



Parishes support families, learn about World Meeting

By Matthew Gambino

Parishioners throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are learning about the World Meeting of Families and, more important, the value of the family to society.

About 40 parishes so far have hosted an information session about the event, to be held Sept. 22-25 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, and more sessions will be hosted throughout the spring and summer.

The talks are given by trained World Meeting of Families presenters who hail from local parishes as well as from local institutions such as Villanova University, University of Pennsylvania, Immaculata University, Neumann University, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and the Theology of the Body Institute.

Other parishes are studying in some way the World Meeting of Families' preparatory catechesis, "Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive."

About 20 parishes are preparing to offer the Discovering Christ faith formation course after the families' congress and the visit of Pope Francis Sept. 26-27. The courses will invite people who have experienced the events to come to the parish and ask questions and consider starting a journey to the Catholic Church.

For fallen-away Catholics it will represent a journey back to the church. For those who are unfamiliar with Christianity or religion in general, the course may be a first step toward God.

Some of the World Meeting of Families preparation activities in parishes are listed below. See the complete list of parish preparation events at the web site of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office for New Evangelization at www.phillyevang.org/wmof.

St. Barbara, Philadelphia — social media campaign inviting parishioners to snap photos of places Pope Francis should visit in Philadelphia and posting on their Facebook page.

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, North Wales — traveling iconic images in family homes throughout the parish.

St. John the Baptist, Ottsville — monthly overnight prayer vigil for healing of the family with a morning Mass for healing of the family.

St. Martin of Tours, Philadelphia — weekly family event in Spanish named after St. John Paul II, who is a co-patron of the

World Meeting of Families along with St. Gianna.

San Rocco, Avondale and St. Martin of Tours, Philadelphia — concerts for the family performed in Spanish on April 14 and 15.

Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, Philadelphia — outdoor Marian procession under the title "Mary, the Mother of Families" on May 3.

St. Norbert, Paoli — regular prayer and support meetings for families and loved ones struggling with addictions.

St. Maria Goretti, Hatfield — displaying relics of St. Gianna Beretta Molla on the weekend of May 16-

17.

St. Pius X, Broomall — in addition to monthly study of the World Meeting of Families preparatory catechesis, the parish offers a healing program for people who have been through divorce.

Simon and Jude, West Chester, St. Patrick, Kennett Square and St. Ann, Phoenixville — hosted a series of talks on St. John Paul II's theology of the body, related to themes of human sexuality, marriage and the family given by speakers from the Theology of the Body Institute.

St. Stanislaus, Lansdale — Family-themed series of talks including "Keeping God in Family Life" presented by Father Michael Mullen, parochial vicar, on April 14, plus monthly study of the preparatory catechesis.

St. Elizabeth, Upper Uwchlan — hosted a March 25 talk by Kevin Reilley, former Philadelphia Eagle and current sportscaster, on the topic "Faith, Family, Friends and Fortitude."

Immaculate Conception, Jenkintown — hosted a film screening and presentation by Dr. Monique Ruberu, OB/GYN and NaPro Technology physician, on the authentic Catholic approach to fertility on March 25 to correspond to the World Meeting of Families' theme for the month of March, "Creating the Future."

Our Lady of Charity, Brookhaven — in addition to weekly Lenten study of the World Meeting of Families preparatory catechesis, the parish offered a special outreach to PREP families called Catholics Reaching Out, starting April 7. It helps parents deepen their faith and fulfill their role as the primary educators of their children in the faith.



NEWS BRIEFS

See more Catholic news at our website, www.CatholicPhilly.com

Young adults put priests on the hot seats

Father Tom Whittingham came across an idea called “Stump the Priest” in which young adults ask questions pertaining to the Catholic Church, especially hot-button issues on church teachings and how to evangelize fallen away Catholics and anyone.

With the help of some brother priests and Meghan Cokeley, director of the archdiocesan Office for the New Evangelization, Stump the Priest was held Wednesday night, March 25, at the Field House, a bar in center city Philadelphia.

Along with Father Whittingham, who is parochial vicar at Mary Mother of the Redeemer Parish in North Wales, were Father Joseph Bongard, rector of Roman Catholic High School; Father Sean Bransfield, dean of formation at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and Father David Friel, parochial vicar at St. Anselm Parish in Northeast Philadelphia.

The inaugural event drew about 100 young Catholics from various young adult groups throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Questions were submitted by email and in person before the start of the event.

The topics in question included the best age to receive the sacrament of confirmation, chastity, married priests, vocations to religious life and evangelization.

Reflecting on the event, Father Whit-

tingham said it was inspiring to help tackle the questions that matter most to Catholics. There was no topic that he and the other priests declined to answer.

“I believe there is great wisdom in the church and her teachings and I’m not afraid or ashamed of any of them,” he said. “I want everyone to know the truth and to have a chance to ask any and all questions!”

Alice Cieslak of SS. Philip and James Parish in Exton said she was blessed to be a part of the faith-filled event. She is currently a member of Catholic Young Adults of Chester County (CYACC).

“I enjoyed the Stump the Priest event because it was an opportunity to interact and listen to a panel of priests discuss topics that concern young people today,” she said. What struck her the most was, “hearing that once you encounter God, it will change the way you live your life.”

Cieslak sees a great need for “people truly passionate about living out their faith in their daily lives,” she said.

Bonner-Prendergast teacher named tops in Delaware County

Elizabeth Farren, a teacher and Math Department chair at Monsignor Bonner and Archbishop Prendergast Catholic High School in Drexel Hill, has been selected to receive the Delaware County Excellence in Teaching Award.

Each year the award is given to 19 recipients out of all public, nonpublic and intermediate unit teachers in Delaware County.

The award honors outstanding performance as a classroom teacher and demonstration of a commitment to education that extends beyond the normal job requirements.

This includes time and effort spent on extracurricular projects and activities that benefit children in general.

Farren will be honored at the Partners in Education Celebration on April 30 at Drexelbrook Corporate Events Center in Drexel Hill. She will receive a cash award for herself and the school.

The event is sponsored primarily by the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union.

Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral welcomes all for visitation and prayer

The golden-domed Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, located at 830 North Franklin Street in Philadelphia, is now open for visitation, prayer, veneration and meditation.

Visitors are invited to view the full-size replica of the Shroud of Turin, which is authorized by the Vatican, venerate the relics of Blessed Bishop Martyr Mykola Charnetsky, CSsR., and Blessed Sister Josaphata Hordashevska, S.S.M.I., and experience the traditional Byzantine icons and mosaics.

All are welcome to visit the cathedral, which will be open for visitation Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturdays 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Stay connected at CatholicPhilly.com

CatholicPhilly.com is the digital successor to *The Catholic Standard and Times*, and your online source for Catholic news and information.

Visit **CatholicPhilly.com** and **sign up for our free weekly email newsletter.**