December/January 2015

**THE GOOD NEWS**

**Philadelphia readies for 2015 visit from Pope Francis**

By Matthew Gambino, Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — After the historic announcement by Pope Francis that he will visit Philadelphia next September, the reality of the challenges and joys of the event is sinking in for planners, civic officials and ordinary Catholics in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

It will be a “once-in-a-lifetime chance for Philadelphia to shine,” Daniel Hilferty called the 2015 World Meeting of Families, which will be capped by the papal visit to the city. Chairman of the meeting’s Executive Leadership Committee, he said the event will require unprecedented coordination and support.

During a news conference at the Philadelphia Art Museum Nov. 17, the day the pope confirmed his visit at the Vatican, Hilferty called on the region’s business community to contribute financial and corporate support to the event.

He said the fundraising effort was “more than halfway toward the goal,” which he did not state.

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput has said he plans to announce the status of fundraising efforts early in 2015.

That is just one of the issues facing organizers before next fall. One thorny issue had been the inability for people registering for the families’ meeting also to secure hotel rooms for the three days of the papal visit — because it was unconfirmed, the rooms were not made available. Now they can be booked.

About 15,000 people are expected to attend the families’ congress at the Pennsylvania Convention Center Sept. 22-25 in two tracks — one for adults with keynote talks and break-out discussions, and another track for children and teenagers with an emphasis on hands-on activities.

That would make it the largest convention of the year for a city used to hosting such gatherings.

The first major public event attended by Pope Francis will not take place until the evening of Sept. 26 at the Festival of Families, a cultural celebration expected to draw up to 800,000 participants.

The pope’s presence that Saturday will swell the number of people coming to the city in the days prior, along with the congress participants and thousands of weekday workers in center city.

“We expect the numbers to grow each day,” said Donna Farrell, executive director of the 2015 World Meeting of Families. “By Saturday, there could be close to 2 million (people).”

Editor’s Note: The Diocese of Kalamazoo will host a pilgrimage to Philadelphia for the World Meeting of the Families. See page 11 for more details.

**Diocesan March for Life activities set for January**

The annual Diocesan Mass and March for Life will take place on Saturday, January 17, at St. Thomas More Parish in Kalamazoo. In case of inclement weather the snow date is January 24, 2015. All the faithful are invited to join Bishop Bradley for Mass at 10 a.m. and the March to the Planned Parenthood facility on West Michigan Ave that will immediately follow. After prayer in front of Planned Parenthood, participants will be transported on buses back to St. Thomas More.

During Mass a collection will be taken to support the pro-life efforts of the Knights of Columbus in the Diocese.

The diocese will conduct a special program for middle and high school youth and their chaperones from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. at St. Thomas More. Cost for the youth program is $10 per person and includes lunch. Registration is required only for those participating in the youth program. The registration deadline is January 5, 2015. Registration packets are available on the diocesan website.

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**Scott Hahn coming to Kalamazoo**

February 21, 2015

Popular speaker and author, Dr. Scott Hahn, will be the speaker for the combined Men’s and Women’s Catholic conference, Saturday, February 21st. The event is sponsored by the Catholic Information Center/Newmann’s Bookshoppe, Kalamazoo. Dr. Hahn, who is the bestselling author of numerous books including The Lamb’s Supper, Reasons to Believe, and Rome Sweet Home, will present three talks during the day on: “Joy to the World: the Family, the Eucharist and the New Evangelization.”

Dr. Hahn received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology, Philosophy and Economics from Grove City College, Penn., his Masters of Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. in Biblical Theology from Marquette University. He entered the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil, 1986.

The conference which will begin with Masscelebrated by Bishop Bradley will be held at Hackett Catholic Prep.

Contact: Steve Goffney, Newmann’s Bookshoppe for more information: 269-553-0482; info@newmansbookshoppe.com

In these holy and joyful days of Christmas, I extend my prayerful best wishes to you and all those near and dear to you.

There are many challenges each of us face both in our daily lives and collectively in the world. That is the main reason why I have urged our diocesan family of faith to offer special prayers and sacrifices during this New Year.

But we are not discouraged by our challenges precisely because of what Christmas means: God’s Word has been made flesh and makes His home among us. We are not afraid. We are people who rejoice in God’s abiding Presence with us in the Church as we live our faith with joy.

May you have a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo

For more information contact Lisa Irwin, Tim McNamara or Veronica Rodriguez in the Secretariat for Parish Life and Lay Leadership, Diocese of Kalamazoo at 269-349-8714.
FROM THE EDITOR

By Victoria Cessna
Communication Director & Editor of The Good News

No pings. Or dings. Or tweets.

Electronic silence. Have you experienced it? A few weeks ago while our network at the diocesan offices was being upgraded we were without our email connection for close to a day. No incoming. No outgoing.

The waiting seemed interminable — and that was only the first half hour.

But a wonderful thing happened in the void of email. While waiting for technicians to work their magic and do all the behind-the-scenes engineering we had to resort to good old fashioned means of communicating. Conversation. Imagine.

Instead of emailing the colleagues whose offices are 20 feet away I walked down the hallway to gather the information I needed. When I needed a question answered from a ministry office based in New York I picked up the phone and talked to a real person. In both instances I was enriched by those interactions beyond the faceless, somewhat impersonal limitations of email.

Something good happened while waiting. When not tethered to my email “inbox” I could take some time to think, to plan, to strategize and to reflect.

Imagine if some ancient key players in the Nativity story had access to today’s technology. I sometimes wonder if the shepherds from the Christmas story were transported to today if they’d miss the Angel of the Lord too distracted by the latest “crazy cat” video on YouTube or if the Three Kings would have wandered around Galilee in circles suddenly clueless when their GPS went off the grid on the way to Bethlehem.

Technology’s great but the overabundance of it has made us probably more impatient — less willing to slow down and more apt to be caught in the center of a frenzy of activity.

Perhaps that’s what the Advent season is meant to be for us — a time to approach it as we would in a technology-free zone. Silencing all the bells and whistles and holiday trappings and letting the meaning of Our Savior’s coming to us in his humble beginnings amaze us. When our necks aren’t bent scrolling through electronic data we can actually let ourselves be inspired by the little miracles surrounding us each day: the small acts of kindness, the gentle whispers of God’s voice.

May your Advent season be filled with an abundance of still moments when you can clearly hear the echoes of the first Christmas resounding in your mind: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Pope Francis DECEMBER Intentions

Christmas, hope for humanity.

That the birth of the Redeemer may bring peace and hope to all people of good will.

Parents. That parents may be true evangelizers, passing on to their children the precious gift of faith.

The Good News for the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo

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Mission Statement of The Good News: The Good News is the official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo. The Good News is an extension of the print ministry of the Diocese of Kalamazoo, the publisher and president. The Good News is an extension to the print ministry of the teaching authority of the Bishop. Therefore, it must always and in all times present Catholic teaching in an orthodox, authentic and balanced manner. It must remain free from the fundamentalist reality.

The mission of The Good News, therefore, is to enable its readers to grow in their Catholic faith, to develop as mature, well informed Catholics and to deepen their commitment to, and relationship with, the Lord, their Catholic faith and their Church.

The USCCB statement:

Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S., auxiliary bishop of Seattle and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Migration, issued the following statement:

“We have a long history of welcoming and aiding the poor, the outcast, the immigrant, and the disadvantaged. Each day, the Catholic Church in the United States, in her social service agencies, hospitals, schools, and parishes, witnesses the human consequences of the separation of families, when parents are deported from their children or spouses from each other. We’ve been on record asking the Administration to do everything within its legitimate authority to bring relief and justice to our immigrant brothers and sisters. As pastors, we welcome any efforts within these limits that protect individuals and protect and reunite families and vulnerable children,” said Bishop Elizondo.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, archbishop of Louisville, Kentucky, and president of the USCCB said, “There is an urgent pastoral need for a more humane view of immigrants and a legal process that respects each person’s dignity, protects human rights, and upholds the rule of law. As our Holy Father, Pope Francis, said so eloquently: ‘Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected, and loved.’”

Bishop Elizondo added, “I strongly urge Congress and the President to work together to enact permanent reforms to the nation’s immigration system for the best interests of the nation and the migrants who seek refuge here. We will continue to work with both parties to enact legislation that welcomes and protects immigrants and promotes a just and fair immigration policy.”

Memoriam

Mr. Tim May — The community of St. Philip Catholic Central High School was shocked at the sudden loss last month of its principal, Mr. Tim May, who died unexpectedly while doing yard work. Very Rev. John Fleckenstein, pastor and Administrator for the Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools, praised Mr. May’s efforts and commitment.

“Mr. May did much for our schools during the year and a half he served as high school principal. His presence, confidence, knowledge, and wisdom will be greatly missed,” said Fr. Fleckenstein. “Mr. May was more than a high school administrator; he was a man who truly loved being principal, loved his faith, and loved the students he led.”

Tim May was appointed principal of St. Philip Catholic Central High School in June, 2013. He had previously been an educator with the Battle Creek public schools.
Even though the days are shorter and of course colder, the hope-filled Advent and joy-filled Christmas season provide the world with more sparkle. Colored lights decorating our homes and Christmas trees, purple and rose candles gradually lighting the entire Advent wreath and sounds of Carolers singing and bells ringing—all outward signs reminding us of the holy season when we prepare for the celebration of the Presence of the Christ Child who has come to save us.

Just a few months ago I had the great privilege of visiting the Holy Land during the Bishops Peace Pilgrimage. One of the most humbling and awe-filled place that I got to visit was the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, very near the spot where Jesus was born. According to the Gospel narratives, Jesus was laid in a manager of hay, with barn animals surrounding the humble cradle. What I found during my visit was that this place was more like a cave. As I knelt at the altar adjacent to that incredibly holy spot, I was profoundly moved, and I want you to know that I prayed for you, for all the priests and people of our diocese, for all my family and dear friends, for all those who asked me to remember then in prayer, and especially for those who are denied the right to life in our world. One cannot help but be moved to prayer in such a holy place where Jesus was born and where our faith began.

Outward, tangible signs, whether they are decorations or actual special spots, help put us in the sparkling, joyful Christmas spirit. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could hold onto that spirit all year long? Advent and the Christmas season present us with an opportunity to let that happen by building upon, and strengthening our spiritual lives.

This Christmas season, as we gaze at our Nativity scenes, as we enjoy the Christmas music and revel in our own anticipation of these special holy holidays, I think we would be wise to allow the holy feelings that we get through our reflection on the beautiful crèche to lead us to examine the life of the Holy Family, the original domestic church. Their real life story—which becomes our story as Christians rooted in the love of our Savior—illuminates for us some important values that we can apply to our own spiritual journey; values such as faithfulness, humility and simplicity.

Faithfulness: From the moment of her “yes” Mary has been the model of faithfulness. She trusted in the Lord’s plan for her life. On the first day of this New Year, the Church celebrates the Feast of Mary, Mother of God. Pope Francis said of Mary: “by Mary’s example of humility and openness to God’s will she helps us to transmit our faith in a joyful proclamation of the gospel to all, without reservation.”

My dear sisters and brothers, this Advent and Christmas season, while it is so appropriate to demonstrate our love and joy through all the many festive traditions, from buying presents to participating in holiday activities, it is even more important to recognize the wonderful opportunity we have to observe the season as an opportunity to grow spiritually in our virtue of faithfulness—finding ways to give “joyful proclamation” to the Gospel, as Mary did through her “Magnificat.” Perhaps we could attend daily Mass, or spend time with our Lord in eucharistic adoration, or attend a special faith formation or study program at our parish.

I hope you are aware that throughout this new liturgical year, I have urged all Catholics to join with me in a spiritual time of hope and renewal. During this time I have asked everyone, in solidarity with one another, to set aside the Fridays of this new liturgical year as days of “Prayer and Sacrifice,” offering our prayers and sacrifices for the intentions and concerns facing us in the world. I have been joining with our diocesan staff during these Advent days for prayer and reflection as we begin our day together. I would encourage you to find similar ways to allow yourself to simply “be” with the Lord in the stillness of the moment during the day, or perhaps adopt your own unique ways of praying with your friends and family.

Humility: Along with Mary’s faithfulness, we also have much to learn from Joseph, her husband and Jesus’ foster father. Joseph teaches us the importance of humility—someone who persevered and remained steadfast in the face of incredible challenges. In our modern world he might be described as the “strong, silent type” attently listening to the Angel’s directions and courageously guiding his young family out of harm’s way. Joseph, like many young husbands, certainly had a vision for his future—a plan for his own life. Obviously God had a much-different and holy plan; instead of giving in to doubt and bitterness, Joseph accepted God’s plan in all humility.

What parts of God’s plan for your life might you be resisting? Are you holding onto some memories of which it might be better let go? Are there indications of paths you feel called to take in which you might be reluctant, or afraid, to move? Look to Joseph and allow his strong/silent example to help you to place your life more confidently in God’s hands. One of our greatest sacramental gifts is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Advent is the perfect time to avail ourselves of the special graces in this healing sacrament, through individual confession and/or participating in a communal penance service.

Simplicity: Lastly, the example of the Holy Family illustrates for us the beauty of simplicity. From the Christ Child Himself, lying so simply in His manger, content and at peace, to his first “disciples,” the shepherds, to the visit of the three kings in all their splendor—each came in simplicity of heart and mind to worship this newborn Son of God.
The Bishop’s Perspective

Continued from page 3

Each year at this time, the media charts Christmas consumer spending; the statistics are staggering. We have to ask the simple question: is all that spending really necessary? This Advent, perhaps we can all take some time to reflect on our priorities. Are all the trappings necessary? Do they really add to the real priority of celebrating the joy of Jesus’ birth who came to save humankind? Maybe we can consider adopting some simple practices such as a handwritten note of thanks, offering a smile to someone who is alone, or being more courteous in our driving or shopping practices—simple gestures of love and kindness can make all the difference in the world.

While many might think the Christmas season ends on December 26th, the season just begins for our opportunity for growth in holiness. On the Sunday immediately following Christmas we will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family (December 28). In the Holy Family, we find all the human challenges, pressures, stresses and crisis that anyone could imagine. What made the difference was their absolute faithfulness, humility and simplicity—that’s what kept them holy.

God could have accomplished His plan for salvation in a variety of ways; yet He chose to come into our world as each of us came into the world: conceived in love, and born as a helpless, vulnerable, needy baby, entrusted into the care and responsibility of parents. As people of faith, we call our homes domestic churches because it is in our homes and through our families that we come to know God and practice our faith. No matter what happens along the way in our lives, all of us begin life in that same way. It is God’s foundational plan for every person. God decided that His Son would be born, live and grow into the One who would save the world according to that same plan. What we come to understand, then, is that all families are holy by their very nature, and all families are called to grow in holiness simply through living lives authentically and honestly in the primary relationships of who we are as human beings.

My dear sisters and brothers, as we rejoice this Christmas season, and as we move throughout this new liturgical year, let us keep a special focus on the examples of the Holy Family so that we too can imitate their examples of faithfulness, humility and simplicity and live our lives in the love of Jesus, our Brother and saving Lord.

God Bless You.

From the Bishop’s Perspective, December 2014

Bradley. For more information, please contact your youth minister at your parish or check us out at http://thepresencekalamazoo.org to reserve your spot! Registration is due by January 23rd, 2015.

YOUTH RALLY 2015 — March 21st

On Saturday, March 21st, 2015 at Paw Paw High School (30609 E. Red Arrow Hwy, Paw Paw, MI 49079), the Diocese of Kalamazoo invites youth from 6th – 12th grade to celebrate the many gifts God has given to each and every one of us and consider the many ways He reaches out to us through these gifts in “I Am Catholic.” Led by Colin Maclver as our keynote speaker and a host of women and men throughout our diocese, this day brings both lessons in our faith, fellowship with the majority of youth from across our diocese, and fun as we celebrate the gift of our Catholic faith. Contact Tim McNamara for more information; tmcnamara@diokzoo.org.

Dillon Heating Assistance Program provides warmth to those in need

The Dillon Heating Assistance Program (DHAP) will operate from Monday, January 5, 2015 through Wednesday, March 25, 2015 or until all funds are exhausted. If you know of someone needing heating assistance, call your parish or mission. Heating Assistance Volunteers will screen all those who come in for assistance. The maximum amount of assistance is $250 per household, per heating assistance season.

Anyone still wishing to make a contribution to the 2014-2015 Dillon Heating Assistance Program may send a check (payable to the Diocese of Kalamazoo / Memo: DHAP), 215 N. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3760. If you have questions about the program, please contact Kerry Williams at kerrywilliams@cdcdok.org.

Local generosity fuels Catholic ministries around the world

Many thanks to the people of the diocese for their generous response to these annual national second collections: $66,416.90 was contributed for the annual Peter’s Pence collection in June. Since 2004, $61,561.03 was contributed for The Catholic Relief Services Collection in May. To date, $75,847.06 has been received for the Special Collection for Humanitarian Relief and Pastoral Support in the Middle East that was held in September.

Through these collections you have shown your care, concern and solidarity with all God’s people, and assisted the local Church in ministries around the world.
Catholic school graduate named to Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life

Professor Maureen Condic, a graduate of St. Augustine Catholic School, Kalamazoo, has been named one of 50 consultors for the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life Council (www.academia vita.org). Dr. Condic is an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Anatomy for the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Chicago and earned her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley and post-doctorate studies at the University of Minnesota. As a member of the Pontifical Academy of Life, Dr. Condic will participate in the General Assembly scheduled for March 5, 2015, Vatican City.

Dr. Condic is an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Anatomy for the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Chicago and earned her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley and post-doctorate studies at the University of Minnesota. As a member of the Pontifical Academy of Life, Dr. Condic will participate in the General Assembly scheduled for March 5, 2015, Vatican City.

Vineyard Academy graduate fighting Ebola in Liberia asks for prayers

Kelly Suter, a Vineyard Academy, Richland, graduate, Class of 2000, has journeyed from Southwest Michigan to the heard of the South Sudan. Suter, who is trained as an RN, works in an Ebola Treatment Center in Liberia.

Vineyard Academy president Carrie Jewett has been keeping track of her former student who is sending email updates back to her friends and family. The most requested item on her list? Prayers.

Kelly is asking for prayers for the people who are suffering through this epidemic and for those trying to provide care for them,” explained Jewett. “She so wants to put a human face on those who are suffering. She is truly an apostle of mercy. After earning her nursing degree she helped set-up clinics in Haiti to treat cholera and has also worked in the South Sudan.

Following is an excerpt from one of Suter’s updates:

“The next day, it was a patient that would encourage me and remind me that what we are doing is making a difference in the lives of so many. Ester is a woman in her mid 40s. In the bed next to her is her son Saah. Saah is ten years old, but has the demeanor of someone much older. Despite having ebola himself, he is consistently at his mother’s bedside — encouraging her to eat, drink and get better. When I went into their room the morning after Dorcas and Alfred died, both Saah and Ester were sitting at the end of their beds. When I asked Saah how he was doing, he calmly put his cup of tea down and told me that he was disappointed the hotdog he had for breakfast had been boiled and not fried then went over to Ester and congratulated her on how well she looked sitting up in her pretty flowered dress.

Suter was recently interviewed for a feature on CBS News. Visit www.cbsnews.com to watch the interview.

The Other Six Days By Jane Knuth
Santa Isn’t the Only One with a Sack Full of Gifts

Bag sales are the best. When the racks in the thrift store are loaded with clothes and the season is changing from warm weather to cold, we announce a bag sale: everything you can fit into a paper grocery sack for only five dollars. Customers flock into the store. One of our volunteers, Eileen, related this tale from our recent sale:

“A young woman walked into the store and told us, ‘I was here yesterday for the bag sale and I bought some really nice stuff, but when I got home, I realized that I was being selfish because I got things for myself and didn’t think about my friend who is having a baby and she has nothing. So I was wondering if I could bring back the things that I bought for me yesterday and get some baby clothes for my friend’s baby instead.’”

“Our cashier told her that bringing back the clothes that she needed was unnecessary. A new bag was handed over and the young woman filled it with baby boy and baby girl clothes, a blanket, and a tiny cap. She was very thankful and she blessed us for being so giving. But who was the real giver?”

Working in the thrift store we learn quickly that charity isn’t always something we do. It is something we are privileged to witness. When we get over the notion that God needs our hard work, our eyes are opened to the work God is doing all around us. And that is the beginning of joy.

May your Christmas season be filled with bags full of God’s work, not your own. And may your joy overflow into your neighbors’ sacks and fill them up, too.
Christmas greetings from Bishop Dominic Kimengich

It is just a little over one year since Bishop Paul Bradley, Msgr. Mike Hazard and Fr. John Peter Ambrose came to visit the Diocese of Lodwar. During their visit we discussed various ways in which the two dioceses would collaborate in some pastoral and social aspects in the spirit of “Sister Dioceses.” One year down the line I am glad to report good progress especially at the level of the two parishes of St. Joseph Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Watervliet.

St. Joseph Kalamazoo has had a long standing commitment to me and the Diocese of Lodwar. Throughout the years, the Christians there have undertaken various apostolic activities. They have supported needy children, given money to buy food for the hungry and enabled me to respond to various needs here in the Diocese through the unrestricted funds that they collect and send to me.

On the side of the parish of St. Joseph Watervliet, one major project they have undertaken is the drilling of water for one village under St. Augustine Cathedral Parish. Some families in the parish have committed themselves to sponsor poor and vulnerable children in our two Church schools, namely Queen of Peace and St. Augustine school for boys. As of now 14 children are benefitting from the sponsorship. A great joy it was for these children and the teachers when they received the news that some families in America, inspired by the love of Christ, are willing to share something of their lives and what they have with those in need so that they can have a bright future and have the opportunity to come out of the poverty they find themselves in.

Already Advent has dawned on these 14 children and their parents. These children are living with lots of hope since they have the assurance of a better life in the future.

Through their sponsors, they are now participating in that joyful hope brought to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he left his comfort zone in heaven and came down to where we are in order to give us life and fill our hearts with joy.

He Himself taught that there is more joy in giving than in receiving while St. Francis of Assisi taught that it is in giving that we receive.

I want to thank all these wonderful families and individuals who have opted, out of love, to share what they have and are now transforming the lives of these children in our Diocese by setting aside $300 every year in order to keep these children in school.

As we think of Christmas let us remember the thousands of families and children who are in refugee camps all over the world because of ongoing conflicts. When Bishop Bradley, Msgr. Mike Hazard and Fr. John Peter came to Lodwar they visited Kakuma Refugee Camp located within the Diocese. They saw for themselves these displaced people from Somalia, South Sudan and other countries where there is no peace. Right now we have more than 200,000 refugees in Kakuma. They need our prayers so that their spirits may be uplifted a bit during Christmas. The Children there would love to receive some Christmas gifts too. Please remember them. Keep in mind also those people of West Africa who are dying because of the Ebola virus. Our Christian hearts do not permit us to remain indifferent to the sufferings of these people. We have to find ways of being in solidarity with them and helping them, especially as we approach Christmas.

If you’re interested in participating in the Sister Diocesan Committee contact: Vicki Cessna, vcessna@diokzoo.org

Twelve ways to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas, not including pipers piping

In the church calendar Christmas does not end on Christmas Day. It is only the beginning. In an earlier time Christmas lasted for 12 days—a tradition from which we get the famous Christmas song. There are many ways we can mark the Christmas season (the one that starts with Christmas), and deepen our Catholic identity. Here are 12 suggestions.

1. Wait for it.

In our grandparents’ day the Christmas tree wasn’t decorated until Christmas Eve. For most of us, it might not be practical to wait until then, no matter what our grandparents might have done. Still there are some things we can do to keep the traditional Christmas cycle.

Go ahead and put up the tree whenever you like, but save placing the star on top until the night of December 24. Plan to leave the tree up until the Christmas season ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, usually the second Sunday in January.

Also consider waiting until December 24 to complete the crèche. Many Latino families put the crèche out early in Advent, but they leave the manger empty until after Midnight Mass. Whenever you put the crèche out, place the Magi statues a good distance from the manger. Each day of Christmas, until Epiphany, move the Wise Men a little closer to the crèche.

2. Pay it forward.

December 26 is the feast of St. Stephen, the church’s first martyr. He was also one of the first deacons, whose job it was to care for the poor.

A good way to celebrate St. Stephen’s Day is to follow his example. Spend 20 minutes online, either alone or as a household, researching poverty issues in your area. Make a commitment to volunteer or donate more during the coming year to serve the poor as Stephen did. Perhaps spend an hour on this day going through your closets and drawers to find clothing you seldom wear, and donate it to a shelter.

3. Pick a card.

Another great way to keep the Christmas season alive is to gather up all the Christmas cards you’ve received and choose one at random each evening to read at dinnertime. If you live with family or a roommate, share some memories about the person who sent you the card. If you live alone, recall how you met the person and resolve to send an e-mail or make a phone call to reconnect in the coming week.

4. Make time for family.

The Sunday after Christmas is the feast of the Holy Family. Plan to spend the entire day with family—extending family if possible. If you like to cook, plan for a festive brunch after Mass. Or make reservations and let your favorite restaurant do all the work. During the meal, share stories of your favorite times together.

If you live alone or if you don’t live in a traditional household, be creative about gathering today with those who are family to you. Invite some friends for dinner, or phone someone who you haven’t talked to in a long time.

5. Bridge the gap.

December 27 is the feast of St. John the Evangelist. It is a day of reconciliation in Eastern European churches. In 1983 it was the day Pope John Paul II reconciled with the man who tried to assassinate him.

Take the opportunity during these Christmas days to reach out to an estranged friend or family member. If it is too big a step to call or send an e-mail right now, at least take a moment ask St. John to pray for your reconciliation.

6. Examine your conscience.

On December 29 we celebrate the feast of St. Thomas Becket. After Thomas became the archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, he had to struggle with spiritual and political decisions that affected the role of the church in England. He did not always choose wisely, sometimes giving in to the powerful influence of King Henry II. But in the end he picked the right path, taking a stand for justice, and it cost him his life.

Today is a good day to examine our own lives and resolve to do more to overcome injustice in the world. We can begin with ourselves. Where have we been unjust? When have we used our influence or authority solely for our benefit?

Take some time today to write or e-mail your congressional representative about an issue of injustice that needs to be corrected. uschc.org/advocacy/takeaction.shtml and congress.org for ideas.

7. Count your blessings.

December 31 is the feast of St. Sylvester I, who, along with Pope John Paul II, is one of the 10 longest-reigning popes (January 31, 314 to December 31, 355). Not much is known about St. Sylvester, but there are stories about him giving hospitality to Christians who would travel through Rome. Like Jesus, he would wash their feet and serve them at the dinner table.

One way to mark the end of the year is to have a dinner party or at least a special family dinner. Ask everyone to bring something to the party or dinner that symbolizes a blessing received from God in the last year. Place them all under the Christmas tree, and, just before midnight, ask everyone to describe their blessing.

8. Ring in the New Year.

Besides being New Year’s Day, January 1 is also the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Years ago many Catholic households, especially German Catholics, used to pray the rosary as a family after dinner. That custom has mostly faded, but the feast of the Mother of God is a good opportunity to revive the practice for a day. If you need a refresher on how to pray the rosary, go to tinyurl.com/praytherosary.
When columnist and author Jane Knuth’s eldest daughter began a post-college adventure a world away teaching English in a remote area of Japan—Jane worried, as any mother would. Ellen, 23 at the time, was confident and practical, so a different concern surfaced: religious isolation in a country where Christians make up one percent of the population, and where the nearest church was hours away. It’s a common predicament for parents of adult children: will the faith so carefully nurtured through childhood withstand life outside the nest?

“What I mean to you.”

Ellen was more concerned about navigating cultural differences and handling her first classroom than the Mass schedule of far-flung churches. Her name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it.

Find out from your parents (if you can) why they chose your name and what it means.

11. Clean house.

In the United States, Epiphany is celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and 8. The arrival of the Magi to honor Jesus is not the only tradition associated with this day. Another ancient Epiphany practice is to bless our homes by marking the entrance to the house with chalk. To bless your home, grab a piece of chalk, gather everyone outside the front door, and offer this prayer:

Leader: “Let us bless our home and pray that all will be welcome here. Let this door be an entry for the blessings of God. Let this door be a gateway of God’s blessings to the world.”

Members of the household take turns inscribing “20 + C + M + B 15” over the top of the door. C, M, and B are the initials of the Catechumens. If you live alone, call your parents or godparents and ask them to bless your home by marking the entrance to your house with chalk.

12. Remember your “birthday.”

Before the Second Vatican Council, the Baptism of Jesus was celebrated on Epiphany. The church leaders who revised the liturgical calendar after the council decided to create a separate feast day focused solely on Christ’s Baptism. In doing so, they wanted to emphasize three truths of faith:

1. At the moment of his baptism, we come to know Jesus is the Son of God.

2. We also come to know him as the Messiah at his baptism, which is symbolized in the gospels by the descent of the dove—an anointing in the Holy Spirit.

3. Through his baptism, which was not required of Jesus, Jesus affirms his complete solidarity with all of us fallible human beings who do require the saving waters of grace. Plan to spend some time today telling stories about family baptisms. If you live alone, call your parents or godparents and ask them to tell you what your baptism was like.

The Catholic Difference

Books for Christmas

By George Weigel

That “there is no end to the making of books” is attested by both revelation (see Ecclesiastes 12:12) and a browse through your local bookstore—which, if well-stocked, will help you get the following to deserving readers on your Christmas list.

N.T. Wright, “Paul: In Fresh Perspective” (Fortress Press). The former Anglican bishop of Durham is the Anglosphere’s premier biblical scholar and to read his books is to feel oneself in the hands of a master-teacher. This small volume is a distillation of the analysis in Wright’s massive, two-volume study, “Paul and the Faithfulness of God” (the fourth installment in his masterwork, “Christian Origins and the Question of God”). It’s a great read for both information and inspiration, and ought to be a considerable boon to preachers.

Jonathan Last, editor, “The Seven Deadly Virtues” (Templeton Press). The title comes from a naughty song in “Camelot,” but in the hands of Last and his colleagues (all prominent conservative writers), the content is not a celebration of vice but a witty introduction to the virtuous life crafted especially for denizens of a culture deeply confused about right and wrong—and about the reasons why doing the right thing makes for happiness. Give it to a regular reader of the National Catholic Reporter, The Nation or some other publication convinced that conservatives are dour, cranky meanies—but get one for your favorite college student, too. The culture wars were never so much fun.

Roger Scruton, “Notes from Underground” (Beaufort Books). The distinguished British philosopher who (as he puts it on the dust jacket) “rescued himself from the academy twenty years ago,” adds to his literary laurels with an evocative novel of life in Prague during the last years of communism. The moral wilderness of mirrors in a police state, against which Vaclav Havel and John Paul II countered “living in the truth,” is dissected with insight and compassion. And while Scruton reminds us of just how bad life was inside the communist culture of the lie, he also explores, in an artful way that never descends to vulgarity, the passions that could be summoned up by that experience. The portrait of a clueless American legal philosopher who insists to hard-pressed Czech dissidents that abortion is the first of human rights is devastatingly delicious.

Fred Kaplan, “John Quincy Adams: American Visionary” (Harper). If he’s remembered at all these days, it’s as portrayed by Anthony Hopkins in the film “Amistad,” but John Quincy Adams was arguably the most talented and consequential public servant in American history. He served in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, represented the United States diplomatically as ambassador to the Netherlands, Prussia, Russia and Great Britain, negotiated the Treaty of Ghent (which ended the War of 1812), and served as President James Monroe’s secretary of state before winning the presidency himself. Adams spoke multiple languages, taught at Harvard, was a competent poet and assiduous diarist, and was happily married to Louisa Catherine Johnson for 51 years. It’s hard to imagine such a man in the sound-bite politics of today, but it’s good to be remembered of the kind of people America once nurtured, in the hope that remembering might inspire us to do so again.

Allen C. Guelzo, “Gettysburg: The Last Invasion” (Vintage Books). There is certainly no end to the making of books about the three most decisive days in American history. But having read my share of them, I learned a lot from this latest entry into the lists, particularly in terms of the logistical concerns behind Robert E. Lee’s two invasions of the North, and the human character of the combatants. Guelzo has mined the materials of the new social history in service to a fine piece of good-fashioned narrative history.

Evelyn Waugh, “Scoop” (Back Bay Books). I first read it in high school; I re-read it for perhaps the 20th time a few months ago. No novel I know is so consistently entertaining. Give it to someone condemned to a long flight in the middle seat.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

George Weigel’s column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver. Phone: 303-715-3215.

Support Catholic religious in their mission, ministries, pope says

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — During the Year of Consecrated Life, all Catholics are called to thank God for the gifts members of religious orders have given the church and the world, to join them in prayer and find practical ways to support them and their ministries, Pope Francis said.

“Let them know the affection and the warmth which the entire Christian people feel for them,” the pope said in a letter issued for the special year, which opened Nov. 30 and will close Feb. 2, 2016, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

The Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court, issued a note Nov. 28 specifying that both lay and consecrated people can receive an indulgence for participating in events related to the Year of Consecrated Life, going to confession, receiving the Eucharist and offering prayers for the intentions of the pope.

In his letter, Pope Francis also offered greetings to Orthodox communities of monks and nuns, and to members of Protestant religious orders, who also take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and are “expressions of fraternal communion and service.” Dialogue between Catholic religious and those of other traditions “can prove helpful for the greater journey toward the unity of all the churches,” he said.

The bulk of the pope’s letter and video messages be sent for a Nov. 29 prayer vigil in Rome and the year’s opening Mass the next day in St. Peter’s Basilica were addressed specifically to the world’s more than 900,000 Catholic religious orders, monasteries, sisters and consecrated virgins.

“Leave your nests and go out to the peripheries,” he told those at the vigil in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. “Live on the frontiers where people are waiting to hear and understand the Gospel. “Wake up the world, enlightening it with your prophetic and counter-cultural witness,” he said in the message to those at Mass in St. Peter’s the next morning.

“Being joyful,” he said in the message, “being courageous” and “being men and women of communion” are the common traits of the founders of religious orders and are the key to their future.

The pope’s letter for the year explained that while he was writing as pope, he was also writing as a Jesuit, “a brother who, like yourselves, is consecrated to the Lord.” Knowing the gifts and challenges of religious life from the inside, Pope Francis urged religious to “look to the past with gratitude,” rediscovering the way their predecessors read “the signs of the times” and responded with creativity. However, it also involves recognizing the difficulties and inconsistencies resulting from human weakness and learning from them.

Religious are called “to live the present with passion” and “embracing the future with hope,” he said, knowing that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire new responses to the needs of the church and the world and to give religious the strength to be faithful servants of God.

Within communities, within dioceses and within the church, he said, religious are called to be “experts in communion,” a call that is prophetic in the modern world. In a polarized society where different cultures experience difficulty in living alongside one another and where the powerless encounter oppression, where inequality abounds, we are called to offer a concrete model of community by which, acknowledging the dignity of each person and sharing our respective gifts, makes it possible to live and brothers and sisters.”

Countering the decline in the number of people entering religious life in the West will not be the “result of brilliant vocational programs,” the pope said, but of meeting young people who are attracted by the joy they see in religious men and women.

The special mission of consecrated people in the church has not ended, he told them. “A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world’s goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine.”

Year of Consecrated Mass with Bishop Paul J. Bradley

February 2, 2015, 6 p.m.

Holy Family Chapel, Nazareth

A light reception will be held afterwards in the Nazareth Dining Hall.

Hosted by the diocesan Office of Vocations and Priestly Formation

Contact: Jane Bodway, jbodway@diokzoo.org, 269-903-0147.

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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

Date: February 21, 2015

Time: 8:30 am – 3 pm (tentative)

Location: Hackett Catholic Prep, 1000 West Kilgore Rd., Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Additional Conference events: Mass, Confession, Adoration and Lunch

Ticket Information: Contact Newman’s Bookshoppe at 269-553-0482 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. 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 “Genesis to Jesus.”

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Scott Hahn

Sponsored: Catholic Information Center/Newman’s Bookshoppe
The combined collection for the Churches in Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and Latin America will take place the weekend of Jan. 31/Feb. 1, 2015.

The Church in these three regions faces many challenges. Central and Eastern Europe continue to recover from years of harsh Communist rule and state-sponsored atheism. Funds from this collection will provide support for basic pastoral programs and evangelization, scholarships for the formation of seminarians and lay leaders who will then serve their local parishes, and rebuild parishes.

Economic struggles, poverty, violence and lack of priests and trained lay leaders are major obstacles for the Church in Latin America. Your donations will fund evangelization efforts and programs for catechesis and formation in pastoral life and vocation discernment to provide trained leadership for local parish communities.

The Church in Africa continues to grow rapidly and has almost tripled in size over the past 30 years. However, the economic and social hurdles of enormous debt, epidemic, severe poverty, and political unrest have made it difficult for the church to sustain its growth and maintain essential pastoral outreach. Your assistance provides grants to finance a wide range of essential and unique pastoral projects all over the continent including outreach programs, schools, evangelization, and education of clergy and lay ministers.

For more information on the components of this collection, visit www.usccb.org/nationalcollections and then search for the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, the Collection for the Church in Latin America or the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa.
Bienvenida a las Hermanas
La Diócesis de Kalamazoo le da la bienvenida a las Hermanas Berley Gámez, Maryud Cortés y Yuliana Rúa de la congregación de las Hermanas Missioner Siervas del Divino Espíritu de Colombia quienes estarán con nosotros por un periodo de cinco años hasta el 2019. La venida de las Hermanas fue posible debido a una ayuda económica proporcionada por la organización Católico de Alto Riesgo por las vidas de sus familias. El Arzobispo Joseph E. Kurtz, presidente de la Conferencia de las Obispados dijo que es urgente una pastoral con una mirada más humana hacia los inmigrantes. Y un proceso legal que respeta la dignidad de estas personas. “El ser humano es hijo de Dios!, ¿ellos o ella tienen la imagen de Cristo! Nosotros debemos ver esa imagen y ayudar a otros que también la vean, los inmigrantes y refugiados no solo representan un problema que se necesita resolver, sino que son hermanos y hermanas para acoger, respetar y amar”. Conferencia de Obispados Católicos de Estados Unidos.

A continuación damos un resumen sobre esta Acción Diferida que fue dada por el Presidente el 20 de noviembre del 2014:
- Ampliará la población elegible para el programa de Acción Diferida para las personas que entraron al país antes de cumplir los 18 años de edad y que han estado físicamente presentes en el país desde el 1 de enero de 2010 o anteriores sin importar la edad que tenga ahora, y que se ha mantenido en el país durante los últimos cinco años o más; se recibirá el periodo de DACA y autorización de empleo de dos años a tres años. 
- Pueden aplicar para un permiso de trabajo los padres de América Latina se ha heredado la costumbre de España de escribir una carta a los Reyes. En México, la noche del 5 de enero en se parte una Rosca de Reyes que en su interior trae varios muestras de dulces que se dejan al Niño Jesús y las personas que encuentran las figuras, se encaran de hacer tamales el día de la Candelaria, 2 de febrero que es la fiesta de la luz y de la presentación del Niño Jesús en el templo y purificación de María después del parto de la Virgen.

Acción Ejecutiva Presidencial: Una Esperanza para Millones de Familias.

La Diócesis de Kalamazoo le da la bienvenida al Padre Raúl Gómez de la Diócesis de Málaga-Sotá, Colombia quien estará prestando su servicio pastoral en la Diócesis de Kalamazoo por un periodo de tres años. Después de varios meses en Wisconsin tomando clases de inglés, El Obispo Paul Bradley lo ha asignado a la Parroquia de Charles Brown en Coldwater para ayudar en la pastoral en general de esta parroquia y en la pastoral con los hispanos de Coldwater, Union City y Brownson. También visitará a los prisioneros de la cárcel. Dómesle entonces una bienvenida cuando nos encontremos con el Padre y que se sienta en casa.

El Programa de Recuperación de Traumas está basado en el Modelo de Trauma, un modelo psico-educacional que ayuda a las personas a aprender cómo integrar sus sentimientos, pensamientos y comportamientos. El trauma es un suceso o una serie de sucesos combinados con la vulnerabilidad de una persona que crea un obstáculo en el normal desarrollo humano.

Navidad, celebración del nacimiento de Jesús “El ángel les dijo: teman, porque yo vengo a comunica una buena nueva que será motivo de mucha alegría para todo el pueblo. Hoy ha nacido para ustedes en la ciudad de David un Salvador que es el Mesías, el Señor. Esto les servirá de señal: encontraron un niño envuelto en pañales y acostado en un pesebre” (Lucas 2:10-12). Dios se hace hombre y con su encarnación eleva a la humanidad al nivel de los recuerdos. La curación ocurre en el nivel del procesamiento e integración de los sentimientos, pensamientos, percepciones, y comportamientos. El trauma es un suceso o una serie de sucesos combinados con la vulnerabilidad de una persona que crea un obstáculo en el normal desarrollo humano.
Trauma Recovery Program addresses relationship building skills
By Sharon Froom

One of the most common challenges for adult survivors of childhood trauma is establishing and maintaining healthy relationships. This is predictable given the reality that as children their significant caregivers either hurt them or failed to protect them from harm. These early injuries, coupled with their unique temperaments, shape the conclusions survivors come to about how to stay safe in future relationships.

Some survivors conclude safety is assured by avoiding relationships altogether. They will accomplish this by isolating, even in a crowd, or with negative, unapproachable behavior. Other survivors will frantically seek and cling to relationships out of fear that setting limits to protect themselves will result in abandonment. And others will vacillate, frantically courting relationships, then abruptly pulling away at the first disappointment.

If you are aware that events in your childhood interfere with your ability to live healthfully and happily as an adult, help and healing are possible. The Trauma Recovery Program helps survivors understand why their injuries go so deep and teaches skills for living more effectively in the here-and-now. The program is offered at no cost to participants. Survivors meet for ten sessions in small groups facilitated by mental health professionals and a priest. Participants do not rehash their hurtful pasts. Instead, the focus is on learning skills to live more satisfying lives.

Reservations are currently being taken for English-speaking groups that begin in February, 2015. Please contact Sharon Froom for registration and/or more information at 269-381-8917, ext. 222.

New groups begin February, 2015
Choose a morning or an evening group

Mornings: 9:30 to noon
February 9, 16, 23,
March 2, 9, 16, 21 (Sat.), 23, 30
April 6

Evenings: 7:00 to 9:30
February 9, 16, 23
March 2, 9, 16, 21 (Sat.), 23, 30
April 13

There's still time to enjoy Vespers at Holy Family Chapel at Nazareth

The Sisters of Saint Joseph invite you to join them for evening Taize Vespers during Advent in the beautiful and prayerful sacred space of Holy Family Chapel, at Nazareth. Deepen your observance of Advent by participating in this peaceful, reflective service involving prayer and simple song in the quiet of Holy Family Chapel. The remaining vespers will be held Sunday, December 21st at 6:30 p.m. Holy Family Chapel is located on the grounds at Nazareth Center, 3427 Gull Road, Kalamazoo.

No pre-registration needed, but call 269-381-6290 for barrier free access directions.

Diocesan plans pilgrimage to World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia

The Diocese of Kalamazoo, with support from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, is sponsoring a seven-day pilgrimage to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, September 21-27, 2015. Pope Francis announced confirmation of his attendance at the meeting which had been widely speculated.

The pilgrimage will depart Monday, September 21st on a deluxe motor coach and travel to Philadelphia with an overnight stay in Pittsburgh. In addition to participating in World Meeting of Families events the pilgrimage will visit shrines including those of St. John Newmann and St. Katherine Drexel. The pilgrimage will conclude on Sunday, September 27th with participation in the Papal Mass for the Festival of Families.

The per person cost is $1,225 based on double occupancy and includes transportation, lodging and some meals. The WMF conference registration fee is not included.

For more information call 800-653-0017 or contact Jamin Herold, jherold@diokzoo.org.

Diocesan Annual Retreat

Heart and Summit: Outlining the Eucharistic Celebration February 28-March 1, 2015

Each year the Parish Life & Lay Leadership Secretariat hosts a diocesan-wide retreat. This year’s topic is Heart and Summit: Outlining the Eucharistic Celebration. The Eucharistic celebration is called the heart and summit of the Church’s life: from the heights of heaven, to the walls of the church, to the words we say, to those who attend to hear them. The Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Mass celebrated, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood, which unites us to Christ, to each other, and to God.

The retreat begins with 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, jbbodway@diokzoo.org or 269-903-0147.

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.

CHRISTMAS LITURGY SCHEDULE
ST. AUGUSTINE CATHEDRAL

Wednesday December 24, 2014
7 a.m. Mass
Christmas Eve
Daily Mass in the Keating Chapel

4 p.m. Mass
Traditional Carols, Organ and Cantor

6 p.m. Mass
Children’s Mass
Traditional Carols
St. Augustine Children’s Choir

11:30 p.m. Mass
Traditional Carols, Choir with Brass
Midnight Mass with Bishop Paul J. Bradley

Thursday, December 25, 2014
The Nativity of Our Lord

9:30 a.m. Mass
Traditional Carols
Organ and Cantor

11:30 a.m. Mass
Solemn Liturgy of Christmas Day
Cathedral Choir

“Waiting in Joyful Hope”

Getting Married?

Check out the 2015 schedule for the diocesan marriage preparation program. Joy-Filled Marriage is a comprehensive marriage preparation weekend for engaged couples rooted in virtues as well as the Theology of the Body. The program incorporates rich Catholic theology with sound psychology. Also available in Spanish.

Upcoming Joy-Filled Marriage Weekend Dates in 2015:
January 24 – 25
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.dioskoo.org/joyfilled-marriage

Finding Father’s Love Saturday, Jan. 24

Dan Kulper

If you are among the millions who did not experience healthy paternal care you may find yourself prone to sadness, anger, anxiety, mistrust, or lack of confidence. Come for a day to uncover the roots of this suffering and look at helpful ways to re-frame your experience without judgment.

Beyond Words: An Icon Retreat with Diane Hamel & David Van Eck, February 2 – 6

Whether you are a beginner or an experienced artist, writing an icon is a richly rewarding experience. Time will be spent in prayerful learning as you create a beautiful and meaningful icon, with experienced direction, that you can take home and enjoy.

Advertise in THE GOOD NEWS

Visit: www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org
Find out how far your marketing dollars will go.

“Lament Not for Me, O Mother.”

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Bishop Bradley dedicates newly renovated Edwardsburg Parish

On Saturday November 22, 2014 Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Edwardsburg, celebrated the dedication of its new church building with close to 400 parishioners in attendance. Bishop Paul J. Bradley was the presider and was joined by Bishop-elect Robert Prevost, former General Provincial of the Augustians and/or principal concelebrants including Rev. Joseph McCormick, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake, Rev. David Otto, former pastor, Rev. Donald Suberlak, retired pastor, St. Mary of the Assumption, Three Oaks and St. Agnes, Sawyer and Rev. Kevin Covert, pastor, Holy Maternity of Mary, Dowagiac.

The 2.4 million renovation and expansion of the church began this past spring. The project includes additional space to accommodate 400 in the church including a sanctuary, a large narthex, renovated office space, meeting rooms and expanded parking. More than 550 families belong to Our Lady of the Lake and many of those families were on hand to participate in the dedication mass and reception which followed the Mass. During his homily Bishop Bradley commended the parishioners for their dedication and commitment.

“Today, we celebrate this Rite of Dedication of a new Church — one of the most beautiful liturgies in our tradition — because it focuses our attention on the essence of who we are as People of Faith,” he said.

“We construct a church building only for one basic reason: to be the place where the Church can gather together to give praise to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and through Him, to give honor and glory to our Loving Father by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Our Lady of the Lake dates back to the early 1920’s when it was a mission Church and became recognized as a parish in 1981. Fr. Joe McCormick has been pastor since 1996.

St. Thomas More celebrates campaign success

The parish community of St. Thomas More, Kalamazoo, came together for a celebratory Mass after the successful completion of its “Living in the Spirit” campaign. The parish celebrated the Eucharist with Bishop Bradley at Kalamazoo College where it was revealed that more than $2.13 million had been pledged in gifts to reduce the debt owed on the construction and renovation of parish facilities including a new church completed in 2007.

The parish offering that day included more than a half-ton of food items for Loaves and Fishes, a local Kalamazoo food pantry. After a picnic lunch, St. Thomas More parishioners participated in a day of community service. More than 60 people spent the afternoon doing service projects by partnering with ministries and non-profit organizations in the community.

Your Health Today

To Immunize or Not to Immunize? There is No Question

When it comes to immunization, there really is no question. As a health care professional, I have trusted immunizations enough to have all four of my own children vaccinated.

Without proper immunization, many vaccine-preventable diseases can have dangerous consequences, from seizures and brain damage to blindness and even death. Before you consider forgoing vaccination (for yourself or for your child), talk to your health care provider. To give you added peace of mind, here are some answers to common questions about vaccination safety:

Are vaccines tested and monitored for safety?

Yes. Before vaccines are licensed, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires extensive testing. This process can take a decade or longer. Once the vaccine is in use, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and FDA monitor any adverse effects (health problems after vaccination) through an exclusive reporting system called the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

Who shouldn’t be vaccinated?

Some people shouldn’t receive certain vaccines or wait to get them. For example, children with compromised immune systems (e.g., cancer patients) may need to wait. If a person has already had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine (rare), a follow-up dose isn’t recommended. Someone with a mild illness like a cold, however, doesn’t have to wait to be vaccinated. To learn more, visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/should-not-vacc.htm.

What should you do if you have (or someone you love has) a reaction to a vaccine?

• Call your doctor. If the reaction is severe, see your doctor immediately.
• Tell your provider what happened, when it happened and when the vaccine was given.
• Ask your caregiver or health department to file a VAERS form, or call 1.800.822.7967.

Are there any side effects?

In most cases, vaccines cause no side effects, or only mild reactions like fever or soreness at the injection site. Be sure to tell your provider if you have health problems, or known allergies to medications or food.

What about a link with autism?

Misinformation about vaccine safety continues to confuse parents who are trying to make the best decisions about their children’s health. Rumors have circulated that thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative once used in many vaccines (and still used in some flu vaccines) could contribute to a diagnosis of autism. Research doesn’t support this claim. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, CDC and Institute of Medicine agree that science does not support a link between thimerosal in vaccines and autism.

For more on vaccination safety, or to schedule an immunization, please call Dr. John Cegielski, Borgess Family & Internal Medicine, at (269) 565.9120.