Release of “Amoris Laetitia” - Last week the Apostolic Exhortation “The Joy of Love” was released. Are you confounded by some commentators’ rhetoric re: change/no change in doctrine or the authority of the Exhortation? Find some orienting information at Authority of Church Documents. What does Amoris Laetitia have to do with the Synod of the Family? Visit Crux - Taking the Catholic Pulse to learn the basics. Perhaps you have already reviewed an official PDF, summaries, and some commentaries. So many responses are coming forward, both Catholic and non-Catholic, around the world. Here are a few selections: Millennial Journal: Young Catholics, an Ancient Faith, a New Century posted 5 Things to Look for in Amoris Laetitia - including “Don’t Put the Mercy of God in a Box”. The President of the USCCB issued a welcoming statement on the document on April 8. Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, comments on “Amoris Laetitia in the Jubilee of Mercy” at the Standard. The Catholic News Agency addresses its interpretation ‘Through the Lens of Catholic Tradition’. Glenn Stanton of the National Catholic Register reports: Amoris Laetitia is Good for the Church and Good for Families. New Ways Ministry: Building Bridges Between the LGBT Community and the Catholic Church posted some links yesterday and updates today. Just FYI: NWM, promoters of same-sex marriage and critics of the church’s defense of traditional marriage, have been the subject of a clarification by the USCCB that it is not a Catholic organization. National Public Radio posted under this headline: “On Divorce and Remarriage, Pope Calls for More Grace, Less Dogma”.

TUES, APRIL 19, St. Mary’s Women’s Group – Westfield, MA: Let’s spend a few moments to support and encourage each other on our life’s journey. This group is open to women of all ages. Our next meeting is April 19, 7- 8:30 pm. meet in the St. Mary’s parish center at 86 Mechanic St. in Westfield, The theme: Confession from John 20:21-23. Light refreshments are provided. Bibles will be available, or you can bring your own.

This is time to connect with other Christian women for fellowship, scripture reading, reflection, and discussion. Sept. through May on the third Tuesday of the month, around different topics from God’s Word. Building friendships on the foundation of God’s Word: you are invited!
WED APRIL 20 - Theology on Tap: Faith, Friends, Fun. Westfield, MA - Adults 21 and over are invited to join. Guest speaker: Paul Mazzariello, Chaplain at Hampden Country House of Corrections. The Hangar’s full range of beverages and wings will be available for purchase. A fun, spirit-filled evening sponsored by St. Mary’s in Westfield. 7:00 pm. at Hangar Pub and Grill, 29 School Street, Westfield, MA.

Continuing WED APRIL 20 -- Praying Again for the First Time. Chicopee, MA: For all who desire to develop, renew, deepen and widen their prayer relationship with God. These mini-retreats with Virginia Collins-English are sponsored by Elms College Institute for Theology and Pastoral Studies. Elms College, Faculty Dining Room in the Mary A. Dooley Campus Center! April 13, 20, 27 at 6:30-8:30 pm. Free and open to the public. Attend one or all! Please reserve your seat by calling Ann Schwein at 413-265-2575 or e-mail schweina@elms.edu. Website: http://www.elms.edu.

FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY, APRIL 22-24 - Retreats for Women - West Hartford, CT: The Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, 303 Tunxis Rd., will offer weekend retreats for women, based on the theme, “Into the Heart of Mercy.” Also offered June 3-5. To register, visit www.holyfamilyretreat.org or call 860-760-9705.


MONDAY, APRIL 25 - Where Hope Grows - Holyoke: Mercy Mondays Everyday Mercy Film Series - screening, refreshments from 6:30-8:30 pm. DECice Hall at the Marian Center, 1365 Northampton Street. Everyone is invited to stay for conversation after the film. Free, open. Donations are appreciated. (2014) USA by Chris Dowling. Where Hope Grows Tagline: “Hope, love, family. Everyone needs someone to believe in.”

A contemporary Christian tale, “Where Hope Lives” takes viewers into a hope-filled experience in small-town America gone sideways. Calvin is a former pro baseball player on the downswing of a problem-drinking spiral. His 17-year-old daughter Katie has little respect for him and is struggling to cope with her boyfriend, Colt. Calvin is intrigued by Produce, a young man with Down syndrome whose way of life promises to turn his situation right side up.

See a montage at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zx1p3xAFpw Rated PG-13 for thematic issues involving drinking, teen sexuality, and for brief language and an accident scene. (Thank you to WXU radio for the great photo with actor David DeSanctis.)
Continuing WED APRIL 27 and MAY 11 - Releasing Your Inner Superhero: Empowered to be Like Christ. Westfield, MA: A Year of Mercy Seminar at 7:00 pm. Superheroes possess extraordinary talents or abilities and are dedicated to the wellbeing of others. We too are endowed as Superheroes by nature of our baptism. This seminar explores the source and nature of our extraordinary abilities by comparing our mission “hear” and traits to those common to superheroes (“special powers”, a strong moral code, the motivation of call and responsibility, and a back-story explaining how and why the superhero serves). Deacon Roger Carrier facilitates. St. Mary Parish, 30 Bartlett Street Westfield, MA at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays, April 6, 13 and 27 and May 11. Cost is $20. Info: Joanne Bagge at 413-562-5484 or email jbagge@stmsaints.org. (Thanks www.atacrossroads.net for the super jpeg.)

JULY 22-24 - Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat - held in the Springfield Diocese for any woman, man, couple, grandparent or sibling struggling with the emotional or spiritual pain of abortion. Upcoming weekend retreat dates are March 11-13, July 22-24, and Oct. 28-30. For more information or to register for a weekend, call 413.452.0661. All inquiries will be answered confidentially and retreats are strictly private.

ONGOING THROUGH 11/20-2016 - JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY - “Merciful Like the Father” - observed from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, through the Feast of Christ the King, November 20, 2016. Visit http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en.html

COMING IN SEPTEMBER - Year of Mercy Pilgrimage to Italy - Father Matthew Alcombright, parochial vicar of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in West Springfield, will lead a Sept. 25-Oct. 6 Year of Mercy Pilgrimage to Italy. Fr. Alcombright at 413-739-4779, Ext. 14 or fr.matt.alcombright@gmail.com.

Let’s Keep the Doors Open! The Newman Club is a resource for Catholics at Amherst or for those who would like grow in or learn more about the Catholic faith. Some ways we practice our faith: Celebrating the “Source and Summit” - Catholic Mass, usually at 5 pm. in Chapin Chapel on Sundays and as arranged for Solemnities; nurturing personal and spiritual development; being a community of love for God and neighbor; exploring and celebrating truth with professors, religious leaders, guests. Are you new to campus or the Newman Club? Email us at newman@amherst.edu

See https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/our-community/religiouslife/student/newmancatholic for weekly Bulletins, events and opportunities, Catholic links to help you connect, contribute, flourish and grow. Do you have news to share in our Bulletin? Email cclark@amherst.edu

Celebrants’ Schedule We are blessed by the presence, witness, and apostolic gifts of our celebrants. See the schedule at the Newman Catholic Club webpage https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/our-community/religiouslife/student/newmancatholic Catholic Advisor Sr. Chris Clark, DHM is our Religious Life resource. Contact her 24/7 via cellphone 413-687-1858 or email cclark@amherst.edu. See her bio. at Chris Clark at Religious Life.
A SAMPLER OF ONGOING EVENTS - more at http://www.ioserve.org/index.php?page=calendar

REGULARLY - EUCHARISTIC ADORATION - in Amherst: every Thursday following the 8 a.m. Mass until 5 p.m. at St. Brigid Church, 122 North Pleasant St. ... In South Hadley: Eucharistic adoration is held on the first Saturday of each month from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Parish on Main Street. ... In Springfield: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held Tuesdays from 9 a.m-5 p.m. at Holy Name Church, 323 Dickinson St. ... Also in Springfield: Adoration with Benediction, led by Deacon Bob Farrell, is held on Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, 123 William Street.

MEETING MONTHLY - WOMEN’S GROUP - Westfield: The St. Mary’s Women’s Group meets monthly in the evening. All women are welcome to join us to connect with other Christian women for fellowship, scripture reading, reflection and discussion. This is a great opportunity to spend a few moments with the women of our church and community to support and encourage each other on our life's journey. This group is open to women of all ages. Visit http://www.stmarysofwestfield.com/ or call 413-562-5477 for more information.

THIRD SUNDAYS: SACRAMENT OF THE SICK - South Hadley: The Sacrament of the Sick is held at noon on the third Sunday of each month at St. Patrick Parish on Main Street.

LAST SUNDAYS - MINI-RETREAT - Holyoke: A Mini Retreat at Immaculate Conception Church, 54 N. Summer St. Father Sean O’Mannion, national director of the Guard of Honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, will lead the retreat, which will begin with the Divine Mercy Chaplet, followed by a talk on Sacred Heart spirituality, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, recitation of the rosary and Benediction. (Illustration Mickey McGrath OSFS’s “No Storm Can Shake My Inmost Calm”)

FIRST SUNDAYS - FAITH AND LIGHT GATHERINGS - Holyoke: Faith and Light, a gathering of people with disabilities, their families, friends and caregivers, meets the first Sunday of the month after the noon Mass at the Celebration Center at Jericho to pray, share, and celebrate together as a community. For more information, contact Sister Joan at 413-538-7450 or srjoan@jerichobeca.org. (Thanks to “Open Doors to Multicultural Families in Kent, WA for the image.)

FIRST TUESDAYS - SUICIDE LOSS SUPPORT - Pittsfield: A Suicide Loss Support Group meets the first Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Brien Center, 10 Wendell Ave. Contact Peg Morse at 413-441-6316 to register or for more information.

FIRST TUESDAYS - ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN - Springfield: A support group and ministry for parents, families and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons will meet in the Community Room of the convent behind Sacred Heart Church, 395 Chestnut St., on the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Call 413-736-6803. Sr. Chris notes: FYI, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Message “Always our Children” is available at USCCB Issues and Action Always Our Children. (Thanks to Marquette University for their “Respect Life Month” poster.)

EVERY WEDNESDAY - HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE - from 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. at St. Jerome Church, 169 Hampden St., Holyoke

SECOND WEDNESDAYS - PARENT SUPPORT GROUP - Holyoke: A Parent Support Group for families of individuals with disabilities is held the second Wednesday of every month from 11 a.m.-noon or 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Alleluia House at the Bureau for Exceptional Children and Adults at Jericho, 537 Northampton St. For more information, contact Laura at 413-538-7450 or laura@jerichobeca.org.

THIRD WEDNESDAYS - SPAGHETTI SUPPERS - South Hadley: The Knights of Columbus Council 1721 holds its Monthly Spaghetti Supper on the third Wednesday of the month from 4-6:30 p.m. in the St. Patrick Social Center. Includes spaghetti with meat sauce, garden salad, rolls, cake, coffee, tea or non-carbonated beverage. Take-Out dinners available. For more information, call the parish at 413-532-2850. Holyoke: The Mater Dolorosa School PTO will host a Spaghetti Supper from 4-7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Pope John Paul II Social Center, St. Kolbe Drive. Cost is $6 for adults; $4 for children 5-12; and free for children 4 and under.

THURSDAYS - TODDLER PLAYGROUP - South Hadley: Children ages newborn to 5 are welcome to come and play, while caregivers enjoy conversation, on Thursday mornings from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in St. Patrick's Social Center. Snacks and beverages are provided.

Volunteers Needed! Homework House Holyoke provides free after-school tutoring and mentoring for children in Holyoke, Massachusetts who are at-risk for academic failure and dropping out of school. We give children a loving and caring environment. We help them improve their literacy skills so they can become productive members of our community. We work towards rekindling their interests in learning and self-improvement- one page at a time. Services are provided to school-age children without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, or gender. For a volunteer application and more information visit Homework House at http://www.homeworkhouseholyoke.org

At Bethlehem House: Immediate Need for Cleaning, Counselors, Order Fillers and Sewers to run our serger to help make pack & play sheets, or work from home on your serger. We have fabric & pattern & sheets pre-cut. Call Pamela at 413-262-8517. Bethlehem House also seeks volunteers willing to work as counselors for clients served by the organization. Bethlehem House is a non-profit, faith-based organization. Working closely with area hospitals to identify clients in need, the organization delivers baby baskets to new moms and babies at four area hospitals. Services at Bethlehem House include a 24 hr. crisis hotline, counseling and referrals, free confidential pregnancy testing, assistance in obtaining prenatal care, financial/legal aid, job training, emergency food, maternity and baby supplies, childbirth and child care programs, breastfeeding classes, educational assistance, adoption information and abstinence and STD education. Please visit http://www.bethlehemhousewma.org.

Providence Ministries, started 35 years ago by the Sisters of Providence in Holyoke, is located at 51 High Street, Holyoke MA. Visit them at https://www.provministries.com. Sr. Chris adds: material support is a partial response, right? Let’s consider ways to connect. Let’s remember these ministries and the people and God they serve in our prayers. Providence Ministries is in desperate need of warm clothing and supplies this winter. Providence accepts contributions of all shapes and sizes! Margaret’s Pantry is located at 56 Cabot St., Holyoke, MA 01040 (That’s in the heart of the Broderick House. (413) 538-8026. Margaret’s Pantry is located at 56 Cabot St., Holyoke, MA 01040 (That’s in the heart of the Broderick House.) (413) 538-8026. Business Hours: Monday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm & Tuesday- Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. Donations accepted Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm/ Summer – closed on Fridays. This is a full service food pantry that provides food to residents of the greater Holyoke area. Kate’s Kitchen serves a noontime meal to anyone, no questions asked, 365 days a year. Kate’s also offers a brown bag supper on Wednesdays from 5-6 pm.
Location: 51 Hamilton St., Holyoke, MA 01040 (413) 532-0233 . OPEN Monday - Sunday, 365 days/year. Volunteers welcome. St. Jude's Clothing Center accepts donations of good used clothing and small housewares during business hours. We provide clothing, and small household furnishings to the needy of our community. The program sells clothing at a nominal cost, which in turn helps defray the expenses of the program. We provide some form of assistance to approximately 3,000 individuals each year. Location: 56 Cabot St., Holyoke, MA 01040 OPEN: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm. Donations accepted Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. CLOSED on Friday’s during the summer. Walk-ins always welcome. Open to the community/ Contact: Brenda @ 413-538-8026 for more info. Walk-ins are always welcome. St. Jude’s is open to the community.