Diocese creates new second collection to benefit diocesan priests retirement fund

In order to adequately provide for the retirement needs of all diocesan priests, The Diocese of Kalamazoo will ask all parishes to conduct a second collection on March 1st and 2nd. Monies collected through the “Diocesan Priests Retirement Collection” will directly benefit the Bishop Paul V. Donovan Good Shepherd Fund and be used to fill a significant gap in priests’ retirement.

“Many faithful priests are left with minimal income upon retirement,” remarked Michael Emmons, diocesan Chancellor and General Administrator.

“They participate in the Social Security program, but since they receive modest salaries during their many years of ministry, their monthly Social Security benefits are much smaller than those typically received by retired lay people.”

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

As is the case with many companies and institutions with pension plans in today’s world, the diocesan priests’ retirement program is not fully funded.

The Diocesan Priest Retirement Collection has been approved by Bishop Bradley to be conducted in the diocese for five consecutive years. A small portion of the collection will also give some immediate relief to current retired priests who have not received a raise in their pension for five years.

“By building the diocesan priests retirement fund we will ensure adequate retirement and health coverage in the years ahead for those who have served the Diocese of Kalamazoo with their priestly ministry,” said Emmons.

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

For additional information please contact Jeffrey Phelan, Chief Financial Officer, Diocese of Kalamazoo, 269-903-0191.

Bishop Bradley to celebrate Mass and Anointing of the Sick at Borgess on February 10

Each year the Church celebrates the World Day of Prayer for the Sick to recognize those suffering from illness and their caregivers. Many parishes embrace the sick and suffering by celebrating the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick on the World Day of the Sick. Bishop Bradley will celebrate this sacrament during Mass at Borgess Hospital, Lawrence Education Center Auditorium (1521 Gull Road), at noon on February 10th. All are welcome to attend. Any parish in the diocese for five consecutive years. A small portion of the collection will also give some immediate relief to current retired priests who have not received a raise in their pension for five years.

“By building the diocesan priests retirement fund we will ensure adequate retirement and health coverage in the years ahead for those who have served the Diocese of Kalamazoo with their priestly ministry,” said Emmons.

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For additional information please contact Jeffrey Phelan, Chief Financial Officer, Diocese of Kalamazoo, 269-903-0191.

The 2014 Diocesan Youth Rally, “Be Amazed” celebrates the fact that God is with us throughout our journey in life. With nearly 350 attending the youth rally last year, this year’s event, to be held on Saturday, March 22, has expanded to a new venue, Northwestern Middle School (176 Limit Street, Battle Creek, MI 49037).

Youth will find inspiration and humor in this year’s keynote speaker, Jackie Francois, a full-time traveling speaker, singer/songwriter, and worship leader from Orange County, Calif. She has been involved in youth ministry since she graduated high school and travels the world speaking to young people about God’s love. She was one of the keynote speakers at the most recent National Catholic Youth Conference held last November in Indianapolis.

Francois has been singing nearly her whole life. After her debut album, “Your Kingdom is Glorious,” was released in 2008, she continued to cultivate her talents and gifts as a songwriter, worship leader and speaker. Her most recent release, “Divine Comedy,” is described on her website as “showcase(n) her evolving musical talent and is a true celebration of life with songs of joy and tenderness.” More information about Francois and her ministry may be found on www.spiritandsong.com.

Registration forms for the Youth Rally can be found on the diocesan website, www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org. The early bird registration deadline is March 5, 2014. Sponsorship opportunities are available. If you are interested in volunteering, or for any additional information, contact Tim McNamara, (269) 903-0139 or tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.
I can certainly use all the liberation I can get and what a bonus to get a new encounter — with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching letter, Joy of the Gospel, catching up on my “Gospels in a Year” emails that flood my in-box through with my coffee, basking in a quiet still-sleeping household, and have my hear a story from the Bible. “Be still. And know. That I am God.”

I’m incredulous at most people’s need to always be “plugged in,” “how can most have no choice with school closings and dire driving conditions. I get it — you’re in charge.”

I’m patient with the force of nature lately and find myself thinking, “yeah, God, a bit dejected at the seemingly endless gray skies, I’m childishly impatient during these historically frigid temperatures and dramatic storms I feel a bit like Elijah — looking for God in the dramatic. Feeling a bit at the seemingly endless gray skies, I’m childishly impatient with the force of nature lately and find myself thinking, “yeah, God, I get it — you’re in charge.”

But like Elijah mentioned in the scriptural story above who was waiting and looking for God in the winds, earthquakes and fires, I’m surprised to learn that God’s not trying to get my attention with dramatic intervention but rather is waiting to speak to me in the silence of my heart — with a whisper.

Slowing down during these winter days is the easy part — we almost have no choice with school closings and dire driving conditions. It’s liberating silence’s that bit trickier. But as my wise mother says, incredulous at most people’s need to always be “plugged in,” “how can we hear what God’s saying to us if we’re never quiet?”

One of my favorite moments during my Sunday school class is when I’m seated on the floor with my bright-eyed four-year-olds and we sing a little Bible verse song (complete with hand motions) as we prepare to hear a story from the Bible. “Be still. And know. That I am God.”

Lately I’ve been embracing the stillness more — trying to be more at ease with slowing down and listening. Sunday mornings I’ll curl up with my coffee, basking in a quiet still-sleeping household, and have my own coffee-klatz with God. Sometimes I’ll let Him speak to me as I catch up on my “Gospels in a Year” emails that flood my in-box through the week, or I’ll linger on a particular passage in whatever spiritual book I’m reading (right now it’s The Catholic Perspective on Paul by Taylor Marshall).

I like to think I’m taking Pope Francis’ advice as he writes in his recent letter, Joy of the Gospel, “Thanks solely to this encounter—or renewed encounter — with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption.” I can certainly use all the help I can get and what a bonus to get a renewed friendship along the way.

Pope Francis February Intentions
Elders. That the Church and society may respect the wisdom and experience of older people.

Collaboration in Evangelization. That priests, religious, and lay people may work together with generosity.

Sounds of Silence

[1 Kings 19:11]
**“Ordinary Joy”**

February is chronologically the shortest month of the year. Even in Leap Years (which 2014 is not) February is only longer by one day. And yet, since it comes in the depths of the winter season, this month can feel interminable. At least in January there are the leftovers of the Christmas, New Years and Epiphany celebrations to keep our life interesting and busy. Even though this has been a snowier and colder winter than the past several, in January we can be excited about playing in the snow, going skiing or looking at the beauty of the winter scenes outside as we sit by the fireplace and listen to our favorite music or watch TV. But February is a different story. This seems to be the month when winter just feels oppressive; the novelty of seeing beautiful snow scenes is replaced by the annoyance of the mounds of plowed snow with no place else to put it. Except for the excitement of the Super Bowl at the beginning of the month and Valentine’s Day in mid-month, there is not much else to distract us from the long winter days and nights of this shortest, but still longest feeling, month of the year.

On top of that, in our Liturgical life, we have returned to the Ordinary Time of the year. Advent, Christmas/Epiphany, Lent/Easter — celebrate special times in the Life of Christ, and account for a little more than a third of the entire year. The Ordinary Time of the Year, which began after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (this year on January 19th), lasts until Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, which this year begins on March 5th; and then resumes following the Easter seasons, on June 9th and lasts until November 29th, when Advent starts and a new Church Year begins anew.

Ordinary Time allows us to reflect on the entire and “ordinary” life and ministry of Christ. Nothing, of course, about the life and ministry of Jesus is “ordinary”; yet, during Ordinary Time, we focus on the day-in and day-out mystery of Christ: His life, miracles and teachings as recorded in the four Gospel accounts of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And we can speculate and meditate on the ordinary things that Jesus did in His life on earth: He was raised in a family — indeed, a “holy” family, but in a family setting just like families in which most of us are blessed to be raised; that Jesus’ parents worried about Him, and even became frantic when He was “lost” in the temple on their journey from Jerusalem back home to Nazareth; that during His formative years and His “hidden life,” Jesus “grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and men.” (Luke 2:52) This was all part of the ordinary time of Jesus’ life and ministry.

Sometimes we use that word, ordinary, in a pejorative manner. In part, that may be the result of the commercialization of our society, which constantly sends the message that everything we have, buy, and are needs to be extraordinary, new, shiny, bigger, better, faster — more super, than anything, or anyone, else. Ordinary is passé; we have to be extraordinary. And yet, we live most of our lives in the ordinariness of our lives, going to school or work, fulfilling our daily responsibilities, and doing what we need to do. Just as Jesus did, we too “grow in wisdom, age and grace” in the ordinary experiences of life; we experience blessings in the ordinary; we sometimes feel sorrow, but we also find true and lasting joy in the ordinary. And so it makes sense that when we come to Church to celebrate the Eucharist as the regular (dare we say, ordinary) source and strength of our spiritual lives, that nearly two-thirds of the Liturgical Year is Ordinary Time.

“Joy” is a great word. It’s a different word than “happiness.” We all want to be “happy”; in fact, one of the three basic rights that our country is founded on is the “right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Unfortunately, there are so many definitions as to what happiness means, or what it takes to make a person happy. Some people drive themselves crazy or become frantic when He was “lost” in the temple on their journey from Jerusalem back home to Nazareth; that during His formative years and His “hidden life,” Jesus “grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and men.” (Luke 2:52) This was all part of the ordinary time of Jesus’ life and ministry.

Sometimes we use that word, ordinary, in a pejorative manner. In part, that may be the result of the commercialization of our society, which constantly sends the message that everything we have, buy, and are needs to be extraordinary, new, shiny, bigger, better, faster — more super, than anything, or anyone, else. Ordinary is passé; we have to be extraordinary. And yet, we live most of our lives in the ordinariness of our lives, going to school or work, fulfilling our daily responsibilities, and doing what we need to do. Just as Jesus did, we too “grow in wisdom, age and grace” in the ordinary experiences of life; we experience blessings in the ordinary; we sometimes feel sorrow, but we also find true and lasting joy in the ordinary. And so it makes sense that when we come to Church to celebrate the Eucharist as the regular (dare we say, ordinary) source and strength of our spiritual lives, that nearly two-thirds of the Liturgical Year is Ordinary Time.

Recently our Holy Father, Pope Francis, issued an Apostolic Exhortation entitled “Evangelii Gaudium,” or “The Joy of the Gospel.” This rather long but extremely insightful letter flows from the most recent World Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization held in October 2012. At the very beginning of the Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis states: “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness... I wish to encourage the Church, faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.” (# 1) And shortly after that, the Pope calls us all to a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ through a conversion of heart in these words: “I invite all Christians everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.” (#3)
This wonderful Apostolic Exhortation is well worth reading for yourselves. You may find a copy on our diocesan website (www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org) or the Vatican’s website at www.vatican.va. Printed versions are available as well at Newman’s Catholic Bookshoppe, or the USCCB publishing office (www.usccb.org). On some of these cold, frigid, long February nights, it would be good to spend time reflecting on the “Joy of the Gospel.” As the Pope says in § 46, “Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way.”

My dear sisters and brothers in faith, let us embrace the joy of this ordinary time to begin, or to renew, the personal encounter with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, or (as the Holy Father says) at least allow our Lord and Savior to encounter us. Let us do so through prayer, through reflection and reading, and through the response of a heart open to being filled with the joy of God’s love—a joy that will fill our hearts in the special, and the ordinary, times of our lives.

Borgess Medical Center once again has earned the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines quality achievement award for both heart failure and stroke care.

Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure is an in-hospital program for improving care by promoting consistent adherence to the latest scientific treatment guidelines. Studies credit this program with reductions in deaths within 30 days of leaving the hospital and with lower re-hospitalization rates.

Since its initiation in 2003, 1,656 hospitals have entered more than 2 million patient records into the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke database. Numerous published studies demonstrate this program’s success in achieving measurable patient outcome improvements, including reductions in deaths within 30 days of leaving the hospital.

“Get With The Guidelines is designed to ensure hospitals like Borgess consistently care for cardiac and stroke patients by following the most up-to-date guidelines and recommendations,” said Paul Spade, president and CEO, Borgess Health. “The program empowers health care teams to save lives and reduce health care costs by adhering to evidence-based practices. I congratulate our doctors, nurses and other professionals who work hard each day to turn treatment guidelines into lifelines.”

For more information on Get With The Guidelines recognition, visit heart.org/myhealthcare.

Combined collection for the Churches in Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and Latin America will take place the weekend of Feb. 1-2, 2014

By Lisa Irwin

Like the members of the early church, who brought forth their gifts to share with those who were in need, we are called to share our gifts with our brothers and sisters in Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and Latin America. Even the smallest gift will support and encourage the Catholic people in these regions. The proceeds of the collection are split evenly among these three national collections:

Eastern and Central Europe — Restoring the Church, Building the Future

For many in the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as parts of Asia, the aftermath of 70 years of Soviet rule is experienced through poverty, infrequent pastoral care, and lack of buildings for the faithful to worship in and in which to cultivate their faith. Your support helps to restore the Church of this region and build the future through grants that provide pastoral care, affordable shelter, funding for building renovations and a cultural and spiritual education to those in need, thereby restoring the Church and building the future of Central and Eastern Europe. Visit http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/central-and-eastern-europe/index.cfm to learn more.

Church in Latin America — Live Faith

Catholics in Latin America and the Caribbean face many challenges, including violence and a lack of both clergy and lay leadership to witness to the gospel message. Your gift to the collection will fund catechists and lay leadership programs, youth ministry programs, and seminarian education in Latin America and the Caribbean, ensuring that present and future generations will have the opportunity to deepen and share their faith. Visit http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/latin-america/index.cfm to learn more.

Solidarity Fund for Africa

Did you know that by 2025 nearly one-sixth of the world’s Catholic population is expected to be living on the African continent? The Church in Africa reveals a picture of both suffering and hope. Many people face a daily reality of food insecurity, water shortage, unemployment, lack of medical care, and illiteracy. At the same time, Catholicism is flourishing among the people of Africa. There are many vocations, and many of these new priests and sisters come to serve the people of the United States. The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa gives much needed aid to the Church in Africa while expressing the gratitude of the Church in the United States for the warm and generous assistance of the African priests and sisters in our parishes. Visit http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/solidarity-fund-for-africa/index.cfm to learn more.

**St. Stanislaus Parish Sweetheart Soup Dinner**

**Sunday, February 16, 2014**

**11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**Featuring:**

- Authentic Czarnina, Broccoli and Cheese, Chili, Seafood Chowder, Chicken Noodle, Hearty Potato and New England Clam Chowder.
- Plus a bountiful Salad Bar, Homem‍ae Breads & Rolls, Pies, Cheesecakes, Desserts and More.
- Cash and Basket Raffles

**St. Stanislaus Parish Hall**

1863 13th Avenue

Dorr, Michigan 49323

**For more information, call St. Stanislaus Parish at (269) 793-7258**
Parish playpen project benefits Catholic Network’s youngest clients

For more than five years, St. Mary of Assumption, Three Oaks and St. Agnes Mission Parish, Sawyer have been sponsoring Catholic Network’s Parish Playpen Project, collecting new and gently used items for mothers and babies who seek services at Catholic Charities (CCDOK).

“If there is a need, we want to help,” says Peggy Wagner, volunteer for both parishes. “We’re such a family-friendly parish and Father Don Suberlak is so supportive of this project. We look forward to helping every year!”

Ten additional parishes throughout the diocese also supported the Parish Playpen Project in 2013. Those parishes include: St. Augustine Cathedral, Kalamazoo; St. Ambrose, Parochial; St. Martin of Tours, Vicksburg; St. Ann, Augusta; St. Margaret, Otsego; St. Mary, Three Oaks; St. Mary, Kalamazoo; Holy Family, Decatur; St. Thomas More, Kalamazoo; St. Basil, South Haven.

If you would like to sponsor the Parish Playpen Project at your Parish (or school or organization) or learn more about how you can help CCDOK serve our community, contact Jeanine Boehm, CCDOK Volunteer Coordinator at 381-1234. Information is also available at our website, www.ccdok.org, under the “Helping Others” tab and “In Kind Gifts.”

Shalom Media expands into the United States with new magazine and cable station

Shalom Media is expanding its reach into the United States through the innovative use of digital, electronic and print media. This Catholic media ministry introduced itself to the English-speaking community in the United States by way of its magazine, Shalom Tidings. Launched in December 2012 and published every two months, the magazine offers personal stories of hope, inspiration, and faith in action.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville, who serves as the new President-Elect of the USCCB, has said of Shalom Tidings, “This magazine is a wonderful example of the new evangelization since it communicates on many levels: to those active in their faith who seek renewal, to those who have become tepid in their commitment to their faith, and to those seekers who are thirsty for a relationship with Jesus Christ in and through the Church.”

In 2013, the ministry hosted its first Shalom Festival, held in thirty cities across the United States. In 2014, twenty-one Shalom Festivals will be held in the United States and Canada. These one-day conferences feature the Celebration of Holy Eucharist by the Archbishops/Bishops from the respective Diocese, spirit-filled praise and worship, and international Catholic speakers. Shalom Media is planning on bringing a festival to the Kalamazoo area on May 24th which will kick-off with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Paul J. Bradley.

The newest project of Shalom Media USA is perhaps its most significant. The ministry is in the final stages of launching Shalom World — God’s Own Channel! — a 24/7 English-language Catholic television channel which will be available by satellite. The channel is scheduled to launch on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27, 2014, as well as the canonization day for Blessed John XXIII and Blessed John Paul II.

In 1989, several young adults in Kerala, a state in South India, would gather together to pray. The group recognized that the unrest seen in individuals, families, and in society stemmed from a lack of peace within each person’s heart. They understood that that peace could only come from a relationship with Jesus Christ. From that humble beginning, the ministry has been propelled forward through the intercessory and financial support of like-minded individuals who constitute the Shalom Peace Fellowship.

In the United States and Canada, Shalom Media manages eight production centers which are busy creating programs for broadcast on Shalom World television. Communication Manager Eby Kurian explains that “The Holy Spirit is behind this entire project. He leads us, gives us gifts and talents to serve the Lord, and inspires those working on the programs and those who will view it.”

A variety of programs will be offered on this upcoming family channel, including live daily Mass, Catholic preachers, ministries, missionaries, documentaries, dramas, animations, talk shows, news, music videos, movies, concerts, praise and worship, conferences (men’s and women’s, Charismatic, Marian, Divine Mercy, Eucharistic Congress, Pro-Life), music videos, movies, concerts, praise and worship, conferences (men’s and women’s, Charismatic, Marian, Divine Mercy, Eucharistic Congress, Pro-Life), and youth and young adult retreats, among others, from around the world. One feature unique to Shalom World is that it will broadcast all the liturgical rites found in the Catholic Church from around the world.

You can find out more about Shalom World and the multitude of other initiatives of Shalom Media USA at www.shalomworld.org.

Providing warmth in times of need: Diocesan Heating Assistance Program

The Diocesan Heating Assistance Program (DHAP) operates from Monday, January 13, 2014 through Wednesday, March 26, 2014, or until 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 $200 per household per heating assistance season. Anyone still wishing to make a contribution to the 2013-2014 Diocesan 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 Deacon Ed Feltes at HeatingAssistance@dioceseofkalamazoo.org or Kerry Williams at kerrywilliams@ccdok.org. May God bless all those who contribute and those who are in need.

The Other Six Days By Jane Knuth

The Mission

“The mission of… the Society (of St. Vincent de Paul) is to join together in a bond of friendship, and to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering…”

— The Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

As a Vincentian, it’s my mission to change myself by growing in friendship for my fellow members, and in love for Jesus by serving Him in the poor. But when things get really busy at the thrift store, I forget all about changing myself, and loving the poor can become muddled. One of my jobs is to write the thank-you notes to our monetary donors. This is fun because I know I am writing to people who already love the poor and who love God. During the latest holiday season there was a whole lot of love going on, so there were dozens of notes of gratitude to send out. It took me a couple of days but the mission was accomplished.

I was feeling very satisfied with myself and the work I had done when “Jesus” walked in with a gentle reminder about what it really means to love the poor. He handed our president an envelope with $400 in it. This was surprising because this particular “Jesus” had just donated the week previous.

“He” explained: “Well, I gave you a donation of five twenties in cash last week, but the thank-you note I received said that it was ‘five hundred dollars’ instead. So, rather than make you re-write the letter, I figured it was the Holy Spirit hinting for a little more, and here it is.”

Who does that sort of thing?

What kind of foolish person gives five times what they intended just because they got a messed up thank-you note?

Oh, yeah…that kind of foolish person.

It sure was nice to get a visit from Jesus.

Special Journey to the Shrines of Ireland

Join Fr. Robert Cregan and Fr. Joseph Xavier

For a special travel presentation Thursday, February 27, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
St. Mary’s Parish, 500 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw

Dublin, Brazen Head Pub dinner, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Rock of Cashel, Kinsale, Cork Heritage Centre, Old Midleton Distillery, Blarney Folk Park, Farm visit, Galway, Our Lady of Knock Shrine, Clonmacnoise, Athlone.

Prices start at just $2,999 per person, includes: All transfers, hotels, 12 Meals, tours, taxes, and fees.Call SeaLandAir Travel to Book Now and Save $250 per person 269-657-5529

For reservations please RSVP by calling SeaLandAir Travel
Phone: 269-657-5529
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Bishop Bradley commends Catholic school education during annual celebration

Bishop Paul J. Bradley recognized the high achievement and dedication of the Catholic Schools communities throughout the diocese and affirmed the diocesan commitment to Catholic school education.

“The Diocese of Kalamazoo is committed to “Advancing Catholic Schools,” as one of our key diocesan priorities, ” he stated. “Countless stories and achievements underscore our schools vision statement which states; “We are a community centered in the Eucharistic Christ and an educational system of the highest standards, rooted in our Catholic faith. Our goal is to equip students with an excellent education and a solid faith formation so each student may know the faith confidently, live the faith in a community where families and teachers work together to advocate for each other’s salvation and Sainthood, and share the faith with relevance and loving courage throughout their lives.”

“Every time I have the opportunity to visit one of our schools and interact with our students,” he continued, “I can witness the effects of our families and teachers working together to form our students in the faith and I am confident that we are living out our vision. We are well on our way to forming and educating the future leaders of our Church and society.”

The 24 Catholic schools in the diocese held a number of activities during the week of January 27th through February 1st. Below is a sampling of highlights from our schools that illustrate this year’s Catholic Schools Week Theme: Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service. To find out more about our Catholic schools visit: www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org/schools or www.wantthemore.com.

Hackett Catholic Central announces Athletic Hall of Fame 2014 Inductees

In conjunction with Catholic Schools Week, Hackett Catholic Central Athletic Director Mike Garvey announced the 2014 Athletic Hall of Fame inductees. They are: Barb and Jim Gilbert, coaches, long time supporters; Duane Muelman: Longtime coach and athletic department contributor; Liz Zannoni, went on to play soccer at the University of Notre Dame; Dave McCrorry, class of 1961, excelled in football; Duane Kalafut, played football and basketball and ran track; and Tim Barrett, Class of 1956, played football, basketball, tennis and ran track.

The 2014 Hall of Fame Induction will be held at Hackett Catholic Central on Friday, April 25 in the cafeteria with a social hour beginning at 6 p.m. followed by the presentation and dinner. Tickets will be available after February 17 and may be reserved by phoning Hackett Catholic Central at 269-381-2646.

St. Joseph Elementary School, Battle Creek, second graders, collected much-needed toiletries and necessities and made “Christmas Sockings” to benefit St. Vincent DePaul clients. Each class at the Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools performs a number of different service projects throughout the year.

LMC students clear 53 yards of leaves and debris in annual service project

On Monday, November 18, 133 Lake Michigan Catholic High School students, staff and parents worked together to help elderly and disabled parishioners in the area. The volunteers bundled up to face the cold and wind and traveled by cars and buses to the homes in Coloma, Benton Harbor, Stevensville and St. Joseph where they raked and stuffed leaves into hundreds of bags.

Students, faculty and parents managed to clear 53 yards of leaves and debris. The leaf raking project began in 2009 with 20 lawns and the freshman class. It has grown to encompass the entire high school and neighborhood. On Monday, November 18, 133 Lake Michigan Catholic High School students, staff and parents worked together to help elderly and disabled parishioners in the area. The volunteers bundled up to face the cold and wind and traveled by cars and buses to the homes in Coloma, Benton Harbor, Stevensville and St. Joseph where they raked and stuffed leaves into hundreds of bags.

St. Philip Catholic High School’s girls volleyball team was invited to the state capital in Lansing to receive a special proclamation for its tremendous success. The team earned its eighth-straight state championship last November.

St. Augustine Cathedral School community is focused on the theme of the 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit. The theme is woven throughout school service projects, classroom activities, special events, ‘school family’ activities and displays.

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Students, faculty and parents managed to clear 53 yards of leaves and debris. The leaf raking project began in 2009 with 20 lawns and the freshman class. It has grown to encompass the entire high school and volunteers.

“The service project is part of our greater teaching of extending ourselves, even in difficult circumstances to serve others,” said John Berlin, Executive Director of Lake Michigan Catholic Schools. “One of the more impressive things was the willingness of our students to work beyond the scheduled time to assist their classmates to finish up the lawns.”

Battle Creek St. Joseph Middle School Spanish Club sponsored a food drive for a local immigrant family in need. Students delivered the collected items to Rev. Evelio Ramirez, who shared his experiences of his native country, Colombia and his Advent art project, with the students.
St. Mary’s Parish hosts new Eastside Choir, helps local community

In order to provide local access to the arts in an underserved Kalamazoo neighborhood, the Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus (KCC) has partnered with St. Mary’s Church, the Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association and Kalamazoo Public Schools to form a new, free KCC choir made up of children from the Eastside and Comstock. The choir will rehearse, perform free concerts and enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood to benefit the entire Kalamazoo area.

The Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus was founded in 1980 with one choir to fill the need for choral training at a time when the public schools could not offer such opportunities. It has grown to six choirs today, including the new Eastside Choir. “The Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus has never turned away a child that could not afford to pay,” said Leona Gould-McElhone, Outreach Director for the KCC. “But for some people, scholarships are not enough. They don’t have reliable transportation.” That is why the KCC developed the idea of forming satellite choirs in the neighborhoods.

The KCC interviewed many different organizations and decided to start a choir on the Eastside because it was the most underserved area. When they approached the Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association, they suggested that KCC ask St. Mary’s to host the new venture.

Pat Taylor, Director of the Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association said “It seemed like a good fit that suits everyone’s needs: the choir — having a space to practice that families are familiar with, St. Mary’s — an opportunity to reach out to our eastside residents by making this space available and the Eastside Neighborhood Association — allowing us to inform our residents of another great activity … that will enhance their children’s lives.” Indeed, it seemed such a good fit that the KCC had no difficulty convincing St. Mary’s to help out. “We at St. Mary’s are excited about the opportunity the Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus is offering the children of our neighborhood,” said Deacon Pat Hall, Parish Coordinator at St. Mary’s.

“We have wonderful facilities at St. Mary’s and the Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association knew that we have a heart for serving the community through outreach programs like this. Part of St. Mary’s mission is to reach out and be involved in activities like this in the community.” Weekly rehearsals and free winter and spring concerts for the community will take place at St. Mary’s. The Eastside, Prep and Treble Choirs will sign together in their next concert called “New Beginnings, an Eastside Spring Song” at St. Mary’s on March 23rd at 4 pm. A reception immediately following the concert in Fr. Bart Hall will give parents and children from the different neighborhoods an opportunity to interact.

Families interested in learning more about the Eastside Choir or the Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus should contact Leona Gould-McElhone, 269-547-7183 or Leona@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org.

14 things to do in 2014

Wondering what you can do for your faith this year? Here are a few suggestions for 2014:

1. Go to confession.
   Start off the New Year with a clean conscience!

2. Sponsor a youth.
   Lots of opportunities abound for youth this year including The Presence High School Retreat on February 7-9 and the Diocesan Youth Rally for all middle and high school students on March 22. Give the gift of faith this year and help a youth get to one of these events.

3. Be more forgiving.
   Practice saying the words “I’m sorry,” “I forgive you,” and “I love you” with the people in your life.

4. Join a group.
   The Diocese offers something for everyone: the Theological Debate Club for Men, Faith In All Things Business Person’s Luncheon. Check out the calendar on the diocesan website for more details on each of these programs.

5. Go on retreat.
   The Annual Diocesan Retreat this year will be March 1-2 at Transformations Spirituality Center in Kalamazoo. Fr. Marcus Mori will speak on “The Everlasting Day: on the reality and joys of heaven.”

6. Practice the corporal works of mercy.
   Take time out of your schedule to bring a meal to a neighbor, visit someone in the hospital or volunteer at a soup kitchen

7. Recharge your family faith.
   The Monthly Energizer is a program sponsored by the Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus (KCC) has partnered with St. Mary’s to help out. “We at St. Mary’s are excited about the opportunity the Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus is offering the children of our neighborhood,” said Deacon Pat Hall, Parish Coordinator at St. Mary’s.

“I’m sorry,” “I forgive you,” and “I love you” with the people in your life.

8. Pray more.
   Go to Mass during the week once, visit an adoration chapel, or join the Rosary Society (call 269-342-0621 for more information) and pray a decade a day.

   The diocese will host a Digital Church Conference on March 7 to help church leaders learn how to use social media to reach out to lost parishioners.

10. Read God’s Word.
    Pick a book of the Bible and read it with a friend.

11. Grow your faith.
    The diocese offers several programs that will help deepen your understanding of the faith. Why Faith meets the first Monday of each month at 8 pm at St. Mary Parish in Kalamazoo. Spring Faith Escape this year will explore the topic of Man of Heaven Vitaen on Thursdays from 7-8:30 pm beginning May 22 at St. Catherine of Siena Stanley Centre.

12. Go to the Annual Catechetical Conference.
    The theme of the conference this year on October 4th is “Being the New Evangelization” with keynote speaker Meg Hunter-Kilmer.

    Pray for the seminarians and religious in formation from our diocese or contact the vocations office to make a contribution to our seminarian endowment fund.

14. Thank a priest.
    Make a donation in his honor to the Diocesan Priest Retirement Fund and help provide for our priests’ future needs.

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With Pinnacle Pilgrimages, you are professionally escorted touring spiritual Catholic Sites, Shrines and exploring our religious heritage. Stay in Kraków’s Old Town or in Rome, you stay just blocks from St. Peters Square! Enjoy Europe’s historic Churches, Art and Ancient Ruins.

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94% of these women were single in times of trouble. In addition to able support system to assist them had witnessed or experienced do-nothing. Many of these women were homeless or precariously housed, baby. Many of these women were in most need. Much like a triage, the screening will focus on abuse, depression, and substance abuse – all major risk factors in any pregnancy. Do you have skills or ideas that might help with this project? This is a perfect opportunity to respond to Pope Francis’ call to “bear fruit and rejoice, knowing that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first.” Would you like to learn more? Pope Francis also calls us to “boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.”

Please take the initiative and call Jeannine Boehm at 269-381-1234.

Annual Diocesan Retreat focuses on heaven
The Annual Diocesan Retreat, March 1-2, 2014, will be held at Transformations Spirituality Center and will help focus on the joy of heaven. The retreat, led by Fr. Francis Marotit, parochial vicar, St. Philip Parish, Battle Creek, is entitled “The Everlasting Day: on the reality and joys of heaven.”

In addition to spiritual talks, the retreat includes Masses, reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration and personal opportunities for prayer. Early registration deadline for the retreat is February 5th. Cost ranges from $125 for a single occupancy room to $80 for sleep at home and goes up $20 after February 5th.

For more information and to register, contact Jane Bodway, jlbodway@dioceseofkalamazoo.org or (269) 903-0147.

Catholic Charities’ Caring Network mentoring program seeks volunteers
By Kerry Williams
Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo
Did you know that Catholic Charities’ Caring Network program serves approximately one out of every six pregnant women in Kalamazoo County? The program meets a variety of needs and supports life-affirming choices. In 2013, staff and volunteers helped 550 women to have healthy pregnancies and prepare for their new baby. Many of these women were homeless or precariously housed, had experienced abuse or neglect, had witnessed or experienced domestic violence, and lacked a reliable support system to assist them in times of trouble. In addition to these overwhelming challenges, 94% of these women were single parents and 95% of these women were living in poverty. The need is great and the resources are limited. Can you join us? In response to this ever-increasing need and limited resources, Catholic Charities is seeking caring and compassionate volunteers to help us develop and implement a comprehensive screening and intake service that meets the needs of all these women while helping us direct the most intensive services to those most in need. Much like a triage, the screening will focus on abuse, depression, and substance abuse – all major risk factors in any pregnancy.

Do you have skills or ideas that might help with this project? This is a perfect opportunity to respond to Pope Francis’ call to “bear fruit and rejoice, knowing that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first.” Would you like to learn more? Pope Francis also calls us to “boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.”

Please take the initiative and call Jeannine Boehm at 269-381-1234.

The Catholic Difference
What popes can and can’t do
By George Weigel
A good friend habitually refers to the Wall Street Journal as his “favorite Catholic newspaper” — a bit of whimsy without foundation, given the openness of the Journal’s op-ed pages to serious Catholic argument on numerous issues. But just as Homer occasionally nods, so does America’s best newspaper. And on Jan. 2, the Journal nodded, big-time, in this description of why Pope Francis was one of the “People to Watch” in 2014:

“After raising expectations for shifting views toward homosexuality, divorce, the environment, and society’s obligations to the poor, the pontiff is expected to also undertake bureaucratic reform at the Vatican, as well as the possible expansion of the role of women in the Church.”

By my count, and bypassing the unnecessarily split infinitive, there are four errors in that one sentence, plus one grave misconstrual of ecclesiastical “roles.”

Although it is very difficult for those who see Catholicism through political lenses to grasp this, popes are not like presidents or state governors, and doctrine is not like public policy. Which means that a change of papal “administration” does not — indeed cannot — mean a change of Catholic “views.” Doctrine, as the Church understands it, is not a matter of anyone’s “views,” but of settled understandings of the truth of things.

Nor are popes free agents who govern by the seat of their pants, if you’ll permit the phrase. Prior to the completion of Vatican II’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Pope Paul VI proposed adding to that seminal document a sentence stating that the pope is “accountable to the Lord alone” — an effort, I suspect, to protect papal authority and freedom of action from potential civil or ecclesiastical encroachments. But the council’s Theological Commission rejected Pope Paul’s proposed amendment, noting that “the Roman Pontiff is … bound to reveal it, to the fundamental structure of the Church, to the sacraments, to the definitions of earlier Councils, and (to) other obligations too numerous to mention.”

Those “other obligations” include honoring the truth of things built into the world and into us. At an academic conference years ago, a distinguished Catholic philosopher remarked (perhaps hyperbolically) that “If the pope said that ‘2+2 = 5,’ I’d believe him.” An even more distinguished Catholic philosopher gave the correct, and far more Catholic, response: “If the Holy Father said that ‘2+2 = 5,’ I would say publicly, ‘Perhaps I have misunderstood His Holiness’s meaning.’ Privately, I would pray for his sanity.”

Popes, in other words, are not authoritarian figures, who teach what they will and as they will. The pope is the guardian of an authoritative tradition, of which he is the servant, not the master. Pope Francis knows this as well as anyone, as he has emphasized by repeating that he is “son of the Church” who believes and teaches what the Church believes and teaches.

Thus the notion that this pontificate is going to change Catholic teaching on the morality of homosexual acts, or on the effects of divorce-and-remarriage on one’s communion with the Church, is a delusion, although the Church can surely develop its pastoral approach to homosexuals and the divorced. As for the environment and the poor, Catholic social doctrine has long taught that we are stewards of creation and that the least of the Lord’s brethren have a moral claim on our solidarity and our charity; the social doctrine leaves open to debate the specific, practical means by which people of good will, and governments, exercise that stewardship, and that solidarity and charity.

And “the role of women in the Church”? No doubt various Church structures would benefit by drawing upon a wider range of talent (irrespective of gender) than the talent-pool from which Church leaders typically emerge. Still, in an interview with La Stampa before Christmas, Pope Francis made it clear that identifying leadership in the Church with ordination is both a form of clericalism and another way of instrumentalisizing Catholic women. Flying a Vatican desk, Francis was suggesting, is not the acme of discipleship.

As for Curial reform: Oremus, as we used to say.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Weigel’s column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver.

Phone: 303-715-3215.
**TIME** magazine honors pope at expense of predecessors

By Rev. Robert Barron

It is splendid indeed that *Time* magazine has made Pope Francis its “Person of the Year” for 2013. The Pope has captured the imagination of the world and has breathed a new life into the Catholic Church. The authors of the Time piece are right in saying that his choice of name has set the tone for his papacy so far: he has resolved to be, like his namesake of old, a friend of the poor and the forgotten. He has determined to be a good person of compassion, leading with the merciful face of Christ.

But details matter in this regard: his choice to live in the Casa Santa Marta rather than in the Apostolic Palace, being driven around in an old clunker rather than a Vatican limousine, paying his own bill at the clerical residence where he stayed prior to his election, flying coach class, embracing the man with the severely deformed face (How like St. Francis who famously embraced a leper). The controversial interviews that he gave just a few months ago also speak of this change in focus. The Pope does not want priests and other Catholic ministers to lead with the “hot button” issues largely centering around sexual morality; rather, he wants the Church to present itself as a “field hospital” after a battle, a place of comfort and mercy. His insistence that Holy Communion is “not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak” is also perfectly congruent with this shift in emphasis. As I say, all of this is remarkable and worth celebrating, and I’m glad the popular secular press has caught on.

However, there is something that has been bothering me ever since Francis became Pope, and its on rather massive display in the Time article, namely, a tendency to distinguish radically between this lovely Franciscan emphasis on mercy and love for the poor and the apparently far less than lovely emphasis on doctrine so characteristic of the Papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. There is actually a good deal of dangerous silliness in this way of characterizing things. If I might cite the much-maligned Benedict, the Church does essentially three things: it cares for the poor; it worships God; and it evangelizes. Isolate any of the three from the other two and distortions set in. Indeed, without deep care for the poor and for social justice, the worship of God can become lifeless (“liturgical fussiness”) and evangelizing can devolve into cultural criticism or mere intellectual debating.

But isolate care for the poor from the other two and equally problematic distortions ensue. Without the worship of God and evangelization, the Church deteriorates in short order into a welfare state, a NGO, a mere “NGO” in Francis’s own language. Now read the authors of the Time article: “In a matter of months, Francis has elevated the healing mission of the church — the church as servant and comforter of hurting people in often harsh world — above the doctrinal police work so important to his recent predecessors.” And “his vision is of a pastoral — and not doctrinaire — church.” This is so much nonsense.

The source of a good deal of this mischief is the 18th century philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose influence on the modern sensibility can scarcely be overstated. Kant famously held that religion is reducible to ethics. With the Enlightenment period, the doctrinal claims of the great religions had come to seem incredible to many, and worship a pathetic holdover from a more primitive time. For Kant, therefore, authentic, grown-up, enlightened religious people would see that morality is the heart of the matter, both doctrine and worship serving, at best, to bolster ethics. It is always a source of amazement to me how thoroughly modern people have gone down the Kantian autobahn in regard to this issue. How we take the following for granted: it doesn’t really matter what you believe, as long as you are a good person.

But the Kantian construal is simply repugnant to classical Christianity. In point of fact, Christians have been, from the beginning, massively interested in both worship and doctrine. How could you read any of the Gospels or any of the letters of Paul and think otherwise? Moreover, the great figures of the Church — Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Newman, etc., etc., have taken doctrine with utmost seriousness. No one doubts that Francis of Assisi himself loved the poor and marginalized, but how many realize that one of his principal concerns was for liturgical propriety?

This is the root of the “Person of the Year” controversy. The authors of the Time piece, the authors mention two features of Francis’s life which effectively undermine their central argument. The “Person of the Year” spends huge swathes of his day at prayer. Rising at five, he prays until seven and then celebrates Mass. And after dinner, he spends several more hours before the Blessed Sacrament. As has been the case with so many of the Church’s saints, his love for the poor flows from an intense worship of God. The article closes with a look at one of the Pope’s Wednes- day general audiences. The topic of Francis’s remarks that day was the resurrection of Jesus. After declaring the Church’s age-old doctrine, the Pope looked up from his text and asked the crowd, “do you believe it?” When they responded, “yes!” he said again, “do you believe it?” This is not a man who is unconcerned with clarity of dogma. I’m delighted that Time Magazine has made the Pope the “Person of the Year,” but I would caution all of the commentariat: don’t drive a wedge between the three dimensions of Francis’s life and of the Church’s life!

Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/Pastor of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award-winning documentary series, “Catholicism” and “Catholicism: The New Evangelization.” Learn more at www.WordOnFire.org

St. Blaise tradition helps keep people healthy

As we celebrate St. Blaise’s feast day on February 3, many Catholics will have on their throats and says this prayer:

*“Father, make this ([unlit]) candle burn with health and deliver you from ailments of the throat and from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*

The Diocesan Program Catalog 2013-2014

The Diocesan Program Catalog details a list of programs and workshops offered by the various Secretariats and ministry offices of the Diocesan Pastoral Center staff. Each entry includes a detailed description of the faith formation workshop, conference or course, the related cost and a contact person. All these programs are funded in part, or in whole, by parishioners’ generous support of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal. The catalog may be downloaded online at www.diocesekalamazoo.org/programs.
Bienvenida Sorcoro Truchan:
Nueva Directora Asociada – Iglesia Doméstica

Sorcoro nació en Hermosillo, Sonora, México de padres mexiteanos. Ha sido educada en México, Estados Unidos y África del Norte. Habla español, inglés, francés y algo de árabe. Tiene una Licenciatura en Administración de Empresas de la Universidad de la Sabana de los Estados Unidos, y ha tomado cursos de posgrado en estudios bilingües-bicultural de la Universidad de Eastern Michigan en Ypsilanti. Está casada con Tony Truchan y tienen cuatro hijos. Sorcoro trabajó anteriormente como Asistente Administrativa del Obispo Daniel Flores y Coordinadora de la Oficina de Familia, Matrimonio y Pro-Vida de la Arquidiócesis de Detroit. Sorcoro desea encontrarse con las familias hispanas y visitar todas las parroquias de la Diócesis de Kalamazoo. Siguiendo la visión del Obispo Bradley, ella desea entender las realidades de las diversas comunidades de la Diócesis y coordinar programas, iniciativas y recursos que ayudarán a fortalecer la Iglesia Doméstica (nuestro hogar y familia). Ofrece su tiempo involucrada con las familias, y pontificando a los grupos de jóvenes en las calles, madres solteras y ancianos descuidados. La pueden contactar directamente al 269-903-0199 o por medio electrónico al acerquémonos a saludar a Sorcoro y démosle la bienvenida cuando nos la encontremos en las parroquias o reuniones diocesanas.

Fortaleciendo las Familias en la Fe (Reflexión #4)
Por Veronica Rodríguez

“Los niños aprenden a farse 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 febrero: en estos días de invierno y especialmente este año que ha sido un poco más fuerte que los demás y tenemos que pasar mucho tiempo dentro de casa, ¿por qué no sacar un tiempo para reflexionar sobre las imágenes que tenemos en casa a nuestros hijos y lo más importante, explicarles el significado de esas imágenes? Muchos veces tenemos en casa imágenes religiosas que nuestros hijos ven a diario pero que no saben el por qué las tenemos ni su significado. El 2 de febrero, se celebra la Fiesta de la Virgen de la Candelaria. Candelaria es una palabra latina que viene de “candela” que significa bril- lante. Candida, vela, luz. Se celebra la Presentación del Niño Jesús al templo y la purificación de la Virgen María después del parto, según la costumbre de esa época (ver Lucas 2:22-39).

Otra actividad para los días de invierno puede ser contar cuentos en familia. Recorden que Jesús utilizaba cuentos para comunicar grandes verdades y una profunda sabiduría. Frente a frente, a través de estas historias familiares, podemos sacar a la luz valores y su significado.

Programa de Formación Pastoral y de Liderazgo de la Diócesis
El programa de formación pastoral y de liderazgo está en su tercer año de formación. Los estudiantes están trabajando en diferentes terrenos: sistema de discípulos, o cómo seguir a Jesús en persona. A pesar de las adversidades en que muchos de los miembros de esta comunidad conocieron a Jesús en persona.

Próximo Sínodo de los Obispos: Los desafíos pastorales de la familia en el contexto de la evangelización
El Papa Francisco ha convocado del 5 al 19 de octubre de 2014, la Tercera Asamblea General Extraordinaria del Sínodo de los obispos, que se celebrará en el Vaticano. Durante este año estaremos escuchando con frecuencia en nuestras parroquias sobre el Sínodo. El tema escogido para el Sínodo será “Los desafíos pastorales de la familia en el contexto de la evangelización”.

El sínodo participarán los patriarcas, los presidentes de las conferencias episcopales, tres religiosos en representación de los institutos religiosos superiores y los presidentes de los diocesanos de la curia romana. Unas 150 personas aproximadamente.

El padre Federico Lombardi, portavoz de la Santa Sede, explica: “es muy importante el anuncio de un Sí- nodo que no se ocupa de un tema de la pastoral de la familia. Este es el momento en el que el papa pretende lle- var adelante la reflexión y el camino de la comunidad de la Iglesia, con la participación responsable del epis- copado de las diferentes partes del mundo. La Iglesia se prepara para escuchar los problemas y expectativas que viven hoy tantas familias. El secretario especial del Sínodo, que ha sido el encargado de analizar los aspectos teológicos del documento preparatorio, ha destacado las palabras “atención, hospitalidad y misericordia” como claves que requiere el papa Francisco hacia las familias divididas o en situación irregular desde el punto de vista canónico, aquellas que están “en los suburbios geográfi- cos y existenciales”, en las que hay problemas “inédi- tos”, como el incremento de las parejas de hecho o el surgimiento de las uniones homosexuales con adopción de niños. Se trata de situaciones que “implican conse- cuencias pastorales de las más significativas”.

El proceso del Sínodo tendrá dos etapas: una Asamblea General Extraordinaria, que se celebrará en 2014, para recoger testimonios y propuestas de los obis- pos y una Asamblea General Ordinaria prevista para 2015, pensada para tomar acciones sobre la pastoral de la persona humana y de la familia.

La Secretaría general del Sínodo de los Obispos envió a los obispos del mundo un cuestionario de 38 preguntas, que abarcan nueve temas:

1. Sobre la difusión de la Sagrada Escritura y del Magisterio de la Iglesia sobre la familia
2. Sobre el matrimonio de acuerdo con la ley natural
3. La pastoral de la familia en el contexto de la evangelización
4. Sobre la pastoral para afrontar algunas situaciones matrimoniales difíciles
5. Sobre las uniones de personas del mismo sexo
6. Sobre la educación de los hijos de matrimonios irregulares
7. Sobre la abogacía de los esposos a la vida
8. Sobre la relación entre la familia y la persona
9. Otros desafíos y propuestas

Estamos atentos a este tema tan importante como es el Sínodo. (Algunas partes tomadas de Zenit.org)

Otras Cartas. Claves para Estudiar y Conocer la Biblia #17
Por Fanny Tabares

En los primeros años del cristianismo se fueron formando los Evangelios de diversas maneras. Los discípu- lones y los apóstoles con un gran espíritu misionero caminaron bastante predicando las enseñanzas de Jesús. Como viajaban tanto seguían manteniendo contacto y animando a sus comunidades a través de cartas que son ahora conocidas como cartas epístolas o epístolas (1 Timoteo, 2 Timoteo y 1 Tesalonicenses, 1, 2 y 3 Timoteo, y 1 y 2 Tesalonicenses).

Tenemos también otras cartas de otros autores como por ejemplo: Las cartas Primera, Segunda y Tercer a los Romanos, 1, 2 y 3 a los Corintios, a los Galáatas, a los Efesios, a los Filipenses, a los Colo- sos, a los Tessalonicenses, 1 y 2 y a Timoteo, a Tito, y a Filipo... Se trata de cartas que ofrecen servicio a la Comunidad Migrante.

Programa de Formación Pastoral y de Liderazgo de la Diócesis
El programa de formación pastoral y de liderazgo está en su tercer año de formación. Los estudiantes están trabajando en diferentes terrenos: sistema de discípulos, o cómo seguir a Jesús en persona.

Rincón de los Jóvenes Hispanos/Latinos
Por Veronica Rodríguez

Actividades Diciembre en el 2014:

1. Encuentro Diocesano Juvenil (Youth Rally), sábado 22 de marzo – Para todos los jóvenes del grado 8 al 12. El tema de este año es “Star dishes” (Comida del futuro). (Be Amazed). La conferencista principal será Jackie Frances.

2. Para las jóvenes que cumplen quince años y para sus padres, las fechas de los Retiros Diocesanos para la preparación de Quincea- ñeras son:
   - Sábado, 26 de Julio en St. Joseph Parish, Kalamazoo; y Sábado, 13 de Septiembre en St. Mary’s of the Assumption Parish, Bronson.

Recuerden que primero deben de hablar con su párroco (por lo menos 6 meses antes de la fecha que desean celebrar la quinceañera). Para más información sobre cualquiera de estos eventos, puede llamar al 269-903-0197.
February 6: Six Session Dynamic Catholic Workshop, St. Monica parish. Two sessions available 12:30 – 2:30 pm or 7-9 pm. Participants will receive a free copy of Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic (Cost: Free). To register call St. Monica Parish, 269-345-4389.

February 7-9: The Presence High School Retreat, Hackett Catholic Central. The Presence high school retreat is a chance for teens to encounter the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The weekend retreat will include music, talks and Eucharistic Adoration. Contact: Tim McNamara, 269-903-0139 or tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.


February 10: Theological Debate for Men. Topic: The Moon. TGI Fridays, West Main Street, Kalamazoo, 7-9 pm. Meets the 2nd Monday, every other month. Contact, Jamin Herold, 269-903-0141 or jherold@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

February 10: World Day of the Sick Mass, Borgess Hospital Lawrence Center with Bishop Bradley, noon.

Mattawan: February 15: Monthly Energizer, St. John Bosco Parish, Mattawan, 6 – 8 pm. The Monthly Energizer gives all a chance to get a bolt of faith energy each month as we gather for music, talks, crafts (for kids) and adoration. Meets the third Saturday of the month – May through December. Contact: Jamin Herold, 269-903-0141 or jherold@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

February 14-16: High School Come & See Weekend. Someجاد, St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana are holding a Come & See event for high school girls, freshmen to seniors. This is a chance to learn what it is like to be a nun in today’s world. Pray, eat, and recreate with the sisters. For more information contact Sister Michelle Sinchom at 800-738-9999, or visit our web page www.thedome.org/vocations, here you can also register online, or email vocation@thedome.org. Parent permission is required.

February 20, 2014: How to Save Your Marriage before Meeting your Spouse (College) with Jason Ever, Thursday, Feb 20 – 7pm Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. St. Thomas Church-St. John Student Center http://chastityproject.com/seminars/events/.

February 22: Diocesan Youth Rally. Keynote speaker Jackie Francios. Contact: Tim McNamara, 269-903-0139 or tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

March 22: Diocesan Youth Rally. Keynote speaker Jackie Francios. Contact: Tim McNamara, 269-903-0139 or tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

OUTSIDE THE DIocese: Lansing:

February 20, 2014: How to Save Your Marriage before Meeting your Spouse (College) with Jason Ever, Thursday, Feb 20 – 7pm Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. St. Thomas Church-St. John Student Center http://chastityproject.com/seminars/events/.

March 1-2: How to Save Your Marriage before Meeting your Spouse (College) with Jason Ever, Thursday, March 1 – 7pm Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. St. Thomas Church-St. John Student Center http://chastityproject.com/seminars/events/.

March 21-22: Diocesan Youth Rally. Keynote speaker Jackie Francios. Contact: Tim McNamara, 269-903-0139 or tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

SOUTHWEST DIOCESE:

February 29-30: Celebrating St. Francis of Assisi, an overnight retreat for Adults and Officers of the Catholic Men’s Camp. Saturdays 9:30 am – 1 pm – Sunday, Cost: $35, scholarships available. Registration deadline, March 14, 2014. Contact: Lisa Irwin, 269-345-0712 or lrwin@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

OUTSIDE THE Diocese:

Grands Rapids:

March 1: March Parish Energizer Conference, 8:30 am – 1 pm Co-sponsored by Diocese of Grand Rapids, Diocese of Kalamazoo & Diocese of Lansing.

March 1-2: Diocesan Youth Rally. Keynote speaker Jackie Francios. Contact: Tim McNamara, 269-903-0139 or tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

The Presence Catholic school and diocesan-sponsored events. Admission! For more information or to register, visit www.thedome.org/vocations, or call Sis- ters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Indiana at 800-734-9999, or email vocation@thedome.org.

A Parish that welcomes all... even the Bossom, St. John Bosco Parish, Mattawan, 6 – 8 pm. The Monthly Energizer gives all a chance to get a bolt of faith energy each month as we gather for music, talks, crafts (for kids) and adoration. Meets the third Saturday of the month – May through December. Contact: Jamin Herold, 269-903-0141 or jherold@dioceseofkalamazoo.org. For more information visit: tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

EWTN’s Raymon Arroyo to speak in Grand Rapids

The 2014 Catholic Radio Study Shows Series sponsored by EWTN will feature the EWTN’s popular television personality Raymon Arroyo on February 25, 2014 at 1:30 pm at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids. Raymon Arroyo is an internationally known, award-winning journalist and anchor for EWTN. He will be speaking on The Alluring Beauty of Art. The presentation begins at 1:30 pm and is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Lisa Brown, 616-916-1140, or email lirwin@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.

Lenten Vespers

Sunday, March 9, 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Beky Hagerty, OSB

Deepen your devotion. Lead by joining us in this peaceful, reflective, justice involving prayer and song in the quiet of Holy Family Chapel. Free, no donation.

For more information or to register at tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org or call 269-903-0139.
Two earn prestigious Eagle Scout rank

Austin Tobias is a parishioner of St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Delton. For his Eagle project, Austin restored the first cabin you see from the entrance on the camp grounds of the Battle Creek Outdoor Education center. “This project included replacing rusted boards, installing new shingles on the roof, [and] scraping and painting the logs on the outside of the cabin,” said Tobias. With the help from family, friends, volunteers, and other scouts, Tobias directed and managed the planning, implementation, and completion of this project so the folks who live in this cabin during the summer months can experience the cabin as it was originally intended during the 1940’s.

Conor McDonald is from Troop 244 in Portage, Mich. For his Eagle Scout project, he planned, organized, and constructed two “Ga-Ga” pits for 12th Street Elementary School. From contacting and working with the school to obtaining the necessary materials for the project, a number of generous donors and volunteers came forward to help Conor make this vision a reality. Logging many hours (331 to be exact), Conor and his team of volunteers saw this project from initiation until completion.

Throughout the course of the year, The Good News is interested in doing articles highlighting our scouts who have achieved the rank of Eagle. This information can be sent to the Catholic Committee on Scouting at tmcnamara@dioceseofkalamazoo.org.