

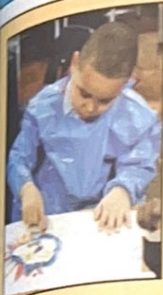
The Tablet

QUEENS AND BROOKLYN, N.Y.

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Since 1908



Catholic School Profile of St. Francis of Assisi, Brooklyn

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Catholic Schools Week
Jan. 29 -
Feb. 4



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LINDA BUSETTI PHOTO

33rd Annual March for Life

More than 450 young Iowans for Life, above, led the 33rd Annual March for Life Jan. 23 in Washington, D.C., to protest the 1973 Supreme Court ruling, which legalized abortion in the U.S. See Centerfold and Page 12.

Diocese in Compliance with Child Safety

For the third year, the Diocese of Brooklyn has been found to be in compliance with the U.S. Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," based on "the completeness and accuracy of the information furnished by the Diocese" to an audit conducted last November.

The Gavin Group, Inc., an independent firm comprised

largely of retired F.B.I. agents, audited the diocese for the bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection. An agent met with Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio and diocesan officials during the three-day review.

Audits completed and found compliant in 2003 and 2004 to see whether the diocese was meeting the objectives of the bishops' charter looked at the

document's 17 articles. Last year's audit focused principally on articles pertaining to safe environment programs and background evaluations, although all the other articles were reviewed, according to Msgr. Otto L. Garcia, Vicar General, who was the lead representative of the diocese for the audit.

The agent conducting the

review also spoke with the Victims' Assistance Coordinator, the Diocesan Review Board, several pastors, an abuse victim, an accused priest, the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office, the diocesan Public Information Office and the Safe Environment Office.

Josephite Sister Patricia

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Planning the Future of
the Diocese

Series Begins, Page 22

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500th Anniversary of Elite Corps

Pope Blesses Swiss Guards

BY CAROL GLATZ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - On the 500th anniversary of the founding of the world's oldest active army, Pope Benedict XVI gave his apostolic blessing to a contingent of Swiss Guards who were lined up in formation in St. Peter's Square.

From his apartment window in the Apostolic Palace Jan. 22, the pope thanked this "well-deserving" corps for its "500 years of service."

He imparted "a heartfelt" apostolic blessing to approximately 70 guards gathered in the square and to former guards who were watching the event from Fribourg, Switzerland, via a live, televised link.

Pope Benedict recalled how on Jan. 22, 1506, "Pope Julius II welcomed and blessed the first contingent of Swiss Guards" that arrived in Rome after the pontiff requested the soldiers come to protect the pope and the Apostolic Palace.

"This is how the Swiss Guards were born," Pope Benedict said.

The pope said his special blessing for the guards was a sign of his "appreciation and recognition" of their service and fidelity.

Earlier Jan. 22, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state, celebrated Mass for the Swiss Guards in the Sistine Chapel.

He highlighted the strength and generosity shown by the first 150 Swiss soldiers who made the four-month trek from Switzerland to Rome to protect the life and safety of the pope.

He told the guards that "we must cleanse and renew ourselves every day in our service to God and in our fidelity to his holy church."

He added that the Swiss Guards' motto of "Acriter et Fideliter," or courage and fidelity, was "a daily call" to live according to such values.

The Swiss Guards kicked off their jubilee celebrations June 21, the date Pope Julius requested the service of Swiss soldiers, renowned for their loyalty and bravery.

Celebrations and other commemorative events were set to continue throughout 2006, culminating in a contingent of former Swiss Guards marching to Rome from Bellinzona, Switzerland. The guards were to arrive in time to take part in the annual swearing-in ceremony of new guards May 6 in the Vatican.

The Vatican and Switzerland also were planning a series of commemorative stamps and coins to mark the 500th anniversary.



ON GUARD: Swiss Guards leave the Sistine Chapel after a special Mass at the Vatican Jan. 22. The elite Vatican, is celebrating its 500th anniversary. Pope Julius II welcomed the first contingent of Swiss Guards to the Vatican Jan. 22, 1506.



Diocese in Compliance with Program

Continued from page 1

Hudson, who directs the Safe Environment Office, reported that since the charter was implemented in 2002, 405 diocesan priests, 99 religious order priests, 144 extern priests, 125 permanent deacons, 4,819 teachers, 710 diocesan employees, 2,830 parish employees and 11,484 volunteers, including catechists, youth ministers and coaches, have completed the Virtus training program, a branch of the National Catholic Risk Retention Group.

Virtus - a Latin word that means "valor" or "moral strength" - focuses

on prevention with a proactive approach. About 80 dioceses use the program.

Another program, Child Lures Prevention, has trained 36,343 children in Catholic schools to recognize potential danger signs and make smart decisions to avoid predators. Brooklyn is among more than 30 dioceses that use the initiative, created by Ken Wooden, a former investigative reporter for network television.

Of the 45,521 public school students who attend parish religious education classes, 21,491 have completed Child Lures training, with the remainder expected to finish the program by April 30. All public

school students also follow the state curriculum on prevention.

Sister Patricia said that 14,432 parents have also completed the Child Lures program and 2,186 have taken the Virtus training.

Since the existence of the bishops' charter, background evaluations of 14,548 individuals in the Diocese have been made by USIS Investigative Services. They include 409 diocesan priests, 99 religious order priests, 127 permanent deacons, 2,914 teachers, 654 diocesan employees, 1,375 parish employees, 8,975 volunteers and 80 candidates for priestly or diaconal ordination.