



# The Visitation Visitor

VISITATION OF THE BLESSED  
VIRGIN MARY CHURCH

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## Igniting the Youth at Visitation

by Patricia Gavanus & Colleen Henderson

Our Catholic youth need to be re-energized in their relationship to God and we have just the right person to do the job, **Laura Baldassari**. You must have attended a Mass at which she has been a cantor. She is a dark-haired girl with an infectious smile and full of energy. One can't help but feel her excitement for the Catholic faith. She is young and relates to the youth of the parish. Her elementary years were completed here at Visitation. She remembers the Khoffee House and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat lighting a spark of faith within her. She now wants to light that spark for the youth today.

A big reason Laura started diving deep into the youth ministry, is that she felt a calling. She wants to foster a community of faith and Christianity. When we look around at the church today, we need to know who will fill our pews at Mass in 10 years, 20 years and 30 years from today. As with so much in life, our youth are our future. Therefore, they must be revitalized and fully evangelized in order for our parish and our faith to survive.

Many young Catholics today can tell you the elements of the faith, such as the catechism, the rosary and the altar vestments. But, do they have an actual relationship with God? In order to do so, our youth need to refocus away from an earthly cure for everything and realize if they are sad and lonely, they can always turn to God for help. When did God fall away from happiness? NEVER!



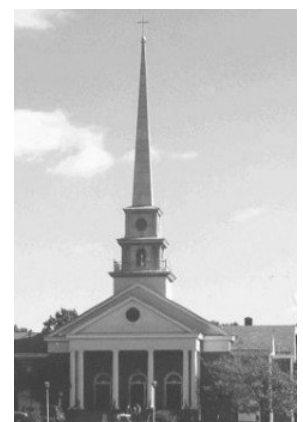
Build your relationship with God and our youth will find happiness.

The assignment of "Youth Ministry Coordinator" was just given to Laura this past summer. Laura has big plans for the Youth Ministry at Visitation Parish. Her first get-together with young parishioners was held in October. There was a bonfire where students shared their favorite bible verse explaining how it touched their lives. The turn-out for this inaugural event was excellent.

Each month, Laura plans to have a unique gathering. Check out the Sunday bulletin for upcoming events. Any questions you have for Laura can be directed to her at [visibvm youth@gmail.com](mailto:visibvm youth@gmail.com).

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# The Visitation Visitor

## Parish Profile — In Memoriam — Sister Germaine Grabowska



*By Patricia Drewicz*

Josephine Grabowska, first-born of Joseph and Lottie Grabowski, had a younger sister and brother, Jane and Edward. They grew up in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn and played in the beautiful parks near their home.

She attended St. Stanislaus Kostka School in Brooklyn where she helped the sisters after school. At home, she shared everything she learned at school with her siblings.

After graduation and with parental permission, Josephine and a few friends were accepted to attend high school at the new Nazareth Academy in Philadelphia where they discerned if they had a vocation to religious life. The young girls traveled by train to Philadelphia and were among the first class of students to be educated at the newly constructed Nazareth Academy High School.

- ♦ May 11, 1928 - Josephine became a postulant.
- ♦ 1930 - Entered the novitiate and chose name Sr. Mary Germaine.
- ♦ September 1, 1932 - Pronounced temporary vows
- ♦ August 15, 1938 – Pronounced perpetual vows

A Villanova University graduate with a degree in Education, Sister Germaine taught countless

numbers of children to read, to write, and to become good citizens as well as good people. She taught in Baltimore, MD; Wading River, NY; Worcester, MA; Plantation, FL; McAdoo, PA; and Trooper, PA. She especially loved preparing children to receive their first Holy Communion.

At the age of 97, after 34 years in Trooper, PA, Sister Germaine retired to Mount Nazareth in Philadelphia where she spent her time visiting sisters in the infirmary, keeping current with her correspondence, and praying in the chapel. In July of last year, it became apparent that Sister Germaine was becoming very weak. On July 31, 2019, in the 91<sup>st</sup> year of her religious life, she peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. Her Mass of Resurrection was celebrated on August 4 at Jesus of Nazareth Convent (Mount Nazareth) in Philadelphia.

May she rest in the peace of Christ forever!



### Catholic Humor

A little boy was listening to a rather long sermon in church. Suddenly, he spotted the red light on the sanctuary lamp. Tugging on his father's sleeve he said, "Daddy, when the light turns green, can we leave?"

\*\*\*\*\*

A Catholic boy and a Jewish boy were talking and the Catholic boy said, "My priest knows more than your rabbi." The Jewish boy said, "Of course he does, you tell him everything."



# The Visitation Visitor

## On the Lighter Side...Catholic Humor



4-28  
© 2007 BJ Keane, Inc.  
Dist. by King Features Synd.  
www.familycircus.com  
"Jeffy's only kneeling on one knee again and saying half the Hail Mary."

### CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

A Kindergarten teacher was observing the children while they drew their art. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to where one little girl was working diligently, the teacher asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But honey, no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat or looking up from her drawing, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute."

### GOD CREATES EVERYONE

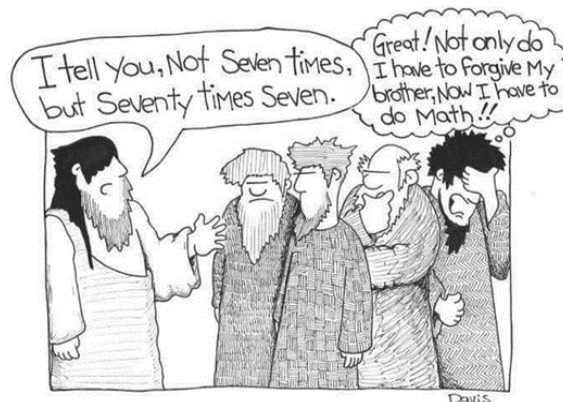
A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek, then his again. Finally she spoke up, "Grandpa, did God make you?"

"Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago".

"Oh," she paused, "Grandpa, did God make me too?"

"Yes, indeed, honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago."

Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"



### GRACE BEFORE MEALS

The Sunday School teacher asks, "Now, Johnny, tell me frankly: do you say prayers before eating?" "No sir," little Johnny replies, "I don't have to. My Mom is a good cook."



### The Visitation **VISITOR**™

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# Annual Visitation Christmas Bazaar

## November 22nd and 23rd, 2019

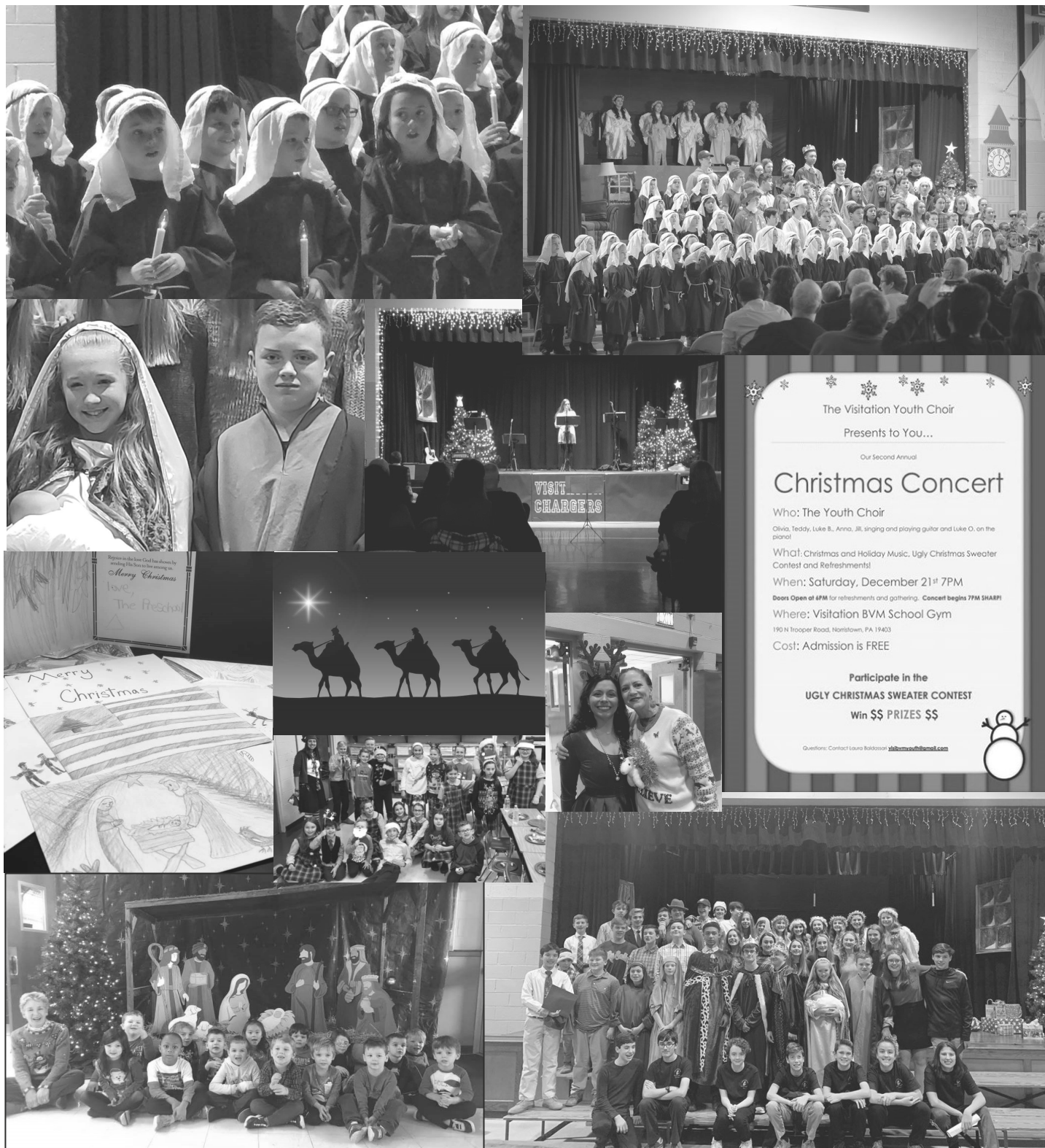






# The Visitation Visitor

## The Reason for the Season





# The Visitation Visitor

## Alpha Course...Beginning a New Journey in Faith

*By Clare Hughes*

For more than 10 years, Visitation BVM has hosted the Alpha Course each fall inviting parishioners and guests to participate in a faith journey.

By its name alone, "Alpha" means the beginning. The Alpha Course engages participants in learning, or re-learning, the fundamentals of Christianity, about Jesus and the Holy Spirit and building a deeper relationship with God. The course guides individuals in exploring their faith and finding deeper meaning in their Christian beliefs.

The course runs for 10-12 weeks. Each weekly meeting begins with a community dinner for the team and guests as a way to socialize, relax and get to know one another. After the opening greeting, the group views a film or video presentation on a topic specific to that session and engages in open conversation and small group discussion about the meaning and impact of the message.

One parishioner, Ed Byrnes, was invited to attend the Alpha course about five years ago by a friend and fellow parishioner, John Doman, who was one of the original course leaders and very instrumental in starting the program at Visitation BVM. The program had such an impact on him that today, Ed is a member of the Alpha leadership team at Visitation BVM and serves as the current host of the course.

Ed shared that the Alpha course completely changed his life. "I would go through the motions...go to church every week, receive the sacraments, but it was stale," Ed commented. "The Alpha Course allowed me to find a real relationship with God, establish a prayerful life and become very excited about my faith."

The Alpha Course was originated by the Anglican Church of England in the 1970's. It expanded over time to churches of other denominations and spread worldwide to serve as

a means to evangelize Christianity. Alpha has reached millions of people in more than 100 countries around the world. The course materials have been translated into more than 100 languages and the content has been adapted over the years to remain relevant with new generations. Local churches of different denominations that offer the Alpha Course follow a consistent timeline and, partway through each course, the groups assemble as one big community to pray, talk and share their faith experience. The Alpha Course is highly recognized by the Catholic Church as a powerful tool for evangelization.

The Alpha Course is open to Visitation parishioners and guests of Christian denominations. Whether you are looking to deepen your beliefs and understanding, or perhaps you have slipped away from the church and want to reconnect, the Alpha Course is a way for you to spiritually bond with Jesus, the Holy Spirit and your faith. It can be life changing.

The response from participants in the Visitation's Alpha Course has been so positive, that the team is considering hosting a winter/spring course. Watch for updates in the Parish Bulletin. In the meantime, think about how the Alpha Course can be the beginning of a new faith journey for you.

## THE ALPHA COURSE

**explore the  
meaning of life!**







# The Visitation Visitor

## Visitation BVM School Receives Archdiocesan Recognition

By Clare Hughes

This past September, Sister M. Barbara Brahl, IHM, Principal, and Father Terry Weik, Pastor, announced that Visitation BVM School was recognized as a *2019 Archdiocesan School of Distinction*. Visitation was among 43 parish and regional schools to receive this honor. The recognition was given to schools for exceeding growth expectations and benchmarks in academic achievement based on the results of standardized testing.

In a press release issued by the Archdiocese, Visitation BVM School received the honor in the category of "*Recognition for Exceeding Academic Potential*" for "achieving standardized test scores greater than their anticipated test scores (determined by the ability testing)."

Father Terry, our Pastor, received the award presented by Auxiliary Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, at a special ceremony held on September 13, 2019 at the Archdiocesan Offices in Philadelphia.

"It's a testament to how hard the students worked and how well the teachers prepared the students for the testing" noted Sr. Barbara. "Each year the faculty and administration [at Visitation BVM School] spend time analyzing the scores and plan strategies to address areas of weakness."

For the parents of current and prospective students, this distinction serves as a tribute to the quality education Visitation BVM students receive. Kathy Steiert, Office Manager and Admissions Coordinator for Visitation BVM School commented, "This means a lot to parents...it helps validate the choice they made to send their children to Visitation. They are getting real value for their money."

The success was celebrated with a social for faculty and staff to commemorate the proud achievement for the school. Congratulations to the Visitation faculty, administration, parents and, of course, students on this wonderful accomplishment!

The students in grades three through seven will take the 2020 standardized testing in March. Sister Barbara and the faculty are hoping that the strong academic performance will continue, and once again, Visitation BVM will be recognized as a School of Distinction.



### What's New at VISI?

Visitation BVM continues to make enhancements in a variety of areas for our school.

A new school board, called the Board of Limited Jurisdiction, has been formed and members will be introduced in late January. The board is a volunteer committee assembled to oversee the financial, development, enrollment and facilities aspects of the school and assist Father Terry in making major decisions affecting the school. The committee is comprised of business leaders and professionals in various fields who can offer expertise to help our school grow and prosper. Watch for more information coming soon.

Visit the refreshed school website at [visitationbvm.org](http://visitationbvm.org) for a new online experience! The updated website launched in the fall with a new design, mobile-friendly access, and improved navigation and speed. The website is a great resource for prospective families to learn about Visitation BVM School and offers current students and families an enhanced online experience using the parent and student portal.

What's cooking this year? Visitation BVM School welcomed a new cafeteria service provided by the Natale Family. The Natales' are parents of five Visitation graduates and are now busy serving up delicious lunches for our students. Feedback on the new cafeteria service has been extremely positive and students are enjoying the tasty meals!

# VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY CHURCH

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### Do You Know?... Facts About Youth Ministry

By Vince Drewicz

- ♦ Faith-based organizations devoted to youth such as the YMCA and YWCA, whose American branches were founded in the 1850s.
- ♦ Father Bernard Sheil turned to sports and founded the Catholic Youth Organization in 1930 with the support of Cardinal George Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago.
- ♦ The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) was the first movement of the Catholic Church to focus on serving Catholic youth of the United States.
- ♦ In 1954, despite being an auxiliary bishop, the "Apostle of Youth" was elevated to archbishop by Pope Pius XII for his many charitable works.
- ♦ The primary goal of most modern-day youth ministries is to teach youth the biblical doctrines of Jesus Christ and of our salvation.
- ♦ The Office for Youth and Young Adults (OYYA) in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is now called Anthem and can be located @<http://anthemphilly.com>.