WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE
Oct. 14th – 20th

Sunday, Oct. 14th – Religious Education from 9:30 – 11 AM
Sunday, Oct. 14th – Adult Enrichment Class in the Social hall, 9:30 – 11 AM
Sunday, Oct. 14th – Eucharistic Minister Training in Church, 12:15 PM
Monday, Oct. 15th – Cub Scouts, 6:30 PM
Monday, Oct. 15th – Legion of Mary in Rel Ed Bldg Room 4, 7 PM
Monday, Oct. 15th – Charismatic Prayer Group in social hall, 7 PM
Tuesday, Oct. 16th – Bible Study in the Den 9:30-11:00 AM
Wednesday, Oct. 17th – Boy Scouts, 7 PM
Wednesday, Oct. 17th – Parish Pastoral Council, 7 PM
Thursday, Oct. 18th – Faith Sharing Group in the Den after 9 AM Mass
Friday, Oct. 19th – Eucharistic Adoration in Church 9:30-10:30 AM
Saturday, Oct. 20th – Altar Server training, 10-11:30 AM
Saturday, Oct. 20th – PCCW Wedding Anniversary Celebration in social hall 6:15 PM

MISSION FOR LITURGY AND WORSHIP

ALTAR SERVERS for Sat/Sun Oct. 20-21
5:00 PM Mass: Bob & Luke O’Brien, Madison Small
8:15 AM Mass: Lauren Wicker, Ben & Sadie Wicker
11:15 AM Mass: Brielle Baughman, Sally Earp, Nick Steinke
Coordinator is Lori Kuhn.

LECTORS for Sat/Sun Oct. 20-21
5 PM MASS – Alfred MacArthur
8:15 AM MASS – Midge Stokes
11:15 AM MASS – Jess Socrates
Coordinator is Dianne Giampietro.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EMHC) for Sat/Sun Oct. 20-21
5:00 PM: Steve Hoffman, Dan Landis, Holly & Charles Fletcher, Sam Spiese
8:15 AM: Bill Bowker, Jason Duty, Margie & Sam Leese, Beth Smith
11:15 AM: Andy Altobelli, Nicole Davis, Bonnie Hensel, Joyce Menges, John Schlaline, Jr.
Coordinator is Claire Wentz.
1. This Sunday, October 14th at Delone High School, the Knights of Columbus will be holding their Designer Purse AND Cash Bingo, which will go to support Catholic education in our local area. Please support the Knights for this special (and fun) event.

2. On Oct. 23 and 24, Fr. Dave Pivonka (the host of The Wild Goose series) is coming to St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg (at the Xavier Center, 465 Table Rock Rd., Gettysburg). On Tuesday evening the doors will open at 6pm. Fr. Dave will begin at 7pm, finishing around 8pm. Then, Confessions will be held following. On Wednesday evening the doors will open at 6pm, and Fr. Dave will begin at 7pm. This evening will feature an amazing time of Eucharistic Adoration and Procession as well as healing prayers, finishing around 8:30pm. I have heard Fr. Dave speak before, and HIGHLY recommend attending this event! To register, please contact Kathy Reid (chair of St. Francis’ Evangelization Committee) at evangelized.blessed@gmail.com. There is no ticket fee; a free will offering will be collected each evening to assist Fr. Dave in his important work outreaching to active and inactive Catholics. I will be going at least one of the nights!

   God bless you and your week – Fr. Marcoe

PRAYER FOR Vocations – “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” If you ask the Lord this question in prayer, are you ready to respond with a joyful “yes”? Consider following Christ more closely as a priest or in consecrated life. Talk to Fr. Marcoe or Fr. Brian Wayne, Director of Vocations, at 717-657-4804 frbwayne@hbgdiocese.org or check out www.dioceseanpriest.com.

VETERANS DAY DINNER – The annual Veterans Day Dinner will be held on Saturday, Nov. 3rd at 6:15 PM in the social hall. The cost is $10 for adults and $5 for kids ages 5-16. Veterans eat free as our guests. Tickets will be sold after Masses in October. ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE PENNSYLVANIA WOUNDED WARRIORS.

SERVICE MISSION TRIP TO ST. EMMA’S MONASTERY – The Benedictine Nuns at St. Emma’s Monastery in Greensburg, PA are once again appealing for help to clean up after their annual Christmas bazaar and decorate for the season of Advent on Sunday, Nov. 11th and Monday, Nov. 12th. Parishioners who volunteered last year claimed that it was a fulfilling experience to perform works of mercy for the elderly nuns by sharing their time talents and labor of love. If interested, please call or text Luz Socrates at 717-873-3650 or email her at luzvsoc@gmail.com for more details.

THANK YOU - On behalf of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, I want to thank all of you who contributed in any way to help make our 11th Annual “Swing for the Sisters” Golf Tournament a huge success! To Fr. Marcoe on behalf of our Parish and the Knights of Columbus, who sponsored a Hole; our Boy Scout Troop 127 who donated 15 cases of water; to you ~ ~ our good parishioners, who made monetary donations, donated Theme Baskets, cases of beer and soda, and golf shirts; and to those who spent the day at Flatbush literally “Swinging for the Sisters!” Our Sisters at the Villa deserve all that we can do for them in these, the twilight of their years. Thank you all so very much!

IHM FALL FEST TRUNK OR TREAT – Saturday, Oct. 21st from 3-6 PM. Join IHM parish, the Charitable Children’s Group and Cub Pack 127 in our second annual “Trunk or Treat!”

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT
Hello, my name is Jonah Robinson and I am a boy scout in Troop 88 in Lake Meade, PA. I am in need of donations for my Eagle Scout project. My project is to replace a stretch of concrete sidewalk beside the Church wall with new concrete. I am planning this to take place here at the Church on Saturday, Oct. 27th. We will be breaking up the pieces of existing concrete and laying the new gravel and pouring the new concrete. Next week’s second collection will be for this project. If you would be willing or able to support this Eagle project in any way, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. You can contact me at jtrumpet10@gmail.com or at 717-640-2862.

Thanks again,
Jonah Robinson

SPAGHETTI DINNER – The Knights of Columbus will be holding a spaghetti dinner on Nov. 10th after the 5 PM Mass. All proceeds will go to the victims of Hurricane Florence. Tickets are $3 for children ages 5-10 and $7 for ages 10 and above. There will be a jar at the dinner for additional donations if anyone would like to donate. See the posters on the bulletin boards for ticket information. We will be selling tickets after Masses on the weekends of Oct. 27th/28th and Nov. 3rd/4th.

RUTH’S HARVEST is an ecumenical ministry of our local congregations in the Abbotstown-East Berlin area. Each month 120 bags of food are distributed to children at the Bermudian Springs School District who are in need of supplemental nutrition. Each parish collects 150 units of particular food items needed each month – here at IHM our assignment includes a rice-with-chicken entree, soup, and fruit cups. Then, volunteers meet to fill bags, which are dropped off at the school for distribution. Here at IHM, we have decided to have the children and families of our Religious Education program (CCD) collect the needed items each month. In this way, children are feeding children. If you would like further information on Ruth’s Harvest, or if you would like to donate food or volunteer in some way, please contact Pat Renaut, who serves with Fr. Marcoe on our food pantry board, which oversees Ruth’s Harvest.
LADIES – IT’S OUR TURN!

DIOCESAN WOMEN’S CONFERENCE – The 4th Annual Diocesan Women’s Conference will take place Saturday, Oct. 20, 2018 at Bishop McDevitt High School. The theme is *Women of Life and Love: Celebrating the Beauty of Humanae Vitae*. The keynote speaker this year is Jennifer Fulwiler. Besides the keynote address, there will be 36 topic choices offered. Come and enjoy beautiful music by *Women at the Well* and fellowship with women from around the diocese and beyond. Any questions, please contact Carol Stroud at 717-619-7572.

If anyone needs a ride or can provide a ride for others, please contact Carol Stroud.

PCCW – The Parish Council of Catholic Women would like to thank all of the bakers and buyers who participated in last week’s bake sale.

NEW PARISHIONERS – We welcome the following new parishioners to Immaculate Heart of Mary Church:

- Andrew & Jessica Day & family, New Oxford
- William & Rosann Gent, East Berlin
- Joseph & Jennifer Bunty, Spring Grove

ADVENTURE CLUB – Please join the Adventure Club on a Pilgrimage to the Basilica in Washington, DC on Saturday, Nov. 3rd, which will be led by Bishop Ronald Gainer. Bus will leave IHM parking lot at 6:30 AM and return at 6:30 PM. Cost of the trip is $27 plus driver gratuity. You must be responsible for own lunch, pack or purchase at the cafeteria in the Basilica. No stop for dinner. Deadline for reservation and payment is Oct. 22nd. Contact Janet McIntyre at 717-633-9384 for information and reservation.

RESPECT LIFE NEWS –

Did you know that October is Respect Life month? This is a month when we are invited as a whole to renew our dedication to uplifting the inherent, God-given dignity of all human life from conception until natural death. Public witness is a great way to spread the Gospel of Love and change hearts. As part of our efforts to show support for our belief in the gospel of life, we will be having several parish sponsored activities, allowing an opportunity for united parish participation. Please also note the diocesan events for Respect Life that are listed as well.

- The Catholic Medical Association, Harrisburg Diocesan Guild, invites all Catholic physicians, medical students, residents, health care workers and their families to attend their Annual White Mass on Sunday, Oct. 14th at 9:30 AM at St. Patrick Cathedral, Harrisburg. Celebrant and Homilist will be Rev. Paul C.B. Schenck. For more information or reception, please RSVP to knerl@hbgdiocese.org.
- A Free Defense of the Faith Presentation open to the public, will be hosted on Wednesday, Oct. 24th at 7 PM at the Eden Resort and Conference Center, 222 Eden Road, Lancaster. Guest speakers will include Rev. Tad Pacholczyk, a bioethicist, from the National Catholic Bioethics Center – discussing Assisted Suicide from a moral Perspective. Also, Mr. Wesley Smith, author, commentator and legal consultant to the Patients’ Rights Council, will be discussing Assisted Suicide and it’s disastrous effects from a political and cultural landscape. Many other life topics will be discussed surrounding these issues. To register, please visit [https://maltaevents.ticketleap.com/ptb/](https://maltaevents.ticketleap.com/ptb/). + Immaculate Heart of Mary will have a time of Eucharistic Adoration on Sunday, Oct. 28th, following the 11:15 Mass until 3 PM. This will be a time of prayer devoted to Respect Life issues, including the Holy Rosary and ending with The Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Please come and spend some time in prayer, as we close Respect Life month, giving thanks for the gift of our lives – our loved ones, and as we continue asking Our Lord for direction in growing a Culture of Life for all God’s children.

FUSION - Fusion is Immaculate Heart of Mary’s youth ministry; open to all teenagers in grades 8 to 12.

Did You Know? October is the month of the Most Holy Rosary

Saturday, October 13th: Deadlines for Fan the Fire and Back from the Dead Cemetery Walk

Saturday, October 13th, 6 – 8:30 PM – Youth Night
Saturday, October 20th, 6:30 – 8:30 PM – Back from the Dead Cemetery Walk

Saturday, October 27th, 6 – 8:00 PM – Youth Night
Saturday, October 27th, 8:15 – 9:15 PM – Festival of Praise Holy Hour
Saturday, November 10th, 6 – 8:30 PM – Youth Night
Saturday, November 17th, 9 AM – 8:30 PM – Fan the Fire Youth Rally
Saturday, November 24th, 6 – 8:30 PM – Youth Night with Adoration

For more information, please call or email Paul Oakes: (717) 259-0611 ext.8 or [poakes@hbgdiocese.org](mailto:poakes@hbgdiocese.org)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION TURKEY DINNER

Immaculate Conception BVM Catholic Church in New Oxford will hold their monthly “all-you-can-eat” turkey dinner on Oct. 21st in the parish hall, located behind the church from 11 AM until 2 PM. Questions regarding the dinner may be directed to the parish office at 717-624-4121. Ticket prices are $9 for adults and $4 for children (6-12). Under 6 – free.
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR – On Saturday, Nov. 17th from 9 AM – 3 PM, St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School will host the 2018 Christmas Bazaar and Craft Show. The bazaar will be held in the Sacred Heart Gym at the Conewago campus, 55 Basilica Dr., Hanover. We will have a variety of commercial vendors and one of a kind products made by local artisans. Our famous “Classroom Basket Raffle” and “Silent Auction” will return this year with items that are sure to please everyone! Small games of chance will be available. Come eat breakfast or lunch with us. Santa will be there from 9 am – 1 pm, so be sure to bring your little ones! Hope to see you there!

MASS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – The Diocese of Harrisburg’s annual Mass Celebrating the Gifts of People with Disabilities will be held on Sunday, Nov. 18, 2018 at 11:30 AM at St. Catherine Laboure Church in Harrisburg. Bishop Ronald Gainer will be the Celebrant and Homilist. This year also marks the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the 1978 Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities. A light reception will follow the Mass, which will include reflections on the 1978 Pastoral Statement. To assist with planning, it is requested that those attending from outside St. Catherine Laboure Parish or in need of any special accommodations, kindly RSVP to LKiley@hbgdiocese.org or 717-657-4804 ext. 322 prior to Nov. 9, 2018. All are welcome to attend.

PCCW – Are you celebrating a special wedding anniversary this year? Were you married 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 or more years ago? A special mass will be celebrated on Saturday, Oct. 20th here at IHM at the 5 PM Mass. Fr. Marcoe will give the couples a special blessing. A reception of cake and coffee will follow in the church social hall. If interested in attending, you can sign up on the sheets on the window sills or call Pat Slonaker at 717-624-3245 by Oct. 14th. If you have a wedding picture you would like to share, please place it in the PCCW bin in the social hall.

ABBOTTSTOWN/EAST BERLIN FOOD BANK – The food pantry in East Berlin held on Sept. 5th served 75 families which included 202 individuals. The number of families served at the Abbottstown location on Sept. 6th was 23 for a total of 50 individuals. The link to the Time to Sign Up page for the food pantry on Wednesday, Oct. 3rd at the East Berlin location is www.volunteersignup.org/9WQCB and Thursday, Oct. 4th at the Abbottstown location is www.volunteersignup.org/KV8CD. Please remember to drop off health/beauty aid items, such as soaps, toothbrushes, diapers, as well LAUNDRY DETERGENT, etc. and place them in the food pantry barrels.

PARISH CARING COMMITTEE – Assists parishioners on an as needed basis, in times of need or stress and provides visitation, care giver relief, meals, errands, light household chores and local transportation. To request assistance or to become a Caring Committee Volunteer, contact Jen Gentile at 717-225-5059.

PRAYER SHawl MINistry – CAN YOU DONATE NEW YARN? During the last year, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has made over 50 items for our own parishioners, Rachel’s Vineyard retreatants, Cross Keys Village Skilled Nursing patients, Spiritrust Lutheran hospice and Hanover Hospital Maternity. We rely on your donations to help with our yarn expense. We can always use red, white and blue yarn for military veterans in hospice care. Please drop off your donations in the covered gray boxes at the entrances to the church. If you know of anyone who would benefit from a prayer shawl, please call the parish office at 717-259-0611. Thank you!

CHOIR – Choir rehearsals start next Sunday, Sept. 16th, at 9:40 AM in the choir loft of the church. The choir is open to everyone, please come and join us! Contact Kathy Schwar at 717-259-9086 or Roy Wainwright at 717-619-7243 if you are interested or have questions.

TWO EVENINGS WITH FR. DAVE PIVONKA, TOR – Location: Xavier Center, 465 Table Rock Rd., Gettysburg Tuesday & Wednesday, Oct. 23/24. Doors open 6 PM Join Father Dave Pivonka, TOR for two evenings of conversation about the Holy Spirit in our lives. An internationally popular speaker, Father Dave spends much of his time helping others come to know God’s love for them through his dynamic preaching, writing, CD’s, and other spiritual outreaches. He held several ministry positions at Franciscan University, and is presently the director of Franciscan Pathways, an
evangelistic and preaching outreach of the T.O.R.’s (Third Order Regulars, a congregation of the Franciscans). Hosted by the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church Evangelization Committee of Gettysburg. Praise and Worship music begins at 6:30 PM. Father Dave begins at 7 PM. Plenty of free parking. ADA and Handicapped accessible venue and bathrooms. There is no ticket fee, a free will offering will be collected each evening to assist Father Dave in his important work outreaching to active and inactive Catholics. Contact Kathy Reid, Chair, Evangelization Committee. Email: evangelized.blessed@gmail.com. Fr. Marcroe has been on retreat with Fr. Dave before and highly recommends going to hear him speak!

AUGUST FINANCIAL REPORT –

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PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL - The Parish Pastoral Council would like to announce that we had two members of our parish community volunteer to serve on the council. Please join us in thanking and welcoming Rosemary Connelly and Lynn Murphy to the council. Given that there were only two vacancies, there will be no need to hold elections as in some years past. The Pastoral Council is here to serve our parish family. Please feel free to talk with any of the members when you have concerns, ideas or questions.

Check out our new website at www.ihmparadise.org.

AERO ENERGY HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROGRAM –
This program was established to provide Aero Energy customers an opportunity to give to our church. To participate, Aero Energy customers sign up by phone or online and Aero Energy donates 4 cents for every gallon of fuel they use to us. Please call if you are not already part of this wonderful program. It’s an easy way to benefit Immaculate Heart of Mary. Call 888-827-17136.

FROM THE PASTOR’S DESK

SUGGESTION CARDS are available on the back ledges and at the entrances of the church. If you have any suggestions on how to make our parish better, please fill one out and return it in the collection basket.

HIPPA LAWS – Please note that HIPPA (health care privacy laws) prevent hospitals from automatically notifying the parish office when you are in the hospital. Therefore, we ask you to please give consent (permission) for the parish office to be notified. If you would like Fr. Marcroe to know of your hospitalization, please inform the parish office before going into the hospital OR once hospitalized, ask the nurse or hospital chaplain/pastoral care staff person to notify the parish.

SUMMER WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE:
Saturday 5 PM, Sunday 8:15 AM and 10:15 AM

MASS INTENTIONS – Mass intentions are a wonderful way to celebrate a special occasion, remember those who have died or are sick and in need of our prayers. Please consider this as a “gift” for someone. Call Anita in the Parish Office to arrange your Mass intentions.

FLOWERS – Looking for a way to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion? A beautiful way would be to order flowers on the altar. Most weekends are available from now through the end of the year. Please call Anita in the parish office to make arrangements.

LOST AND FOUND – Please check our Lost and Found bin in the sacristy for any items you may have left in Church. Any unclaimed items will be discarded.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students at Delone Catholic High School for achieving honor roll status:
FIRST HONORS: Julia O’Brien, Audrey Sell and Harrison Smith
SECOND HONORS: Christian Powell
COMMENDABLE EFFORT: Abigail Sell

WEEKDAY MASS PARKING – Anyone attending the weekday Masses are asked to park in the lot beside and behind the Church whenever there is snow and ice. This parking area will be made ready first for anyone on the property.

BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION – Please keep collecting and sending in those BoxTop$ for Education for St. Teresa School. If you’d like to help out trimming those BoxTop$, please contact kwenger@hotmail.com. All help is appreciated!

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT – It has been noted that some people, who are dropped off or picked up for Mass, are doing so at the steps right along West Canal
Road. Especially at night, and given the adjacent hill, it is deemed this is unsafe given the speed and flow of traffic. For accessible and safe access to the Church at all times, please use the side social hall doors. Thank you.

EVENT NOTICE – I have been a parishioner at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church for more than 40 years and employed in the newspaper business for more than 20 years. We have many wonderful events happening here at our parish and we'd like to get the word out to the public. Please feel free to send me any events that would be of interest to our local community – from Lenten dinners to youth events to Bible studies and everything in between! You can send information to: 6fletch@embarqmail.com. Don’t forget to tell me the following: WHAT is the event? WHO is invited? WHEN is the event? WHERE is the event? WHY should people attend? HOW can they get more information? If you have any questions, fee free to call or text me at 717-357-8051. Thank you!

Holly Fletcher

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELING SERVICE – Outpatient Behavioral Health Care is dedicated to providing access to high quality outpatient counseling for children, adolescents and adults in a small, friendly, confidential office. Services include individual and family therapy, marital counseling and parent-child counseling. Services are provided regardless of religious affiliation. Accepting Medical Assistance insurance (Medicaid) and County Mental Health funding (York and Dauphin Counties, for low income uninsured people who are determined to be eligible). Other clients can pay fee on a sliding scale. No one is turned away due to an inability to pay. Not accepting private/commercial insurances. Local offices are York Counselling, 253 E. Market St., York (717-845-2696) and Paradise Counseling, 6156 W. Canal Rd, Abbottstown (717-259-9537 – press 0 for secretary). Visit www.cchbg.org for more information.

HEARING IMPAIRED – Anyone who is hearing impaired may find it helpful to sit in Pew #9 on the Sacristy side. You will notice “hearing impaired” stickers on the side of the pew to indicate the best place to sit if you are hearing impaired.

HANDICAP PARKING – Please note that handicap parking spaces are available for parking near the social hall entrance to the Church. If you are attending the 11:15 AM Mass, in order to avoid the traffic associated with religious education letting out, the following two options are recommended: EITHER come in the EXIT lane BEFORE 11 AM, OR come in the usual entrance way AFTER approximately 11:07 AM.

CHILDREN’S CHAPEL – For everyone’s information, especially for those who may be new to our parish, there is a so-called Children’s Chapel or Cry Room here in the Church. It’s located in the front left corner of the church, where a restroom is also located. As a parish family, we want children and families to be welcome here at Mass, and so it’s important to have an appropriate place in the church for babies and young children when they get fussy and need extra attention. We really want to encourage parents to use this space to tend to their children as needed. Please, feel free to just get up when need be from the body of the church, and utilize this space. Then you can better tend to your children without feeling like you’re being watched. And this will also allow the other parishioners to be able to more fully focus on worshiping.

PRAYER SHAWLS – Are you in need of a prayer shawl? Do you know someone who is? Please call Jan Melhorn at 308-2532. The next prayer shawl meeting will be held Tuesday, Feb. 14th at 1 PM in Room #3 of the RE Building. All knitters and crocheters are welcome. If you want to learn to knit or crochet, we can teach you. Skeins of new yarn are always welcome and there are bins at the church entrances for these donations.

CREMATION

Since 1963, Catholics have been allowed to choose cremation over burial as a means of laying a loved one to rest. Cremation is a popular choice since it is less expensive and more manageable than a full burial. Cremation, like death, is final. But that doesn’t mean you won’t have second thoughts. Susan Skiles Luke, a marketing consultant in Columbia, Missouri, had her mother cremated and buried in a family plot. Now, she wishes it was her mother’s body and not just the cremated remains that was in the grave. “When I go there, which isn’t often, I want to feel like her body is under ground, right alongside my grandparents and beloved great aunt, all dressed up in their Sunday best…”

Although creation is permitted, some Catholics have not been dealing properly with their loved ones remains. Common practices include scattering ashes, parting ashes out to friends and relatives, and keeping the ashes in a common area, such as a living room. While scattering ashes may seem romantic to some (but is also contrary to Catholic teaching), there’s something to be said about keeping your loved one in once place, and then marking that place with a name. “We mark the graves of our loved ones with a headstone to memorialize them, so we don’t forget them”. When visiting that person’s grave, just seeing his or her name can give comfort.

To instruct the faithful in this regard, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued updated guidelines. According to these, burial is still preferred, but cremation is an option. When a loved one has been cremated, their ashes must be kept intact, the same as one would treat a body. The ashes may not be separated or scattered. Instead, they should remain in a proper vessel that is interred in a proper place, such as a
cemetery or church. Finally, the document stresses that Catholics who choose cremation for reasons contrary to the faith, (e.g., to have their ashes scattered) must be denied a Christian funeral. In the end, whether cremation or burial is chosen, we await from the grave the second coming of Jesus Christ and the blessed Resurrection of the Dead.

Tips for talking to children about difficult subjects/news reports

The topic of sex abuse, particularly child sex abuse, is a daunting one for parents. Every parent must consider many factors including the best age-appropriate way to discuss the topic. Below are some points to consider adapted from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and First Things First.

1. Make sure you are composed before you talk with your child.
2. If you believe your child is aware of news concerning abuse in the diocese, start the conversation. Not talking about a difficult event can make the event even more threatening in your child’s mind.
3. Listen carefully to what your child is asking or talking about.
4. Clarify just what any concerns are before you answer. Sometimes we make assumptions and give far more information than what the child needs.
5. Keep your answers simple and brief. Don’t answer questions that have not been asked. Do not overload your child with information that is beyond his/her level of understanding.
6. Assure your child that you and other adults that are in charge are doing everything possible to make sure they will be safe. This will give them a sense that adults are actively taking steps to protect those who are currently suffering.
7. Don’t make guarantees that such a thing can never happen again. Words like “never” and “always” should be used very carefully because small children trust that this is a promise from you.
8. Explain that we do not know why people treat other people badly.
9. Try to limit your child’s exposure to media coverage. A child believes what he or she sees on television, or in the newspapers is always true.
10. Let your children know about successful community efforts. You may want to share positive media images, such as reports of individuals helping those in need.

Additional information is available at www.YouthProtectionHBG.com