News Briefs

Pope rings ‘voice of unborn’ bell

Pope Francis rings a bell called “the voice of the unborn,” before his general audience at the Vatican Oct. 27. The bell was made for a parish in Ecuador by a pro-life group in Poland. Among the engravings on the bell are an image of an ultrasound and two hands around a heart with a quote from Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko: “The life of a baby begins under its mother’s heart.” (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Pope to celebrate World Day of the Poor in Assisi, Italy, Nov. 14

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis prepared for his celebration of the World Day of the Poor by meeting with and listening to some 500 poor people making a pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy, Nov. 12.

Two days later, on the World Day of the Poor, the pope will celebrate a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with about 2,000 poor people and those who assist them, the Vatican said. Everyone will be offered a hot meal after Mass.

The Assisi pilgrims, assisted by a French and several Italian Catholic charitable organizations, will go home from Assisi with new backpacks containing winter sweaters, scarves, hats and jackets as well as fabric anti COVID-19 masks.

The Vatican said the gifts will be packaged by the +Three project, “which promotes products made in respect of environmental and economic sustainability within an ethical and socially useful supply chain.” The Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, which promotes and organizes the World Day of the Poor, said Pope Francis will pay particular attention this year to 40 group homes that care for children and their mothers, delivering a two-month supply of personal care products and food, especially baby food.

Facilitators, notetakers attend synod training

By Matthew A. DiCenzo

STEUBENVILLE — Facilitators and notetakers for the Synod on Synodality in the Diocese of Steubenville were given instructions on how to prepare for parish consultations.

On Oct. 31, in-person meetings took place at Holy Family Church Malara Hall, Steubenville, and at the Ironton Catholic Community Parish Life Center. A virtual meeting, conducted at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, was also available.

According to the Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, "In April 2021, Pope Francis initiated a synodal journey of the whole people of God to begin in October 2021 in each local church and culminating in October 2023 in the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops." The theme of this synod is “For a Synodal Church: Communio, Participation and Mission.”

The vademecum reads: “The mission of the church requires the entire people of God to be on a journey together, with each member playing his or her crucial role, united with each other.” The handbook states “the objective of...

Bishop celebrates final Mass at St. John Bosco

By Dino Orsatti

Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, left photo, celebrates the final Mass at John Bosco Mission, Sardis, Nov. 7. Father Timothy Davison, pastor, right photo, greets parishioners after Mass. (Photos by Orsatti)

SARDIS — “It’s sad but I understand it had to close,” said longtime parishioner Janis Miller. Miller was referring to the closing of St. John Bosco Mission in Sardis. Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton celebrated the final Mass at the church Nov. 7.

During his homily, Bishop Monforton acknowledged the difficulty of closing this mission after 45 years, but added, “This closure is part of the rhythm of the church. It’s a sign of the times all over the country.” The bishop told the parishioners to remain positive and “trust God’s divine providence.”

The bishop announced the closing in September due to the few number of people attending Masses at the mission. Janet Perrine, who attended the final Mass along with 17 others, said attendance has been dwindling since the pandemic.
Facilitators, notetakers

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the current synod is to listen, as the entire people of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church.” It also explains that the purpose of the synod is “not to produce more documents.” Rather, it is intended to “inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be” and “to discern together how to move forward on the path toward being a more synodal church in the long-term.”

Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton attended the training in Malara Hall. The bishop said the Diocese of Steubenville is a “microcosm of the universal church.”

He said the “challenge” will be to “avoid any preconceptions of what we are going to have as our final statement,” stating it could “sew what the Holy Spirit is trying to say to us.”

The bishop said, “Pope Francis wants us as a church to listen. If anybody is familiar with Pope Francis, you are also aware he is most concerned with those on the peripheries—those who don’t always get heard. When it comes to our parishes, often times when people gather together, there are certain individuals that usually do a lot or most of the talking and the pope thinks that’s a great idea. However, what about those who don’t do all the talking? The Spirit works just as much through them as well... We are in a common pilgrimage in this life, and the Holy Father is asking us to slow down and let’s just listen.”

Debbie Riccardo, a member of the diocesan synod team, was present in Steubenville, too. She said: “Our sincere hope is that by obediently and sincerely entering into this process of listening and sharing, our local church and the universal church will be more easily seen to be the resplendent bride of Christ she already is and that each member of the church will know the gift and responsibility we enjoy as members of the church.”

She emphasized, “We are not rewriting anything, we are talking about our experiences because the church wants to know where we are—the whole body.” Riccardo informed the attendees how they will conduct their meetings. She stressed “respectful listening” as well as time management and recording main points. Riccardo said the process for the parishes, schools, communities and groups will include “three meetings over the next few months.” She said it is important to have a timer in the meetings so “everyone has an equal opportunity for sharing.”

After an explanation of the synodal process, the attendees broke into two groups and practiced. During the practice run, facilitators and notetakers answered how they experience journeying as a parish family. Topics included the environment of aging parishes, reaching out to the youth and non-practicing Catholics as well as overall parish life. Just like the sessions they will facilitate, people had two minutes to convey their thoughts.

Following the practice, Riccardo said of the process: “This is a way for us all to have our voices heard and to help other people to get their voices heard.”

Bishop Monforton expressed why he feels the synod is important: “Seventy percent of Catholics don’t believe in the real presence of the Eucharist. That’s a train wreck. For me, if 1% didn’t believe, that would still be a train wreck. So, the writing’s on the wall. We got work to do.”

Parishes and institutions will submit a report from their meetings to the diocese, which will then submit a summary in 10 pages to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishop Monforton pointed out “the weight of our document is the same” as much larger dioceses in the United States. After the USCCB compiles their report from the U.S. dioceses, their report will be sent to the Synod of Bishops.

In addition to Bishop Monforton and Riccardo, the Diocese of Steubenville synodal team includes Father James M. Dunfee, diocesan vicar general and pastor of St. Agnes Parish, Mingo Junction; Franciscan Sister Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother Agnes Therese Davis; and Alan and Nancy Schreck.

Bishop

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Perrine said the closing was difficult for her since she has so many memories associated with the church. “My children’s baptisms, first Communions, and confirmations were all administered at this church over the past several decades,” said Perrine. She went on to say, “That’s why it is so sad to see it close but I see why it had to be done.” Jack Klug, who made the trip from Shadyside for the Mass, echoed it is so sad to see it close but I see why it had to be done.”

During the sign of peace, Bishop Monforton went around and shook everyone’s hand. Following the celebration of Mass, the bishop and Father Timothy Davison, pastor, St. John Bosco Mission, Sardis; St. John the Baptist Parish, MILtonsburg, and St. Sylvester Parish, Woodsville, spoke to every Mass attendee and addressed their concerns about the closing. Father Davison also invited the parishioners to attend Masses at St. Sylvester in the future.

St. John Bosco Mission originated in Hannibal when the first service was held in 1956 in the Hannibal Community Hall. The members of the Hannibal mission then moved to the American Legion Hall, until the property was sold to make room for the Hannibal Locks and Dam. The congregation then moved to Hannibal Grade School. In 1972, the Hannibal mission became a mission of the now closed St. John Vianney Parish, Powhatan Point.

On Dec. 29, 1975, a building that housed a former restaurant was purchased for the usage as a church. The mission was dedicated to St. John Bosco June 6, 1976, by Bishop John King Mussio, the first bishop of Steubenville. Father John “Jack” Holmes was named the first administrator of the mission and was succeeded by Msgr. Gene W. Mullett, who renovated the mission. Priests who also served the mission included Father John Costlow, Msgr. Joseph P. Malara, Father John F. Mucha, Father Ronald Griffith, Father James M. Dunfee, Father Chester J. Pahn, Father Frederick C. Kihm, Msgr. Thomas C. Petronek, Father Jason Parti, Father Thomas F. Hamm and Father David L. Gaydosick.

St. John Bosco Mission is now merged and united with St. Sylvester Parish, Woodsville.

The closing of St. John Bosco Mission leaves the Diocese of Steubenville with 51 parishes and 2 missions.

Join us

NEW YEAR’S Eve Party 2022

Friday, Dec. 31, 2021
9:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Knights of Columbus Msgr. Joseph F. Dooley Council 4361 Hall
117 Legion Drive, Mingo Junction, OH 43938
The evening will include music, lights and a photo booth by DJ Chelsea; hors d’oeuvres and snacks; pork, sauerkraut and potatoes at midnight; and two drink tickets per guest and party favors. A cash bar and 50/50 raffle will be available for those who wish to participate.

Tickets cost $65 for singles and $100 for couples and can be purchased beginning Nov. 1.

Note: Tickets sold at the door will be $85 for singles and $125 for couples.
Checks can be made payable to Columbian Club.

For additional information, telephone (740) 535-8037
Bishop Monforton visits Mary’s House in Stockport

The house, surrounded by more than 400 acres, provides expecting mothers an alternative to abortion by providing free housing and other assistance through a staff of Christian women. Craig said Mary’s House welcomes pregnant women from any kind of background who otherwise would not have a loving or nurturing home to raise a child. Whether that is economic hardships, abuse or other struggles, all are welcome.

The house offers them assistance in getting them the pregnancy-related services, “really, just making their life better,” Craig said. She grew up with the Schaad family, and said, “Honoring their wishes was very important to me as director.”

The staff consists of two full-time and one part-time house manager, in addition to Craig. They teach the young women some of the life skills they’ll need as they navigate pregnancy and enter motherhood, like birthing class, parenting skills, life skills, medical education, financial education, mental health and spiritual well-being.

A board, consisting of business people and community members of Washington and Morgan counties, governs Mary’s House. It was important to the board for the staff to be Christian. “If you associate with good people, good morals, you strive for that,” Janice Schaad said, citing a sermon at her church.

Mary’s House, funded by grants and donations, is currently housing a 33-year-old pregnant woman who was homeless most of her adult life. She is from Fort Myers, Florida, but made her way to Ohio about four months ago. Bishop Monforton said, after his tour of the facility, “We are grateful to Mary’s House as they provide a home and assistance to pregnant women and their unborn children, thereby promoting the sanctity of all human life.”

“It’s the community and the grace of God that keeps us open,” said Craig.

The home, capable of providing shelter and support for eight women, opened for operation June 24 and had its ribbon cutting ceremony and blessing July 16. For additional information about the ministry, visit www.maryshouseoh.org.
Michael Welker on diaconate ordination: ‘We’ll grow into maturity in Christ’

By Dino Orsatti  
Editor  
STEUBENVILLE — Diocese of Steubenville parishioners are invited to attend the diaconate ordination of Michael Welker and Bob Rice during a 10 a.m. Mass, Nov. 20, at Finnegan Fieldhouse, Franciscan University of Steubenville. Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton will ordain the two men as permanent deacons for the diocese during the celebration of Mass.

In a question and answer style interview, Welker explains his thoughts as he prepares for ordination to the diaconate:

Q: How did you discover your vocation to the diaconate?
A: I first sensed Jesus calling me to diaconate in 1989-90, a time of service to my family when my mother passed away. I mentioned this notion to my wife, Cynthia, off and on throughout our marriage, and we continued discerning if I was, how I was, when it could be that I was called. I found a strong affirmation in marriage — serving in so many forms as a husband and father lays a foundation. In addition, I found further confirmation of my call while serving as a professor in a Catholic university and a missionary within my field of Catholic social thought — and I recall teaching a yearlong seminar on the Spanish mystics that brought great joy to my heart. This deepened dramatically when I spent several weeks on a mission to West Africa more recently. One senses the movement of God in these times.

Q: How would you describe the diaconal formation process? What aspect of it did you enjoy the most?
A: Formation was excellent. I recall a clear message at the beginning, with follow-through: formation doesn’t mean one might be ordained, but rather, formation is aimed at establishing varied means of bringing us close to the Lord. The primary formative work was on prayer, deepening the spiritual life, and furthering integration of one’s personality, relationships, and life in Christ, which has grown in surprising ways and continues to grow.

Q: What do you hope to bring to the parishioners of the diocese from your ministry?
A: My hope is to be always ready to pray, support, guide and serve. My approach in this would be mainly inspired by the proclamation of St. John the Baptist, “I must decrease; He must increase.” I think the key idea is “readiness” and “openness,” to serve from the heart. I believe that formation as a permanent deacon will be ongoing, in the sense that I’ll be learning from parishioners, too, while serving, especially with my wife at my side in hoped-for ways. She has great insights and wisdom, a discerning and sensitive heart that helps me where I fall short. As a deacon, the mark of character is that I’d be conformed to Christ the Servant, who humbled himself on the cross and was exalted above all as king of kings. If I can help people make progress in their spiritual journey, then this is the essence of aiding our shepherd, Bishop Monforton.

Q: How do you plan on balancing your job and family while ministering as a deacon?
A: The priorities include staying on top of communication, staying organized, staying strong in prayer to discern the right way to serve and balance, and to say yes and no as appropriate. Hopefully, some of the ways I serve will also bring the family into the picture, in ways that are fitting with family activities and healthy growth in the Lord.

Q: What are you looking forward to following your ordination?
A: I have a deep love for Liturgy, Sacred Scripture, and the life of prayer. I know that there will be challenges, and that we will be stretched and formed by the Lord. Getting to know parishioners, their life in Christ, their needs and aspirations — think these will be a source of many blessings and joy, in seeing how God works with us.

Q: What would you say to someone who feels they are being called to the diaconate, but are uncertain if they want to pursue it?
A: I would say, ask the Holy Spirit to show you the way, to work in the depths of the heart, to discern the Lord’s call in prayer and to talk to deacons, your friends in Christ, and with your family (especially your wife, of course!). For me the process unfolded over 25 years, so ask for patience and don’t worry.

Q: Who is a saint that inspires you?
A: There are many, but several come to mind as crucial: St. Augustine for his keen intellect and beautiful style of writing; St. Teresa of Avila, because she conveys the path of prayer in a manner that is inspired; St. Francis of Assisi, of course, so crucial in my conversion to the Catholic faith. His life and dedication to Jesus is iconic (and, he was a deacon!).

Q: Anything you would like to say to the people of the Diocese of Steubenville?
A: Please pray for your deacons, priests and bishop. I hope that you will be patient with your new deacon, for I am a sinner. As we grow together in professing the truth, we’ll grow into maturity in Christ, who is founder, head, the image of the invisible God, Our Lord and savior. Above all else, being a living icon (imperfectly!) in His Church, if anything I can do will inspire humble service in others, we can all build each other up.

Pope Francis and Bishop Monforton celebrate All Souls’ Day Masses

Pope Francis prays at a grave at the French Military Cemetery before celebrating Mass for the Feast of All Souls at the cemetery in Rome Nov. 2. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)
Draft statement stresses Eucharist’s importance, not a need to deny it

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — At their June assembly, when the U.S. bishops debated a proposal to draft a statement on the Eucharist, some of the bishops asked whether it would address denying Communion to Catholic politicians who support abortion.

The draft of the statement sent to the bishops in October seems to put this question to rest, at least for now.

The statement has not been made public by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in advance of the Nov. 15-18 assembly of bishops. It was obtained by The Pillar and published Nov. 3 by the Catholic website.

Titled “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” the statement is at once both a reflection on the importance of the Eucharist in the life of the Catholic Church and a teaching document on what the church has taught over the centuries.

The statement, at least in this current draft, does essentially what Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, told bishops it would do.

In a recorded video this fall produced by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to further explain the document and the planned upcoming revival on the Eucharist, Bishop Rhoades said the document will focus on how “the Eucharist is our greatest treasure as Catholics” and will look at different aspects of the Eucharist, particularly how it illustrates Christ’s sacrifice and is the real presence of Jesus, not just a symbol.

The document, in its current form without amendments, does not specifically call out Catholic politicians who support abortion, including President Joe Biden, the second U.S. Catholic president, whose name came up during the June virtual meeting.

When the statement was first proposed to the body of bishops at their June assembly, some bishops said a strong rebuke of the president should be included in it because of Biden’s recent actions protecting and expanding abortion access, while others warned that this would portray the bishops as a partisan force during a time of bitter political divisions across the country.

At the end of their June discussion, Bishop Rhoades, who is chair of the Committee on Doctrine, said the document would not focus on denying Communion to people but on the importance of the sacrament.

He said the second half of the document will emphasize what Catholics should do with this deeper understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist, from more active participation at Mass to participating in devotions such as adoration and renewing their commitment to serve others.

And that is how the drafted document looks. It explains the importance of Communion, calling it a gift, and uses references from Scripture, prayers of the church and Second Vatican Council documents to back this up. It also explains, citing words of the saints, how Communion is “one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith” which is “a door through which we, like the saints and mystics before us, may enter into a deeper perception” of God’s presence.

The document also notes that the U.S. Bishops’ statement “Lumen Gentium” (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) describes the Eucharist as “the source and summit of the Christian life.”

It notes that as Catholics understand what the Eucharist means, they should more fully participate in Mass and also reach out to serve those in need, citing the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says: “The Eucharist commits us to the poor.”

Toward the end, it mentions how Catholics should show reverence in receiving the Eucharist and also recognize that there are some sins that “rupture the communion we share with God and the church.”

It distinguishes between mortal and venial sins — noting that the latter are the “sins and everyday faults” that do not break the covenant with God. “One commits a mortal sin,” the document says, “by freely, knowingly and willingly choosing to do something that involves grave matter and that is opposed to charity, opposed to love of God and neighbor.”

“One should not celebrate Mass or receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin without having sought the sacrament of reconciliation and received absolution,” the document reminds Catholics.

Then, repeating what the bishops said in their 2006 document, “Happy Are Those Who Are Called to His Supper,” this draft document points out that if a Catholic in his or her personal life has “knowingly and obstinately” rejected the doctrines of the church or its teaching on moral issues, that person should refrain from receiving Communion because it is “likely to cause scandal for others.”

The document concludes with examples of saints who were transformed by their reception of the Eucharist and their deep understanding of what it means.

It urges those who have left the church to come back, saying: “We miss you and we love you.” It also ties this return back to the Eucharist quoting St. Teresa of Kolkata, who said: “Once you understand the Eucharist, you can never leave the church. Not because the church won’t let you, but because your heart won’t let you.”

In September, Pope Francis said that he preferred not to comment directly on the issue of denying Communion in the United States, but he urged U.S. bishops to take a pastoral approach rather than wade into the political sphere.

Catholic theologians who spoke to Catholic News Service this summer about the bishops’ document sensed that it would be more about urging Catholics to come to a deeper understanding of this sacrament.

With a lot of emphasis being put on what seemed to be a litmus test about Catholics’ worthiness to receive Communion, Susan Timoney, an associate professor of pastoral studies and a dean at The Catholic University of America, said Catholics should talk to their pastors about this.

She said they will likely come away with a sense that the bishops’ efforts to encourage a deepening appreciation for the Eucharist is an attempt to say, “Look, it means something to be a disciple.”

“You have a responsibility if you’re going to call yourself a Catholic, and if you’re going to present yourself for Communion to be ready and to understand what that commitment entails,” she said.

Timothy O’Malley, director of education at the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, said: “If you pay attention to what the bishops are saying to recent revisions and outlines,” on this document, you don’t see it “being sort of political.”

O’Malley also said the document on the Eucharist and discussion around it should involve looking at the role Catholics have in the public square, noting that when Catholics receive the Eucharist, it means they “belong to the body,” which means they “uphold all dimensions of solidarity.”

The bishops are expected to discuss the draft document during an executive session they have scheduled for the start of their November in-person meeting in Baltimore; usually they hold such a session at the end of their meeting.

The public sessions of the meeting are Nov. 16 and 17.

A preliminary presentation of the statement is expected to take place Nov. 16, with a debate and vote on it to take place Nov. 17. It needs a two-thirds majority vote to pass.

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Father John C. Maria raises the Eucharist over the altar at the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Siena in Allentown, Pennsylvania, March 9, 2020. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)
St. John Paul II Be Perfect

By Diocese of Steubenville
Bishop Emeritus Gilbert I. Sheldon

Our Lord said: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). We might be tempted to ask: “Are you kidding, Jesus? How can anyone be as perfect as God the Father?” You would be right, too. No human being can aspire to an attribute of God’s and achieve it perfectly. So, what is Jesus telling us? He’s pointing out a direction for us, a way to follow. Doing so will put us on the right track in our spiritual life. If we stay on it, we can’t go wrong. St. John Paul puts it this way: “A way of perfection obviously means a way of perfection to be acquired, not a way of perfection already acquired.”

All Christians are called to a state of perfection. Some, of course, those who embrace the religious life, are explicitly committed to its pursuit by the lifestyle they have embraced, a lifestyle oriented around the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The vows are directed, as we have seen, against those things in human life that are most likely to become obstacles, roadblocks, as it were to spiritual perfection. Poverty: the love of material things and the desire to acquire them. Chastity: the desire to satisfy the sex instinct and all that is associated with it, e.g., human love and marriage. We call that love “special,” because it, too, plays an important role in God’s providence, and is also a way to perfection, not however, without its own complications and its own twists and turns. The third vow, that of obedience, is directed against one of the things that makes us human: free will. Free will is that faculty, unique in “homo sapiens” that gives him “choice,” something the other animals that inhabit this planet with us are lacking. Man is able to choose for himself, for example, who and when he will mate with. Lower animals do not. They are guided by instinct. Man has instincts, too, but they do not figure as strongly in his actions. Choice can trump instinct for man. He can choose for himself what he will do with his faculties. We do not put a tiger on trial for attacking and killing a man. We might exterminate it, but we don’t put it on trial. A human being who kills another human being might be exterminated, too, but only after the business of a trial. A trial is meant to determine “beyond the shadow of a doubt” whether the human person acted “knowingly and willingly” to do the act. In other words, “of his own free will.”

Man is able to choose what he will do with his life. That brings us back to the question of vocations again. We can’t seem to get away from it. I knew some men in the seminary who had to make such a choice. Let’s call them Tom, Dick and Harry — not their real names, of course. Tom, like many youngsters his age (the time just before World War II) had always been interested in aviation. Just after he graduated from high school, the Army Air Force opened the Aviation Cadet program to qualified high school graduates. (The U.S. Air Force, as such, did not exist then. It was created after WII.) Until then, the cadet program was restricted to college graduates or those with at least two years of college. Tom applied, took the necessary tests, and was sworn in as an aviation cadet. A funny thing happened, though, before he could get his pants in the seat of a P-51: They dropped the Atom Bomb! All of a sudden, they didn’t need any more fly-boys, or, for that matter, anymore of anything. Later on, after he had gone to college, he was given to understand that he could be accepted in the New U.S. Air Force, for training as a jet pilot. But, he had resolved to follow another path by then: the priesthood.

Dick, the second seminarian, had found that he had an aptitude for machine tools. His father, a veteran machinist, told him there was a future for him in the shop, if he cared to go that route and exploit his proven skills with machine tools. He could possibly become a skilled machinist, possibly a tool and die maker. Like Tom, he had already chosen another course.

Harry had always been interested in being a doctor, but considering his resources, it was out of his reach. But, he did have an uncle who, though not wealthy, had done well for himself. He offered to put Harry through medical school. But, like Tom and Dick, he had already chosen another path.

What do these three have in common, after they had a good shot at what they always wanted? Faith! Good parents of faith and a good Catholic education did the trick. They asked themselves what was the best thing they could do with this one life they will ever have? The best thing, they concluded was to give it back to God in some capacity to further his kingdom on earth. Why not give that a try? These comments would apply also to any of the men you will find in the seminary that we spoke, as in any of the religious vocations. That matter of vocations keeps coming up. We don’t seem to be able to get away from it. But, it fits well into the question of human freedom and our consideration of human “choice,” or free will. Any one of those men we talked about could have gone other ways. They could also have chosen a path of sin as do so many others their age.

Pope John Paul says on the topic: “It cannot be forgotten that all Christians are called to perfection.” Nor is perfection that complicated. It comes down to using our freedom — our gift of choice — to choose God’s way in every situation. We have only to ask ourselves, “What would Christ do, or what would Our Lord do in this matter?” I think we can always or at least usually come up with the right answer. The real problem is not in knowing. It’s in freedom to say yes or no to him. At this point, you may be tempted to think to yourself: “What an awful gift is this freedom! Wouldn’t it be better to be free like lower life, e.g., “free as the birds?” But, thinking again, we would see that the gift of human freedom is worth all the trouble! Without it, there would be no such thing as love — only instinct. Is that what you really want? Is it so surpassing that freedom comes with a cost — like everything else that’s worthwhile!

The Sign of Peace in the Liturgy

By Father Nicholas S. Ward

In the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, there are five paragraphs in which the Rite of Peace is discussed (82, 154, 181, 219 and 266), following the Lord’s Prayer and preceding and the Fractioning of the Rite. It begins with the prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ you said to your Apostles, Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.” This is a reference to John 14:27, where Jesus then says “Not as the world gives I leave you, my peace I give you.” This is a reference to (82, 154, 181, 219 and 266), following the Lord’s Prayer are five paragraphs in which the Rite of Peace is discussed.
**Vocations Awareness; the Synod; and a Church of Hope**

By Diocese of Steubenville  
Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:19-20).

**National Vocations Awareness Week (Nov. 7-13)**

Many of you may be aware that this week we celebrate National Vocations Awareness Week in the Catholic Church here in the United States. First and foremost, let us pray for an increase in vocations to the diaconate and the priesthood as we are reminded by Jesus himself that the harvest is great, but the laborers are few (see, Luke, Chapter 10, Verse 2). Thank you for your prayerful support of vocations and in a particular note for our future priests.

As I tell people, as a small diocese, we cannot afford a lot of seminarians, and yet we cannot afford not to have a lot of seminarians. Your generosity, especially through the Diocesan Parish Share Campaign (DPSC), is a direct and personal support of our future priests. Did you know 40% of the DPSC goes toward seminarian education, vocation outreach and our retired priests? Thank you for promoting the Catholic priesthood here in the Diocese of Steubenville.

**The Synod**

The Catholic Church has embarked into the universal initiative of the Synod on Synodality. Another way of putting it is for us to practice the essential art of listening. What is of critical importance is that we are heard. Some have the misconception that what is being changed is dogma doctrine and church discipline such as the priestly role. This is both unacceptable and an indictment against our ability to teach the truths of the faith to such a large percentage of people.

It is my hope that as people are heard, we can employ much of the results into an eventual pastoral plan for our diocese as we look five to 10 years in the future. Our Holy Father purposely has not placed concrete expectations or topics in this synodal initiative for this would just be a distraction in this endeavor, which would then be fueled by personal biases and lofty expectations for personal desires. Recent studies show that Catholics begin exploring the thought of leaving the church as early as the fourth grade, a stark reminder that as a listening church, we can do so much better.

**A Church of Hope**

On All Saints Day, I had the opportunity to celebrate the solemn Mass at Laman Hall for Steubenville Catholic Central High School, as well as the fifth and sixth grade for Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary and Junior High schools. Following the Mass, I toured the classrooms at the high school for an impromptu “Ask the Bishop” or “Ask the Class.” At the high school, for the month of November, “No Shave November” is being celebrated as well as permission to wear hoodies around school. Each initiative comes with a fee of which the entire amount collected will be shared with Aim Women’s Health, an initiative in Steubenville promoting the dignity of pregnant women and their unborn children. Aim assists the moms taking their children to term; that is birth, and then supporting them in raising their young daughter or son. I also had opportunity to visit the two kindergarten classes at the grade school of which the students were dressed up as saints. These little saints had written information about the saint they were promoting. All the classes I visited illustrate to you and me that leadership and hope are not age specific. A hope-filled church is evident in our youth and it should never be taken for granted.

In my “Did You Know?” article two weeks ago, I highlighted the theological virtue of hope and how it is an essential virtue to the spiritual health of each person. As we continue to navigate a polarized society, the church itself must stand out as that institution of hope ready to provide direction and comfort to everyone, reminding them that in the Holy Name of Jesus, there always is hope. In a few short weeks, we will begin a season replete with hope namely, the Holy Season of Advent. These weeks approaching Christmas should be a time of hope-filled expectations as we celebrate our faith in our savior who has entered the world for our redemption and will return as its judge.

Each Mass you and I attend is a celebration of the kingdom of God perfectly manifested in Jesus Christ himself where all hope resides. Just a year ago, we were still struggling with social distancing and the many precautions that were being taken in order to keep us safe. While we have a greater appreciation now of the COVID-19 virus and its variants, we cannot allow such a moment to divide us from brother and sister. Jesus Christ is the prince of peace and he has conquered the prince of this world. You and I have a role in salvation history as it continues to play out in our lives. Together, we have the obligation to share our hope in Jesus Christ with all whom we encounter. Discouragement and despair impede progress. Hope provides us the driving course to make our world a better one through holiness and fortitude.

Stay holy; stay healthy; stay safe.

**Joy and Encouraging Vocations**

By Sister Constance Veit

I do a lot of outreach to the young on behalf of my religious congregation, so I try to be aware of trends in vocations work and the common traits of emerging generations.

Recently, I took some time to review the latest “Study on Religious Vocations,” co-sponsored by the National Religious Vocation Conference and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, hoping that it would give me an “aha moment” on how to interest young women in our community of Little Sisters of the Poor.

I was struck by a section of the report titled “Intergenerational Living.” According to the 2020 NRVC/CARA study, a mere 13% of perpetually professed members of religious communities are younger than 60, while the same proportion are at least 90 years of age. These are pretty sobering statistics! I was consoled to read the following testimony from a young religious: “It is beautiful to have all different generations and ethnicities in one community, in one house, if we allow ourselves to see that beauty.”

What a hope-filled attitude on the part of a young religious! It really inspired me to stop bemoaning the aging that this is the essential message we need to communicate to young people. They need to know that they are loved as they are, even though God wants to give them more.
March for Life: Unborn must be part of current US debate over inequality

By Kurt Jensen
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — It’s a question Jeanne Mancini has already been asked so many times, she has an answer ready to go.

On Dec. 1, the Supreme Court hears oral arguments in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, an appeal by Mississipi to remove a lower court’s injunction on its law banning most abortions after the 15th week of pregnancy.

Should the court rule in favor of the state law in a decision to be handed down next year, overturning Roe v. Wade and sending the abortion issue back to the states, will there still be a need for the annual rally and march in Washington?

Or will March for Life, a fixture since January 1974, instead become a decentralized arrangement of statewide marches?

“We will make an announcement if and when that happens,” Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, told Catholic News Service.

State marches that began a few years ago, she said, were not planned in anticipation of any Supreme Court decision, but rather as a “way to strengthen the grassroots” and provide opportunities for activism for those who don’t make the trip to Washington.

Carrie Severino, president of Judicial Crisis Network, identified the challenge should the court uphold the Mississippi law. “It really just puts the ball back in (the states’) court. There should be 50 Marches for Life,” she said during the announcement of next year’s theme, “Equality Begins in the Womb.”

“We want to expand this rigorous debate about inequality” to the unborn, Mancini said at the Heritage Foundation, where the theme was announced.

Calling the theme a cry for “inherent human dignity because of who we are in our essence,” she added, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to injustice everywhere, including in the womb.”

Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, said that “it reclaims a key word – equality – and reminds us that unless children in the womb enjoy it, the rest of us lose it as well.”

The March for Life is scheduled for Jan. 21. The event, which starts with a rally near the National Mall followed by a march to the Supreme Court, is always held on a date near the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 rulings, Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, rulings that legalized abortion nationwide.

“It’s going to be one of the most significant years for the march yet,” said Severino. “This court has an opportunity like none it has had before with the Dobbs case.”

The Mississippi law was enacted in 2018, but it never took effect because a federal appellate court immediately blocked its enforcement. The state’s single abortion clinic is still performing them.

With Justice Amy Coney Barrett joining Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch, as well as Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, Severino said, “we now have a majority of justices on the court who believe the Constitution must be interpreted according to its original understanding, and its original meaning.”

The Sign of Peace

From Page 6

fractured, the decreased solemnity of the moment is all too easily disrupted by shout- ing, vigorous hand-waving to people at the other end of the church, brief conversations about mundane and unrelated subjects, and sometimes throwing up the two-fingered “sign of peace.” At this point, the priest says, “May the Lord have mercy upon you.”

The sign of peace is now an expression of the gift of peace among the faithful. At Mass, it is a sign of peace, but also a sign of peace. It is worth recalling that the rubric from the ancient form of the Mass), and, if we accept the rubrics, we find that it is indeed optional: “An exchange of peace appropriately carried out among the participants at Mass enriches the meaning of the rite itself and gives fuller expression to it. It is entirely correct, therefore, to say that such an action, and the public use of the rite of peace has become more prevalent again in recent years. It is an expression of friendship.”

As the ritual gift of the sign or kiss of peace has become more prevalent again in our liturgy, it would be helpful to remember what it is – a ritual, not a break from the liturgical action but a sharing of it, and an important reminder that while our liturgy is solemn and prayerful it is also intimate. This intimacy we share with others we must ultimately spring from the love of Christ in the Eucharist, the peace we receive from the altar and share with the world as a peace the world cannot give itself.

Father Ward is parochial vicar to Father Michael W. Gossett, pastor of Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Lourdes parishes, Wintersville.

Blessed Sacrament celebrates 45th anniversary of church dedication

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Wintersville, celebrates the 45th anniversary of the dedication of the current church, Nov. 7. On Oct. 2, 1974, a fire destroyed the old church, which was located on the current location of Sargs Hall. The church was rebuilt and dedicated by Bishop John King Mussio, Steubenville’s first bishop, Nov. 7, 1976. Father Michael W. Gossett, pastor of Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Lourdes, Wintersville, said: “Catholics in Wintersville can be thankful to God that, even after such a tragic event, we have a church where we can gather to worship.”

Joy

From Page 7

God “values and respects you,” we might say to thee, to every member of the human family. We can thus understand the emotion so often felt during the sign of peace at a liturgical celebration. Even so, during the Synod of Bishops, there was discussion about the appropriateness of greater restraint in this gesture, which can be exaggerated and cause a certain distraction in the assembly just before the reception of Communion.

It should be kept in mind that nothing is lost when the sign of peace is marked by a handshake, the same document, while not stipulating anything specific, mentions the handshake as perhaps the most common expression, though it would seem that a brief embrace is also suitable, given the ancient custom of the sacred ministers exchanging the peace in this way. However, as the bishops have stated, words are more than sufficient, as reflected in rubric 154 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: “At the same time, in accord with the decisions of the Conference of Bishops, all offer one another a sign that expresses peace, communion, and charity. While the sign of peace is given, one may say, ‘Pax Domini sit semper tecum’ (The peace of the Lord be with you always), to which the response is ‘Amen.’”

It is something they see in the quality of a gaze or a smile, in the serenity with which a consecrated person embraces trials or suffering, and in the generous gift of self to the poor day after day.

Father Francis insisted on joy in a recent speech to Discalced Carmelites. “It is ugly to see condescending men and women with a long face. It is ugly, it is ugly. Joy must come from within: that joy that is peace, an expression of friendship.”

God forbid that any of us become ugly as we grow older! In “Christus Vivit,” the exhortation he wrote following the synod on young people in the life of the church, Pope Francis reminded us that Christ is alive and he wants us to be fully alive.

“When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear,” he wrote, “he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope.”

So, let’s ask Jesus, “himself eternally young,” to give us hearts that are ever young and capable of loving, ready to welcome the new generations who knock on our doors just as Elizabeth welcomed the Virgin Mary into her home in the Visitation.

Let’s witness to these young women and men the JOY that fills our hearts, and is eager to fill theirs as well, if only they give themselves to him!

Sister Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.
Security camera captures acts of vandalism at St. Louis Church, Gallipolis

By Dino Orsatti

GALLIPOLIS — A security camera at St. Louis Church, Gallipolis, captured a vandal who apparently spray-painted swastikas on the church’s front door and a pro-life entrance sign, according to Father Thomas F. Hamm, pastor.

Father Hamm is cooperating with Gal- lipolis police in the investigation, and they hope to find the person or persons responsible for the crime. He said this “disturbing act of vandalism” happened around 11 p.m., Oct. 31, as the security camera indicated. According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, more than 100 incidents of arson, vandalism and destruction have taken place at Catholic sites across the United States since May 2020.

“These incidents of vandalism have ranged from the tragic to the obscene, from the transparent to the inexplicable,” said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee for Religious Liberty.

“We thank our law enforcement for investigating these incidents and taking appropriate steps to prevent further harm. We appeal to community members for help as well. These are not mere property crimes – this is the degradation of visible representations of our Catholic faith. These are acts of hate,” said Cardinal Dolan.

Biden attends Mass in Rome, tells reporters of his admiration for pope

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

ROME (CNS) — Pope Francis “is a man who has a great empathy. He’s a man who understands that part of his Christianity is to reach out and forgive,” U.S. President Joe Biden told reporters in Rome Oct. 31.

On the margins of the G-20 summit in Rome, Biden repeatedly was asked about his faith and his meeting with Pope Francis. Skipping a cultural event planned for the heads of state Oct. 30, Biden went to the vigil Mass at St. Patrick’s Church, official home of the U.S. Catholic community in Rome. A reporter for the Associated Press, who was at the church for the Mass, said the president received Communion.

The parish, located across the street from the U.S. Embassy to Italy, is staffed by Paulist priests. Paulist Father Joe Ciccone was the main celebrant and homilist at the Mass; Paulist Father Steven J. Petroff, the pastor, concelebrated and gave Biden Communion. Paulist Father Matthew Berrios also concelebrated.

In a post on the parish Facebook page later, Father Petroff said the three priests “were honored to welcome the president and first lady on behalf of St. Patrick’s Catholic American community in Rome and the Paulist Fathers. All are welcome!”

Before leaving Rome, Biden also went to Mass Nov. 1 in the residence of the U.S. ambassador to Italy. Jesuit Father David McCallum, the Rome-based executive director of the Jesuit’s Discerning Leadership Program, said he celebrated the early morning Mass for the Feast of All Saints. He also posted photos on his Facebook page.

Some Catholics, including a few U.S. bishops, have argued that Biden, who regularly attends Mass, should not receive Communion because of his support for legalized abortion, which clearly runs counter to Catholic teaching on the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death.

Several hours after meeting Pope Francis Oct. 29, Biden was asked if abortion was one of the topics of his meeting with the pope. Biden responded, “We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic, and I should keep receiving Communion.”

The Vatican did not comment on what Biden reported other than to say it was a “private” conversation. The two were assisted by two interpreters and met for 75 minutes, a record for a papal audience with a head of state.

If Pope Francis called Biden a “good Catholic,” a ceramic tile the pope gave Biden may illustrate what he meant.

The painted 12-inch square tile depicts a pilgrim walking along the banks of the Tiber River toward the Vatican. But, he is not there yet.

For more than a year, Pope Francis’ gift for visiting government leaders has been either a plaque depicting a migrant family with the inscription, “Let’s fill our hands with other hands,” or a sculpture of a dove holding an olive branch with the inscription, “Be messengers of peace.” But, for Biden, the pope chose the pilgrim. As Pope Francis has made clear throughout his pontificate, defining someone as a good Catholic or a good Christian does not mean canonizing them or approving of everything they say and do. Rather, good Christians recognize they are sinners in need of God’s forgiveness and grace, and they are committed to continuing the journey.

On Sept. 15, Pope Francis was asked about giving Communion to Catholic politicians who support abortion. He said, “Abortion is more than a problem. Abortion is murder.” He said the question about giving Communion is not theological; it’s pastoral. He said, “Communion is not a prize for the perfect,” but rather “a gift, the presence of Jesus in his church and in the community. That is the theology.”

The last question at Biden’s Oct. 31 news conference at the end of the G-20 summit was whether what he said Pope Francis had said to him should put “to rest” the discussion about his worthiness to receive the Eucharist. Biden responded, “Look, a lot of this is just personal.”

Rather than addressing the Communio question directly, the president spoke of his admiration for Pope Francis and, particularly, for how the pope “provided great solace” for him and his family when Biden’s son, Beau Biden, died of cancer in 2015.

“Tears has always been this debate in the Catholic Church, going back to Pope John XXIII, that talks about how we reach out and embrace people with differences,” Biden said. “If you notice what the pope said when he was asked, when he first got elected pope, he was traveling with the press and they said, ‘What’s your position on homosexuality?’ He said, ‘Who am I to judge?’”

“This is a man who has a great empathy. He’s a man who understands that part of his Christianity is to reach out and forgive,” Biden said. “And so, I just find my relationship with him one that I personally take great solace in; he is really, truly genuine, decent man.”

The president said that when he won the election in 2020, Pope Francis phoned him “to tell me how much he appreciated the fact that I would focus on the poor and focus on the needs of people who are in trouble.”

While saying he did not talk much more about his conversation with the pope “because so much of this is personal,” Biden said Pope Francis embodies “everything I learned about Catholicism from the time I was a kid going through grade school, through high school. And, I have great respect for people who have other religious views, but he’s just a fine, decent, honorable man, and we keep in touch.”
**Carrollton** — A “First Friday Men’s Night” will be held at 6 p.m., every First Friday of the month, at Our Lady of Mercy Church. The evening will include Eucharistic adoration, the praying of the rosary, an opportunity for confession and Benediction. Pizza will be served. For additional information, telephone Luke Dougherty at (740) 381-5074.

Our Lady of Mercy St. Vincent de Paul Society is collecting new or gently used winter jackets, particularly children’s, for the winter season. A box will be available in the back of the church for the collection.

**Chesapeake** — Eucharistic adoration at St. Ann Church will be offered every Wednesday at 5:15 p.m. and following the Mass at 6:30 p.m. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Society is collecting new or gently used winter jackets, particularly children’s, for the winter season. A box will be available in the back of the church for the collection.

**Churchtown** — St. John Central School will hold a gala at 6 p.m., Nov. 20, at Knights of Columbus Council 4617 Hall, 17472 Ohio Route 676. A ticket for two people costs $100, which includes dinner and entry into the drawing of more than $3,500 in prizes. Music will be provided by Anthony Moeber. For additional information or to purchase tickets, telephone Jenna Long at (740) 538-2727 or Evan Schaaf at (740) 336-8851.

**Martins Ferry** — St. Mary Central School is celebrating “Enjoy Coupon Books.” Cost is $40. Books are available at the school office.

**St. Mary Central School** is selling Sarris Christmas candy. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, Sarris is offering free shipping on all orders with no minimum purchase needed; there will be a $5 handling fee. Anyone interested in placing an order can visit www.sarris.com, click on “Online Ordering,” go to “Products,” then “Master Sheet Christmas 2021.” The group identification number for St. Mary Central is 10-0304. The school receives 25% of the profit and orders will be shipped directly to the people ordering the candy. For additional information, telephone the school office at (740) 633-5424.

**Pine Grove** — Mass at St. Mary Mission is celebrated at 4 p.m., Sundays.

**Wintersville** — Our Lady of Lourdes Parish CWC will sell nut rolls and pumpkin rolls following the 9:30 a.m. Mass, Nov. 14. Nut rolls cost $12 and pumpkin rolls cost $10.

**Knights council receives an award**

Knights of Columbus St. Joseph of Monroe County Council 5009 members receive the “Star Council Award.” The Knights of Columbus website states: “The Star Council Award recognizes outstanding achievement in membership, insurance and programming. In order to achieve the Star Council Award, a council must earn the Father McGivney, Founder’s and Columbian Awards.” According to the council, it is the highest award for a local Knights council. (Photo provided)

**Knights of Columbus donates to Faith and Light community, Steubenville**

Baci Carpico, past state deputy of the Ohio Knights of Columbus and current member of the Ohio Charity Foundation, pictured second from left, presents a $1,500 check to Marybeth Coleman, correspondent of the Faith and Light community, Steubenville, pictured third from left, at Holy Family Church, Steubenville. Pictured to the left of Carpico is Msgr. Gerald E. Calovini, pastor of Holy Family Parish. Pictured to the right of Marybeth Coleman is Maggie Hunt and Emily Coleman. Faith and Light is an international movement founded in 1971, which brings together children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disabilities. Together, with their family and friends, they meet regularly at Holy Family Church for a gathering of music, a meal, prayer and faith. This group means a lot to the community it serves and Kayla Henry, one of the core members, mentioned it is a welcoming environment where lots of friends can be made. They are so excited to have meetings starting back up after a long break due to COVID-19, according to Marybeth Coleman. The chapter has many volunteers, including students from Franciscan University of Steubenville and other local parishes. (Photo provided)

**Annual ‘Basket Bonanza’ planned**

Catholic Central High School Band Boosters, Steubenville, will hold a second annual “Basket Bonanza” online at https://go.rallyup.com/basket-bonanza. Ticket sales for the bonanza will conclude at 2 p.m. Dec. 5. The drawing will be livestreamed that day on the Crusader Marching Band Facebook page at 2:15 p.m. In-person pickup instructions will be emailed to the winners. Pictured with the baskets are, from left, Jillian Bucci, flute section leader; Miryam Gonzalez, Eleonor Stouts, president and clarinet section leader; Isabella Inverso; Joseph Stetson, drum major; Joseph McFarland; Serena Terry, assistant drum major; Chica Asci, manager; Sam Johnston, director; and Rebecca Bolster, saxophone section leader. (Photo provided)

**Around and About**

**Athens** — Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio will hold a rummage sale from 8:30 a.m.-noon, Nov. 13, at the Holy Family Center, 75 Stewart St.

**North Canton, Ohio** — Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth Chapter of Magnificat, a women’s ministry modeled after the Visitation, will hold a breakfast Dec. 4 at Walsh University, Barrette Center, 2020 E. Maple St. The 20th anniversary of the chapter will be celebrated. Father Ed Gretchkko and Jackie France will be the guest speakers. Cost is $22 for a mail-in reservation or $23 online; visit magnificatark.weebly.com. Reservations cannot be accepted after Nov. 27. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. and breakfast begins at 9 a.m. An optional Mass will be celebrated at 8 a.m. in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel at the university. For additional information, telephone Joan Spiehl at (330) 933-8778.

**St. Clairsville** — Knights of Columbus Our Lady of Peace Council 4243 is selling “Enjoy Coupon Books.” Cost is $40. For additional information, telephone John Swan at (740) 695-0366 or (740) 312-2865.

**Wheeling, W.Va.** — A sung evening prayer for the dead will be prayed at 6 p.m., Nov. 17, at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, 1300 Eoff St.
Wheeling University service project benefits Catholic Charities, local residents

WHEELING, W.Va. — Wheeling University, Wheeling, West Virginia, first year students assembled more than 900 food packets for Catholic Charities West Virginia – a project that will benefit local residents this winter. Through the partnership with Catholic Charities Northern Region, about 160 first-year seminar students assisted the agency in preparing the “snow meals” for those who receive home delivered meals from Catholic Charities. Assisting the students were Wheeling University staff and upper-class volunteers.

“Our mission at Wheeling University is to equip our graduates with the critical, creative and empathetic tools they need to pursue rewarding careers and enrich their local communities. To do that, students need to have experiences like assisting Catholic Charities’ efforts to help our community members to feed their families. I am grateful the Wheeling University family could assist Catholic Charities and the Wheeling residents who depend on this meal program,” said Ginny R. Favede, president of Wheeling University.

The Northern Region of Catholic Charities provides meals to about 185 people Monday through Saturday each week. However, with inclement weather approaching, the agency some-times cannot deliver meals due to unsafe conditions. On those occasions, each individual receives, in advance, five snow meals, which include nonperishable food items. The meals bridge the gap until deliveries can resume. As part of their first-year seminar experience, the Wheeling students packed the snow meals for Catholic Charities.

On site for the meal assembly was Latrishia Whitelatch, a Wheeling alumna, who is the assistant coordinator of the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center, Wheeling. “Usually, our volunteers help us pack the meals at the center. This is the first time we have been able to partner with the university in this way and it is a tremendous blessing. We have the meals prepared ahead of time, and with the students help, we did it in a fraction of the time,” she explained.

Twenty tables were set up inside the university’s Troy Theater and students wore masks and gloves and were spaced out to adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols. At each table, students trained each other, gathered and placed a can of soup, a fruit cup, applesauce, ramen and dried fruit into bags. Once all the meal bags were finished, the Wheeling students helped Whitelatch pack the meals at the center. This is the first time we have been able to partner with the university in this way and it is a tremendous

Students at Wheeling University, Wheeling, West Virginia, gather in the university’s Troy Theater to prepare meal bags for Catholic Charities. (Photo provided)

Pope names Pittsburgh pastor as auxiliary bishop for Pittsburgh Diocese

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Pope Francis has appointed Father Mark A. Eckman, pastor of Resurrection Parish in Pittsburgh, as an auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Bishop-designate Eckman, 62, is a native of Pittsburgh and was ordained a priest of the Pittsburgh Diocese May 11, 1985. He was recently named pastor at Resurrection, but his first assignment after his ordination was as parochial vicar at the same parish.

His appointment was announced Nov. 5 in Washington by Archbishop Christoph Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

His episcopal ordination Mass is scheduled for Jan. 11 at St. Paul Cathedral in Pittsburgh.

“The Holy Father’s appointment is a gift to our diocese and brings great joy to me,” said Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik, saying the newly named auxiliary – a “born and raised Pittsburgher” – has “a deep devotion to Jesus and the people of this region.”

“He has shown himself to be a caring, compassionate, responsible, skilled pastor of the church,” he said in a statement. “Please join me and his brother priests in prayer asking Jesus to fill his heart as he humbly takes on this new role.”

“I am honored that the Holy Father has placed such trust and confidence in me and I will serve wherever needed,” Bishop-designate Eckman said. “I have chosen as my episcopal motto: ‘To serve in faith and charity.’ I hope to faithfully live out this motto as I continue to minister in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.”

Obituaries

Richard Althar I, 74, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 6.
John Burkhart, 54, St. John, Bellaire, Nov. 4.
Patricia Callendar, 83, St. Mary, Shadyside, Sept. 2.
Richard Callendar Jr., 60, St. Mary, Shadyside, Sept. 4.
Richard Callendar Sr., 83, St. Mary, Shadyside, Sept. 15.
Ronald J. Calovini, 84, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Barnesville, Sept. 5.
Don Cantor, 86, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Barnesville, Sept. 18.
Paul E. Carey, 70, Ironton, St. Joseph, Oct. 2.
Franklin Clark, 61, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 10.
Richard Crugnale, 82, Mingo Junction, St. Agnes, Sept. 11.
Melanie Davis, 82, Ironton, St. Lawrence O’Toole, Ironton, Oct. 1.
Albert Dobrovich, 95, St. John, Bellaire, Oct. 12.
Matilda Giusto, 97, Mingo Junction, St. Agnes, Oct. 13.
Margaret Hutkai, 96, St. Joseph, Tiltonsville, Oct. 25.
Denise Johnson, 62, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 3.
Carl F. Kleinman, 55, South Point, St. Joseph, Ironton, Sept. 15.
Donald Kuchinka, 94, St. Mary, Shadyside, Oct. 12.
Mary D. Lynskey, 93, St. Peter, Steubenville, Nov. 2.
Joseph Mannarino, 94, Mingo Junction, St. Agnes, Sept. 10.
Marilyn L. McLaughlin, 78, St. Mary, Temperanceville, Oct. 9.
Sister Rose Michael, 94, St. John, Bellaire, July 18.
Catherine Mick, 93, St. Mary, Shadyside, Sept. 6.
John Patrone, 79, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 29.
Mary Powell, 92, St. Mary, Shadyside, Sept. 7.
Rebecca S. Reichman, 62, St. Mary, Temperanceville, Feb. 2.
William Schramm, 95, St. Mary, Shadyside, Oct. 15.
Helen A. Smith, 86, St. Mary, Temperanceville, Aug. 23.
Sandra K. Smolira, 76, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Barnesville, Sept. 23.
Angela Strussion, 49, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 21.
Christopher Strussion, 50, St. John, Bellaire, Aug. 25.
Thomas Strussion, 52, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 21.
Alfred Tellitocci, 88, St. Mary, Shadyside, Oct. 11.
Ronald A. Temple, 82, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Barnesville, July 10.
Lora I. Trimboli, 94, Ashland, Kentucky, St. Joseph, Ironton, Sept. 16.
James "Turtle" Vingino, 71, St. John, Bellaire, Oct. 29.
Joseph "Banjo" Vitiello, 82, St. Mary, Shadyside, Sept. 16.
Michael Vuvelich, 66, St. Mary, Shadyside, Oct. 29.
Willie Mae Smith Wilson, 97, Pedro, St. Lawrence O’Toole, Ironton, Sept. 4.
Rita Yavalek, 87, St. John, Bellaire, Sept. 15.
The Knights of Columbus are celebrating the one year anniversary of Our Founder’s beatification and invite you to join!

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