Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

After 40 days of silence, we proclaim again our “Alleluias.” After 40 days of fasting and penance, we rejoice anew because “Jesus is Risen!”

Easter represents the central mystery of our faith. Easter assures us that in spite of the worst that humanity could do to Jesus, resulting in His suffering and death, His Resurrection means that He is alive forever. Because of our baptism into Christ and through our membership in the Body of Christ, Easter reminds us that we share Jesus’ new life.

May the Glory of Easter bless you and may Easter help us to give courageous witness to our faith, and to live our faith with joy.

Jesus is Alive! Life is renewed! Hope is assured! Amen — Alleluia!

At the request of Pope Francis, members of the Diocesan Pastoral Center staff of the Diocese of Kalamazoo conducted a diocesan-wide consultation for the XIV Ordinary Synod of Bishops. The synod will be held this coming October 4-25 at the Vatican on the theme of “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World.”

Four diocesan seminarians to receive the Order of Deacon on May 9 at St. Augustine Cathedral

Bishop Paul J. Bradley has called the following four seminarians to the Order of Deacon: José de Jesús Haro Gómez, St. Joseph Parish, Kalamazoo; Bruno Ebubechukwu Okoli, St. Thomas More Parish, Kalamazoo; Andrew Paul Raczkowski, St. Monica Parish, Kalamazoo; and Paul George Redmond, St. Monica Parish, Kalamazoo. All four men attend Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit.
Years back I was a young mother with a toddler and preschooler-in-tow, a demanding full-time job and a life full of worries. I always had some fear holding me back, preventing me from taking the plunge.

And truth be told I wasn’t the fear of leaving my children — they would be in the loving care of their father. And it wasn’t even the temptation of not knowing anyone else going. That was actually somewhat comforting. It was what I had heard about the closing ceremony of the weekend. During the final prayer service the retreat participants had their feet washed by the retreat team. What?!

We all have that “thing,” don’t you agree, that one little irrational quirk. For one of my best friends’ it’s someone touching the inside of her arm. She’s been known to shriek at the mere touch because the benign action reminds her of the many blood draws she gave as a sickly child. For me—my quirk was having anyone touch my feet. Ugh. It likely stems back to a minor childhood accident which left my toe dangling from my foot and required stitches. The toe healed, the anti-foot-touching quirk did not.

I expected my nervousness to progress along with the weekend. But a funny thing happened. As I became more comfortable by the inspirational testimonies of faith and engaged with my fellow retreat participants my fear of the impending “foot washing” dissipated. By the time one of the retreat leaders was gently rinsing my feet with a Christ-like care I was at peace and awash in the beauty of the moment.

I had let my fear go. And isn’t that what the apostles did? Their greatest fear had been realized — the death of their friend, their teacher. They even ran and hid. But once they encountered the Risen Lord their fear gave way to witness. It was what I had heard about the closing ceremony of the weekend. During the final prayer service the retreat participants had their feet washed by the retreat team. What?!

Happy Easter!

Pope Francis APRIL Intentions

Universal: That people may learn to respect creation and care for it as a gift of God.

Evangelization: That persecuted Christians may feel the consoling presence of the Risen Lord and the solidarity of all the Church.

Bishops call to unite our prayers to those suffering from religious persecution

Bishop Paul J. Bradley, as a member of The Administrative Committee, chaired by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), shares the following statement urging all people to unite with those suffering from religious persecution:

Following is the full text of the statement.

STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

March 10, 2015

Upon learning of the death of 21 Coptic Christians at the hands of ISIL terrorists, Pope Francis called their murder a “testimony which cries out to be heard.” On behalf of America’s Catholic Bishops, we pause to listen and invite people of all faiths to join us in prayer for those facing the stark reality of religious persecution in the Middle East and elsewhere. The testimony of those 21 brave and courageous martyrs does not stand alone as thousands of families — Christian and other religious families — find themselves fleeing from horrific violence.

We urge all people of goodwill to work toward protections of the marginalized and persecuted. In union with the local Churches and the Holy See, we call upon our nation to: work with the international community to intervene and protect the rights of religious minorities and civilians within the framework of international and humanitarian law; address political and economic exclusion that are exploited by extremists; and increase humanitarian and development assistance.

Lent is a season to meditate upon the Cross and unite ourselves even more closely with Christ’s suffering. Let us use this season to unite with our suffering brothers and sisters and pray for them and with them in a special way. With hope, let us pray for the day when we can all share in the joy and lasting peace of Christ’s resurrection.

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal kicks off this month

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal, which provides the major fundraising support for the ministries, services and programs of the Diocese of Kalamazoo, begins this month with “announcement weekend” April 11 and 12. Registered parishioners will receive a mailed direct-mail brochure and pledge card the week of April 20th.

Each generous gift to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal helps support important ministries such as seminarian education, formation programs for youth and adults, and the pastoral ministry of Bishop Paul J. Bradley. More than 97 percent of all monies raised stays in the diocese.

“We are blessed with the gifts entrusted to us so we may continue to build up God’s Kingdom in the Diocese of Kalamazoo,” said Bishop Bradley. “Your financial support of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal enables many of the ministries, programs and services of the diocese. We receive your gift in love and strive to give it back through sharing the Good News throughout Southwest Michigan.”

DID YOU KNOW?

• The Diocese of Kalamazoo consists of approximately 112,000 Catholics in nine counties, and is made up of 59 parishes, 23 Catholic schools.

• Currently the diocese supports 12 seminarians. The average annual cost of a seminarian education is more than $30,000.

• The Diocese provides centralized services and support to the parish staffs.

• All funds raised in excess of the total goal stay in the parishes.

Available again this year is an online giving option. More information on the appeal may be found at www.diokzoo.org.

Parish Goals see page 11
Easter: a new season — a brand new life

Spring has finally arrived. After a long, frigid, and brutal winter, we can breathe a sigh of relief. The morning quiet is broken by the sweet sound of chirping birds at first light, and the ground now cleared of the deep snow that has cleared the way for the crocuses and tulips just beginning to peak through the frozen ground. All these are certain signs that nature is coming back to life.

Easter Sunday is another sure sign that a new season has begun. Out of the death, darkness, and disappointment of the tomb where Jesus’ lifeless and broken body was laid on Good Friday, the New Life of the risen and victorious Jesus has burst forth! Today, we join with Christians around the world as we celebrate the greatest sign of new life in human history — a new life we are given through the resurrection of our Jesus, our Risen Lord.

The 40-day penitential season of Lent has been a time of preparation. Lent does for us spiritually what “spring training” does physically for Major League professional baseball teams. It is an extended period of time spent getting ourselves in better shape spiritually (physically) through prayer, fasting, self-denial and works of charity. And having completed this “spiritual spring training,” we are now ready for the new season to begin. It’s appropriate that the “Opening Day” baseball game this year is on Easter Sunday night, between the St. Louis Cardinals and the Chicago Cubs; all the other 28 teams begin their new season on Easter Monday. But for us who are rejoicing in a new way and celebrating the central mystery of the resurrection, we are ready to begin this new season proclaiming our faith with joy. While many focus their Easter celebrations on Easter egg hunts, chocolate Easter bunnies, or even our newest Easter outfits and bonnets, we need to put our greatest efforts in celebrating Easter spiritually and liturgically because Easter leads us to a brand new life.

This Easter, I hope that all of us will find that we have made significant progress in living a new, spiritual life. I hope we find that we are in a better place in terms of our relationship with God; that we are more resolved to live our lives according to God’s ways. Easter is a day not only to rejoice in the new life of Jesus, but also the new life that we share in His New Life. Easter is a day to remember that there is far more to life than what we experience day-in and day-out in the circumstances of our life in what we sometimes call “the real world.” Easter is a day to remember that we are people with a destiny — we’re not just people who are human, living in a human world; we are people preparing in this world to live for eternity in the life of the world to come. As Lent was the season to remind us of our mortality, our sinfulness, and that the time we have to live in this world is finite, Easter is that day to remind ourselves that, thanks to Jesus’ New Life, we are preparing to live eternally when we pass through our own death and burial in heavenly glory.

In a homily Pope Francis preached during the final days of Lent, he reminded the world of the beauty of God’s love for us and its transforming power. He said,

“To have faith is to make space for God’s love, to make space for his power, for God’s power. Not for the power of a powerful person, but for the power of one who loves me, who is in love with me and who wants to rejoice with me. This is faith. This is believing: making space for the Lord so that he can come and change me.”

In our Diocese, we rejoice in the fact that more than 150 people entered into the life of the Church either through the waters of baptism or through the “Professions of Faith” made at the Easter Vigil. This dramatic moment truly gave them “new life” as they became Catholics in full communion with the Church. We welcome these new sisters and brothers in faith with open arms. Transformed and strengthened by the Sacraments of Initiation, these newly-welcomed Catholics — also known as “neophytes” — enter into a new phase of their formation called, Mystagogy. These terms are rich in their origins and meanings. “Neophyte” is from the Greek word meaning “new plant,” since the faith has been newly planted in them. The word “mystagogy,” is derived from the Greek and means “leading through the mysteries.” While our parishes welcome these new members and continue supporting them in their continued formation, all of us, whether we have been Catholic for a few days or all our lives can benefit from seeing ourselves in the same way — as “new plants.” Another way to approach the phase of mystagogy is to recognize it as a lifelong journey of growing closer to God and a deepened understanding and practice of the faith. That is the journey we have all been on during these past 40 days of Lent; in reality, this is a journey that continues throughout our lifetime. We continue to live, learn about, grow in, and find ways to share our faith. All of us are challenged to find the ways to live our lives with such conviction and with such Easter joy that we will inspire many others, who may not yet have the gift of faith, to consider entering into the Church.

What a great privilege it is for us to recognize who we are: a family of faith — the Body of Christ — billions of followers of Jesus Christ living the world rejoicing in the New Life of our Risen Lord. Our faith unites us and should inspire us to not only feel privileged in our identity, but because of who we are, that we will be motivated to reach out in Christ-like love and service to those of our sisters and brothers who are being persecuted, who are being oppressed, who are living in poverty and with injustice.

Continued on page 4
Notre Dame wins big on HHS

By Sarah DeMott

In February 2014, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the University of Notre Dame, denying they met the requirements to be considered a religious employer and requiring them to abide by the Affordable Care Act’s contraception mandate.

The ACA mandate required that Notre Dame submit a form affirming it is a religious institution opposed to providing contraceptive services. This would then leave the university’s insurers responsible to cover the employee’s contraceptives. However, Notre Dame argued, this essentially left the university still providing contraceptives. The appellate court disagreed and denied the case.

Three months later, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Hobby Lobby, and one week after that, it granted an injunction to allow them to drop coverage. The university would have to pay $250 million per year in fines for failing to provide contraceptives, and $10 million per year if it were to drop coverage.

For Notre Dame, the university argued that not only did the ACA mandate infringe on its right to exercise religion but it was also not key to government interest, nor was it the least restrictive means, arguments that had worked in the Hobby Lobby and Wheaton College cases.

On March 9th, the Supreme Court ruled in Notre Dame’s favor, instructing the lower court to consider Notre Dame’s arguments in light of the Hobby Lobby case. This is a big win not only in the struggle against a contraceptive-focused society, but also for religious liberties. The ACA requires organizations to provide contraceptives (20 different forms of birth control, including four abortion methods) to employees at no co-pay. As contraceptive use goes directly against Church teaching, requiring religiously-affiliated organizations to pay for them is a direct attack on their rights and in conflict with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

However, the fight isn’t over yet. Now that Notre Dame’s case is left the university still providing contraceptives. The appellate court dismissed the case. Notre Dame argued that not only did the ACA mandate infringe on its right to exercise religion but it was also not key to government interest, nor was it the least restrictive means, arguments that had worked in the Hobby Lobby and Wheaton College cases.

On March 9th, the Supreme Court ruled in Notre Dame’s favor, instructing the lower court to consider Notre Dame’s arguments in light of the Hobby Lobby case. This is a big win not only in the struggle against a contraceptive-focused society, but also for religious liberties. The ACA requires organizations to provide contraceptives (20 different forms of birth control, including four abortion methods) to employees at no co-pay. As contraceptive use goes directly against Church teaching, requiring religiously-affiliated organizations to pay for them is a direct attack on their rights and in conflict with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

However, the fight isn’t over yet. Now that Notre Dame’s case is back in the appellate courts, they could still be required to have their insurers cover the contraceptives. So far, similar cases have found the compromise of having insurers cover them instead of the organization does not violate religious rights, even though the organization must first alert the insurers that they will need to pick up the tab. Notre Dame says this isn’t a solution, since they are still involved in the process of providing contraceptives to their employees, even if they aren’t technically paying for it. The university would have to pay $250 million per year in fines for not providing the contraceptives or $10 million per year if it were to drop employee health insurance completely.

Ordinary Synod on the family — Continued cover story

To assist in this effort the Lineamenta (a text written in preparation for a General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops) was released in June 2015. The response form was sent to all the clergy (priests and deacons) and posted on the diocesan website. Deacon Kurt Lucas, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Parish Life and Lay Leadership, and Jamin Herold, Associate Director in the Secretariat for Catholic Education and Evangelization, conducted eight listening sessions in February, 2015 — one in each of the six deaneries within the diocese, one with the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph (our only Motherhouse of Religious Women), and one with diocesan staff. Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council were specifically invited to submit responses.

Following is a list of summary points from the document:

- Many respondents thought that the Church’s teachings on marriage and family are beautiful and true, but not well disseminated. However, there were a minority of respondents who thought that these same teachings should be revised or even discarded where God’s love is first experienced and learned was impossible to live out.
- The important place of the family as the place where God’s love is first experienced and learned was recognized by most respondents. However, almost everyone indicated that families need more assistance — and in how to live out this mission in the world today. Families need to strengthen their faith life.
- Parishes are the primary contact points for people with the Church. Clergy, seminarians, parish staff, and lay ecclesial leaders all need to be taught proper ways to speak the Truth in love, to develop listening and loving relationships with those struggling with the teachings on marriage and family, to not expect convergence to take place immediately, and to demonstrate the mercy of God in all they do.
- While many respondents were able to name positive diocesan and/or parish initiatives regarding marriage and family, almost all had suggestions both for new initiatives which are needed and to improve what is already being done.
- Those who attended the listening sessions indicated that the sessions themselves were helpful, allowing the faithful to engage in dialogue about important issues. They requested more of these as follow-up to the synod and even for other topics.

Website Resources:
Vatican.va and news.va for more information

Seminarians receive the Order of Deacon — Continued cover story

The Mass of Ordination to the diaconate will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2015 at 10 a.m. at St. Augustine Cathedral. A light reception to welcome the newly ordained transitional deacons will follow the Mass in the St. Augustine Crowley Center.

What is a Transitional Deacon?

In the Catholic Church, the diaconate is the first of three ranks in ordained ministry. Deacons preparing for the priesthood are transitional deacons. Those not planning to be ordained priests are called permanent deacons. Married men may be ordained permanent deacons, and single men may be ordained with a commitment to celibacy. Source: USCCB
Planning a wedding?

We’ve got you covered
By Sarah DeMott

Planning a wedding is stressful, but there are plenty of guides and resources to help ensure the celebration of this sacrament is a beautiful, God-centered event.

Marriage is a sacrament, and the bond between husband and wife is a symbol of the sacrificial love Christ has for his Church. Throughout the Bible, marriage is given special significance. Jesus’ first sign of entering his public ministry was during the wedding feast at Cana.

There are liturgical considerations, such as which readings to choose for your wedding Mass. These decisions are best made with your spouse and your parish priest. There are also some helpful resources on the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website.

Another key consideration in your wedding Mass is the music. “Music is integral to any sacramental celebration. Music helps to enhance the prayers and scripture readings of the priest and congregation,” says David Reilly, Director of Diocesan Worship and Liturgy.

“Music adds joy to the celebration and allows the congregation to join their voices in thanksgiving to God for the gift of your new life together. Music can help to make the wedding ceremony beautiful and memorable. To paraphrase the words of St. Augustine, the one who sings, prays twice.”

It is vitally important you begin your wedding preparation early. Most parishes require six – nine months notice, but it is strongly suggested you begin planning a minimum of one year before the wedding date. Preparation for a marriage is more than picking a venue, flowers, dress and music, it is preparing for total self-giving and dedication to helping get your spouse to Heaven. You should plan to meet with the music ministers at your parish six to nine months ahead of your date and bring some ideas of songs you may want for the grand entrance, exit, etc. However, flexibility is important and you should trust the expertise of your music minister. It is important to note that secular music is not allowed during the sacramental ceremony, so any special secular songs will need to be saved for the reception.

Planning a wedding can be overwhelming, but there are people in your parish who have plenty of experience and are ready to help. The diocesan website includes both a participation guide template you are encouraged to download and customize, and a guide to planning the music for your wedding. Trust in your priest and music minister, and turn to God with any fears or uncertainties. Remember, you will be a minister for the sacrament of matrimony and through that, you enter the sacrament of Christ and the Church. May your wedding planning be a time of great joy and promise with our Lord.

Diocesan Marriage Preparation retreat begins new program
By Sarah DeMott

Twelve couples gathered in January for the first marriage preparatory weekend utilizing the “Joy-Filled Marriage” program. Based on St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, the program is a virtue-based approach to preparing engaged couples to live a God-focused, joy-filled marriage.

As a two-stage program, one half focused on life skills incorporating key virtues and the other focused on the Church’s teachings on a sacramental marriage, it provides couples the tools needed to understand how to live a marriage in line with Church teaching in today’s world.

With two weekends now under its belt, the program is continuing to grow and adapt based on feedback from leaders and couples. Associate Director for Parish Life and Lay Leadership-Domestic Church at the Diocese of Kalamazoo, Socorro Truchan, is excited to see where the program can go. There are opportunities to have weekends hosted at the deanery level to cut down on travel time, or even potentially as a weekly course taught at individual parishes, which could also help build community within parishes.

“The conversations from this have helped us to redirect our lifestyles to be more God-centered,” said one couple. “We made commitments to each other to be better people and act more according to God’s wishes. This program made us face certain issues we had been sidestepping in our previous conversations.”

Of all the topics discussed during the weekends, praying together as a couple and using Natural Family Planning were the two couples cited as the most useful.

“It takes a team to build strong marriages,” says Truchan. “We want this program to build a community between already married, newly married and engaged couples. Marriage isn’t just the responsibility of the couple, it is everyone’s.”

A Landscape of Hope
By Jane Knuth

Since the publication of Thrift Store Saints, visiting St. Vincent de Paul groups in other parts of the country has become part of my life. Spending time with my fellow Vincentians is pure joy. It is a privilege to be invited to come help them by being the speaker for their annual meeting, or for their fund drive, or to help them recruit volunteers. They give tours of their food pantry operations, their thrift stores, or their medical clinics and job training centers — whatever each group is doing to make God visible in the suffering of impoverished neighborhoods.

This winter, my husband Dean and I spent a weekend in Faribault, Minn. The local conference of St. Vincent de Paul started up six years ago in this small town and they burst out in a huge beam of love. They bought an old Catholic grade school building where they feed 150 families each month, teach English as a second language classes to Somali refugees and Latino immigrants, and distribute free furniture, household goods, and clothing. They pay utility bills, prevent evictions, and assist homeless teens. We were amazed at how much a small group of people could accomplish with God shining his light in them.

The day I visited there were some clients in their food pantry, so they let me roll up my sleeves and pack grocery sacks. The outside temperature was – 7 degrees but clients lined up outside the door at 8 a.m. to be admitted at Noon. Two fellow volunteers were strong young men, able to lift the heavy crates of canned goods and frozen meat donated by local businesses. They worked cheerfully, hard, and long, and at the end of the day, my host shared their story. “They are from a local landscaping firm and the owner values them as employees. He doesn’t have a lot of work for them in the cold months but he wants to keep them on the payroll and out of the food lines, so he pays them to come down here to help us out.”

Together, the Vincentians and the business owners are changing the landscape of their town in more than one way.

Join Catholic Advocacy Network to make your voice heard
Each legislative session, Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) evaluates bills introduced into the Michigan House and Senate based on their impact on human dignity, social justice, and the common good. While staff advocate for or against these bills, MCC provides an opportunity for Michigan Catholics to stay updated on current policy issues and to contact their lawmakers about these issues called the Catholic Advocacy Network (CAN). To learn more, visit: www.mich catholic.org

Catholic Charities honors its volunteers at annual “Celebrate Life” luncheon
Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo will honor its volunteers and the annual “Celebrate Life” Luncheon on May 7 from Noon – 1:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo County Club. This year’s theme is “Honor our Volunteers.”

According to Fran Denny, Executive Director, the power of volunteers is transforming. She said, “The love of our volunteers — played through their service — is truly unstoppable and life-changing. In the simple way they walk alongside our clients and our staff, assisting us where they are able, each volunteer is planting seeds of love which bloom in changed and enriched lives.”

If you’d like to learn more, please call Jeanine at 269-381-1234 or visit the website (www.cedok.org). To purchase tickets, please contact Ellie Clark (269-381-9800 or ellenclark@cedok.org).
Holy Family Healthcare continues to grow, helps fill in the gaps with today’s healthcare system

By Sarah DeMott

For more than 20 years, Dr. Don Bouchard worked with children in the current medical system. He was even the Chief of Pediatric Medicine at Borgess-Lee Memorial Hospital.

It was through an opportunity to earn his M.B.A. that Bouchard realized he had strayed from why he got into medicine. He felt a calling. “How did you get so far away from home?” he heard God asking him.

Through his business studies, he realized the healthcare industry was becoming less and less about the person. Bouchard decided it was time to get back to focusing on patients as people instead of casefiles. He and a group of Catholic physicians began to meet regularly to discuss their field and issues affecting them, such as the contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act. Holy Family Healthcare was born out of these discussions, and they applied for their 501(c)3 non-profit status in September of 2012 and began practicing out of their mobile clinic in June 2014. During its first summer, June to October 2014, the newly established practice saw close to 400 children.

According to Bouchard, Holy Family Healthcare at its core is a joy-filled ministry where the doctors and staff form a covenant relationship with patients and their families. He explains that their approach to pediatric care focuses on not only just the physical well-being of a child, but also the emotional and spiritual, and the wellness of the entire family.

Care is based on Catholic social teaching and respecting each person as an individual with dignity. They base their practice standards on the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare in America, with the guidance of Bishop Bradley on issues of faith and morals. The staff begin each day in prayer and prayer cards are always available for patients to take with them.

Born to a poor family in rural Maine, Bouchard sees himself in his patients. “My family would have been the family to fall through the cracks,” he says. Now, he is proud to be able to offer care to everyone, even if they don’t have insurance.

In 2014, HFH purchased a mobile clinic, allowing them to provide medical and dental care to children of migrant workers in Van Buren and Berrien Counties. Currently, HFH is set up in the Aleman Center at Immaculate Conception Parish in Hartford where it continues to provide pediatric medical and dental care, as well as pediatric and adolescent counseling. They also have a Mission Closet where families can get clothes, household needs and toys, all of which have been donated.

“When parents bring their children in, they can check out the closet and if there is something in there they need or clothes that fit, they can take it. We really want them to leave with more of their needs met than just seeing a doctor,” says Bouchard. “People drop off bags of clothes or boxes of old toys and we sort through them. Coats were really big this winter. Kids would come in without coats so we were able to give them something they really needed but didn’t have and couldn’t afford.”

One of the largest developments in its growth is a blooming partnership with St. Joseph Parish in Kalamazoo. The former convent building on the parish grounds will be converted into two-floor clinic, with one floor for pediatrics and another for a family practice. With some minor modifications, old ofice spaces will be turned into patient exam rooms. The two biggest renovations will be a new sprinkler system and an elevator. The community room and kitchen will be used for community events. Once renovations are complete, HFH hopes to operate two separate, fully staffed offices, one in Hartford in a new building and one in Kalamazoo at the convent.

HFH has also developed “Building Up with compassion” a youth program started in the Hartford community which gives youth the opportunity to learn about and experience selfless giving and servant leadership while creating something that can be given to others. The program will consist of four service projects per year, open to any children ages 8 to 18. The first project will be on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 12th, tying fleece blankets to give to those in need. HFH hopes to expand the program throughout the diocese.

“We want to help parents instill in their children servant leadership, a sense of selfless giving,” says Bouchard. “We believe helping parents build strong kids will lead to strong families.”

Holy Family Healthcare has several upcoming projects. This summer, they will host Binder Park’s Zoomobile on three Sundays in Hartford as an educational program parents can enjoy with their kids. They’re also working on a movie night at The Strand in Paw Paw, showing Food Chains, a documentary about the lives of migrant workers. All proceeds will go to the Hispanic Migrant ministry. They also partner with the diocese Youth Rally, Jeter’s Leaders and the Ministry for Adults with Disabilities.

Anniversary interview: Pope talks about his election, papacy, future

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- When Pope Francis went out onto the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica for the first time, he said he did not prepare what he was going to say, but “I felt deeply that a minister needs the blessing of God, but also of his people.”

He did not know if it was right to explicitly ask the thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square to bless him, so instead he asked them to pray that God would bless him, he said. And he bowed for their prayers.

Marking the second anniversary of his election March 13, Pope Francis spoke about the conclave that elected him in 2013, about his life the last two years and about the future in an interview with Valentina Alazraki of Mexico’s Televisa.

The pope even joked about the reputation Argentines have for being proud or haughty. “You know how an Argentine commits suicide?” he asked Alazraki. “He climbs to the top of his ego and jumps!”

And, he said, while he doesn’t hate being pope, he is not a fan of the travel involved and he really would like to go out of the Vatican unrecognized, perhaps “to a pizzeria to eat a pizza.”

“I have the feeling that my pontificate will be brief,” he said. “Four or five years. I don’t know, or maybe two, three. Well, two already passed. It’s just a vague feeling.”

Perhaps, the pope said, it is like the kind of trick a gambler plays on his mind by convincing himself — when he places a bet — that he will lose; when he does, he is not disappointed. “I do not know what it is, but I have the feeling that the Lord put me here for a brief time... But it is just a feeling. So I keep the possibility open.”

Pope Benedict XVI’s discernment that he no longer had the energy to carry out the office and his decision to resign to a life of prayer was courageous, Pope Francis said, and it opened the door for popes in the future to do so with greater ease.

But, the pope said, he is opposed to setting an age limit, for example, 80, for a pope’s ministry. While for some theologians “the papacy is a sacrament,” he said he would not go that far, but “it is something special.”

Asked about reports that he received about 40 votes during the 2005 conclave that elected Pope Benedict, Pope Francis refused to answer, “although I could tell because now I have the authority to speak.”

As for the 2013 conclave, he said he had no inkling until the lunch break March 13 when something happened, “cardinals started coming up to him and asking about his health. “When we returned in the evening, the cake was cooked. Everything happened with just two ballots. It was a surprise for me as well.”

During the voting, he said, he was praying the rosary, which was his normal practice and brings him a great sense of peace. “The same thing occurred then, which for me was a sign that it was God’s will. Peace. And even today I have not lost that sense.”

The cardinals at the conclave interrupted his rosary when he had reached the two-thirds vote necessary to be elected. “They asked me if I accepted. I said yes. I don’t know if they made me take an oath, I don’t remember.”

Questioned about the 2014 extraordinary synod and the upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family, particularly regarding the acceptance of homosexual persons and Communion for divorced and civilly remarried couples, Pope Francis said some people have “unrealistic expectations,” but he is convinced God wants the church to focus on better serving families.

“The family is in crisis,” he said, and it is not the age-old crisis of infidelity, but the future of marriage itself.

“I think the Lord wants us to face this,” Pope Francis said, including through improved “marriage preparation; accompanying cohabitating couples; accompanying those who do marry and are raising a family, supporting those whose marriages have failed and are in a new union; preparing them for the sacrament of marriage, (because) not everyone is ready.”

As for the reform of the Roman Curia, which Pope Francis said really was the “last (royal) court” existing in Europe, he said, “the appearance of a court can be maintained,” but the Curia must be a group of people and structures “at the service of the church, not the service of the bishops.”
Bishop Bradley shares peace pilgrimage insights at annual Interfaith Peace Service in Kalamazoo

By John Grap

More than one hundred people gathered on Sunday afternoon, March 22, at Kalamazoo’s First United Methodist Church, to pray for peace and to listen to Bishop Paul Bradley of the Kalamazoo Diocese report on his 2014 trip to the Holy Land.

The interfaith service for peace was sponsored by the twelve-year old Kalamazoo Interfaith Coalition for Peace and Justice.

Representatives from several faith traditions led prayers prior to the bishop’s talk.

“When we live in the age of wars, assassinations, and we need to pray for peace, more than ever in the history of mankind,” said Kanai Lohani, reciting a Hindu prayer.

From a traditional Jewish Sabbath prayer, Amy Damaske prayed, “Grant us peace, your most precious gift, o eternal source of peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth.”

Imam Hafiz Akbar read part of a traditional Muslim prayer, “Allah, you are the source of all peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth.”

In Jerusalem they met with religious leaders, did some sightseeing, saw the outside of the Dome of the Rock, and prayed at the Western Wall.

A small group went to Gaza to visit the scene of the recently concluded conflict, meeting with various Palestinian leaders and officials.

They participated in interfaith dialogue with clergy and lay people in Nazareth, went to Galilee, Ramallah, Hebron, and Bethlehem. They met with Shimon Peres, former Israeli prime minister, at his institute for peace.

Bishop Bradley, saying that the bishops learned a lot, and prayed much, “We saw scary things and we saw hope-filled sites,” he said. “Our eyes, minds, and hearts were opened in ways that they had never been before.”

An Armenian patriarch told the bishops, “We’ve been praying for peace for 1,000 years.”

The bishop told the gathering that he was not aware of the reality of the situation in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, he said. “We believe that what we’re doing here, this afternoon, praying and dialogue, remains really the only solution for peace in the Holy Land,” the bishop said. “Peace is possible, prayer is powerful, and that dialogue, understanding, and compromise is the key. God remains always our hope.”

Youth Rally

Youth show their Catholic pride in annual diocesan rally

Young Catholics from middle and high schools across the diocese came together Saturday, March 21st for the annual diocesan Youth Rally held at Paw Paw High School. More than 250 youth, chaperones and volunteers enjoyed a day celebrating the theme “I am Catholic” through a series of activities, breakout sessions and a closing Mass with Bishop Paul J. Bradley.

In his homily Bishop Bradley commended the participants for choosing to follow Jesus.

“My dear young Catholics, if it was difficult for Jesus, we’d be foolish to think that it’s not going to be difficult for us,” he said. “To choose to follow Jesus, to choose to live our lives by Gospel values, to choose to do what’s right even if everyone else around us is doing something different, to choose to stand up to defend the gift of human life — none of that is easy; all of that takes a lot of courage. But when we choose to follow Jesus, we will find the joy of the new life that God wants for each of us — the new life that lives within us.”

Some of the highlights of the different sessions included the following: Dr. Robert Griffin, Professor Emeritus of Latin & Spanish (Western Michigan University), taught three sessions entitled “Latin’s not dead!” Tina Griffin, taught three sessions entitled “Art Detectives: Cracking the Code” using examples of sacred art to show how the artist communicates a message or story by his use of colors, scenery, objects, people and animals in the painting. Jessica Simons, a dance teacher, taught a dance in the gym to the song/video “Mass Fitness” (http://lifeeten.com/mass-fitness/). This gave a large group of students in each session the chance to move around and spend some energy.

New pro-life group’s motto:

‘So every child makes their mark’

By Nate Madden, Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A newcomer to the pro-life movement, Online for Life, was among the winners at the 2015 Weyrich Awards Dinner, which took place recently at the Four Seasons in Washington.

Named Outstanding New Organization of the Year, Online for Life describes itself as a “compassionate, technology-driven nonprofit organization committed to rescuing children and families from abortion.”

The group seeks to do this by “reframing the conversation by upending conventional assumptions and promoting the truth about the cultural, sociological and psychological impacts of abortion.”

Its three primary areas of focus are: reaching out to life-affirming pregnancy centers nationwide; building networks of community partners to assist couples in crisis pregnancies; and working to change modern culture to one of life “one heart, one mind, one child at a time.”

Other pro-life advocates made a strong showing at the Feb. 25 dinner, held once a year by Coalitions for America to honor the achievements of various people and organizations in the American conservative movement. It is named in honor of the late Paul Weyrich, a lifelong religious and political activist. He was a founder in the Melkite Catholic Church.

Among the other award recipients was March for Life’s vice president of government affairs, Tom McClusky, who was named Faith Community Leader of the Year. The two runners-up were Robert P. George, professor of jurisprudence at Princeton University, and Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life. March for Life also was declared the Grassroots Organization of the Year.

Lila Rose, president of Live Action, was named Youth Leader of the Year. Rose, 26, is also the founder of Live Action, which, according to its website, is a “youth-led movement dedicated to building a culture of life and ending abortion.” Her organization is probably best known for its undercover video investigations of abortion clinics. Its videos have shed light on illegal and unethical practices in the nation’s abortion industry, exposing violations by abortion clinic staff. Her group’s work has led to the closure of several abortion facilities.

The Coalitions for America also honored Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Alabama, as National Legislator of the Year. Sessions has a 97 percent rating on the National Right to Life Scorecard and was an original co-sponsor of the 2003 Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.
The Catholic Difference

A mission of love
By George Weigel

The World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia this September should be more than a vast Catholic “gathering of the clans” around Pope Francis—and so should the months between now and then. If the Church in the United States takes this opportunity seriously, these months of preparation will be a time when Catholics ponder the full, rich meaning of marriage and the family; human goods whose glory is brought into clearest focus by the Gospel, Parents, teachers and pastors all share the responsibility for seizing this opportunity, which comes at a moment when marriage and the family are crumbling in our culture and society.

Now, thanks to a fine mini-catechism prepared by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Pontifical Council for the Family, we’ve been given a basic resource with which to do months of preparatory catechesis on marriage and the family—and preachers have been offered reliable material for shaping homilies on these great themes between now and September.

“Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive” (Our Sunday Visitor) begins by reminding us that the Catholic Church’s teaching on marriage and the family is not composed of “positions” or “policies,” a widespread misunderstanding today. Rather, the Church’s teaching about marriage and the family are expressions of the basic truths of Christian faith: God, who brought the world into being, loves us; the divine love is most powerfully displayed in God’s son, Jesus Christ; friendship with Jesus brings us into the communion of the Church, which is a foretaste of the communion with God for which we are destined; our basic task as Christians is to offer others the gift we have been given—friendship with the Lord, which we do both by witness and by proposal. Or, as St. Augustine so memorably put it in the “Confessions,” “we have been made for God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in the divine embrace.

Nothing falls outside God’s creative and redeeming purposes, which include our being created male and female, the complementarity and fruitfulness built into our being created male and female, and the permanence of marriage, which is a sign of God’s own covenant fidelity. God is a communion of loving Persons; thus married love, St. John Paul II taught, is an icon of the interior life of the Holy Trinity. God keeps his promises; thus the promise-makers among us who live the covenant of marriage bear witness to that divine promise-keeping by their own fidelity.

In light of all this, the Christian idea of chastity comes into clearer focus. In the Catholic view of things, chastity is not a dreary string of prohibitions but a matter of loving-with-integrity: loving rather than “using;” loving another for himself or herself. The sexual temptations to which the Church says “No” are the implications of a higher, nobler, more compelling “Yes:” yes to the integrity of love, yes to love understood as the gift of oneself to another, yes to the family as the fruit of love, and yes to the family as the school where we first learn to love. “Yes” is the basic Catholic stance toward sexuality, marriage and the family. We should witness to that “Yes” with a joyful heart, recognizing that the example of joyful Catholic families is the best gift we can offer a world marked today by the glorification of self-absorption.

In a pontificate that has reminded us continuously of our responsibilities to the poor, for whom God has a special care, preparations for the World Meeting of Families are also an opportunity to remind our society that stable marriages and families are the most effective anti-poverty program in the world. As demographer Nicholas Eberstadt wrote recently, “the flight from the family most assuredly comes at the expense of the vulnerable young”—especially low-income children, who are more vulnerable to the toxic effects of family breakdown. That’s not Catholic carping; that’s basic social science data.

The Catholic idea of marriage and the family is a gift for the whole world. Catholics should gift that gift away, profligately, in the months ahead.

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.

Vineyard Academy relocates thanks to ecclesiastical partnership
By Sarah DeMott

For nearly 19 years, Vineyard Academy leased space generously offered behind the Jameson family business. However, when the business began an extensive construction project, Vineyard’s classroom space became part of a construction zone, which was unsafe and not conducive to a learning environment.

After meeting with numerous community and business leaders in the greater Richland area, two area churches offered space for lease. This would allow Vineyard Academy classes to resume while money was raised to build a permanent campus north of Richland on Academy-owned property. The most generous offer came from Gull Lake United Methodist Church. Vineyard Academy is now set-up in classroom spaces located in the church’s educational wing. The move only caused a three-day gap in classes while classroom equipment was moved and set up.

“Our students’ daily routines have not been interrupted;” says Vineyard Academy principal Carrie Jewett. “They are excited to have hallways, a cafeteria, a paved playground area and a softball field. We are very grateful for the generosity of the Gull lake United Methodist church in their opening their beautiful facility to us.” Plans for the permanent campus will be announced at their 20th Anniversary Celebration on May 1st and on Holy Family Radio in the spring.

Vineyard Academy is a private, independent school operated by lay Catholics, founded in 1995. This relocation is one of many examples of ecclesiastical partnership between Christian churches of different denominations throughout the greater-Kalamazoo County area.

New kids guide to the Bible features fun, entertaining facts
National Geographic Kids 1,000 Facts About The Bible is a brightly illustrated, easy-to-follow reference guide to encourage your children to explore the Bible. Each section combines historical stories and facts with stunning photos and artwork, all in a super kid-friendly format. Here are some excerpts from the book:

“In Jesus’ time there were no Bibles. Instead, Jesus would have memorized the scrolls of teachers and rabbis. It is said that the 12-year-old Jesus could recite the Torah and other writings in formal Hebrew.”

“In biblical times, newborn babies were immediately bathed and rubbed with salt, probably to toughen their skin.”

“The book also includes various fun facts about babies in the Bible, the Prophets, Biblical villains, laws and commandments and more.

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. For more information, contact Jamin Herold or call (800) 653-0017.

Vineyard Academy students shown above in new location.
Kenneth Branagh’s very Christian Cinderella
By Fr. Robert Barron

Kenneth Branagh’s “Cinderella” is the most surprising Hollywood movie of the year so far. I say this because the director manages to tells the familiar fairytale without irony, hyper-feminist sub-plots, Marxist insinuations, deconstructionist cynicism, or arch condescension. In so doing, he actually allows the spiritual, indeed specifically Christian, character of the tale to emerge. I realize that it probably strikes a contemporary audience as odd that Cinderella might be a Christian allegory, but keep in mind that most of the fairy stories and children’s tales compiled by the Brothers Grimm and later adapted by Walt Disney found their roots in the decidedly Christian culture of late medieval and early modern Europe.

In Branagh’s telling, Ella is the daughter of wonderful parents, both of whom instilled in her a keen sense of moral virtue and joie de vivre. The girl’s idyllic childhood was interrupted by the sudden illness of her mother, who, while on her death-bed, delivered to Ella the injunction always to be “kind and courageous.” Her father then remarried and brought his new wife and her two daughters to live with him and Ella. Some years later, Ella’s father left on a lengthy business trip. Before he set out, she enjoined him to send back to her the first branch that his shoulders would brush while on the journey. A few weeks later, a servant arrived with the branch in his hand and the dreadful news that Ella’s father had become sick and had died. The now utterly isolated Ella became the victim of her wicked stepmother (played by the always compelling Cate Blanchett) and her obnoxious stepisters, who visited upon her every type of cruelty and injustice. They even take away her bedroom, forcing her to sleep by the dying embers of the fire to keep warm. The ashes that stain her face give rise to the cruel nickname her stepmother gave to her. Significantly, the cat belonging to Ella’s stepfamily is called Lucifer.

So we have a beautiful, vivacious, and morally upright young lady whose life becomes a nightmare through the intervention of untimely death and wicked oppression. In an ordinary and too-true loss is celebrated every 25 years, an extraordinary loss may be an occasion of special elements in Branagh’s telling—is that Cinderella, upon escaping from the cruel oppression of her stepmother, turned to the wicked woman, not to curse her, but to offer a word of forgiveness. There could be no more compelling evidence that we have a healthy understanding of the teachings of the theologians, though we had kept the image of God, we had lost our likeness to him.

To return to Branagh’s traditional telling of the tale: while out riding in the country, Cinderella encounters a magnificent stag that was being pursued by a hunting party. Subsequently, she met the leader of the hunting brigade, a handsome young prince, the son of the King. The two almost immediately fell in love. Because she returned home without identifying herself, the prince called for a ball and invited all of the young women of the realm to come, hoping to lure his mysterious beloved. Though her stepfamily tried desperately to prevent her from attending, Cinderella, through the ministrations of her fairy godmother, managed to get to the ball, where she, of course, entranced the prince. Once again, she was compelled to return early, and the lovesick prince sought her desperately until he found her and married her.

We are tempted, no doubt, to see all of this as the stuff of ordinary romance, but we should look more deeply. First, the stag is a traditional sign of Christ and thus his presence as the object of the hunt is meant to signal his presence at the symbolic level of the narrative. Moreover, the prince, the son of the King, who falls in love with a woman despite her lowliness, is an obvious evocation of Jesus, the Son of God, who was sent to become the bridegroom of the human race, whose spiritual blood had been covered over by sin. The prophet Isaiah predicted that the “builder of the human race” would come one day to marry his people, and the motif of the sacramentum, the sacred marriage, runs right through the New Testament. Indeed, the fathers of the Church took particular delight in ringing the changes on this theme, emphasizing that the Prince of Peace, the Son of God, in marrying the human race, lifted us up out of our lowliness and bestowed upon us all of his own benefits and dignity. This is precisely why the early theologians of the Church specified that the sacramentum involved an admirable commercium (a wonderful exchange) with spiritual goods given to us and giving us his grace. In the symbolic language of our story, the unmerited love of the prince indeed transformed Cinderella into a princess.

The surest sign that this transformation has occurred—and it is one of my favorite elements in Branagh’s telling—is that Cinderella, upon escaping from the cruel oppression of her stepmother, turned to the wicked woman, not to curse her, but to offer a word of forgiveness. There could be no more compelling evidence that she had thoroughly taken on the character of the bridegroom.

When you see this film, I would invite you, even as you take in the fantasy and romance of it, to appreciate it too as a deeply Christian story.

Pope Francis announces upcoming Jubilee of Mercy to begin December 2015

Last month Pope Francis announced the celebration of an extraordinary Holy Year dedicated to Mercy.

The Jubilee of Mercy will begin on December 8th, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the Feast of St. Elizabeth of the Trappists.

The official and solemn announcement of the Holy Year will take place on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 12th. While an ordinarily jubilee may be announced on the occasion of an event of significant importance. The last ordinary Jubilee took place in the year 2000 while the last extraordinary year was proclaimed in 1983 by John Paul II.

Ed Dennis, is a prison volunteer and member of St. Mary Parish, Marshall.

For more information on our Diocesan Prison Ministry Program contact Lisa Irwin at (269) 903-0177 or liirwin@diokzoo.org.
Resurrección: Explosión de Vida y Alegria
Por Fanny Tabares

Después del duro invierno, del frío, de días oscuros con poco sol, y después de varias semanas de penitencia, reflexión y oración durante la Cuaresma, finalmente la Semana Santa llega la Pasca cuando celebramos la resurrección de Jesús. La vida triunfa sobre la muerte, la luz sobre la oscuridad, el amor triunfa sobre el egoísmo y el roncar, la paz triunfa sobre la guerra, y la luz vence a las tinieblas.

La celebración de la pascua en primavera ayuda a entender mejor este mundo profundo de transformación y resurrección. Cuando los arboles parecían muertos en el invierno resucitan con flores y hojas, los pajaritos cantan en sus nidos y el sol más radiante pone fin a las noches largas de invierno. Toda la naturaleza estalla en la tierra, inundada de tanta claridad, y que, radiante con el fulgor del rey eterno, se siente libre de la tiniebla que cubría el orbe entero.

La Resurrección es el fundamento de nuestra esperanza: Cristo vence la muerte, y nuestro Dios de viva. ¡Felices Pascuas, Jesús Ha Resucitado y Está Entre Nosotros!

Ministerio con los Campesinos Migrantes
La Diócesis de Kalamazoo tendrá la reunión para comenzar el ministerio con los campesinos migrantes el jueves 14 de mayo de 8:30 a 10:30 a.m. en el Diocesan Pastoral Center, 215 N. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. La reunión es para todos los voluntarios que ayudarán con el ministerio y para aquellos que quieran ser voluntarios. En ese día, proveeremos material de recogida y comentaremos a las preguntas que tenga sobre el Ministerio. También es una excelente oportunidad para conocer a otros voluntarios. Si desea ser voluntario o si tiene alguna pregunta, llame al 269-903-0197.

Ministry to the Migrant Farmworkers
The Diocese of Kalamazoo will host their beginning of the season meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2015, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 215 N. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. This meeting is for all the volunteers that will be helping with the ministry to the migrant farmworkers and for those who wish to become volunteers that day will have some resource material, answer any questions that you may have regarding Mission Ministry and it is also an opportunity to meet other volunteers. If you wish to volunteer or have any questions, please call 269-903-0197.

Conférence pour Hombres Latinos en Detroit
Abril 26 de 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Iglesia St. Christopher, 7800 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI 48282
Para registrarse o mas información llamar al (313)-596-7309

Calendario/Calendar

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<td>1 (Sabado) 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>2 (Domingo)</td>
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<td>3 (Viernes)</td>
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<td>4 (Sabado)</td>
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<td>5 (Domingo)</td>
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| 7 (Martes) | Reunión de Migrantes (Meeting of Migrants. (The C:

Fortaleciendo las Familias en la Fe (Reflexión #13)
Por Verónica Rodríguez

“Los niños aprenden a fiorir 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).

Actividad para hacer en familia este mes de Abril: Después de estar tanto tiempo encerrados debido al invierno tan largo, aprovechemos estos días ricos de primavera para salir afuera con nuestros hijos y mostrarnos la maravilla de la vida. Tomemos este tiempo para hablarles a nuestros hijos sobre la resurrección de Jesús. Salgamos a ver si podemos ver cómo todo, de nuevo toma vida. Uno de los mejores momentos de la primavera es el de buscar huevos popular sobre los conejos y huevos de Pascua para disfrutar tan mucho los niños. Parte de la integración intercultural es comprender y buscar en la historia el significado de las costumbres nuevas como son los tan populares huevos y conejos de Pascua. La historia nos cuenta que los alemanes en Pennsylvania fueron quienes introdujeron esta costumbre a Estados Unidos. Además, el intercambio de huevos de chocolate se va practicando desde hace más de ochocientos años en Polonia, Alemania, Eslovaquia, Italia, Argentina, Brasil, y ciertas zonas de México. Muchas familias en sus casas comienzan a decorar con los niños los tradicionales huevos cocidos. En mi país, en la primavera se comienza a decorar las casas con los huevos de Primavera y las flores. ¡Muchas gracias por sus donaciones!

Porque tuviste y haces mierda de comer; tuve sed y ustedes me dieron de beber. Fui forastero y ustedes me recibieron en su casa” — Mateo 25:35

Infórmese

¡Información importante para los inmigrantes al hacer su declaración de impuestos federales! Usted NO ESTÁ OBLIGADO a pagar una multa de impuestos por no tener cobertura médica si su estatus migratorio lo determina. Hable con un impositor de seguro médico en el Mercado de Seguros Médicos.

Si tiene Asistencia Pública para los niños y no tiene truncatedo, la forma 1040A no cubre su esquema de impuestos. Usted también está EXENTO del requerimiento de pagar una pena de impuestos por no tener seguro médico, aunque tenga un número de seguro social.

No es recomendable que declare impuestos a la Administración de Impuestos Federales. Necesita llenar el formulario 1040A (no el formulario 1040-EZ) y el formulario 8965. Llene el código de extensión “C” para ciudadanos que viven en el extranjero” en la Categoría C, Categoría D, Categoría E de la Parte III. La Categoría B y la Parte III pide un número de seguro social. Tal como lo indican las instrucciones, las personas que tengan un ITIN deben poner su ITIN en esa columna. Las personas que no tienen un ITIN ni número de seguro social deben dejar esa columna vacía.

Si ya presentó su declaración de impuestos y pago su declaración de impuestos, puede cambiar su declaración de impuestos para pedir esta exención y pedir un reembolso. Tomado de National Immigration Law Center: http://www.nilc.org/taxpenaltySp.html

Lo que debería saber acerca de la demanda sobre la Acción Ejecutiva de Inmigración.
El 17 de febrero el juez de la corte federal del distrito de Tejas declaró que la demanda puesta por 26 estados y ha emitido una orden judicial para retrasar el proceso de protección y de deportación para mil millones de inmigrantes que el Presidente Obama anunció el pasado noviembre. Usted debe saber que:
- El DACA actual anunciado en el 2012. permanece sin cambios.
- La decisión no es permanente. Hay que esperar la decisión del Tribunal Superior. Por esta razón los programas nuevos se pueden retrasar. La decisión del juez solo atrásara las nuevas acciones ejecutivas que fueron anunciadas en noviembre del 2014.
- Continúe su preparación para los programas nuevos. Organice sus documentos para estar listo para cuando los programas procedan.

Conferencia Litúrgica del Suroeste
Del 25 al 27 de Junio del 2015 en la Diócesis de Las Cruces, Nuevo México, habrá una conferencia litúrgica para los Músicos de Pastoral Hispánicos. El tema de la conferencia es “Cantando Juntos Como Iglesia”. El propósito de la conferencia es para proporcionar los músicos hispánicos con herramientas funcionales a los ministros de música que sirven a las comunidades de habla hispánica o inglesa. Para más información visite la página de Internet www.slc.org o mande un mensaje electrónico a hpm@slc.org.
**Stewardship Conference**

Nearly 200 participants joined the 2015 Diocese of Grand Rapids Stewardship Conference. Bishop David J. Walkowiak and Bishop Paul J. Bradley, (below, left) along with ten breakout session presenters and a luncheon speaker, shared, through the lens of Christian stewardship, their God-given gifts with those who gathered on March 21.

**April 19: Annual Diocesan Scouting Mass**

Sunday, April 19th, Girl and Boy Scouts from across the diocese are invited to attend the Annual Diocesan Scouting Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral, 3 p.m. Scouts and their leaders will receive the Palm Sunday procession and the blessing of palms, seems to have originated in the Frankish Kingdom. The earliest mention of these ceremonies is found in the Sacramentary of the Abbey of Bobbio in northern Italy (beginning of the eighth century). The rite was soon accepted in Rome and incorporated into the liturgy. The prayers used today are of Roman origin. The various names for the Sunday before Easter come from the plants used—palm (Palm Sunday) or branches in general. (Branch Sunday: Domingo de Ramos; Dimanche des Rameaux). In most countries of Europe real palms are unobtainable, so in their place people use many other plants: olive branches (in Italy), box, yew, spruce, willows, and pussy willows. In fact, some plants used are thorny, which symbolizes Christ's suffering.

Palm Sunday heralds in Holy Week. The Palm Sunday procession, and the blessing of palms, seems to have originated in the Frankish Kingdom. The earliest mention of these ceremonies is found in the Sacramentary of the Abbey of Bobbio in northern Italy (beginning of the eighth century). The rite was soon accepted in Rome and incorporated into the liturgy. The prayers used today are of Roman origin. The various names for the Sunday before Easter come from the plants used—palm (Palm Sunday) or branches in general. (Branch Sunday: Domingo de Ramos; Dimanche des Rameaux). In most countries of Europe real palms are unobtainable, so in their place people use many other plants: olive branches (in Italy), box, yew, spruce, willows, and pussy willows. In fact, some plants used are thorny, which symbolizes Christ's suffering.

**Overnight retreat for adults with cognitive/developmental disabilities**

The Secretariat for Parish Life and Lay Leadership is hosting a weekend of faith, fun and fellowship on April 18th and 19th at Camp Friedenswald Lakeview Lodge in Cassopolis. Cost is $35 and scholarships are available; preferred registration deadline is April 6th. This year’s theme is “In the Footsteps of St. Joan of Arc: Donning the Armor of God.” The weekend begins at 9:30 a.m. on April 18th and concludes at 1 p.m. on April 19th. Retreat activities include prayer, fellowship, Mass, activities and crafts. For more information, contact Lisa Irwin at (269) 903-0177; lirwin@diokzoo.org.

**2015 Bishop’s Annual Appeal Parish Target Goals**

Bishop’s Annual Appeal Targets

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<th>Target Goal</th>
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<td>St. Claire, Centreville</td>
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<td>St. John, Albion</td>
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<td>St. Mark, Niles</td>
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<td>St. Monica, Kalamazoo</td>
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"Waiting in Joyful Hope"
Lenten Day of Spiritual Renewal features talks on health care and domestic church

The Kalamazoo Diocese Council of Catholic Women (KDCCW) hosted their annual Lenten Day of Spiritual Renewal on March 11th. Dr. Don Bouchard, from Holy Family Healthcare and Socorro Truchan, Associate Director for Parish Life and Lay Leadership-Domestic Church with the Diocese of Kalamazoo spoke on this year’s theme, Living Images of God. Dr. Bouchard gave an update on the services Holy Family Healthcare is providing throughout the diocese, as well as some insight into where they want to grow. Truchan discussed how to see Jesus and his love for us all around us and how to incorporate that love into our daily lives, especially in the domestic church, our homes and families. Members are shown below with the 40th anniversary cake.

Twenty-five percent of the local Rice Bowl collection is kept locally to fund grants for programs that provide food assistance and/or respond to the root causes of hunger across the nine counties of our diocese. Keep your eyes out for instructions on how your parish will be collecting your Rice Bowl funds.

Thank you for helping celebrate CRS Rice Bowl’s 40th Anniversary

Your Health Today

Don’t Let Your Diabetes Manage You

If you’ve been diagnosed with diabetes, you’re far from alone. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), 29.1 (or 9.3 percent of the population) million Americans had diabetes in 2012.

While this statistic may seem overwhelming, there’s plenty diabetics can do to manage their condition—and live a longer, healthier life.

The Power of Knowledge

A diagnosis of type 1 diabetes means your pancreas is no longer capable of producing insulin. Therefore, it will be your responsibility to monitor your blood glucose (sugar) levels and administer the insulin your body needs. Most people with diabetes have type 2, which is associated with older age, obesity, family history of the disease, previous history of gestational diabetes, physical inactivity and ethnicity. In type 2 diabetes, the pancreas usually makes enough insulin, but for unknown reasons, the body does not use it correctly.

Those with diabetes often do not have symptoms or there is a gradual development of symptoms. However, if undetected, type 2 diabetes can cause serious health complications—which is why it’s very important to know how to spot the signs. Symptoms of type 2 diabetes may include:

- Increased thirst
- Increased hunger (especially after eating)
- Dry mouth
- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss or recent weight gain
- Fatigue
- Blurred or decreased vision
- Headaches
- Loss of consciousness (rare)
- Slow-healing sores or cuts
- Itching of the skin
- Frequent yeast infections
- Velvety dark skin changes of the neck, armpit and groin
- Numbness and tingling of the hands and feet
- Impotency

Life Through Prevention

You can do a lot to reduce your chances of getting type 2 diabetes by shedding extra pounds. Research shows that exercise and a healthy diet can prevent diabetes in people with impaired glucose tolerance. The medications metformin and Precose have also shown to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes in individuals with pre-diabetes.

If you already have diabetes, exercise and a nutritionally sound diet will limit the negative effects of the condition. Eating healthier means:

- Enjoying a variety of foods, including vegetables, whole grains, fruits, non-fat dairy foods, healthy fats, and lean meats or meat substitutes
- Trying not to eat too much food or too much of one type of food
- Spacing your meals evenly throughout the day
- Not skipping meals

If you smoke, quit, as quitting is one of the best ways to stave off the devastating complications of diabetes, including heart disease. Most importantly, visit your doctor regularly to monitor your condition for lifelong health.

For more on managing your diabetes, contact Dr. Tom Saad, board-certified family medicine physician with Borgess Family Medicine, at (269) 552.0100.