

FaithLife



The Season of Advent

www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

December 10, 2017

DIOCESAN NEWS

Bishop establishes endowment

This fall, Bishop Lawrence Persico celebrated with gratitude his fifth anniversary as bishop of the Diocese of Erie by establishing the Bishop Lawrence T. Persico Endowment for Pastoral Ministry.

The endowment—set up through the Catholic Foundation—will provide funding for clergy as well as lay men and women interested in enhancing pastoral skills.

The endowment was created in response to needs uncovered during pastoral planning the past few years.

"My hope is that by establishing this source of funding which will build into the future, our foundation always will have resources for people who want to build their skills and knowledge in pastoral ministry," the bishop explained.

Bishop Persico envisions the endowment being used to help those who want to attend conferences, take courses, or bring speakers into the diocese. It will be open to people involved with any aspect of pastoral ministry, from pre-school religious education teachers to those working in parish or diocesan offices, to professors teaching at the graduate level.

Lisa Louis, executive director of the Catholic Foundation, said anyone may honor the bishop and his efforts by donating to the endowment. [See information below.]

"It's a wonderful way to support his work and further a purpose he has prioritized with his own giving," Louis said.

The bishop's episcopacy has included several initiatives, most notably a pastoral planning process that led to a comprehensive plan for Catholic schools in the diocese. The planning process also has meant restructuring for parishes in the 13-county diocese. The number of parishes decreased from 116 to 97 through a series of mergers that took effect Feb. 13, 2017.

HOW to DONATE:

www.mycatholicfoundation.org

<http://dioceseoferie.planningyourlegacy.org/meet-our-donors/bishop-lawrence-persico>

Contact Lisa R. Louis, executive director of the Catholic Foundation, at 814-824-1237 or at louis@ErieRCD.org

Good Samaritan CEO named

Douglas Bloom, 57, has been named the new chief executive officer of the Good Samaritan Center in Clearfield.

Bloom replaces Deacon Tony Indelicato, who retired in October after 16 years of service.

A social service agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, the Good Samaritan Center serves as a temporary shelter for men, offers emergency assistance and operates a second-hand furniture store. The men work in the warehouse at the store.

A retired U.S. Navy veteran, Bloom is a native of St. Timothy Parish, Curwensville, and has extensive experience in fundraising and community service.

Since leaving his position as a service representative with the Social Security Administration in 2014, he has served in various capacities in the community.

From January 2016 to June 2017, he served as president of the Curwensville Borough Council. A third degree member of the Knights of Columbus, St. John XXIII Council in Curwensville and Grampian, he has served as its treasurer since 2014.

Bloom started his new position on Nov. 1 and has been getting acquainted with the agency's day-to-day operations and physical infrastructure.

"He's hoping to make the Good Samaritan Center more visible in the region.

"This is an opportunity to try to give back to the community and use some of my life experiences to help lead these men by example," Bloom said.



Douglas Bloom

AUGMENTED REALITY



Sean Baer, instructional technology coach at Mercyhurst Prep in Erie, demonstrates the 3-D image of a human heart through the school's new zSpace technology.

Mercyhurst Prep incorporates new technology

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Virtual reality isn't enough for Mercyhurst Prep in Erie. This fall, the co-ed Catholic high school added augmented reality to its curriculum.

In November, students began using zSpace, an educational tool that combines these complementary technologies to enhance the 21st-century classroom.

"zSpace allows you into the third dimension," says Sean Baer, instructional technology coach at Mercyhurst. "3-D is the next best thing in education."

Mercyhurst is the only high school in the region, besides the Buffalo area, that uses zSpace. Local physicians and educators already have taken a peek at the 12 new zSpace stations, which are incorporated into the school's already-existing DREAM Lab. The lab is fully equipped with computers, 3-D printers and video walls.

"We've heard from doctors who say med school would have been so much

easier with zSpace technology," says Mercyhurst President Ed Curtin.

The school set aside \$50,000 in its budget to acquire zSpace, Curtin says, because it is committed to offering students the most cutting-edge education.

"Our primary task is to prepare students for college. When they get there, they're not going to be behind anyone," Curtin says.

In 2016, Mercyhurst added virtual reality programs and 3-D printers into its technology lab.

With virtual reality, students wear individual goggles to experience a computer-generated, ocular environment. With zSpace and augmented reality, the real world is closer and richer. Augmented reality is experienced not just by one student wearing glasses, but can be shared with an entire classroom.

zSpace uses an all-in-one computer to create a lifelike and interactive experience for students in most subject areas, including art, biology, math, engineer-

ing, even language. Using a special stylus, a student or teacher wearing glasses with sensors can seemingly touch a simulated beating heart, tour Paris, or create a ceramic pot.

Most noteworthy is the ability to insert a virtual camera into a simulated beating heart in order to pop out the various chambers, arteries and circuits. The same can be done with other body parts.

For science/biology teachers like Theresa Wyman, it's a significant complement, not a replacement, for the dissection of sheep hearts and fetal pigs.

"My biology students recognize very quickly that this is an area that is growing," Wyman says.

zSpace images are so life-like and three-dimensional that a classroom of students can virtually dissect a body part.

Adds Curtin, "This is as close as you can get without having to bring a cadaver

>> See MERCYHURST zSPACE, page 3

Autistic students get 'safety net' at 'Hurst

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series on autism and the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst University, Erie. Read the final installment in the Dec. 24 edition of FaithLife.

Twenty-four-year-old Ryan Slaby has been through speech therapy, art therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. An autism diagnosis can require that range of care.

But Slaby is employed today, thanks in part to the internationally recognized Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst University (AIM) in Erie. A 2016 graduate of Mercyhurst, he majored in both accounting and finance and is working as a specialist in the records management department at KeyBank in Cleveland.

"This month, he's hoping to get a promotion as an accountant. "I was always able to overcome all of my different challenges," Slaby says.

Those challenges began early, according to his mother, Janet Slaby of Brecksville, Ohio. She recalls her young son hav-

ing delays in motor skills and speech. It wasn't until he was 9 that the Cleveland Clinic diagnosed him on the autism spectrum, a complex developmental disability that usually appears in early childhood and affects a person's ability to communicate and socialize.

"We did a lot of therapies over the years, anything we could do to help him in any way," Janet Slaby says. "But Ryan just kept exceeding my expectations."

In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that autism occurs in 1 in every 68 births in the United States. Most of those are boys. The Autism Society of America estimates that the U.S. is confronted with nearly \$90 billion annually in costs for autism care and support.

Faced with the increasing prevalence of the disorder, Mercyhurst, in 2008, founded AIM. Its goal is to assist students on the spectrum to advocate for themselves and to develop much-needed social skills that will put them on the path to academic success and,



Mercyhurst University junior Paul Cohen and first-year student June Durkee meet on campus with Brad McGarry, director of the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst University (AIM).

hopefully, meaningful employment.

Since the program's inception, 22 students with autism have graduated with four-year degrees from Mercyhurst, says Brad McGarry, director of AIM. Currently, AIM enrolls 60 students from all over the

world. It is one of the oldest and largest autism support programs in the country.

"I've heard from parents who say they never would have looked at a four-year college for their son or

>> See 'SAFETY NET,' page 2

PRAYING FOR PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN, CONGO

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—An image of Sudanese St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita is carried in procession during a prayer service led by Pope Francis for peace in South Sudan and Congo in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 23.

The pope has been unable to visit South Sudan. At the service, he said that "prayer is more important, because it is more powerful. Prayer works by the power of God for whom nothing is impossible."



Photo by CNS

NewsMakers



Snippets of Catholic headlines and stories from around the world from Catholic News Service

■ Scientists date tomb of Christ



CNS photo

A conservator cleans the surface of the Edicule, the traditional site of Jesus' burial and resurrection, in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Scientists who helped restore a shrine above the site believed to be the place where Christ was buried in Jerusalem say testing of samples has dated the tomb to at least the fourth century.

The new information published recently by National Geographic is consistent with historical accounts that say Constantine, the first Roman emperor to stop persecuting Christians and who became a Christian himself, began protecting the tomb around the year 326.

In the fourth century, Constantine is said to have sent a team from Rome to the Holy Land in search of the site, and after the group believed they had located it, they tore down a pagan temple on top of it and protected the tomb. The site is located in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City of Jerusalem.

■ Catholic organizations advocate for slave-free seafood label

WASHINGTON (USCCB)—To commemorate the United Nations International Day for the Abolition of Slavery on Dec. 2, the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking (CCOAHHT) asked seafood producers, distributors and seafood retailers to make public, through packaged product labeling, their efforts to fight human trafficking in their product supply chains. According to CCOAHHT, consumers

are not receiving enough information needed to make moral purchasing decisions.

■ Pope: Rohingya refugees are created in God's image, likeness

DHAKA, Bangladesh (CNS)—Each human being is created in the image and likeness of God, yet so often people desecrate that image with violence as seen in the treatment of Myanmar's Rohingya minority, Pope Francis said.

"Today, the presence of God is also called 'Rohingya,'" the pope said Dec. 1 after meeting, clasping hands with and listening intently to 16 Rohingya who have found shelter in Bangladesh.

"They, too, are images of the living God," Pope Francis told a gathering of Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu leaders gathered in Dhaka for an interreligious meeting for peace.

The refugees traveled to Dhaka from Cox's Bazar, the southern Bangladeshi city hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled Myanmar.

More than 620,000 Rohingya have crossed the border into Bangladesh since late August.



CNS photo

Pope Francis greets a man as he meets Rohingya refugees from Myanmar during an interreligious and cultural meeting for peace in the garden of the archbishop's residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dec. 1.

Editor's Notes

Mary SOLBERG

The Twitter world was alight last weekend with messages about the first Sunday of Advent. It sure beat all the negative political discourse of recent months.

Thousands of organizations and people shared their thoughts about the meaning of this season:

- "Stay Alert!" tweeted the **Sisters of St. Joseph of North-western Pennsylvania**.
- "And so it starts...challenge yourself to make this the best Advent of your lives," tweeted **Kennedy Catholic High School's campus ministry**.
- "The world says, 'I'm OK, you're OK.' Advent reminds us that the world, and our lives, are a mess. We need something—"someone"—to make us whole. We need our Savior! Our lives are like the empty manger awaiting the birth of Christ!" tweeted **Cardinal Timothy Dolan**, the current archbishop of New York.
- "Let the season begin!" tweeted **Bishop Lawrence Persico** from the "Answer the Call" Advent concert.

Advent puts everything in perspective as we await Christ's coming. Our waiting takes on so many forms, whether it's a serious problem we're anxious to overcome, the birth of a baby or even a state football championship.

At press time, the Cathedral Prep Ramblers football team, under the able leadership of Coach **Mike Mischler**, anxiously awaited their departure for the Dec. 7 state championship game at Hersheypark Stadium in Hershey, Pa.

So many diocesan teams have excelled on the regional and state levels this fall. Look for complete coverage in a future *FaithLife*.

I was fortunate to join **Anne-Marie Welsh**, our diocesan director of communications, at the annual Niagara Awards held last month at Union Station in Erie. The Communications Office

and its publications were honored by the local chapter of the Public Relations Society of America with five gold and silver awards for excellence in public relations.

Welsh won a gold for her media relations story on Bishop Lawrence Persico's ride on a Harley Davidson during last summer's Roar on the Shore motorcycle rally.

Another gold went to **Elizabeth Butterfield** for her design of the Catholic Charities Ball invitation.

Silver honors went to:

- Welsh, **Msgr. Edward Lohse**, vicar general, and yours truly for *Faith* magazine
- Butterfield, **Matt Clark**, administrator of the Office of Worship, and Welsh for internal communications
- Welsh, along with **Matt King** of Gannon University, for a video production for the Catholic Charities Ball.



Anne-Marie Welsh

Here's a unique gift idea for Christmas: Pope Francis, once again, has personally donated several gifts he has received—including a Volkswagen—for a papal lottery fundraiser to help the homeless and those affected by the earthquakes that struck central Italy in August and October.

Ticket sales started Dec. 1 and will conclude Feb. 2, 2018. The winning tickets will be drawn in the presence of a commission set up to guarantee fairness.

Tickets—at a reasonable cost of 10 euros each—are available for purchase at www.vaticanstate.va.

Mary Solberg is the editor of *FaithLife*. Email: msolberg@EriERCDCD.org Call 814-824-1171 Twitter: @ERIERCDSolberg

AIM offers 'safety net'

Continued from page 1

daughter if they didn't have trust in AIM," McGarry says. "AIM is a safety net for students on the autism spectrum."

On a recent fall day, McGarry gathered with four current Mercyhurst AIM students, ranging from a freshman to a five-year senior. They've all come to AIM because of its reputa-

tion. Paul Cohen, from Washington, D.C., is a junior majoring in history, and Waterford resident Rachael Wilson is a sophomore double majoring in English and history.

They and nine other AIM students traveled to New York City this fall to visit major companies—including Google—that have committed to hiring

students with autism. They also met with such autism advocacy organizations as Autism Speaks and the World Autism Day initiative at the United Nations.

A film crew recorded their activities for use in a documentary, "This Business of Autism," which will be released on Netflix next April.

The New York trip—funded by a grant from the A.J. and Sigismunda Palumbo Charitable Trust—is essential to providing career opportunities to students with autism, who face a daunting national employment rate of under 15 percent.

Mercyhurst's AIM graduates have an average employment rate of 64 percent.

"It's not enough to prepare these students academically for the world of work," McGarry says. "We have to make sure they're employable after graduation."

Both Cohen and Wilson are interested in careers as archivists. Twenty-two-year-old Kevin Thomas, from Georgia, is graduating this year with a degree in English, and June Durkee, of Maryland, is a first-year student with hopes of entering the field of sports business.



Contributed photo

Mercyhurst University grad Ryan Slaby stands at Cleveland's Tower City following a job interview for a promotion at KeyBank.

"I've been able to pinpoint what it is that I want to do because of the support of the AIM program and other opportunities," says Thomas, who has written film reviews for his hometown newspaper in Fayetteville, Ga., since he was 10.

Ryan Slaby believes the program set him on a path to success.

He bought his own car a couple of months ago and is saving his money to purchase a condo.

He encourages others with autism to be honest about their disability with friends and even future employers "so that others can have an understanding of what their difficulties and challenges are."

FaithLife
The bi-weekly newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Erie. St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 East Grandview Blvd. Erie, Pa. 16504
Publisher: The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico
Executive Editor: Anne-Marie Welsh
Editor: Mary Solberg
Graphic Design: Rich Papalia
Advertising Manager: Brenda Williams
Advertising Design: Elizabeth Butterfield
Website: www.EriERCDCD.org
Volume 13, Issue 22
Member of the Catholic Press Association
Subscription: \$10/year
Periodical postage paid at Erie, Pa.
Postmaster: Send address changes to: FaithLife at St. Mark Catholic Center
Email: FaithLife@EriERCDCD.org
Editorial: 814-824-1171
Advertising: 814-824-1161
General Information: 814-824-1161
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EVENTS

■ **‘Follow the Star’ concerts**

Tennessee Backporch will perform its popular “Follow the Star” Advent/Christmas concert at four more parishes in Erie. Ticket prices (\$15 for adults, \$5 for students) are the same at all locations. The schedule:



- Our Lady of the Lake Church, 128 Sunset Drive, Dec. 10 at 4 p.m. Tickets are available at the door.
- St. Francis Xavier, 8880 Main St., McKean, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. Purchase tickets at the parish office or at the door.

- St. Gregory Thaumaturgus Parish, 48 South Pearl St., North East, Dec. 17 at 4 p.m. The concert will feature student singers from St. Gregory School and McDowell High School. Tickets are available at the parish office, 136 West Main St., North East, or at the door the evening of the performance.
- St. John Parish, 101 Olin St., Girard, Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. The concert will feature the Westlake School vocal ensemble. Tickets will be sold at the door.

■ **Advent vigils**

All are welcome to attend Advent vigils at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, 6101 East Lake Road, Erie, Dec. 16 and 23, each day at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Sister Marilyn Schaubel, OSB, at marilynosb@mtsibenedict.org or call 814-899-0614.

■ **Advent event in Kersey**

St. Boniface Parish in Kersey will host its fourth annual Advent ecumenical event, “Lessons & Carols,” on Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. at the church, located at 355 Main St., Kersey. Choirs from Sacred Heart and Queen of the World parishes in St. Marys, along with youth from both the St. Marys area and Elk County Catholic, will participate. A festive social will follow in the gathering space of the church.

■ **‘Stars and Promises 2017’**

Peter Mayer, the lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffett, will perform with his own band Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Parish, 2401 W. 38th St., Erie. The concert, titled “Stars and Promises 2017,” will feature singing and stories on the theme “When You Come Home.” The cost is \$50 for artist circle seat-

ing, available online only at www.ticketcity.com. General admission tickets are \$25 and are available online and at the church office. For more information, contact Cynthia Berarducci 814-833-7701, ext. 201.

■ **Prep/Villa Christmas play**

Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy will present “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,” a hilarious Christmas classic based on the novel by Barbara Robinson, Dec. 14-16 at 7 p.m., and Dec. 17 at 2 p.m. at the Villa Maria Academy auditorium, 2403 W. 8th St., Erie. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors. Tickets are available at the door.

■ **Pancake breakfast**

A pancake breakfast will be held Dec. 17 from 8:30 a.m. to noon at Mount Calvary Parish, 2022 East Lake Road, Erie. The breakfast includes sausage, fruit cup, juice, coffee and all the pancakes you can eat. The cost is \$7 for adults; \$4 for children 12 and under.

■ **Shalom Christmas Concert**

The public is welcome to join Catholic parishioners in Clearfield County for the annual Shalom Christmas Concert Dec. 17 at 2 p.m. The event will be held at the Paul G. Reitz Theater, located on Scribner Avenue in DuBois. Admission is free. For more information, contact Judy Smart at 814-637-5930 or Rich Kenawell at 814-771-7932.

■ **Christmas Vendor Blender**

St. Bartholomew Parish in Sharpville will feature more than 40 crafters and vendors with cash-and-carry items for your holiday shopping at its Christmas Vendor Blender event Dec. 17 from 3 to 7 p.m. Admission is free, but those attending are encouraged to donate cash or non-perishable food items for the Sharpville Community Food Pantry. The event will be held in the St. Bartholomew Social Center, 321 W. Ridge Ave., Sharpville.

■ **March 2018 women’s retreat**

Register now for the March 9-11, 2018, women’s retreat at the Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center in Pulaski, Pa. The cost per person is \$145, which includes meals and a private room. A non-refundable deposit of \$45 is due with registration. Send checks, payable to The Spiritual Family The Work, to: Julia House, c/o Sister Josephine Vuodi, FSO, 4415 Briggs Ave., Erie, PA 16504. For more information, email sr.josephine@thework-fso.org.

Vocation News

Candidates welcomed to diaconate



Photo by Anne Marie Weiss

Eight men from around the Diocese of Erie recently were admitted to candidacy for the permanent diaconate during a ceremony at St. Mark Catholic Center’s chapel. Pictured, from left, are: Lawrence and Anne Tyers, St. Joseph Parish, Warren; Paul and Joan McCoy, Our Lady of Peace Parish, Erie; Joseph and Jennifer Glover, Immaculate Conception Parish, Clarion; Daniel and Fran Reilly, St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, Port Allegany; Bishop Lawrence Persico, who presided at the Mass; George “Frank” and Carrie Hannah, Notre Dame Parish, Hermitage; Paul and Debbie Barko, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Harborcreek; Marc and Jennifer Jones, St. Michael Parish, Greenville; and David and Peggy Jacquel, also of Our Lady of Mercy.

Seminarians attend beatification



Continued photo

Seminarians from the Diocese of Erie, as well as Sister Josephine Vuodi, FSO, traveled to Detroit for the Nov. 18 beatification of Father Solanus Casey. Father Michael Kesicki, rector of the seminary, and Father Nicholas Rouch, vice rector, celebrated the Mass that day. Pictured, from left, are: Sister Josephine; and seminarians Benjamin Daghir, Daniel Weaver, Michael Awangpeng, Andrew Hamilton, Waylon Duncan, Patrick Strycharz, Eric Egert, Ryan Courtney and Jason Koshinski. Seminarians missing from the photo are Adrian Fritzsche and Cory Pius.



Photo by Mary Sillong

Mercyhurst Prep sophomore Mark DiPietro and junior Courtney Jung use a zSpace station during biology class.

zSpace introduced at Mercyhurst

Continued from page 1

into a high school.”

Technology coach Sean Baer and Principal Deborah Laughlin are excited that the program appeals to all students, whatever their level of learning or interests.

“It’s going to be helpful in two ways. It will engage students, and if students are engaged, they’re going to learn more,” Laughlin says. “And second, I’m anxious to see how it helps students who are struggling learners. Students with difficulty with retention or organizing material will benefit from this, too.”

OBITUARY

Deacon Frederick W. Keck

Deacon Frederick W. Keck, 66, died Nov. 28 at his residence in Erie.

Ordained a deacon for the Diocese of Erie in 2010, he was currently serving as a deacon assistant and secretary at Erie’s Holy Rosary Parish.

Born in South Bend, Ind., he was the son of the late Meinrad and Justine Mahoney Keck.

He earned a master’s in spirituality and a doctorate in philosophy,

systemic theology, both from Fordham University in New York. He taught at Mercyhurst University and Gannon University, as well as for the diocesan diaconate program.

He had been a contributing writer for *Faith* magazine of the Diocese of Erie.

Deacon Keck was a board member of the C.J. Jung Society. Besides his parents, he was pre-



Deacon Frederick W. Keck

ceded in death by his wife, Jean Kennedy Keck.

Survivors include two brothers, Daniel Keck, and his wife, Lorraine Hayda, of New York, and Michael Keck, and his wife, Karen, of North Carolina; three nephews; a sister-in-law; and a brother-in-law.

Bishop Lawrence Persico presided at a funeral Mass Dec. 2 at Holy Rosary Church, Erie. Inurnment will be private and at the convenience of the family at Queen of Peace Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Holy Rosary Catholic Church, 2701 East Ave., Erie, PA 16504.

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Check out more photos at www.ErieRCD.org/atd.htm



Seyboldts honored for their philanthropy



ERIE—Catholic Charities board member **Evelyn Seyboldt**, and her husband, **Dave Seyboldt**, center, received the Outstanding Philanthropists Award during the recent National Philanthropy Day luncheon sponsored locally by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Pictured with the Seyboldts are Catholic Charities board members **Jim Toohey** and **Maureen Dann**.

Penny challenge raises more than \$855



GREENVILLE—The students of St. Michael School in Greenville held a penny challenge recently to benefit the Prince of Peace Center, a Mercer County social service agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie. They raised a total of \$855.26. In addition to collecting items for the local Good Shepherd Center, students choose an agency each month to benefit from a service project.

Women enjoy annual soup luncheon



NEW BETHLEHEM—Members of the St. Charles Altar Rosary Society in New Bethlehem enjoyed their annual soup luncheon Nov. 3. Pictured, from left, are: **Donna McNeal**, **Paula Foster**, **Barbara Veronesi**, **Patricia Coleman**, **Becky Bish**, **Lisa Shaffer**, **Sandy Anderson**, **Phyllis Troup**, **Jean Miller**, **Deborah Seidle** and **Marge Shirey**.

Fifth-graders warm up with charity



MEADVILLE—Seton School's fifth-graders held a warm winter clothing drive to support The Clothes Line, a Meadville-based organization dedicated to offering people quality clothing at no cost. The school community donated 53 coats, 73 hats, 17 pairs of boots, 21 scarves, 27 pairs of mittens, and 16 pairs of snow pants.

Author meets book club members



WARREN—The Adult Formation Book Club of St. Joseph Parish in Warren recently hosted **John Schlimm**, author of *Five Years In Heaven*, who read excerpts from his memoir. Schlimm, seated at center, is surrounded by book club members.

Trooper talks to kids about drugs



LUCINDA—Students at St. Joseph School in Lucinda recently participated in Red Ribbon Week, a drug-free awareness program. **Pennsylvania State Police Trooper Jason Siegel**, center, from the State Police barracks in Franklin, met with children in kindergarten through sixth grade. They discussed staying healthy and keeping away from harmful drugs.

World Day of Peace celebrated



LUDLOW—Catholic Rural Ministry hosted its fifth overnight retreat at the Olmsted Manor Conference Center in Ludlow. Forty participants, led by **Benedictine Sister Anne McCarthy**, kneeling second from left, discussed Pope Francis' 2017 World Day of Peace message. **Sister Tina Geiger, RSM**, standing at far right, summarized the retreat, saying, "Jesus' message of active non-violence in the face of hatred, oppression and diminishment of the human person in any way is central in Pope Francis' message."

Kids collect items for SSSJNN



ERIE—These fourth-graders at St. Luke School in Erie are surrounded by items recently collected at St. Luke on behalf of the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network. Students who elected not to wear their uniform one day donated either \$1 or brought in an item for the needy. Pictured, from left, are: **Morgan Tatar**, **Tommy Mayo**, **Melody Desuah** and **Austin Edmonds**.

Warm wishes for a blessed and joyous Christmas season from all of us at Mercyhurst University.

But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" — Gen 3:9

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