM

Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg

Mass for the Solemnity of Saint Joseph with Promulgation of Bishop Kulick's Pastoral Letter dedicating the Diocese to the guardianship and protection of Saint Joseph.

SAINT JOSEPH: PATRON OF IMMIGRANTS

Tuesday, March 19, 2:30 PM

Saint Joseph Parish, Everson

Afternoon Prayer with Building a Saint Joseph Altar. All are invited to bring non-perishable food and supplies to offer in thanksgiving for Saint Joseph's intercession. Items donated will be distributed to families in need throughout the Diocese.

SAINT JOSEPH: PROTECTOR OF THE EUCHARISTIC LORD

Tuesday, March 19, 6 PM

Saint Joseph Parish, Uniontown

Holy Hour with presentation on Saint Joseph, Protector of the Eucharistic Lord, Patron of Families, and Fosterer of Vocations.



Diocese
of
Greensburg



2024 Diocesan Lenten Appeal begins next month

By Paul Puleo
Managing Director
of Development

GREENSBURG — The 2024 Diocesan Lenten Appeal, “Receive and Share,” begins in February in the 78 parishes across the Diocese of Greensburg.

Our theme this year reminds us of our call to discipleship, sharing in our blessings to provide for the needs of others: “The measure you give will be the measure you receive back.”

In the coming weeks, each parishioner will receive a letter from their pastor. Each pastor has developed a project or case they hope to fund from their parish share of contributions to this year’s appeal. Parishes will share in this blessing by receiving the financial support to do capital improvements, provide needed funds to many catechetical and religious programming, or increase their reserves to ensure long-term sustainability of the parish.

Because of your generosity, last year’s Diocesan Lenten Appeal was the most successful in Diocesan history, receiving nearly \$6.5 million. It is important to note that only one-third of the faithful in the Diocese of Greensburg, or about 16,000 people, participate in the Diocesan Lenten Appeal. Imagine what we could do if those who have been faithful in their generosity are joined with others who are new to helping sustain their parish and other programs within the Diocese.

There are many ways you can make a gift to your parish during the Diocesan Lenten Appeal. Your donation can be through the online giving portals, via pledge cards, by mail or by giving a check directly to the parish.

On behalf of Bishop Kulick, thank you for your generosity.

Paul Puleo can be reached at
ppuleo@dioceseofgreensburg.org or
724-552-2509.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

St. Raymond of the Mountains Parish, Donegal, completed its project of replacing carpet in the church. Father Anthony A. Onoko, Pastor, said he is joyful because of parishioners’ generosity in the annual Diocesan Lenten Appeal that allowed the parish to complete the project on schedule.

Deacon Craig Alexander receives Saint Vincent Seminary award for student service

LATROBE — Deacon Craig Alexander, who is scheduled to be ordained a priest in the Diocese of Greensburg this spring, is the recipient of the 2023-24 Diakonia Award for student service at Saint Vincent Seminary.

The Diakonia Award is presented to a fourth-year seminarian who is scheduled to graduate and whom both the student body and the faculty



recommend as exhibiting outstanding academic performance, service to the seminary community through contributing to student morale and spirit, leadership within the community and creative outreach to others.

In conferring the award, the faculty and staff said Deacon Alexander characterizes the meaning of diakonia, or

service: “This student has been a good example of servanthood for others and a calm and dedicated man of prayer, study and commitment to God and the Church throughout his time at Saint Vincent Seminary.”

Deacon Alexander and Bishop Larry J. Kulick are the only two from the Diocese of Greensburg to receive the Diakonia Award during their time in the seminary.

— *The Catholic Accent*

Pilgrimage set to National Shrine

Mark your calendar and plan to join in a Diocese of Greensburg pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., Saturday, Sept. 21, led by Bishop Larry J. Kulick. This will be the first Diocesan pilgrimage to our magnificent National Shrine since 2006, and is sure to be a very holy and special experience. Further information on the itinerary, transportation options and cost will be announced soon.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE: Close to 90 members of the young Church from the Diocese of Greensburg traveled to Indianapolis, Ind., for the three-day National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC). NCYC is a powerful experience of prayer, community, evangelization, catechesis, service and empowerment for Catholic teenagers. Several priests from the Diocese as well as representatives from parishes and the Office of Faith, Family and Discipleship served as chaperones.

Eagle Scout project at monastery a labor of love

By Melissa Williams Brown
Contributing Writer

GREENSBURG — Mother Mary Anne Noll, longtime prioress of St. Emma Monastery, describes Sam Piasecky's Eagle Scout project as a labor of love.

The Hempfield Area High School senior frequently attends 7 a.m. Mass on Saturdays with the Benedictine sisters. He often offered to help Mother Mary Anne with anything that was needed at the monastery.

Piasecky has been involved in Scouting since he was 7. When it came time for his Eagle Scout project, he wanted to do something for the monastery.

Mother Mary Anne came up with an idea for his project during Mass one morning. The sisters have nothing specific about St.

Benedict on the monastery grounds, and that led them to ponder the St. Benedict medal as an inspiration for the project. The medals feature St. Benedict on one side, and both sides of the medal are inscribed with initials of Latin prayers.

Piasecky was intrigued. He spent more than 200 hours creating two circular mosaics, 6 feet in diameter, replicating both sides of the medal. In September, he installed them with the help of his fellow Boy Scouts in Troop 480 of St. Paul Parish, Greensburg.

The mosaics are made from 18 96-pound paver stones and thousands of pieces of broken red, blue, gray and black ceramic tile. They are placed on a bank near the Cor Jesu Chapel, where visitors can see them as they enter the chapel path from the parking lot.

Mother Mary Anne said she could not be prouder of Piasecky's hard work.

"It was awesome to see the organization behind the installation and the all-day installation itself," she said. "Congratulations, Sam! May God bless you."

Piasecky, a son of Chris and Barbara Piasecky, is a parishioner of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish, Greensburg, and also attends Holy Family Parish, Latrobe. In school, he's president of the National Art Honor Society.

He plans to attend Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, with a double major in theology and political science. He said when he was a freshman, he started thinking about the priesthood, and it has become clearer as he's gotten older.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Sam Piasecky gathers with sisters at St. Emma Monastery, where he created and installed mosaics.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

CONFIRMATION: Bishop Larry J. Kulick celebrates the sacrament of confirmation for ninth-grade students at St. Joan of Arc Parish, Farmington, Nov. 6, along with Father James F. Petrovsky, Pastor.

Central and Eastern Europe collection to be taken Feb. 3-4

The Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe will be taken at all Masses Feb. 3 and 4. Proceeds will help the Church overcome the challenges of rebuilding after decades of atheistic communist rule, bringing light to 29 nations in Central and Eastern Europe. The citizens have been freed from the evil of communism for over 30 years, but much work still remains to accomplish the restoration of the Church in this part of the world. The people do not have the resources to "Restore the Church [and] Build the Future" on their own.

Funds from this collection will support reconstruction projects, education, and formation of clergy, religious and laity, and will provide

assistance to those suffering from poverty.

"I hope that our parishioners will be comforted in knowing that their contributions to this collection do indeed make a difference in the lives of so many persons as they struggle to recover from former communist rule," Bishop Larry J. Kulick said in a letter to priests announcing the collection. "We are called to continue to offer hope to our fellow Catholics in Central and Eastern Europe by providing both material and spiritual assistance as they face enormous challenges."

"Please pray with your parishes for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, asking God to strengthen those who serve and to relieve those who suffer."



GEIBEL CATHOLIC HOMECOMING:

Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School held its homecoming in October. Members of the Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School, Connellsville, homecoming court are, from left: Khalia Zylka, freshman representative; Autumn Bartos, junior representative; Halee Hart, queen; Gracie Ross, senior court; Tessa O'Neill, senior court; Cortni Tinkey, junior representative; and Isabella DiCenzo, sophomore representative.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

OBITUARIES

Sister Miriam
Richard Soisson, SC

GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Miriam Richard Soisson, 94, died Nov. 11, 2023, at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. She was

in her 75th year of religious life.

Sister Miriam taught students in the Dioceses of Greensburg, Altoona-Johnstown, Phoenix, Pittsburgh and Tucson and the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and served as principal of the former St. James School, Apollo.

A funeral Mass was held Nov. 15, with burial in the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Barbara
Makar, SCN

PITTSBURGH — Sister of Charity of Nazareth Barbara Makar, 93, died Nov. 24, 2023, at Vincentian Home. She was in her 71st year of religious life.

A Greensburg native, Sister Barbara entered the Vincentian Sisters of Charity from St. Florian Parish, United, in 1952. In 2008, she transferred her vows when the Vincentian Sisters of Charity merged with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.

Sister Barbara served as an elementary school teacher for 33 years in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg.

A funeral Mass was held Dec. 1, with burial in the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Mary Catherine
Seli, SC

GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Mary Catherine Seli, 98, died Nov. 30, 2023, at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill.

She was in her 80th year of religious life.

Sister Mary Catherine served as a language arts teacher in elementary and middle schools in the dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh and Tucson, Ariz., as well as the Archdioceses of Baltimore, Los Angeles and Washington. She was assistant archivist for the Sisters of Charity from 1995 to 2006.

A funeral Mass was held Dec. 4, with burial in the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Anne Toomey, SC



GREENSBURG — Sister of Charity Anne M. Toomey, 83, died Jan. 17, 2024, at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. She was in her 64th year of religious life.

Sister Anne taught students in the dioceses of Greensburg and Pittsburgh and the Archdiocese of Washington, and served as principal of the former

St. Pius X School, Mount Pleasant.

In 2011, Sister Anne was named treasurer at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity, and assistant director of Seton Arts Service Corps, working with Seton Hill University student scholars and inner-city children. She was appointed Sister Servant at Caritas Christi in 2014.

A funeral Mass was held Jan. 20, with burial in the sisters' cemetery.

Women invited
to 'Beloved'

GREENSBURG — Bishop Larry J. Kulick invites women in the Diocese to attend "Beloved," a gathering Jan. 29 at 6:30 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. The Bishop will speak on "Created in God's Image." The gathering will include prayer, reflection, small group discussion, Eucharistic Adoration and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is no cost, and no reservations are required.

Join Bishop Larry J. Kulick for
Lenten Evenings
of Reflection

Tuesday, February 20 – 6:00 PM
Saint Bartholomew Parish, Crabtree
Topic: "Believe in the Gospel"

Tuesday, February 27 – 6:00 PM
Holy Family Parish, West Newton
Topic: "This is My Beloved Son"

Monday, March 4 – 6:00 PM
Church of the Good Shepherd Parish, Kent
Topic: "Stop Making My Father's House
a Marketplace"

Monday, March 11 – 6:00 PM
SS. Cyril & Methodius Parish, Fairchance
Topic: "Everyone Who Believes in Him
May Have Eternal Life"

Wednesday, March 20 – 6:00 PM
Christ, Prince of Peace Parish, Ford City
Topic: "We Would Like To See Jesus"

Stations
of the Cross

Friday, February 16 – 6:30 PM
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Connellsville
Intention: For the Homebound and Infirm

Wednesday, February 21 – 5:15 PM
Saint Cecilia Parish, Whitney
Intention: For Peace in the World

Friday, March 1 – 5:30 PM
Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish, Greensburg
Intention: For Vocations

Friday, March 8 – 7:00 PM
Church of the Resurrection Parish,
Heilwood Site
Intention: For the Deceased

Friday, March 15 – 2:00 PM
Saint Sebastian Regional Catholic School,
Belle Vernon
Intention: For the Youth

Friday, March 22 – 8:00 PM
Saint Lawrence Parish, Cadogan
Intention: For the Intentions of
the Faithful



Diocese
of
Greensburg



EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BINGOS

East Vandergrift — Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish will hold bingo Jan. 28, Feb. 4 and 18 and March 3 in the social hall. Doors open at 1:30 p.m., with bingo at 2:30. Refreshments are available. Information: 724-423-3777.

Freeport — St. Mary, Mother of God Parish holds bingo the first Sunday of each month in the Family Community Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. and bingo begins at 6:30.

North Huntingdon — St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish will hold a Super Bingo Feb. 24 in Mack Hall. Doors open at 10:45 a.m., with early-bird games at 11:45. There will be 20 games, four specials and a \$1,000 jackpot payout. Lunch and beverages are included. Tickets are \$30 and are available by mail (with check and registration form) and at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, St. Agnes Parish, North Huntingdon, and Immaculate Conception Parish, Irwin. Proceeds benefit the 412 Senior Youth Ministry. Information: Mary Frankhauser, 724-600-4894.

Whitney — St. Cecilia Parish will hold bingo Feb. 4, March 3, April 7 and May 5 at 2 p.m. in the parish hall. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. Refreshments are available. Information: 724-423-3777.

BLOOD DRIVE

Freeport — St. Mary, Mother of God Parish will hold a blood drive March 27 from noon-5 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Appointments: 877-258-4825 or vitalant.org.

BREAKFASTS

Freeport — St. Mary, Mother of God Parish will hold a pancake breakfast Feb. 25 from 8-11 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$8 for adults and \$5 for ages 5-12 (free under 5).

Freeport — The Jeannette Holy Name Society will host a Super Bowl pancake and sausage breakfast Feb. 11 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in Mersinger Hall. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for ages 6-10 (free under 5). Tickets: 724-527-1430 or 724-244-5104.

CASH BASHES

East Vandergrift — Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish, will hold a 21-and-over Cash Bash Feb. 10 in the social hall. Doors will open at 5 p.m. and the first number will be drawn at 7 p.m. The \$30 donation includes food, beverages and chances to win \$3,000 in cash prizes. The night will include pull tabs, 50/50s, a lottery board and theme baskets. Tickets are available in the church after Sunday Mass, at the parish office in Apollo, or by calling 724-882-9212.

Mount Pleasant — Visitation Parish will hold a cash/purse bash March 3 from 1-4 p.m. at St. Pius X Parish hall. Tickets are \$35 and include appetizers, lunch, dessert and beverages. Only 250 tickets will be sold. Tickets: 724-547-3903, 724-547-2432 or 724-547-1911.

Scottdale — The partner parishes of St. John the Baptist, Scottdale, and St. Joseph, Everson, will hold a 21-and-over Cash Bash Feb. 3 in the St. John the Baptist School Hall. Doors open at 5 p.m. with the first drawing at 6. Cost is \$25 and includes food and beer. Only 333 tickets will be sold. Tickets/information: 724-887-6321.

COOKBOOKS

Harrison City — The Ladies Guild of St. Barbara Parish is selling its "St. Barbara's Taste of Heaven" cookbook. Information: 724-744-7474.

DINNER

Delmont — A spaghetti dinner is planned March 10 from noon-4 p.m. at St. John Baptist de La Salle Parish, sponsored by the partner parishes of St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, Export, and St. John, Delmont. Basket and 50/50 raffles are planned.

DINNER/DANCES

Connellsville — Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School's "Musical Gala" Valentine's night benefit is set for Feb. 9 at Aaron's Building. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., with dinner served at 7 and live music by Nick Bell and the Brass Knuckles from 8-10. Tickets are \$65 per person (21 and over) and can be purchased at bidpal.net/geibelvalentine. Information: 724-628-5600 or dvittorio@geibelcatholic.org.

Jeannette — Sacred Heart Parish will host a Valentine's Day dinner and dance Feb. 10 from 6-10 p.m. (doors open at 5:30) in the cafeteria. Tickets are \$25. Food will be provided by Rizzo's Malabar Inn, Crabtree. Beer, wine and pop 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.

FAMILY ADORATION NIGHT

New Alexandria — St. James Parish will host a Family Adoration Night Feb. 9 from 6-7 p.m. All ages are welcome. The night will include music, a Gospel reading, a short homily and time for personal prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. An ice cream social will follow in the social hall.

LENTEN DAY OF PRAYER

Greensburg — The Greensburg Diocesan Council of the National Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) will host a Lenten day of prayer at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, March 2. The day will begin with rosary for priests at 9 a.m. and Mass at 9:30 a.m., followed by a Lenten reflection by Father Eric J. Dinga, Spiritual Advisor of the DCCW, Stations of the Cross and brunch. Cost is \$20, with reservations due by Feb. 26. Information/reservations: Kathy Byron, 724-787-2415 or kathyb1133@gmail.com.

LENTEN LUNCH SERIES

Delmont — St. John Baptist de La Salle Parish will host an ecumenical Lenten lunch series featuring a different local minister each week, from noon-1 p.m. Feb. 22 and 29 and March 7 (with Father Teodoro A. Cortezano, pastor of St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Export), 14 (with Deacon F. Daniel Frescura of St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and St. John Baptist de La Salle Parish) and 21. The series is sponsored by the Delmont Area Ministerial Association.

MAGNIFICAT BREAKFAST

Crabtree — The Greensburg chapter of Magnificat — A Ministry to Catholic Women will hold a breakfast Jan. 27 at 9 a.m. at Rizzo's Malabar Inn Banquet Hall. Guest speaker will be Jennifer Wilson, who will relate how she found her way through college hookup culture, infertility, a complicated delivery and postpartum depression with the help of the Holy Spirit. Cost is \$25 (\$20 for students). Registration: magnificatgreensburg.com or Brenda Concannon, 724-836-2094.

MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION

Freeport — St. Mary, Mother of God Parish will hold a Mardi Gras wine and beer tasting with light fare and entertainment Feb. 10 from 6-10 at Renshaw Farms. Tickets/information: 724-448-9645 or 724-596-0503.

PILGRIMAGES

Greensburg — The Diocese of Greensburg is planning a pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., led by Bishop Larry J. Kulick, Sept. 21. This will be the first Diocesan pilgrimage to the shrine since 2006. Details will be announced soon.

Perryopolis — St. John the Baptist Parish is hosting a pilgrimage to the Holy Land Nov. 4-14, led by Father Rody Mejia, Pastor. Cost is \$4,190 per person and includes bus transportation to and from the airport, airline tickets, double occupancy hotel accommodations, all meals and nine days in the Holy Land. Information: 724-736-4442 or sjbperry@dioceseofgreensburg.org.

PRESENTATIONS/SERIES

Greensburg — "Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession" is the topic for a series being offered at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. Topics are "Embraced by Mercy" Feb. 8, "Biblical Foundations" Feb. 15 and "Answering Common Questions" Feb. 29. Sessions are from 7-9 p.m. in the Faith Formation Center. Information: Sister Jeanne Marie Vonder Haar, 724-834-3710, ext. 35.



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EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRESENTATIONS/SERIES

Indiana — Scholar and author Franciscan Father Daniel-Maria Klimek will share insights from his book, "For the Love of Mary," Jan. 30 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Thomas More University Parish. The event is free; refreshments will be served. Information: 724-463-2277.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Latrobe — The Oblates of St. Benedict, Latrobe Deanery, has the following meetings planned: Feb. 18, Benedictine Father Philip Kanfush, "Stewardship in the Rule and Benedictine Spirituality"; March 17, Benedictine Brother John Fisher Helms, "St. Benedict and His Rule"; and April 21, Benedictine Father Killian Loch, "Work in Benedictine Spirituality." Meetings are from 3-4:15 p.m. in Brownfield Room 202 at Saint Vincent Seminary. Attendees may also attend vespers at 5 p.m. and supper at 5:35 p.m. Supper reservations: Benedictine Father Donald Raila, 724-805-2291.

RUMMAGE SALE

East Vandergrift — Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish will hold a rummage sale Feb. 2 and 3 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Feb. 4 from noon-1 p.m. in the church basement. Information: 724-478-4958.

SPEAKERS

Greensburg — Two speakers from the Diocese of Greensburg are available for parish presentations. Father Daniel E. Carr, Director of Pro-Life Activities, Marriage Preparation and Adult Education and Formation in the Office of Faith, Family and Discipleship, offers "Authentic Living: IRL in a World of Virtual Reality." Carolyn Cannizzaro, Director of Pro-Life Advocacy, speaks on "Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present." Information: ccannizzaro@dioceseofgreensburg.org or Christina Cerilli, for Father Carr, at ccerilli@dioceseofgreensburg.org.

SUPPORT

Harrison City — The St. Peregrine cancer support group meets monthly

(usually the third Wednesday at 7 p.m.) at St. Barbara Parish. All cancer survivors and caregivers are welcome.

Perryopolis — St. John the Baptist Parish offers a bereavement support group that meets the last Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The parish also hosts a Servants of the Holy Spirit gathering, focused on opening yourself to the Holy Spirit and letting the Spirit work through you, the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. Information: 724-366-0917.

Whitney — Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, an outreach mission of St. Cecilia Parish, Whitney, Sacred Heart Parish, Youngstown, and Trinity Lutheran Church, Latrobe, offers monthly meetings to provide grandparents information and time to interact with one another. Dinner and child care provided. Information: 724-423-3777 or 724-537-7358.

VOCATIONS NIGHT

Indiana — Chosen Youth Ministry will host a free Vocations Night Feb. 7 from 6-8 p.m. at St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish featuring presentations from clergy, religious sisters, married couples and singles, plus games. It is open to young people in grades 6-12, and families are welcome to attend. Information: Rachel Digmon, rdigmon@dioceseofgreensburg.org.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

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.*



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