



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Catholic

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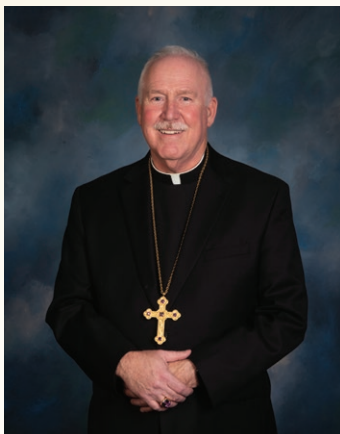
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Official tour group of the Diocese of Pittsburgh

These pilgrimages are not sponsored by the Diocese of Pittsburgh or Pittsburgh Catholic magazine.





Serving in Faith and Charity

BY BISHOP MARK ECKMAN

If you're a priest (or a bishop), summer isn't all about barbecues or even pilgrimages. Summer is time for a new round of priest assignments. You may meet a new priest in your parish, or say farewell to a familiar one.

These changes occur as older priests retire. They may also reflect the need to bring a priest with certain skills to a certain place, or to give a younger priest experiences in different kinds of parishes.

Over the years, I've seen this from different angles: as a priest, as a pastor, as episcopal vicar for clergy personnel, and now as your bishop. I know what it's like to receive a new assignment, to leave a community you've come to love, and to begin again somewhere new. I also know what it's like, as a parishioner, to adjust to change.

These assignments are made with care. They come through prayer, conversation, and attention to the needs of our parishes and our people. As bishop, I carry that responsibility in a particular way, asking where each priest can best serve and how we can best care for our communities.

Right now in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, we have 252 priests. Of those, just over 100 are in active ministry, serving 60 parishes. Many are nearing retirement age, though some volunteer to serve long afterward.

For a priest, an assignment is more than a move that means leaving behind people, relationships, and a place that has become part of his life. It also means saying "yes" again, trusting that this is where the Lord is calling him to serve next.

That is part of what a priest says "yes" to at ordination.

He doesn't know where his call will lead over time, but he is willing to go where he is needed.

For parishioners, change can bring both gratitude and uncertainty. It takes time to get to know a new priest, just as it takes time for him to get to know his people. That adjustment is something we experience together.

At the center of all of this is the call to serve.

I see that call lived out every day. It's in the way our priests show up for their people, in the sacraments they celebrate and the time they give to those who need them.

If you notice a change in your parish this summer, I invite you to keep that in mind. Offer a word of welcome, encouragement, or a prayer for our clergy. It is so helpful for our priests to hear from you. They need to know that they are not serving alone, and that the ministry they do is strengthening the life of the Church.

Right now I see many signs of hope in our diocese. We are blessed to be ordaining five men to the priesthood and six men to the transitional diaconate, with another ordination scheduled for the fall. We give thanks to God for their willingness to respond to His call.

It's a great joy to see men step forward to give their lives in this way. The willingness of new men to serve brings new energy and hope.

This year more men have begun to consider a call to the priesthood. We always need more, and I ask you to continue to pray and to encourage those who may be discerning this call. Every vocation is a response to God's invitation; each one matters in the life of the Church.

Our goal is to double the number of men discerning the priesthood in our diocese.

The Church continues forward because of those who say yes.

May God bless you and your family this summer. †

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FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Reader,
Summer has a way of opening things up. Windows, calendars, neighborhoods and, often, our hearts all let in fresh air or free time. Longer days invite us outdoors, family traditions return, parish festivals begin, and familiar routines make room for something new.

In the Church, this season opens doors to new beginnings, fresh starts, joyful traditions, and opportunities to grow in faith. From clergy transitions and healing ministries to music, mission, and community celebration, summer shows us that God is always at work.

In this issue of the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, we celebrate a Church that is alive in hope.

For many parishes across our diocese, summer is a time of transition as clergy assignments bring both goodbyes and new opportunities for ministry. In his column, Bishop Mark reflects on this important season in diocesan life. He invites us to pray for the priests whose faithful service guides our communities, as well as for new vocations that will shape the Church for generations to come.

Read a powerful story of hope and healing through the Addiction Recovery Ministry, where one man's decision to seek help became a new beginning. His story speaks to something our faith has always taught us: that no one is beyond the reach of grace, and healing often begins the moment a person truly understands that they matter. A supportive community is crucial for those who suffer from addiction, and this ministry provides that support. This June, as our nation marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Catholic bishops of the United States will consecrate our country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This historic act offers all of us an opportunity to pray in a special way for our nation, our families, and our future. Inside, you'll find details about how to join the novena and participate in this meaningful moment for the Church in America.

Even in the warmth of summer, we're wishing you a Merry Crèche-mas as efforts continue to preserve the Pittsburgh Crèche for generations to come. This cherished symbol of faith and beauty has long been part of our city's spiritual and cultural life, and there are creative ways for all of us to help sustain it.

Of course, summer in the Diocese of Pittsburgh also means festival season. Our annual parish festival guide is back, offering opportunities throughout the months ahead to gather, celebrate, and support our parish communities.

Our cover story reflects a spirit of joyful witness through music. The Saint Andrew Kim Youth Trio began with volunteer service hours, but their journey has grown into something much more. Through music, prayer, and friendship, these talented young musicians are using their gifts to bring peace and joy to others. Their story highlights that young people are not simply the future of the Church. They are living its mission right now.

As we continue this Holy Year of Saint Francis, summer also offers each of us an invitation to notice God's presence in both joyful gatherings and quiet moments. In sunshine and service, celebration and prayer, may we find renewed peace.

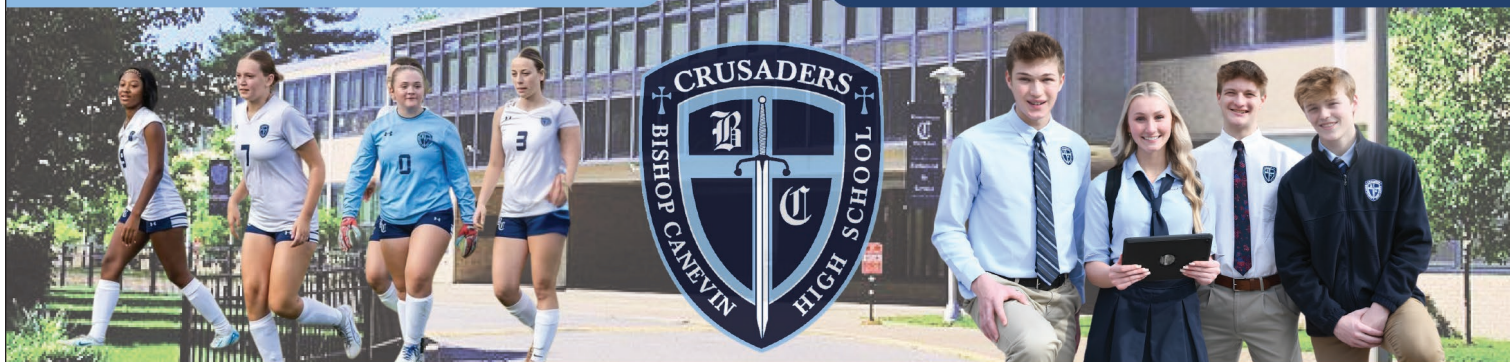
Thank you, too, for your continued support of the *Pittsburgh Catholic*. Our annual reader appeal is an important part of sustaining this ministry, and we are deeply grateful for your encouragement, your prayers, and your generosity throughout the year.

Wherever this summer finds you, may it be a season of hope, renewal, and living faith. †

With gratitude,
Jennifer Antkowiak
Editor-in-Chief
Pittsburgh Catholic

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ALLEGHENY COUNTY

When Charles Lucas saw an icon at his future daughter-in-law's home, he was enthralled. Learning she painted it after taking lessons with iconographer Peter Pearson, he began two years of study in the iconographer's Lawrenceville studio.

In the two decades since, Charles has produced and displayed icons at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Prior to the COVID lockdown he taught confirmation students how to paint icons of their chosen saint. "That was hard, with everyone having a different saint, but rewarding. I have encountered some now in college who still have their icons," he said.



▲ Charles Lucas holds a madonna and child icon from a display at St. Therese of Lisieux Church.

BEAVER COUNTY

Forty people from St. Augustine Parish participated in a seminar presented by Adam Jenke of St. Paul Street Evangelism in St. Blaise Church. They "learned best practices on sharing the faith, with a special emphasis on preparing them to start conversations with people they have never met," said outreach director Patty Seaman. Next they went out in small groups, knocking on doors and talking to residents. At the end when participants discussed their experiences, many had been able to pray with strangers and one man expressed a desire for his children to be baptized.



▲ Seminar attendees at St. Blaise Church, St. Augustine Parish, listen to Adam Jenke of St. Paul Street Evangelism.

BUTLER COUNTY

Hundreds of parishioners turned out at St. Michael the Archangel Church to celebrate Sister Nancy Schnur's decades of service – including as a principal of Butler Catholic School – during her 70 years as a Sister of Divine Providence.

Don Kelly, the Pittsburgh Pirates manager, who is also her cousin, arrived with a number 70 Pirates jersey to mark the occasion. As a young girl, before joining the order, her first known statement of what she wanted to do with the family was, "I want to go to a Pirates game at Forbes Field."



▲ Pirates manager Don Kelly (right) presented a number 70 jersey to his cousin, Sister Nancy Schnur for her 70th anniversary as a Sister of Divine Providence.

GREENE COUNTY

Nineteen teens and five adults from St. Michael Parish, Cranford, NJ, returned to St. Matthias Parish for the third time to help low-income residents of the region.

"They give up their spring break in order to serve others through multiple corporal and spiritual works of mercy, such as painting, home and church repairs, organizing and cleaning storage areas, building ramps for the disabled and more," said Father Tom Lewandowski, pastor of St. Matthias Parish.

They assist both parish families and clients of social services in Greene and Washington counties.



▲ Some of the New Jersey volunteers with the ramp they built for a homeowner with disabilities.

LAWRENCE COUNTY

The Journeying through Grief ministry at Holy Spirit Parish supports families in the year following a death. Parishioner Mary Ann Isaac leads 17 volunteers who send handwritten letters and helpful booklets for coping.

"The most common feedback we receive is families being comforted that what they are going through is normal," she said. Since 2019 the ministry has supported over 1,400 families in Lawrence County. Correspondence between volunteers happens over the phone, with Mary Ann providing training and keeping notes for every death that occurs in the parish.



▲ Mary Ann with the booklets that are sent to every bereaved family in Holy Spirit Parish.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

The food bank at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish serves about 1,500 people monthly, while a related diaper bank "supports our youngest neighbors with dignity and care," said Joe Caruso, the business manager.

The food bank benefits from good parish management and strong partnerships with Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Catholic Charities, 412 Food Rescue and Hunters Share the Harvest. "What amazes me most about our food bank program is that we feed about 25% of Charleroi Borough's population," said Father Levi Hartle, the pastor.



▲ Some of the more than 100 volunteers from the parish are sorting and bagging vegetables for distribution.



Come away

“COME AWAY FOR A WHILE.”
It's an invitation from Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. It sounds peaceful and simple, something most of us would gladly accept.

It also sounds a little like the vacation ads we see this time of year, with images of gorgeous beaches, or mountain views, and the promise to escape and finally rest. There's something about this season that makes us want that, even if just for a little while.

For many of us, it raises the honest question: how?

Life doesn't slow down just because we need it to. Responsibilities continue. The people we care for still need our time and attention. Even in the summer months, when the pace may shift slightly, the weight of everyday life comes with us.

In Mark's Gospel, the moment when Jesus speaks these words is anything but

quiet. The disciples have just returned from being sent out to teach and to serve. They are coming back with stories, questions, and likely a deep sense of both purpose and exhaustion. They are also grieving. They have just learned of the death of John the Baptist. Around them, people are coming and going so quickly that they have not even had time to eat.

There is urgency all around them. Needs, expectations, people reaching for them. Everything seems to be moving quickly and there is little room to stop.

In the middle of all that, Jesus says, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”

That invitation is still there for us, right in the middle of our real lives.

Not long ago, I had a parallel experience. After a stretch of full and stressful days, I was invited to go to dinner. I was tired mentally and physically; ready for a quiet night at home. Staying home would have been easier. I was close to saying no, but I went.

That evening I conversed with a couple who talked about their pilgrimages to Lourdes. There was so much peace in the way they described their experience.

Before the night ended, they offered me a bottle of holy water from the shrine. It was unexpected, and I was so overwhelmed with gratitude that it brought tears to my eyes.

What stayed with me was how easily I could have missed that moment, and that kindness. It was just what my heart needed, even though I didn't realize it.

I learned that stepping away does not always mean leaving everything behind. Sometimes Jesus steps in to help and heal us in these small moments when we connect with him during our day. These are opportunities we might have missed, or even said no to, if we weren't paying attention to the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps you can take a few quiet minutes before the day begins, a short walk, a pause in the middle of a busy afternoon. Jesus welcomes a simple prayer spoken honestly, without needing the right words.

These moments create space. And in that space, something begins to settle. We remember that we are not carrying everything alone.

With longer days, and sometimes more relaxed routines, summer offers more moments to “come away for a while.” They may be simple, but they are real, and they are enough. †

A Summer Prayer

Lord,

Help me to notice the moments

You are inviting me to pause.

Give me the grace to step away, even briefly, and to meet You in the quiet.

Remind me that I do not carry everything alone.

Walk with me in the small moments of this day,

and let the light of the summer sun remind me of Your presence and peace.

AMEN.



JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

is the Chief Communications Officer and Diocesan Spokesperson.



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▲ Left to right: Rosemarie Haas, Brandon Tatar, Deacon Tim Noca

RECOVERY requires COMMUNITY

Addiction Recovery Ministry walks with addicts and their loved ones

BY ANN RODGERS

Brandon Tatar owned only the clothes on his back when he walked into Addiction Recovery Ministry (ARM) in Sharpsburg. Two weeks out of jail, he was clean but realized that if he continued to crash with a friend, he would use again.

He had been to ARM before, when he denied he needed ongoing help. Now he was desperate for access to a sober living unit.

"I was in my own bed, in my own [sober living] room that night," said Brandon, still clean and helping out at ARM while hunting for a job.

"He knocked on the door

at one o'clock on a Monday afternoon and by three o'clock I had him placed," said Rosemarie Haas, the recovery center director, who connects addicts with resources for recovery.

Rosemarie grew up in Sharpsburg at what is now Christ the King Parish. She was the parish secretary

in 2018 when Father Mike Decewicz founded ARM to assist individuals and families struggling with addiction, grief, and the spiritual wounds they inflict. After his death in 2023, she was among those who stepped forward to take up his mantle.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh, which had helped to launch ARM as an independent ministry, recently assigned Deacon Tim Noca as the full-time executive director. Then Brother Joe Dudek providentially appeared to offer help.

A member of the Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, he had spent decades working in addiction ministry before returning to Pittsburgh to care for ailing relatives. Since he was nearby, he asked if ARM needed assistance. He is now an indispensable team member.

While the nerve center of ARM is in Sharpsburg, the goal is for every parish to have trained, certified "missionaries of recovery" to

help local people in need.

"Addiction loves isolation; recovery demands community," Deacon Tim said.

iTHIRST training and certification is central to ARM's goal for parish recovery programs. People who want to assist those who are addicted and their loved ones can enroll in the 8-week spiritual companionship program.

ARM is an umbrella group that helps people access a range of Catholic and secular recovery programs, he said. However, the key to its success is personal, one-on-one support. Much of Rosemarie's work is referral and triage.

"You help people figure out where they need to be, what level of care they need, if it's detox, rehab, sober living. I guide them in the right direction," she said.

No one is a number to Rosemarie. When a local recovering alcoholic called about a friend in Massachusetts who had a nephew in Ohio who was struggling with recovery – and wasn't Catholic – Rosemarie immediately called a contact in Columbus. Soon the nephew in Ohio had a mentor.

"Nine times out of 10 I don't get a call from the person that's suffering, I get a call from a family member who is looking for help," she said.

Brandon was an exception.

He grew up in New York State, where his popularity led to "partying, being around the wrong people," he said. "Before you know it, you're depending on substances or alcohol to get you through your day."

In an attempt to restart,



▲ Rosemarie Haas connects people suffering from addiction with help

his young family moved to Sharpsburg. He got a well-paying technical job and tended bar.

“But ultimately, I wouldn’t accept help. I thought these programs were for someone else,” he said.

“I was out with the people that I knew I really shouldn’t have been with but I considered my friends. Slowly everything that I came to tell my wife is a lie. I’m never around. She doesn’t need me because I’m not there. There’s no reason for her to miss me. So, she leaves me.”

Distraught, he gave up instead of straightening up.

A DUI arrest pushed him to ARM, but he accepted minimal help. Eventually Rosemarie, Brother Joe and a social worker for Sharpsburg borough convinced him to enter a 30-day residential recovery program. Soon after he finished he was arrested and jailed for several months.

He was determined “to stay on the right path this time.”

Released in January, he was staying at a friend’s home when the police raided it. That’s when he returned to ARM. Rosemarie helped with whatever he needed, including bus passes and clothes for job hunting,

“When you walk in, you feel like you matter,” Brandon said of ARM.

By spring he was allowed to visit his two young children and had established a civil relationship with his long-suffering former wife.

Brandon, who had been raised without faith, said Brother Joe has slowly answered his questions about Catholicism, without ever pushing it on him.

“I always wanted more of a faith-based approach to my recovery and Catholicism is structured and old-school – kind of like the program of recovery itself,” he said.

He now realizes that addiction is due to the neurochemistry of how his brain bonds with alcohol and drugs, and the craving will never go away. “Any time you’re sick or down, you’re still going to want that,” he said. “The only way you can treat it is by staying active and doing

the little things each day that give you a reason to toe your own line.”

Some programs ARM uses have no religious basis, others are explicitly Catholic or generically Christian. Catholic In Recovery is a Catholic 12-step group, Substance Abuse Ministry (SAM) focuses on praying the rosary for recovery. Six Steps is a Christian equivalent of Nar-Anon, for people in relationships with drug abusers. ARM also has a grief response committee to support those who have lost a loved one to addiction-related death.

Brandon now talks to some of the people who come into the center, showing them what ARM has to offer. He is proud that he is trusted to do so.

“The people here are there to help you, but you have to admit to yourself that you need it. You have to seek it,” he said. †

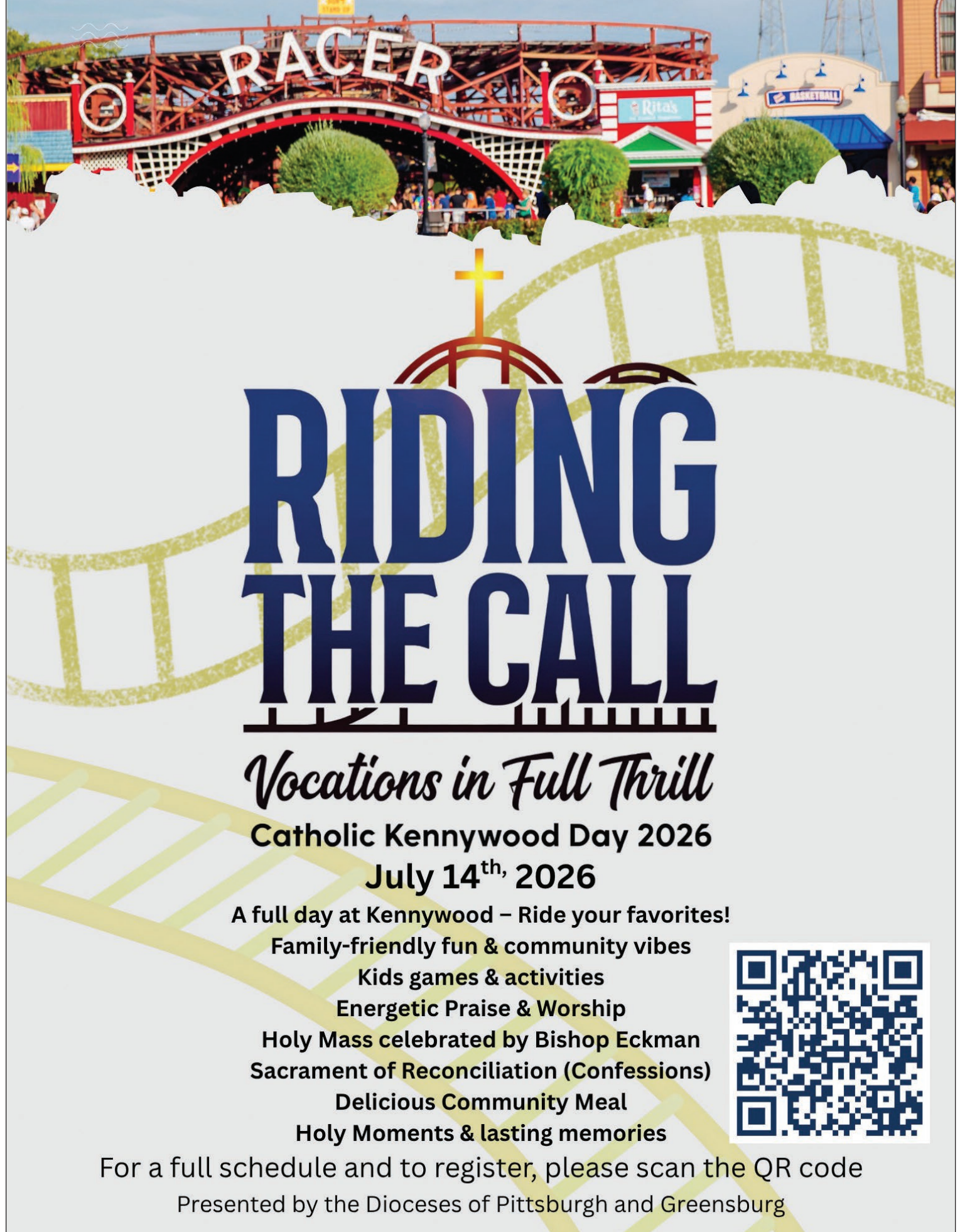


▲ Brandon Tatar found help at Addiction Recovery Ministry shortly after his release from jail.

ARM upcoming events

▶ **July 15, 2026, at 7 p.m.:** Bishop Mark Eckman will offer a Mass in Saint Paul Cathedral for Healing from Addiction. More Masses will be held in surrounding counties later.

▶ **August 21-23, 2026:** “Broken, Not Buried” is a retreat at Saint Paul of the Cross Spiritual Center, Pittsburgh, for those who love someone struggling with addiction. Led by Keaton Douglas, executive director of iTHIRST. For information call 412-378-9290



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– Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati, feast day July 4.

Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925) was born into an influential family in Turin, Italy, served the poor, cultivated a deep life of prayer, promoted social justice and stood against Italy's rising Fascist movement. He was also an accomplished mountain climber.

► **Come celebrate as Bishop Mark Eckman ordains new priests** on Saturday, June 27, 2026 at 10 a.m. in Saint Paul Cathedral. Five men are scheduled for ordination to the priesthood.

► **Join Bishop Eckman for a eucharistic procession** on June 7, 2026, honoring the Feast of Corpus Christi. Mass will begin at noon in Saint Paul Cathedral, with the procession lasting for about an hour afterward.

► On June 11, 2026, at their semi-annual gathering, **the Catholic bishops of the United States will consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of**

Jesus. The consecration is part of celebrations for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. From June 3-11, 2026, all Catholics are invited to join a novena for the consecration. The bishops are also promoting “250 Hours of Adoration” and “250 Works of Mercy” asking parishes to make a collective commitment to fulfilling those activities. Information: www.usccb.org/weholdthesetruths.



► **Give to Peter's Pence**, an annual collection June 27-28, 2026 supporting the operations of the Vatican and Pope Leo's charitable works worldwide.

► **Discover Catholic perspectives on artificial intelligence** at a diocesan-sponsored symposium June 23, 2026: “AI, the Human Person, and the Love that Surpasses all Knowledge.” Intended for both educators and the broader community, the symposium is a rare opportunity to learn from experts in science, communication, technology, education, philosophy, and theology. The day includes keynote presentations, panel discussions, Q & A sessions, and participant colloquia. For more information, please call (412) 456-3106.



► **Do you or a loved one suffer from addiction?** A Mass for Healing from Addiction will be held July 15, 2026 at 7 p.m. in Saint Paul Cathedral; and August 6, 2026 at 6 p.m. in Saint Vitus Church (Holy Spirit Parish), in New Castle, Lawrence County.

GOOD SHEPHERDS

A Shepherd Who Answers the Call

BY JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

In 2022, Debra Gohl found herself at a painful turning point. “I was in a bad way, and my life felt like it was falling apart,” she said. “I didn’t like my behavior, and I didn’t recognize the person I had become.”

Debra did something simple but difficult. She called St. Ferdinand Parish in Cranberry, hoping to speak with a priest. Leaving a voicemail for Father David Egan, she didn’t really expect to hear back.

Two minutes later, her phone rang. It was Father David, who agreed to meet with her. That moment became a new beginning.

“When I say that Father David changed my life, it’s not an exaggeration,” Debra said. “The person I am now is different, and the people around me notice it.”

Through regular confession, spiritual guidance, and consistent encouragement, she found healing and a renewed sense of faith. “I was terrified of confession when I came back to the Church,” she said. “Now I love it. It has changed everything for me.”

Debra now encourages others to seek out that same experience.

“I’ve brought my fiancé, my friends, and even someone who was struggling deeply,” she said. “I’ve told people, ‘Let Father David help you. Let your soul be renewed.’”

She describes Father David as a priest who meets people where they are, with compassion and understanding. “He draws people in,” she said. “He makes you feel seen, cared for, and understood.”

Father David now serves at St. Aidan Parish in Wexford.

Reflecting on her journey, Debra has this message for others who hesitate to return to the Church: “There is nothing to be afraid of. There is healing waiting for you.” †



Do you have a Good Shepherd story?

► Send stories highlighting the good work of our clergy in the Diocese of Pittsburgh to communications@diopitt.org.

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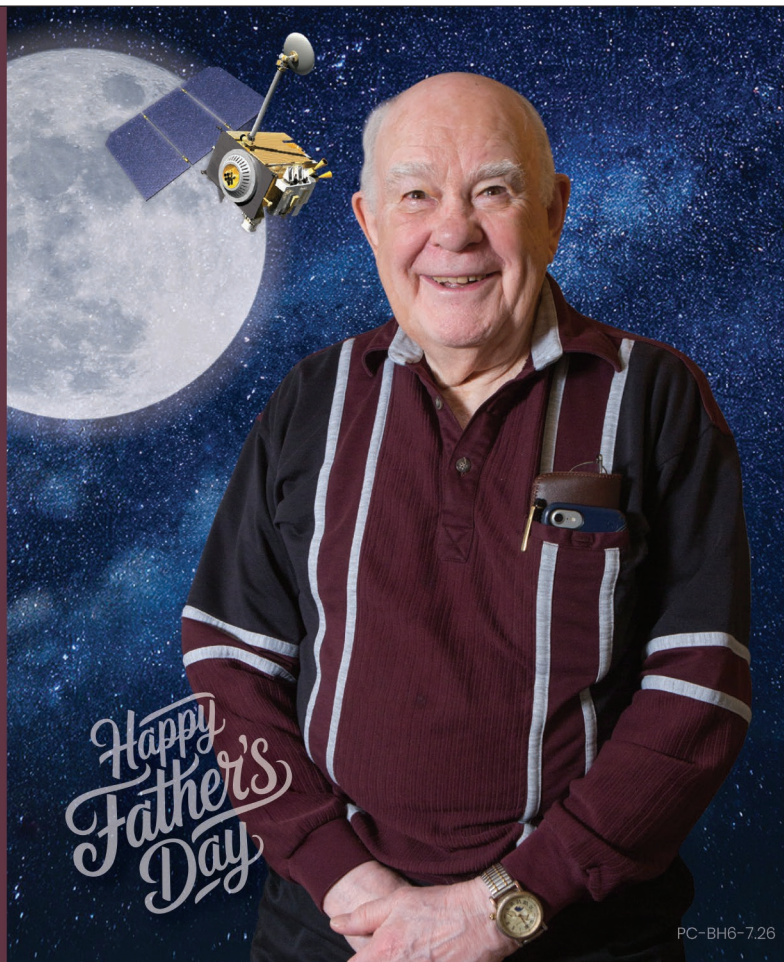
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QUESTION

I hear people speak of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but it has not been part of my spiritual life. I am curious about this devotion and whether it might be something helpful for me. Can you offer any help with this?

ANSWER

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has long been a part of the spiritual life of many Catholics and Catholic parishes. The history of this devotion seems to be rooted in the Scripture passage in which Jesus speaks of living waters flowing from within him (see John 7:37). This passage was amplified by the crucifixion narrative in which blood and water flowed from the side of Christ (see John 19:34).

Over the ages, personal devotion to the Sacred Heart was supported by many saints and religious Orders. No one, however, was more forceful than Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque who, in the 17th century, experienced private revelations regarding the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This long history of personal devotion culminated in the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the liturgical calendar for the universal church by Pius IX in 1856. The Church's liturgical tradition employed this devotion to encourage Catholics to experience the love of God made manifest in the incarnation of Christ. The Sacred Heart of Jesus revealed that God was not abstract and

distant but rather very near to us as the love of Christ.

The popularity of this devotion was strongest when, in the early 1900's, reception of Holy Communion was infrequent because many felt unworthy. Even after the reforms begun by St. Pius X in the first years of the twentieth century, people often stayed away from the Eucharist out of a sense of devotion, reverence or awe. It is not difficult, then, to see that, for these people, devotion to the Sacred Heart was an important means by which God was seen as close to us. They understood their own hearts and thus felt a deeper understanding of God in the heart of Jesus Christ.

Today, with more frequent reception of Holy Communion, some have felt less need for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This need not be the case, however. Devotion to the Sacred Heart complements and unfolds our belief in the Eucharist. The church's liturgical books

provide beautiful prayers from which we can continue the ancient devotion to the Sacred Heart. One example is found in these words from the preface for the Mass of the Sacred Heart: "Lifted high on the cross, Christ gave his life for us, so much did he love us. From his wounded side blood and water flowed, the foundation of sacramental life in the Church. To his open heart the Savior invites all to draw water in joy from the springs of salvation."

Surely these words challenge modern Catholics to establish in their own lives a closer relationship with Christ. On June 11, 2026, as part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Parishes around the country are encouraged to join the bishops in celebrating the consecration of our nation to the Sacred Heart.

FAITH FORUM



Pope Leo XIV's Prayer to the Sacred Heart for the Month of June begins: "Let us pray together that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from His Heart, learn to have compassion on the world." The pope goes on to add: "Lord, I come to your tender heart today, to you who have words that set my heart ablaze, to you who pour out compassion on the little ones and the poor, on those who suffer, and on all human miseries. ...send us out on mission, a mission of compassion for the world in which you are the source from which all consolation flows." †



FATHER CHARLES BOBER is pastor of Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish. He has written his column for the *Pittsburgh Catholic* newspaper and online since 1983.

It's Crèche-Mas in July

A summer celebration of a cherished Christmas tradition

BY JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

Long before December, the Christmas season in Pittsburgh is already beginning to take shape.

For more than a quarter century, the Pittsburgh Crèche has welcomed visitors to the plaza at the U.S. Steel Tower, offering a moment to slow down and take in the story at the heart of Christmas. Crèche-Mas in July is an initiative to raise financial support for this great testament to the Christian faith, which costs \$90,000 a year to erect, dismantle, repair and store.

Since its introduction in 1999, at the instigation of local architect Louis D. Astorino to recreate the Vatican's nativity scene, the life-sized display has brought the true meaning of Christmas to Downtown. The crèche stands 64 feet wide, 42 feet high, and 36 feet deep featuring, 20 life-size figures.

Each year, the crèche is liturgically blessed by the bishop and an array of Christian leaders from across the ecumenical community, reflecting their shared faith. From Light Up Night through Orthodox Christmas, the crèche welcomes visitors

around the clock, drawing hundreds of thousands annually. Many people make a visit to the crèche part of their family traditions.

But bringing the crèche to life each year is a monumental undertaking.

Constructed from tens of thousands of pounds of wood and other materials, it requires weeks of preparation to build. Dozens of local unions, organizations, businesses, religious sisters and volunteers collaborate, donating time, skill, and resources.

While the display is visible only during the Christmas season, the work behind it continues year-round, as parts are inspected and repaired, new clothing made and each part carefully stored. Only about half the cost of erecting and caring for the crèche is covered by an endowment, so donations are needed.

Crèche-Mas in July is a chance to celebrate what the crèche brings to the Pittsburgh region, and to be part of this testament of love for Jesus, Mary and Joseph. †



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PARISH FESTIVAL GUIDE

COMPILED BY BILL HILL

Relax and have fun this summer with your parish family at a summer festival. Come to enjoy food, music, rides, games, and more. See how many festivals you can visit. *Festival details are subject to change so check the parish website for updates before you go.*

► June (and late May)

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Mon. May 25-Sat. May 30, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish – 3945 Kirk Ave.,

Allison Park 15101 (lower parking lot on Duncan Ave. and the social hall) • olphpg.org/parish-festival • Mon. 6:30-10pm; Tue.-Thu. 6:30-9:30pm; Fri.-Sat. 6:30-10pm • Taste of Nations food booth, grill favorites, haluski, funnel

cakes and more • Basket raffle and daily live entertainment beginning at 7pm.

Mon. June 1-Sat. June 6, Blessed Trinity Parish, St. Albert the Great campus, 3198 Schieck St., Pittsburgh 15227 • blessedtrinitypg.org • Mon.-Sat. 6:30-10pm. • Food booths • nightly dinners Wed.-Sat. • Reinhart rides, games for the family, nightly entertainment.

Thu. June 4 - Sat. June 6, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, St. Agnes Campus, 622 St. Agnes Ln., West Mifflin 15122 • www.thomastheapostle.net • Thu.-Sat. 5-10pm • International food booths daily, fish fry Fri. • Games of chance, bingo, entertainment nightly • Tickets on sale for \$9,000 raffle to be drawn in August.

Mon. June 8-Sat. June 13, St. Paul of the Cross Parish, 400 Hoodridge Dr., Castle Shannon 15234 • www.stpaulofthecross.com/parish-fair • Mon.-Sat.

6-10pm • Homemade donuts and pierogies, festival food favorites, soft drinks • Flea market, raffle (\$1,000 prize Mon.-Fri. and a \$10,000 prize Sat.), games and rides.

Mon. June 15-Sat. June 20, Resurrection Parish, St. Thomas More Campus, 126 Fort Couch Rd., Bethel Park 15241 • www.resurrectionpg.org/summerfest • Mon.-Fri. 6-10pm, Sat. 5-10pm • Wide range of food, beverages, beer and wine • Rides, games, kids' zone, bingo, flea market, \$20K cash raffle, basket raffle • Live entertainment nightly.

► July

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Wed. July 8-Sat. July 11, Guardian Angels Parish, Most Blessed Sacrament grounds, 800 Montana Ave., Natrona Heights 15065 • www.guardianangelspg.org • Wed.-Fri. 6-10pm, Sat. 5-10pm • Food tent, rides, games, bingo, basket raffle, cash raffle • Nightly entertainment.

Wed. July 8-Sat. July 11, Holy Family Parish, 444 Holy Family Way, Pittsburgh 15239 (St. John the Baptist location) • https://holypfamilypg.org/family-festival • Wed.-Sat. 5-9pm for food and 6-10pm all other activities • Food tent featuring festival food favorites and nightly dinner specials • Grand raffle, DJ and nightly entertainment, games, rides, bingo, and flea market.

Thu. July 9-Sat. July 11, Mary, Mother of God Parish, St. Angela Church

grounds, 2701 Kelly St., White Oak 15131 • www.marymotherofgod1.org • Thu.-Sat. 6-10pm • Live bands nightly 7-10pm • multi-cultural food booths, homemade cuisine • Adult and children games, games of chance, kiddieland, train rides, raffle.

Thu. July 9–Sat. July 11, St. Raphael the Archangel Parish, Ss. Simon and Jude Church grounds, 1607 Greentree Rd., Pittsburgh 15220 • Straphaelcgs.org • Thu.-Sat. opens 6pm • Indoor flea market, games of chance, chinese auction, nightly skydivers; cash raffle, kids' games, activities, bounce houses • Ethnic food booths, bake sale, popular festival treats and a giant dining tent.

Thu. July 16–Sat. July 18, Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish, St. Bernadette campus, 245 Azalea Dr., Monroeville 15146 • Christthedivineshepherd.org • Thu.-Sat., 6-10:30pm • Favorites of festival food, booths and sit-down areas • Games, basket raffles, nightly cash raffles, bingo, rides • Nightly live musical entertainment.

Thu. July 16–Sat. July 18, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, St. Joseph Church, 1301 5th Ave., Coraopolis 15108 • www.mshj.org • Thu.-Sat. 5-10pm • Food booths, nightly dinner specials, games of chance, raffles, nightly live entertainment.

Wed. July 22–Sat. July 25, Triumph of the Holy Cross Parish - Grounds of St. Thomas à Becket, 139 Gill Hall Rd., Jefferson Hills 15025 • www.triumphoftheholycrossphg.org • Wed.-Sat. 6-10pm • Live bands, home-cooked meals, donuts, games, rides, raffles and more.

Thu. July 30–Sat. Aug. 1, Archangel Gabriel Catholic School, Archangel Gabriel Parish campus, 5720 Steubenville Pike, Robinson 15205 • www.ags.srccs.org/festival • Thu.-Sat. 5:30-10pm • Food booths, food trucks, games, prizes, rides, live entertainment, white elephant sale, casino, raffle baskets and more.

Thu. July 30–Sat. Aug. 1, St. Aidan Parish, St. Alexis Church, 10090 Old Perry Hwy, Wexford 15090 • Thu. July 30 5-10pm, Fri.-Sat. 5-11pm • Outdoor food: variety of fried foods including funnel cakes • Indoor dining: Thu., BBQ; Fri., fish fry; Sat., Italian • Games, rides, bingo, raffle baskets, and entertainment featuring local dance schools and musical acts.

Thu. July 30–Sat. Aug. 1, St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Forest Hills campus, 2001 Ardmore Blvd., Forest Hills 15221 • www.sjwpitt.org • Thu. 5-9pm, Fri.-Sat. 5-10pm • Delicious ethnic dishes and wonderful festival foods • Entertainment, dancers and music nightly • Games of chance, children's area, baskets, bingo, bake sale and raffles.

Fri. July 31–Sat. Aug. 1, St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Our Lady of Grace campus, 310 Kane Blvd., Pittsburgh 15243 • www.smapgh.org • Fri.-Sat. 5-9pm • Ethnic food booths, American grill, funnel cakes, apple pies • live music, cash and basket

raffles, bingo, games and more.

BUTLER COUNTY

Fri. July 17–Sat. July 18, St. Faustina Parish, St. Christopher Church, 232 N. Franklin St., Prospect 16052 • www.stfaustinaparish.org • Fri.-Sat. 5-8:30pm • Italian booth, Greek booth, other ethnic booth, grill booth, BBQ chicken booth, funnel cakes, homemade pies, ice cream • James Tobin both nights • Basket raffle (150+ baskets) adult games, bingo, kids' zone with games, bounce house & obstacle course.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Fri. July 10–Sat. July 11, St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 225 Park Ave. Monongahela 15063 • saintandrewmidmon.org • Fri.-Sat. 5-10pm • Mass Sat., 4pm • Festival Favorites food including Italian and Slavic • Live music, dancing, lawn games, bingo and more.

Wed. July 15–Sat. July 18, St. James Parish/JFK Catholic School, 111 West Spruce St., Washington 15301 • www.jfkatholic.com/summer-festival • Wed.-Sat. 6-10pm • Four nights packed with

delicious eats, live music, exciting games, rides, raffles, and endless fun for all ages.

► August

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Wed. Aug. 5–Sat. Aug. 8, Our Lady of Hope Parish, St. Valentine Church, 2710 Ohio St., Bethel Park 15102 • olhpgh.org • Wed.-Sat. 6-10pm nightly • Homemade donuts, food trucks, OLH food court, beverages • Games of chance, bingo, raffles, giant inflatables, kids' tent, rides • Live entertainment.

Wed. Aug. 5–Sat. Aug. 8, Regina Coeli Parish, Assumption School campus, 35 N. Jackson Ave, Pittsburgh 15202 • www.reginacoeliparish.org/festival.

Wed. Aug. 5–Sat. Aug. 8, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, St. Therese campus, 1 St. Therese Ct., Munhall 15120 • www.thomastheapostle.net • Wed.-Sat. 5-10pm • International food booths daily, fish fry Fri. • Games of chance, arcade games, bingo, entertainment nightly • Tickets on sale for \$9,000 raffle, winners drawn Aug. 8.



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Faith Beyond Words

DEAF MINISTRY PROMOTES BELONGING, PARTICIPATION, AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

BY JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK

Each Sunday at 11 a.m., Deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing Catholics gather at Saint Mary of the Mount Church in Mary, Queen of Peace Parish on Mount Washington for a Mass that is both spoken and signed.

The liturgy is fully integrated. Deaf lectors sign Scripture alongside hearing lectors. Deaf response leaders guide everyone in prayer. Deaf extraordinary ministers assist with the distribution of the Eucharist. A Deaf choir signs the music alongside vocalists, offering a visual expression that deepens the prayer of the Mass.

For many who attend, it is a shared experience of faith that reflects belonging, participation, and connection within the Church.

Father Walt Rydzon, a now-retired priest, was chaplain to Pittsburgh's Deaf Catholic community in 1994. He understood that Deaf Catholics wanted to fully participate in the life of the Church and helped create a Mass where Deaf and hearing Catholics



▲ Father Michael Stumpf with Father Walt Rydzon

could worship together.

Prior to that, although Mass and faith formation for Deaf Catholics had been available in Pittsburgh since the 1960s, those experiences did not typically include hearing parishioners.

In 1994, bringing the communities together required both trust and patience.

"Both Deaf and hearing parishioners were initially reluctant to share a Mass," Father Walt said. "They thought they might be losing an aspect of their worship experience. And I did my best to tell both communities, 'You're not losing anything, you're gaining everything.'"

The bilingual Mass with American Sign Language was pioneering. With a team of determined lay leaders, skilled liturgical interpreters, and a deacon fluent in sign

language, the ministry took root.

"Members of the hearing culture had a chance to learn a second language and to realize the spirit and meaning behind why some of the signs are shaped as they are. It just brought people closer together," he said.

At a party for volunteers that first Christmas, some wept as Deaf and hearing Catholics silently signed "Silent Night" together.

"God knows all languages," Father Walt said. "Some people pray with their voices, some people pray with their hands, and God hears those prayers."

That same Mass continues to thrive. Father Michael Stumpf, now chaplain to the Diocese of Pittsburgh's Deaf Ministry, came into the role with little background



▲ Father Michael Stumpf signing Mass.



▲ Cantor Madlene Augello and Deaf Choir members Irene Hearn, Cindy Vogtsberger and Randi Kelly pray with song and sign.



▲ Lectors Peggy Eddens and Irene Hearn share the First Reading in English and American Sign Language.



***“God knows
all languages.
Some people
pray with their
voices, some
people pray
with their
hands, and
God hears
those prayers.”***



in Deaf ministry when he became pastor of the Mount Washington parish. “The Deaf Ministry found me,” he said.

Through his experience, he has come to understand the depth of communication within the Deaf community.

“With sign language, there’s an added physical dimension to communication,” he said. That carries into prayer, where meaning is expressed through movement, expression, and presence.

Experiencing signed prayer deepened his own spirituality, and his connection to the Deaf community has remained strong even after serving in other parish assignments.

While the parish where the Deaf Ministry worships has undergone multiple mergers and transitions, the Deaf Ministry itself has remained a steady presence.

Many hearing parishioners say the experience has broadened their understanding of liturgy. Some have learned simple signs to join in the prayers and responses.

American Sign Language is a nuanced and expressive language, with its own structure and depth. It allows the Word of God to be received in a direct and

accessible way, while offering a broader understanding of how prayer can be experienced and shared.

Karen Shepherd, a hearing member of the Deaf Ministry team and director of the Deaf Choir, has seen that impact over many years. She stepped into her role unexpectedly and is grateful for mentoring from Deaf parishioners. Among her early projects was translating liturgical songs into sign language to make them more accessible.

“The strength of the faith of my Deaf friends is so inspiring,” she said. “They have very few options for a signed or interpreted Mass, and they show up every week.”

Many members of the Deaf community travel long distances to attend.

Planning liturgies involves communication among interpreters, music ministers, clergy, and parish leadership. Attention is given to details that support full participation. “When the intentions of the community are welcoming and sincere, the logistics can be worked out,” she said. “We are all learning together to make whatever adaptations are necessary.”

For example, in some parts of the Mass,

all parishioners remain seated so that signers remain visible.

The ministry continues to grow alongside changes within the Deaf and hard of hearing community, Father Michael said. Advances in technology, including cochlear implants and hearing assistance systems, are expanding how people experience sound and communication.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh’s Deaf Council and Hard of Hearing Committee supports a wide range of individuals, including Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, and cochlear implant users.

Angela Cristina, secretary of the diocesan Deaf Council, said hearing Catholics often do not realize “the exhaustion of constantly needing interpreters for spiritual formation, or the frustration of having their faith formation experiences filtered through someone else’s interpretation.”

She emphasized that Deaf Catholics are “a vibrant cultural and linguistic community with their own spiritual insights, theological perspectives, and ways of experiencing liturgy that can enrich the entire Church.”

Access to the sacraments remains central. For Deaf Catholics, having a priest who can sign allows for direct participation in the most personal moments of faith, including the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Looking ahead, the Diocese of Pittsburgh is preparing to ordain Deacon Erik Pintar, a member of the Deaf community, to the priesthood this summer. He uses cochlear implants, speaks, and signs fluently.

“I learned sign language before I can remember,” he said.

While studying computer and electrical engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, friends encouraged him to teach an American Sign Language class. He continued teaching through seminary.

He said the Deaf community has supported him through prayer and by showing up in large numbers for his diaconate ordination.

“The Deaf community is wonderfully warm, welcoming and supportive,” he said. “It is such a joy to be with them and learn from them. I am inspired by the Deaf community and can’t wait to work with them more as a priest.” †

PLAYING WITH PURPOSE:
**The Saint Andrew
Kim Youth Trio**

Volunteer service hours
become something more

BY PAM SURANO



Even before the doors opened at Saint Malachy Church in Coraopolis, classic melodies and Catholic hymns could be heard outside as three young musicians moved seamlessly from “Here I Am, Lord” to “Ave Maria” and then “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” The musicians are the Saint Andrew Kim Youth Trio, ages 13, 15 and 16.

Founded in 2024, the trio is directed by Rosaria Park, a music teacher, vocalist and mother of trio members Danison and Edwin Lee. She is also a ballet pianist at Point Park University and an organist at her parish, Saint Isidore the Farmer in Imperial.

“I choose music based on emotional melody. When

arranging, I pray that it will touch people,” Rosaria said.

They are all Korean, and the trio is named for Saint Andrew Kim Taegon, the first Korean-born Catholic priest, who was martyred for helping missionaries enter Korea. The trio honors his legacy of faith and sacrifice by seeking to serve others.

“One day I had the idea

to form the group. Students often need volunteer hours, but I wanted something more meaningful,” Rosaria said.

The members are:

Eunsol Ko, 15, a cellist and sophomore at Pine-Richland High School who enjoys reading and assembling puzzles.

Danison Lee, 16, a violinist and sophomore at Central Catholic High School where he is a Boy Scout and lacrosse player.

Edwin Lee, 13, a violinist and student at Archangel Gabriel Catholic School who plays soccer and loves classical music.

What began as after school practice and service quickly evolved. The group performs two or three times a month, mostly at Catholic venues, particularly nursing homes or retirement communities.

“One person told me after losing her husband, the music gave her comfort,” Rosaria said. “In nursing homes, people are surprised. Some cannot move or speak much, but when the students play, some cry. Some become very alive. They thank them.”

At first, the students focused on playing correctly. Now, they are learning to play with emotion, she said. That changes both how and why they play.

Danison recalled one of the group’s first performances at a senior home when he noticed a woman in the audience weeping.

“That stayed with me. It makes me want to keep playing,” he said.

Danison began playing piano at age 4, but the violin has since become his instrument of choice.

“I play to make others feel emotionally attached to the music and more happy. Sometimes people are very joyful. Sometimes they’re emotional, even sad because of memories,” he said. The young musicians did not expect much reaction at first, but that quickly changed, Eunsol said.

“People become very engaged. Some people remember their childhood. Some say we remind them of their younger selves,” she said. “By the end, their eyes are lit up. You can tell they’re



▲ Rosaria Park plays the piano



▲ Danison Lee, left Edwin Lee, right



▲ Eunsol Ko plays the cello in the Saint Andrew Kim Youth Trio



▲ Saint Andrew Kim Trio with Bishop Eckman

remembering something from their past,”

Edwin, the youngest, recalled one listener telling him his playing reminded her of her own father, who had made his instrument “talk.” He has realized that music is its own language.

“Even if people don’t know the words, they can feel it,” Rosaria said.

Music has also become a way to witness their faith.

“They go to give, but

they always come back having received something themselves,” Rosaria said. “The experience teaches young people that they can contribute to society, it helps them to live with humility.”

Danison said their work has prompted him to go deeper into his Catholic life both in and beyond the classroom at Central Catholic. “It inspired me to join more service groups and take my faith more seriously,”

Danison said.

Even when Eunsol doesn’t want to rise early on a weekend to perform, she leaves feeling changed, she said.

Rosaria, a native of South Korea, said that her devoutly Catholic parents once worried about her desire to pursue music as a career. But her own dreams of the spotlight have been surpassed by a desire to serve Christ through a different kind of Catholic youth music ministry. The trio is scheduled for performances through most of 2026, with increasing interest from institutions across the region. They have performed at Fallingwater, the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden and a holiday event in Downtown Pittsburgh. They have been invited to play in a South Korean basilica this summer. Rosaria hopes to expand the ministry, creating more opportunities for young musicians to serve throughout the diocese.

“We don’t charge, we are volunteer,” she said.

“I don’t want to show myself, but God working through me.” †



LEARN MORE

For more on the Saint Andrew Kim Youth Trio visit: sites.google.com/view/standrewkimyouthtrio/home



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INTRODUCING PRIORESS-ELECT

Sister Michele "Shelly" Farabaugh



Sister Michele "Shelly" Farabaugh was elected as the new Priorress of the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh. Sister Michele will approach her role as the community's spiritual and administrative leader valuing authentic communication, hospitality, and joyful spirit.

Good News

in our Elementary Schools

Our Lady of Fatima, St. Monica Catholic Academy, Ss. Peter & Paul, Beaver County

Our Lady of Fatima School, St. Monica Catholic Academy and Ss. Peter & Paul School premiered *Blue Notes & Blessings*, an evening of live music featuring Grammy award-winning saxophonist Eric DeFade and vocalist Kelley DeFade.

Jazz selections fused with faith in a sophisticated event that included dinner. The fundraiser promoted awareness and support for Catholic education across the region. All proceeds went directly to support the schools.



▲ Eric and Kelley DeFade donated their time and talent to Catholic schools

Butler Catholic, Butler

Second graders at Butler Catholic School prepared for the sacrament of reconciliation by role-playing as if they were the priest.

Father Kevin Fazio, pastor of All Saints Parish in Butler visited Rosemary Watson's classroom to teach the students about mercy and forgiveness as they practiced going to confession.

Student Leo Herlihy took on the role of priest, while Father Kevin stepped in as the penitent. He walked through each step in a reassuring, light-hearted way. Students then guided Father Kevin through the Act of Contrition and asked questions, deepening their understanding of the sacrament.



▲ Father Kevin Fazio helps Butler Catholic second grader Leo Herlihy prepare for the sacrament of reconciliation through role-playing.

Blessed Trinity Academy, Glenshaw

Students from all grades at Blessed Trinity Academy in Glenshaw packed more than 300 lunches for The Red Door ministry in Downtown Pittsburgh, supporting neighbors experiencing homelessness and hunger.

The middle school school service club organized supplies and guided

younger students as they assembled food bags. The project was inspired by an article in *Pittsburgh Catholic* magazine,

"The Red Door Project is always so meaningful for our students because they are learning firsthand how a small act of kindness, like making a lunch, can have a huge impact," said Meredith Kandravsky, director of advancement at Blessed Trinity.



▲ Seventh graders: (left) Emilie Lepic and (right) Whitney Luka, Maura Shapiro, and Reagan Straub sort and organize snacks to assemble lunches for The Red Door.

St. Wendelin School, Butler

A sixth grader at St. Wendelin Catholic School in Butler shared a pro-life message across Pittsburgh.

Lily Turk created the winning T-shirt design for Pittsburgh's inaugural Pro-Life March. Her artwork appeared on the shirts worn by attendees on the one-mile march to proclaim the value, dignity, and beauty of every human life from conception to natural death.

Lily entered the design contest after researching the march and drawing inspiration from other designs.

"This design is meaningful because it encourages people to give babies a chance to live, and stopping abortion is saving lives," Lily said.



▲ Lily Turk, a 6th grade student at St. Wendelin School in Butler holds her winning design from the Pittsburgh Pro-Life March T-shirt contest.

Divine Mercy Academy, Monroeville

At Divine Mercy Academy in Monroeville, students are learning what it means to live like saints through "Saints in Action."

The program pairs older and younger "buddy classes" across grades K-8 for hands-on projects inspired by saints such as St. Peter Claver, St. Faustina, St. Carlo Acutis and St. Francis Xavier. Students reflect on service and virtue through shared activities and track their journey in "Saints in Action" passports.

"We are learning that we can be saints too if we make the right choices," said sixth grader Jackson Woodward



▲ Kindergartners, Bennett Lindley (left), Eliza Herbst (middle) 6th grader Dominic O'Grady (right) create puppets of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton during a "Saints in Action" class

Good News

in our

High Schools

Bishop Canevin High School, East Carnegie

Three Bishop Canevin High School juniors participated in a multi-state tour of historic black colleges and universities (HBCU), exploring opportunities and history.

Anthony Evans, Jr., Jalen Jackson, and Nyeema Norwood were chosen to participate in the Omega Sylvester Pace HBCU Tour, sponsored by the IOTA Phi Foundation.

"We are passionate about our students following their dreams," said Charlotte Smith, director of student enrichment at Bishop Canevin.



▲ Bishop Canevin juniors Anthony Evans, Jr., Nyeema Norwood and Jalen Jackson

North Catholic High School, Cranberry Township

Nine students from North Catholic High School earned first place honors at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) regional event at Slippery Rock University, advancing to the state level.

Their projects focused on artificial intelligence, environmental science, chemistry and neuroscience. Several students received special awards.

Freshman Isaiah Thomas was recognized for research on bias in generative AI, sophomore Zephany Samuel earned a perfect score, and senior Elena Esposito was honored for her microbiology project.

"How blessed we are to have such creative and intelligent students," said Amy Murray, a science teacher.



▲ First place honorees (left to right): Elena Esposito, Dylan Bopp, Jordyn Valazquez, Ciaran Corrigan, Kendra Raypholtz, Zephany Samuel, Aine Corrigan, and junior Claire Elliott. Unpictured: Isaiah Thomas

Seton LaSalle High School, Mt. Lebanon

All nine students on Seton LaSalle High School's forensics team qualified for the state tournament.

Senior Amari Morris also advanced to the world tournament, with sophomores Maddie Debbis and Kiera Truncik qualifying for the National Catholic Forensics League Grand Tournament in

Washington, D.C.

Debate has "helped me overcome my fear of presenting and live out my God-given potential," Amari said.

They "cheer not only for their teammates, but for others," said coach Lauren Hess.

Principal Will Merchant called forensics "the unsung hero of our activities program" for helping students grow as leaders.

Central Catholic High School, Pittsburgh

Inspired by the first responders and medical team who saved his life, Central Catholic High School alumnus Damar Hamlin is giving back.

The Buffalo Bills safety, a 2016 Central graduate, went into cardiac arrest during a Monday night football game.

He returned to the school to announce the expansion of his Chasing M's Foundation Heroes Scholarship for underserved youth. The scholarships make education after high school attainable for Central graduates and others in the region. Hamlin was joined by Pittsburgh Mayor Corey O'Connor, a 2002 Central graduate.



▲ Alumnus and NFL player Damar Hamlin joins Pittsburgh Mayor Corey O'Connor with Central Catholic High School students

St. Joseph High School, Natrona Heights

For the first time, the St. Joseph High School girls bowling team is headed to the WPIBL (Western PA Interscholastic Bowling League) Championship Tournament.

Junior captain Louisa Palumbo led the way with a 178 average, finishing fourth in the division. Junior Ruby Wissinger also stood out.

"It really shows how hard we all worked and how our collaboration and persistence paid off," Louisa said.

Three bowlers qualified for the regionals as individuals: senior Jake Skundrich, junior Louisa Palumbo, and junior Martin Stickney.



▲ St. Joseph High School girls bowling team. Back row: Annamarie White, Mary Huth, Julia Skowronski, Ava Humphrey, Louisa Palumbo, Ruby Wissinger, Abigail White. Front row: Mattalie Bayne, Abygail Farmer



▲ Members of the Seton LaSalle High School forensics team left to right: Allistair McMeans, Grace Rebholz, Kennedy Durick, Kiera Truncik, Maddie Debbis, Julia Miller, Neilan McCallister, Amari Morris, Mylena Anthony



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In this **Year of Saint Francis**, where are you finding peace right now?



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"Adoration and the Rosary."
- ANTHONY ELIAS, SAINT PAUL
CATHEDRAL PARISH



"I find considerable joy and peace in quilting! I have about 4 projects in progress; also 5 UFOs (unfinished objects!), and lots of fabric for future projects."
- DOROTHY VOITH, SAINT RAPHAEL
THE ARCHANGEL PARISH



"Sitting in bed with my dog, Ace, getting ready to start my day."
- SARAH STEPHENSON & ACE, OUR
LADY OF HOPE PARISH



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