Hands on learning at St. Peter School

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Submission Deadline

March 10, 2020 for the April issue.

Images from Catholic Schools Week

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament School Principal, Debbie Szczepanski speaks to Taylor Sweet’s second-grade class during a Catholic Schools Week field trip to Airport Bowling Lanes.

(Above) Immaculate Conception School fifth-grader Charlie Benzin has his head shaved for Bald for Bucks. Benzin had his head shaved as a tribute to his family friend Bethany Humphrey (far left), who is battling cancer. Benzin’s sister Sophia (center) was also on hand to witness the event. The shaving ceremony took place in the school cafeteria.

(Right) Mount St. Mary’s sophomore Liliana Quinones works on the “Build a Bench” project as part of Catholic Schools Week. The build project focused on the importance of green spaces in communities. The group physically made nine benches, two Adirondack chairs, and two end tables all by hand at the school. The majority of the pieces will be donated to various communities.
Diocesan Tribunal welcomes new canon lawyer
Anne Ameno brings unique perspective to Diocese of Buffalo

By Patrick J. Buechi
Staff Reporter

Anne Ameno may be the answer to a lot of prayers. In a Church that has been criticized for being led too much by clergy, the presence of a lay woman in the diocesan tribunal offers the diversity people have been asking for.

Ameno, who earned her canon law degree last spring from the Catholic University of America, was appointed judge and defender of the bond for the diocesan tribunal in September, a role that sees her presiding over annulment cases.

“I mostly work on marriage cases, but canon law touches on every part of life in the Church,” she explained. “My job includes weighing in on things as well. If someone needs advice about anything canonical, I can be one of the numbers that gets called, and because I have the blessing of being here five days a week, because I do not have a parish assignment like our priests do, I get asked all sorts of questions. Anything that falls under the purview of governance or life in the Catholic Church falls under the purview of canon law.”

The prime purpose of a diocesan tribunal is to investigate and judge annulment cases. The office also receives calls regarding Catholic life and liturgical practices.

Ameno is a rarity. She is the only non-religious lay woman who has served on the Diocese of Buffalo’s tribunal, although religious sisters have served as judges in the past.

“It’s becoming increasingly common,” Ameno said of lay involvement in church law. “Of my class of 18 students at Catholic University, five of us were lay people — not priests, not religious. Three men and two of us women. There is an increasingly number of lay people. Bishops really seem to have an interest in increasing their lay staffing of their tribunals of hiring lay canon lawyers. They realize there’s a distinct perspective, that there’s a value in having that staff on your tribunal and canonists you employ reflect the whole of the people of God and not just the clergy. I think it’s been a positive development for the Church.”

By serving in Buffalo, Ameno is serving the church that served her. The Cheektowaga native received her First Communion at Our Lady of Czestochowa and was confirmed at St. Andrew’s. She admitted it wasn’t until she started Colgate University in Central New York that she got in touch with her faith.

“I went to public school all my life, which surprises people when they find out I decided to become a canon lawyer,” she said. “I was the crazy kid who went to secular college and found God. Not a story you hear too often.”

She said she met the Lord the first Sunday of college. She went on to study religion and political science.

“I knew my being happy, God had something to do with that. I went to Mass my first Sunday of college and never stopped. It stuck. The Lord met me there in a big way,” she said.

After Colgate, she worked as a teacher, served in the pro-life movement, and worked in finance briefly. She even thought of entering a religious community before going back to grad school. It was a period of trying to understand what God wanted for her. A deep desire to serve the Church led her to Boston College, where she received a master’s in Theology, then to Canon Law at the Catholic University of America.

Why canon law?

“I get asked that all the time, often prefaced with ‘What’s wrong with you,'” she laughed. “Growing up I really wanted to be a lawyer, like a civil lawyer. I realized as I got older that I loved the law, but did not want to be a lawyer in that sense. As I became more religious, my interest in religious studies more generally transformed into an interest in theology. So, academic interest in theology and law, throw in a deep desire to serve the Church, I looked into canon law and it just fit.”

There is also a need in the Church for canon lawyers. Many dioceses want lay women as canon lawyers to offer a different perspective. This also frees up priests to serve in parishes.

“I bring something new to this ministry by virtue of my background,” she said. “This was a place where I could serve, where there was a need, and where me as who I am could bring something special.”

Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, apostolic administrator, and Father Peter Karalus, vicar general, have taken advantage of Ameno’s position and asked for her input in a variety of matters.

“I’ve been asked my opinions on lots of different things,” she said. “I am very new to the staff, however I have been consulted on disciplinary issues.”

“It’s very helpful to have her here,” said Msgr. Salvatore Manganello, judicial vicar for the diocese. “The rest of us all have parishes that we’re running besides being here. So, she’s the only full-time person other than the administrative assistants who are here. So, that’s help to have someone here full time.”

Although she has been away from Buffalo for a number of years, she sees returning home at this particular time of change as an adventure.

“It’s actually pretty exciting to join the staff of the diocese now,” she said. “This is a beautiful time of renewal and healing for the Diocese of Buffalo, and I get to be part of that. It’s hard to watch your home be dragged through the national news. But, it also means there’s new light in Buffalo. There’s a time of renewal and healing and excitement. I don’t think anywhere else in the country can say that. We have far more to look forward to than we have to look back on and lament. I believe this is a time when all of us get to be a part of the healing. There are a lot of people hurting right now, maybe some new blood can become a beacon of light in that.”
Local musician hopes to bring Catholic message to the kids

**By Patrick J. Buechi**
Staff Reporter

Glenn Colton has always wanted to make a living from playing the guitar. A musician for 40 years and a Catholic for 25, he is designing a plan to bring the faith-filled message he learned to the younger generation in a fun way.

Colton, 56, started playing bars in his college days, but found performing music just to sell more beer unsatisfying. So, he created a kids show, Glenn Colton Live, where he played songs about making protecting the earth, America and anti-bullying at public elementary school assemblies. As a former teacher, he would structure his songs like a lesson plan. Songs include “Readers Are Winners,” “If It’s Meant To Be, It’s Up To Me” and “The More You Put Into It, The More You Get Out Of It.” He describes his show as “Jimmy Buffet meets Mr. Rogers.”

“I took a shot on following a dream,” he said, after a Sunday morning show. “But, instead of playing the bars like I did for years and years, I could find a venue where I could create and perform original music in a concert setting. It would allow me to perform in a setting unlike the bars, where you’re saying something and you have an audience that’s willing to listen. That’s not the easiest thing to do. Sometimes as a musician, the hardest thing to find your audience.”

He did up to 300 shows a year, until schools started cutting back on assemblies a decade ago, and he had to sell cars to support his family.

Now he is rebooting his musical career. Colton began playing the 4:30 Saturday afternoon Mass at St. Mary on the Lake in Hamburg, after his old friend Father Ted Jost invited him to cover a Mass last year. Colton had been a cantor at St. Christopher’s years ago, but never led a Mass.

“I’ve been doing it full-time about two months now,” he explained just after New Year’s, “and I absolutely love it. I enjoy learning the hymns. I don’t know a lot of them, so every week I’m learning new hymns. It gets me thinking about them throughout the week. It’s a spiritual connection, not just Sunday.”

Colton, who was inducted into the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame in 2009, attended Buffalo State College with plans of becoming a teacher. He taught in Florida for a while, but decided he really wanted to try to do something more than passive entertainment. He began structuring a show that included some education, a little dancing, and a lot of fun for kids. He’d even throw in some classic rock riffs for the parents in the audience.

“It was a character lesson put to music that a teacher could refer to throughout the year,” he explained. “It took off. In my heyday, I was doing almost 300 shows a year in Western New York. A lot of repeat clients, summer shows, camps, YMCAs, schools, evening concerts. Anywhere you could imagine kids would congregate, that was my niche.”

Now he’s trying to create a hybrid product, something that is part fun musical and part spiritual song leading. He just occupied a position as music teacher at Immaculate Conception School in East Aurora. He’s also substitute teaching two days a week at Our Lady of Black Rock for middle school technology. He’s also on a sub list for Queen of Heaven, West Seneca and St. John Vianney in Orchard Park.

“I’m really intrigued by offering an acoustic act, where it has the energy and the fun and the participation of this show, yet with a message specific to Catholics in Catholic schools, which is one of the reason I am immersing myself in the subbing. I don’t really have any designs to become a teacher. I want to get my head wrapped around what is going on in the Catholic schools to see if I could put together a musical offering that would resonate and strike a chord,” he explained.

“My dream is, at the end of the school year to have assembled a show that is acoustic that I could present to a Catholic school. At the beginning I would offer it for free to get the kinks worked out of it. Then once it’s perfected, then it would be able to go anywhere with just a guitar.”

He still does his classic Glenn Colton Live in Concert at select elementary schools. He has found that schools only hold assemblies around holidays or the end of the school year, making those school performances few and far between nowadays.

“I think the kids have changed. Teachers tell me that they are on their phone constantly,” he said. “In the old days, the only way we could have an experience like this was to have someone come in. (Now,) they push a button and they can see the best of the best on their phone. It’s a little harder to impress them. It seems there’s been a shift. Public events like kidsfest are just going away. I ask these organizers why. They say no one shows up.”

He also teaches guitar at the Guitar Factory in Orchard Park, which combines his love of music and education in a different way.

“I used to have one job, now I have four,” he said. “It’s an interesting moment. Song leading, kids shows, subbing, guitar teaching. But no car sales.”

Colton met Father Jost 24 years ago, shortly after his ordination while assigned to St. Christopher Parish in Tonawanda. Colton was taking part in the RCIA program.

Before his ordination, Father Jost had a career in musical theater, performing in New York and Los Angeles. He performed a Lincoln Center National Tour of “Anything Goes” with Leslie Uggams and Rex Smith. So, when it comes to hiring musicians for his parish, he’s not just looking for good. He’s looking for Leslie Uggams good.

“I guess I’m looking for a little bit better than average, though I’m not as picky as you might think,” Father Jost said. “One thing about Glenn Colton, he is so engaged, he loves music so much. And she’s so engaging because he’s done years and years of this (kids shows) where he really engages people. He’s not just up there singing, he’s singing with great faith.”

At a show between Sunday Masses at St. Mary’s, one adult said to another, “You should have come to this thing. This guy’s really neat.”

For a sampling of what Glenn Colton Live is all about, visit glenncolton.wixsite.com/mysite.
Zoomobile bring turtle power to St. Peter School

By Patrick J. Buechi
Staff Reporter

Turtles, sharks and elephants came to St. Peter School, not in a thundering stampede but as passengers in the Buffalo Zoo’s Zoomobile. Volunteers from the zoo taught the students about ecosystems, the ocean and food chains at the Lewiston elementary school during Catholic Schools Week.

The zoo crew brought with them the jaw of a shark with its many rows of sharp teeth, an enormous elephant foot, and a real live spotted sea turtle during their Jan. 30 visit. Sadly, the turtle is part of an endangered species, so the eager students could not pet the little guy.

“(The Zoomobile came) here last year and the kids loved it, so we asked them to come back again,” explained Brittanie Phillips, fourth-grade teacher.

Phillips could see by the participation of the students that they enjoyed learning about the wildlife. “They bring live animals as well, which gets them super stoked,” she explained.

Catholic Schools week is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. School typically have special Masses, assemblies and other activities to honor and congratulate the students, families and community.

At St. Peter’s, the week included a French Toast Fling, talent show, magic show, and a visit from Cardinal O’Hara High School’s Drama Club, who performed “Shrek” for the younger kids.

Principal Maureen Ingham spent 34 years in public schools in Niagara County before coming to St. Peter’s eight years ago. “I love the commitment. I love the ability to share our faith. We have a great team here. Everyone who is here, is here because they want to be, and it shows in everything they do,” she said of her staff, students and parents.

Over the years, she has watched the school grow from 72 students to about 200. They now have three pre-K classes. She tells people, “This is the place to be.”

“At the end of the day, we can do all the wonderful things we do. But when people ask, what makes your school good, I say the fact that our children leave here and are successful. That is our goal; to make sure that we prepare them for the next step in their education.”

The school sees average kids, kids who need help, and kids who excel. One student is gearing up for state level Geography Bee. Another student has made the Middle School All County Chorus, while two girls made the Elementary All County Chorus.

The school is on the forefront of technology with middle schoolers using Chromebooks, interactive white boards and iPads in every classroom. This year the middle school students are using an online Social Studies program without old school textbooks.

In keeping with the Catholic Schools Week theme, St. Peter’s really is a place where students can earn, serve, lead and succeed.

Students from St. Peter School enjoyed a visit from volunteers and staff from the Buffalo Zoo as part of Catholic Schools Week. Students learned about animals and their environments from different parts off the globe.

Robin Sanecki, outreach program specialist with the Buffalo Zoo, shows students from St. Peter School a spotted sea turtle.
Teachers, students, champions of education honored at 20th annual Catholic Education Dinner – GALA 22:6

**BY PATRICK J. BUECHI**
Staff Reporter

Two Southern Tier elementary students were among the many honorees at GALA 22:6, the 20th annual Catholic education dinner on Jan. 23. Proceeds from the dinner will be used to fund needs-based tuition assistance for students attending Catholic elementary schools throughout the eight counties of Western New York.

Madelyn Muisrsepp, a seventh-grader at Immaculate Conception School of Allegany County in Wellsville, received the fourth-annual Natalie Mattimore Lewis Kindness Counts Award. Maria Richert, an eighth-grade student at Southern Tier Catholic School/Archbishop Walsh Academy in Olean, received the inaugural Tim Russert Scholarship for Creative Writing.

The Kindness Counts award recognizes a seventh-grader who exemplifies a spirit reflective of Natalie Mattimore Lewis, who has been described as an “ambassador of kindness.” It includes a $1,000 tuition voucher and a $100 cash award given directly to the student.

“Our honoree tonight, is known in her school for being a very serious student, but also one with a kind heart and an extremely gentle soul. She has a beautiful sense of faith and has shared with her parents that she couldn’t imagine going to a school where they weren’t allowed to speak openly about God,” said event MC, Father Joseph Rogliano.

Madelyn thanked her family and principal, Nora Burdick, who nominated her, when receiving the award.

“I’m very grateful to be a part of the caring community that Immaculate Conception School is. I have learned trust, honesty, discipline, faith and kindness by being part of that community. With Mrs. Burdick’s leadership, structure and continuous focus on respecting others, I feel as though I have become a better person,” she said, adding, “In a world where you can be anything, be kind.”

The Tim Russert Scholarship for Creative Writing was set up by Russert’s widow, Maureen Orth, and is given to a faculty-nominated eighth-grade Catholic student who exemplifies strong writing skills, classroom leadership, critical thinking, and who embodies the charism of the late “Meet the Press” host. The award includes a one-year $1,500 tuition voucher to local Catholic high school.

Maria was nominated by Maryanne Cole, Ph.D., her seventh- and eighth-grade teacher, who praised Maria as a remarkable young woman with enormous talent and great enthusiasm.

“Maria’s writing skills go far beyond typical eighth-graders, and in fact, she often helps her classmates with writing when they struggle,” said Cole. “Maria can write beautifully both in a formal, academic essay or a fictional narrative. Whatever she writes is always clear and engaging. In fact, she is gifted,” she added.

Ironically, the creative writer had little to say at the podium.

“I don’t have a speech, so I’d just like to say thank you to my family, friends and school. They support me through everything I do, so thanks,” Maria said in gratitude.

Russert, a Buffalo native and Catholic school alum, created an award to honor the teachers who take extra care of their students just as two very special teachers did for him. The Sister Lucille Socciarelli/Father John Sturm Making a Difference Award recognizes an educator who is impassioned beyond the call of duty, committed to making a difference in the lives of students under their tutelage.

“Tim Russert knew that behind every successful student was an equally dedicated teacher, akin to those who helped recognize and cultivate untapped potential in him,” said Richard Suchan, executive director of The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, which presented the Gala.

Tim Russert’s Sister Lucille Socciarelli and Father John Sturm 2020 Making a Difference Award went to Elaine Nuwer, an exceptionally talented and extraordinarily dedicated third-grade teacher at St. John the Baptist School in Alden.

“To modest to speak for herself, St. John’s principal, Jonna Johnson, who nominated Nuwer, spoke on her behalf.

“I first met Elaine three years ago when I began my principaship at St. John the Baptist School,” Johnson said. “I could tell right away, she is an extraordinary woman. As an administrator, she is exactly what you would want to find in a teacher. She’s knowledgeable. She’s compassionate. She’s dedicated. She’s flexible. She has an amazing sense of humor. In fact, her humor is what can get us all through a very difficult day. Over her 30 plus years of teaching, she has been involved in so many children’s lives. She has had the opportunity to inspire, to be there, not just for children, but for their parents, for her co-workers, for her community, for her parish. She has the ability to inspire everyone around her.”

The Christopher Mazurkiewicz Educational Scholarship Fund, created in 2002 by an anonymous donor in honor of an exceptional student who lost his life in an airplane accident went to Immaculate Conception School in Allegany County.

Also receiving awards were longtime supporters of Catholic school known as “Champions of Education.” The 2020 honorees include Sister Mary McCarrick, OSF, who has long served as an ambassador to Catholic education and social justice initiatives; and Buffalo Dental Group founders Drs. Bernard Kolber and Ellen Vossler, who have been fierce advocates for Catholic education, as well as a fervent supporter of Gala 22:6 since its inception.

Although unable to attend, Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Buffalo, recorded a message for those in attendance.

“I’m with you in spirit,” he said. “You are people who are so dedicated to Catholic education because you see what it’s all about. It is about bringing our life and our faith and our love to our children. Catholic education is more than just about good academic standards and safe environments and all of those wonderful things that we are noted for in our history, but it is also because we see every single child as the whole child – body, soul and spirit – as a child of God. The mission of our education is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who loves us all. In a world that is experiencing so many forms of disconnect, and so many ways people feel rejected and literally unloved, unappreciated, unnoticed, we are here ... we do this for one another.”

Susan Santandreu, president of Mary, Mother of Vocations Ministry (formerly the Serra Club), served as this year’s dinner chairperson.

Formerly known as the Making a Difference Dinner, the event debuted as GALA 22:6 in 2015. The dinner title is rooted in Proverbs 22:6 – “Train up children in a way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart it,” – which references the importance of educational formation in the lives of our young children. The dinner has raised $5.8 million over the past 20 years, 100 percent has gone to Catholic education tuition assistance, allowing thousands of children with an education.
**Holley church re-opens after three month renovation project**

St. Mary and St. Mark Parish community joyfully celebrated the grand re-opening of St. Mary’s church in Holley on Sunday, Feb. 9, after undergoing three months of interior renovations. Priests from the Eastern Niagara–Orleans Vicariate concelebrated the Mass with Father John Arogyasami, the current parish administrator, with seven other pastors from neighboring parishes also in attendance. Approximately 200 parishioners attended the Mass and subsequent reception in the parish social center.

A capital campaign was initiated and completed some six years ago by then pastor, Father Mark Noonan, with goals for renovating the 115-year-old church building which included a new roof, repairs to copper gutters, installation of central air, handicap accessibility and rehabilitation of sidewalks and parking areas. St. Mark’s in Kendall was also included in this drive, funds of which were earmarked for repairs to the roof and steeple, as well as one remaining objective, the replacement of the front entrance steps. Through the generous donations by parishioners, the campaign was successful and allowed the work to move forward.

Father Arogyasami recently put the project of St. Mary’s interior renovation in motion, with the assistance of the parish business administrator, Tom Widzinski, and a committee of parishioners to guide the process. This temporarily closed the Holley worship site, but the parish was blessed to be able to relocate all weekend Masses and weekly eucharistic adoration to the St. Mark’s location, some eight miles north.

The talented professionals at Swiatek Studios out of Clarence performed the interior artwork and beautiful painting designs that included the creation of a custom color palette, devised on site and rooted in the existing Frohe stained glass windows. The stencil design, the color layering and special effects using subtle color and gloss differences resulted in some unique enhancements. The use of gold leaf to highlight capitals, rosettes and other molded features added a brilliant elegance. One of the final adornments was customizing the existing triptych with a mural on canvas reflecting the 15th-century Galitzin Triptych painted by Pietro Perugino which depicts the artist’s inspired conception of God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the crucifixion. The Stations of the Cross were taken off-site to the studio for individual enhancements. Each one was colorized and gilded using the same artistic talent that is reflected in the church. Site preparation work beforehand was performed using the gifts and talents of parishioners from both churches, and included the removal of the pews, statues, furniture, adornments, as well as the old carpeting.

New flooring was contracted and installed by Brockport Custom Carpets. They worked long hours to coordinate with the parish staff and volunteers, who were then able to return the pews, furniture, and statues and allow for the completion of molding and trim work in time for a “soft re-opening” in mid-January.
Catholic Health launches new online chat feature

Getting connected to health care providers and services when you need them is critical for staying healthy or better managing an existing health condition. Now, more than ever before, people are going online to look for a doctor or research their specific health care needs. To help connect website users to the information they’re looking for as quickly and easily as possible, Catholic Health is the first local health system to launch a new web chat feature that connects visitors to a live representative.

With this new feature, when people visit chsbuffalo.org and click on the “Providers” or “Locations” tab, a chat bubble will appear on the lower right side of the page, enabling them to connect directly with a HealthConnection representative. Located at its downtown headquarters, HealthConnection is Catholic Health’s community call center. HealthConnection representatives can help website visitors find physicians, by specialty and location, who are accepting new patients; and even help them register for Catholic Health-hosted events.

“People frequently visit our website to find a doctor or confirm a location, but often have additional questions. With our chat feature, they can get the information they need quickly from our specially-trained representatives,” said Barb McManus, vice president of marketing for Catholic Health. “This is another way for us to provide personalized service and enhance the patient experience.”

In 2019, Catholic Health had over 750,000 visits to the “Providers” and “Locations” sections on its website. HealthConnection representatives are available to chat in real-time, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. During off hours, visitors can leave a chat email message that will be answered the next business day. The feature is mobile-friendly and can be used on all Android, iPhone and tablet devices, in addition to standard computers and laptops. People who are looking for a physician or have questions about Catholic Health programs and services can also call HealthConnection directly at 716-447-6205.

For more information, visit chsbuffalo.org.

Dr. Michael Baden to visit and meet with students at Hilbert College

HAMBURG – Hilbert College is pleased to announce “An Evening with Dr. Michael Baden” on Tuesday, March 17 at 7 p.m. in Hilbert’s William E. Swan Auditorium. The event is presented by the Institute for Law and Justice at Hilbert College, in conjunction with the Hilbert College Criminal Justice Studies Division and the Southtowns Regional Chamber of Commerce. This event is free and open to the public. Seating will be first-come, first-served. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. More information is available at www.hilbert.edu/baden.

Baden will address some of the most high-profile and controversial cases that he investigated during his 90-minute discussion.

In addition to the evening event, Baden will be on campus meeting with Hilbert students, alumni, and friends. Baden will visit with classes from Hilbert’s nationally-recognized criminal justice and forensic science departments. The course curriculum in many classes will focus on Baden’s investigations in the weeks leading up to his visit.

Baden is the former chief medical examiner of New York City and past co-director of the New York State Police Medico-Legal Investigations Unit. He received a bachelor’s degree from the City College of New York and a medical degree from New York University School of Medicine. He trained in internal medicine and pathology at Bellevue Hospital Medical Center where he was intern, resident and chief resident. He has been a medical examiner for 45 years and has performed more than 20,000 autopsies. He has been a consultant to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Veteran’s Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm’s, Drug Enforcement Agency and the United States Department of Justice.

He was chairman of the Forensic Pathology Panel of the U.S. Congress Select Committee on Assassinations that re-investigated the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1970s. He has also been an expert in the investigations concerning Medgar Evers, John Belushi, Yankee Manager Billy Martin, Marlon Brando’s son Christian Brando, O.J. Simpson, Jayson Williams, Robert Blake and Las Vegas hotel owner Ted Binion. He has investigated deaths in Poland, Croatia, Serbia, Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Monaco, Panama, England, Canada, Zimbabwe and other countries for human rights groups and private attorneys. He has been a member of the board of directors of a number of drug abuse and alcohol abuse treatment programs where he attempts to apply what he has learned from the dead at the autopsy table to the betterment of the living.

Baden has also served as President of the Society of Medical Jurisprudence and vice president of the American Academy of Forensic Science. He was the host of the HBO “Autopsy” series for 13 years, which demonstrated how the various forensic sciences assist in solving crimes and was a consultant for the “Crossing Jordan” television series. He has been author or co-author of more than 80 professional articles and books on aspects of forensic medicine and two popular non-fiction books “Unnatural Death, Confessions of a Medical Examiner” and “Dead Reckoning, The New Science of Catching Killers.” He is also the author, with his wife, attorney Linda Kenney Baden, of two recent forensic thrillers, “Remains Silent” and “Skeleton Justice.” He is the forensic science contributor for FOX News Channel and is a reviewer for the “New England Journal of Medicine.”
Esau and Jacob: a tricky relationship

Many are familiar with the story of Sarah and Abraham’s son, Isaac, his wife, Rebekah, and their two sons, Esau and Jacob (Gen 25: 19-36: 43). An often overlooked aspect of this saga is the ending of the story of their relationship. The story begins with Rebekah’s barrenness. Isaac prayed to the Lord on Rebekah’s behalf and she became pregnant. The children struggled in the womb, so she too prayed to the Lord. Rebekah is given a revelation that “two separate peoples are quarreling within you; one shall surpass the other, and the older shall serve the younger.” Esau is born first, followed by his twin Jacob. Note that the story indicates that Rebekah knows the will of God, namely that Jacob will surpass Esau.

When the twins are grown, Esau, whom Isaac preferred, became a hunter, while Jacob, the favorite of Rebekah, was a tent-dweller, a shepherd. One day when Esau came into the tent and saw the lentil stew that Jacob was cooking, he asked for some. Jacob bartered, asking for Esau’s birthright in exchange; Esau sold his birthright (a double portion of the family inheritance) to Jacob for a dish of stew and some bread.

The saga continues when Rebekah overheard Isaac sending Esau out hunting for game, to return to cook a meal and get Isaac’s blessing. Remembering the oracle during her pregnancy that the second son would surpass the eldest, Rebekah helps trick Isaac into thinking that Jacob was Esau, thereby getting the covenant blessing for Jacob. In the ancient world it was believed that a blessing, or a curse, lived on and could not be recalled. Therefore, when Esau and Isaac discover Jacob’s deceit, the blessing cannot be revoked and given to Esau. Understandably, Esau was angry and declared that after Isaac died, he would kill Jacob. Rebekah warns Jacob of his brother’s anger, Jacob eastward flees to his uncle Laban in Haran.

There Jacob eventually married first Leah, then Rachel. He acquired great wealth and Laban’s sons were jealous so the Lord told Jacob to return “to the land of your fathers.” After escaping from Laban, Jacob knew he must pass through land controlled by Esau and so must meet his brother. Jacob sent messengers with word to Esau that he was coming; the messengers return and say that Esau was coming with 400 men. Jacob prayed to the Lord and then sent gifts hoping that Esau would forgive him.

When Jacob saw Esau coming he went forward, ahead of his own family, and bowed to the ground in front of Esau. Esau ran to meet Jacob, embraced him, and weeping, kissed him. Esau did not want Jacob’s gifts, but Jacob insisted with the words, “Please accept these gifts from me for to come into your presence is for me like coming into the presence of God, now that you have accepted me so kindly.”

Esau invited Jacob to accompany him, but Jacob told Esau to go on ahead since his children and flocks needed to travel slowly. When Esau departed going to the west, Jacob went his separate way to the northeast.

What is one to make of the ending of this story? Discussion on forgiveness in this story ought to include:

There is genuine repentance on the part of Jacob, even though this comes in the context of fearing for his life. Or is there? Forgiveness from the offended party can be an experience of God for the offender.

The forgiveness and exchange between the two brothers did not mean an ongoing relationship.

Participation in political life is a moral obligation

A friend of mine and I were having a conversation recently about politics and government, and when the subject of Congress came up, he said, “I don’t trust any of them.” Startled, I asked, “None of them? Not one of the 535 members of the Senate and House?” “Well,” he said, “there may be one or two good ones, but they all just do what they are told by their party or their donors.”

As the conversation went on, I asked him whether he had ever visited an office and spoken to his own representative or senator, or called their office on an issue, or written a letter, or sent an email. “What for?” he answered, “They’ll do what they want anyway.”

You may have encountered the same cynicism among some of your friends or neighbors – or fellow parishioners. And we can all point to some bad actors in politics who are more concerned about their own fortunes than the common good. But my experience is that the overwhelming majority of those in office want to follow the wishes of those whom they represent. The problem is that they frequently don’t hear from anyone other than their donors or party leaders.

I have been involved in Catholic political advocacy on behalf the poor and marginalized for almost two decades, at the State level and the Federal level, and while not every intervention is successful, I have almost always been treated with openness, a willingness to listen, and interest in our position.

Unfortunately, even when I am able to make a strong case advocating, for instance, for maintaining or increasing our international aid budget, or helping to pass important legislation like the Global Child Thrive Act, or getting support for important domestic safety nets like SNAP benefits – even then sometimes I get a response from the legislator or their staff that goes something like this: “You’re the only person we’ve heard from on this issue.”

That’s where YOU come in. Your voice needs to be heard. You need to be a part of the advocacy effort of the Church on behalf of the poor, the marginalized, the immigrant, the refugee, the unborn, the worker, the environment, the family. The bishops have said that “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.” It is our voices raised together that make the difference.

The reality is that making your voice heard is not at all that hard. By signing up for any one or more Catholic advocacy sites, you can receive an alert about important issues from a Catholic perspective. You will then be able to send an email to your senator or member of Congress or state legislator with very little effort.

For example. Catholic Relief Services and the U.S. bishops have a joint site called confrontglobalpoverty.org that will keep you in touch with issues around the world. Also, catholiccharitiesusa.org/advocacy will give you the opportunity to be the voice of those on the margins here in our own country. And the U.S. Bishops have a site for advocacy at votervoice.net/USCCB/home.

The best form of advocacy, of course, is in person with the legislator or their staff. Later this month a number of us will be meeting with members of Congress and senators while they are on break and in their home districts.

Please lift your voices on behalf of the voiceless, the marginalized, and our Gospel values. If you would like more information about getting involved, please contact me at the email address below.

Deacon Don is the Diocesan Director for Catholic Relief Services and can be reached at deacondon@gmail.com
The Catholic Church is Not a Punchline

By Linda Kennard

This is part 2 of a column that appeared in the February 2020 edition of the WNY Catholic.

After witnessing the miracles of St. Therese, I feel compelled to speak up. I realize that I am not a church leader, or anybody of importance in the Church. I am just a common Catholic. I make mistakes, and I often struggle with His will over my own.

The Catholic Church has been getting a great deal of bad press lately. Like many Catholics, I’ve tried to ignore the negativity surrounding our faith. We watch countless comedians turn our faith into punchlines, as they aim their jokes at the priesthood, and Catholicism in general. I once heard someone call herself “A recovering Catholic,” as though Catholicism was someone call herself “A recovering alcoholic.”

I was born into the Catholic Church. I remember my favorite priest from childhood. Father Davies always had hugs for us kids. There was never any sense of impropriety about the priests at the church I grew up in. As a teenager, like most of my generation, I rebelled against some of the teachings of Catholicism. Eventually, I came back to my faith. We still had a few issues to work out, this Church I loved and I; but by the time my children came along, God and I had worked most of it out.

Through the six parishes I have belonged to in my life, I have never witnessed, nor have I heard of, any inappropriate behavior from the many priests I’ve known, toward any parishioner. They have been true men of God. Their compassion and devotion cannot be overstated. They have seen me through the darkest moments of my life, comforting and guiding me back to the light. Without them, I’m not sure I would be here today.

I understand that we hold our priests to a higher standard; we should. They should have a better handle on that whole free will thing. But, and I don’t say this as a means of excusing the behavior of predatory priests and those who covered up their crimes, they are men first; deeply flawed men. They deserve to be punished, but that doesn’t mean the Catholic Church, as a whole, should pay the price.

Everybody wants to focus on the bad acts, as if those crimes should negate 2,000 years of positive things the Church has done around the world. Think about that.

Should entire families be held accountable when one member commits a crime? Have we all forgotten when people wanted to punish a whole race for the acts of a few members?

There has been a lot of bad press about many of our presidents. Should the wrong they’ve done taint all the presidents, from Washington to Trump? Are we expected to forget all the good our leaders have done because these men were flawed? That’s not realistic.

Are we less proud of being Americans because Kennedy slept with Marilyn? Have we turned our backs on our country because of Watergate? No, we still believe in democracy. So why, when someone asks about our faith, do we cringe as we whisper, “Catholic?”

Please, let’s not allow crimes of the collar make us ashamed of our faith. Now, more than ever, we need to stand together and reclaim our reputation as a proud, world-wide force.

I’m tired of people trying to shame me because I am Catholic. I find it offensive when non-Catholics want to weigh in about how our priests should be prosecuted.

These crimes were not committed by the Church. They were committed by men; men who should pay for what they’ve done. The Catholic Church did not do this; yet, the church is being crucified - punishing the whole for acts of the few.

We need to speak up for our church; to start healing our own hearts, and restoring our reputation.

Let’s stop allowing others to call our faith into question. Instead, let’s erase the doubt they have in Catholicism. We need to stand together, with pride in our faith. It has to start somewhere.

With all the turmoil in the world, I am proud to be a Catholic. I kneel before the cross and bow to God’s will.

Christ’s invitation to each one of us during Lent is to be attuned to the call to ongoing conversion of heart and to grow closer to Him. The spiritual renewal of each member of the Church serves as a catalyst in renewing the entire Church. Christ is counting on each one of us to grow in his love and in his life. He invites us all to grow in our awareness his holy presence at both Mass and eucharistic adoration.

As we embark upon the Lenten journey, our fast reminds all of us of our deepest hungers. Our hunger for love, truth and goodness can only be satisfied in Christ. Our Lenten journey needs to intersect in a meaningful way with the Eucharist, for it is through the Eucharist that we are fed.

St. Peter Julian Eymard, who was canonized in 1962, is known as the apostle of the Eucharist. Throughout his faith journey, he had an intense devotion to Mary, and entered the Marist Congregation where he was ordained a priest. He continued to experience a strong attraction to Christ in His eucharistic presence and he felt that he was being taken over by it. He was so deeply touched by the Lord that he felt impelled to bring all to Christ by drawing them to the Eucharist through his teaching and preaching.

Although it was difficult to begin a new religious order, St. Peter Julian forgave and developed a spirituality of Christ-centered love around the Eucharist. His community is known as the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Later in his life, he stated that if the Church and society is to flourish, it could only be done through love for the Eucharist, for the Eucharist is the life of the world. Through the holy presence of Jesus, the Eucharist satisfies the deepest hungers of the human heart.

St. Peter Julian Eymard’s teachings have touched many through a retreat program known as “Life in the Eucharist.” This retreat is being offered in the parishes of the Western Niagara Vicariate during Lent. It is open to all and free of charge. As more people make the retreat, it will be offered in more parishes throughout the diocese.

Through the retreat, participants develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the Eucharist as revealed in Scripture and Church teachings. Several parishes will be hosting the Life in the Eucharist Retreat where five different themes will be unpacked through teaching, witness, prayer, reflection and discussion. The themes to be discussed include “The Eucharist as Nourishment,” “The Eucharist as Reconciliation,” “The Eucharist as Transformation,” “The Eucharist as Abiding Presence” and “The Eucharist as Mission.”

Many saints like St. Peter Julian Eymard teach us that prayer before the Blessed Sacrament leads us more deeply into intimate union with Christ. It is in this prayer and at Mass that we behold the Lamb of God.

St. Peter Julian Eymard once said, “Until we have passionate love for God in the Most Blessed Sacrament, we will accomplish nothing at all.” He is our food, our strength and our refuge. During Lent, may we all discover the life of Christ in the Eucharist, a powerful force for the renewal of individuals, the Church and the world.

Life in the Eucharist
Scary questions for Lent 2020

Do we help these families to know, love and serve God, in their lives? And, how are we different from the dozens of competing congregations which also claim to do this? Neither the grandeur of worship space, the winning personality of a leader, the popularity of programs, or clever use of technologies, are enough if our mission is not about making disciples for Christ.

According to the latest research, the fullness of truth and access to sacraments is not selling like Jesus did for Lent? Ask the scary questions that are already in place. But what if there is nothing wrong with “them”? You know “them” families have been the most powerful discipling organisms throughout history. But we can no longer presume that these families see us as a spiritual resource in their brave new world. A church that is doing nice things is not enough. Parents want the best for their children, and that is Jesus. Fervent and personal faith in Jesus, which is joyfully shared with others.

Congregations that rely upon their positions on hot button issues, or cater to consumer appetites will fail with the next generation. Yes, some churches still rely on gimmicks to sustain attendance, perhaps with the honest hope that curiosity will lead to a holy longing, and cause vibrant faith.

Only two problems with this theory: neither the current realities, nor the witness of the first Christians, support such an aspiration. The early church was driven by an urgency to foster in all people, a life in Christ. That is still what is needed today.

Every church should ask themselves, why are we here? Why do people come here and not drive a mile down to a more convenient Mass? What difference would it make if our church closed their doors on Sunday after the last worship service? How long would it take people to notice? What impact would it have on the community? Would people simply read the “Closed” sign on the door next weekend, and get back in their cars to find another nearby church? Is there a unique reason for our presence beyond weekly worship convenience, or some tribal affiliation? Does our parish command any particular loyalty, and is that loyalty Jesus centered? Answers to all of these questions can be found in conversation with our people.

It may be a scary new starting place. But, why not do what Jesus did for Lent? Ask the scary questions that are already in everyone’s minds. Your parish vitality might depend on it.

Father Corbin named administrator to St. Stephen’s Grand Island

Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Buffalo, has made the following appointments:

Father Raymond G. Corbin has been appointed administrator of St. Stephen Parish on Grand Island for a term of six years effective March 3. Father Corbin currently serves as pastor of Infant of Prague Parish in Cheektowaga.

A native of Albion, Father Corbin was ordained in 2004. He first served as parochial vicar at St. Mary of the Assumption in Lancaster. He has been at Infant of Prague since 2009.

Father Romeo Hontiveros’ term as administrator of St. Dominic Parish in Westfield and Brocton has been extended for six years, effective Feb. 1.

Faculties have been given to Father Alexander Cymerman, OFM Conv. The retired Conventual Franciscan will be residing at the Father Justin Senior Residence in Athol Springs.

Father Ray Corbin (right) and Father Romeo Hontiveros (far right)
High school junior sends 135 joey pouches to Australia after fires

KENMORE — Mount St. Mary Academy junior Emma Candella has been working tirelessly for two weeks to make 135 joey pouches that will be sent to aid Australian animals following the recent devastating fires.

Candella cut and sewed 115 pouches on her own over a two-week period. On Jan. 28, she mailed the pouches to Relief Crafters of America who will then send them on to the animals in need.

“Time flew by as I was making them,” Candella said of her sometimes hours-long sewing sessions. “I just love animals, and I wanted to find a way I could help with something tangible.”

During one of the school’s brief morning assemblies, Candella called her peers to action, asking students to donate fabric and pitch in their time to bring her project to life. A particular group of students in Mount St. Mary Academy’s STEAM classes joined in her efforts, cutting out and preparing fabric for Candella to continue working on. On their own, they assembled 20 additional pouches in the school’s Makerspace.

The joey pouches are meant to simulate a marsupial mother’s pouch for young animals who may have been orphaned in the fires, Candella explained. They aren’t meant only for kangaroo joeys. They can be used to comfort and care for a variety of other animals including koalas, sugar gliders, bandicoots and more.

Though the project was unrelated, much of Candella’s efforts were completed during Mount St. Mary Academy’s Service and Justice Week. This week centered around three-day immersive experiences through which students learned about local, national and global injustices and needs. More importantly, students in each of the school’s dozen experiences learned just how they can make a difference in their respective projects. Candella lived out the spirit of this experience in her efforts to care for her global neighbors; the Australian animals.

Mount St. Mary Academy junior Emma Candella has made 135 joey pouches that will be sent to aid Australian animals following the recent devastating fires.

How I fit into God’s puzzle

BY JUSTIN ANDERSON
Our Lady of Sacred Heart, Orchard Park

Joining Youth Board, once I have found out about it, sounded like an amazing opportunity for me to have my ideas heard and to be in a comfortable space with people who share the same beliefs. I am not always a very outgoing person. I have trouble fitting in and struggle to speak out. Despite that, I fit right into this group like a puzzle piece. And that puzzle is God. We’re all here together in this group to be His voice and to spread His words.

I enjoy spending time at Youth Board meetings and enjoy contributing my thoughts. Everyone gets along very well and works well with one another. This amazing group of individuals, young and old, is made up of some of the kindest, most amazing people. You can almost call us a family. We laugh, we struggle, we have many things in common, and that is why we are all work very well together. Together, we act as a voice for not only God, but for the diocese’s youth who are not always heard and or represented. Through the guidance of the Youth Board faculty, we do amazing things for the youth like the Diocesan Convention or mini workshops every once and a while for a group to attend and learn about their faith.

Being on the Youth Board really has made me feel changed. I was very shy and afraid to speak in discussions in my parish youth group or in my classes at school. But being on the Youth Board made me realize that I’m not just another person on earth, I am better than that, I am someone who can be valuable in my own ways. I am not just another student at my school or a member of a club or group, I have worth and I can work well with others. Being around a group of people you can be yourself around really makes it clear that it’s OK to be yourself wherever you are, there is no need to “fake it to make it” or to be someone you’re not to fit in. One thing I will remember from the board is that uniqueness and being different will bring you closer to others.
LeRoy community braves weather to support life

BY PATRICK J. BUECHI
Staff Reporter

A couple hundred residents of LeRoy braved the elements to show their support of unborn human life on Saturday, Jan. 25. The church communities of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, Calvary Baptist and Living Waters sponsored a regional Rally for Life in solidarity with the national March for Life in Washington, D.C.

The rally included messages from Daniel Tomlinson, advancement manager of Compass Care Rochester; Darlene Miene, former director of All Babies Cherished; and abortion survivor Alexander Andrews.

Tomlinson thanked everybody for showing up on the rainy, 37-degree morning. He called New York state the abortion capital of the United States, having more abortions per capita than any other state — 29.6 abortions per 1,000 women. The District of Columbia is slightly higher.

“We believe the reason that God has placed you and the churches that you belong to in your state for a reason, to bear witness to the truth that every single human being is fully and deeply human from the moment of conception to natural death. And you are standing in a very dark state that does not understand the value of each and every human being,” Tomlinson said.

Compass Care, founded in 1980, serves women who are considering abortion with ethical compassionate medical services, helping to transform their fear into confidence. “No woman should be afraid to have her own child,” he said.

Tomlinson did offer some good news. Monroe County had seen a 50 percent decrease in abortion in the past decade. Nowhere else in the U.S. has this happened. He would like to see a 50 percent decrease in Buffalo over the next five years as well.

Miene told the packed parish hall to be a “messenger of hope. Be a messenger of love. Be a messenger of forgiveness.”

This is just the start she added, explaining how to begin the process of forgiving someone who has had an abortion. “We need every single one of us to go and say, ‘I love you. I don’t understand. I don’t need to understand. But, I can love you, and I can help you, and I can bring to a place that can really help you.’”

Andrews, a parishioner of Our Lady of Mercy and a teacher of Natural Family Planning, gave her own message of forgiveness. Born in Moscow after seven months of gestation due to an unsuccessful abortion, she was sent to Moscow Children’s Home shortly after. Although she grew up in America with loving adoptive parents, she struggled with depression and a sense of rejection knowing her birth mother tried to abort her and gave her up for adoption.

“I would continually ask God to be with me and help me through these times of anxiety and depression. … I would ask God to free me from my hurt and anxiety, to give me strength, to help me to see a purpose for me. God upholds his promises. He was attentive to my prayers. He heard my cries and stayed along my side, leading me to peace and healing,” she explained.

Andrews re-visited her life after the birth of her children and death of her mother. She no longer has the deep pain of rejection. She now sees it as the work of the devil, not her birth mother, who cause her pain.

“One lie I carried my whole life was that my mother’s rejection was to blame for all my feelings,” Andrews said. “The truth was Satan had taken her unfortunate decision and used it against me, causing more destruction in my life than I’m sure my mother ever intended.”

During the mile-long march through the center of LeRoy, residents stood in their doorways to watch. One driver held out a Bible to show support.

“I took part because I grew up in the Catholic Church always realizing that abortion is wrong and that women have a choice,” said Veronica Dodge, a parishioner of Our Lady of Mercy. “To be out with the community to see such an outpouring of love and so much unity in the different churches for one cause.”

Her husband joined her to respect the value of life. “It says in the book of Psalms 139 that God knew us when we were knit in our mothers’ womb and that’s where life begins, and people need to know that,” said Lloyd Dodge.

This was the first time the LeRoy churches joined together for a march. “We’ll see if it becomes annual,” said Father Matthew Phelan, O.de.M., pastor of Our Lady of Mercy. “Of course, even at the national march, we pray for the day it’s not necessary. But if it’s necessary, I think we’ll probably do it again.”
We came, we saw, we marched for Life in Washington, D.C.

BY JONATHAN MOLIK
Youth Minister,
St. John Paul II Parish, Lake View

The 47th annual March for Life took place in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 24. The annual rally of pro-life supporters from across the country took place just two days after the 47th anniversary of the historic Roe v. Wade court case which monumentally legalized abortion in the United States. I’m often ridiculed for my profession and decision to put my body and health through three long days of pilgrimage-like conditions which I’m often told “won’t make a difference.” But when I’m engulfed in a sea of tens of thousands of people from the unborn to the elderly, it gives me a new hope and revitalization of my soul that keeps me coming back. That life has so many different looks and glories, how can we deprive anyone of that opportunity?

My journey to the March for Life began at my former high school, St. Francis in Athol Springs. I was chaperoning a group of 30 students as part of the school’s Franciscan Youth Ministry under the direction of senior Religion teacher Rory Reichenberg. A new partnership with brother school Archbishop Curley in Baltimore, gave us a place to stay. So, we set off on the seven-hour journey to Maryland.

Early the next morning, thousands of teens, clergy and religious wrapped around the block of the Capital One Arena, barricaded by the police officers, waiting for the doors opening for a rally. The Youth Rally and Mass for Life has become a staple of student groups gathering in Washington for the March. Joyful teens and a sea of colors packed into the arena. While some made a dash for the confessional, others took the opportunity to catch 20 minutes of sleep or acquaint themselves with colleagues and friends. As I sat there quietly praying my rosary anticipating the beginning of Mass, I began to realize how much pressure sits on the shoulders of my generation and the next and we carry it so well. Everyone sits enthusiastically participating in every little chant or game the MC threw our way. These students were proud to publicly bear witness to Christ and the pro-life movement.

Following the rally, we departed for the National Mall to try and catch a glance of the first ever sitting president to attend the March for Life, Donald Trump. Just inside the row of metal detectors, thousands crammed in with American flags and Trump paraphernalia. The president came walking out after a marvelous crowd rendition of “God Bless America” to his spot behind the presidential podium enclosed with bullet proof glass. “I want to welcome tens of thousands — this is a tremendous turnout,” Trump said, a minute into his speech.

“Tens of thousands of high school and college students who take long bus rides to be here in our nation’s capital. And to make you feel even better, there are tens of thousands of people outside that we passed on the way in. If anybody would like to give up their spot, we can work that out. We have a tremendous group of people outside. Thousands and thousands wanting to get in. This is some great success.” What a success it was, everyone was attentively listening to the man who stood with them like no other leader had. “It made the trip worth it,” explained the man standing next to me who came from West Virginia. “It’s definitely a moment I will be able to tell my grandchildren about,” I remember whispering to one of my fellow chaperones.

So, there we were, thousands of riled up pro-lifers ready to publicly demonstrate our beliefs in front of the whole country, reinvigorated after being publicly backed by our nation’s leader.

As I stood there, surrounded by friends, brothers and strangers, I began to appreciate just how life is so different for everyone and how everyone plays their own piece of the puzzle. The unique atmosphere created at the march for life every year from those who silently walk, chant prayers, singing “Freebird,” or just strike up a conversation with a neighbor is all thanks to their parents’ willingness to say yes to life. The march truly remains the most distinctive atmosphere I have encountered. It’s the only place I know where strangers of all backgrounds can come together for a common purpose peacefully. I hate saying I’m looking forward to next year because I hope our efforts spark a change to the point where abortion is illegal and life is respected the way God intended it, but I’d miss getting together with Catholics from all over.

So why do I march? My dad told me one day about a poem called “The Dash” by Linda Ellis. It reads, “He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.”

No one should be denied the opportunity to live their “dash.” That is what I stand for.
New chapel at O’Hara blossoms after 2019 flood

Faith center of the school rebuilt and made better

**By Patrick J. Burchi**
Staff Reporter

When Cardinal O’Hara High School suffered the worst disaster in its history last year, the staff saw it as an opportunity to rebuild the faith center of the school community.

In February 2019, two pipes burst flooding the Tonawanda school’s fine arts hallway. One pipe, directly over the chapel, drenched the room and all its contents. Father Thomas Ribits, OSFS, who teaches art, Spanish and religion at O’Hara, took it upon himself to renovate the chapel.

He didn’t just bring the chapel back to what it once was, he made it better. He removed the backlighting that cast a dull glow behind the altar. A new rug replaced the old tile floor. A new altar was constructed with faux marbling and woodgrain. From a distance it looks like it came from one of the finer churches in the diocese. Father Ribits, who is also an artist in his own right, placed the altar on level ground rather than the raised platform it used to stand on, to help school chaplain Msgr. Leo McCarthy from having to go up one step.

To accent the repainted chapel, a statue Jesus with St. Francis of Assisi, in honor of the school’s Franciscan tradition, was placed on a wall alongside a painting of St. Francis de Sales. Father Ribits brought in a bust of Jesus with a crown of thorns from his residence. He also repainted the Stations of the Cross which had become so faded, they were indistinguishable from the walls.

“The teachers were saying, ‘We didn’t even know we had Stations,’ because they were just all gray,” said Barbara Tucker, public relations coordinator.

Other staff members of the 60-year old school pitched in as well, taking home the vestments of the altar servers and cleaning them. The only thing still to be done is replace the holy water font, which broke into two pieces. Father Ribits is looking for an antique bowl to add to the marble base.

The chapel is open all-day during school hours allowing students to come in to pray and have a bit of quiet time.

“We usually use the chapel for retreat days. Every year we go on retreat, afterward we have Mass in here. After that, we usually reflect on it,” explained Taylor Ford-Workowski, a junior.

Larger school Masses are held in the school auditorium, but the chapel is used for smaller prayer services held before sports games. The chapel also gets used by alumni and neighbors holding small funeral services.

Tucker has seen two or three kids sitting inside the first thing in the morning, just gathering their thoughts. “The door is always open,” she said.
Think of all the people you can help.

Think of the young student struggling in school because of challenges at home or with peers. **Think of the single parent** burdened by poverty. **Think of the college student** needing a space to be and to grow in faith. **Think of those who are sick or in nursing homes** lacking spiritual care.

Catholic Charities’ many services help those most in need and vulnerable, and Fund for the Faith ministries help meet the spiritual needs of Western New York Catholics.

Last year, Catholic Charities impacted the lives of more than 160,000 individuals. For nearly a century, your generosity has supported our neighbors in all eight counties. Please continue that legacy of hope this year.

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Catholic Health Hospitals earn Blue Distinction Center designations

BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York has named Catholic Health hospitals Blue Distinction Centers in knee and hip replacement and spine surgery as part of its Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mount St. Mary’s Hospital, and Sisters of Charity Hospital and its St. Joseph Campus received Blue Distinction recognition for knee and hip replacement. Kenmore Mercy and Sisters Hospital also received Blue Distinction recognition for spine surgery, with Kenmore Mercy named a Blue Distinction Center+ for spine surgery.

Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated health care facilities that show a commitment to delivering high-quality patient safety and better health outcomes, based on objective measures developed with input from the medical community and leading accreditation and quality organizations. In addition to quality benchmarks, facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers+ are on average 20 percent more cost-efficient when compared to other facilities.

Knee and hip replacement procedures remain some of the most commonly performed, elective surgical procedures in the U.S., according to a 2018 study released by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Spinal surgeries are also among the most common and expensive surgeries in the U.S., according to the government-based Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Catholic Health hospitals designated as Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement demonstrate expertise in joint replacement surgery, while those designated as Blue Distinction Centers for Spine Surgery demonstrate expertise in cervical and lumbar fusion, cervical laminectomy and lumbar laminectomy/discectomy procedures. According to the designation, this expertise results in fewer complications and readmissions for the particular specialty when compared to other facilities.

“Quality and patient safety are at the heart of everything we do in Catholic Health and we are proud to be recognized by BlueCross BlueShield of WNY for meeting their robust selection criteria for knee and hip replacements and spine surgery set by the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program,” said Dr. Hans Cassagnol, chief clinical officer and physician executive for Catholic Health. “Our skilled surgeons, specially trained nurses, clinicians and support staff help us attain these recognitions by delivering the highest quality care every day.”

The Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, cellular immunotherapy, fertility care, gene therapy, knee and hip replacements, maternity care, spine surgery, substance use treatment and recovery. Research for many of these programs shows that, compared to other providers, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate higher-quality and improved outcomes for patients.

“BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York is pleased to recognize Catholic Health hospitals for providing exceptional knee and hip replacement, and spine surgery care,” said Dr. Thomas Schenk, senior vice president, chief medical officer, BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. “The quality, safety and outcomes measures met through the Blue Distinction program reflect their commitment to providing better care, results and a better patient experience for our members.”

For more information about the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program and for a complete listing of designated facilities, visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.
Blessed Sacrament Church of Buffalo presents
Church on Fire: Stay With Us!
In the midst of the troubled times in our Church and Diocese, we offer this program of learning, reflection, and inspiration expressed through word, music, and song. Join us and celebrate the positive and good things the Church is doing today.

The Catherine M. and Paul W. Beltz LECTURE SERIES

Thursday, March 5: 7:00 pm
St. Vincent de Paul – Then & Today: Ecclesiastical Reform
At Blessed Sacrament Church
Presented by Rev. Aidan R. Rooney, CM
Vice-President for Mission
Niagara University
Rev. Rooney will talk about St. Vincent’s first mission, clergy reform and re-orientation of the hierarchy in 17th century France. He will explore the implications of St. Vincent’s work and will address how relevant his mission is to our Church today.

Sunday, April 26: 3:00 pm
Women in a Wounded Church
At Blessed Sacrament Church
Presented by Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, STD
President Emeritus
St. Bonaventure University
A practical program for the advancement of women into significant leadership roles in the Church is sorely needed. This becomes more urgent given the new revelations of sex abuse rocking the local Church. Sr. Margaret will discuss how women are forming networks to effect real change. Where do women find the spiritual energy/strength to face what appear to be insurmountable obstacles to equality in the life of the Church they love?

Monday, May 11: 7:00 pm
River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey
At Shea’s 710 Theatre
Presented by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ
Author of Dead Man Walking
Social Justice Advocate
Nobel Peace Prize Nominee
Sr. Helen, a world renown advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, will talk about her memoir, River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey. She’ll share her childhood, convent, and early ministry experiences where she worked with the African-American poor who helped her understand what white privilege and institutional racism is. Sr. Helen will autograph her books which are available for purchase.

Wednesday, April 1: 7:00 pm
St. Ignatius of Loyola - Then & Today: Ignatian Spirituality
At Blessed Sacrament Church
Presented by Rev. Thomas R. Slon, SJ
Rector
Canisius Jesuit Community
Buffalo, NY
Fr. Slon will explain what is unique about Ignatian Spirituality and why it might especially be helpful to us in our times, as we face our own Church crises. Attendees will experience these methods of prayer and engage in dialogue around these topics.

Thursday, March 19: 7:00 pm
St. Francis of Assisi - Then & Today: “Rebuild My Church”
At Blessed Sacrament Church
Presented by Rev. Ross Chamberland, OFM, Ed.D.
Asst. VP for Student Engagement
Interim University Chaplain
St. Bonaventure University
“Rebuild my Church” was God’s Command to Francis of Assisi. At first, he literally repaired physical church structures. St. Francis soon realized the deeper meaning of God’s command. Fr. Ross will explore how we can rebuild our Church.

Thursday, May 7: 7:30 pm
“A Resurrection Concert”
The Choir of St. Louis Church
Frank Scinta, Organist/Choirmaster
The St. Louis Choir returns to Blessed Sacrament with a program of sacred music for Lent, Passion, and Easter. Featured will be the works of Palestrina, Byrd, Farrant, Scarlatti, Parker, and others.

Sunday, March 29: 3:00 pm
“Spring Passion”
Ars Nova Musicians Chamber Orchestra
Donna Lorenzo, Director
This Lenten concert features the works of Bach, Elgar and Haydn’s “The Seven Last Words of Christ.” Critics have regarded the music of Haydn’s seven sonatas as a transforming experience. Don’t miss it!

Sunday, July 12: 7:30 pm
“Icons and Legends”
Vocális Chamber Choir
James Burritt, Director
Vocális celebrates the best of humanity, those who have illuminated our world through their words, deeds, and left an inspiring legacy. From religious figures and historical greats, to those who have made us laugh and smile, such icons as Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln, and Dr. Seuss.

CONCERT SERIES
All Concerts at Blessed Sacrament Church, 1029 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

FOR TICKETS:
All Other Lectures and Concerts – go online at BlessedSacramentBuffalo.org/events

Call SHEA’s Box Office: 716-847-0850
Blessed Sacrament in Buffalo presents Church on Fire: Stay with Us lecture and concert series

On April 15, 2019, the world watched in shock and dismay as the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris burned. Annemarie Scobey-Polacheck wrote an article, “The Parallel Between Notre-Dame and the Catholic Church Itself,” that was published in the August 2019 issue of “U.S. Catholic.” The author shares the realization she had that morning, watching Notre-Dame burn, that not only was the cathedral burning, but the whole Catholic Church was burning because of the sexual abuse crisis that has plagued the Church since 2002.

For the last two years, the Diocese of Buffalo has been rocked with these scandals. All of these allegations have created a crisis of faith for many of the faithful. What are we to do? As Scobey-Polacheck suggests, “The parallel between the fire at Notre-Dame and the situation of the Catholic Church itself is the parable for our time. We begin with the deep sorrow of a community that understands that loss affects us all – the loss of the cathedral was a global loss, not a Parisian loss. In the same way, every child’s abuse is the exploitation of someone in our own family.

“At Notre-Dame, the crown of thorns and the Blessed Sacrament survived the fire. They survived because Father Jean-Marc Fournier, the Paris Fire Brigade chaplain, ran into the burning cathedral, headed for the relics, and managed to pass the crown of thorns and the Blessed Sacrament to others, forming a chain to safety outside the cathedral.

“Today, our Church can be saved by those who run into the fire, not by those who pretend it’s not burning. Our church is being saved by those among us who see the tragedy of longtime secrecy and abuse for what it is and yet choose to go in anyway. Our Church will be saved not only by the grace present in the Eucharist, but also by the recognition of our responsibility to those who have suffered, those who are fragile and holy – those who wear a crown of thorns.”

In the midst of the troubled times, Blessed Sacrament Church of Buffalo has implemented the Church on Fire: Stay With Us! Lecture and Concert Series sponsored by Catherine M. and Paul W. Beltz. All are welcome to the sessions of learning, reflection and inspiration expressed through word, music and song.

The lecture series, which began last year, is presented in three parts: “The Burning of the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris,” which was held in November; “The Sexual Abuse Crisis and Moving Forward,” presented in January; and “Catholics Doing Good Today.”

Part three, which examines the “Path Forward: Catholics Doing Good,” will begin March 5 at 7 p.m. in Blessed Sacrament Church, 1029 Delaware Ave., with Father Aidan R. Rooney, CM, presenting “St. Vincent de Paul-Yesterday and Today: Ecclesiastical Reform.”

Father Rooney will explore the implications of St. Vincent’s work in clergy preparation, ongoing formation, lay-clergy collaboration and the criteria for the selection of bishops in the contemporary Church.

On March 19 at 7 p.m., Father Ross Chamberland, OFM, Ed.D., will present “St. Francis of Assisi – Yesterday and Today: Rebuild My Church.”

To rebuild the Church, Francis returned to the basics of preaching the gospel and devotion to the sacraments. Catholic, sacramental, imagination will be explored as we discern God’s calls to rebuild His Church.

April 1 at 7 p.m. will see “St. Ignatius of Loyola – Yesterday and Today: Ignatian Spirituality” presented by Father Thomas Slon, SJ.

Father Slon will explain what is unique about Ignatian Spirituality and why it might be especially helpful to us in our time, as we face our own Church crises. The evening will offer opportunities to experience these methods of prayer and to engage in conversation around these topics.

On April 26 at 3 p.m., “Women in a Wounded Church” will be presented by Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, STD.

Sister Margaret will talk about how are women forming networks and linkages that will result in real change. She will also question where the spiritual energy and strength come from when women face what appear to be insurmountable obstacles to equality in the life of the church we love?

The May 11 presentation at 7 p.m. will be “River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey” by Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ.

Sister Helen will talk about her own spiritual journey in her newest book, “River of Fire,” which traces her journey of spiritual awakening, from practicing her religion, from being apolitical to rolling up her sleeves and getting engaged. The epigraph comes from St. Bonaventure: “Ask not for understanding, ask for the fire.” She got involved with poor African-Americans in New Orleans who helped her understand what white privilege is, what institutional racism is. While engaged in this work she received an invitation to correspond with a person who was on death row. Two and a half years later this man was executed and Sister Helen watched him burn with fire, and she says that’s when the “fire” exploded in her soul.

The Church on Fire: Stay With Us! Concert Series is designed to provide faith enlightening experiences derived from listening to sacred music. Three premiere Western New York musical organizations will be providing both orchestral and choral performances.

On March 29, at 3 p.m., “The Seven Last Words of Christ” By Joseph Haydn, will be performed by the Ars Nova Musicians Chamber Orchestra, with Music Director Donna Lorenzo.

On May 7, at 7:30 p.m., “A Resurrection Concert” will be performed by the Choir of St. Louis Church led by Frank Scinta, organist & choirmaster.

On July 12, 7 p.m., “Icons and Legends,” a benefit concert for Blessed Sacrament Church will be performed by the Vocalis Chamber Choir with James Burritt as director.
Pilgrimage to Divine Mercy Shrine set for October

The Society of Our Lady of Divine Mercy is sponsoring a pilgrimage to the Divine Mercy Shrine for Oct. 2-6 for the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday and the 20th anniversary of St. Faustina’s canonization. On Saturday, Oct. 3, there will be festivities for Our Lady and her holy rosary, and on Monday, Oct. 5, we will celebrate St. Faustina’s Feast day.

This is our eighth year of taking pilgrims to the shrine in response to Pope Francis’ call to take a pilgrimage to build up one’s faith, to build up the Church, and to spread the Divine Mercy devotion which helps Catholics to live by their baptisms, and to make peace in our world through deeds of mercy.

The Shrine of Divine Mercy is located in Stockbridge, Mass., in the beautiful Berkshire Mountains and is maintained by the Marians of the Immaculate Conception since the 1940s. Pilgrims experience a retreat like setting on the grounds with the beautiful fall foliage and fresh mountain air. There is the outdoor shrine where Mass takes place, adoration and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. In the back, there is a shrine to the Holy Innocents and Our Lady of Lourdes. During the spring, summer and fall months, Mass and confession are outdoors. Other times, confession is in the shrine church where the relic of St. Faustina is housed. The interior of the church is breathtakingly beautiful. Besides the church, there is a chapel dedicated to Our Mother of Mercy which is housed in the Marian Helper Center where pilgrims can light a candle and be surrounded by the beautiful stained glass windows depicting the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. There are other mini-shrines on the grounds to visit. Recently, St. Joseph’s Shrine was enlarged and updated.

Pilgrims will be staying at Pilgrim Inn and dining at Michael’s Restaurant in Stockbridge. There will be daily Mass. This pilgrimage is sponsored by the Society of Our Lady of Divine Mercy which is a group of people dedicated to the Divine Mercy Devotion, performing works of mercy by helping the needy, and sponsoring programs pertaining to Divine Mercy.

There is no charge for this pilgrimage, but we do take donations and we have a fundraising program that pilgrims participate in to pay for the bus, pay for the hotel, and the suppers at Michael’s Restaurant. There is a minimum of five baked goods sales and participation in a Chinese Auction for pilgrims.

The following is a schedule for the fundraisers:
- March 7, Baked goods sale at St. Andrew Church in Sloan, during Saturday and Sunday Masses
- March 14, St. Michael’s Downtown Church, during Saturday and Sunday Masses
- March 28, St. Timothy Church in Tonawanda, during Saturday and Sunday Masses
- April 4, Chinese auction and luncheon, Cala’s Kitchen in 6888 Erie Road, Derby, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- April 18, St. Mary of the Lake Church, Hamburg, during Saturday and Sunday Masses

There are many more fundraisers not printed here. Pilgrims that are interested should contact Donna Marie at 716-627-4187 to get on the list and to receive an itinerary and information. There are 56 seats on the bus.

Healing Mass & Novena

St. Padre Pio of Petrelcina

2nd Wednesday at 7 p.m.
St. John the Baptist
6895 Boston Cross Rd.
Boston, N.Y. 14025
(716) 941-3549
Rev. Peter Napierkowski

| March 11, 2020 | Sept. 9, 2020 |
| April 8, 2020 | Oct. 14, 2020 |
| May 13, 2020 | Nov. 11, 2020 |
| June 2020 No Mass | Dec. 2020 No Mass |
| July 8, 2020 | Jan. 2021 No Mass |
| Aug. 12, 2020 | Feb. 2021 No Mass |

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Must be applied at time of purchase
2020 retreats at Stella Niagara’s Center of Renewal

STELLA NIAGARA – In addition to its availability for groups and individuals seeking a tranquil retreat setting for groups up to 90, Stella Niagara’s Center of Renewal Retreat & Conference Center is proud to announce two of its upcoming retreat weeks for 2020. A special silent preached retreat week will be presented by noted author and lecturer Sister Barbara Fiand, SNDdeN, from Sunday, June 21 through Friday, June 26, 2020, followed by a weekend directed retreat week from Thursday, Aug. 13 through Thursday, Aug. 20.

Based on her book, “On Becoming Who We Are: Passionate Musings in the Winter of Life,” the reflections during Sister Barbara’s June 21-26 preached retreat week will invite retreatants to take a leap of courage at this time of turmoil and conflict, not only in our world, but in fact in our Church as well. The retreat will address the unavoidable questions that confront all mature believers in the 21st century, and, as Diarmuid O’Murchu has affirmed, we need to accept that we are “gifted with everything it takes to be creative stewards of this evolving world.” There are “idols” that have crept into our belief system: the idols of gender, of permanence, of inerrancy, of language, even of immediacy. We will look at these idols and reflect on their control over our faith-life. We will remember the vision of Jesus and try to embrace it, once again. Come drink “Deep.”

Sister Barbara is a retired professor of philosophical and spiritual theology and the author of 11 books. She lectures and gives retreats as well as workshops throughout the country and abroad on issues related to holistic spirituality, the transformation of consciousness, faith-seeking understanding in the 21st century, human maturation, and the true self.

The Aug. 13-20 Directed Retreat Week will feature a customized spiritual design guided by trained spiritual directors. Three- and five-day retreats are also possible with advance arrangements.

Currently in its 46th year of retreat center ministry, Center of Renewal Retreat & Conference Center at Stella Niagara is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, Holy Name Province. Located only two miles north of Artpark, and only 10 miles north of Niagara Falls via the Niagara Scenic Parkway, Stella Niagara’s Center of Renewal is an all-in-one-building retreat house that can provide overnight retreats and conferences for almost 100 individuals with multiple meeting rooms for groups of varying sizes. Enjoy more than 100 acres of tranquil, natural beauty located on the Lower Niagara River adjacent to the Stella Niagara Preserve of the Western New York Land Conservancy.

Detailed flyers for both retreats can be obtained by contacting 716-754-7376, Ext. 2). The retreat center is currently booking group and individual retreats into the year 2024, and welcomes inquiries to help customize your spiritual journey. More information on the retreat center is available by viewing the website at stellaniagararetreats.org.
LANCASTER — Four Roman Catholic parishes — Our Lady of Pompeii, St. Mary of the Assumption in Lancaster, St. Martha and St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta in Depew — will co-sponsor Surge of the Heart, a three evening Lenten parish Mission on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, March 9-11 from 7 to 8 p.m. The mission, presented by Jon Leonetti, will be held at St. Martha Church, 10 French Road, Depew.

Leonetti, an international Catholic speaker, best-selling author and radio host. Through his mission messages participants will discover the freedom Christ offers by way of his life and love.

Schedule of Mission Sessions

Evening One — “Who is God and Why Does it Matter?”

We cannot love someone we don’t know. In order to love God, we have to know God. We examine the ways God reveals himself to us, so we better understand who we are and what our mission in life is about.

Evening Two – “God’s Dream for Your Life”

God’s dream is to make you a saint. In session two, Leonetti shares both powerful and humorous stories of Catholic men and women who revolutionized their generation, living and sharing the extraordinary love and mercy of God in the most ordinary ways. They are stories that will make you laugh and stories that will make your cheer — and stories that will make you want to go and do likewise.

Evening Three – “Let’s Be Saints”

Every saint had a mission and a plan. We should too. On evening three, Leonetti shares the three things every saint had in common and how we can implement them into our lives. There may never be any more important thing we will ever do.

“Since 2016, our four parishes have come together to organize and combine resources for our Lenten programs,” said Father Bart W. Lipiec, pastor of St. Martha Parish. It is our mission as a team to offer Lenten programs which will enhance each participant’s spiritual renewal during this most sacred time in the Catholic Church.

There is no charge to attend the Lenten Parish Mission, and preregistration is not necessary. Attendees are encouraged to participate all three nights for a mindful Lenten experience, however people may attend all or any of the sessions. Free will donations will be accepted to help the sponsoring parishes offset program costs. Refreshments will follow each evening’s session.

For more information, call 716-684-6342 or visit one of the parish websites: olpparish.com, stmaryonethehill.org, stmarthedepew.org or blessedmotherteresaparishdepew.org.

Jon Leonetti has been featured and interviewed by the nation’s top Catholic websites, blogs and radio shows, helping Catholics in all walks of life to fall in love and stay in love with the living God.

Souper Bowl at St. Mary of the Assumption

Pictured with donations to St. Mary of the Assumption’s “Souper Bowl Weekend” drive are from left, Chase Smith, 8; Sister Therese Chmura, CSSF, director of Faith Formation at St. Mary’s; Edward Smith III; and Lee Smith, 7. The Smiths are Lancaster residents and participants in St. Mary’s Family Faith Formation program.
### BINGO Listings

**SUNDAY**
Cardinal O’Hara High School  
39 O’Hara Rd., Tonawanda  
**Phone:** 695-2600 ext. 326  
1 p.m. $10 admission package includes all games and specials. NEW! Queen of Hearts!

Kenmore - St. Andrew’s School  
Elmwood @ Sheridan  
Facebook: St Andrews Bingo  
7 p.m. $10 admission package includes all games.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church  
3148 Abbott Rd., Orchard Park  
**Phone:** 824-2935  
2 p.m. $3 Admission

St. Bernard Church  
1988 Clinton St., Buffalo 14206  
**Phone:** 822-8856  
7:30 p.m. Bonus Ball, R/W/B, Progressive Holy Kielbasa game.

**MONDAY**
Hamburg Council – Knights of Columbus  
36 Pierce Ave., Hamburg  
**Phone:** 649-9830  
7:30 p.m. $20 packs, R/W/B, Progressive, Bullseye, Bonus Ball, Pull Tabs

Town of Tonawanda – St. Amelia Bingo  
2999 Eggert Road, Tonawanda  
**Phone:** 836-0011  
7:15 p.m. Bonus Ball, Share the Wealth, Progressive, Bottoms Up

**TUESDAY**
Kenmore - St. Andrew’s School  
Elmwood @ Sheridan  
Facebook: St Andrews Bingo  
7:30 p.m. $10 admission package includes all games

TUESDAY Cont.  
St. Andrew Church  
111 Crocker Street, Sloan  
**Phone:** 896-8962  
7:30 p.m. Progressive, R/W/B, Bullseye

**WEDNESDAY**
St. Francis of Assisi Holy Name Society  
4203 St. Francis Drive, Hamburg  
**Phone:** 627-2710  
7:30 p.m. $3 Admission board. Bonus Ball, Share the Wealth, Progressive, Pull Tabs. Pizza, snacks and baked goods available.

Town of Tonawanda – St. Amelia Bingo  
2999 Eggert Road, Tonawanda  
**Phone:** 836-0011  
7:15 p.m. Bonus Ball, Share the Wealth, Progressive, Bottoms Up

**THURSDAY**
Fourteen Holy Helpers  
1345 Indian Church Rd., West Seneca  
7 p.m. Kitchen has many food items. STW 50/50/70% payouts. Also Queen of Hearts game.

Kenmore - St. Andrew’s School  
Elmwood @ Sheridan  
Facebook: St Andrews Bingo  
7:30 p.m. $10 admission package includes all games

Knights of Columbus  
755 Erie Ave., North Tonawanda  
**$2 Admission** R/WB-Progressive  
7:20 p.m. Bonus Ball, Queen of Hearts

St. Bernard Church  
1988 Clinton St., Buffalo, 14206  
**Phone:** 822-8856  
7:30 p.m. Bonus Ball, R/W/B, Progressive Holy Kielbasa, Queen of Hearts (NEW).

**FRIDAY**
Kenmore - St. Andrew’s School  
Elmwood @ Sheridan  
Facebook: St Andrews Bingo  
7:30 p.m. $10 admission package includes all games

**SATURDAY**
Cardinal O’Hara High School  
39 O’Hara Rd., Tonawanda  
**Phone:** 695-2600 ext. 326  
7:30 p.m. Average weekly payouts - $4,000! Queen of Hearts and Bell Jars games!

Infant of Jesus Shrine – Pallotine Fathers  
3452 Niagara Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda  
**Phone:** 694-4313  
7 p.m. $2 Admission.

St. Andrew Church  
111 Crocker Street, Sloan  
**Phone:** 896-8962  
7:30 p.m. Progressive - R/W/B - Bullseye - Queen of Hearts

St. Vincent de Paul Parish at St. Leo’s  
2748 Military Road, Niagara Falls  
7:30 p.m. Every Saturday  
$3 Admission/$20 Packs  
Queen of Hearts, Red/White & Blue, Bell Jar

Town of Tonawanda – St. Amelia Bingo  
2999 Eggert Road, Tonawanda  
**Phone:** 836-0011  
1 p.m. Bonus Ball, Share the Wealth, Progressive, Bottoms Up

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To advertise:  
**716.847.8736 • ads@buffalodiocese.org**

Bingo advertisements are in support of our parishes and affiliated Catholic entities.
Adoration

Alden — Adoration is held at St. John the Baptist Parish, 2021 Sandridge Rd., every Friday in the church at 7:30 a.m., followed by Mass with the schoolchildren at 8:30 a.m. First Friday Adoration 7:30 to 8:25 a.m., followed by Mass at 8:30 a.m. Re- sume Adoration from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., closing with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Arcade — Adoration is held at St. Mary Parish, 471 West Main St., Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 585-492-5330

Buffalo — Exposition of the Holy Eucharist takes place at Corpus Christi Church, 199 Clark St., Wednesdays to Fridays with a 10 to 11:30 a.m. Mass, and the first Thursday of each month in the church from 7-10 p.m.

Buffalo — SS. Columba-Brigid Parish, 75 Hickory St., offers Eucharistic adoration every First Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Buffalo — St. Michael Church, 651 Washington St., offers Eucharistic adoration at the Sacred Heart Shrine each day. Weekdays, 7:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., and Sundays from 12:45 to 5 p.m. Confessions weekdays from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 4:30 to 5 p.m. On Saturdays, confessions will be heard from 11:30 a.m. to noon; 1 to 2 p.m.; and 3:30 to 5 p.m. Handicap accessible and on-site parking. www.stmichaelbuffalo.org

Buffalo — St. Stanislaus Parish holds a Holy Hour with Eucharistic adoration every First Friday of April through December, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the church at 123 Townsend St.

Canaseraga — Eucharistic adoration takes place every Thursday at St. Mary Parish, 6 North St., with exposition at 10 a.m., followed by all-day adoration and benediction at 7 p.m. Confession available from 6 to 7 p.m. First Friday exposition is at 9:30 a.m., after 9 a.m. Mass. Followed by the rosary for life and silent adoration, with benediction concluding at 10:30 a.m.

Depew — Eucharistic adoration is held on the First Friday of every month at Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Parish, 496 Terrace Blvd., beginning with the 8 a.m. Mass and concluding at noon. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is recited at 11 a.m.

Kenmore — Eucharistic adoration is held in the St. John Neumann Chapel at St. John the Baptist Parish, Englewood and Belmont Avenue, Monday through Friday, 2 to 4 p.m.; Holy Hour Fridays, 1 to 2 p.m.; Holy Hour Sundays, 3 to 4 p.m.

Lancaster — Our Lady of Pompeii, 158 Laverack Ave., holds adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every First Friday from noon to 8 p.m. The Divine Mercy chaplet is prayed at 3 p.m.

Lancaster — St. Mary of the Assumption holds Eucharistic adoration every First Friday from 12:30 to 5 p.m. at the church at 1 St. Mary’s Hill (corner of N. Aurora St. and St. Joseph St.) 716-683-6445.

North Tonawanda — St. Jude the Apostle Parish, 800 Niagara Falls Blvd., holds Eucharistic adoration on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. 716-694-0540.

North Tonawanda — Our Lady of Czestochowa, 57 Center Ave, North Tonawanda 14120, every Tuesday From 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Adoration Room, in the Ministry Center.

Orchard Park — Eucharistic adoration takes place at Nativity of Our Lord Church, 43 Argyle Place, 24/7. 716-998-0593 or 716-649-3090. Entry code needed after 3 p.m.

Sacrament Church in the Town of Tonawanda, at 263 Claremont Ave., offers Eucharistic adoration in the Divine Mercy Chapel every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. until 6:10 p.m., followed by a Mass. 716-834-4282.

South Buffalo — St. Martin of Tours Parish, 1140 Abbott Road, provides daily Eucharistic adoration 24/7. Anyone interested in being a weekly adorer or a substitute, call Don Graham at 716-822-0283. A security code is needed from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Tonawanda — Night of Two Hearts, all night adoration, honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, takes place at St. Amelia Church, 2999 Eggert Road, from 8 p.m. each first Friday of the month to 8 a.m. Saturday.

Tonawanda — Blessed Sacrament Church in the Town of Tonawanda, at 263 Claremont Ave., offers Eucharistic adoration in the Divine Mercy Chapel every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. until 6:10 p.m., followed by a Mass. 716-834-4282.

West Seneca — Queen of Heaven Parish, 4220 Seneca St., provides daily Eucharistic adoration 24/7. Anyone interested in being a weekly adorer or a substitute, call Nancy at 716-907-5368. Visitors are welcome. A security code is needed from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Williamsville — St. Gregory the Great Parish, 200 St. Gregory Court, offers adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 24/7. A security code is needed from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. 716-688-5678.

Charismatic Prayer Meeting

Buffalo/Black Rock — A Charismatic prayer meeting, Prayer and Praise, will take place in the church hall at Assumption Parish, 435 Amherst St., (use the Peter Street entrance) every Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m.

North Tonawanda — A Charismatic prayer meeting takes place at St. Jude the Apostle Parish every Thursday from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Healing Mass

Boston — St. John the Baptist, 6895 Boston Cross Road, monthly Healing Mass, second Wednesday at 7 p.m. 716-941-3549.

Pilgrimages

Experience the peace of Medjugorje Sept. 24-Oct. 4, 2020 with Father Robert Owczarczak. Call Caroline 716-491-9431

Prayer

Pray in Interior Silence through the Centering Prayer method “Be still and know that I am God” (PS. 46:10) www.contemplativeoutreachbuffalo.com

Special Magnificat

Father Donald Calloway, MIC, author and speaker, whose dynamic witness to the transforming love of God has touched the hearts and changed the lives of thousands of people. Dec. 7, Our Lady of Victory National Shrine, Ridge Road and South Park Ave., Lackawanna, 7:30 a.m. Mass to 12:15 p.m.; $35 (includes box breakfast) by Nov. 28 ($40 after due date). For reservations, call Maureen 716-683-2290 or see www.facebook.com/magnificatbuffalo

Triduum

Buffalo — The annual public Triduum in honor of St. Joseph will be held at the Carmelite Monastery, 75 Carmel Road, Buffalo. The Triduum will begin on Tuesday, March 17 and close on the feast day, Thursday, March 19. Father Neil J. Roy of the Diocese of Peterborough, Ont, will conduct the services. Special Magnificat.

Services each evening of will begin with the rosary at 6:45 p.m., followed by Mass. Holy Mass each night of the Triduum will be offered in the Extraordinary Form according to the 1962 Missal. We ask that all who attend do so modestly and suitably dressed, as is proper in the House of God.
Sister Eileen Barrett, OSF

Sister Eileen Barrett, whose teaching career spanned nearly six decades, died Feb. 15, 2020, at Sisters of St. Francis Amherst. She was 89.

Sister Eileen, formerly known as Sister M. Kevin, was born Sept. 20, 1930, to Francis and Mary Agnes Busch Barrett of Buffalo. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity order in 1948, shortly after graduating from St. Ann School of Business in Buffalo. She professed her first vows Aug. 17, 1951, then her perpetual vows on Aug. 18, 1955, at Stella Niagara. She graduated from Rosary Hill (now Daemen) College in Amherst, in 1969.

Sister Consolacion B. Briones, RSM


Sister Consolacion was born in the Philippines to Dominador Briones and Gertrude (Ballesteros) Briones on Sept. 21, 1936. She grew up on the U.S. military base Fort Stotsenburg while her father served in the U.S. Army. At the age of 5, she witnessed the brutality of the Bataan Death March. Such an experience impacted her for life and prompted her desire to reach out to those in need and pain.

As the oldest of 12 children, she was given many responsibilities. After high school, she continued her education at Business Bohol College and National University of Dentistry in the Philippines, earning a doctor of Dentistry degree. Eventually her family moved to California. In San Francisco, Sister Consolacion met a sister who guided her to explore various religious communities. At that time, she learned that the Buffalo Sisters of Mercy had a mission in the Philippines. On Sept. 8, 1966, Sister Consolacion entered the Sisters of Mercy Community and after three years of instruction, professed her vows on Aug. 15, 1969. At the same time, she attended Trocaire College and received an A.A.S. Degree in Nursing. She returned to the Philippines in August 1971 and ministered at Mercy Hospital in Mindanao. She also worked Makati Medical Center in Manila and was a rural dentist in Jimenez. After returning to the United States in 1980, Sister Consolacion was staff nurse at Our Lady of Mercy Health Care Unit and Mercy Hospital in Buffalo. As a volunteer in Alzheimer’s Respite Care and pastoral care, Sister Consolacion has touched the lives of many bringing compassion and care to those in need. As an “upbeat” person, joy and laughter were shared regularly.

Sister Consolacion is survived by her siblings Dolores Raymundo, Dominador Briones Jr., Leticia Padua, Zenaida Smith, Juanito Briones, Alfredo Briones, Remedios Novicio, Mary Hayner, Rafael Briones and Anthony Briones, all reside in California. Predeceased by her parents and brother Angelino.

A vigil service was held on Friday, Jan. 24. A funeral Mass was held at burial service took place at Holy Cross Cemetery on Saturday, Jan. 25.
Sister M. Anthony Reichmuth, OSF

Sister M. Anthony Reichmuth, OSF, who spent the greater part of her ministry as a cook for the students of Stella Niagara, died Feb. 16, 2020, at Stella Niagara Health Center, Stella Niagara.

The daughter of Bernard and Mary Grad Reichmuth, was born Sept. 3, 1927, in Buffalo. She attended Sacred Heart Elementary School and spent one year at St. Ann Commercial School, both in Buffalo. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity on Sept. 3, 1944. She then professed her first vows on Aug. 18, 1946, and perpetual vows three years later, at Stella Niagara.

Sister Anthony began her ministry as a cook at St. Anthony Convent, in Charleston, W.V. in 1946. She went on to serve at St. Ann Convent, Buffalo and St. Lawrence Convent, Buffalo. Throughout the 1950s, she served as a cook in convents in the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. She returned to Stella Niagara as assistant school cook in 1960, then as school cook from 1970-2005.

After her retirement from full-time ministry in 2005, she continued to serve at special events at Stella Niagara Education Park and also spent countless hours as a volunteer in the kitchen at the Fatima Shrine, Lewiston. She became a resident of the Stella Niagara Health Center in June 2017.

Sister Anthony is survived by her sister, Marguerite Martin. She is predeceased by her parents and siblings—Mary Kuchnowski, Anna Marie Bruenn, Bernice Zimmerman, Celia Gianconiera, Bernard, Emily and Anthony Reichmuth.

A funeral Mass will be held Feb. 20, at the Sisters’ Chapel, Stella Niagara, with burial in the Sisters’ Cemetery, also in Stella Niagara.

Father Dennis G. Riter

Father Dennis G. Riter, who has ministered to the Hispanic community of the Buffalo Diocese since his ordination, died Feb. 8, 2020, at Buffalo General Hospital after a brief illness. He was 74.

Born Oct. 15, 1945, to Anthony and Caroline Stephen Riter in Buffalo, Father Riter attended Depew Elementary School and St. John the Baptist in Alden. He later attended the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary for high school and college. He went on to earn a master of divinity degree from St. John Vianney Seminary in East Aurora.

He was ordained May 29, 1971, at St. Joseph New Cathedral by Bishop James McNulty. His first assignment saw him ministering to Hispanics as part of the Spanish Apostolate. That fall, he was assigned as assistant at Assumption Parish in Lackawanna, where he served until 1977. He went on to serve at St. Aloysius Parish in Springville from 1977-1982; St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Dunkirk from 1982-1984; St. Brigid Parish in Buffalo as administrator from 1984-1987; Queen of All Saints Parish in Lackawanna as administrator 1987-1994. In 1982, Father Riter was named coordinator of the Spanish Apostolate in the Dunkirk-Fredonia area.

In July of 1994, Father Riter was appointed administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Valentine parishes in Buffalo. Two years later, he was named pastor of those parishes. In 2002, he was named pastor of St. Mary Parish in Batavia. In 2008, he became pastor St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Dunkirk, where he was serving at the time of his death.

He also served as episcopal vicar and vicar forane for Chautauqua, as well as chaplain at the Brooks Memorial Hospital.

He is survived by his eight siblings: Carol Stifter, Joanne Idzik, Betty Lou Reimer, Charles Riter, Thomas Riter, Mary Jane Lynch, John Riter.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated Wednesday, Feb. 12 at 11 a.m. in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. Visiting hours will be held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Tuesday, Feb. 11 from 3-7 p.m. and Wednesday, Feb. 12 from 10 -11 a.m. Burial will be in St. John the Baptist Cemetery, Alden.
A PRAYER FOR HEALING VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just:
You gave your only Son to save us by his blood on the cross.
Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.
Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters who have been gravely harmed, and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their restless hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits with faith.
Grant them justice for their cause, enlightened by your truth.
Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people’s wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness.
Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PREVENTION MEASURES AND FOLLOW-UP throughout the U.S.

We train everyone to prevent and report abuse.
2,531,872 adults trained
4,117,869 children trained

We require background checks.
2,515,411 background checks for clerics, employees and volunteers

We report all allegations. 100% of U.S. dioceses/eparchies require allegations of sexual abuse to be reported to public authorities

We work with law enforcement.

PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN
UPCOMING CLASSES

Parish and Catholic school employees and volunteers, over the age of 18, who work with children and young people in the Diocese of Buffalo, are required to attend a child sexual abuse awareness session.

St. Francis of Assisi (Tonawanda)
March 3 at 6:30 pm

St. Bonaventure University (St. Bonaventure)
March 24 at 12:30 pm

Catholic Center (Buffalo)
March 24 at 12:30 pm
April 7 at 12:30 pm
April 23 at 12:30 pm
May 21 at 12:30 pm

Note: Please be sure to check online at www.virtus.org for updates to this list. Additional classes may be added as parishes and schools request to host a class.

Register online at: www.buffalodiocese.org/protecting-gods-children

BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF HELP AND HEALING:
THERE IS HOPE.

Your local Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to help you or anyone who has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church. We will listen to your needs and support you. We will help you make a formal complaint and arrange a personal meeting with the bishop, or his delegate, if desired. We encourage you to come forward and speak out.

Contact: Ms. Jacqueline Joy
Catholic Charities, 425 Main St., Dunkirk, NY 14048

Report Hotline (716) 895-3010 jacqueline.joy@ccwny.org
Considering Cremation?

The final expression of our faith as Catholics is the blessed and sacred burial in a Catholic Cemetery. We offer numerous cremation options for your Catholic burial.

Catholic Cemeteries
Diocese of Buffalo

873-6500

Put your faith in us.