CRS Rice Bowl celebrates 40 years of changing lives around the world
Diocese will host Facebook contest for local participants

Baltimore, MD — This year marks the 40th anniversary of CRS Rice Bowl, the largest and oldest Lenten program used by millions of Catholics across the United States known for its iconic and symbolic cardboard ‘rice bowl.’ The program has evolved over multiple generations to become a tradition for Catholic families, parishes and religious educators. Since its inception, millions of Catholics have contributed alms totaling $250 million to support efforts that fight poverty and hunger in dioceses across the U.S. and overseas.

Pope Francis has captured the world’s attention to the plight of hunger and poverty around the world. He said, “the scandal that millions of people suffer from hunger must not paralyze us, but push each and every one of us to act: singles, families, communities, institutions, governments, to eliminate this injustice.” People looking for a way to respond to this call will find CRS Rice Bowl is a proven and robust response.

Begun in 1975 in Allentown, Pennsylvania as a response to the famine in the African Sahel region, the idea took hold and was adopted by the U.S. Bishops as a national response to hunger around the world. A year later, the initiative became an official program of CRS as “Operation Rice Bowl.” Known today as ‘CRS Rice Bowl,’ the program uses donations to support CRS’ humanitarian programs in 93 countries overseas, providing life-saving assistance and hope to impoverished and vulnerable communities. Twenty-five percent of the total contributions remain in the dioceses where they were given and often fund food pantries, community gardens and outreach to vulnerable populations in the U.S.

The look and feel of the program has evolved over time and today incorporates a wide variety of resources for people — at any age — to make Lent a deeper and more fulfilling experience. In addition to a full collection of resources for educators, parish leaders and parents, there is a CRS Rice Bowl app for people to use on their mobile devices.

For the 40th anniversary, the program offers two new video series along with a video made especially for young children. The popular “CRS Global Kitchen” video features Fr. Leo Patalinghug, host of GracebeforeMeals.com, who cooks five meatless recipes from this year’s “CRS Global Kitchen” video. The “What is Lent?” series provides eight prominent Catholic figures, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan and popular authors and speakers Rev. James Martin, SJ and Christopher West, who answer the question “What is Lent?” Between them, they illuminate topics such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and solidarity to show how these practices are foundational to the Lenten season.

Another series, called “What is Lent?,” features eight prominent Catholic figures, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan and popular authors and speakers Rev. James Martin, SJ and Christopher West, who answer the question “What is Lent?” Between them, they illuminate topics such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and solidarity to show how these practices are foundational to the Lenten season.

To follow CRS Rice Bowl on Twitter or Facebook, search @CRSRiceBowl or #4Lent4Life. For local “Rice Bowl” information and events, see page 11.

World Meeting of Families Diocesan Pilgrimage

The Diocese of Kalamazoo, in conjunction with Canterbury Pilgrimages and Tours Inc., is sponsoring a seven-day pilgrimage to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, Sept. 21-27. Pope Francis has confirmed his attendance at the event. The Holy Father also announced he would be making stops in New York and Washington D.C. during his trip to the United States.

For more information see story on page 7.

Diocese invites responses for October Ordinary Synod

Local Catholics invited to complete online questions or attend a deanery meeting

At the close of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 2014, Pope Francis decided to make public the document which summarized its work. He instructed that this document would also serve as the outline for the XIV Ordinary Synod of Bishops in October 2015 on the topic, “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World.”

Included in this document were questions to determine how it is being received and to generate further input from all around the world. In the Diocese of Kalamazoo, responses will be gathered in two ways. First those who wish to respond to the questions should carefully and prayerfully read the document. Then people may either use the response form provided by the diocese and/or they may attend one of the February scheduled deanery meetings. These deanery meetings will be facilitated by Deacon Kurt Lucas, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Parish Life & Lay Leadership and Jamin Herold, Associate Director in the Secretariat for Catholic Education & New Evangelization. The document and the response form are available at: www.diokzoo.org/consultation.

Two meetings were held earlier in the month in the Northern and Eastern deaneries. The remaining meetings are:

Central Deanery: Tuesday, February 10 at St. Monica, Kalamazoo’s Community Building at 7:30 p.m.

Lakeshore Deanery: Wednesday, February 11 at St. Bernard, Benton Harbor’s Parish Center at 6:30 p.m.

Southeast Deanery: Tuesday, February 17 at Holy Angels, Sturgis’ church basement at 6 p.m.

Southwest Deanery: Tuesday, February 24 at St. Mary, Niles’ Parish Center at 7 p.m.

Diocesan staff will compile all responses and send a summary document to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. All diocesan responses from around the country will then be gathered into one report and sent to the Vatican. For more on the history of Synods and the impact on the life of the Church see page 8.

Priests Retirement Collection to be held
March 1st

For the second year the diocese will conduct the Priests Retirement Collection. Last year generous parishioners donated close to $120,000 to the inaugural fund which helps ensure adequate retirement and health coverage in the years ahead for the priests who have sacrificially served the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

For more information on the collection see page 5.
FROM THE EDITOR
By Victoria Cesna
Communication Director & Editor of The Good News

It remains a mystery to this day. The great Valentine’s Day card disappearance. It’s a case that dates back to the ‘70s when I was changing out my boots for my shoes and eager to start my day in Mrs. Wilson’s kindergarten class. I turned to retrieve my bag of carefully folded valentines that I had set down beside me and they were gone. Poor! My five-year-old heart was broken and even as classmates plopped their own valentines into my pink-tissue, heart-decorated Kleenex box, I was still inconsolable. I’ve had an “eh” attitude about Valentine’s Day ever since.

Now, don’t get me wrong, I’m certainly not one to turn my nose up at a carefully-selected box of chocolates or a bouquet of flowers, and I’ve delighted in passing out valentines to my own family and Sunday school students. But for me there’s still an involuntary eye-roll to the superficial nature of the holiday and the almost-mandatory nature of it.

Also, the more I journey through this life, the more I appreciate of the wisdom of the ancient Greeks who understood the full complexity and meaning wrapped up in just four letters. You see, the Greeks had at least six different words to describe love: eros, sexual passion; philia, deep friendship; ludus, playful love; agape, love for everyone; pragma, longstanding love; and philautia, love of the self.

As humans, if we’re fortunate, we’ll live our lives encountering each type of love as outlined by the Greeks. However, as Christians, our faith teaches us that at the center of our hearts should be the most important one — agape — or selfless love.

Understandably, that’s not an easy task but it’s one we were called to strive towards every day as our hearts are not centered in the superficial but in God.

Father Francis explained Christian love in this way in a recent homily, “Remaining in the love of God,” he said, “is not so much an ecstasy of the heart, a nice thing to feel… the love John speaks of is not the love of soap operas! Christian love has a particular quality: concreteness. Jesus Himself, when He speaks of love, speaks to us about concrete things: feeding the hungry, visiting the sick… Love is concrete. And when this concreteness is not there, you can live a Christianity of illusions, because you don’t understand where the center of Jesus’ message is.”

So this month, go ahead and shower your Valentine, but don’t forget to love one another along the way.

Pope Francis FEBRUARY Intentions
Universal: That prisoners, especially the young, may be able to rebuild lives of dignity.
Evangelization: That married people who are separated may find welcome and support in the Christian community.

The Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo

The Good News for the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo
PUBLISHED: Monthly/10 issues per year
DISTRIBUTION: The first weekend of the month via parish bulletins.

The Good News for the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo is the official publication of the Diocese of Kalamazoo. All notices and regulations, appointments, assignments, etc. issued under the caption “Official” are to be regarded as official communications of the Bishop of Kalamazoo. Opinion columns, feature stories and letters to the editor appear in the publication, but do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by the Good News or the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

“The Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley, Bishop of Kalamazoo

The Good News, The February edition will be distributed in all parishes February 7 & 8.

NOTICE: The February edition will be distributed on all parishes February 7 & 8.

www.dioskooz.org

The Sisters of Mercy of Kalamazoo

The Good News
FEBRUARY 2015

“Waiting in Joyful Hope”

Three religious sisters from Colombia begin ministry in Diocese of Kalamazoo

The Diocese of Kalamazoo welcomes Sister Berley Gamze, Sister Maryd Cortes and Sister Yuliana Rua of the congregation Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit from Colombia who will be here for a five year period, until 2019. The arrival of the Sisters was possible due to the economic help provided by the organization, Christian Extension. For many years the Diocese has brought Sisters to minister to our migrant farm workers for one or two months. The Sisters have a great capacity and sensibility to minister to the families and people in need. Through their commitment, the Sisters will be able to reach inside the people’s hearts, no matter their age. They will also bring much joy with the many gifts they have, such as their music and dynamic activities. The Sisters will help in the pastoral of San Felipe de Jesus, Pearl and the Lakeshore Deanship providing vocational retreats for the youth of the parishes. They will also visit the Hispanic/Latinos of San Felipe de Jesus and the Lakeshore Deanship to learn about their reality as they offer them the richness of the Good News, answering to the New Evangelization call.

Midwest-born Adrian Dominican sister chosen to lead Catholic Charities USA

By Catholic News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS) — Dominican Sister Donna Markham has been chosen to succeed Father Larry Snyder as the new president of Catholic Charities USA.

Sister Donna becomes the first woman to lead Catholic Charities, which was founded in 1910. She will officially take over from Father Snyder June 1.

In a Jan. 12 telephone interview with Catholic News Service, Sister Donna said it is “a wonderful story” that three of the United States’ leading Catholic service organizations are headed by women, listing Carolyn Woo, president of Catholic Relief Services, and Sister Carol Keenan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association.

“I see myself as number three — at least,” Sister Donna said. “It’s the first time for Catholic Charities, but certainly not the first time in this country.”

Currently president of the Behavioral Health Institute for Men in Cincinnati, Sister Donna, a board-certified clinical psychologist, has a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Detroit and was named a fellow in the American Association of Clinical Psychologists.

Beforehand, she served for 10 years as the president of the Southdown Institute in Ontario, and was the founding director of the Dominican Consultation Center in Detroit, serving there for 13 years. Both agencies focused on the psychological care of people in ministry.

From 2004 to 2010, Sister Donna was president of the Adrian Dominican congregation in Michigan, and served a one-year term in 1991-92 as president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

She also served eight years as a member of Catholic Charities’ board of trustees, two of those as board chair.

Catholic Charities USA is the national office for Catholic Charities agencies nationwide, which help a combined 9 million-plus people a year regardless of religious, social or economic backgrounds.

Born in Illinois north of Chicago, Sister Donna grew up mostly in Michigan and Ontario, earning her first college degree from the University of Toronto.

Rev. Robert Creagan invested as Knight of the Holy Sepulchre

By Catholic News Service

Pearl and the Lakeshore Deanery providing vocational retreats for the youth of the parishes. They will also visit the Hispanic/Latinos of San Felipe de Jesus and the Lakeshore Deanship to learn about their reality as they offer them the richness of the Good News, answering to the New Evangelization call.

The purpose of an individual in joining the Order should be to serve the Church and to support the efforts of the Church and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to maintain the Christian presence in the Holy Land. The Holy Father has given the Order the two-fold modern day mission of fostering the practice of the Christian life in the modern world and the preservation of the faith in the Holy Land. This is accomplished by prayer, evangelization and almsgiving.

In May 2014, Fr. Creagan made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to celebrate his 25th anniversary of priestly ordination. With this new honor, he will be promoting support for the Church in the Holy Land and praying for peace in Jerusalem. When asked about this recognition, Fr. Creagan said, “I am grateful to be a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre. I accept his new duty to raise attention for the needs of the Church in the places that Jesus made sacred by His presence.”

Additional information about the Order can be found at http://www.coohj.net or www.coohjnorthcentral.org

Dominican Sister Donna Markham has been chosen to succeed Rev. Larry Snyder as the new president of Catholic Charities USA.
February, while the shortest month in the calendar, certainly doesn’t always seem that way as we hunker down for winter storms and equip ourselves with extra layers of clothing and a variety of snow tools as we do “battle” with Mother Nature. We regularly check our radar apps and listen intently to our TV weather forecasters so we can be ready for whatever is coming our way. This type of preparation and planning keeps us safe and makes our journey more pleasant.

So while we have good reason to spend an inordinate amount of time focused on the weather during these February days, it makes me wonder if we give the same attention to listening to and planning for what God’s plan is for our lives. Are we equally “equipped” to discern the calling and knowledge for what we are called to do in our lives as we are with our snow shovels and detailed weather apps? Do we take the time to prayerfully discern our true voca-

Just as we do to forecast the weather, wouldn’t it be great to have a “Vocations” app for our smart phones? We could punch in our likes, interests, hopes and dreams and the app would give us a detailed plan for achieving our life’s vocation. But, of course, we know that our lives are not that methodical, or predictable, don’t we?

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin word “vocatio” which means “calling.” For many people, the very word “vocation” automatically connotes only a “calling” to the priesthood or religious life. But in fact the word is much more encompassing. Our lives as Christians are understood in the context of our baptismal vocation. Through baptism, all of us are called by God to become disciples of Jesus, discovering, developing and sharing our gifts and talents with others in service to help transform the world into the Kingdom of God. We are called to lives of holiness; lives that will lead us to our ultimate reward of eternal life with God in Heaven.

We begin listening for this call from the time we are little children. “What do you want to be when you grow up?” As children we heard this question posed to us many times. Our young minds might first hang on to the fantasy of being a Major-League baseball player or astronaut or Oscar-winning actor. But as fine as those things are, and important as it is to dream, what we do as our job, or career, is really only a part of what our true vocation is from God.

Achieving and living out our baptismal promises is our basic vocation in life, our calling. We may do this in one of three basic life-choices: as a single person, a married person, or as a priest, deacon, or a person who takes vows for consecrated life (religious sisters, brothers and priests).

Here in our Diocese we are blessed to have the Sisters of St. Joseph at Nazareth Center as a vibrant and long-standing part of the Church here in southwest Michigan. Their remarkable legacy dates back to 1889 when 11 brave sisters arrived here from Watertown, NY with (then) Father Francis O’Brien to establish a hospital. It was the beginning of Borgess Hospi-

Continued on page 4
National Catholic Youth Choir seeks singers
Deadline to apply is March 27, 2015

The National Catholic Youth Choir is currently seeking Catholic high school singers to apply for the June 15 – June 30, 2015, choral camp and multi-state concert tour; applications are online at www.CatholicYouthChoir.org and are due March 27, 2015.

The choral camp and multi-state concert tour will be held June 15 – June 30, 2015 at St. John’s Abbey & University, Collegeville, Minn.

Applicants must be Catholic high school students entering grades 9, 10, 11, & 12 in fall of 2015.

The cost is $1,100 and scholarships available.
Contact: 320-363-3184 Email: neyc@csbju.edu

40 Days for Life – using prayer, fasting and outreach to save lives
By Sarah DeMott

Drawing on the strength of our Lord, who spent 40 days in the desert in prayer, 40 Days for Life is an annual time of prayer, fasting and peaceful outreach to help save lives and bring an end to abortion. The largest international coordinated pro-life campaign, 40 Days for Life unites more than 650,000 volunteers across 27 nations in prayer.

Locally, an Opening Rally will kick off the campaign on Monday, February 16 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Hackett Catholic Prep. Vigils will be held at Planned Parenthood from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, February 18 through March 28.

“40 Days for Life is an excellent opportunity to stand in prayerful witness for the sanctity and dignity of human life at all stages,” says Lisa Irwin, Associate Director, Sanctity of the Human Person for the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

There will be a “Mid-Point Inspiration Rally” on Sunday, March 8 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Planned Parenthood. The closing baby shower celebration will be held at Caring Network on Sunday, March 29 from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Brenda Sinkovitz at 269-254-9337 or Email: 40dayskalamazoo@gmail.com.

Sacred Music at the Cathedral
2014-15 concert season

Dr. Thomas Fielding
organist in recital

Dr. Fielding is the director of liturgy and music for St. Augustine Cathedral. His program will include works by Lübeck, Bach, Franck, Tournemire, Fielding and Willan.

Friday, 13 February 2015
7pm

St. Augustine Cathedral
542 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007 • 269.345.5147
Open to the public with a free-will offering
FEBRUARY 2015

Collection will once again be held during the weekend of February 28 and March 1st. All monies collected in order to adequately provide for the retirement needs of all diocesan priests, The Diocese of Kalamazoo initiates the collection for diocesan priests' retirement readies for second year.

Catholic convert, he has this innate ability to speak dynamic speaker in high demand. As a former anti-baby's material will bring in people at all mass: the family, the Eucharist and the New Evangelization through the day-long event. His overall theme, Hahn.

Aside from the excitement the conference itself draws, Executive Director of the Catholic Information Center Steve Goffeney thinks the quality and accessibility of Hahn’s material will bring in people at all stages of their faith journey.

Dr. Scott Hahn coming is huge because he is such a dynamic speaker in high demand. As a former anti-Catholic convert, he has this innate ability to speak about what life was like before he began living a life of faith, says Goffeney. “His three talks, the family, the Eucharist and the New Evangelization, are all relative to each of our lives in the world today. We are very lucky to have him.”

Part of the Catholic Information Center’s mission is to bring in quality speakers who can speak in both an intellectual and invigorating manner.

“He is the best selling Catholic author of all time,” says Goffeney. “I know I speak for a lot of people; Scott Hahn’s ed talks, books and DVDs have helped us on our journey to heaven. He has the ability to open up the scriptures like nobody else, to paint a picture in your mind and bring the scriptures alive. We are excited to see him speak in person.”

Keyspeaker: Dr. Scott Hahn

Doors open for the conference at 7:30 a.m. in the Hackett Catholic Prep gymnasium. The day will begin with Mass celebrated by Bishop Bradley at 8:30 a.m. Advanced tickets are $30, or $10 for students. For more information on the conference and tickets, call Newman’s Bookshoppe at 269-553-0482 or visit www.newmansbookshoppe.com.

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Collection for diocesan priests' retirement readies for second year

In order to adequately provide for the retirement needs of all diocesan priests, The Diocese of Kalamazoo initiated a “second collection” last year. Parishioners responded generously and close to $120,000 was raised. The collection will once again be held during the weekend of February 28 and March 1st. All monies collected through the “Diocesan Priests Retirement Collection” will directly benefit the Bishop Paul V. Donovan Good Shepherd Fund and be used to fill a significant gap in priests’ retirement.

Retired priests of the Diocese of Kalamazoo currently receive a small pension which they use for basic needs such as food, housing and transportation. Diocesan priests live independently during their retirement, unlike priests of religious communities who live together during their senior years and are cared for by their religious institutes.

As is the case with many companies and institutions with pension plans in today’s world, the diocesan priests’ retirement program is not fully funded. The Diocesan Priest Retirement Collection was approved by Bishop Bradley to be conducted in the diocese for five consecutive years.

This Diocesan Priest Retirement Collection is separate from the annual national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which supports retired priests, brothers and sisters of religious orders and institutes across America. All monies collected this March will directly benefit priests of the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

A detailed brochure, letter from Bishop Bradley and frequently asked questions are posted on the diocesan website, www.dioskzoo.org, and will be distributed in parishes the weekend of February 21 and 22.

NEWS FROM OUR SISTER DIOCESE

European Shrines: Featuring Fatima & Lourdes October 26 – November 7, 2015

Please join Rev. Robert Creagan and Rev. Joseph Xavier of the Diocese of Kalamazoo along with Julie Petschler for an exciting presentation of the European Shrines. For more information or RSVP to SeaLandAir Travel.

Call today: 269-657-5529 or info@sealandairstrip.com
**St. Jerome’s Lenten Luncheon Talks**

The annual Lenten luncheons will be held at St. Jerome Parish Hall in Battle Creek every Wednesday from February 18th to March 25th. The February 18th Mass (Ash Wednesday) will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. followed by the distribution of ashes. The other Lenten luncheon Masses will begin at 10:45 a.m. The speaker of the day will begin his address at 11:30 a.m. with a light lunch following the presentation.

**February 18**
Rev. Evelio Ramirez (St. Jerome & St. Joseph Parishes)

**February 25**
Bishop Emeritus James A. Murray

**March 4**
Rev. Stephan Philip (St. Rose of Lima, Hastings)

**March 11**
Rev. Craig Lusk (St. Mary, Marshall)

**March 18**
Rev. Francis Marotti (St. Philip)

**March 25**
Rev. Christopher Derda (St. Jerome & St. Joseph Parishes)

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**Kalamazoo and Battle Creek Priests Lenten series offer opportunity to grow in the faith**

**February 25:** Examining “What I have Heard and Seen”
*Part One:* Pages 1-9... topics include: Church Hierarchy, the Role of the Bishop, the structure of a Diocese, the special Role of the Laity in the Church and more. (Fr. Fleckenstein)

**March 4:** Examining “What I have Heard and Seen”
*Part Two:* Pages 10 to conclusion... topics include: Diocesan “commitments” including an understanding of... the “Domestic Church”, The Church as a Center of Hope, the Role of Education, and specific ministries (and opportunities) in the Church. (Fr. Marotti)

**March 11:** “We Dare to Say”
*Part One:* Pages 4-14... topics include: What is faith? What does it mean to be a part of God’s family? How do we carry out our faith in concrete ways (Opening the “Door of Faith”), what God created us to be, the journey of faith. (Fr. Fleckenstein)

**March 18:** “We Dare to Say”
*Part Two:* Pages 15-23... topics include: “The Mission of Life”, obligations towards God, the “Church of the Home,” Apostolic Service. (Fr. Fleckenstein)

**March 25:** “The Church a Center of Hope”
*Part One:* Pages 4-16... topics include “Communion” the People of God, Hope in God; what it means to be a Parish. (Fr. Fleckenstein)

**April 1:** “The Church a Center of Hope”
*Part Two:* Spiritual Action. (Fr. Fleckenstein) Tenebrae held in the Church at 7 p.m. following presentation.

All presentations will be held in the Parish Center at Saint Philip’s; All are welcome to a dinner at 5:15 pm before the 6 pm presentation.

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**Liftoff! Local students finally see research launched into Space**

Six local Catholic school students have been waiting since October 2014 for their research and art work to be launched on an unmanned NASA-contracted rocket to the International Space Station. That amazing goal was achieved last month, in a successful launch at Cape Canaveral, Fla. The launch, initially scheduled in October, was aborted three times due to weather and other problems, including a massive explosion of the rocket just seconds after a launch scheduled Oct. 28 from Wallops Island, Va., in which all the students’ work was destroyed. The students recreated their research and artwork, and it was part of the cargo that was launched into space this morning. The science experiment was created by four Hackett Catholic Prep freshmen, pictured right (from left): Mackenzie Ortlieb, Natalie Moyer, Grace Brennan and Delaney Hewitt.

The girls began their experiment, titled “Microgravity’s Effects on Dry Lake Fairy Shrimp,” while 8th graders at St. Monica Catholic School, last spring. Artistic emblems celebrating the launch were created by Bridgid Roth, a fifth grader at St. Augustine Cathedral School in Kalamazoo and Hannah Oo, a 7th grader at St. Joseph Catholic Middle School in Battle Creek. The four young scientists traveled to Wallops Island on Oct. 27, in hopes of seeing the launch, but it was scrubbed at the last minute when a boat was discovered within launch range. They were accompanied on their trip by Becky Reits, principal of St. Monica Catholic School, who brought this unusual space curriculum to schools in the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo. The program is sponsored by the Student Flight Experiments Program, through the National Center for Earth and Space Science Foundation (NCESSE), headquartered in Ellington City, Md. The young scientists have been pragmatic and persistent through this lengthy process.

As Grace Brennan put it: “Science is all about trial and error...all we can do is give science another try and move forward.” Their persistence paid off; this morning, as the Space X rocket made a perfect launch into the early morning sky off the coast of Florida.

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**Students from China head to the classroom at St. Philip Catholic Central**

St. Philip Catholic Central High School, Battle Creek, staff and students were excited to spend two weeks with 30 students and several school staff members from China. The students are from northeast China, with the majority attending Jiamusu High School, which is populated with 5,000 students and 400 staff members.

The students came to the United States to experience different cultural experiences, according to Cathy Erskine, Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools. When they return to China they will share their experiences about our food, culture and especially the educational opportunities. The school is currently exploring the option of hosting students from China for the entire 2015-2016 school year.

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**“Waiting in Joyful Hope”**

**February 18:** The speaker of the day will be held at St. Jerome Parish Hall in Battle Creek every Wednesday from February 18th to March 25th. The February 18th Mass (Ash Wednesday) will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. followed by the distribution of ashes. The other Lenten luncheon Masses will begin at 10:45 a.m. The speaker of the day will begin his address at 11:30 a.m. with a light lunch following the presentation.

**February 24:** Reflections on the Domestic Church: Bringing the sacred mysteries home

**March 3:** The Mercy of God Experienced in Humanity: Seeking and granting forgiveness

**March 10:** The Keys to Perfection: Being what God made us to be

**March 17:** “Come Holy Spirit and Enkindle in us the Fire of Your Love”: The work of the Holy Spirit to transform our life

**March 24:** The Paschal Mystery: Embracing it as the heart of our existence

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**Rev. Christopher Derda**
(St. Jerome & St. Joseph Parishes)
World Meeting of the Family: An International Gathering to Address Challenges

Beginning with 1994, The Year of the Family, the Pontifical Council for the Family has been responsible for organizing the World Meetings of Families in Rome (1994); Rio de Janeiro (1997); Rome (2000); Manila (2003); Valencia (2006); Mexico City (2009); Milan (2012); and now, Philadelphia (2015). Since its inception by Saint John Paul II, the World Meeting of Families has sought to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe.

As the world’s largest family gathering, the World Meeting of Families — Philadelphia 2015 is expected to bring together 10,000 – 15,000 delegates from more than 150 nations in faith and celebration. The Congress will provide delegates the opportunity to share their thoughts, dialogue and prayers during daily Mass, devotions and breakout sessions. All sessions will focus on the myriad issues facing today’s global families, including financial crises/poverty, blended families, disabilities, addiction, divorce, and interfaith marriage, with speakers from the Pontifical Council for the Family, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Foundation for Family and Futures, National Catholic Partnership on Disability, Catholic Relief Services, among others. Rooted in the 2015 Congress’ theme, “Love is our mission: the family fully alive,” the catechetical content and programming will emphasize the impact of the love and life of families in society.

The World Meeting of Families — Philadelphia 2015 will offer an Adult Congress and a Youth Congress for ages 6-17. There will also be a licensed day-care for children under the age of six. The Adult Congress, for ages 18 and older, will consist of keynote presentations and breakout sessions that address the many ways in which families can strengthen their bonds, especially in the face of the significant challenges facing the family globally in the 21st century. The Youth Congress will provide interactive programs designed for young people to play, listen, serve, build, and embrace the mission of love in a family.

Nearly 100 renowned speakers are expected to present and facilitate conversation among delegates. From Baptist to Jewish to Lutheran, 24 percent of the Congress presenters will represent other faith traditions and 30 percent of presenters are from outside of North America. Leading the program are keynote addresses from Father Robert Barron, founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, Rector of Mundelein Seminary, and host of Catholicism; His Eminence, Seán Patrick Cardinal O’Malley, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Boston; Helen Alvaré, Professor of Law at George Mason University School of Law; Dr. Juan Francisco de la Guardia Brin and Gabriela N. de la Guardia, renowned Panamanian doctors; His Eminence, Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila; and His Eminence, Robert Cardinal Sarah, President of the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”, Archbishop Emeritus of Conakry, Guinea. Although a few breakout session speakers are still being confirmed, the majority of speakers and presentations for the Congress has been finalized and can be reviewed at http://www.world-meeting2015.org/about-the-event/speakers/.

World Meeting of the Family boast an international gathering to address challenges

Pope says he will canonize Blessed Junipero Serra in Washington

By Francis X. Rocca, Catholic News Service

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Pope Francis said his September trip to the U.S. will take him to Philadelphia, New York and Washington — where he intends to canonize Blessed Junipero Serra — but probably no other stops. The pope also confirmed he would visit the United Nations in New York. He had already announced his participation in the late-September World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

Catholic News Agency reported on a proposed schedule that U.S. and U.N. church leaders have submitted to the Vatican. That schedule would have the pope arriving in Washington the evening of Sept. 22; visiting the White House and celebrating Mass at the shrine Sept. 23; addressing a joint sessions of Congress Sept. 24 before traveling to New York City to address U.N. General Assembly Sept. 25.

His Jan. 15 announcement on the plane from Sri Lanka to the Philippines surprised even the people who have been promoting the sainthood cause of Blessed Junipero. The CNA interview with Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Vatican nuncio to the United Nations, said the Mass at the shrine “would be primarily for bishops, consecrated and religious men and women, seminarians and representatives from humanitarian and Catholic charitable organizations,” while Pope Francis said that is when he would canonize Blessed Junipero.
Dioecesan Annual Retreat
Heart and Summit: Outlining the Eucharistic Celebration
February 28-March 1, 2015

Each year the Parish Life & Lay Leadership Secretariat hosts a dioecesan-wide retreat. This year’s topic is Heart and Summit: Outlining the Eucharistic Celebration. Join us as we come both to gain in knowledge of the Sacrament-most-high and, ultimately, to sit in awe in contemplation of the profoundest of mysteries. It will be led by the Diocesan Bishop, along with some Eucharist promulgation initiatives that have been serving our diocese for the past year and half - Mary Frances Brennan, Kathleen Dierberger, Tim Singler and Nathan Williams. The retreat begins with a 9 a.m. Mass on Saturday, February 28, 2015 and concludes after the 9:30 a.m Mass on Sunday, March 1, 2015. There are two options available when you register – one is with an overnight stay and the second is for those who would like to commute. The cost is $100 for double occupancy, $125 for single occupancy and $80 for those who elect to commute each day. To receive these rates registrations must be received by February 4th. After February 4, 2015 an additional $20 will be charged. For more information or to register, please contact Jane Bodway, jbodway@diokzoo.org or 269-903-0147.

Dr. Scott Hahn

Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Scott Hahn

“Joy to the World: The Family, The Eucharist and The New Evangelization”

Date: February 21, 2015
Time: 8:30 am – 2:45 pm
Location: Hackett Catholic Prep, 1000 West Kilgore Rd., Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Additional conference events: Mass, Confession, Adoration and Lunch
Ticket Information: Tickets are $30 each or $10 for students.
Contact Newman’s Bookshoppe or online at www.newmansbookshoppe.com
Dr. Scott Hahn is the author of over forty books. He is the editor of the academic periodical, Letter & Spirit: A Journal of Catholic Biblical Theology, and co-editor of the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible. An exceptionally popular speaker and teacher, Dr. Scott Hahn has delivered thousands of talks and academic lectures, nationally and internationally, on a wide range of topics related to scripture, theology and the Catholic faith. Hundreds of these presentations have been recorded and distributed by Catholic Lighthouse Media, The St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, and St. Joseph Communications. He has appeared on hundreds of television programs on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), where he has also been the regular host and presenter on several popular 13-week series (including “Our Fathers Plan,” “The Lamb’s Supper,” and “Gammie to Jesus”).

Sponsor: Catholic Information Center/Newman’s Bookshoppe

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Dr. Scott Hahn

“The Catholic Difference
Owning our baptism
By George Weigel

The transfer of the celebration of the Epiphany to a Sunday from January 6 (the solemnity’s traditional date), and the elimination of Sundays-after-Epiphany in favor of the ill-named Sundays of “Ordinary Time,” has made a hash of the Christmas liturgical season, as I suggested in “Evangelical Catholicism.” Still, the liturgical calendar of Blessed Paul VI does use a method by highlighting the formerly insignificant Feast of the Baptism of the Lord as the terminus of the Christmas season.

And that service is to remind us to remember, cherish, celebrate the date of our own baptism.

When I first started working on pro-life and religious freedom issues with Evangelical Protestants, some 35 years ago, I was struck by the way these folks introduced themselves at a meeting. Most Americans, in such circumstances, identify themselves by occupation: “I’m John Smith and I’m a lawyer with Smith Jones.” Or “I’m Jane Doe and I’m a pediatrician at Children’s Hospital.” My new friends didn’t do that. Rather, they’d say “I’m John Smith (or Jane Doe) and I was born again on such-and-such a date”—which was usually when the person in question was a young adult.

Contrarian that I can be on occasion, I would say, when the introductory rites came around to me, “I’m George Weigel and I was born again on April 29, 1951 ... at which point I was precisely 12 days old.” That drew the occasional blank stare, but it often led to interesting conversations about sacramental regeneration.

My evangelical friends’ sense that the day of their being “born again” was the defining moment of their lives, and my Catholic convictions about what had happened to me on April 29, 1951, came into harmonic focus when, in preparing the first volume of my biography of St. John Paul II, “Witness to Hope,” I described the pope’s return to his parish in Wadowice on his epic first papal pilgrimage to Poland in June 1979. Stepping into the church where he had served Mass, received the scapular, and prayed daily during his youth, the 264th Bishop of Rome took a moment to reflect on what it means to “own” one’s baptism.

Why? Because Karol Wojtyla knew that that day was the most important day of his life: the day when he was first empowered, by water and the Spirit, to become a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ and a missionary disciple. As John Paul understood it, the most important day of his life was not the day on which he was ordained a priest, consecrated a bishop or elected pope. The most important day of his life was the day of his baptism. Everything else flowed from that. Like the waters in Ezekiel’s vision, flowing from the restored Temple to renew the face of the earth.

In discussing Evangelical Catholicism, the book and the idea, with dozens of audiences in various Catholic venues around the country and the world over the past two years, I’ve often conducted a little pop-quiz, asking my audience how many of them know the date of their baptism. I once got close to a 10 percent positive response, but the norm is usually a bit below that. The point is that non-bishop participants at synods may make presentations upon invitation, only the bishops themselves — and a few priests — have the right to make direct interventions and to vote.

Furthermore, there is a distinction between an extraordinary synod and an ordinary synod, which meets at regular intervals. [In October 2015 there is an ordinary synod on the family — a follow-up to the extraordinary synod held in 2014.] Often, after the conclusion of a synod of bishops a final document, known as a “post-synodal apostolic exhortation,” is issued by the pope.

The synod of bishops serves to foster greater communion and fraternity within the College of Bishops and to deepen the bonds of bishops with the pope, the Successor of Peter and visible head of the universal church.

Synods afford the world’s bishops rare opportunities to pray together and to consult one another on important issues affecting the life of the church. However, the primary role of bishops at synods is to offer their counsel and expertise to the pope, bringing to the synod his own knowledge, ideas, pastoral experiences and the concrete concerns of the local church he represents and governs.

What’s a Synod?

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The word “synod” derives from the Greek word “syndos,” meaning “to walk together.”

In the early church, especially in the East, the word was used to describe any special gathering of bishops to decide important matters of faith, morality and church discipline.

Synods always have been a privileged place for the development of the local churches in Eastern Christianity. Still today the election of Eastern Orthodox bishops takes place in synods.

A debt of gratitude is owed to Pope Paul VI because in 1967 he established the Synod of Bishops in the contemporary Catholic Church.

According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, there are two forms of synods: the Synod of Bishops and a diocesan synod.

The majority of those who participate in a synod of bishops do so “ex officio,” that is, they are present in their capacity as heads of Vatican offices and as presidents of bishops’ conferences. A minority of other participants are personally invited to attend by the pope as he reserves the right to invite additional members to attend by the pope as he reserves the right to invite
Dietrich von Hildebrand and our relativistic age
By Very Rev. Robert Barron
Postmodern relativism and deconstruction have produced, at the popular level, what I have termed the “Meh culture,” that is to say, a culture dominated by the “whatever” attitude, a bland, detached indifference to the good and the true. How often have you heard someone say, “that’s perhaps true for you but not for me,” or “who are you to be imposing your values on me?” or in the immortal words of the Dude in “The Big Lebowski,” “well, that’s just like your opinion, man.” Is it not a commonplace today that the only moral absolute that remains is the obligation to tolerate all points of view? What this subjectivism has conduced toward is a society lacking in energy and focus, one that cannot rouse itself to corporate action on behalf of some universal good. John Henry Newman said that well-defined and predictable values are precisely what give verse and direction to a river. Once those banks are knocked down, the river will spread out, in short order, into a large, lazy lake. Applying the analogy, he argued that objective truths, clearly understood, are what give energy to a culture and that when those truths are compromised in the name of freedom or toleration, said culture rapidly loses its purpose and cohesiveness. It is as though people today are floating on individual air-mattresses on Newman’s lazy lake, disconnected from one another, each locked in the isolation of his or her subjective judgments.

The great twentieth century philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand was one of the most articulate and incisive critics of the kind of relativism that has come to hold sway in our time. Following the prompts of both Plato and St. Augustine, Hildebrand delighted in showing the self-defeating incoherence of the position: if he is to be consistent, the relativist must hold that the claim of universal relativism is not valid and hence not binding on anyone besides himself. Hildebrand taught that the philosophy of relativism flowed from the failure to honor the fundamental distinction between the arena of the merely subjectively satisfying and the arena of real values. There are many things and experiences that we seek because they please us or satisfy some basic need. One might find a cigarette appealing or a slice of pizza tasty or a political party useful, but in all these cases, one is bending the thing in question to his subjectivity. But there are other goods (Hildebrand’s “values”) that by their splendor, excellence, and intrinsic worth, draw the person out of himself, bending his subjectivity to them, drawing him toward self-transcendence.

In the presence of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony or Chartres Cathedral or Plato’s Republic or the daily work of the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, one is compelled to acknowledge the preciousness of a reality that goes beyond the needs or expectation of one’s ego. To characterize such things as merely subjectively satisfying, as though appreciating them is simply a matter beyond the needs or expectation of one’s ego. To characterize such things as merely subjectively satisfying, as though appreciating them is simply a matter of indifference to good. In our relativistic age, when we are con- structive as indifference to good. In our relativistic age, when we are con- structive as indifference to good.

Faith Explosion 2015: I am Catholic, the Diocesan Youth Gathering for grades 6-12, will feature author Colin Maciver as keynote speaker. The all-day event, which runs from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on March 21st, will be held at Paw Paw High School. Maciver travels internationally with Dumb Ox Productions, discussing purity and purpose with youth around the world. He also teaches theology, serves as religious department chair and campus ministry coordinator at St. Scholastica Academy in Covington, La., and has over 10 years of youth ministry experience. One of his most well-known accomplishments, he is one of the founders of Theology of the Body for Teens.

“Colin speaking at the youth rally is a special opportunity for our youth because not only is he a teacher of the faith, but he is a great witness through his family and service to the Church, which is very inspirational for all of us, both young and old,” says Tim McNamara, Associate Director of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry at the Diocese of Kalamazoo. The youth rally itself is important for the faith formation of our youth, McNamara says. “Youth are encouraged to go so they can receive a jolt in their Catholic faith life. Yes, we’ll have presentations and opportunities to sing and serve, but having the experience of encountering the Catholic faith within the nine counties of southwest Michigan, our Diocese.”

“With each moment of life, life can be either joyful or sorrowful or any number of things. If we are walking alone in the life apart from the God who granted us this life, it becomes extremely lonely and dificult. When we come to realize that Jesus Christ is walking with and experiencing this life with us, our life becomes all the more manageable and joyful.”

All youth in grades 6-12 from any parish in the Diocese are eligible to attend. Cost is $35 per youth if registered by March 2nd.

There will be a late registration charge for any one registering after March 2nd. The cost includes dinner, afternoon snack and a t-shirt. All registration payment and paperwork must be received by March 13. For more information, contact Tim McNamara at tmcnamara@diokzoo.org or 269-903-0139.

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Visita del Papa a Estados Unidos y el Tema de la Familia

En septiembre de este año, 2015 el Santo Padre vendrá a Estados Unidos y visitará a Filadelfia, Nueva York y Washington.

El Papa Francisco estará presente en Filadelfia para la Jornada Mundial de las Familias del 22 al 27 de septiembre. El lema para la Jornada es “El amor es nuestra Misión: La Familia vivamente viva”, haciendo hincapié en el amor al amor y la vida de las familias en nuestra sociedad. El Encuentro Mundial de las Familias se realizará en varias ciudades en el país. El tema que trata sobre el amor es el tema que ha sido elegido por el Papa Francisco y que ha sido escogido por el Pontificado en sus diferentes exhortaciones y cartas al papa.

El encuentro mundial es una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre la importancia del amor y la vida de las familias en nuestra sociedad. El Encuentro Mundial de las Familias se realizará en varias ciudades en el país. El tema que trata sobre el amor es el tema que ha sido elegido por el Papa Francisco y que ha sido escogido por el Pontificado en sus diferentes exhortaciones y cartas al papa.

La Jornada Mundial de las Familias, que se celebra cada año, es una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre la importancia del amor y la vida de las familias en nuestra sociedad. El Encuentro Mundial de las Familias se realizará en varias ciudades en el país. El tema que trata sobre el amor es el tema que ha sido elegido por el Papa Francisco y que ha sido escogido por el Pontificado en sus diferentes exhortaciones y cartas al papa.

Rincón de los Jóvenes hispanos/latinos

Por Verónica Rodríguez

Actividades Diocesanas en el 2015:

Encuentro Diocesano Juvenil (Youth Rally), sábado 21 de marzo – Para todos los jóvenes del grado 6 al 12. La conferencia es en inglés.


“¿Cómo puedo perdonar?”

Por Verónica Rodríguez

“Los niños aprenden a fiarse del amor de sus padres. Por eso, es importante que los padres cultiven prácticas comunes de fe en la familia, que acompañen el crecimiento en la fe de los hijos” (Papa Francisco, Encíclica Lumen Fidei).

Fortalecer las Familias en la Fe (Reflexión #11)

Por Verónica Rodríguez

Taller de información sobre como solicitar becas para el próximo año. El taller es para los estudiantes y sus padres.

El Plato de Arroz de CRS puede enriquecer tu caminar espiritual y material. Esta Cuaresma, por favor reflexiona sobre lo que te da alimento y lo que te da identidad, ya sea étnica o religiosa, para entender mejor la identidad de otros hermanos y hermanas necesitados.

Por Veronica Rodriguez

Refrigera tu fe de las familias en nuestra sociedad. El Encuentro Mundial de las Familias se realizará en varias ciudades en el país. El tema que trata sobre el amor es el tema que ha sido elegido por el Papa Francisco y que ha sido escogido por el Pontificado en sus diferentes exhortaciones y cartas al papa.

Calendario

FEBRUARY 2015

12 – 14 V Encuentro – Reunión nacional sobre el V Encuentro de Hispanics/Latinos. Preparado por el Secretario Nacional Hispánico de los Obispos Unidos. Baltimore, MD.

18 (Miercoles) Miércoles de Ceniza. Contacto con la Curia. (Domingo Sábado, Lent begins).

19 (Jueves) 11 am – 3 pm Encuentro Regional sobre el proceso del V Encuentro.

26 (Miercoles) Miércoles de Ceniza. Contacto con la Curia. (Domingo Sábado, Lent begins).

Marzo/Marz

7 (Sabado) 10 am – 3 pm Encuentro Pre-Matrimonial, para parejas que van a casarse. También para parejas de matrimonios antiguos.

17 (Viernes) 9:30 am – 12 pm Reunión de Migrante Local. Lugar: St. Joseph Parish, Kalamazoo, MI. (Pre-Matrimonial Encounter in Spanish for those who will be getting married and for married couples who would like to have a day together.)

24 (Sábado) 10:30 am – 4 pm Encuentro Nacional de V Encuentro.

Taller de información sobre como solicitar becas para el próximo año. El taller es para los estudiantes y sus padres.

Programa de Consejería en Español: Programa de Recuperación de Trauma

La expedición de actas no representa costos adicionales al pago de derechos correspondientes ($13 dólares por acta).

Infórmese

Expedición de copias certificadas de actas de nacimiento mexicanos en consulados de México. A partir del 15 de enero de 2015, los Consulados de México en Estados Unidos podrán emitir copias certificadas de actas de nacimiento generadas en territorio nacional.

Para obtener sus copias certificadas, los mexicanos deberán presentar en una oficina consular, portar una identificación oficial que acredite que es el titular del acta de nacimiento, proporcionar su Clave Única de Registro de Población (si cuenta con ella), llenar una solicitud y cubrir el pago de derechos correspondientes ($13 dólares por acta). La expedición de actas no representa costos adicionales al pago de derechos de $13 dólares. Evite ser víctima de abusos, ninguna persona puede cobrarle más por este servicio.

Por Veronica Rodriguez

El Programa de Recuperación de Traumas está basado en el Modelo de Trauma, un modelo psicologico que ayuda a las personas a comprender sus experiencias de abusos, emociones y comportamientos. El programa ofrece seminarios sobre el amor y la vida de las familias en nuestra sociedad. El Encuentro Mundial de las Familias se realizará en varias ciudades en el país. El tema que trata sobre el amor es el tema que ha sido elegido por el Papa Francisco y que ha sido escogido por el Pontificado en sus diferentes exhortaciones y cartas al papa.

El Papa Francisco renovó en Colombia su exhortación a la reconciliación y a impulsar las comunidades, con claridad y sin equívocos, que vivan en paz, y animó a las religiones a acercarse y a buscar la unidad de la fe de los hijos. (Papa Francisco, Encíclica Lumen Fidei).

Reflexiones del Papa Francisco en su visita a Sri Lanka:

El Ecumenismo y la Paz

Durante el mes de enero el Papa Francisco continuó sus visitas a través del mundo y una de sus visitas fue a Sri Lanka y Filipinas. En Sri Lanka se encuentra un encuentro ecuménico con líderes de diferentes religiones como el budismo, el hinduismo, el islam y el cristianismo.

El Papa dijo: “No hay que renunciar a su identidad, ya sea étnica o religiosa, para vivir en paz.” En su discurso, el Papa explicó que la identidad religiosa de algún país es una herramienta que fomenta el respeto. “Si somos honestos en la presentación de nuestras convicciones, seremos capaces de ver con más claridad lo que tenemos en común y las formas para trabajar juntos para el bien de todos.”

Por Veronica Rodriguez

El Papa Francisco alentó a todas las religiones a participar en este encuentro, que reúne a las cuatro comunidades religiosas más grandes que integran la vida de Sri Lanka: el budismo, el hinduismo, la religión musulmana y el cristianismo.

Muchas gracias por su presencia y su calorosa bienvenida. Es igualmente una gracia poder estar con todos ustedes, hombres y mujeres de estas grandes tradiciones religiosas, que comparten con nosotros el amor a Dios y a la humanidad. El Papa Francisco alentó a todas las religiones a participar en este encuentro, que reúne a las cuatro comunidades religiosas más grandes que integran la vida de Sri Lanka: el budismo, el hinduismo, la religión musulmana y el cristianismo.

Por Veronica Rodriguez

La violencia es un problema que afecta a todas las religiones y a las personas de buena voluntad que no se unen en favor de la paz, condenando toda violencia con claridad y sin equívocos.
CRS Rice Bowl monies benefit local causes

In addition to helping families and communities in developing countries, 25 percent of the money raised in our diocese through CRS Rice Bowl remains here to fund grants for hunger and poverty alleviation projects throughout the nine counties of our diocese. In the 2014-15 program year, seven grants were awarded totaling $19,000. Grantees were:

• St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Margaret Parish, Otsego – $2,400 to purchase high demand items and/or those not available through other sources for their food pantry. (Allegan County)
• Food Bank of South Central Michigan – $3,000 for Fresh Food Initiative in the Kalamazoo County, providing fresh food to the food insecure. (Kalamazoo County)
• Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Edwardsburg – $4,600 for the renovation of the Edwardsburg Emergency Food Pantry, which is housed at Our Lady of the Lake. The renovation was part of their “Building Our Future Together” renovation project. (Cass County)

How do you Rice Bowl?

Diocese of Kalamazoo hosts Lenten Photo Contest on its Facebook page

By Sarah DeMott

Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Rice Bowl is a reminder of this. Show us how you “Rice Bowl” – whether you volunteer at a soup kitchen, make meatless meals on Fridays or pray a daily rosary for those with the greatest needs, we want to see how you honor this Lenten season. Remember, what you give up for Lent changes lives.

Each week, we will post about Rice Bowl and Lent on our Facebook page. One post will call for your photo submissions. Simply post your photo as a comment before noon that Friday. We will announce a randomly selected winner each Friday at 3:30 p.m.

*Any photos submitted after 12 p.m. on Fridays will not be included in the contest. Photos submitted are only valid for the week they are posted. They must be reposted in order to count for subsequent weeks. Winner will be announced each Friday at 3:30 p.m. and contacted by diocesan staff via Facebook message. Submission of photos give the Diocese of Kalamazoo rights to repurpose photos for Rice Bowl/Lent related communications.

St. Margaret’s offers Rice Bowl solidarity meal featuring Lebanese cuisine

St. Margaret Parish in Otsego is offering a CRS Rice Bowl Solidarity Meal on February 28th immediately following the 4:30 PM Mass in the McGuire Room. Since Lebanon is one of the five countries highlighted in the materials provided with CRS Rice Bowls this year, a traditional Lebanese meal will be offered. It will be prepared and served by Executive Chef Ken Kronkhtie, who has lived in Lebanon, and has also served as Executive Chef for the Royal Family in Saudi Arabia. As we once again prepare for our traditional Lenten observances of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we have an opportunity to reach out in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Lebanon. A free will offering will be taken. Please RSVP not later than Monday, February 23rd to Deacon Dean at St. Margaret’s. 269-694-6311.

Diocesan Ministry to Persons with Disabilities hosts open session to gather feedback and announces Spring retreat plans

Persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers, are invited to an informal gathering to share the experiences, challenges and joys of their faith life with members of the Diocesan Ministry to Persons with Disabilities. The open session will be held March 14th from 3:30 – 5 p.m. in the Siena Conference Room at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, 1150 W. Center Avenue, in Portage. Light refreshments will be served. For more information contact Lisa Irwin at 269-903-0177 or lirwin@diokzoo.org. All are welcome. RSVP appreciated but not required. Other gatherings will be scheduled throughout the year around the diocese.

Upcoming Joy-Filled Marriage Weekend Dates in 2015:
• March 7 – 8
• July 11 – 12
• September 19 – 20
• November 14 – 15

Contact Socorro at: struchan@dioceseofkalamazoo.org or via phone at: 269-903-0199 or visit: www.diozkoo.org/joyfilled-marriage

Making a Report of Sexual Misconduct

A report of sexual misconduct may be initiated at the Diocese of Kalamazoo’s Sexual Misconduct Question and Reporting Line: 877-802-0115. A caller will be requested to provide his or her name and telephone number. All calls regarding sexual misconduct will be returned, usually within one hour. This toll-free telephone number has been established as a part of the diocese’s effort to protect children, young people and other vulnerable people in our schools, parishes and ministries. This line is for reporting suspected sexual misconduct or child abuse within diocesan institutions and ministries only. If you have some other concern about diocesan schools, parishes or ministries, please contact the appropriate diocesan school, parish or office directly. In all cases of sexual abuse you are encouraged to report all cases to the local police or protective services.
Young artists can win prizes with diocesan “The Family Fully Alive” contest

Flex your artistic muscles and win prizes. The deadline is February 15, 2015 to send in your art, writing, music or video for the Student Contest, reflecting the theme, “The Family Fully Alive.” How is your family “fully alive” in the faith? or how do you wish your family to become “fully alive”? Tell us your stories of family faith in a poem, painting, song or short video. This is your chance to win one of several prizes including “educational scholarships” donated by the Knights of Columbus. For complete contest rules call Socorro at 269-903-0199 or visit: www.diokzoo.org/domesticchurch.

All ages brave the cold to “March for Life”

By Sarah DeMott

On Saturday, January 17, close to 100 people of all ages from all over the diocese braved windy Michigan weather to make the journey from St. Thomas More Parish to Planned Parenthood in Kalamazoo. The second “Diocesan March for Life” was a time of reflection as the marchers were greeted with honks of support, and some of protest. Upon arriving at Planned Parenthood, participants prayed a rosary for an end to abortion, a culture that respects life and peace.

Groups from Hackett Catholic Prep, Lake Michigan Catholic High School and several other local groups travelled to the nation’s capitol to join with hundreds of thousands to commemorate the Roe v. Wade decision on January 22nd and to peacefully rally for an end to abortion. Even Pope Francis reached out in solidarity to the March for Life efforts, tweeting “Every Life is a Gift. #marchforlife”.

Losing Weight Leads to Gaining Life

If you’re struggling to maintain a healthy weight, you’re far from alone. Obesity affects nearly one in three Americans, and in Michigan, it’s estimated that more than 60 percent of residents are overweight.

While there is no cure for obesity, the American Medical Association has recognized it as a disease, a condition that with hard work and lifestyle modification, can be successfully managed. Obesity can lead to many health problems, as well as emotional suffering from the emphasis our society places on appearance. Although losing weight is far from easy, even shedding a modest amount of weight can improve or prevent serious health issues.

How Is Obesity Measured?

Body mass index (BMI) is a number health care providers use to determine if patients are at risk for weight-related diseases. This number is calculated from your weight and height to estimate how much body fat you have. In general, if your BMI is 30 or greater, you should talk to your doctor about what you can do to lose weight. (To calculate your BMI, visit cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi.

Losing Weight = Gaining Life

By losing only 5 to 10 percent of your total body weight, you can see improvements in your health. Successful weight loss hinges on making these important lifestyle changes:

• Eating right — The means more fruits, vegetables and whole-grain carbohydrates, and limited amounts of sugary, sugary and fats. Emphasizing lean meats (and proteins like beans, lentils and soy), as well as eating fish twice per week, is also ideal. You provide can also help you review how many calories you normally take in each day, and make recommendations on where you can cut back.

• Working out — The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that people who are obese get at least 120 minutes a week of moderate physical activity. For significant weight loss, you may need to get 250 to 300 minutes of exercise weekly. Before beginning any exercise regimen, talk to your doctor first. (Remember, some exercises are always better than no exercises.)

• Encouraging support — Therapy with a trained professional can help you get to the root of any emotional or behavioral issues related to your eating habits, as well as learn how to develop healthier coping mechanisms. You can also find understanding and camaraderie by joining a support group whose members share similar health challenges.

Your provider may recommend weight loss medications or surgery if other methods haven’t worked, or if you already have health complications stemming from obesity.

For more on maintaining a healthy weight, or to make an appointment with Dr. Ramon V. Rosales, call Borgess Family Medicine, at (269) 565-9120.