



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



3

All Souls Day Observances



24

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# Catechetical Leadership

## Re-imagine how we pass on the faith

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

There is an urgent need to re-imagine the way the Church passes on the faith to young people and engages others in lifelong faith formation, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said to more than 200 catechists who gathered at All Saints School in Norwalk on October 28.

In a remarkable 45-minute talk that was punctuated by applause, laughter and absorbed listening, the bishop told the men and women in attendance that social media is re-wiring the lives of young people, leading them to ask tough questions and to become disaffiliated at an earlier age.

"There is in my mind a tremendous urgency that is growing," the bishop said, noting that he sees it when he speaks to youth across the country and here in Fairfield County.

"The world is changing faster than we can appreciate," he said of the new technology where "computer browsers are the open door" to a world that often dismisses faith and comes between children and their parents.

The bishop told catechists that they are a bridge between faith traditions and children, and that there is a need to "re-tool and re-imagine" the ancient task of passing on the faith. "Doing the same old things over and over again is frustrating. It's time to break out. I'm issuing a call to arms, and the battle is for the human heart, the heart of young people and their parents entrusted to our care," he said.

His "Conversation with Catechists" is one of a series of talks with those who teach the faith throughout the diocese



"IT'S TIME TO BREAK OUT," Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said in a "Conversation with Catechists" on October 28 in the first of a series of talks with those who teach the faith throughout the diocese. He told catechists that they are a bridge between faith traditions and children, and that there is a need to "re-tool and re-imagine" the ancient task of passing on the faith. (PHOTO BY MICHELLE BABYAK)

to help launch the Leadership Institute's "Faith Re-imagined" initiative.

The bishop told catechists that they should first and foremost think of themselves as "witnesses to the faith."

While passing on knowledge of the faith and its teachings is important, young people must be brought to an "encounter with Christ," which is experienced within a community of love and service, he said. The bishop said that, in addition to the written word, catechesis requires a new language of imagery and perhaps even a YouTube approach that better engages young people in the mysteries of the faith.

He said that information technology has accelerated the divide between science and faith and that many young people think

"faith is the stuff that science hasn't figured out yet."

Several times during his talk, the bishop emphasized that "parents must play an intimate role in the faith of their children," and that any successful catechetical approach must draw the entire family into the faith experience. "Our job is not to judge but to help parents love their children better," he said.

Many of the parents in attendance nodded in agreement when the bishop discussed the challenges faced by those engaged in passing on the faith, beginning with a growing sense of disaffiliation in the young. "Which means young people and people of all ages are making the conscious decisions to separate themselves from our parishes and the Church. Young

people don't see a value in these communities. They don't see a value in being part of our schools and parishes. There is a crisis of relevance in our communities."

Likewise, he believes young people are afflicted with a growing sense of anxiety and restlessness fueled by smart phones and social media.

"They're not comfortable in their own skins because they live in a hyper-competitive world. And they're told if they're not great at everything, there's something wrong. They're afraid they're not going to be good enough or accepted for who they are," he said.

That leads young people "to doubt their self-worth and perhaps doubt that God loves them," he said.

Despite the challenges, the

bishop said he remains optimistic and believes that a new approach is possible. "This is not an exercise in discouragement. I didn't come here to tell you we can't do this," he said. "It's time to walk the walk as much as talk the talk. There's nobody, myself included, who can't grow more deeply in the love of Jesus. It starts with an encounter. The goal of catechists is to bring the Good News to the world by first allowing it to change their own hearts. We have to walk that path together," he said.

After the bishop's talk and question and answer session with the audience, Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute, distributed copies of the "Invitation to Lifelong Formation," the recently published report that includes the Catechetical Task Force Finding & Recommendations for catechesis.

"We're not asking you to do one more thing. We're asking you to do everything differently," Donovan said, noting that people from the Leadership Institute and the Faith Formation team will walk with catechists during the process.

Those who were unable to attend the first catechetical meeting had another opportunity on November 7, when the bishop hosted a similar conversation with catechists. The event in Bridgeport took place at the Catholic Center.

("An Invitation to Lifelong Formation," the 36-page catechetical report, is available in print and will be posted on line in many languages. It can be downloaded in its entirety or in individual sections. For more information, visit [www.formationre-imagined.org](http://www.formationre-imagined.org).)



### ON THE COVER

Bishop Caggiano presents the St. Augustine Medal to Agnieszka and Grzegorz Rus of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Stamford. Daughter Angelika looks on while Jacob accepts the award on behalf of his dad, Grzegorz. More than 175 were honored for the volunteer service to parishes across the diocese.  
PHOTOS BY MICHELLE BABYAK

### CONTENTS

- |    |  |       |   |
|----|--|-------|---|
| 5  | <b>SS. CYRIL &amp; METHODIUS PARISH</b><br>Religious Institute establishes oratory | 16-21 | <b>ST. AUGUSTINE MEDAL RECIPIENTS</b><br>Making the love of Christ real                   |
| 7  | <b>CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE</b><br>Becoming "men of virtue" in faith              | 22    | <b>OUR LADY OF PEACE, STRATFORD</b><br>Memorial block build community                     |
| 11 | <b>EXPLORING CATHOLIC IDENTITY</b><br>Guest Columnist Dr. Michelle Loris           | 27    | <b>HONORING ITALIAM-AMERICAN ROOTS</b><br>St. Margaret Shrine celebrates 75th Anniversary |
| 12 | <b>"I WAS A STRANGER..."</b><br>Diocesan Mission Trip to Ethiopia                  | 31    | <b>TAKING THE DISCERNMENT JOURNEY</b><br>Support vocations in our diocese                 |



# Latest News

## All Souls Day: 'This is holy ground'

A gentle November sunlight and soft fall colors framed the All Souls Day Masses held outdoors in Trumbull and Norwalk as hundreds gathered to pray for their departed loved ones and remember the dead.

"Death is part of a life of faith, but not the last chapter in the story of faith. You and I are linked in baptism with the death and resurrection of Christ," Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said in his homily before almost 400 people at St. John Cemetery in Norwalk.

"We have come here because this is holy ground. It's beautiful and quiet. There is solitude here and a physical reminder of what awaits everyone," said the bishop. "We are doing today what ancient Christians did when they built early churches around the graves of the first martyrs."

At the same time the bishop was celebrating Mass in Norwalk,

Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, was celebrating Mass at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull.

"This cemetery is a place of hope," Msgr. Powers said in welcoming over 250 of the faithful to the Mass. "It is wonderful that we can do this today as Masses are also being held in churches around the world. Let us remember those who have gone before us in faith."

Both Masses were held under large outdoor tents and drew both young and old on a mild autumn morning.

After Mass, diocesan staff distributed white and red carnations, which many of those in attendance placed on the nearby gravestones of their loved ones.

Msgr. Powers said the bishop hopes to expand the All Souls Day Mass observance to every cemetery throughout the diocese next year.



NORWALK—"We have come here because this is holy ground. It's beautiful and quiet. There is solitude here and a physical reminder of what awaits everyone," said Bishop Caggiano at an All Souls Day Mass at St. John Cemetery in Norwalk. At the same time, Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, celebrated Mass at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull. "Let us remember those who have gone before us in faith," the bishop said. After both Masses, many placed flowers on the graves of their loved ones. (PHOTO BY AMY MORTENSEN)

### St. John Cemetery, Norwalk

In his homily at St. John Cemetery, the bishop said the challenge is "not simply to come and pray for the dead, but to consider ways to follow their good example. Let us remember the good they did, their integrity and values, and follow their example. Today we commend them to God's mercy as one day others will do for us."

The bishop said that standing in a cemetery should also remind us "to live every day to do good," and to let go of the pettiness, anger and worries that get in the way of our sense of God's grace and the gift of life.

"God has given us today to live fully in grace because we do not know when we will hand our life back to him. We should remember that there will be a stone with our name on it as well, and offer our life one day at a

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

## Diocese releases Strategic Plan for schools

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The diocese unveiled the new Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools on October 6 in a meeting at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport attended by 100 school board members, pastors, principals and other educators. "This is a gigantic leap forward and an historic afternoon in the life of our schools," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, adding that the plan will "re-envision and re-invigorate" Catholic schools in the diocese.

"This is a pivot point for us," said Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools. "Now we move from conversation to implementation. This is not just about the viability of our schools, it's about their vitality."

The three-year plan prioritizes 16 goals and 80 objectives to renew Catholic identity, sustain and grow academic excellence, improve operations and support new leadership and governance models.

The plan grew out of the work of the Diocesan Education Commission, a group of educa-



"THE REAL CHALLENGE for the future is not to improve academic scores, but to improve learning," said Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools, during the presentation of the new Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools on October 6.

tion, business and institutional leaders with a wider range of expertise empanelled by Bishop Caggiano in 2014 to plan for the future of the schools. Others who contributed to the plan include parents who completed surveys and principals and teachers who participated in focus groups.

Dr. Cheeseman said that in the coming months his office will be working with principals and schools to formalize a timeline, define actions and set bench-

marks to measure the success of the plan. During his slide presentation in the Queen of Saints Hall, Dr. Cheeseman said that Catholic Schools have the opportunity to re-make their own destiny and re-define themselves apart from public schools.

"We're not interested in becoming public schools with religion class," he said. "We need to differentiate by promoting our strengths. People talk about the common core. We have one too;

it's Christ, and the faith-based learning community we create."

He said Catholic Schools "form, inform and transform. We change who students are so they in turn can change the world. Catholic Schools have felt the need to chase public schools for too long," he said, "but we now have the opportunity to be different, not just because we can, but because of who we are."

Noting that Catholic schools already have excellent academics, Dr. Cheeseman said the future is not about teaching students to take tests or grading teachers. "The real challenge for the future is not to improve academic scores, but to improve learning. Many of our students will be working in jobs not yet created," he said.

"We're not curriculum centered, we're child centered," he said, as he walked those in attendance through the Strategic Plan, which calls for personalized instruction and blended learning that emphasizes creative problem solving, respect and collaboration.

Dr. Cheeseman said he will continue to meet with a group of

innovative teachers throughout the system to look for creative new approaches to engaging students in learning.

Before rolling out the plan, Dr. Cheeseman gave an overview of some of the demographic challenges that will see private and public schools competing for fewer young students. In the past seven years, there has been a 22 percent decline in the age 0-4 population in the state.

Likewise, the state is becoming more secular, with a growing number of people who identify as "none," who profess no religious affiliation. Beyond that, he said family incomes continue to lag, making it harder for parents to afford tuition costs.

However, he remains positive about the future of Catholic education and the support it is receiving through the new Foundations in Education, which provides scholarship funds for students and innovation grants for teachers.

"The good news is that we do make a difference," he said. Catholic school students have much higher church attendance

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

# Mass of Hope & Healing

## Healing must stand on truth

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

Perhaps it took a rainstorm and a powerful liturgy to wash away some of the deepest anguish over sexual abuse in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

It also took the authentic and soul-baring testimony of victims of sexual abuse and a direct and deeply truthful homily by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. It all came together in a memorable way at the recent Mass of Hope, Healing and Reconciliation held at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fairfield.

"No healing can occur unless we stand in the truth," said the bishop, who condemned sexual abuse and its lifelong impact on victims.

"There are many with their hearts shattered because of the evil of predator clerics," he said.

"The survivors have endured great suffering in the deepest part of their hearts." The bishop said the evil of child sexual abuse robbed the innocence of victims and represented a betrayal of good priests, who also seek healing from the damage done by the crisis.

In a quiet and moving gesture, the bishop left the altar during the Sign of Peace and embraced the survivors group seated in the front row.

He praised them for their strength and courage, and for the depth of their faith that has led to work with the Church in the process of reconciliation.

What began as a "tentative and shaky" outreach to survivors has grown into a friendship and relationship of trust that is taking significant steps toward healing, the bishop said. "What unites us

is the common search to be able to go on in hope, to be healed from our suffering and drawn closer in reconciliation," he said.

"Healing is as much a walk in faith as being carried in faith by the love of Christ," said the bishop. "To be honest, I don't know the next step. I didn't know we'd be here at St. Anthony's a year ago. Can we ask that we take the next step together, to follow wherever the Lord will lead us?"

Survivors' group member Peter Philipp extended a gracious and hopeful welcome before Mass.

"Today we join our journeys together. Mine started 60 years ago when I was first abused. I never thought we'd be gathered here on a rainy afternoon to celebrate our lives," said Philipp, who added that continued prayer and reconciliation can lead to



"NO HEALING CAN OCCUR unless we stand in the truth," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano during a Mass of Hope, Healing and Reconciliation for those who were sexually abused by priests. The bishop praised members of the survivors group (above) for their strength and courage.

"freedom from what happened in the past."

Group members Jim DiVasto and Barbara Oleynick delivered the first and second readings. During the prayers of the faithful, the congregation prayed "For those who have suffered abuse, that they may experience God's profound love for them and God's healing powers, we pray to the Lord... For those affected

by abuse in any way, that they may have the courage to tell their story to reach for healing."

After Mass, the bishop asked all to be seated and Peggy Fry came forward to deliver a personal and unvarnished testimony of her struggles with the impact of abuse and her search for someone in the Church to listen and acknowledge her suffering.

➤ *CONTINUED ON PAGE 24*

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# SS. Cyril & Methodius Parish

## Religious Institute continues tradition

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has invited the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, a Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right, to establish an oratory and take over the pastoral care of SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Bridgeport.

On Sunday, October 8, Bishop Caggiano installed Canon Andrew Todd as pastor of SS. Cyril and Methodius and rector of the new Oratory, and paid tribute to Msgr. Joseph Pekar, who has served as pastor since 1971.

Canon Andrew Todd is a native of New Orleans. Born on November 14, 1987, he was ordained to the priesthood on August 5, 2014. He has served as a vicar at St. Francis de Sales Oratory in St. Louis, and at the Shrine of Christ the King in Chicago.

“These appointments have prepared Canon Todd well to become pastor of the historic parish in Bridgeport’s inner city,” said Bishop Caggiano. “The parishioners have been very enthusiastic and welcoming, and they are eager to build on the good work of Msgr. Pekar

and the unique traditions of the parish.”

Proud of its Slovak heritage, SS. Cyril and Methodius was established in 1907 to serve recent immigrants to Bridgeport’s East Side. The current stone edifice was built in 1912, and includes stained glass windows from Germany and a trio of paintings that replicate originals from the chapel of Saints Cyril and Methodius in St. Clement Basilica in Rome.

In 1998, following a request from his parishioners, Msgr. Pekar (see accompanying article) asked for and received permission from Bishop Edward M. Egan to bring the traditional Latin Mass back to the parish. The result was an energetic mix of parishioners introducing Slovak traditions to a new generation and young families from the surrounding towns who loved the stately beauty of the Latin Mass.

“The people of the parish are strong in their faith and generous in their support,” Msgr. Pekar said when the parish approached its 100th anniversary. He has served as their pastor for 46 years.

The pastoral care and adminis-



CARRYING ON THE TRADITION, Bishop Caggiano celebrates Mass on the beautiful historic altar of SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Bridgeport. The bishop has invited the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest to take over the pastoral care of the parish and continue the Latin Mass and time-honored devotions sustained in the parish by its former pastor, Msgr. Joseph Pekar.

tration of the parish is now being entrusted to the clergy of the Institute of Christ the King, who will continue the celebration of the traditional Roman Liturgy of 1962, carrying on the initiative of Msgr. Pekar and the long-standing custom of the parish.

According to Canon Law, an oratory is a place that is set aside for divine worship by a community or group of the faithful. By inviting the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest,

Bishop Caggiano recognized the unique role of the SS. Cyril and Methodius and its parishioners.

The institute seeks to carry on the Catholic life and tradition of the parish by offering the traditional Roman liturgy, devotions, daily confessions, days of recollection in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, classes in spirituality and doctrine and youth formation activities, among others.

The institute was founded in 1990, and its international seminary is located in Gricigliano, in the Archdiocese of Florence, Italy. Recognizing the importance of harmony between faith, liturgy and the power of beauty in attracting the human senses to the things above, an integral part of

the institute’s charism is the use of the traditional Latin liturgy. Their motto, taken from St. Paul, is “Live the truth in charity.”

After merely twenty-five years of existence, the institute counts 80 apostolates in twelve countries, 80 priests and more than 90 seminarians. In 2004, a community of religious sisters was established to aid the priests in their mission.

The institute’s vicar general, Msgr. Michael Schmitz, was present for the installation. He said he was deeply grateful to Bishop Caggiano for welcoming the Institute of Christ the King to the Diocese of Bridgeport.

A reception was held following the Mass.

Since priests of the Institute of Christ the King normally live in community, Canon Todd will be accompanied by seminarian Bryan Silvey during his first year as pastor.

The Institute of Christ the King operates under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception, to whom it is consecrated.

(*Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish is located at 79 Church Street in East Bridgeport. For more information, a new website for the parish will be coming soon at [www.institute-christ-king.org/bridgeport/](http://www.institute-christ-king.org/bridgeport/). For more information on the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, visit [www.institute-christ-king.org](http://www.institute-christ-king.org).)*

## Msgr. Pekar retires

By PAT HENNESSY

Msgr. Joseph Pekar resigned as pastor of SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Bridgeport on October 7. He had led the parish since Bishop Edward M. Egan named him pastor in June of 1971.

“I came for supper and stayed for 46 years,” he says with a laugh.

A Bridgeport native, Msgr. Pekar grew up in a thriving Slovak neighborhood whose faith was encouraged by two parishes, the former St. John Nepomucene, established in 1891, and SS. Cyril and Methodius, which was founded in 1907. “The whole East Side of Bridgeport was Slovak in those days,” he recalls.

“When Bishop Egan asked me if I could take over the parish, I told him that I knew the lan-



YOUNG FAMILIES have “discovered” SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish after Msgr. Pekar (center) established a Latin Mass and time-honored devotions at the parish. On his retirement, the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest agreed to carry on the traditions he had set up.

guage and I knew the people.”

Msgr. Pekar graduated from St. John Nepomucene School and Fairfield Prep, and entered St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield in 1949. He completed his

studies at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore, Md., and was ordained in St. Mary Church in Bridgeport by Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan on May

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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# Bishop's Lecture Series

## 'God is always calling us to deeper encounter'

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

"Suffering that is not transformed is transmitted," Sister Miriam James Heidland, SOLT, said several times in her reflection on "Decisive Encounter."

In a powerful and deeply personal talk to inaugurate the new Bishop's Lecture Series sponsored by the diocesan Leadership Institute, Sister Miriam said that all people are "broken," but in their suffering and sense of shame they can find that God loves them and is always near.

"He meets us on our own road to Emmaus," she said to a gathering of more than 60 young adults, including other women religious, on October 11 in St. Catherine of Siena Family Center.

"God is always calling us to a deeper encounter," said Sister Miriam, who now lives in



SISTER MIRIAM JAMES HEIDLAND, SOLT, delivered a moving and profound reflection on "decisive encounter" and human forgiveness in her recent talk to launch the new Bishop's Lecture Series. The former college athlete said that Christ "meets us on our own road to Emmaus." (PHOTO BY AMY MORTENSEN)

Corpus Christi, Texas, but grew up in Washington State and was a scholarship athlete at the University of Nevada-Reno.

In discussing the Road to Emmaus, Sister Miriam said that the disciples were "walking in the wrong direction" and didn't rec-

ognize Jesus when they encountered him on the road. Like most people, they failed to see God in their own lives, but he accompanied them until they understood.

As she began her talk, she promised it would not be a lecture but an invitation to walk with her and together "encounter one who loves you, and that's where the beauty of transformation takes place."

In her hour-length reflection, which ended with a deeply felt prayer, she shared elements of her life as an unhappy daughter in a troubled relationship with her mother, a college volleyball player, and a young woman who wanted so much more out of life than success or business as usual.

While sharing her personal feelings, she gave a glimpse into her own spiritual autobiography that brought her from suffering

to faith.

She said that many people become physically, emotionally and spiritually ill because of their inability to forgive. Forgiveness doesn't mean dismissing the profound hurt that another person may have caused or "letting them off the hook," she emphasized.

"To release our grasp upon a person is to choose to ask God to bless them and take care of them. It requires the Grace of God, 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do.' I didn't know that for a long time," she said.

Sister Miriam attributes her vocation to a priest who became a "spiritual father to her" when she was lost and in need of healing.

She said she entered the convent in 1988 after experiencing a sense of God's love that

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



# Save the Date!

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### CHRISTMAS CONCERT

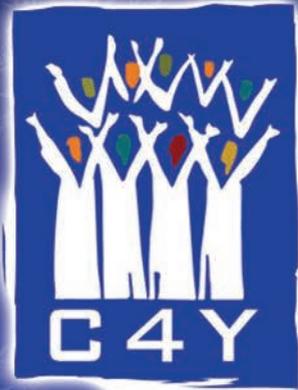
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# Mens Conference

## Bishop Caggiano issues 'call to arms' to men

BRISTOL, CT—"I have come to give you a call to arms different from any other call in the world," Bishop Frank J. Caggiano told 550 men at the Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference on October 28. "You must surrender to Jesus Christ and fearlessly give witness to him in a very confused and mixed up world."

The bishop delivered the keynote address at the 10th annual conference, whose theme was a celebration of the Apostolate of the Laity taken from Acts 1:8: "You will be my witnesses."

"You and I must choose and be committed men of virtue," he said, because it is the only hope for the next generation. "Young people are tired of words because the world is full of empty promises. Instead, they want to follow men and women who are people of integrity and who are true witnesses to Christ."

The day-long program, which was held at St. Paul Catholic High School in Bristol, also included presentations by Tim Staples, director of apologetics and evangelization at Catholic Answers, Father Glenn Sudano, CFR, one of the original eight founders of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and James Wahlberg, executive director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation, which he founded with his brother, actor Mark Wahlberg. Musician and evangelist Marty Rotella served as master of ceremonies.

Our country has become more divided and hostile to faith, Bishop Caggiano said. And modern life is characterized by consumerism, materialism, addiction, abortion, euthanasia and a callous disregard for the poor, the sick and the suffering.

"Men of Christ must stand up as virtuous witnesses and say, 'Enough is enough,'" he said, adding that we can no longer wait for our leaders to act.

These efforts in spiritual growth should be based on the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

Bishop Caggiano outlined a suggested course of action for the men:

1. Make a nightly examination of conscience that considers not only faults, but also what had gone well that day ... and thank God.

2. When you find yourself confessing the same sin over and over, connect it to the appropriate virtue that is missing in your life. If you struggle with pornography, pray to Christ for the grace to be set free and work on the virtue of temperance.

3. If you need a virtue, ask for it in prayer because "God will not say no."

4. Examine your fears; one of the greatest being the fear to stand before the cross and accept our sins—and realize that despite them we are still lovable to Jesus.

Bishop Caggiano told the men to pray for courage to face their fears and also to ask for the gift of obedience, which he called, "a dirty word in our modern world." Nevertheless, our purpose is to "obey and be submissive to what the Lord Jesus asks" because this obedience leads to true freedom.

"Did you ever consider how much faith Jesus has in you?" Bishop Caggiano asked. "He has called you and let his Spirit literally transform you to do his work in the world. Jesus never said it would be easy, but in your greatest struggle, he is standing by you."

Father James Sullivan, pastor of the Church of the Assumption in Ansonia and chaplain for the conference, said he had never seen so many men go to confession.

During the day, 20 priests were hearing confession in the chapel, the school, the offices and on the grounds. He heard at least 25 confessions, and another priest heard 35.

"The conference provided an opportunity for spiritual healing," he said. "The talks led men to a conversion of heart and then to the sacramental grace and healing that comes from confession."

Apologetist Tim Staples said that Catholic men must be armed, ready and equipped to take the faith to the culture at a serious time in our nation's history when religion is under attack. "We are living in a culture where

people have lost what it means to be a human being—but we have the answer in the Catholic faith."

"So many are afraid to say anything for fear they will be criticized," he said, adding that "When you don't know your faith, it leads to a spirit of timidity. Apologetics is very important in our age of growing indifference."

A Baptist convert to Catholicism and father of seven children, Staples said that 31 years ago when he was serving in the U.S. Marines he met a young Catholic who was prepared to defend his faith and who had a thorough understanding of the Bible. "I was out-Bibled by a Catholic, and it was unnerving to me," he recalled.

Jim Wahlberg, executive director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation, talked about his life of alcoholism, drugs, prison, loneliness and the events in his life, which through the grace of God, led to his recovery from addiction and to a true understanding of the Catholic faith.

The middle child in a family of nine kids, he grew up in Dorchester, Mass., and started drinking at age 11. He left home, was arrested many times and spent his early life in group homes and foster homes until age



"YOU MUST SURRENDER TO JESUS CHRIST and fearlessly give witness to him in a very confused and mixed up world," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, delivering the keynote address at the 10th Annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference, whose theme was a celebration of the Apostolate of the Laity taken from Acts 1:8: "You will be my witnesses."

17 when he went to prison for a violent crime. He turned a 2-year sentence into a 5-year sentence and eventually was on the streets again.

During his second prison term, at MCI Concord Prison, he was befriended by a priest and began to work in the chapel. A decisive moment in his life occurred when Mother Teresa visited the maximum security prison. During Mass, surrounded by dignitaries, she eschewed a place of honor on the stage beside the cardinal and chose instead to kneel on the floor with the prisoners.

"I felt an explosion inside of me," Wahlberg recalled. "I realized I was looking at Jesus."

He was 25 years old when he was released from prison and

entered a 12-Step program. Then, after his wife went on a retreat, she returned home and said he should attend one. However, he resisted until his 13-year-old daughter pleaded, "Daddy, I want you to go. I want you to be happy."

"That retreat led me right to the foot of the cross, and I realized how broken I was," he said.

He continued to grow spiritually, but his life wasn't without adversity. His world was rocked again when he learned that his young son was addicted to drugs. However, after entering a recovery program, his son has been clean and sober for five years, which Wahlberg described as one of the greatest blessings in his life of faith. ■

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# Saint Gregory the Great

## Father Dunn comes home to his parish and school

By HEIDI DOMINAKUS

On October 2, St. Gregory the Great School held a homecoming reception surprising and welcoming Father Michael Dunn back home to St. Gregory the Great. The children sang songs, the cheerleaders performed a set of cheers, and then each grade presented Father Dunn with a gift.

The children sang a revised version of "Home" the folk song by Phillip Phillips. The song's theme, about "making this place

your home" brought tears to many eyes in the gymnasium. Along with the students there were parents, grandparents, alumni and even Father Dunn's second grade teacher, Irene Anderson, in attendance.

Father Dunn was born in New Hyde Park, Long Island, N.Y., but he grew up in Danbury. He attended St. Gregory the Great School, graduating in 1978. He went on to Immaculate High School, Class of 1982.

He graduated from Sacred

Heart University in Fairfield with a major in criminal justice and pursued graduate courses in community counseling at Fairfield University. He was a counselor for troubled teenagers at VITAM adolescent counseling center in Norwalk, and was summer sports director for the Wilton YMCA before making the decision to pursue a vocation to the priesthood.

He entered St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford and graduated from Immaculate Conception Seminary in South



**H O M E C O M I N G C E L E B R A T I O N**—Father Michael Dunn brought his dog, Chance, to St. Gregory the Great School for a "welcome home" festivity that included cheerleaders, songs and the presence of his second grade teacher. Their new pastor had graduated from St. Gregory's in 1978.



Orange, N.J. He was ordained by Bishop Edward M. Egan in 1994. Father Dunn celebrated his first Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton, his parents' home parish. His assignments included St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, St. Mary Parish in Bethel and St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, and he was named spiritual director of Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield in 1997.

He was appointed pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston by Bishop William E. Lori on July 1, 2010.

Father Dunn celebrated his first Mass as pastor of St. Gregory's on Saturday, September 30, at the 4:30 pm vigil Mass. During his homily, he introduced himself to parishioners and spoke of his goals for the parish and school. The main point of his homily was a simple one: "I feel incredibly blessed and grateful to be home." ■



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Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
St. John's Church on the Green  
Waterbury, 4:00 PM

# George Weigel at St. Catherine

## John Paul II biographer offers glimpse of Pope

When George Weigel went to dinner at Pope John Paul II's residence at the Vatican in 1995, it was an event that would change his life and lead to his writing two volumes, 1,600 pages, about one of the towering Christian figures of the 20th century, a man who changed the Church and the world.

At the request of Father

In March 1996, the Pope had said of his other biographers, "They try to understand me from the outside, but I can only be understood from the inside."

They saw the public man who was the topic of countless news stories, analyses, opinion pieces and talks, but they did not grasp "the internal spiritual springs"

for his role as the Pope's biographer, right from the third grade when Sister Mary Euphemia announced his class would be praying for the conversion of a communist dictator—Wladyslaw Gomulka. Thirty years later, when he was writing about Poland and Karol Wojtyła, the 40-year-old auxiliary bishop of Krakow, Gomulka played an insidious role in the story.

In college, Weigel had no intention of studying philosophy, yet doing so proved enormously helpful to him in understanding the thinking and mind of John Paul II. However, more important than philosophical ideas for the Pope was prayer. It was central to his life.

"Everything he accomplished in the world was the fruit of prayer," Weigel said, and the most important part of his day was the hour from 6:30 to 7:30 am, which he spent in the chapel at the papal apartment.

The inspiration for World Youth Day, which many in the Vatican thought would not succeed, came during prayer, and it ultimately became a signature moment in modern Catholic history. And prayer was central to the role he played in the collapse of communism.

One of the great lessons Weigel learned from his friendship with the Pope was that "He refused to accept the tyranny of the possible—the notion that some things simply are the way they are and are impossible to change."

With prayer and the Holy Spirit, all things are possible, even the seemingly impossible, such as the collapse of world Communism and a gathering of two million young people around the Pope for a day of celebration.

Even though we live in what Weigel calls "a seriously disordered era," the life of St. John Paul II "provides us hope and teaches us that we should never accept that a situation, which ought to be different, can't somehow be nudged toward change."

"All of us are called to live counterculturally, which has not been the history for Catholics in the United States," he said. "However, I don't think we are called to withdraw and I don't think John Paul II thought so."

Father Marcello said St. John

Pope was blessing monstrances that would hold the Blessed Sacrament and be used for Eucharistic adoration for priestly vocations in the diocese.

"I had just been appointed assistant vocations director, and I was a few feet away from him, holding the monstrance," he recalled. "I never met anyone with such piercing blue eyes. It was like staring into eternity." ■



NOTED CATHOLIC WRITER and St. John Paul II biographer George Weigel visited St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull recently to sign copies of his new book: *Lessons in Hope: My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II*. "Everything he accomplished in the world was the fruit of prayer," Weigel said in his talk.

Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, Weigel visited St. Catherine's to talk about his recent work, *Lessons in Hope: My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II*, a third volume in what he calls a triptych about the life of John Paul II.

He shared stories and anecdotes about the saint culled from his decades-long friendship with him and discussed the "providential coincidences" that overshadowed them—God's hand at work in their lives.

Weigel, who is the Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies, said, "I never imagined writing this book."

But then while he was traveling the world, discussing his second volume, *The End and the Beginning*, Weigel discovered that five years after the death of John Paul II, people did not want more analysis. "What they wanted," he recalled, "were stories and anecdotes that would somehow bring him back to life.... The risk of canonizing someone is that we lose the human texture, and I hope the stories in my book bring him a little closer."

of a man Weigel described as "a multilayered, multitextured personality, for whom everything began with a personal friendship with Jesus Christ."

He was also a man who had an acute sense of Divine Providence in his life and who once observed, "In the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences."

One of the most emblematic examples of this belief was the assassination attempt on him on May 13, 1981, the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima, when a professional assassin fired at point blank range and the bullet missed John Paul II's abdominal aorta by a millimeter.

As Weigel said, one hand fired the shot and another guided the bullet, referring to the Blessed Mother.

Even the assassin, Ali Agca, was convinced "this goddess of Fatima" had saved the Pope's life, and that she was coming through the walls of the prison "to do unpleasant things to him."

"The Pope's reflection on the providential quality of his own life had a profound effect on me and my life," Weigel said. Looking back, he could observe the same sense of providence from childhood, preparing him

### SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for November 19, 2017

Matthew 25:14-30

Following is a word search based on the Gospel for 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A: a test for a master's servants. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

JOURNEY	ENTRUSTED	TALENTS
ABILITY	WENT AWAY	TRADED
DUG A HOLE	GROUND	MASTER
SETTLED	ACCOUNTS	FIVE MORE
WELL DONE	GOOD	FORWARD
WICKED	LAZY	INTEREST
THROW	DARKNESS	TEETH

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## EDITORIAL

## Saints &amp; Souls

November ushers in the start of the long holiday season beginning with Thanksgiving.

But the early part of this month is perhaps the most important for people of faith, and sets the foundation for all that follows.

On November 1, we celebrated the heroes of our faith on All Saints Day. It's a day to feel blessed and inspired by their two thousand years of heroic and transforming witness to the Catholic faith. The second gift of early November is the gentler, reflective All Souls Day, an opportunity to reflect on parents, friends and the people who have gone before us and shaped our lives.

Hundreds throughout the diocese accepted the bishop's invitation to outdoor Masses held in diocesan cemeteries in Norwalk and Trumbull. "We come here both to shed a tear and to sing Alleluia, because though death creates pain and suffering, it won't have the final say. Christ will come again to claim his people," the bishop said in his homily at St. John Cemetery in Norwalk.

How beautiful it was to remember and pray for loved ones during an outdoor Mass on a beautiful autumn day! Bishop Caggiano said he would like to see Mass offered in every Catholic cemetery throughout the diocese next year on All Souls Day.

We are a Church blessed by great saints and caring souls! That's something to celebrate!

## Social Media &amp; the Gospel

As more of us turn to social media for information or to voice our opinion, it may be worthwhile to consider the thoughts of Deacon Greg Kandra of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Deacon Kandra, a former producer of 60 Minutes and a man with a long, distinguished career in media of all forms, recently spoke at the Priest Convocation about the challenges associated with the communication of the Gospel in the 21st century. He focused specifically on the need for the Church and its leaders to use social media effectively as a way to evangelize the growing numbers of people who live, work and socialize in and through the digital continent. In his Facebook entry on the day of the talk, Bishop Caggiano offers this instructive summary of the deacon's comments:

1. "Be not afraid:" Deacon Greg encouraged us to avoid whatever fears or anxieties we may have about using the various forms of social media that now mark ordinary life. With the proper humility and desire to learn from our mistakes, we should leave behind no form of social media in pursuit of avenues by which we can share "the story of Christian faith."

2. "Put your sword away:" The deacon noted that many use social media as a way to tear down, sow division or propagate a tribal mentality that is meant to attack those who do not share our views or beliefs. His simple advice is to never sink to their level. We must never respond online in anger or hostility. Our words should always reflect our attitude of faith.

3. "Let us love one another:" Finally, as members of the Church, everything we do and say online is an opportunity to spread the Good News of the Gospel. It is a message of love, mercy and forgiveness. To do anything else is to betray who we are and the mission we have been given by Christ."

## Arise and Shine!

This year's Christmas Concert by the Diocesan Youth Choir moves to the Quick Center of Fairfield University on Sunday, December 17, at 7 pm.

Plan now to join Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Mary Bozzuti Higgins, director of the Diocesan Youth Choir, for one of the most joyful and inspiring events of the year! The 100-member youth choir will perform a challenging program of Christmas songs and chants from different ages and cultures.

The evening will include some youth choir classics like Arise and Shine, Gaudete, Festival Sanctus and of course the crowd pleaser, Siyahamba, along with some new music and surprises including a Calypso Lullabye.

This year, Scripture readings will be done in Vietnamese, Ukrainian and Spanish. It's a song-filled and prayerful way to enrich your Christmas celebration.

Tickets are \$20. VIP tickets are available for \$50 and include a pre-concert reception with the bishop. Order tickets online at [www.quickcenter.fairfield.edu](http://www.quickcenter.fairfield.edu) or call the box office: 203.254.4010.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Running the NYC Marathon for Catholic Charities

By ELLEN MCGINNESS

MANHATTAN—Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC) board member Marilyn Hart ran her 11th New York City Marathon on November 5. But this time, she hit the pavement to raise funds for Catholic Charities, an organization that's dear to her.

Hart set up a crowdrise account with the goal of raising \$2600. Why did she want to raise funds for this particular agency? "CCFC the largest private social services provider in the county, with programs that include soup kitchens, food pantries, early childhood education, housing and mental health. The state has cut funding to all organizations, but the need still exists and continues to grow," she explained.

In true Catholic spirit, Hart stopped to help a woman who had fallen, losing 17 seconds off of her target time in the process. But she wasn't disappointed with her finish saying, "The running



is the easy part, taking care of so many people is the challenge."

(If you'd like to help Hart reach her goal, you can donate at: [www.crowdrise.com](http://www.crowdrise.com).)

[www.ccfairfield.org](http://www.ccfairfield.org) com/o/en/team/marilyns-15th-marathon. To learn more about Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, log on to [www.ccfairfield.org](http://www.ccfairfield.org).)

## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS



The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport, has made the following clergy appointments in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

## INTERIM DEAN

FATHER FRANCISCO GOMEZ-FRANCO, to interim Dean of the "Queen of Peace" Deanery (A). Father Gomez-Franco will continue to serve as Pastor of Saint Charles Borromeo Parish and as Episcopal Master of Ceremonies. Effective date was October 30.

## PASTOR

CANON ANDREW TODD, new to the Diocese from the Institute

of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, to Pastor of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Bridgeport. Effective date was October 7.

## PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

MONSIGNOR THOMAS W. POWERS, to temporary Parochial Administrator of Saint Ann Parish in Bridgeport, until a permanent provision is made for the parish. Monsignor Powers will continue to serve as Vicar General and

Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Effective date was October 30.

## PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

FATHER GERALD BLASZCZAK, S.J., has been appointed to serve on the Presbyteral Council to represent the religious clergy in the Diocese. Effective date was November 1.

Father Joseph A. Marcello  
Vicar for Clergy, November, 2017

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# Editorial



## Exploring the Identity of a Catholic University

### GUEST COLUMNIST

BY MICHELLE LORIS, PH.D., PSY.D.

*Michelle is associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences & chair of the Department of Catholic Studies at SHU.*

**O**ur nation and the world grapple daily with prejudice, senseless brutality and violence. As we struggle with divisive issues such as intolerance related to religion, race, ethnicity and gender identity, it's easy to lose perspective, get caught up in political rhetoric or misguided advocacy, and question one's own beliefs and values. The constant bombardment from media and communication technology can be deafening, and the polarization numbing.

For a student in college, charting one's own course in these chaotic seas is increasingly challenging, frustrating and confusing. Tumultuous issues require discussion and debate, sound rea-

soning, philosophical and historical underpinnings and an open mind. And if you don't have strong religious or family roots, or a trusted hand to guide you, it can be a perilous journey.

As university leaders, we see that the trend among our students is toward more secularization and materialism. Many students identify as "agnostic," or "spiritual but not religious," or as "unchurched" or "non-affiliated." In many ways, they are indifferent to any institutional religion and unconvinced of any enduring or universal morality. So, in Catholic higher education today, there is much discussion about how to maintain a robust, relevant, and distinctive Catholic identity in our colleges and uni-

versities.

Research shows that many students today are focused on "getting a degree," not so much on becoming a knowledgeable and educated person. Studies in the humanities, for example, are often seen as irrelevant to students' career goals. In the cyber world they inhabit, students are primed for quick responses and facts, most often captured in 140 characters or less. Rationale and perspective are not always congruous with this generation's motives and disciplines.

Some university faculty, too, are focused only on a specialized area of study in their disciplines, and are less concerned about how this area of study may contribute to Catholic thought. Reality and truth are seen as purely subjective, relative and dependent upon perspective. Not unlike students, many faculty favor secularization; they are not committed to the development of or engagement with Catholic intellectual life.

In such a context, we need to consider the idea of a Catholic University and how we sustain its Catholic identity. We also need to determine how we can bring Catholic intellectual life

across disciplines and place it at the heart of the Catholic university. And we need to ensure that our students are exposed to this thinking, see its relevance in addressing today's challenges, and prepare them to go out into the world as leaders.

At Sacred Heart University, we have developed a curriculum that focuses on Catholic thought and enduring questions of humanity. And we are seeking out and cultivating faculty who recognize the value and vigor of Catholic intellectual life.

We are a lay staffed, and lay led comprehensive Catholic university, rooted in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. We understand that one way to distinguish a Catholic university is to place Catholic thought and Catholic thinkers, writers and artists at the center of an engaging interdisciplinary conversation. We believe that fundamental and enduring humanistic questions have no quick answers; they require thoughtful reflection, and foster open inquiry and a free exchange of views and ideas.

As such, we have created a required common core, housed in the Department of Catholic

Studies. It is called the Human Journey Seminars: Great Books in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

We understand this tradition as an ongoing 2,000-year interdisciplinary conversation about God, humanity, society, and nature. Our goal is to develop a community of learners and scholars, who, with Catholic thought at the center, engage in this ongoing conversation.

Fundamental questions frame the reading, inquiry, and discussion: what does it mean to be human; what is our relationship with God; what does it mean to live a life of meaning and purpose; what does it mean to understand and appreciate the natural world; and what does it mean to form a more just society for the common good?

In these seminars, students grapple with enduring questions, great books and authors, and pressing contemporary issues and problems. The dynamics of these seminars, whose central activities are reading, reflection, inquiry and dialog, foster self-awareness, moral understanding, and community both within the classroom

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



## We Have a Yeller!

### A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

*Matthew Hennessey and his family are parishioners of St. Aloysius in New Canaan.*

**O**ur Billy is a growing boy. He had his first birthday over the summer and has recently taken up toddling. He's also an early riser, and wants his breakfast on the tray about two seconds after his butt hits the high chair.

Did I mention he's a yeller? "GWOAAHK!" he yelps if the first banana of the morning takes a bananosecond longer than necessary to peel and slice. My guess is his perch at the bottom of the birth order has taught him

that it's better to be annoying than to be ignored.

Smart kid. He'll go far.

Despite his obvious social precociousness, our Billy still has very few words. "Banana" is one, but he's also pretty good at "hi" and "down." He can approximate his siblings' names. All very charming during the normal course of the day. Breakfast is another story.

Our Billy's screeching drives the other children batty, especially our Magdalena, who is 11

and bedeviled by sensory issues. Even on her best day a loud noise can set her off. She's not keen on sudden outbreaks of laughter. She detests the Happy Birthday song.

Like most Hennesseys, mornings are not Mags's strong suit. She and Billy make a fine pair. When he screeches, she grunts. His call is like a bird of prey; her response is like an angry pig. It's a barnyard battle over bacon and eggs.

And it's not just breakfast. As I believe I've mentioned, he's a yeller. Yellers gonna yell.

"GWOAAHK!" he yells in the car while we're driving to visit Grandpa. "GRRR!" comes the inevitable reply.

"GWOAAHK!" he yells from the pew on All Saints Day. "GRRRR!" again like clockwork. "GWOAAHK!" in the grocery store.

"GRRRR!" at the playground. E-I-E-I-Oh please make it stop.

I tell you all this for a particular reason. When you are the

parent of small children, the parents of older or grown children will occasionally approach and remind you to "cherish this age."

"It'll be gone in a flash," they sometimes say. "Trust me they'll never be this cute again. You're going to wish you could pick them up and squeeze them again when they're 27 and asking for \$4,000 to buy a moped."

These people are well-meaning. I'm sure they are telling the truth, just as I'm sure one day I'll probably do the same thing. But that day hasn't come yet. Right now the only polite thing I can think to tell them is, "Thank you for the reminder to be an attentive and in-the-moment parent, but there's no way in a hundred months of Sundays I could possibly miss the open warfare at our breakfast table."

I'll tell you some other things I won't look back fondly on: The time Sally fell and knocked her tooth out. Or the time she needed

a spinal tap to rule out meningitis. She was three weeks old. It was 10:45 on a Friday night, during a snowstorm. Dr. Pierce probably doesn't look back fondly on that either.

I won't have warm memories of the time Clara fell off the slide at the playground and fractured her collar bone, or the time she broke her arm in the gym at school. We thought she was okay so we didn't take her to the doctor until the next morning. I'd rather forget that, thanks.

I won't miss the time Paddy barfed off the top bunk on the Fourth of July, or the time Mags had her tonsils out and I had to stay with her overnight on a hospital cot. In fact I won't miss that so much that I already don't miss it.

I'll always cherish the hugs, the snugs, and the major milestones. But if the GWOAAHKs and GRRRs are gone in a flash, well, I won't complain. Not for a bananosecond. ■

# Notre Dame Health & Rehabilitation

## Responding to changing care needs

By PAT HENNESSY

"Everything old is new again," said Sister Marie Lucie Monast, STTV, pastoral care coordinator at Notre Dame Health and Rehabilitation Center (NDHR) in Norwalk.

Notre Dame celebrated the grand opening of its refurbished rehabilitation center on July 19. The name change (it was formerly Notre Dame Convalescent Home) recognized a change in focus of the facility, along with the opening of the newly refurbished rehabilitation gym, updated handicapped access and security and a cheerful living room for patients and families.

"We want to announce to the world that we are changing in response to the needs of people in our area," said Dana Paul, Notre Dame's administrator. "It's not a new idea, it's a new emphasis."

He noted that while NDHR still offers long-term care, the facility aims to have 25 percent of its services dedicated to rehabilitation. "We're adding a new element," he explained. "Our therapy program is supported by a staff neurologist and physiatrist, specializing in physical medicine

and rehabilitation, and is coordinated by a full-time rehabilitation director."

Times have changed since Notre Dame Convalescent Home was opened by the Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova in 1952. At that time, elderly people often chose the security of a residential setting when they didn't want to stay alone in their homes. Now, in-home care often provides a viable option.

"We always offered some short term therapy, but the new possibilities out there have changed the care needs," said Sister Lucie. "When we began looking around a few years ago, we realized that there weren't any programs that focused on stroke."

NDHR has geared up to meet this need. Physical therapy is available seven days a week. A speech therapist is on staff, and occupational therapists work with clients to develop the skills needed to return home. "There's a new feeling of energy here," said Sister Lucie.

The rehabbed facility is owned and operated under the Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova, and their founder's spirit illuminates the facility. St. Thomas was

called the "Father of the Poor." As Archbishop of Valencia, Spain, he insisted that the material resources of the Church should be shared with those in the greatest need.

"Our residents may not be poor in money, but they are poor in their body, and sometimes poor in their minds," said Sister Lucie. "Our staff treats residents as if we were treating Jesus in his physical body."

Residents recognize this atmosphere. "I can't say enough good things about the staff," said Hedwig Anderson, who first came to Notre Dame for therapy. "Everyone I came in contact with was a happy person. The whole purpose of rehab is to get you home again to independent living. With their positive attitude, the staff built up my confidence so that I could do that."

Anderson appreciated the atmosphere, which she credited to the availability of daily Mass in the chapel. "When you go to Mass every day, you continue that spirit all day long," she said.

When she could no longer remain home alone, NDHR was Anderson's immediate choice for long-term care. She is now presi-

dent of Notre Dame's Resident's Council.

On September 30, Hedwig Anderson celebrated her 104th birthday.

NDHR has been awarded a five-star rating by the centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services. It has been named one of the best nursing homes in Connecticut by US News & World Report. In addition to these ratings, Notre Dame's mission statement says it best: "It is our sacred privilege to serve the aged, the sick and the infirm with love and compassion.... We pledge ourselves to give the best possible care to each and every one."

(For more information, call 203.847.5892 or email [ndhrehab.org](mailto:ndhrehab.org).)



LEARNING TO WALK WITH CONFIDENCE — Hedwig Anderson first came to Notre Dame Rehabilitation Center for therapy. "Everyone I came in contact with was a happy person," she said.

### MSGR. PEKAR FROM PAGE 5

25, 1957. His first assignment was as parochial vicar of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Stratford. He also served at St. Joseph Parish in Danbury before becoming pastor of SS. Cyril and Methodius.

He has been a member of the Presbyteral Council, a priest advisor to the Juvenile Court, and regional director of the Family Life Office of the diocese. He also served as chaplain to two chapters of Columbiettes, one in Bridgeport and one in Danbury and was named spiritual director for the Legion of Mary in 2001. He was appointed a Prelate of Honor to Pope John Paul II, with the title of Monsignor, in 1996.

At the time of his appointment as pastor, the original Slovak population around SS. Cyril and Methodius was assimilating into the mainstream culture. Many families were moving into the suburbs, and it was thought that the parish would soon be closing its doors.

"Instead of closing, we went on," Msgr. Pekar says. "More than 200 people encouraged me to ask Bishop Egan if we could celebrate Mass in Latin again. With his permission, I started having Mass in English, in Slovak and in Latin. That was 19 years ago. As time went on, fewer people went to the Slovak Mass, but I got more people coming to the Latin Mass than I did for English!"

Although the parish finally ceased to celebrate Mass in Slovak, their traditions became part of the fabric of parish life, including the 40 Hours devotion and May crowning and holiday celebrations. Parishioners loved the mix of hymns in Slovak, English and Latin.

"People came from all over the area—young families with a lot of children." These families were drawn to a Latin liturgy whose beauty is echoed in the church by the original, intricate altar encircled by elaborate stained glass windows. "I've baptized, married and even buried some of my parishioners. I've continued with them through all the events of their lives," Msgr. Pekar says.

Although leaving is hard, Msgr. Pekar is glad that the Latin Mass and traditional devotions will be carried on by the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest. "My parishioners wanted it, and now they know it will still be there. They're happy we're continuing on."

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# Mission Trip

## ‘I was a stranger, and you welcomed me’

*The following account was written by John Grosso, social media leader of the Diocese of Bridgeport, after returning from his mission trip to Ethiopia.*

When I was asked to accompany our diocesan trip to Ethiopia with Catholic Relief Services and Turning Wine into Water, I thought the theme of the trip was going to be “For I was thirsty, and you gave me drink.” In fairness to me, we were going to see an inauguration of a clean water project funded in part by the founder of Turning Wine into Water, Nick Troilo!

What ended up happening was something far different, and more amazing than I could have ever imagined.

It started right after I arrived at a Cistercian monastery in a tough part of the capital of Ethiopia,

Addis Ababa. My Fairfield County bubble had just burst in a spectacular way, and I was visibly anxious. I’ve always been a worrier. I’ve always been hesitant to go anywhere near the borders of my comfort zone, so I was severely out of my element. One of the seminarians at the monastery, who I had just met, noticed right away.

“John! Why are you nervous?” he asked as he was moving me into my room that they had meticulously prepared.

I didn’t have a good answer, so I mumbled something about everything being so new and overwhelming to me.

“No need to be nervous,” he said, “This is home. This is your home. No need to be nervous. We will take care of you.” It was radical

hospitality in its purest form.

I nearly cried. Here I was, in Ethiopia, there because I thought God had sent me because of my communications qualifications. I thought I was there to help my brothers and sisters, and I was closed to the fact that they could help me. That was one of the many moments in the trip when I felt like I “woke up.”

Those moments of awakening continued to happen almost every day. One such moment occurred when we were driving into the village of Biliti, hours away from our idea of “civilization,” to hundreds of people lining the streets cheering, clapping, and smiling. I remember the honor guard of motorcycles and donkeys the village organized to greet us, and the abundant joy and love



FRIENDSHIP GROWS in unexpected places, as Social Media Leader John Grosso learned during a mission trip to Ethiopia. “They treated me like a family member,” he said of his experience.

that every single person present poured upon us. We felt the presence of God radiating from everyone we met.

I felt so unworthy. Here were people who physically had very little, and they were offering me food and an honored place to sit. They were treating me like a family member, and yet, three days before, all I could think about was how nervous and uncomfortable I was.

I could go on (and on, and on), but I am already going on too long, so I will end with this. When I was leaving the Cistercian monastery (after three days) to join up with the rest of the group, I was

talking to that seminarian again. His name is Fikadu, and we had become friends.

“Fikadu,” I said, “you guys have gone above and beyond for us. You’ve rolled out the red carpet for us. Why?”

He smiled, as if the question was a silly one, “Because we see Jesus in you.”

All week I thought it was going to be “I was thirsty and you gave me drink,” and that I was going to be the person giving the drink. I never imagined it would be “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me,” and that I would be the stranger. ■



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# Honoring Veterans

## 'This We'll Defend'

By DANIEL FITZPATRICK

Many people don't know that "This We'll Defend" is the official motto of the United States Army, adopted at the time of the Revolutionary War. According to Reference.com: "Each word is meaningful. 'This' refers to the United States, the U.S. Constitution and liberty. 'We'll' references the army's collective team efforts, and 'defend' refers to the primary function of the army as a defender of the nation, not an aggressor against others."

I never served in the military, but members of my extended family served with honor as Army and Navy officers in just about every conflict from at least World War I through Operation Iraqi Freedom. And I have lived most of my life surrounded by the wonderful men and women

of our armed services. My hometown of Plattsburgh, N.Y. is the site of the oldest military post in the U.S.—the "Plattsburgh Barracks," first established as Cantonment Plattsburgh in 1812. In 1917, it was the home of the Plattsburgh Training Camp where Army Chief of Staff General Leonard Wood established the "Plattsburgh Idea," the predecessor to today's ROTC.

In 1944, the base was turned over to the Navy and became Camp MacDonough, an indoctrination school for naval officers. The camp was named after Commodore Thomas MacDonough, naval hero and victor of the Battle of Plattsburgh in the War of 1812. In 1945, the camp was turned over to the Army Air Forces and in 1954 became the Plattsburgh Air Force Base, a Strategic Air Command

bomber base and home to the 308th and 380th Bomber Wings and 497th Refueling Wing.

As a critical component of the US nuclear triad, this meant that my hometown was a primary target for Soviet ICBMs in the event of nuclear war. Those not alive during the Cold War will find it difficult to understand what it was like to live under the constant threat of that Sword of Damocles.

During that time of global tension, another Plattsburgh native gave great service to his country and the world. General Glenn K. Otis, a four-star general who enlisted in the Army in 1946, served on occupation duty in post WWII Korea, was picked from the ranks to attend West Point, served with distinction in-country during the Vietnam War, directed major improvements as director of the XM-1 Tank Task



Force and ultimately served as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Army Europe from 1983-88. I am proud to have known General Otis. On his death in 2013, another Army general observed "Glenn Otis was a soldier's soldier who served his country and his army with distinction and dedication for more than four decades."

I mention this because in this noisy and contentious world it is all too easy to miss the fact that there are many extraordinary individuals quietly dedicated to preserving, protecting and defending the liberties we some-

times take for granted. We are profoundly fortunate that men and women of talent choose to serve in our armed forces. When I met my brother-in-law's Officer Candidate School and Army Ranger School classmates, I felt like hiring each one of them on the spot; they were all that impressive. Let's take a moment to give them the thanks they deserve.

*(Daniel FitzPatrick is a parishioner and Eucharistic Minister at St. Mary Parish in Greenwich, and a Knight of Malta active in the Diocese of Bridgeport.)*



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# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

## Recognizing *the* volunteers, *the* mentors *and the* prayerful servants *of our* diocese



(SAINT AUGUSTINE MEDAL PHOTOS BY MICHELLE BABYAK)

## St. Augustine Medal recipients ‘work wonders’

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

“You may not be able to work miracles but you are wonder workers,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano told 175 St. Augustine Medal of Service recipients gathered in St. Augustine Cathedral on October 28. The honorees, many of them married couples, were recognized for their volunteer service to parishes, schools and charities throughout Fairfield County.

“Today, the world is full of those who talk the talk,” the bishop said, “but you walk the walk. Every time you stand in front of a class, work in a soup kitchen or visit the sick and elderly, you are the hands and feet of God.”

Hundreds, including family members and friends along with priests and pastors filled the cathedral for the

afternoon ceremony and prayer service, which was followed by a reception at Kolbe Cathedral High School on the cathedral campus.

After leading Midday Prayer, including the recitation of the Psalms, Bishop Caggiano began his homily by reflecting on the imagery of hands.

“Hands are our extension into the world. Hands allow us to engage the world and to change it,” he said in praising recipients for the work of their hands and hearts.

The bishop told the gathering that they don’t need to be miracle workers to do good in the world.

He said the witness of the St. Augustine Medal winners is an example of how most of the good done on earth comes out of “the common and ordinary things in life, using your hands day in and day out to make the love of Christ real.”

The bishop praised honorees “for breaking into the loneliness of others who have been blessed by the power of God’s love in you. Keep serving, and keep walking with him in joy.”

After his homily, the bishop blessed the St. Augustine Medals, which feature an image of St. Augustine on one

side, and the seal of the Diocese of Bridgeport on the other.

“Confer upon these men and women the gifts of your Holy Spirit that they may continue to serve your Church,” the bishop said.

Al Barber, president and CEO of Catholic Charities, read the names of recipients and called them forward to receive their medals and individual greetings from the bishop.

Many recipients were accompanied by their pastors and parish priests, who took the time from their busy weekend schedules to support their parishioners.

The gathering broke into applause when Bishop Caggiano called Father John Connaughton, director of vocations, forward to join the picture with his parents John and Anne Connaughton. The Trumbull couple was nominated and accompanied by Father Brian Gannon, pastor of St. Theresa Parish.

The St. Augustine Medal of Service was instituted in 2005 by Bishop William E. Lori to recognize the “unsung heroes” who unselfishly give of their time and talents to build up parish communities and diocesan ministries. ■

# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



SAINT MARY SCHOOL, BETHEL:  
**MR. BOB & MRS. ANN STOSSER** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Gregory Viceroy, Principal*



SAINT MARY PARISH, BETHEL:  
**MS. ROSE SCHLEMMER** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Corey V. Piccinino*



BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **DEACON RICARDO MARTINEZ & MR. ERICK MARTINEZ** — *Nominated by Reverend Joseph J. Karcsinski, Parochial Administrator*



CATHOLIC ACADEMY OF BRIDGEPORT, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. JAMES L. BAILEY** — *Nominated by Sister Joan Magnetti, RSCJ, Executive Director*



KOLBE CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. MICHAEL & MRS. SHARON FEDERICI** — *Nominated by Mr. Henry Rondon, Principal*



OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. THOMAS KOLENBERG** — *Nominated by Mr. Bill McLean, Chief Development Officer*



OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. MANUEL & MRS. IRENE COUTINHO** — *Nominated by Reverend Jose B. Alves, Pastor*



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CHAPEL, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. JOSEPH VARHIDI** — *Nominated by Reverend Eugene R. Szantyr, Pastor*



SAINT ANDREW PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. CHARLES RICHARDSON** — *Nominated by Reverend Eugene R. Szantyr, Pastor*



SAINT ANDREW ACADEMY, BRIDGEPORT: **MS. NICOLE RIVERA** — *Nominated by Mrs. Lori Wilson, Principal*



SAINT ANN ACADEMY, BRIDGEPORT: **MS. SANDRA SANTA** — *Nominated by Mrs. Patricia Griffin, Principal*



SAINT ANN PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. WILLIAM & MRS. NORA VERESPIE** — *Nominated by Reverend Peter J. Lynch, Pastor*



SAINT AUGUSTINE ACADEMY, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. TODD VAN NESS** — *Nominated by Dr. Debi Boccanfuso, Principal*



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. GUSTAVO & MRS. CRISTIANA MURTA** — *Nominated by Reverend Francisco Gomez-Franco, Pastor*



SAINT GEORGE PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MS. SONIA ORTIZ** — *Nominated by Reverend Elio Albano Sosa, IVE, Parochial Administrator*



SAINT MARGARET SHRINE, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. ED & MRS. ANN MASTRONE** — *Nominated by Reverend Giandomenico Flora, Rector*



SAINT MARY PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. EMILIO & MRS. GUILLERMINA ALICEA** — *Nominated by Reverend Rolando Torres, Pastor*



SAINT PETER PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. FELIX & MRS. BRUNILDA ARBELO** — *Nominated by Reverend José Rebaque, Parochial Administrator*



SAINT RAPHAEL ACADEMY, BRIDGEPORT: **MRS. ILENE IANNIELLO** — *Nominated by Sister Christine Hoffner, Principal*



THE CATHEDRAL PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: **MR. CARLOS & MRS. GRISELDA ORTIZ** — *Nominated by Reverend F. John Ringley, Pastor*

# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



**SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL, BROOKFIELD:**  
**Ms. MARY JO HOWE** —  
Nominated by Ms. Dina Monti, Principal



**SAINT MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS PARISH, BROOKFIELD:**  
**Mr. DONALD & Mrs. CLAUDETTE PERLEY** —  
Nominated by Reverend Shawn W. Cutler, Pastor



**IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PARISH, DANBURY:**  
**Mr. JOSE & Mrs. ADELIA SANTOS** — Nominated by  
Reverend Jose Brito-Martins, Parochial Administrator



**OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH, DANBURY:**  
**Mr. LUIS & Mrs. ROSA GUACHON** —  
Nominated by Reverend John Jairo Perez, Pastor



**SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH, DANBURY:**  
**Mr. PETER BUZAID** — Nominated by Reverend Jeffrey  
Couture, former Parochial Administrator



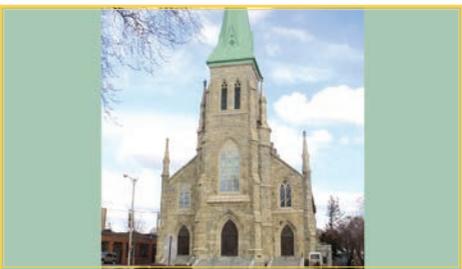
**SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT SCHOOL, DANBURY:**  
**Mr. MICHAEL & Mrs. SALLY WILSON** —  
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**SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, DANBURY:**  
**Mr. JOSEPH BROMLEY** —  
Nominated by Reverend Samuel V. Scott, Pastor



**SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL, DANBURY:**  
**Mr. EDOVARD & Mrs. MARILYN VIEUX** —  
Nominated by Mrs. Lisa Lanni, Principal



**SAINT PETER PARISH, DANBURY:**  
**Ms. HELOISA NEVES** —  
Nominated by Reverend Gregg D. Mecca, Pastor



**SAINT PETER SCHOOL, DANBURY:**  
**Ms. MAYRA CLAY** —  
Nominated by Mrs. Mary McCormack, Principal



**SAINT JOHN PARISH, DARIEN:**  
**Mr. WILLIAM FRAZIER** —  
Nominated by Reverend Francis T. Hoffmann, Pastor



**SAINT THOMAS MORE PARISH, DARIEN:**  
**Mr. JAMES DAVIS** —  
Nominated by Reverend Paul G. Murphy, Pastor



**NOTRE DAME PARISH, EASTON:**  
**Mr. WILLIAM & Mrs. CHERYL CONSTAND** —  
Nominated by Reverend Michael P. Lyons, Pastor



**HOLY CROSS PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**Mr. JOHN & Mrs. MARIE ADAMS** —  
Nominated by Reverend Alfred F. Pecaric, Pastor



**HOLY FAMILY PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**Mr. AL & Mrs. MARYLOU EDWARDS** —  
Nominated by Reverend Norman J. Guilbert, Pastor



**NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL, FAIRFIELD:**  
**Ms. KATHY ROHR** —  
Nominated by Mr. Chris Cipriano, Principal



**OUR LADY OF ASSUMPTION SCHOOL, FAIRFIELD:**  
**Ms. JODY GOURLEY** —  
Nominated by Mr. Steve Santoli, Principal



**OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**Mr. MICHAEL & Mrs. DIANE KANE** —  
Nominated by Reverend Peter A. Cipriani, Pastor



# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



**SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**MR. CHRIS AND MRS. KYLE ANN MCCARTHY** —  
*Nominated by Reverend John P. Baran, Pastor*



**SAINT CATHERINE ACADEMY, FAIRFIELD:**  
**MS. VIRGINIA AOYAMA** — *Nominated*  
*by Mr. Brian Farrell, Director of Education/Principal*



**SAINT EMERY PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**MR. NICHOLAS & MRS. LAUREEN PEKAR** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Milan Dimic, Pastor*



**SAINT PIUS X PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**MR. ROBERT GUMAN** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Samuel Kachuba, Pastor*



**SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH, FAIRFIELD:**  
**MR. GLENN & MRS. PATRICIA HANSEN** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Victor T. Martin, Pastor*



**SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS SCHOOL, FAIRFIELD:**  
**MR. JOSEPH DRAPER** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Steve Anderson, Principal*



**SACRED HEART PARISH, GEORGETOWN:**  
**MR. ROBERT & MRS. JANET GLENNAN** —  
*Nominated by Reverend David C. Leopold, Pastor*



**GREENWICH CATHOLIC SCHOOL, GREENWICH:**  
**MR. ROBERT & MRS. BONNIE TUITE** —  
*Nominated by Mrs. Patrice Kopas, Principal*



**SACRED HEART PARISH, GREENWICH:**  
**MR. JOHN INNOMINATO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Bose Raja Selvaraj, Pastor*



**SAINT AGNES PARISH, GREENWICH:**  
**MR. JAMES & MRS. MARGUERITA SALERNO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend James A. McDevitt, Pastor*



**SAINT MARY PARISH, GREENWICH:**  
**MR. LAURENCE MABES, JR.** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Cypryan P. LaPastina, Pastor*



**SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH, GREENWICH:**  
**MS. LYNN AMBROSINO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Ian M. Jeremiah, Pastor*



**SAINT PAUL PARISH, GREENWICH:**  
**MS. DOROTHY MITCHELL** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Leszek Szymaszek, Pastor*



**SAINT ROCH PARISH, GREENWICH:**  
**MS. EMPERATRIZ CONSTANTE** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Arthur C. Mollenhauer, Pastor*



**SAINT JUDE PARISH, MONROE:**  
**MR. JEFF & MRS. LIZ ROMEO** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Monsignor Dariusz J. Zielonka, Pastor*



**SAINT ALOYSIUS PARISH, NEW CANAAN:**  
**MR. MICHAEL & MRS. MARY ALDRICH** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Robert M. Kinnally, Pastor*

# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



SAINT ALOYSIUS SCHOOL, NEW CANAAN:  
**MR. MIKE & MRS. LINDSAY PIGNATARO** —  
Nominated by Mr. Bardhyl Gjoka, Principal



SAINT EDWARD THE CONFESSOR PARISH, NEW  
FAIRFIELD: **MR. ALAN & MRS. JANE LINER** —  
Nominated by Reverend Nicholas A. Cirillo, Pastor



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA PARISH, NEWTOWN:  
**MR. ROBERT & MRS. PATRICIA LLODRA** — Nominated  
by Reverend Monsignor Robert E. Weiss, Pastor



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA SCHOOL, NEWTOWN:  
**MR. SEAN & MRS. MAUREEN KERINS** —  
Nominated by Sister Colleen Smith, ASCJ, Principal



ALL SAINTS SCHOOL, NORWALK:  
**MR. SALVATORE CALISE** —  
Nominated by Mrs. Linda Dunn, Principal



SAINT JEROME PARISH, NORWALK: **DR. RICHARD  
& MRS. ANNETTE MAIBERGER** — Nominated  
by Reverend David W. Blanchfield, Pastor



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, NORWALK:  
**MR. PEDRO HERNANDEZ** — Nominated by Reverend  
Peter F. Lenox, Parochial Administrator



SAINT LADISLAUS PARISH, NORWALK:  
**MS. ALICIA HERNANDEZ** — Nominated  
by Reverend Juan Gabriel Acosta-Quevedo, Pastor



SAINT MARY PARISH, NORWALK:  
**MR. STUART & MRS. JILL CHESSMAN** —  
Nominated by Reverend Richard G. Cipolla, Pastor



SAINT MATTHEW PARISH, NORWALK:  
**MS. ELIZABETH DUNNE** — Nominated  
by Reverend Monsignor Walter C. Orlowski, Pastor



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH, NORWALK:  
**MR. THOMAS GORZKOWSKI** —  
Nominated by Reverend Mirek Stachurski, Pastor



SAINT PATRICK PARISH, REDDING RIDGE:  
**MR. THOMAS RYAN** —  
Nominated by Reverend Joseph Cervero, Pastor



SAINT ELIZABETH SETON PARISH, RIDGEFIELD:  
**MR. JAMES & MRS. CYNTHIA BRUNO** —  
Nominated by Reverend Joseph A. Prince, Pastor



SAINT MARY PARISH, RIDGEFIELD:  
**MR. VINCENT FALOTICO** — Nominated by Reverend  
Monsignor Laurence R. Bronkiewicz, Pastor



SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, RIVERSIDE:  
**MS. CATHERINE CROWTHER** — Nominated by  
Reverend Monsignor Alan F. Detscher, Pastor



HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC ACADEMY, SHELTON:  
**MR. EDWARD GAVIN** —  
Nominated by Mrs. Laura Varrone, Principal



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, SHELTON:  
**MS. MARY ANN MILLER** —  
Nominated by Reverend Michael F. Dogali, Pastor



SAINT LAWRENCE PARISH, SHELTON:  
**MR. FRANK MASSO, JR.** —  
Nominated by Reverend Michael K. Jones, Pastor

# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



**SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE PARISH, SHELTON:**  
**MR. ROBERT & MRS. BARBARA STELLNER** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Ciprian Bejan, Pastor*



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**MR. GRZEGORZ & MRS. AGNIESZKA RUS** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Pawel M. Hrebenko, Pastor*



**HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MS. KAREN PRITCHARD** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Monsignor Kevin T. Royal, Pastor*



**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. KENNETH & MRS. ANNE WIEGAND** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Piotr K. Smolik, Pastor*



**SACRED HEART PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MS. BARBARA CERULLI** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Alfonso Picone, Pastor*



**SAINT BENEDICT-OUR LADY OF MONTSERRAT, STAMFORD:**  
**MS. JACKIE HARGRAVES** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Gustavo A. Falla, Pastor*



**SAINT BRIDGET OF IRELAND PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. NATHANIEL & MRS. PATRICIA BELKNAP** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Edward McAuley, Pastor*



**SAINT CECILIA PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. CHARLIE & MRS. LENA COSTELLO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Albert G. Pinciario, Pastor*



**SAINT GABRIEL PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MS. TERESITA SENERADOR** —  
*Nominated by Reverend William M. Quinlan, Pastor*



**SAINT LEO PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MS. MARCIA MANDI** —  
*Nominated by Reverend James D. Grosso, Pastor*



**SAINT MARY PARISH, STAMFORD:** **PAT KRAUSE**  
**ACCEPTS FOR MS. SALLY CAMPO, POSTHUMOUSLY** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Gustavo A. Falla, Pastor*



**SAINT MAURICE PARISH, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. JOHN & MRS. SUSAN PRITTING** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Alfred A. Riendeau, Pastor*



**THE BASILICA OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. DAVID & MRS. JANET LANCASTER** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Monsignor Stephen M. DiGiovanni, Pastor*



**THE CATHOLIC ACADEMY OF STAMFORD, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. HAROLD SPITZFADEN** —  
*Nominated by Ms. Patricia Brady, Head of School*



**TRINITY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, STAMFORD:**  
**MR. MICHAEL & MRS. MARY ANN O'LEARY** —  
*Nominated by Mr. David Williams, Principal*



**HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH, STRATFORD:**  
**MR. GREG MOREAU** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Andrew G. Marus, Pastor*



**OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, STRATFORD:**  
**MR. BRIAN & MRS. PAULA LATHAM** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Monsignor Martin P. Ryan, Pastor*



**OUR LADY OF PEACE PARISH, STRATFORD:**  
**MS. MARY ANN PALMIERO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Nicholas S. Pavia, Pastor*

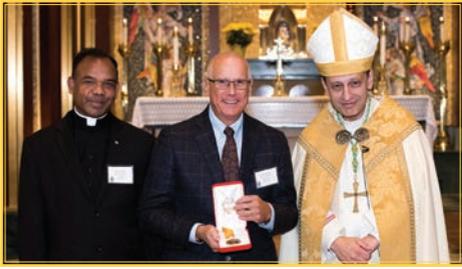


**SAINT JAMES PARISH, STRATFORD:**  
**MR. DAN & MRS. JEN CARON** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Thomas F. Lynch, Pastor*



**SAINT JAMES SCHOOL, STRATFORD:**  
**MR. RICHARD & MRS. JESSICA CURRAN** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Jack Lynch, Principal*

# 2017 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



**SAINT MARK PARISH, STRATFORD:**  
**MR. MICHAEL MOLLIKA** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Birendra Soreng, Pastor*



**SAINT MARK SCHOOL, STRATFORD:**  
**MRS. THERESA SCIALLO** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Scott Clough, Principal*



**CHRIST THE KING PARISH, TRUMBULL:**  
**MR. BOB & MRS. PAT SILK** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Terrence P. Walsh, Pastor*



**SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, TRUMBULL:**  
**MRS. PATRICA CAPOZZI** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Joseph A. Marcello, Pastor*



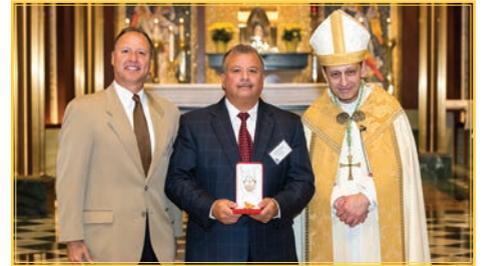
**SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA SCHOOL, TRUMBULL:**  
**MRS. MARY DINEEN** —  
*Nominated by Ms. Eunice Giaquinto, Principal*



**SAINT STEPHEN PARISH, TRUMBULL:**  
**MS. DORIS TOROK** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Christopher J. Samele, Pastor*



**SAINT THERESA PARISH, TRUMBULL:**  
**MR. JOHN & MRS. ANNE CONNAUGHTON** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Brian P. Gannon, Pastor*



**SAINT THERESA SCHOOL, TRUMBULL:**  
**MR. CARMINE PASACRETA** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Salvatore Vittoria, Principal*



**SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH, WESTON:**  
**MR. CHRISTIAN EIDT** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Michael L. Dunn, former Pastor*



**CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, WESTPORT:**  
**MR. ROBERT & MRS. VERONICA ESTONY** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Thomas P. Thorne, Pastor*



**SAINT LUKE PARISH, WESTPORT:**  
**MR. BILL & MRS. JUDY WANAT** — *Nominated*  
*by Reverend Monsignor Andrew G. Varga, Pastor*



**OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH, WILTON:**  
**MR. LOUIS FURLO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Reginald Norman, Pastor*



**CATHOLIC CHARITIES, BRIDGEPORT:**  
**MR. PETER MALONEY** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Al Barber, President*



**CATHOLIC CHARITIES/NEW COVENANT CENTER:**  
**JOHN GUTMAN ACCEPTS FOR MR. ED KEARNS** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Al Barber, President*



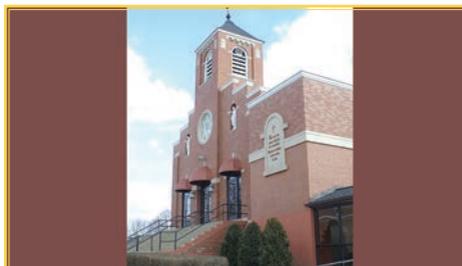
**CATHOLIC CHARITIES/MERTON CENTER:**  
**BRIAN JENKINS ACCEPTS FOR MS. SHELIA McENERY** —  
*Nominated by Mr. Al Barber, President*



**SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, BROOKFIELD:** **MR. VINCENT, POSTHUMOUSLY & MRS. ANDREA LUPO** —  
*Nominated by Reverend George F. O'Neill, Pastor*



**IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL, DANBURY:**  
**MR. KEVIN ARCHER** —  
*Nominated by Mrs. Mary Maloney, President*



**SACRED HEART PARISH, DANBURY:**  
**MR. WILLIAM JAKUBEK** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Peter J. Towsley, Pastor*



**SAINT PHILIP PARISH, NORWALK:**  
**MR. OTTO DE PIERNE** —  
*Nominated by Reverend Sudhir DSouza, Pastor*



**SAINT MARY SCHOOL, RIDGEFIELD:**  
**MR. SCOTT EDWARDSON** —  
*Nominated by Mrs. Anna O'Rourke, Principal*



# Our Lady of Peace, Stratford

## Memorial blocks build parish community

By PAT HENNESSY

Bright spring daffodils, huge heads of blue hydrangeas in summer, gentle foliage mellowing into fall. All those add a touch of joy to any parish grounds. At Our Lady of Peace Parish in Stratford, a project by the Women's Garden Club has added a purposeful accent to the flowers and foliage.

"We work very hard for people to feel welcome," says Father Nick Pavia, pastor of Our Lady of Peace. "When the Garden Club came up with the suggestion of memorial blocks, it seemed like an excellent way to deepen our sense of community."

The Garden Club, a group of women about 40 strong, culti-

vates the charm of the grounds surrounding the Norman French Church. The women suggested plantings and memorial blocks around Msgr. Gilmartin Hall with two ends in mind: remembering past parishioners and friends and celebrating current members, and improving the ecology of the area around the hall, which was subject to erosion and runoff.

"We had a tremendous response from the parish," says Garden Club member and parish council representative Christine Griffin. "It was a way to remember parishioners who meant so much to us, or members of our own families."

She pauses to point out a block in memory of Ginger Norko.

"Ginger used to take care of the

altar flowers, so it's appropriate that her name is here among the plants she cared for," Griffin says, sharing a fond remembrance.

Other blocks contain the names of current parishioners. "The nicest thing is, after Mass, seeing families stop and point out to their children, 'That's us.'"

"The blocks build a sense of connectedness in the parish. We all had a little bit of a hand in it," says Janet Benedict, another Garden Club representative to the parish council. "It will add to the history of the church as well."

The women were also acutely aware of the ecological needs of parish property. Like so much of New England, the soil around the buildings is poor and rocky, compounded by fill and asphalt from old construction. Every year saw topsoil washing away.

They knew they needed an edging strong enough to endure a snowplow. Belgian blocks from CT Stone in Milford, weighing 30 pounds apiece, filled the bill. Shaved smooth on one side at CT Stone, they were engraved at Barre Granite Memorials in Stratford. Because of their size and weight, the women could convey only 12 blocks per carload.



FRIENDS, FAMILY AND FOND MEMORIES—Father Nick Pavia, pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Stratford, and Christine Griffin peruse the memorial blocks installed by the Women's Garden Club. Their project drew the parish community closer together.

In all, the Garden Club has installed 101 memorial blocks.

Now, not only do the blocks build memories and the plantings recycle altar flowers, the beds are self-sustaining and will improve with every passing year. And there's no more runoff. "Peat absorbs," says Griffin. "It's like a sponge. It holds ten times its weight in water."

Generously assisted by men of the parish and a number of healthy young parishioners,

among them Griffin's two sons, the Garden Club removed the mulch in October and amended the soil, preparing for winter.

"We may be considering adding another memorial bed next year," says Father Pavia. For now, he'll bring the more fragile Christmas and winter flowers during his visits to homebound parishioners, and picture in his mind those to come next spring. "Whatever we do, nothing at Our Lady of Peace is ever wasted." ■

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# Religious Education

## Survey gives Holy Family high marks

By PAT HENNESSY

"It's apparent that Holy Family's religious education is highly regarded by parents," says Father Norm Guilbert, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Fairfield. "It is delivering an outstanding 'product.'"

Father Guilbert knows for a fact that parents believe faith formation is important within the parish, and that they think the religious education staff are doing an outstanding job.

Following the closing Mass of Synod 2014, Father Guilbert and his parish set about putting the synod goals into action. The Holy Family Strategic Plan, developed in 2016, identified three areas that are of major importance to the parish. Those include religious education, liturgical life and social life.

The decision was made to make religious education the first priority. To that end, the parish Catechetical Task Force, with input from the teaching staff, conducted a comprehensive survey of the religious education program.

"In marketing, if you're selling a product you want to know if it's any good, or get some feedback on how to improve it," said John Connolly, who joined the task force early this year.

Using his experience in sales and marketing, he helped to draft a clear, easy to understand survey form that was sent to families with students registered in religious education and to families of education-age children who were not enrolled in the program.

"We were a little apprehensive when we sent out the survey, especially since it asked what parents thought about the program and the teachers," said Mary Jane Perry, coordinator, with Catherine Nolfi, of Holy Family's religious education. "But we knew our program was strong, and we knew how well our teachers work with our kids."

Her confidence was justified. Overwhelmingly, families expressed solid support for the religious education staff and the outstanding job they are doing. "The teachers do a great job to inform my son about the importance of God in his life," added one respondent in the optional "Comments" section.

"You have to know what's working and what's not working," noted Jeanette McMahon, whose grandson, Nate, is in the program. "It's important to ask, 'How can we improve?'"

"The survey questions make sure that the program is going to work well for everyone, parents and teachers alike" added Catherine Golding, who has two children in the program. She did not favor a proposed switch in class time from weeknights to Sunday mornings. "We go to Mass together on Sunday," she said. A majority of parents agreed with her.

One of the popular features of Holy Family's religious education program is the Family Mass, held the fourth Sunday of every month. Each month a different class takes charge, starting with the youngsters in first grade.

"Everybody is invited to 'coffee and' after Mass," says Coordinator Perry. "All the families seem to come, not just the families whose kids are in charge. It has a special feeling."

The program's First Reconciliation service draws a goodly number of families as well.

Families credit Perry and Nolfi as the heart of the program, with justice. "We try to be close to the parents and know every family," said Perry. "If a child doesn't show up for religious education, we're aware of it. I'll call the family and find out if there's a problem. If there is, we'll find a way to work around it."

Nolfi attended the "People of Joy" formation day held at the Catholic Center in September, where she received the Catechetical



"WE GET TO KNOW YOU," say coordinators of religious education at Holy Family Parish in Fairfield. Respondents to a parish survey gave high marks to that attitude. Here, co-coordinator Catherine Nolfi spends time with young Nate McMahon.

Tack Force report, which included best practices and recommendations. Both women also attended a Catechist Conversation with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

Perry noted that Holy Family gets new families for their religious education every week.

"We welcome them. We'll get to know them and their children. We'll find out what they need," she said, echoing a theme of the

Formation Day.

Respondents to the parish survey appreciated that approach. "Everyone in the religious education program does a great job," said one parent. "Our child looks forward to class each week."

Nolfi summed up the attitude that received such a strong affirmation from the parish survey: "You're all invited to God's table." ■

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### STRATEGIC PLAN FROM PAGE 3

than those in other schools, and an increasing number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life come from Catholic school students.

In his closing remarks, Bishop Caggiano thanked members of the Education Commission and said that Catholic schools remain a core mission of the Catholic Church. "Our schools are a sacred bridge to our parishes, and another authentic community of faith. We will re-evangelize the missing generation through them," he said.

"I stand before you as the Fifth Bishop of Bridgeport, and I will do whatever is humanly possible to support excellence in Catholic schools and make their operations viable for generations to come."

The plan was formally released to the public on October 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and is available in print and online versions.

The diocesan schools system educates more than 9,000 students in 20 elementary schools, five high schools and one school for students with special needs. ■

# Special Needs

## Mass for people with disabilities at St. Catherine

FAIRFIELD—The annual Mass to celebrate people with disabilities held on November 5 was hosted by St. Catherine Center for Special Needs in Fairfield.

It has been customary at this Mass to offer the opportunity for individuals to receive one or more Sacraments of Initiation, with preparation that has taken place outside the typical faith formation program. Gail Mikolsky, director of parish and community outreach for the center, worked with directors of religious education (DREs) throughout the diocese to coordinate preparation and participation. Planning and coordination with the parish religious education programs began in the spring.

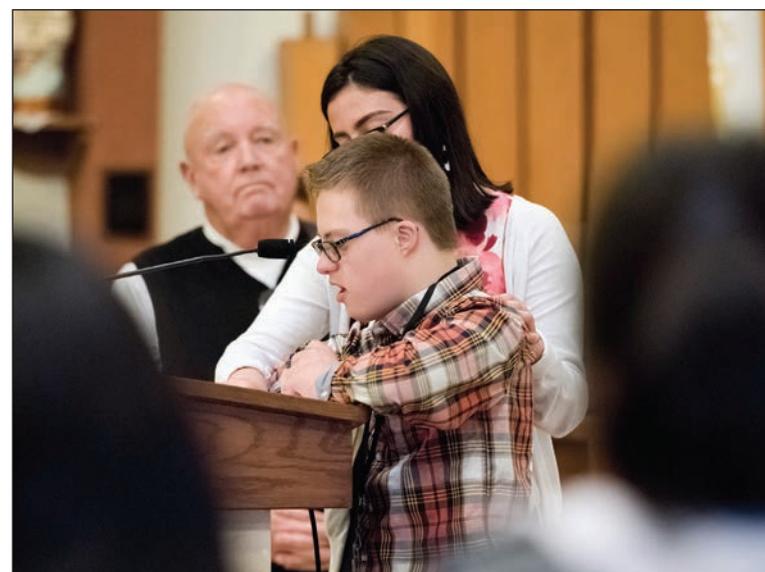
“Collaborating with the parishes, we get the opportunity to listen to parents and to create a



welcoming and comforting setting for these children to participate in the Mass,” commented Mikolsky. This year, there were 17 young people from 11 different parishes and St. Catherine Academy who received sacraments.

Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, celebrated Mass with a church filled with families, St. Catherine Center board members and staff, Knights of Columbus honor guard and friends of St. Catherine Center. Anna Stowe, a confirmand from St. Catherine Academy, and her brother presented the first and second readings. Nicholas D’Ostilio, confirmand and parishioner of St. Peter Parish in Danbury led the Prayer of the Faithful and Philip Palilla, a confirmand from St. Catherine Academy and St. Rose of Lima Parish, presented the gifts at the offertory, accompanied by his family.

In his homily, Msgr. Powers



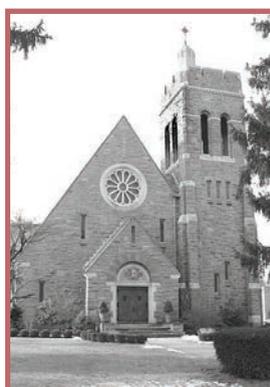
spoke of the virtue of humility. “If we are truly humble, we see ourselves as God sees us,” he began. “These children of God are the essence of humility and are welcomed and valued in the eyes of God.”

“This annual Mass reminds us that all are welcomed in our Church,” commented Helen Burland, executive director of the center. “Each of us must work to encourage the full participation of all people in the life of our parishes and the diocese. Our efforts

on a daily basis focus on the ordinary. But today, we celebrate the extraordinary”

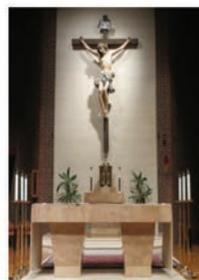
Following Mass, Msgr. Powers, several board members and Ryan, one of the adult program participants, headed to the center’s new program room for a blessing. The day was filled with joy!

(St. Catherine Center for Special Needs is located at 760 Tahmore Drive, Fairfield. For more information, call 203.540.5381 or email [gmi-kolsky@stcatherineacademy.org](mailto:gmi-kolsky@stcatherineacademy.org).) ■



*Thank you Frank Macari  
& our entire Religious  
Education Team for sharing  
your faith with our children!*

**Our Lady of the Assumption  
Fairfield**



**Thank you to our  
Coordinators & Catechists  
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### MASS OF HOPE AND HEALING FROM PAGE 4

Describing her family as deeply faithful and active in the Church, she said her abuse began at age 16 by a young and charismatic priest who was a friend of the family. Peggy was too ashamed to tell her parents and didn’t think anyone would believe her.

She wrote letters to local Church officials and to the Pope, but no one responded. The Church’s denial of the crisis left her deeply troubled.

“I felt so abandoned, so alone,” she said, “They stole my trust and innocence, but not my faith.”

She began to move forward when her attorney and a newspaper reporter told her story, but she never gave up on truth telling within the Church.

Healing began for her in a serious way when Father Skip Karcisnki, who served as St. Jude Parish in Monroe at the time, listened to her story and offered spiritual help. Then in January 2015, she was invited to a listening session with Bishop Caggiano held at Fairfield University.

“This was monumental. The bishop listened and there’s no doubt he had heard us,” she says of those early listening sessions. “I felt the remorse from my bishop, along with the incredible strength from my fellow survivors, and I began to regain my trust,” Fry said.

The meetings also represented the beginning of the survivors’

group.

At the end of her talk, Fry, who is now a grandmother of nine, was joined by other members of the survivors’ group that came forward and embraced one another in a moment of pride and joy.

“Christ desires us to be healed,” said Jim DiVasto. “This committee would never have been possible without the courage and support of Bishop Frank. We’ve all grown to be great friends, and that’s a great source of healing for us.”

(For information about the survivor’s group or for victim assistance, call Erin Neil, LCSW: 203.650.3265 or [eneil@diobpt.org](mailto:eneil@diobpt.org); or Michael Trintrup, LCSW: at 203.241.0987, or [mtintrup@ccfc-ct.org](mailto:mtintrup@ccfc-ct.org).) ■

# Cardinal Shehan Center

## CBS legend talks 'Grandparenting' at Breakfast

BRIDGEPORT—The first woman to serve as guest speaker in the Cardinal Shehan Center Celebrity breakfast series brought the house down with a mixture of humor, interesting stories and perceptive comments about the press and the “polarized nation.”

CBS 60 Minutes correspondent Lesley Stahl captivated almost 400 friends of the Shehan Center at the Downtown Holiday Inn with her talk followed by a question and answer session.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano delivered the invocation and Shehan Center executive director Terry O'Connor served as master of ceremonies for the breakfast, which is expected to raise over \$70,000 for the educational and recreational programs of the center.

The bishop said that hope is one of the great gifts children receive from the staff and volunteers of the Cardinal Shehan Center, and the good things that happen there are “God’s way of showing us that there is real hope for the future.”

In the program prior to Stahl’s talk, Sylvia Martin of Stratford was presented the Volunteer of the Year Award for her work on many fund raising events. Martin is a retired



WE’RE ENTERING THE AGE OF GRANDMA—Lesley Stahl said at the recent Cardinal Shehan Center Breakfast held in Bridgeport. “There are 30,000 new grandparents in the U.S. each week.” More than 400 attended the event that raised \$70,000 for the youth center’s educational and recreational programs.

registered nurse and a parishioner of the First Baptist Church in Stratford. She was a member of the Shehan Center as a young girl, and said she always wanted to return to serve others as a volunteer.

Ten-year-old Amaris Timmons, a sixth grader at the Cathedral Academy, was the Shehan Center Youth speaker. She told the gathering of business and civic leaders that the center has taught her the importance of losing gracefully and learning from her mistakes.

Stahl started her talk by saying she would “spare the audience”

the hot political topics and focused on being a grandparent, something she delved into in her 2016 book, “Becoming a Grandma: The Joys and Science of the New Grandparenting.”

“We’re entering the age of Grandma,” she said. “There are 30,000 new grandparents in the U.S. every week,” many of them from the ranks of aging Baby Boomers who don’t quite fit the image of grandparents of the past.

“Most grandmas aren’t gray any more—we’re all blonds,” she quipped, but she believes that grandparenting is a bond that cements families and generations together.

“When we hold these babies we are instantly transformed,” she said.

Studies show that both grandparents and grandchildren are “happier and healthier when they interact,” she said. “We’re great for kids, and it’s important for them to know that they belong to a family. We give them unconditional love and they give it back.”

She said there has been an historic reversal in recent decades in that older Americans are now the wealthiest and they play a large role in helping their children and grandchildren, particularly with the purchase of “big ticket” item from healthcare expenses to paying for an education.

But there are also challenges. “Once the baby is born, the family balance of power immediately shift to the young couple,” she said, and some grandparents are “terrified of antagonizing” the parents, who can deny access to the children.

Speaking about her own career, she said it was launched by an “affirmative action” pro-

gram. In the early 1970s, CBS realized that it needed more women journalists, and after applying for a job she found herself apprenticing alongside of news legends like Dan Rather and Roger Mudd in the Washington, D.C., newsroom.

During a question and answer session, the veteran broadcast reporter said the lumping of all news outlets together and the tarnishing of legitimate journalists as practitioners of “fake news” troubles her.

She is also concerned about the Internet as a news source. “We have a Wild West unfettered Internet, and it needs a sheriff,” she said.

“One thing that keeps me up at night is the polarization in our

country,” she said, noting that there seems to be a sharp dividing line. People on either side of it see anything and everything in a different way, and can’t seem to agree.

The Shehan Center offers a variety of programs including an After School & Saturday program, basketball leagues, a summer day camp, swim camp and physical education classes for local schools. In addition, the center offers enrichment programs such as tutoring, music, soccer, keyboarding, karate, swimming and cooking.

(The Cardinal Shehan Center is located at 1494 Main St., Bridgeport. For more information, call 203.336.4468 or visit [www.shehancenter.org](http://www.shehancenter.org).)

Thank you  
Ms. Jeanne Bisson  
Director of Religious Formation  
and entire team for sharing  
your faith with our children!

St. Emery Parish, Fairfield



God Bless You and Thank You  
to our entire Religious Formation Team

for your continued  
commitment  
to teach our children.

St. Thomas the Apostle  
Norwalk



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continued commitment  
to teach and share the Faith  
and lead our children toward  
a life-long relationship  
with Jesus the Lord!

With thanks  
and blessings

to

Ms. Kathleen

Rooney,

our entire religious  
education team,  
and to the catechists  
and volunteers



Our Lady of Fatima  
Wilton

# Inner-City Foundation

## Gala to feature Preservation Hall Jazz Band

BRIDGEPORT—New Orleans' legendary Preservation Hall Jazz Band will come to Greenwich on November 16 to perform at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich at a benefit for Fairfield County's Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education. This year marks the charity's 26th annual benefit dinner.

"We are delighted to be presenting the Preservation Hall Jazz Band this year," says Richard Stone, executive director of the Inner-City Foundation. "The majority of our funding comes from this event, and without its proceeds we could not do what we do, which is to provide almost \$1 million of crucial funding to local programs providing critical help to the neediest people right here in Fairfield County."

The Preservation Hall Jazz Band derives its name from Preservation Hall in the heart of New Orleans' French Quarter. The band has traveled worldwide, spreading their mission to nurture, perpetuate and expand the art form that is New Orleans jazz.

They have recorded with musical legends Tom Waits, Pete Seeger and Doctor John, performed sold-out shows at Carnegie Hall with the likes of Allen Toussaint and Steve Earle, and appeared on the Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon.

The Inner-City Foundation expects that the Preservation Hall Jazz Band will render their benefit a hot ticket this fall, and that it will be a boon to their annual fundraising efforts, which is needed now more than ever, according to Stone.

"Although it should be no surprise to anyone that need is up and funding is down, given the economy," says Stone, "people do tend to have a blind spot when it comes to this area. People think of Fairfield County as very well-off. Which of course it is, but it's not all gold coast. State and federal budget cuts have had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of our community. And the gap is widening—38 percent of people who live in Fairfield County are now struggling to make ends meet,

either unable to meet the basic cost of living, or living in poverty. Unless increased resources materialize from other places, such as foundations like ours, a lot of people are going to have nowhere to turn."

Founded in 1992, The Inner-City Foundation supports organizations providing food, clothing, shelter, education and counseling to at-risk and needy families, children and adults of Fairfield County. Organizations may apply for grants; all applications are thoughtfully considered, says Stone.

"We do all the legwork so donors don't have to," says Stone. "We carefully vet all these organizations to make sure they are efficient and effective, and we look for organizations that are providing not only a safety net but also a springboard to a better future," he says. "And because of our experience, minimal staff, and dedicated, passionate volunteer board members, we're highly efficient. Ninety percent, or 90 cents of every



NEW ORLEANS' LEGENDARY Preservation Hall Jazz Band will perform on November 16 at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich at a benefit for Fairfield County's Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education. The Preservation Hall Jazz Band derives its name from Preservation Hall in the heart of New Orleans' French Quarter. The band has traveled worldwide, spreading their mission to nurture, perpetuate and expand the art form that is New Orleans jazz.

dollar that we raise, goes directly to the organizations we support. That's a good record, and should give people confidence that when they donate to us their money is not only doing good, and staying local, but also going directly to benefit the people they are trying to help."

The Inner-City Foundation has provided more than \$29 million to about 200 local organizations over the last 26 years.

The Inner-City Foundation's 26th annual benefit dinner featuring the Preservation Hall Jazz Band will take place on November 16 at 6 pm at the Hyatt Regency in Greenwich. Master storyteller and Greenwich local Bonnie Levison will be the master of ceremonies.

Mitch Barns, chief executive officer of Nielsen, chairs the Corporate Committee, Dick and

Vilma Matteis chair the Benefit Committee, which is currently in formation and includes: Beth and Peter Barhydt, Ruth and Charles Chiusano, Pamela and Eric Dale, Amy Dana and Joe Profaci, Audrey and Daniel Dornier, Julie and David Genovese, Helen and Dan FitzPatrick, Edna Keleshian, Isabel and Joe Lane, Bonnie Levison, Virginia and John Lyddane, Patricia and Edward McLaughlin, Sue and Bill Mitchell, Mary and Brian Moran, Jane Pelletier, Geri and Jim Roper, Sheryl Shaughnessey, Claudia Steers, Cindy and Rich Stone, Elaine and ChiChi Ubiña, Laura Wack, Maureen and Frank Walsh, Suzan and Ken Wirth, and Stephanie and John Wu.

(For tables and tickets to the benefit or to donate, visit [innercityfoundation.org](http://innercityfoundation.org), email [info@innercityfoundation.org](mailto:info@innercityfoundation.org), or call 203.416.1496.) ■

### BISHOP'S LECTURE SERIES FROM PAGE 6

profoundly changed her life. The Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT) is a missionary community that serves global areas of deepest apostolic need.

Quoting Bishop Robert Barron, she said "The desire for God is written in the human heart because God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God can he find the truth and happiness for which he never stops searching."

"I thought when I entered the convent that everything would be all right, just as brides think when they marry," she said drawing laughter. But her road to healing and forgiveness has been an ongoing process that has evolved over the 19 years she has been a nun.

Half way through her talk, she told those gathered to hear her that she had struggled with alcoholism as a young adult and continues to participate in a 12-step program. But the focus of

her talk was not psychological or self-help, it was about the power of God to meet us on the road.

"Pope Francis said preaching the Gospel of Joy is tough when our lives are surrounded in fear. Joy is not Christ coming to modify our behavior. It's not a reform school or behavioral modification. Christianity is transformation into glory. We're completely changed and transformed, radiant in his love," she said.

She said that the transformation requires an encounter from the heart, not simply going through the motions of faith. "The heart is the dwelling place where we live. Its hidden center is beyond the grasp of others. Only God comprehends," she said.

In a brief question and answer session following her talk, Sister Miriam said it was important for youth ministers to "meet people where they are" on their own road to Emmaus. "No one wants to be a project to be fixed. They want to be

loved as people," she said.

When asked about the one book that changed her life other than the Bible, Sister Miriam, responded, "Be Healed" by Dr. Bob Schuchts, a book about "how we get stuck" and the power of encounter with God to free us.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano thanked Sister Miriam for launching the new Bishop's Lecture Series.

"Rarely have I heard a more authentic, genuine reflection of what faith is than what you gave us tonight. It feels like a retreat," the bishop said. "You alluded to St. Thomas and the different ways to experience God through truth, goodness and beauty, and tonight you shared the truth with us in a beautiful way, and you have helped us all to encounter the Lord."

(For more information on the Leadership Institute programs, visit [www.formationreimagined.org](http://www.formationreimagined.org) or call 203.416.1670.) ■

### CATHOLIC IDENTITY FROM PAGE 11

and among the faculty who lead these seminars.

#### Teaching the teachers

The best way to keep Catholic intellectual life at the heart of a Catholic university is to develop a faculty who see this goal as a compelling, exciting enterprise which engenders animating and engaging inquiry about the human experience.

The faculty who facilitate these seminars come from a variety of disciplines; not all are Catholic, but all are dedicated to implementing the vision and purpose of this process. They are immersed in conversations about the texts and the pedagogy; offer colloquia; accompany students to films, museums and lectures; attend weekly workshops and conferences about Catholic thought and imagination; and participate in a three-day summer faculty-development workshop.

These are a community of scholars who recognize that conversation about contemporary issues with Catholic thought at its center can offer its students moral clarity, and help them develop a moral compass. These faculty help students learn to question, to think critically, to develop perspective, to reflect, and to see the enduring relevance and legacy of the Catholic intellectual tradition in their lives today. ■

# St. Margaret Shrine

## 75th anniversary celebration

BRIDGEPORT—Threatening clouds could not dim the beauty of the Mass celebrating the 75th anniversary of St. Margaret's Shrine in Bridgeport on October 29. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who celebrated the anniversary Mass, has been an enthusiastic and frequent visitor to the shrine's rambling hills and rock-rimmed grottos.

The bishop came to the shrine the first weekend after his installation in September of 2013. At that time he came for the dedication of a new shrine on its grounds, this one dedicated to St. Padre Pio.

"What a blessing it was to have the bishop here for our 75th anniversary celebration," said Deacon Don Foust, the shrine's administrator. "I believe he has a soft spot in his heart for our shrine. His comments after the Mass were very telling, particu-



BUILT AS A PLACE TO PRAY FOR PEACE, St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport opened in 1942. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated the shrine's 75th anniversary Mass on October 29. Honoring its Italian-American roots, St. Margaret's still celebrates a Mass in Italian each Sunday.

larly the way his experience here reminds him of his Brooklyn Italian roots. We are blessed for him to have that feeling about us."

Opened in 1942, St. Margaret's Shrine was built as a place to pray for peace and to remember the young men who

were dying in World War II. Visitors to the shrine are greeted by the Stations of the Cross and a faithful reproduction of Michelangelo's Pieta. The statues and grottos built over the past 70-plus years give the shrine its distinctive charm. Together, these welcome visitors to an oasis of

peace and prayer.

The grounds contain individual outdoor shrines of St. Margaret, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Sebastian and Our Lady of LaVang (honoring an appearance of Our Lady in Vietnam), among others. The site has a St. Anthony

Chapel and an All Saints Chapel. Another recent shrine recalls the children and staff who died in the Sandy Hook massacre.

Honoring its roots in Bridgeport's Italian-American community, St. Margaret's still celebrates a Mass in Italian each Sunday at 9:30 am. ■

## WOMEN'S ADVENT DAY OF REFLECTION

### THE ART OF WAITING

The Leadership Institute and the Sisters of Life are excited to offer a Women's Day of Reflection in preparation for Advent on **Saturday, December 2, 2017, 8:30am-2:30pm at The Catholic Center, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606.**

During the season of Advent, we are often distracted with many activities: shopping, decorating, baking, ending an academic semester, etc. However, this season ought to be about so much more than frenzied preparations. Above all, Advent is a time to slow down and prepare our hearts in an ever deeper way for Christ, and this brief day of reflection is just one way to give yourself the time and space to encounter Jesus. It is opportunity to be renewed through the Sacraments (Mass, Reconciliation), Spiritual Talks, Rosary with meditations, reflective prayer, and of course, fellowship.

**Please Join Us!**

**What is the cost?**

The cost is **\$25** which includes breakfast and lunch.

**How to sign up?**

Please RSVP by November 28, 2017 at [www.formationreimagined.org](http://www.formationreimagined.org).

Registration is limited, so please respond today.



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# Remembering the Holocaust

## From Treblinka to Georgetown

By FRANK DEROSA

The clickety-clack of the wheels of the freight cars penetrated the silence of the Polish countryside as they transported terrified Jews the 50 miles from Warsaw to Treblinka, the brutal extermination camp. It was September, 1942.

Among those at the threshold of death by asphyxiation in one of Treblinka's six gas chambers were Majer Latowicki, 34, and two brothers among his 10 siblings.

The condemned knew, and history has confirmed, what lay ahead when the Holocaust train rolled to its last stop. SS soldiers, bearing weapons and icy stares, would prod them out of the cars with their rifles, collect their valuables, order them to disrobe, and then, bereft of conscience, line them up for liquidation, the latest victims of maniacal Adolf Hitler's genocidal "Final Solution."

Desperate to save their lives and deny the Fuhrer his wishes, the brothers knew their only chance to survive was to look for the right moment to jump off the

moving train and run to freedom.

In recreating the scene in your mind, one can only imagine the gripping fear pulsating through their bodies—the trembling hands, the tense muscles, the rapid thump-thump of the hearts inside their chests—as the three looked for the moment to jump. They knew the soldiers on board would fire at them when the attempted escape was inevitably discovered. But they also were aware of the alternative if they didn't risk the try.

As the fields of their beloved homeland swept by, the brothers finally saw an opening. In an instant they leaped from the death train and sprinted toward the unknown. The Nazi soldiers, catching sight of them, rained bullets in their direction. Majer's brothers fell, mortally wounded. He survived, suffering a broken bone in one leg. Meanwhile, the train continued toward its dreaded destination.

Having miraculously escaped death, Majer found refuge with a Polish Catholic family. They hid him in the loft of a barn by their home. For a year they provided

food, nursed his injury and protected him, certainly aware of the risk of Nazi retribution toward them if his whereabouts were discovered. The Nazis never found him.

As the months wore on and as he hoped for the liberation of his country, he kept close the shattering memory of his dead brothers and the chilling way he lost them.

When the war ended, in time he emigrated from Poland, came to America, married and raised a family, settling in the Bronx. He vowed that one day he would return to the spot where his brothers were gunned down and move their remains to Warsaw for proper burial in a Jewish cemetery.

Fast forward seven and a half decades from war-torn Poland to peaceful Georgetown, Conn., and the office of Daniel Latowicki. He is Majer's son, a warm and compassionate professional with an engaging personality who has practiced dentistry there for more than 30 years.

When we talked recently, Dan said details of the escape were limited because, like so many



TREBLINKA EXTERMINATION CAMP was built and operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during World War II. It is estimated that between 700,000 and 900,000 Jews were killed in its gas chambers.

who suffered during the war, Majer related little about the horrifying, death-defying experience. Dan spoke somewhat reluctantly about his late father's ordeal, recognizing my interest in the harrowing story but clearly not seeking to draw attention to himself or his family.

As we continued our conversation, Dan went on to explain that Majer kept the promise he made to himself. He returned to his native land years later to search for his brothers' remains. But he was able to locate and exhume those of only one of them. He then fulfilled his vow to bury what he found with dignity in Warsaw.

Dan, an observant follower of his Jewish faith, ever mindful of how his father and his family suffered (he believes only one other member of the large family did not go to the gas chamber), revealed his desire to journey one day to Treblinka and Warsaw. His sole purpose: to recite Kaddish, the solemn Jewish Prayer for Mourning.

More than 44 million people have visited Auschwitz and other death camps since 1945. Among them were our own bishop, Frank J. Caggiano, and young people from the Diocese of Bridgeport who made a prayerful visit there in 2016 as part of their World Youth Day pilgrimage to Krakow.

Although their prayers did not include the Kaddish, they conveyed the same intent from a faith based on belief and trust in

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

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# Saint Mark School, Stratford

## Students cut hair for breast cancer awareness

STRATFORD—St. Mark School hosted their Eighth Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Cut-A-Thon on October 20. Students and faculty dressed in pink as they rallied together to raise awareness in the fight against breast cancer.

Stratford's Jade Salon transported their services to the school's auditorium and donated their time and products as they have for the past six years. They not only cut hair but gave pink synthetic hair extensions to students in an effort to raise addi-

tional funds.

Eleven boys had their heads shaved and four girls cut about a yard of hair collectively and donated it to make wigs for women fighting cancer. The cut hair will be donated to Pantene Beautiful Lengths and Wigs for Kids, benefiting women and children with medical hair loss. Additionally, 45 pink synthetic hair extensions were purchased by students to promote the cause.

A total of \$2,460 was collect-

ed by St. Mark School and Jade Salon. All proceeds were donated to the Elizabeth Pfriem SWIM Cancer Center at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport.

Lyn McCarthy, executive director of the St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation, was on site to accept the donation check. She personally thanked the students for their continued efforts in supporting breast cancer awareness. "I look forward to coming to St. Mark every year to witness this school's selfless acts of kindness," she added.

Scott Clough, the new principal of St. Mark School, remarked, "I am proud to be part of such an amazing and caring community that knows the power of giving to those who are less fortunate than ourselves."

In the past eight years, St. Mark School and Jade Salon



RAISING AWARENESS of the fight against breast cancer, St. Mark School, together with Jade Salon in Stratford, hosted their Eighth Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Cut-A-Thon in October. Third grader Antonia Britto, shown here with Jade stylist Nicole Longo, was one of the students to donate her hair to make wigs for women fighting cancer.

have donated over \$18,000 to the SWIM Cancer Center. Recognized nationally as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, St.

Mark School will continue to turn its blue ribbon pink each October in an effort to raise breast cancer awareness. ■

### ALL SOULS DAY FROM PAGE 3

time to his honor and glory."

The bishop told the gathering that the most difficult day in his life as a priest was the day he buried his mother and "took a handful of soil to put on her casket and said the words, 'dirt to dirt, dust to dust.'"

He said we should take strength and consolation in the understanding that "It's only their resting place for a time, until God calls them and us."

#### Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Trumbull

Msgr. Powers called the All Souls Day observance a celebration of faith, hope and charity.

"When someone who we love dies, we miss them and we're sad. But our faith tells us that their life has changed, not ended. The Eucharist, when Jesus gives us his body and blood, soul and divinity, tells us that he loves us. In Jesus, death does not have the final say."

Hope tells us that we will see our loved ones again. "In Christian hope, we all will share in the Resurrection. In Christ, death has no power."

The gathering of the faithful to pray for all those who have died is an act of charity uniting Catholics throughout the world. "This is one of the sweetest of the spiritual works of mercy—to pray for the dead, entrusting them to God's mercy."

Purgatory, with its promise of purifying us of our sins, is a gift of God, a great mercy, Msgr. Powers said. It prepares our limited souls to be freed to embrace the Lord. At the same time, those in purgatory can pray for us even as we pray for them. The entire Church, through prayer, helps each other as we mourn.

"This is a wonderful way to remember my father, who is buried in Italy, and my friends who are buried here," said Maria Veltri, a member of Christ the King Parish in Trumbull. She and her husband, Rocco, took flowers offered after the Mass to place on a friend's grave.

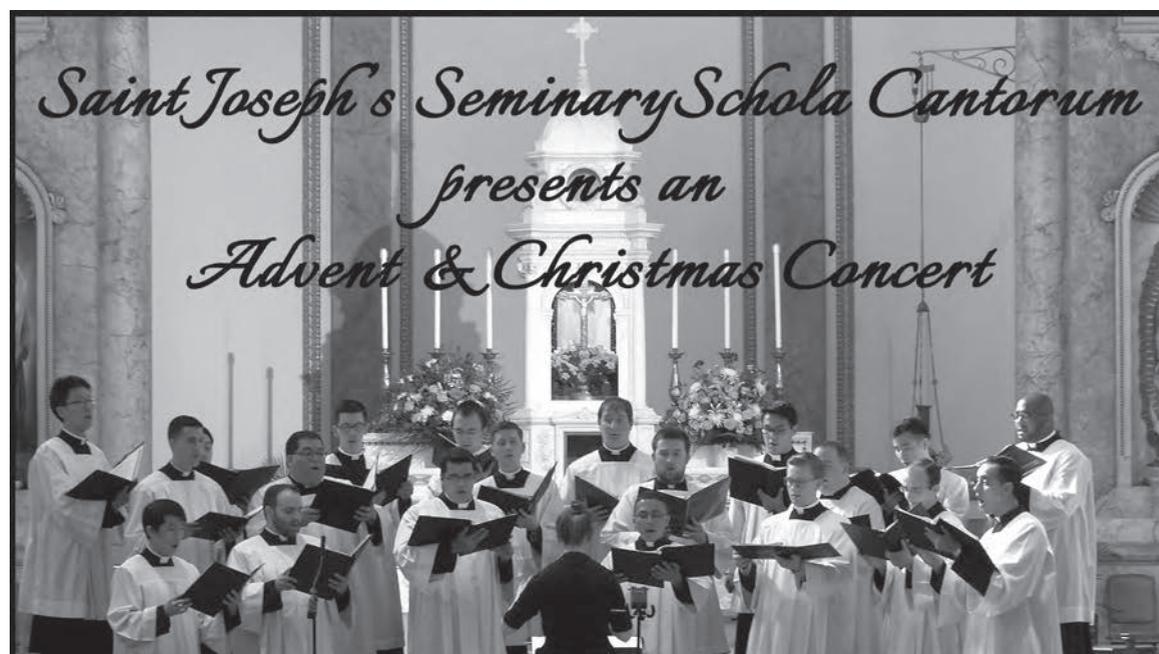
"I appreciate that they want to do this yearly, and that we can come to pray here," said Rocco, both of whose parents are buried in Italy.

Members of the Saboe family from St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull have a close connection to Gate of Heaven Cemetery. "What a beautiful ceremony!" said Theresa Saboe Hesley, who came up from Philadelphia to join other family members, including her sister, Beth Saboe Mollo. Their mother Ruth Saboe has seen her husband, several children, and other close family members buried here. They, too, took flowers to place on the graves.

Ruth Saboe had her 94th birthday this All Souls Day.

The faithful gathered here, and all those who trust in the love of Jesus, find in All Souls Day a celebration of faith, hope and charity.

"I am the Resurrection and the life says the Lord; whoever believes in me will live forever" (John 11:25-26). ■



### Saint Joseph's Seminary Schola Cantorum presents an Advent & Christmas Concert

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# Obituaries

## Deacon William Murphy, 82

Deacon William Owen Murphy, a retired deacon of St. Joseph Parish in South Norwalk, passed away peacefully at his home in Norwalk on October 6 at the age of 82.

He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on November 18, 1934, and attended Brooklyn Prep, College of the Holy Cross and Columbia University Law School. He served on active duty with the U.S. Air Force in Germany 1961-1962.

He was hired by Simpson Thacher & Bartlett in 1960 and spent 35 years at the firm, 25 as partner. He served on the Banking Law Committee of the Bar Association and in the course of his career he worked on the restructuring of the debt of Yugoslavia and the Philippines, among other issues. He retired from the firm in December 1994 and was ordained a deacon by Bishop Edward M. Egan on July 8, 1995.



DEACON WILLIAM OWEN MURPHY

Following his ordination, he graduated from Yale Divinity School with a master's of divinity degree. He was active at St. Joseph's for 22 years, and served his community as well as his parish. Deacon Murphy served as chair of the Norwalk Board of Education, chair of the board of Family and Children's Agency, a

board member of an anti-poverty agency, a homeless shelter and the Side By Side Charter School. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the New Canaan Country School and on the Board of Consultants of Portsmouth Abbey School.

Deacon Murphy is survived by his wife of 52 years, Barbara, and his sons Bill of New York and Jim and his wife Jenny of Darien, as well as five grandchildren.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Deacon Murphy on October 14, at 10 am in St. Joseph Church. Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, was the principal celebrant. Father Peter Lenox, administrator of St. Joseph, was the homilist.

Interment followed in St. John's and St. Mary's Cemetery in Norwalk. ■

## Sister Amalia

Sister Mary Amalia Menardi, 99, died on June 13, at Lourdes Health Care Center in Wilton. She celebrated her 75th jubilee with the School Sisters of Notre Dame this year.

Ruth Marie Menardi was born on March 22, 1918, in Bogota, N. J. She worked in Manhattan for three years before she entered the School Sister of Notre Dame. She earned a B.S. degree from Notre Dame of Maryland University and two master of arts degrees from Fairfield University.

Sister Amalia's first assignment was to St. Paul the Apostle School in Ellicott City, Md., in a one-room school-house designated for black children. Sister Amalia taught the first through the eighth grades

in the same room. She remembered those two years as the highlight of her teaching career.

Sister Amalia taught at the former St. John Nepomucene School in Bridgeport from 1954-61; was principal of Holy Rosary School, Bridgeport, from 1961-67; and principal of Our Lady of Peace School, Stratford, from 1968-71.

In 1973, she became the coordinator of religious education at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk, where she served for 21 years.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Amalia in the Chapel of Villa Notre Dame on June 19. Msgr. Walter Orłowski, pastor of St. Matthew's, was the principal celebrant. Burial followed in St. Mary Cemetery, Bethel. ■

## Sister Agnes

Sister Agnes Seebach, OSU died peacefully on August 3. She was born September 10, 1937, in Seaford, N.Y. She entered the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk in September 1960, taking the religious name of Sister Mary Pauline.

She earned a BA degree in education from St. John's University in Queens, N.Y., and a master's in theology from Loyola University, New Orleans.

Sister Agnes taught at Our Lady Star of the Sea School in Stamford from 1973-75 and again from 1977-78. After serving in parish ministry and as coordinator of St. Ursula Center in Blue Point, she retired in 2004.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated for Sister Agnes on August 9 at St. Ursula Convent in Blue Point, Long Island, followed by interment at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Coram, N.Y. ■

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## DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT: NOVEMBER 12—DECEMBER 16

### NOVEMBER

13	Msgr. Alphonse J. V. Fiedorczyk	1987
15	Rev. M. Steven Barrett, S.S.	2000
	Rev. John P. Odie	1999
19	Rev. Rocco D. Nadile	1978
20	Rev. Francis J. Fulop	1957
	Rev. John F. Culliton	1967
	Rev. Hugh A. Coffey	1975
21	Msgr. Edwin F. Burke	2004
22	Rev. Stephen J. Panik	1953
	Msgr. Joseph N. Murphy	1988
23	Rev. Robert G. Pohley	2006
26	Deacon Joseph Lawrence Rowan	2013
27	Deacon John Barton	2012
	Rev. Myron V. Miller	1961
28	Deacon Wayne E. Malloy	2011

### DECEMBER

1	Rev. Michael E. Kearney	1956
	Msgr. Alfred J. Sienkiewicz	1996
	Deacon Robert W. Becker	2000
3	Msgr. John E. Gilmartin	2011
	Rev. Thomas Gwozdz, OFM Conv.	2007
	Rev. Joseph A. Pisarcik	1956
4	Msgr. Joseph M. Fitzgerald	2005
5	Rev. Vincent J. O'Connor	1985
7	Deacon George Saulnier	1997
8	Rev. Rufin Kuveikas, OFM Conv.	2008
10	Msgr. Bartholomew J. Skelly	1967
	Rev. Ambrose Walas, OFM Conv.	1967
	Rev. Paul M. Spodnik	1976
13	Rev. Alfred E. Russo	2009
15	Msgr. Lawrence J. McMahon	2009

# Vocations

## Seminarian is 'not alone' on the discernment journey

By DEACON DAVID FLYNN

"Discerning a vocation for the priesthood is not something you can do alone," said Colin Lomnizter, a seminarian at St. John Fisher Residence in Stamford.

"You need the help and support of others who are in the same situation. That includes other seminarians and those who are skilled at helping you understand yourself and whether or not a vocation to the priesthood fits you." Anyone who thinks he might have a vocation, but is uncertain whether or not he should enter the seminary, Colin's advice is, "Just do it! There is never the 'right time'."

He speaks from personal experience. As a freshman at Fairfield Prep, Colin began wondering if he had a vocation to the priesthood. The question was stirred, in part, by an older brother, whom he observed searching for a similar answer. The search led to him and his brother attending a vocations fair at Sacred Heart University and went as far as Colin "nearly" completing an application to the seminary when

he was a high school senior.

Feeling there were other things he wanted to do before making that decision, such as graduate school and traveling, Colin did not follow through on that desire. Instead, he decided to attend Catholic University of America (CUA), where he studied philosophy.

The notion of the priesthood still nagged at his conscience, though. The internal debate ended on September 23, 2015, when the final words of Pope Francis' homily during the canonization Mass of Father Junipero Serra pierced his conscience and his heart.

Repeating the motto that St. Serra was famous for, Pope Francis exclaimed, "Forward! Always forward!" Immediately, Colin knew he needed to stop equivocating and make a decision. He resolved to finish what he had been delaying and applied to St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford for a time of discernment. He was accepted and entered the formation program at the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year.

His experience in the forma-

tion program has been hard and humbling, but very rewarding. The program is structured to provide time for study, prayer, worship, spiritual direction, chores and fraternity, all designed in a way that will help a man understand God's desire for him and to learn about himself.

"Self-discovery is the hard part," Colin said. Learning about himself "has been a humbling experience." It has also convinced him of his vocation and is giving him confidence in that conviction. That part of the experience has brought him "joy and hope," he said.

When he began his formation, Colin struggled with what he thought had to be a decision over whether to marry or become a priest. But that approach, he realized, was too complicated and he



SEMINARIAN COLIN LOMNIZTER

needed to simplify it. He came to understand that to be a good father, whether biological or spiritual, he first had to learn how to be a good son and listen to God in order to learn what kind of father God was calling him to be.

Colin has had many strong and positive influences that formed his impressions of what it means to be an obedient son, a good and holy Catholic man and a good father. First, there are the priests. Among them he mentioned Msgr. Richard Shea, who was the pastor at St. Catherine of Sienna in Trumbull when he was growing up and with whom he

was always close.

St. Catherine of Sienna's current pastor, Father Joseph Marcello, has provided Colin with friendship, spiritual advice and a holy example as a priest, helping to form for him a healthy impression of the priesthood.

Another priestly influential force was Father Frank Donio, a Palantine priest at CUA, whose example not only encouraged Colin to enter the seminary, but encouraged two of his best friends, as well. From each of the priests mentioned, Colin has grown to understand what the title "Father"

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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# Column: Thomas Hicks



## The Black Carriage

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

*Thomas Hicks is a member of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull.*

**B**ecause I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just  
ourselves  
And Immortality.  
We slowly drove, he knew no haste,  
And I had put away  
My labor, and my leisure too,  
For his civility...  
I first surmised the horses' heads  
Were toward eternity.  
Emily Dickinson

Again it is stern November—"no butterflies, no bees, no fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—November!" (Thomas Hood). The aged year is near its end; proud Winter is close at hand.

All Saints and All Souls Day stand at the door of this month, calling us to remember those that our hearts held dear. More and more are gone. People I thought would never die have died. They

were people with whom I identified myself. They were part of the fabric of my life. Their deaths left great gaping holes. I think of them and moments of lost time. I long for them to be living and to have it all over again.

The heart is sad for vanished hopes. I resonate to that passage from Psalm 23 about walking through the valley of the shadow of death. My belief in heaven has me feeling like someone who is waiting and waited for.

Isaiah 38:12 uses two striking figures for death. "My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver he has rolled up my life, cut me off from the loom." A "shepherd's tent" doesn't stay long in a place. With the thread on the loom, the Weaver weaves the pattern of my life, then detaches the thread from the loom, rolls up the pattern and

takes it with him. There is a limit to the thread allocated to me.

The Roman writer, Seneca, compared life to a role in a play that should satisfy us when it is over, since that is all the Author wrote. One should leave graciously.

At times I do wonder how "Brother Death" will come for me. I pray he will arrange the meeting without much mess or fuss. Dying will be the last thing I'll have the opportunity to do well. I love Therese of Lisieux's reflections on this: "I wonder how I will do when dying. I would like to come off with honor. In my childhood, the great events of my life appeared to me as insurmountable mountains.

When I saw little girls make their First Communion, I said to myself: How will I do at my First Communion? Later: How will I do at entering Carmel? And afterwards: at taking the habit? At making profession? At present, it's How will I do at dying?"

We are children of earth, who die. "Who will save himself from the grasp of the grave?" (Psalm 89:50).

A man named John DuBos (died 1742) cleverly said: "Something that should console

us when dying is the memory of our stupidities and the assurance that they are now going to stop."

There's a prayer by a man name Ernest Hello. It's a prayer to the angel Raphael, the guide of Tobias, a prayer very appropriate for November and All Saints and All Souls Day. The prayer goes: "I feel lonely and tired, crushed by the separations and sorrows of life. O Raphael, guide of Tobias, lead me toward those whom I am waiting to see again, those who are waiting for me. Oh, the rapture of that meeting; Oh, the joy to see me coming."

There's an American Indian tribe named the Athabaskan where the custom is for the dying person to make his/her last word the word "goodbye" which is *Tiaa*, which literally means "See you."

I hope I can die in harness. Till then I expect, now and then, to feel Death touch my shoulder and say: "Live—I'm coming." Life is to be lived, and it seems nearly incomprehensible to think of life continuing its ways without me. But sooner or later, I'll hear the Banshee, I'll open the door, I'll see the black carriage "kindly stopped for me," maybe wet with rain. ■

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#### SEMINARIAN FROM PAGE 31

means in a spiritual sense.

He is also grateful for the significant influence the religious, particularly the Marian Community of Reconciliation, professed women religious in Trumbull. While a teen, Colin became involved in their youth ministries.

Family and friends made at CUA have been very supportive of his decision to enter the seminary.

When asked about the obstacles that might be preventing men and women from considering a vocation to the priesthood or reli-

gious life, "It is due," he thinks, "to a lack of urgency in how we live our lives." Society offers the lure of comfort that can distract us from the fact of our mortality.

While he develops his prayer life and continues his discernment journey, Colin knows that he is not alone. "It takes a community to form a vocation," he says out of gratitude for the support he has been given.

(For more on vocations, visit [www.bridgeportvocation.org](http://www.bridgeportvocation.org). For Serra Club of Bridgeport, go to [www.facebook.com/serrabridge](http://www.facebook.com/serrabridge).) ■

#### What you can do to encourage vocations

Here are some suggestions from Deacon David Flynn about what you can do to encourage vocations:

Pray for the seminarians.

Pray for an increase in vocations.

Continue to support the seminarians with Serra Club of Bridgeport' activities. That support is very meaningful to them.

Help people understand that a vocation is something that "normal people" do. Normal people love Christ.

When you meet someone who is considering the priesthood or religious life, encourage them to speak to a priest and to frequently attend Mass and Confession.

# Column: Joe Pisani



## To discover God's will, just ask

### SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

*Joe Pisani has been a writer and editor for 30 years.*

**Y**ears ago when I was teaching religion in junior high school, the topic turned to God's will, which can be a pretty daunting subject even for adults like Augustine and Aquinas, never mind adolescents.

I thought I'd done a pretty good job explaining it to 32 seventh-graders, until a hand shot up in the back of the class and young Beth Quigley proceeded to tell the story of a woman who walked out into the street and was hit by a car and died.

REMEMBERING  
FROM PAGE 28

the Lord of all. "We prayed the Rosary together," he wrote in a moving Facebook reflection, "to give testimony to our belief that God's love does not abandon us even in our darkest hours of pain and suffering."

The bishop further reflected that "it is hard to reconcile the fact that human beings are capable of so much evil and destruction. And yet, it is there to see, in silence, with your own eyes."

He added: "May the memory of those who died there be a catalyst to bring the world to true peace and reconciliation. It is a prayer that we need now more than ever."

At a local Holocaust observance in Fairfield in 2015, Bishop Caggiano joined interfaith leaders in prayer and also honored elderly victims of the Holocaust who turned out for the service. He told them that when he and his mother watched "Schindler's List" in a Brooklyn movie theater, she reacted in words simple yet profound. Speaking in her native Italian, she said: "Non dobbiamo mai dimenticare." "We must never forget."

Dan Latowicki would agree. ■

"Was that God's will?" she asked. "Or was it fate?"

I understood how the ancient Greeks must have felt when Socrates was laying his trap for them as they debated on the streets of Athens. I stuttered, I started to perspire, and I probably blurted out something like "It's not easy to tell what God's will is." Then, I detoured the discussion to something less perplexing like the sacraments.

"Beth, if you can't remember the Seven Sacraments, how can you comprehend God's will?"

It was a bad response. Years later, I realize God's will for us is easier to understand than the 2,300 pages of the Affordable Care Act, and yet we agonize as if it's indecipherable and we need

a divine Rosetta Stone to crack the code and make sense of our lives.

Many people I know talk about their "destiny" and "fate" as if they're characters in an Arthurian legend, a Greek myth or the Game of Thrones. Others trust their horoscopes more than God's will. I don't believe in horoscopes or fate, but I believe in God's personally tailored plan for each of us.

The spiritual writer Carlo Carretto, commenting on the path that led him to become a Little Brother of Jesus and go into the solitude of the desert, once wrote, "Herein is contained the mystery of the history of our salvation ... invited and impelled by a force which, when we do not recognize it, we call fate, but which, when we are clear about it and aware, we call the will of God. Do you believe that everything is part of a plan, a design, an intervention of God in our affairs? I do. And I am convinced that God's love can transform the darkness of a disaster or the irrationality of an earthquake into an event that can influence or even completely change our lives."

I've known family members

and friends who look at their lives, scratch their heads and wonder what it's all about. What's their destiny? Some are celebrating, some are suffering. Many of them fell into careers or go from job to job pursuing a pay check while the true purpose of their lives eludes them.

Others knew their so-called destiny from an early age because their parents told them. They were achievers and over-achievers marked for greatness in the eyes of their families and society, and they eventually achieved prominence, prestige and wealth. But did they achieve as much in the eyes of God?

God's ways are not man's ways. He has a unique plan that existed before time for each of us, and it doesn't necessarily involve acclaim and material success. Nevertheless, it can involve great things because when we commit to God's will, he can turn our small acts of obedience into unimaginably tremendous spiritual accomplishments. Regardless of your vocation or profession, if you seek God's will, you have purpose; and if you don't seek God's will, no vocation or profession however respected is as

meaningful and productive as it should be.

Our world exalts power and celebrity, but the greatest achievements in salvation history often result from the efforts of humble people—homemakers, bank tellers, bricklayers and Uber drivers, who've turned their will and lives over to God.

Accepting God's will means taking Christ with us moment by moment and asking him what he wants us to do in every situation. He'll tell us, but to hear him, we have to pray, sit in silence and listen.

If we say "yes" to his plan for us, he'll put people in our path, situations in our lives, and opportunities in our day to bring Christ to others. Does that sound simplistic? It's simple, but not simplistic. God's will has an immeasurable purpose in human and spiritual terms—nothing less than saving souls. God is counting on each of us. Really.

As I often tell my daughters, God has a plan for your lives and it's better than your plan. To discover what it is, all you have to do is ask. His plan is your true destiny and the source of happiness. There's no other. ■

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# Bits and Pieces

**MOMs+DADs** prayer/support group for those with Down syndrome, their family and friends meets the third Thurs. of every month (**Nov. 16**), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk. For more info, contact strapostolate@optimum.net.

**MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE:** the Charismatic Renewal Services announces a Mass of Healing and Hope on Thurs., **Nov. 16**, at St. Roch Parish, Greenwich, at 7:30 pm with Fr. Larry Carew. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.456.5610.

**DIVORCED AND SEPARATED** Catholics are invited to join "Hearts Renewed," a support group for divorced or separated men and women. Meetings are held in Fairfield on the first and third Fri. of every month (**Nov. 17; Dec. 7**) at 7:30. For more info and for directions, call Bette: 203.338.0503 or Peggy: 203.834.1287.

**THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN** Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Church, Fairfield, on Sat., **Nov. 18**, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass with Fr. Norm Guilbert. Social and meeting follow. For more info, call Pat Heile, OFS: 203.255.8801

or pheile5713@aol.com.

**KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA** will hold their monthly Mass and meeting Sun., **Nov. 19**, at 12 noon at St. George Parish, Bridgeport. For more info, call 203.878.0519.

**ST. CATHERINE'S PLAYERS** announces audition calls for its 2018 production of Shrek The Musical! Open auditions will be held on Tues., **Nov. 28**, and Wed., **Nov. 29**, at St. Catherine Parish, Riverside. Elementary and middle school students, 7:30; high school students and adults, 8:30 pm. Come with a prepared song and sheet music. For more information about roles, or to volunteer, visit [www.stcatherinesplayers.com](http://www.stcatherinesplayers.com) or email [stcatherinesplayers@gmail.com](mailto:stcatherinesplayers@gmail.com).

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP** begins a nine-week session Thurs., **Nov. 30**, from 7:30-9 pm at St. Thomas More Parish, Darien. No charge; registration necessary. For more info, call Lillian Toll: 203.966.9367 or the parish office at 203.655.3303.

**COME HOLY SPIRIT!** Parish Community Rally at St. Patrick Parish, Redding, will take place on Sat., **Dec. 2**, starting with lunch at noon; end the day with Adoration and Mass at 5:15. No charge; no reservation

needed. This rally is in response to the scourge of the present state of drug and alcohol addiction that is destroying families and youth. Led by John Hamilton, speaker Dom Quaglia and singer-songwriter Sarah Kroger. For more info, contact the parish: 203.938.2253 or [www.stpatred-ding.org](http://www.stpatred-ding.org).

**DRAMA CLUB** at Notre Dame High School, Fairfield, will present 12 Angry Jurors on Fri., **Dec. 1**, at 7 pm at Our Lady of Assumption Parish in Fairfield. Tickets sold at the door: \$3 students; \$5 adults). For more info, contact Theresa Marzik: [tmarzik@notredame.org](mailto:tmarzik@notredame.org) or call 203.372.6521.

**VENDORS/CRAFTERS** wanted for a Holly fair at St. Margaret Mary Parish, Shelton, Sat., **Dec. 2**, from 9 am-4 pm. Table rental: \$30. For more info or for rentals, contact Sharon: 203.305.6503 or [smwspicer@gmail.com](mailto:smwspicer@gmail.com).

**TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS** is celebrated at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, the first Sun. of each month (**Dec. 3**) at 4 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

**JOIN IN PRAYING** the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for Persecuted Christians from your home/car/office the first Tues. of every month (**Dec. 5**) at 7 pm. How? Before 7 pm, call 877.216.5269 and type in the pin number 96869.

**HOLY HOUR:** Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury, (18-35), will gather on Tues., **Dec. 5**, at 6:45 pm for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, followed by a social. For more info, email [catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com](mailto:catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com).

## Young Adult Mass with the Bishop

**BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO** invites all young adults (ages 18-35) in the Diocese of Bridgeport to Mass at 7:30 pm on Thurs., **Dec. 7**, at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford to celebrate the vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy Day of Obligation. Prior to Mass, beginning at 6:30 pm there will be Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with worship music and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After Mass, there will be a reception in the basement. For more info, call Evan Psencik, in the Office of Faith Formation: 203.416.1649, or visit [www.conncatholics.org](http://www.conncatholics.org).

**HANDEL'S MESSIAH**, Part I and Hallelujah Chorus led by Ted Spelling with the Stamford Symphony at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, Stamford, on Sat., **Dec. 9**, at 8 pm. Tickets: \$25. For more info or for tickets, call 203.325.4466 or go to [stamfordsymphony.org](http://stamfordsymphony.org).

**GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY** meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (**Dec. 9**) at 10 am following the 9 am Respect Life Mass. For more info, contact John Juhasz: 203.762.3661 or [juhaszjw@optonline.net](mailto:juhaszjw@optonline.net).

**THE BOOK OF RUTH**, a presentation by Fr. Ed Colohan, will be offered at Holy Family Parish, Fairfield, on Sat., **Dec. 9**, from 9:30 am to 12 noon in the parish center. Those attending should read the four chapters of Ruth. Bring your Bible. No charge. Space limited; registration needed. To register, call 203.336.1835.

**THE MIRACLE OF FATIMA MUSICAL** is coming to the Bridgeport Diocese! Produced by Christopher Blair and Barbara Oleynick, the musical will play at St. Andrew Church, Bridgeport, every other Sunday from **May 13-Oct. 14**. All audition information is available at [www.fatima100yrs.com](http://www.fatima100yrs.com). Upload your audition file or send YouTube link by Fri., **Dec. 15**, to: [barbara.oleynick@fatima100yrs.com](mailto:barbara.oleynick@fatima100yrs.com).

**HANDEL'S MESSIAH**, Part I, and favorite Christmas carols will be presented by the choirs of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, on Sun., **Dec. 17**, at 4 pm, accompanied at the organ by Dr. Aymeric Dupré la Tour and directed by Dr. Carolina Flores. Free admission. For more info, call the parish: 203.261.3676.

**LITHUANIAN CHRISTMAS EVE:** the Knights of Lithuania of St. George Parish, Bridgeport, will celebrate Kucios on Sun., **Dec. 17**, at 12 noon with a Mass and luncheon. For reservations, call 203.878.0519.

**ENCOURAGE** apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions or gender ID confusion holds confidential meetings monthly. For more info email [EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com](mailto:EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com).

**COURAGE** apostolate provides pastoral care and support for men and women who experience same-sex attractions and want to live chaste lives. Confidential meetings are held weekly. For more info call 203.803.1564 or email [Courage@diobpt.org](mailto:Courage@diobpt.org).

**PROJECT RACHEL:** Are you or someone you know carrying the pain and sorrow of losing a child to abortion? Call our confidential phone line: 203.895.3554 or 203.416.1619, or email [projectrachel@diobpt.org](mailto:projectrachel@diobpt.org). God's mercy, healing and forgiveness are waiting for you!



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love endures  
forever.”**

—1 Chronicles 16:34

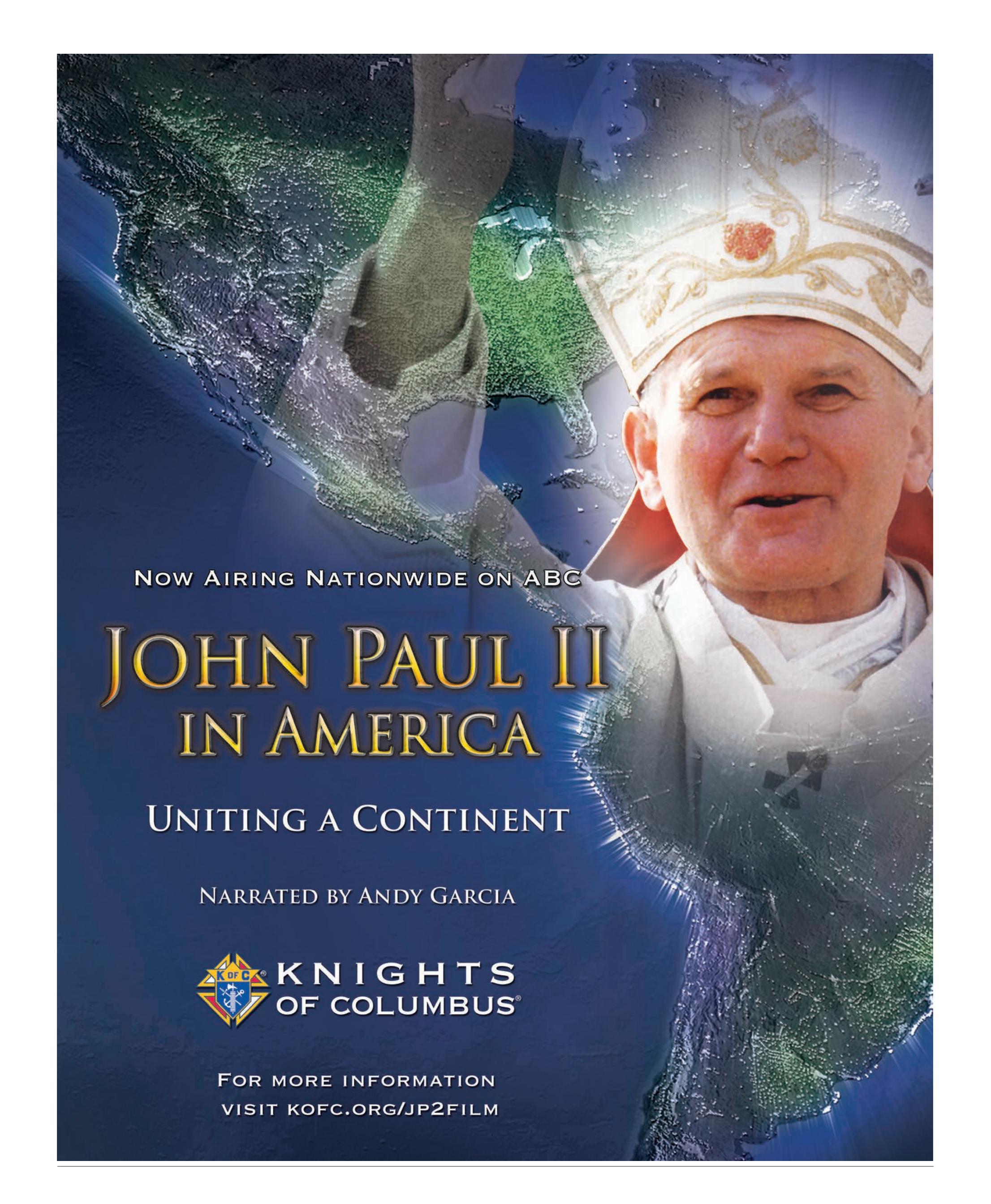
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