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Fan the Fire

Youth Rally united over 340 teens in worship

TRUMBULL—The annual Fan the Fire event joined together over 340 teens from diocesan middle and high schools on August 19 to discover or deepen their relationship with Christ.

St. Joseph High School was the new host to this year’s rally. “Holy is His Name” was the theme for the event filled with prayer, adoration, inspiration and fun for the participants. Teens chose from several breakout sessions on prayer, Scripture, vocations, and relationships.

This year, a new addition and big highlight was a Catholic Service Corps service project called CRS Helping Hands, for which over 30,000 meals were packed and shipped overseas to our Burkina Faso, Africa.

Speakers included Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who delivered the morning keynote speech on Mary as the model of holiness, and Dom Quaglia, a nationally known Catholic speaker and former LifeTeen youth minister, who spoke in the afternoon.

Music was provided by Catholic artist Sarah Kroger and the Diocesan Youth Choir, C4Y, during the afternoon Eucharistic Adoration and closing Mass, at which Father Mike Novajosky, spiritual director and chaplain at St. Joseph High School, was the main celebrant.

“The entire day was incredible!” said Caroline Taylor, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas youth group in Fairfield. “Bishop Caggiano’s speech was so inspirational, and the way he spoke really kept me engaged the whole time! After that, Sarah and Dom, the musician and MC, helped me with what to expect in a future relationship.”

Armed with that stimulus, Caroline was able to take her faith to a new level. “Adoration brought me closer to God, and I had a really good conversation with him.”

(Fan the Fire is sponsored by the Faith Formation Office and the Diocesan Leadership Institute.)
By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The September 23 pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for a day of prayer and worship is shaping up to be another historic day in the life of the diocese. Almost 1,000 faithful from the diocese have already signed up to travel on one of the buses leaving from many points throughout Fairfield County, and others are expected to make the drive for the day. People from other dioceses across the country will now join in the pilgrimage, which will be broadcast live by EWTN, the global Catholic network.

According to Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute, which is coordinating the day, many parishes, schools and ecclesial movements throughout the diocese have reserved their own buses in addition to those that are scheduled to depart at 7 am from St. Jude Parish in Monroe, the Catholic Center in Bridgeport and Trinity High School in Stamford. They are expected to return at 11:30 pm on the same day.

“We have been blessed by the enthusiastic and prayerful response to major diocesan events such as the synod and the consecration of the diocese, which were both joyful and memorable events” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “We pray that our pilgrimage to the National Shrine also proves to be a singular day in the life of the diocese as we move forward together in faith and renewal.”

Earlier this year, when he announced plans for the pilgrimage, the bishop said, “The pilgrimage encourages everyone to become missionary disciples with me, and to invite their friends, family and neighbors to deepen their faith and their relationship with the Lord.”

The bishop said that through prayer and pilgrimage people can find “a joyful heart, a more optimistic view, and the energy to make a difference in the world.”

In a video invitation on his Facebook page, Bishop Caggiano invited people of all ages to join him on the pilgrimage.

“The purpose of a pilgrimage is to break from the ordinary routine and spend time in prayer and gratitude. It is prayer in motion,” the bishop said, noting that the one-day pilgrimage will be “a journey into the beauty, mystery and power of prayer.”

Diocesan pilgrims are expected to arrive at the basilica grounds at 1 pm, with Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano at 2 pm, followed by a procession and dedication of a new outdoor Rosary Path and shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. The new shrine, created in a national effort led by Bishop Caggiano, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, where she asked them to pray the Rosary.

The diocesan pilgrimage grew out of the “Face of Prayer” campaign launched by the bishop earlier this year to encourage youth and people of all ages to deepen their prayer life.

“It is also a continuation of the renewal called for by the Fourth Diocesan Synod,” Donovan said.

Donovan said he would like to see more than 1,500 people make the trip to D.C. for a day of prayer. The Mass at the National Basilica on September 23 will be covered live by EWTN.

(To register, pay online and indicate what location you would like to board and return to on the bus, email thefaceofprayer@diobpt.org, or call: 203.416.1670. Those who would prefer to travel to Washington D.C. on Friday and stay overnight before the pilgrimage can make a reservation through Little Flower Tours and Travel. Call toll free: 888.843.7373. Visit www.thefaceofprayer.com)

Priest Convocation set for October

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano is asking for prayers as he and priests throughout the diocese prepare to meet at the Fifth Convocation of Priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport from Sunday, October 15, through Wednesday, October 18.

The convocation is held every three years and more than 200 diocesan priests are expected to attend the three-day retreat to be held in Newport, Rhode Island.

“Of One Heart and Mind: Brothers United in Christ,” is the theme of this year’s convocation.

In the invitation letter to priests, Bishop Caggiano said, “The convocation is meant to strengthen the fraternal bonds among us and to contribute to our spiritual formation as we continue to work toward renewal. I am confident that our time together in fraternity and prayer will bear much good fruit.”

Conference speakers include Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of the diocese of Brooklyn; notated Catholic blogger Deacon Greg Kandra; and Mother Olga Yaqob, DMN, foundress of the Daughters of Mary of Nazareth.


Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, said that Mass will not be celebrated in most parishes throughout the diocese from Monday through Wednesday (September 16, 17, 18); however, members of the Jesuit Community at Fairfield University and religious order priests will be available for sacramental emergencies.

Committee members who have joined in planning the convocation are Father Rolando Arias, Father Sam Kachuba, Father Peter Lynch, Father Thomas Thorne, Msgr. Andrew Varga, Sister Nancy Stirlacci and Father Joseph Marcello.

“The convocation experience benefits each priest spiritually and emotionally and also promotes understanding and collaboration,” Msgr. Powers said. “It’s a time of renewal and inspiration for our priests, who will return with an even greater commitment to serve.”

Bishop James Massa is an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn, where he currently holds the position of moderator of the curia and vicar for education. He is the past executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, with responsibilities to coordinate the official ecumenical and interreligious dialogues between the Catholic Church in the United States and its partner religious communities. Having completed his undergraduate work at Boston College, Bishop Massa pursued graduate studies in theology at Yale Divinity School and Fordham University.

Bishop Massa was born in Jersey City, N.J., and graduated from Boston College with a bachelor’s degree in theology and history in 1982. In 1985, he earned a master of divinity degree from Yale University, and in 1997, a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Fordham University. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn on October 25, 1986.

Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart, founder and mother servant of the Daughters of Mary of Nazareth, was born and raised in Iraq. She lived through four wars. She started a lay movement called Love Your Neighbor. She invited ➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 23
Growing up, my family was only sort of interested in faith. We’d go to church and pray occasionally. I went through CCD, but was never really interested in what I was learning. When I was old enough, my mom forced me to go to youth group, so I added that into the mix too. Even with all of the boxes checked, I was never really into faith and Church.

But that all changed for me when I began high school. I started at Kolbe Cathedral in Bridgeport, my first Catholic school experience. In my sophomore year, I took a theology class with the school chaplain, Father John Ringley. Boy, was that class tough! Father Ringley taught us everything we ever needed to know about Catholicism: Church history, saints, symbolism, sacramental theology, prayers, and so much more.

In that class, while I sat taking notes, I started to ask myself why I did not do and believe what I was being taught. I learned that Catholics go to Mass every Sunday and go to Confession, that Catholics believed certain things were right and others were wrong. I was led to ask myself, “If I’m a Catholic, and Catholics believe that, why don’t I?”

In the midst of this period of self-examination, I was invited to participate in Convivio. There was momentum building for me to go to Confession; I decided to go because there were priests from all over hearing Confessions, so I would probably never see that particular priest again, right?

I took my Examination of Conscience booklet and hid so that no one would see what I was marking down. When it came my turn, I sat down and began my Confession by reading from the book without looking up. When I finished, the priest looked at me and said, “Well, praise God for a good and holy Confession!”

He proceeded to ask me questions: Where these things were coming from and why they were coming up? This was the first time in my short Confession history that a priest had taken an interest in me, which struck me. But what struck me more was when Father, after my Act of Contrition (which I had just learned in class!) and absolution, looked at me and asked if I had ever considered a vocation to the priesthood.

I wanted to burst out laughing! Me, who just listed all the awful things I’d done? He must not have heard anything I said! No way I could be a priest. Rather than saying all of that, I simply said that I hadn’t. He responded, “OK. Well, I don’t ask everyone, but something told me I should ask you.”

Leaving the retreat that weekend, the thought came back to me more than once, though I tried my hardest to make it disappear. So I decided to think about what had happened. I chose to believe that Father really didn’t ask everyone, because he told me he didn’t. If that was true, what made him ask me? I remembered learning that, in Confession, the priest is sitting in the person of Christ (in persona Christi), so it isn’t the priest who is there forgiving your sins, it’s Jesus. So in that confessional, it wasn’t the priest asking me to consider priesthood, but Jesus himself. And if the Lord was asking me to think about the priesthood, how could I say no to him?

And so my discernment started. On a diocesan discernment retreat, I discovered that before one knows to what God is calling one, one must know God. So I started to go to Mass every Sunday, go to Confession and youth group, pray and read Scripture more often. Growing in my faith, I became more and more sure of my vocation, of where the Lord was leading me. In my senior year of high school, I applied to the seminary.

So four years later, here I am, could I say no to him?

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Sacred Heart University

‘Transformational’ growth at SHU

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

When asked what makes him most proud in his work as president of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Dr. John Petillo doesn’t mention the record growth in student enrollment or the impressive number of first-class buildings and programs the university has unveiled in the last five years.

“The involvement of the students and the sense of community we’ve built here,” he says immediately from his office in the Thomas Melady Administration Building. “We have a close-knit student body and a culture of friendship, service and tolerance.”

Dr. Petillo, who often takes time to stop in the cafeteria and have lunch with students, has also been deeply moved by their compassion for others and the way they pull together as a community in good times and in crisis. What’s remarkable about Sacred Heart’s sense of community is that it has thrived alongside the explosive growth of the campus, which has led the Chronicle of Higher Education to rank it as one of “the fastest growing Roman Catholic colleges in the country.”

The university now numbers more than 8,500 students who are seeking degrees and certificates in a growing number of undergraduate and graduate programs in arts, business, education, health, communications, computer gaming and other areas of study.

“We’re a very serious learning community,” says Dr. Petillo, who noted that this year’s commencement ceremony numbered more than 2,000 grad and undergrad students.

“We filled Webster Bank Arena,” says Dr. Petillo proudly, “and for the first time, we had more graduate degrees than undergrads. That’s a significant move forward for the university.”

Based on the university’s strategic plan, Dr. Petillo would like to see enrollment grow to 10,000, and he believes that goal is within reach in the next couple of years.

SHU opens new Center for Healthcare Education

FAIRFIELD—After nearly two years of construction, Sacred Heart University’s new Center for Healthcare Education is ready to open.

Staff and faculty from the College of Health Professions and College of Nursing have moved into the state-of-the-art building, and students will begin their studies with the latest technology and modern features there this fall. The official unveiling will be Friday, September 22, at 11 am, and healthcare workshops and lectures will take place throughout the year to celebrate the new facility and inform the community about the importance of health care.

For years, the College of Health Professions and College of Nursing operated at the Cambridge building in Trumbull. Construction crews broke ground on the new site in June 2015 and built the three-story, 120,000-square-foot center and 50,000-square-foot parking garage that both sit on 8.7 acres of land. The building was designed by SLAM, a national architectural firm based in Glastonbury and is a $65 million investment for the university. SLAM is also working on the University of Notre Dame’s Campus Crossroads project.

“The expanded space and updated equipment will offer new opportunities for learning and ensure that students graduate well prepared and ready to make their mark in the booming health care sector.”

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Diocesan News

Relics of St. Pio to visit

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will celebrate a Mass in honor of St. Pio on Sunday, September 24, at 10 am at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull.

The relics will also be at Basilica of St. John the Baptist in Stamford on September 22 and 23.

The following relics will be available for public veneration: St. Pio’s glove; crutches of his wounds; cotton-gauze with his blood stains; a lock of St. Pio’s hair; St. Pio’s mantle; and a handkerchief soaked with his sweat hours before he died.

God’s grace will fall in the world.

Father Gannon expects substantial numbers of people for the veneration and Mass. About 8,000 came to St. Theresa’s two years ago for the major relics of St. Maria Goretti. The same this time. “Padre Pio is so well known and loved, and many people are devoted to him,” he said.

St. Pio was born on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, Italy, and baptized Francesco Forgione. He first expressed his desire for priesthood at age 10. In order to pay for the preparatory education, his father, Grazio Forgione, emigrated in the United States.

He received the full stigmata. It remained with him until his death on September 23, 1968.

He first expressed his desire for sainthood—part of the person’s body or something with which he or she was in contact. Relics are not worshiped, but treated with religious respect. Touching or praying in the presence of such an object helps a faithful individual focus on the saint’s life and virtues, so that through the saint’s prayer or intercession before God, the individual will be drawn closer to God.

Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, pastor of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, will celebrate a Mass in honor of Padre Pio on Saturday, September 23, at 7:30 pm.

“I feel very blessed in several ways to be a part of this,” said Father Gannon, who will be a concelebrant with Bishop Caggiano. “First, to have a great saint’s relics to come to St. Theresa to encourage a deeper devotion to our Lord, and second, because Padre Pio’s stigmata is a constant reminder to us of the wounds of Our Lord and how we are redeemed by his wounds.”

Father Gannon added a personal note for priests too. “As a priest, Padre Pio is a firm reminder of what all of us priests are called to be—to look out for the salvation of souls, be charitable, loving and absolutely devoted to the truth of the Church.”

“The future saint entered the Capuchin order at age 15, taking the name Pio. He was ordained a priest in 1910 at the age of 23. During his lifetime, Padre Pio was known as a mystic with miraculous powers of healing and knowledge. He bore the stigmata, wounds an individual receives that correspond to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ.

His stigmata emerged during World War I, after Pope Benedict XV asked Christians to pray for an end to the conflict. Padre Pio had a vision in which Christ pierced his side. A few weeks later, on September 20, 1918, Jesus again appeared to him, and he received the full stigmata. It remained with him until his death on September 23, 1968.

Father John Paul II canonized him in 2002.

In the Catholic Church, relics are physical objects associated with a saint or candidate for sainthood—part of the person’s body or something with which he or she was in contact. Relics are not worshiped, but treated with religious respect. Touching or praying in the presence of such an object helps a faithful individual focus on the saint’s life and virtues, so that through the saint’s prayer or intercession before God, the individual will be drawn closer to God.

New Service Corps director

“We want to awaken in young people a desire to serve, and connect active service to their faith in Jesus Christ,” said Jessica Nayden, the new coordinator of the Catholic Service Corps (CSC) for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Nayden is a life-long resident of Fairfield County who began serving the Church in the Diocese of Bridgeport after graduating from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, in 2008. She has been the youth minister at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield since 2009 and served as a theology teacher and as the director of Campus Ministry and Christian Service at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull from 2010-17.

“When I was at St. Joe’s, we would connect students with service opportunities like working in at the Thomas Merton Center, serving meals and working in the Thrift Shop, which provides clients with clothing and household items at a nominal price. It was an eye-opening experience with them,” she said.

Nayden is passionate about sharing the love of Christ with young people, and is thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the Catholic Service Corps. Their first event for the new season came at the Fan the Fire youth rally, held in August on the grounds of St. Joseph High School. The CSC volunteers teamed up with Catholic Relief Services and led an assembly line to help teens pack 30,000 meals destined for Burkina Faso in West Africa, which suffers from cyclical droughts and flooding. The youth poured and measured grain and a nutritious mix of foodstuffs into portions to be supplied to families most in need.

“In all of this, our theme is ‘Love Makes the Difference,’” Nayden said. “That’s going to be our Twitter hashtag, too. It says everything about us.”

She added that a new website, coming soon, will have a catalog of service opportunities that individuals can reference. “We will also have organized service projects for the entire diocese, as well as regional projects for the deaneries. All youth and young adults will be able to participate in CSC events, and they will also have access to online theological reflections to help them connect acts of service to their Catholic faith.”

Nayden currently lives in Bridgeport with her husband, Robby, and their son Leo.

“Follow the Catholic Service Corps on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook at @CSCBpt. It will also be featured on the new website for youth and young adults: www.thechurchneedsyou.com.”

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September 2017
EDITORIAL

Joyful educators

Energy. Commitment. Technology. Excellence. Above all, faith. The atmosphere at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport pulsed with enthusiasm as principals and teachers gathered for the start of the new school year.

School teachers, whether in public or Catholic schools, are dedicated to their students. That’s why we trust them with the care of our children. Catholic school educators bring something extra to the classroom: eagerness to be part of the educational process; a feeling that their opinions and experience matter; enthusiasm for the possibilities offered by the latest innovations; and a freedom to express their faith and the desire to enrich that faith in the youngsters who will soon be in charge of our world.

“You are strong, visionary leaders,” said Superintendent of Catholic Schools Dr. Steven Cheeseman when he greeted the educators. “I know that you are well prepared to lead the way to educating the students in knowledge, faith and service.”

His confidence is well placed. In their meetings, administrators and teachers alike looked forward with joy to the challenges of the coming year. So can their students, parents, and all those who look to these educators to develop well-formed, faith-filled leaders for the next generation.

Join the Pilgrimage!

There’s still time to sign up for the diocesan pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D. C. on Saturday, September 23. The National Basilica is one of the most magnificent and beautiful churches in the country, and a fitting place for our diocese to gather in prayer and worship.

Those who were blessed to participate in the Synod Closing Mass in 2015 and the Consecration of the Diocese to the Sacred Heart last November know the feeling of joy, prayerfulness and unity that descended on the diocese at these historic and beautiful liturgies.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano now extends another invitation to join him in a pilgrimage that further the renewal of the diocese, and we hope Catholics throughout the diocese join him. Already more than 1,000 have registered to attend, but there’s room for many more!

Bishop Caggiano has described pilgrimage as “prayer in motion,” and asks us to “break the ordinary routine” by taking this road trip to a place of greater prayer, gratitude and reflection.

The one-day event will include 2 pm Mass with the bishop, followed by a procession to the new Outdoor Rosary Garden and Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima and the visionaries on the 100th anniversary of her appearance. For registration and payment information, email thefaceofprayer@diobpt.org Or call: 203.416.1670

Spiritual Eclipse

The recent solar eclipse seemed to gather the nation at the intersection of science and faith. Among those transfixed by the solar event were diocesan employees who assembled on the large front terrace of the Catholic Center and watched the eclipse through special glasses, colanders and other contraptions as the sun was erased over a line of oak trees.

It may have been the most photographed eclipse in human history. While much was written about it, very few commentators achieved the spiritual insight recorded by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in this reflection from his Facebook page:

“Despite both the scientific lessons that can be taught to our children about the beauty of the solar system and the sheer curiosity of the event, I find the fascination that people have for the eclipse to be instructive. We ordinarily take for granted the power and necessity of sunlight in our lives. Without such light, life would not be possible. How often do we express thanks to the Lord for something so basic as the light around us? Yet, it is only when such light is blocked do we pay any attention to it. On days such as these, we would do well to pause and express our thanks to our gracious God who has given us the warmth and power of light—a gift that we often take for granted.”

EDITOR’S CHOICE

Relief headed to Texas

NORWALK—Msgr. Walter Orłowski, pastor of St. Matthew Parish, is driving one of three supply trucks down to Texas the first week in September. Msgr. Orłowski is asking parishioners and community members to donate non-perishables including bottled water, soap, shampoo, razors, Clorox, paper towels, and toilet paper.

Special Collection

Second collections to assist families who are in dire need of food, water, clothing and shelter, especially in the cities of Houston and Rockport, will be taken in parishes throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano asked pastors to hold voluntary collections on either the weekend of September 9-10 or September 16-17.

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

The following Deacons have been appointed to the Diocesan Council:

- Deacon Donald Foust – Deaneys
- Deacon Frank Masso – Deaneys
- Deacon John DiTaranto – Deaneys
- Deacon Donald Naiman – Deaneys
- Deacon Gerald Lambert – Deaneys
- Deacon Daniel Ianniello – Deaneys
- Deacon William Santulli – Deaneys
- Deacon Ernest Jefferes – Deaneys
- Deacon Renato Berzolla – Deaneys

Reverend Joseph A. Marcello
Vicar for Clergy
September 2017

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

RECTOR
REVEREND MARCO PACCIANA, new to Diocese, to Rector of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary, Stamford. Effective date was August 1.

DIOCESE
REVEREND ARTHUR C. MOLLENHAUER, to Defender of the Bond and Promoter of Justice in the Tribunal. Effective date was July 1. Father Mollenhauser will remain as Pastor of Saint Roch Parish, Greenwich.

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR
REVEREND JEFFREY W. COUTURE, to temporary Parochial Administrator, Saint Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury. Effective date was August 15. Father Couture will remain Chaplain at the Newman Center at Western Connecticut State University.

RETIREMENT
REVEREND ANGELO S. ARRANDO, Saint Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury to retirement. Effective date was August 15.

THE FOLLOWING PRIESTS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO THE DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSION:
- Reverend Brian P. Gannon
- Reverend Michael P. Novajosky

THE FOLLOWING PRIESTS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO THE COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS:
- Reverend Juan-Gabriel Acosta
- Reverend Francisco Gomez-Franco

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**Editorial**

Bishop Caggiano delivers the good news to youth

A WOMAN’S VOICE

By Elise Italiano

Elise Italiano is executive director of communications at the Catholic University of America.

O f all the headlines billed for last month’s World Youth Day, Unite in Washington, D.C., I was guessing that the two musicians—Audrey Assad and Tony Melendez—were the biggest draw for the young pilgrims who traveled to the St. John Paul II National Shrine. Assad is a nationally known singer and songwriter who shares personal witnesses about her conversion. Melendez, a Nicaraguan-American born without arms who plays the guitar exclusively with his feet, has performed for international audiences at World Youth Days convened by the past three popes.

Little did I know that the biggest event of the year would be Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of the Diocese of Bridgeport, a shepherd who, though short in stature, is big in heart.

Those who have their pulse on the American Catholic hierarchy tend to follow the prelates responsible for the Church’s response to the biggest social and cultural issues of the day: immigration, religious liberty, the protection of life, marriage and health care.

They’re the topics that dominate religion news headlines. They’re also the issues that people think are so polarizing that they are keeping young people out of the pews.

The Church has another priority that is less contentious but no less important: direct, attentive engagement with the next generation of believers. After hearing his World Youth Day Unite catechesis, it’s clear that Bishop Caggiano needs to play a big part in the American contribution to the World Synod on Youth.

Though from the world’s perspective a 58-year-old cleric might be as far removed as one could be from millennial youth and young adults, he understands the challenges they face when discerning and saying “yes” to God’s plan for their lives. No doubt that why the past two popes booked him at World Youth Days and why he has served as the episcopal advisor for the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry for three years.

At various points during his 30-minute catechesis, I looked to my left and right and saw teens and 20-somethings leaning forward in pews or on the floor with bated breath, hanging on every word—that is, when they weren’t catching their breath between side-stitching fits of laughter.

Once the pope who shares his name, his approach is personal and passionate. He masterfully combined exegesis with personal accounts of his vocation story and invited the participants to share their own takeaways. He looked them directly in the eyes. Anyone in youth ministry knows that building up young people involves both instruction and invitation. That’s the basis for trust, intimacy and response.

Bishop Caggiano seems to think when it comes to youth, it’s best—as he says—to “get down to brass tacks.” They crave the Good News more than anything else: God is love, he loves them in spite of their sins and in their brokenness, and he’s closer to them than they can imagine.

For a generation plagued by anxiety, depression, fear and loneliness, a generation who has endless virtual encounters at the expense of real friendship, the bishop simply delivered the fundamental messages of the Gospel.

Though the controversial issues of our day saturate news and social media, it’s the basic kerygma—God loves me—that makes skeptics into saints.

From that starting point alone young people can ask themselves, “What does God want for my life? How will I respond tomorrow now that I know what I do today?”

Maybe it was his Brooklyn accent that wrapped his talk in warmth or his eyes that sparked with a little bit of mischief. Whatever it was, Bishop Caggiano convinced me and those crammed into a chapel in Washington, that even though “life will give us a thousand reasons to doubt God’s love,” there is still yet good news.

Don’t yubbleswedge da ha$$bleetz.

A DAD’S VIEW

By Matthew Hennessey

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

The commute was bearable, but at my desk I noticed something amiss. My typing fingers didn’t work anymore. They managed to find their starting positions—asdfkl;—the way sleepwalkers can tie their shoes in the dark. But when the order was given to match, my hands simply flipped around the keyboard like a pair of slippery Virginia hams.

The clear lake water must have shorted a circuit in my primary motor cortex. By midmorning things had mostly corrected themselves. Apologies, however, if you received an e-mail asking if you remembered how to yubbleswedge da ha$$bleetz. That was the disease talking. I had vacation brain. I’m better now.

Readjusting to regular order is tough enough for an office drone. It’s worse for kids. Do you remember what it was like to visit your grandparents or spend a week in the waves and think, “Why can’t we just live here forever?”

My stock answer to this question is elegant and simple: “Because.”

That’s as satisfying a response as any kid should expect from a parent. Underneath it lie a host of unpleasant truths. Because we can’t afford it. Because we don’t have imagination enough to pull it off. Because if we lived there it wouldn’t be vacation.

Kids can’t handle that much straight truth. “Because” will have to do.

We have a teenager in the house, and a tween, and a pre, and a very vocal four-year-old, and a baby who is fighting the good fight daily for every last scrap of attention he feels he deserves. Regular order produces sibling friction even on the best of days. On Day One post-vacation, the friction is so fraught you can smell the smoke.

“Can you please not do that right up next to me so that all I can hear is you doing that. Ugh. Please? What are you even doing?”

“I’m not doing anything. She was looking at me when I was trying to just sit here and then she blamed it on me and I wasn’t even doing anything.”

The four-year-old chimies in: “Will you pleeeeeece play with me?”

“Archglle beeeeelllaaaaaah llissss.” That’s the baby, in case you didn’t know.

“Maaa-ahhmm. He’s doing it again”

All day that Monday. Less so on Tuesday. Almost not at all on Wednesday. A little on Thursday. By Friday they’d stopped asking why we can’t live by a lake in New Hampshire and started asking whether they could borrow a glass baking dish to make “salad” in the backyard.

You know, regular order. Life. My kids are homeschooled. That doesn’t make the start of the school year any easier on them. School is school. Most kids would rather fold socks than study sentences. My kids are like most kids.

Luckily they have a teacher who loves them unconditionally, and who can tailor lessons to their individual abilities and learning styles (not to mention their blood-sugar levels). The arrangement is especially well-suited for our Magdalena, whose challenges are unique.

It’s hard work for Mrs. Hennessey, but she enjoys it and she’s good at it, which is about the best you could ever hope for from a job. Most office drones don’t have that, although they do get paid a salary, which makes vacation occasionally possible.

Everybody needs a little time away. I think I heard somebody say that. But coming home has its upside. The grind isn’t all bad. Regular order provides a certain amount of comfort.

So long as your careful not to yubbleswedge da ha$$bleetz.
St. Jerome rallies to support parishioner

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Religious and government leaders urged comprehensive immigration reform at St. Jerome Church recently, and said it was time for good people to speak out against policies that are needlessly dividing families.

More than 300 gathered for the early evening vigil on August 8 in support of Jung Courville, a St. Jerome parishioner and mother of two young children who faced deportation at the end of September.

After the meeting, people signed letters that were sent to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and her case has since been re-opened in Philadelphia.

Courville and her husband Richard, owners of a flower shop in Norwalk, were in attendance at the vigil and were mobbed by well wishers after the hour-long event.

“No one is a stranger here,” said Father David Blanchfield, pastor of St. Jerome’s, as he began the vigil with a brief prayer asking to “keep the family together and stop the deportation.”

Father Blanchfield said the couple and their boys attend the 9:15 am Mass at St. Jerome every Sunday morning, and one week he noticed that Richard was agitated and upset.

“When he told me the shocking news, I was horrified and outraged,” he told the gathering. “Our parish is in trouble because one of us is in trouble,” he said. “These people are given, not takers.”

In his remarks to the gathering, Richard Courville said he met his wife Jung in 2000 and they were married three years later. Their oldest son Christian was born in 2004 with spina bifida, a birth defect with incomplete closing of the backbone, and needs the constant care provided by his mother. Richard Jr. was born in 2009. Both boys are students at All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk.

“All life was stripped from me. With feelings of complete powerlessness and hopelessness, I turned my faith to God,” Richard said, thanking Father Blanchfield and parishioners for standing by him.

Courville said he and his wife had hired an immigration attorney in 2003 and have reported to ICE every year since and been granted stays of deportation. Religious leaders who participated in the event said they were troubled by the separation of parents and children under current policy.

“This doesn’t make sense,” said Sister Peg Regan, SSND, who has worked with immigrant women in transition for over 22 years. “Jung has been a worker, mother, neighbor and wife in this community for 17 years,” she said, noting that the deportation order was “cruel and heartless to the family.”

“This is a time when we are in a narrow place,” said Rabbi Michael Friedman of Temple Israel in Westport, “and we need God’s help to redeem us from this narrow place.”

Rabbi Friedman said that no one in the Jewish community is too far from the immigrant experience.

“The Torah says that it’s not right to oppress widows, orphans and strangers. We know what it was like to be strangers in the land of Egypt,” he said.

Rev. Anthony Bennett, pastor of Mt. Aery Baptist Church in Bridgeport, said it was important to move beyond stereotypes and recognize the humanity of immigrants. “We came here tonight to say we are with you. We know what it’s like. You have the right to be here. We love you and will support you.”

He urged people to continue to “bear witness and speak out for comprehensive immigration reform which can be done on a bipartisan basis.”

Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling

Blue Mass set for September 10 in Norwalk

BRIDGEPORT—The annual diocesan Blue Mass honoring fire, police and first responders will be held on Sunday, September 10, at 12 noon at St. Matthew Church, 216 Scribner Avenue, Norwalk.

A reception immediately following Mass will be held in the Masterpool Great Room on the parish grounds.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be the main celebrant, along with diocesan priests who serve as police and fire chaplains in Fairfield County. Father Charles Allen, special assistant to the president of Fairfield University, is serving as chairman of the event.

Law enforcement, fire and emergency medical service personnel of all faiths in Fairfield County, along with members of the general public, are invited to attend the Mass and reception.

“It is always a privilege and honor to recognize our uniformed personnel who put their lives on the line every day to safeguard the community. The Blue Mass commemorates their courage and dedication,” said Father Allen.

This year’s honorees are being recognized for acts of bravery, public service and compassion in the line of duty. Honorees include Officer Maryhelen McCarthy from the Patrol Division of the Newtown Police Department; Weston firefighter and EMT Mark Blake; Norwalk Fire Department firefighter George Baez; Norwalk Police officers Anthony DePanfilis, Matthew Nyquist and José Silva.

The Fairfield County Councils and Assemblies of the Knights of Columbus is sponsoring the Mass again this year.

The Blue Mass takes its name from the blue uniforms worn by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by Bishop William E. Lori, the Blue Mass was initiated to celebrate the life and heroism of those who died during the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. Each year, awards are presented to individual local police, fire and first responders for acts of heroism and public service.

(If you would like to learn more about this event, contact Elizabeth Auda: 203.416.1636 or eauda@diobpt.org.)
Regional schools open in Shelton, Stamford

When schools opened for the fall semester, the new regional schools in Stratford and Shelton showed that Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport is on a strong foundation for the future.

“The administrators of our regional schools are strong, visionary leaders who are committed to Catholic education,” said Superintendent of Catholic Schools Steven Cheeseman.

“They are well prepared to lead the way to educating the students in knowledge, faith, and service. I am confident that our new school will be a vibrant and diverse community of students and families committed to Catholic education.”

The Catholic Academy of Stamford

The Catholic Academy of Stamford, which will open this fall, is a combination of the city’s three elementary and one middle school—Holy Spirit, Our Lady Star of the Sea and Trinity Catholic.

The school will open on the same property as the current Trinity Catholic Middle School, and a new, renovated lower level in the current Trinity High School building, which will accommodate all of the elementary school students.

Pat Brady has served as the Stamford Catholic Education Strategic Planning Committee for the past year and two years ago, he was named principal of Trinity Catholic Middle School.

Dr. Higgins holds a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education from Duquesne University and two master of arts degrees, one in history from Duquesne and another in elementary school administration from St. Louis University.

She has devoted her entire professional career to Catholic education; as a teacher for 14 years and a principal for the last 22 years. Since 2008, she has served as principal of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield. Under Brady’s administration, St. Thomas earned the 2010 National Blue Ribbon of Excellence Award. Brady is a member of the Knights of Columbus and a leukemia survivor.

Upper School Principal Abbey Camillery holds two master of arts degrees, in adolescent education and educating students with disabilities. She was instrumental in creating the Innovation Lab and introducing science, technology, engineering and math programs to Trinity’s curriculum.

Lower School Principal Natalia Cruz holds a master of science degree in childhood education and is currently working towards a dual master’s in building and district school leader. She came to this diocece with two years of experience teaching in Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New York.

New principals named for diocesan schools

By PAT HENNESSY

In addition to the principals appointed to the new Academies in Stamford and Shelton, Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools, has named new principals for Immaculate High School and for three diocesan elementary schools.

“We are grateful to have these experienced and devoted administrators leading our schools,” said Dr. Cheeseman. “They will guide our students on their journey to academic success with a strong moral foundation, prepared to lead the coming generation.”

Immaculate, Danbury

Dr. Patrick Higgins has been named principal of Immaculate High School. The appointment was effective July 1.

“Dr. Higgins has demonstrated success as a teacher and leader at the high school and elementary school levels in both the public and private sector. Most importantly, he is a man of tremendous faith. I believe that he will work collaboratively with the rest of the leadership team to further the mission, vision and future of Immaculate High School,” said Dr. Cheeseman.

Dr. Higgins is a Professionally Certified Connecticut Public Educator with endorsements in social studies and grades pre-K-12 school administration. From 1991 to 2011, he taught college preparatory, advanced and AP social studies courses at Ridgefield High School, and from 2011-13 served as the dean of students and director of student activities at Joel Barlow High School in Redding. Dr. Higgins holds a B.S. in justice and law administration, and an M.A. in history and international relations, as well as an Ed.D. in instructional leadership and education psychology from Western Connecticut State University in addition to a professional teacher certification from Sacred Heart University.

One of Dr. Higgins’ academic goals is to continue building stronger partnerships with area Catholic elementary schools, especially in relation to the subjects of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. This collaboration also applies to universities in Fairfield County. “Along with our excellent and dedicated faculty and staff, we will continue to make Immaculate High School a leader in curricular innovation, instructional delivery and educational excellence for our students,” he said.

Dr. Higgins and his wife Tammy, a Cardiac Nurse Practitioner at Danbury Hospital, have resided in Bethel for 26 years and are parishioners of St. Mary Parish. They have two grown children. For the past 27 years Dr. Higgins has been a Third Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, Pavia Council # 48.

St. Joseph School, Brookfield

Dina Monti has become the new principal of St. Joseph School in Brookfield.

“Dina Monti was the unanimous first choice of the search committee. She is a proven academic leader and is committed to making sure that students will be well prepared for high school and beyond,” said Dr. Cheeseman.

“In addition to her strong academic credentials, she is committed to sharing her deep faith with young people.”

An educator with more than 38 years of experience, Monti taught for 10 years in the Archdiocese of New York before becoming a principal in that school system. She has a total of 26 years as a Catholic school principal. Monti comes to St. Joseph from Stamford, where she has served as principal of both St. Cecilia and Holy Spirit schools. She had previously served as principal at Our Lady of Fatima School in Wilton. She holds a B.S. degree from Fordham University and a master’s in education in school administration and supervision from Iona College.

Monti is a member of St. Jerome Parish in Norwalk.

“I am very excited as I begin to serve as principal here at St. Joseph School in Brookfield,” she says. “I have already met so many wonderful people. I am...”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15
Father Suarez renovates chapel

By PRISCILLA MAHAR

“By placing the Blessed Sacrament at the center of the chapel, I’m reminded that as a priest I must always place Christ at the center of my life” said Father Luke Suarez, who served as chaplain of Notre Dame High School in Fairfield for almost three years.

Father Suarez has taken the position of full time parochial vicar at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull. But before leaving Notre Dame, he was able to provide students with a great gift, a place to better nurture their relationships with Christ, in the form of extraordinary renovations to the chapel at the high school.

In addition to placing the Blessed Sacrament at the center of the chapel, the renovations Father Suarez made included a new altar, main retablo, side shrines for statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph, and repainting. He created all the pieces in his father’s woodworking shop in Virginia. He then spent a week working every day to install them.

Father Suarez credits his woodworking skills to his parents. He and his siblings were home schooled, and he learned carpentry at an early age because, as part of their studies, his parents encouraged him and their other children to “learn a trade” in addition to their regular academic lessons.

Father Suarez used his impressive talents in woodworking to make the renovations possible, but more importantly he saw a need for the students to have a place of refuge where they could pray and be with Christ, and he sought to fulfill that need.

“Our world is so busy. To have a place that is beautiful and quiet helps the students pull away and direct their attention towards God. It reminds them of the truth that God hears them and that they can go and spend time with Jesus. And that they are able to call that out for them.”

He noted that young adulthood and the teenage years are such an important time for growing in one’s faith. As students are transitioning into adulthood and begin to make their own decisions, they’re very receptive to what’s going on around them. Because of the negativity and stress that can be found often in high school settings, it is important that they have a calm, quiet, and holy place in which they can go and spend time with Jesus.

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Father Suarez said that he hopes “through the beauty, comfort and warmth, they are able to find refuge from this crazy, busy life. And that they are also able to focus on the Eucharist and develop a devotion to Our Lady.” He said that all the work he put in is intended to draw attention to Christ. “God was willing to entrust me with the project, simply as a priest who happened to execute it, but it was all him,” he said.

Now that his parting gift to the students is in place, he hopes that when they see the tabernacle at the center of the chapel, they will be reminded to always keep God at the center. This is the message that he hopes that every Catholic will remember: “Place Christ in the center of your life.”
Summer enrichment provides ‘Jump Start’

By SUSAN CECERE

What do you get when you combine an engaging math and language arts program with live animals, an ice cream truck and an 80-foot, three-masted sharpie schooner? One memorable and meaningful summer enrichment program, which at the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport is called “Jump Start.”

Thanks to the generosity of the Paul & Anne-Marie Queally Family Foundation, Jump Start just ended its fourth year, offering five weeks of summer enrichment camp to rising 4th-8th grade students currently enrolled in one of the academy’s four campuses: St. Andrew, St. Ann, St. Augustine and St. Raphael. This year’s program saw enrollment nearly triple from last year, with 110 children participating.

“This year’s Jump Start was bursting with positive energy,” said program coordinator Debra Tarczali. “We are truly blessed to have such generous donors as the Queallys and to experience summer learning through the eyes of our eager, hard-working students.”

Academics have always been the core focus of Jump Start, but this year was amped up with enhanced resources available to both students and faculty. Mathletics offered captivating online learning space, giving students the tools they need to be successful both in and out of the classroom, and Vital Signs strengthened middle school literacy and reading comprehension skills. Students also read high-interest stories and engaging novels. Art and technology classes and relaxation and meditation activities, along with offsite field trips such as a hands-on, science-infused learning experience aboard the schooner SoundWaters, rounded out the program. Gospel values and group prayers also were incorporated into daily activities, and a nutritious lunch was also provided to all.

“I just love the program,” said teacher Peaches Bernard. “It’s wonderful for those students who struggle, as well as those just looking to keep sharp during the summer months. The kids have a chance to build and scaffold their skills while working at their own pace. They are better prepared for the fall and truly get a jump start into the next year’s curriculum.”

Teacher Sue Dorsey agreed. “The novels the students read become a springboard to teach necessary reading skills and to harness the students’ own creativity, while also spurring their urge to write, read additional materials and express themselves through different media.”

Art teacher Karen Heck, computer teacher Joyce Bondos and Dorsey collaborated on culminating activities that grew from the love of a book, a love of literature and a connection that they hope will last a lifetime.

Nataliya, a seventh grade student, said she enjoyed learning history as her class explored a nonfiction novel on Hurricane Katrina. Books also came alive when the students got to see a library firsthand outside their school experience. Fifth-grade student Jeremy enthusiastically recalled, “One day we even got to walk to the Bridgeport Public Library, explore the bookshelves and see the huge reference room. It was amazing!”

To ensure academic growth, math and reading assessments were conducted both pre- and post-program. Students improved their skills significantly.

As the new school year gets under way, one thing is certain. Catholic Academy of Bridgeport students are better prepared and heading into the year with a jump start.

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Foundations opens grant cycle for teachers

BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Education will launch the first round of proposals for Innovation and Leadership Grants for Diocese of Bridgeport teachers and administrators beginning this fall.

“This is our first request for proposals from teachers and educators, and we’re very excited about launching this competitive grant initiative, which holds extraordinary promise for our schools. The grant cycle opens September 15 and closes October 31,” said Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director of Foundations in Education.

Doherty-Lemoine said that, in addition to the better-known Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, Foundations in Education also promotes excellence in school leadership, teaching and learning for educators in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The Foundations grant programs will fund innovation in classroom teaching and provide support for continuing education and leadership formation for teachers and administrators. “We will award $105,000 in grants this first cycle and seek to increase that number substantially in future years,” Doherty-Lemoine said.

Foundations in Education raised over $800,000 earlier this year with a Spring Gala that brought 250 business, education and civic leaders to Woodway Country Club in Darien. They have equally ambitious plans for raising money for innovation and leadership grants, too, which will effectively help transform education in diocesan schools throughout Fairfield County.

Doherty-Lemoine said that the grant process is competitive, and selection will be made by a committee of the Foundations in Education’s board. The Innovation and Leadership Grant Committee is chaired by Dr. Julia McNamara, former president of Albertus Magnus College. Grant applications will be considered for their innovation, creativity, sustainability, likelihood of success and long-term impact on student learning. All submissions will be ranked accordingly.

Leadership grants will support continuing professional education and leadership formation for current faculty and administrators, with an eye to faculty retention and, equally important, to cultivating future administrators for diocesan schools.

Foundations in Education, the vision of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, was incorporated July 14, 2015, as a new not-for-profit foundation whose exclusive mission is to strengthen and transform Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport by supporting innovation in academic and professional development of school leaders and providing scholarship assistance to families in need.

Foundations in Education is now governed by a lay Board of Trustees. Foundations in Education also manages the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, which has awarded $6,933,845 to 4,130 students in diocesan Catholic schools since its inception in 2015. In the past year, the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund awarded nearly $2.5 million in aid to more than 1,240 students at diocesan elementary schools. For the 2017-18 academic year, the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund awarded 1,302 grants totaling $2,582,700.

(To learn how you can support Foundations in Education or to download a grant proposal form, visit the Foundations in Education website: www.foundationsineducation.org. For more information, call Holly Doherty-Lemoine at 203.416.1642.)

BISHOP CURTIS HOMES FROM PAGE 6

with residents paying 30 percent of their income.

“We’ve never taken a property out of affordability restrictions or out of a HUD contract,” said Pearson, who explained that his company expects to renew and extend contract with HUD and work within the long-term contract agreement and regulations that govern subsidized housing.

“You’re probably not going to notice much change, except for the improvements,” Pearson said to residents who turned out for the meetings.

He said that once Related takes over ownership, it will meet with tenants to get their suggestions for improvement.

Related purchased the ten-story, 186-unit Bishop Curtis Homes at 525 Palisades Avenue in Bridgeport from the diocese in 2013 and invested $4 million in upgrades such as new lobby, windows, air conditioning and kitchens.

Related is one of the nation’s largest developers of 80/20 rental housing in New York City, and also boasts award-winning developments in California and Chicago ranging from family, senior, urban, suburban, HOPE VI, SRO and intergenerational. In-house expertise in all disciplines ensures that developments consistently set new standards for creative design and financing and add value to the neighborhoods in which they are located.

The first Augustana Homes was opened by Catholic Charities in 1969 in Bethel and became a model of senior housing throughout the state. The late Joseph Canale of Danbury, former state housing commissioner and president of the board of Catholic Charities, initiated the project with the encouragement of Bishop Curtis.

As the network grew to 11 units throughout Fairfield County, the diocese retained a professional housing concern to manage the facilities.
Caroline House

Low-income families find hope at Caroline House

By JOE PISANI

Lucy Freeman, executive director of Caroline House, tells the story of one of their preschool students who moved from Bridgeport to North Carolina and entered public school. Soon after, they got a call about her performance... it was exceptional and her teachers wanted to know whether Caroline House was a private school!

It was just one of many success stories for the literacy education center in Bridgeport, founded in 1995 by the School Sisters of Notre Dame with the mission of enabling women and children to reach their full potential through education in English language and life skills. Today, three teachers are from the order, while the fourth is from the Congregation of Notre Dame.

Of the 200 families Caroline House serves, most are Hispanic with some French Creole, African and Indian. Freeman said. The programs are directed toward low-income women and children and include English as a Second Language, literacy, life skills, citizenship, preschool, and children’s tutoring.

Freeman said that a primary goal of Caroline House is to break down social and physical isolation that has hindered low-income immigrant women from improving their lives. One woman who took the program was overjoyed because ordinary activities such as going grocery shopping and to the post office, which once intimidated her because she didn’t speak English, are no longer frightening.

Another mother felt relief because she was able to go to her child’s school for a parent-teacher meeting without needing anyone to translate or explain the issues.

One of the most enthusiastic supporters of Caroline House is Bigelow Tea, whose CEO, Cindi Bigelow visited recently to see firsthand the Children’s Summer Tutoring Program, a one-on-one student mentoring program that matches up younger children with older student mentors from local schools and universities. The program assists with basic math and language and is offered free of charge to approximately 50 boys and girls who are either part of the Caroline House’s after-school program or come from Luis Marin Munoz School in the East Side of Bridgeport.

Funds raised through the Annual Bigelow Tea Community Challenge road race support Caroline House, which has received $38,000 since it became a favored charity of the road race in 2008.

“I was so inspired, not only by the Caroline House’s ongoing efforts to help the community, but by the Summer Tutoring Program,” Bigelow said. “The ingenuity and compassion that young tutors demonstrated as they helped younger students understand the fundamentals of math and English was inspiring. In giving generously of their time and talents, they are making a positive difference in our community. I am so proud of each and every one of them and grateful that Caroline House has opened its heart and doors to make programs like this available.”

Freeman said Bigelow Tea has been a donor for almost a decade and Cindi Bigelow has been a great supporter. “She came in to visit and was touched by what we are doing here. Her passion to help people who are underserved is huge.”

Last year the annual Bigelow road race raised $150,000, bringing the total raised since the event began to more than $1.4 million dollars, which has been donated to 21 local charities.

This year, the 30th Annual Bigelow Tea Community Challenge will take place Sunday, September 24 in Southport, rain or shine.

Regional Schools open from page 11

New York. Fluent in Spanish, she has helped build a strong sense of community, especially among the Latino population.

Holy Trinity Catholic Academy, Shelton
The Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton, occupying the campus of the former St. Lawrence School, incorporates three former elementary schools: St. Jude School in Monroe and St. Lawrence and St. Joseph School in Shelton. It has an incoming enrollment of 275 students.

Laura Varrone has been appointed principal of Holy Trinity by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, following his meeting with her and based on the unanimous recommendation of the Search Committee, the Office of the Superintendent, and the Academy Board.

“She comes to us with a tremendous resume and great experience in education and administration,” said Bishop Caggiano. “She also comes as a woman of tremendous Catholic faith and a joyful spirit,” Bishop Caggiano added. “I am delighted to welcome her.”

Varrone grew up in Stratford, where she graduated from St. James School. She has called Shelton her home for a number of years until recently when she moved with her family to Monroe. She, her husband John, and their daughter are members of St. Jude Parish in Monroe, so she is familiar with the entire area covered by the new regional school.

Varrone graduated with a master’s degree from Fairfield University and is currently working on receiving a Ph.D. With a background in school counseling and special education, Varrone was most recently a school administrator responsible for the opening of Wright Tech in Stamford, where she served as director of counseling and admissions. She has experience designing curriculum, scheduling, marketing and enrollment, and working closely with board members and parents to create a successful school experience for students. She has worked in both elementary and high school settings and is truly excited for this new opportunity.

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Barat Center—November 10 at 9:30 a.m.

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High School Apostles Celebrate 10th anniversary

By PRISCILLA MAHAR

“It’s different when talk about the beauty of our faith comes from a peer level,” says Maria Cerdena, MCR, coordinator of the High School Apostles (HSA) program in the Diocese of Bridgeport. “The High School Apostles trains teens to accompany their friends on the journey of faith.”

Cerdena is a member of the Marian Community of Reconciliation, commonly called the Fraternas. Evangelization of the culture is their main charism. The Fraternas started the High School Apostles shortly after they arrived in this diocese.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the formation of HSA, which was celebrated on August 6. The day consisted of Mass at St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, celebrated by Father Sam Kachuba, followed by a social featuring fellowship, an energetic frisbee tournament and a food truck. Those attending had all been involved with HSA in some way over the past decade. Current high schoolers were able to come together with those now living out their vocations who had been involved in HSA in years past.

The original outreach to high schoolers began during a meeting of Ana Montoya, MCR, then working in the Faith Formation Office, with high school campus ministry teams. “Ana was the mind behind the HSA,” says Cerdena. With the input of the ministry teams from diocesan high schools, she put together a leadership training program designed to encourage peer-to-peer dialogue of faith. The word “apostle” in Greek means “messenger,” specifically a person sent on a special mission, and that’s exactly what the High School Apostles are trained to become. “It’s not just deepening their faith for themselves,” says Cerdena, “but in order to share the love of the Lord and the love of their faith.”

As the program has evolved, it has become a group of 50 to 70 high school teens, coming from both Catholic and public schools, who meet once a month to deepen their own faith and learn how to share it both in word and in practice.

Being surrounded by their peers is an important aspect for young people when it comes to practicing the faith. The community and affirmation that they’re not alone helps them to feel more confident to go against what may be the culture at their high school.

Jessica Mazal, now a theology teacher at Notre Dame High School, reflects on her time as an HSA. Mazal talks about how “the faith isn’t something to be lived alone” and how having that Catholic community in high school prepared her for college. “When I went to Sacred Heart University, I knew that I wasn’t alone. That confidence more than anything is what the High School Apostles gave me. It’s difficult to live your faith in front of friends who disagree with your values,” said Mazal.

Eric Silva fell into the High School Apostles almost by accident. “I was at St. Joseph High School, and they were offering a retreat on a school day. For me, it was a day to get out of class. The friendships I made as a result of that first day planted a seed, but it was the radical witness of the fraternas, living the Gospel as consecrated lay women, that nurtured it.”

Father Eric Silva, now parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield, was ordained to the priesthood last year.

The host of the anniversary event, Father Sam Kachuba, has been involved with HSA from the beginning. “They had just started, and they came to my ordination. That’s the first time I met them,” said Father Sam. His involvement with HSA began with hearing confessions at Convivio, the community prayer vigil was co-sponsored by CONECT, an alliance of Catholic community in high school prepared her for college. “When I went to Sacred Heart University, I knew that I wasn’t alone. That confidence more than anything is what the High School Apostles gave me. It’s difficult to live your faith in front of friends who disagree with your values,” said Mazal.

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FAIRFIELD CATHOLIC
September 2017
BRIDGEPORT—Fairfield County’s Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education announced in July that they had awarded $951,214 in grants to 52 local organizations throughout Fairfield County in the last year. The local non-profit foundation supports educational and social programs that serve the neediest families and individuals of Fairfield County.

“We saw a significant increase in grant requests for education this year,” says Richard Stone, the executive director of the Inner-City Foundation. “Educational grant requests were up almost 30 percent.” About half of the funds awarded by the Inner-City Foundation went to inner-city education programs in Bridgeport, including scholarship and financial aid programs at Kolbe Cathedral High School and Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, and women’s literacy and life skills programs such as those available at Mercy Learning Center and Caroline House.

“The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education is critical to Kolbe Cathedral High School’s scholarship/financial aid program,” says Jo-Anne Jakab, who recently retired from Kolbe after working there for more than 43 years, most recently as principal and president. “Without the Inner-City Foundation, hundreds of young men and women over the past 25 years would have been unable to attend this high-performing inner-city school. Graduating from Kolbe Cathedral almost guarantees a more promising future—we’ve had 100 percent of our students go on to college for the past 10 years! The majority of Inner-City Foundation scholars are the first generation in their family to attend college, forging new roads for not only themselves but also their families in the future.”

The other half of the Inner-City Foundation’s available funds this year went to area social programs providing food, shelter, medical help and counseling. Without the foundation’s support, a lot of these programs simply could not exist, says Stone.

“State budget cuts have had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of Connecticut, and Fairfield County,” says Stone. “We have just completed our 25th year, and the need right now in Fairfield County is probably greater than we’ve ever seen it. It’s not all Gold Coast. Unless increased resources materialize from other places, such as foundations like ours, a lot of people are going to have nowhere to turn.”

The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education is a 501(c)(3) non-sectarian foundation that supports education and other programs addressing the most basic human needs of Fairfield County residents seeking help, and strives to support organizations that provide not only a safety net but also a springboard to a better future. Organizations providing food, clothing, shelter, education and counseling to at-risk and needy families, children and adults of Fairfield County may apply for grants. Founded in 1992, the Inner-City Foundation has provided more than $29 million to about 200 local organizations over the last quarter-century.

(The Inner-City Foundation will hold their 26th annual benefit dinner this fall, their largest fundraiser of the year. Stay tuned to their website, innercityfoundation.org, for date and ticket information. For more information about the Inner-City Foundation, or to donate, visit the Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education at www.innercityfoundation.org, email communications@innercityfoundation.org or call 203.416.1496.)
College Retreat

‘Make It or Break It’

By PRISCILLA MAHAR

As an artist, youth minister, journalist and college student, I have worn a lot of hats this summer, and it has been an incredible experience. As Pope John Paul II said, “Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure” and my life has been falling nothing short of that.

Working with everyone at the Diocese of Bridgeport and being able to see all the ways I can serve God, this summer and in the future, has been incredible. But probably the biggest blessing of this summer was being able to create, organize, and run the first annual “Make It or Break It” college retreat.

What originally began as a desire to introduce those graduating from high school to campus ministry quickly turned into a reality as so many people from throughout the diocese stepped up to help me with whatever I needed to make this retreat happen. I was able to get all the resources that I needed in order to provide Catholic college students with a day to prepare them for the upcoming semester.

“Make It or Break It,” or MoB, was hosted at St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, thanks to Father Sam Kachuba, who was so gracious and excited to host the event and to say morning Mass specifically for the participants who started the day.

The rest of the day consisted of talks on friendships, dating, the partying culture, and keeping God at the center of your life, as well as games, small groups, Adoration, and Confession. All the sessions were centered around issues that these students were likely to face once away at college and how to overcome these challenges as a Catholic student.

Abby Wolpiuk, a participant who just graduated from Lauralton Hall in Milford, says: “A retreat focused toward college students is really a gem among others. I felt like everything that was discussed was relevant to my own life and stresses. The leadership was made up of college students for college students, and that resulted in a more impactful day for me. ‘Make It or Break It’ was a powerful day of prayer and reflection that really changed my perspective of stepping into the new college world.”

Abby will be attending Catholic University in Washington D.C. as a freshmen this fall.

Those involved in running the retreat have had experience working in both high school and college ministry. Through this, we’ve personally witnessed many students leaving the faith once they got to college, as well as students whose faith was set on fire as it became their own.

Emphasizing that college is the “make it or break it” time for your faith, Michael Rosati, who just graduated from St. Joe’s in Trumbull and will be starting at Salve Regina in the fall said: “The Make It or Break It’ retreat was an amazing experience that helped ease my anxieties as an incoming freshman. There were so many informative talks from people who are living the college experience right now. It was great to talk to people in the same position I am. The opportunities for Mass, Adoration, and Confession were amazing. I feel confident about holding onto my faith as I enter college.”

None of what was accomplished that day would have been possible without the endless help, support, and prayers from those throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport, and I am extremely grateful to all of them.

(For more information, resources, and upcoming events for college students around the diocese, follow our social media, Facebook @ MakeItDOB and Instagram @ MakeItDOB and keep all of them in your prayers this semester.)
St. Vincent’s Medical Center

Choppy water doesn’t deter SWIM

BRIDGEPORT—Choppy water didn’t deter 153 swimmers and more than 200 boat and SWIM volunteers who fought through choppy waters to swim across the sound on August 5 in the 30th Anniversary of St. Vincent’s SWIM Across the Sound.

A team of six 16-year-olds placed first Overall and pledged to never stop fighting for the end of cancer.

Motivated by personal experiences with survivorship and loss, the swimmers had one shared goal in mind: supporting 30,000 people annually who are battling cancer and their families. This year’s SWIM raised over $300,000, all of which goes to St. Vincent’s Medical Center Foundation’s 45 cancer education, prevention, and assistance programs. SWIM participants consisted of eight Solo Swimmers, two Two-Person Relays, one Never Alone relay, six Classic (non-wetsuit) Team Relays, 13 Traditional (wetsuit) Team Relays, and four Corporate Challenge Team Relays.

“The weather forecast and sea conditions made this one of the most challenging years in the SWIM’s history because of their potential to impact our swimmers and other volunteers on the water,” said Lyn McCarthy, executive director of St. Vincent’s Medical Center Foundation. “Their safety was our number one priority.”

Thunderstorms and rough waters accompanied many of the swimmers and volunteers as they headed to Port Jefferson on the Bridgeport Ferry at 6 am on Saturday morning. After a delayed start, the first wave of swimmers took to the water at 9:05 am. By 10:30 all 153 swimmers were in the water, making their journey across the Long Island Sound to Captain’s Cove Seaport in Bridgeport. The course was 15.5 miles, but with wind and waves it seemed much longer.

For most of the day, the wind pushed the swimmers to the east. The boat captains and swimmers had to work harder (and swim longer) to keep within the perimeter and on course. By 5:30 pm, with the current and wind going in the same direction, swimmers still to the east could not overtake the tide.

Despite the challenges, 18 of the 34 escort boats completed the entire swim.

“Beating out the tide to take first place Overall and in the Traditional Category was a team of six 16-year olds from Westport and Wilton called the King Wrats, who completed the marathon in six hours and 42 minutes Their motto, “Never Stop Fighting,” was evident in their tremendous swim, finishing 32 minutes ahead of the next team.

“I don’t think I have ever felt more accomplished in my entire life,” expressed team captain Austin Twiss of Westport. “While getting out of the water I was expecting to feel pain, but instead, I felt a rush of happiness knowing that we all just swam 15.5 miles to raise money for cancer. The best part was at the finish line when everyone came up and hugged us and thanked us for what we did, and the people who told us their stories and how much this all meant to them. I think this swim is a great experience and it is all for a great cause. I will definitely be doing this many more times in the future.”

St. Vincent’s SWIM Across the Sound provides cancer education, screening, and prevention programs at low or no cost for the uninsured and underinsured.

(For more information on the SWIM, visit www.SwimAcrosstheSound.org. For a complete list of results, go to give.stvincents.org/marathon2017.)

Share your Faith story with others

BRIDGEPORT—The diocesan Leadership Institute is collecting stories about the way people encounter the person of Jesus Christ. Do you have a story to share?

“We all encounter Jesus in different ways: through the birth of a child, the loss of a loved one, through nature, music, or even travel. Through joy or sorry, triumph or tragedy. We even experience Jesus when we help a stranger, or when we are present and aware of a moment of grace,” said Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute.

Donovan said the new project is encouraging people to think about a time they encountered the person of Jesus and share that story with others across the diocese. These stories of three to five minutes will be a part of a new series: “From Encounter to Accompaniment.”

“You may have someone else come to experience Jesus. Your story may accompany another on their own journey of faith. Your story may be just the words another needs to hear as they seek experiences of Jesus in their own lives,” Donovan said.

Think of your story and sign up for a date and time when you’re ready to tell it.

The Leadership Institute will be recording stories (audio only) the week of September 11 at the Catholic Center (238 Jewett Ave., Bridgeport). We have slots available at half-hour intervals during these dates and times: Wednesday, September 13, 11 am-2 pm; Thursday, September 14, 8:30 am-2 pm; Friday, September 15, 8:30 am-2 pm, and Saturday, September 16, 9 am-1 pm.

(For more information or to register a time, call 203.416.1670, or visit www.thefaceofprayer.com.)

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www.portsmouthabbey.org
Seminarian Mission Trip

Seminarians serve food, faith and others

By JOE PERROTTA

From July 17-21, the seminarians of the Diocese of Bridgeport went on a mission trip to serve the people of Maine. Staying in the town of Standish, they served the people in the surrounding area in a number of different ways, including serving food at a local soup kitchen, assisting a small community of mostly elderly nuns with work around their property, and helping at a thrift store called Threads of Hope that Catholic Charities Maine uses to help fund their work.

In addition to the work they performed during the day, the seminarians spent part of their afternoons engaging in communal prayer, Mass, and fellowship. Father John Connaughton, vocation director for the Diocese of Bridgeport, tasked a different seminarian with leading the entire group in a reflection session each evening. These reflection leaders, chosen because they were the most senior seminarians, each took a different approach to their reflections. Some began in prayer or with scripture, others by sharing their own stories from the day’s labors. Some simply posited a theme and then opened the floor to discussion and stories. The conversation that ensued was always filled with heartfelt

REFLECTION: JOE CAIN

It took place in an old elementary school gym, filled with tables and food and kind-hearted volunteers ready to serve the poor of Portland, Maine, who would show up that day to receive a free meal provided by the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Portland. My seminarian brothers and I were on a mission trip going from job-site to job-site in different teams of four or five, doing whatever needed to be done for the different ministries of Catholic Charities. As my team and I were getting ready to feed the poor at the soup kitchen in Portland, one of my seminarian brothers and I were talking to those we would serve. The very first man I met instantly verbally attacked me. Totally unwarranted and unexpected, he did his best to push me around with his words. His words hurt as he commented on the priesthood and how I was dressed. My initial reaction was to hurt him back. Eventually I decided that it would be best to just walk away. Nothing could come of me saying or doing anything. Looking back and praying on that experience now, it no longer causes me anger. On the contrary, it has stuck with me as a challenge and a form of motivation. On

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC
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Back to School

looking forward to continuing to provide the quality Catholic education the students deserve. Let us pray for each other as the new school year begins.”

St. Mark School, Stratford
Scott Clough has assumed the post of principal at St. Mark School in Stratford.

“He brings with him a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm as well as an understanding of curriculum, 21st century learning, and the effective use of technology to improve instruction,” said Dr. Cheeseman.

Clough holds a bachelor of science in history and minor in economics, a master of arts in instructional and developmental positions, and has a demonstrated record of success,” said Dr. Cheeseman.

In addition to his strong academic credentials and leadership awards, Anderson is committed to sharing his strong faith with young people. “He speaks often of his joy in being able to share the love of God with his students and their families,” added Dr. Cheeseman.

And he and his wife, Cheryl, are parishioners at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown. They have one grown daughter.

In addition to these appointments, diocesan schools have gained a number of new administrators. Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford has announced the appointment of Christine Wagner as assistant principal. Scott Bannon, formerly principal at St. Joseph School in Brookfield, is the new assistant principal at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield. At All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk, Marianne Licare has joined the faculty as the new assistant principal. In Bridgeport, Henry Rondon has resumed his position as principal of Kolbe Cathedral High School. Dan Routhier will be the new Dean of Student Life.

Most recently, Anderson was principal of St. Joseph School in Shelton and had been principal of Central High School in Bridgeport. He also served as principal of East Haven High School, and in the Connecticut Technical High School System. Throughout his career, he has been a teacher, supervisor of instruction, director of adult education, and a manager of several specialized educational programs.

Anderson earned a B.A. in English from St. Anselm College, and M.S. in curriculum and instruction from Western Connecticut State University and a 6th Year Certificate in administration and supervision from Southern Connecticut State University.

“He brings with him a tremendous amount of experience and has a demonstrated record of working closely with faculty to foster a commitment to continuous improvement and professional development to ensure student success,” said Dr. Cheeseman.

St. Thomas Aquinas, Fairfield
Stephen Anderson has accepted the offer to be the next principal of St. Thomas Aquinas School.

He joins the St. Thomas community after having served in both public and Catholic schools as a school administrator on both the high school and elementary school levels. This summer he was a presenter at the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) conference being held in Boston.

HE AND HIS HUSBAND, Kristen, have a young child, with another on the way.

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Open House

energy and anticipation filled the room as Dr. Steven Cheeseman welcomed principals at the beginning of the new school year.

In addition to his strong academic credentials and leadership awards, Anderson is committed to sharing his strong faith with young people. “He speaks often of his joy in being able to share the love of God with his students and their families,” added Dr. Cheeseman.

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Open House
Parish News

Blessed Sacrament turns 100

By Father Skip Karcinski

One hundred years ago, a new parish was formed in Bridgeport from old St. Mary’s to serve the Catholic people now filling the neighborhoods of the East End.

Humbly settling for a basement church, the new parishioners immediately worked to construct a large parish school. Together, school and church drew a “miraculous catch” of culturally diverse people to this seaside community.

Now, after 100 years, the prosperous factories, the thriving businesses and the vital neighborhoods of the East End have been greatly reduced. And likewise, our parish’s fame and our fortune.

And yet, like the child in the Gospel who provided Jesus with only a few loaves and fishes, we still see ourselves as contributing faithfully and mightily to the Lord’s mission of feeding the hungry, bringing peace to the distressed and lovingly welcoming all peoples together and to him.

Today, Blessed Sacrament parishioners worship in two languages, Spanish and English, with all of the richness and exuberance that our Latin and African American heritage provides. Weekly, in our food pantry, we make available to our neighbors the abundant donations of non-perishable food and clothing brought to us by other parishes, schools and generous individuals throughout the diocese. Our food pantry, our summer camp, our Parking Lot Farm, our Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway, and our very creative fundraisers welcome many visitors to a section of our city that still waits for even a little attention and a chance for redevelopment.

On September 30 and October 1, Blessed Sacrament Parish will gratefully, proudly, musically and prayerfully celebrate all that the Lord has made of us in the past 100 years.

Please join us for a celebratory dinner on Saturday, September 30, at Vazzano’s Four Seasons Restaurant in Stratford (7-10 pm) featuring talent from our parish (tickets can be purchased from our rectory or after any of our Masses) and a special celebratory bilingual Mass in English and Spanish at 10:30 am on Sunday, October 1.

(For more information, call the parish: 203.333.1202 or contact Pat DeCoster: patstail62@gmail.com or 203.339.5073.)

Beginning the Next Hundred Years—Confirmation class of 2017 celebrates the first 100 years of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport and forms the foundation of the generations to come.

Those with Down Syndrome, their family and friends are invited to

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass asking for the intercession of St. Robert Bellarmine
Father Joseph Koterski, S.J., celebrant

Sunday, September 17, 2017
9:30am at St. Mary Church
669 West Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut 06850
Reception following the Mass, all are welcome

Please come and join the MOMs+DADs prayer/support group
(Mother of Mercy spiritual Divine Advocate for Down syndrome)
Third Thursday of every month, 7:30pm at St. Mary’s Parish Center
Next prayer meeting will be September 21, 2017
Inquiries welcome at strapostolate@optimum.net

Oberammergau Passion Play 2020
Get information on traveling to the oldest passion play in the world by attending a travel meeting on October 1, 2:30pm at the St. Lawrence Parish Center, Shelton. RSVP by September 22 to Virginia 203-402-0632.
Sacred Heart University

Two major acquisitions propelled Sacred Heart into the news and caught the attention of the entire community: the purchase of the 151-acre Great River Golf Course in Milford in October 2015, and perhaps most notably, the announcement earlier this year of the purchase of the 66-acre GE corporate campus.

Describing the acquisition of the coveted GE campus as “transformational,” Dr. Petillo says “it will be one of the most significant events in the life of the university for the next twenty years.”

Now known as “West Campus,” the former headquarters has been put to immediate use by Sacred Heart and will soon be the home of a new innovation center, performing arts, education offices and many other programs.

Acquiring two large parcels in Fairfield County, one adjacent to the main campus, has signaled the dynamic growth and creative leaps that are moving the university into a new era.

The university is also moving ahead with new dorms on the 15-acre parcel it purchased from the Jewish Home for the Elderly in 2016, and is about to unveil its stunning new Center for Healthcare Education, which sits on Park Avenue just below the main campus. Also nearing completion is the new home of WSHU Radio and Public Safety building on Park Avenue at the entrance to the main campus.

President Petillo credits Michael Kinney, senior vice president for finance and administration, for his considerable money management skills and outside-the-box thinking in acquiring properties without substantially increasing the debt.

In fact, as the university has added more academic buildings and dorms, its bond rating has strengthened. Sacred Heart is now one of only four universities in the state to receive an S&P “A” bond rating. It shares that distinction with Yale, Wesleyan, and Trinity.

Likewise, Moody’s has upgraded Sacred Heart’s rating to “A3,” primarily driven by the university’s strong student demand and robust enrollment and tuition revenue growth, along with “program diversity and capital investment that has modernized the campus.”

Dr. Petillo is quick to point out that all of the growth of the campus has a spill-over effect on the local and state economy. Sacred Heart is now one of the area’s largest employers, creating an estimated 5,500 jobs, while its students and faculty pump more than $56 million into the local economy each year.

The pace of growth at the university has been so rapid that graduates of the 1990s campus would have a hard time recognizing the place, let alone one of the 69 alumni of the first class who recently returned for a reunion.

However, while much has changed, one thing remains the same. Dr. Petillo emphasizes that the university, founded in 1963 by Bishop Walter Curtis, was created out of the energy, innovation and spirit of Vatican II, which will forever be part of the DNA of the institution.

“The Catholic identity is at the core of who we are,” he says, noting that all students take core courses in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, which he describes as a 2,000-year ongoing conversation between the Catholic community of thinkers, writers, artists and the cultures in which they have lived, “asking fundamental questions about God, humanity, society, and nature.”

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who recently received an honorary doctorate from the university, got a firsthand look at the spirit and faith of the campus when he visited last fall.

A standing room only of over 300 students filled Schine Auditorium and gathered around him on the stage as he discussed Catholic Social Teaching. The bishop thanked the young people for service and told them to “never stop trying to change the world.”

President Petillo agrees. He’s proud of the fact that the student body performs more than 50,000 hours of community service each year and that the university is engaged in many community activities that support non-profits, the environment, and local business.

“We’re mission driven and we celebrate values of tolerance personal conscience, and reflection and opportunity to explore belief in this human journey,” he says.

(Sacred Heart University, the second-largest independent Catholic university in New England, offers more than 70 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and certificate programs on its main campus in Fairfield and satellites in Connecticut, Luxembourg and Ireland. For information visit www.sacredheart.edu.)

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CATHOLIC PROFESSIONAL NETWORK
Msgr. Joseph Kohut died on August 5 at Notre Dame Convalescent Home in Norwalk. He was 98 years old.

“During his 55 years as a priest, Monsignor Joe wanted only to bring Jesus to others and others to Jesus through Mary,” said Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, who had known Msgr. Kohut since his own boyhood at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown and delivered the homily at his funeral.

“He loved Our Lady,” recalled Msgr. Powers. “He prayed the Rosary faithfully every day; he placed fresh flowers before every statue of her; he spoke of her with filial devotion and as though she were present and listening. And he took it one step further by wearing blue every single day of his priesthood in honor of Mary. It could be a blue handkerchief, a blue blazer, shirt or sweater; or a blue handkerchief, his priesthood in honor of Mary. He was 98 years old.

Convalescent Home in Norwalk.

On August 5 at Notre Dame Convalescent Home in Norwalk. He was 98 years old.

During his homily, Msgr. Kohut was received into St. Matthew Church on August 10. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated there on August 11, followed by a reception.

It could be a blue handkerchief, his priesthood in honor of Mary. He was 98 years old.

A memorial Mass was held on August 26 at St. Emery’s.

Father Kohut lived at the Catherine Manor, N.Y.

During his homily, Msgr. Kohut was received into St. Matthew Church on August 10. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated there on August 11, followed by a reception.

“Father Louis came to St. Emery’s Parish after the passing of Father Robert Nemeth in 1998. He was the sixth pastor to serve at St. Emery’s and the last of the Franciscan Friars to serve there. We are very saddened to learn of his death,” said Father Milan Dimic, the current pastor.

Father Dimic said his departure represented the end of the Franciscan era at St. Emery’s after 79 years. Father Louis left the parish in 2011 due to health reasons.

He spent the remainder of his life in Youngstown, Ohio at the Mount Alverna Friary serving as a local missionary.

“Father Louis was responsible for the beautiful and major restoration of St. Emery’s Church in 2000 and was very proud of this accomplishment. The renovation served as a means to provide for the younger families and to celebrate the millennium in 2001,” said Fr. Dimic.

The sanctuary was redesigned to be in compliance with the restoration of the liturgy as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council—a new altar, ambo and baptismal font were imported and installed from Italy.

Three shrines were added including the Holy Family; the Franciscan family of saints: St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. John of Capistrano and St. Padre Pio; and Hungarian saints: St. Stephen, Our Lady of Hungary and St. Emery.

Born February 16, 1955, in Trenton, N.J., Friar Louis Michael Pintye was invested in the Franciscan habit on June 23, 1984. He made his Solemn Profession of Vows at his home parish of St. Stephen, King of Hungary, in Trenton, on May 21, 1989. During his 27 years of priestly ministry following his ordination on October 6, 1990, Father Louis served the people of God as a parochial vicar at St. Ladislaus Parish, New Brunswick, N.J.; St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Troy, N.Y.; and St. Joseph Parish in Winsted, Ct., and as pastor of St. Emery’s.
Las monjitas de Santa Brígida
guardar los visitas disfruta de la familia a plenitud, aunque siempre busca un momento y lugar para recogerse en la oración. Al salir de la secundaria decidió ingresar al convento y duró tres meses en México como aspirante e hizo tres años en Roma como aspirante, un año de noviciado, para luego seguir la profesión de sus primeros votos, luego los renovó por cinco años y finalmente hizo sus votos perpetuos. Para llegar a los votos perpetuos debió estudiar las Constituciones o Reglas y vivir bajo el carisma de su apostolado que es la hospitalidad y rezar por la unidad de la iglesia.

La hospitalidad consiste en abrir sus puertas al convento para personas que quieran hacer retiros o ejercicios espirituales sin importar la religión que profesen, y ofrecerles un techo, una comida y un lugar cómodo para que puedan meditar, discutir y orar dentro o fuera de la capilla del convento. A decir de la Hermana Fabiola: “La hospitalidad no es más que ser una ama de casa dedicada a los quehaceres domésticos para que la familia se sienta bien recibida y feliz dentro de su hogar”. Y el rezar y orar por la unidad de la iglesia es una misión especial dada a las monjitas bríganidas debido a que su fundadora, la Madre Isabel, hizo su conversión al catolicismo de una familia protestante. “Orar por la unidad es parte de nuestro trabajo diario no solo mientras estamos en la capilla sino mientras trabajamos en los quehaceres”, dijo la Hermana Ermengelida.

A Ermengelida, la vocación la cogió en su natal Guadalajara. Ella, cuando era niña veía en su casa unas tas monjitas Guadalupanas de Cristo Rey Orden de San Benito y desde siempre quiso seguir sus huellas. La enviaron a estudiar como interna en el Convento de Tacambaro en Michoacán, luego fue a México, DF, donde la convirtieron en enfermera auxiliar y ahí es donde tomó la decisión de ingresar al convento.

Con 18 años de edad, ingresó en la ciudad de México como aspirante. Después de cinco meses en México, DF, se fue a seguir su vida religiosa en Roma and in 1988 hizo la profesión perpetua de sus votos.

Una parte de su postulantado lo vivió en Suiza. En los Estados Unidos tiene 22 años viviendo dentro del convento y curiosamente dice que cuando va de vacaciones donde su familia, aun cuando disfruta de ellos, extraña el silencio del convento y a sus hermanas religiosas, y siempre espera con ansias volver a casa, es decir, a Darien.

La Hermana Floriana, nativa de Michoacán, tenía 17 años cuando asistió a un encuentro de juventudes en donde explicaron sobre los estados de vida de la soltería, casado y la vida religiosa. Ella se impactó con los testimonios de la vida religiosa y apostó por esto. Después de terminar la secundaria se quedó en casa de formación de México e hizo su soviocidio en la Paz, Baja California, su primera profesión de votos fue en abril de 2005 y se quedó por siete años en México, DF. Para profesar sus votos perpetuos se fue a Roma y al cabo de dos semanas estuvo de vuelta en México. Pero siguiendo el voto de obediencia fue enviada a los Estados Unidos donde vive por 13 años seguidos.

PO R MARICARMEN GODOY

Las Monjitas de Santa Brígida cuenta con 650 monjas y 250 conventos alrededor del mundo, pero uno solo funcionando en los Estados Unidos en el poblado de Darien. El Convento de Santa Brígida tiene entre sus muros a tres religiosas nativas de México, quienes viven el carisma de su fe a través de la “hospitalidad y la oración por la unidad de la iglesia cristiana”, mientras atienden a los huéspedes que buscan paz y recogimiento espiritual.

El orden religioso de las “Bríganidas” fue refundado por la ahora Santa Elizabeth Hesselblad, una inmigrante de origen sueco quien abrazó la religión católica después de haber profesado el luteranismo. Su convento y casa para huéspedes en Darien cuenta con una vista paradisíaca de un brazo de Isla Sound, una casa de estilo colonial, un jardín bien cuidado lleno de flores e inmensas piezas de pintura en una propiedad de diez hectáreas, todo bajo el cuidado amoroso de seis religiosas, tres de ellas de la India y tres mexicanas.

Las hermanas Fabiola Guíñez, Ermengilda Gaitán y Floriana Villa son nacidas en Jalisco y Michoacán; tienen en común una vida monástica dedicada al trabajo y la oración y el haber crecido en el campo en medio de los animales silvestres, el maíz, frijoles y el ágape. Vienen de hogares con varios hermanos y escucharon el llamado vocacional aun en edad escolar.

La Hermana Fabiola nació en Jalisco, está en el convento como religiosa por 20 años. Los dos primeros años hizo su postulantado en Roma. Ermengelida es de Michoacán, tiene 35 años de religiosa y 55 años de edad; y Floriana 20 años dentro del convento sin contar con los dos primeros años de postulantado, aspirando y noviciado.

Fabiola pidió al párroco de su iglesia que le diera una guía para ingresar a un convento y de inmediato refirió a las bríganidas por medio del Obispo de Colima, un estado que colinda con Jalisco. Nunca tuvo miedo de ingresar al convento aunque separarse de la familia fue una prueba de fuego para ella. Dejó a sus padres y 10 hermanos, es la sexta de sus hermanos y cuando le encanta disfrutar de su familia, sin embargo, busca tiempo para ir al Santísimo y recogerse en la oración, faena a la que siempre le acompaña su madre.

Su rutina religiosa empieza a las 6:15 am, cuando se levantan, realizan el Oficio de la Lectura, a las 6:40 am rezan los Laudes, la Oricion de Alba de la Iglesia, tienen media hora de meditación antes de la misa que inicia a las ocho de la mañana. Luego desayunan, trabajan en los quehaceres y a diez de la mañana hacen la Adoración al Santísimo. Huéspedes están invitados a unirse a la Adoración y las oraciones de las hermanas durante todo el día, o visitar la capilla para una meditación tranquila.

Con todo esto, el Convento de Santa Brígida ofrece un refugio ideal para personas que buscan recogimiento espiritual y meditación. Las Hermanas ofrecen cuartos individuales y grupales, y tres comedas completas con recetas propias de Italia, México e India, donde son originarias las religiosas.

Con todo esto, el Convento de Santa Brígida ofrece un refugio ideal para personas que buscan recogimiento espiritual y meditación. Ofrecen cuartos individuales y grupales, atención de las tres comidas completas, con recetas propias de Italia, México e India de donde son originarias las religiosas.

(El convento de Santa Brígida está ubicado en 4 Runkenhage Road, Darien. Para más información, visite su sitio web: wwwbirgitines-us.)

SHU OPEN NEW CENTER FROM PAGE 5

The College of Health Professions includes over 1,000 undergraduate, post-baccalaureate and graduate students and 56 full-time faculty members. It offers bachelor’s degrees, graduate certificate programs, master’s degree programs and a doctoral program in physical therapy. U.S. News and World Report ranked SHU’s physical therapy program number one in Connecticut and in the top five in New England.

In the Center for Healthcare Education, enhanced athletic training, human performance and motion-analysis labs will provide up-to-the-minute learning environments for the exercise science and athletic training programs.

(For more information on the Center for Healthcare Education, visit www.sacredheart.edu/about-shu/newfacilities/centerforhealthcareeducation.)
the surface level, what that poor man was saying when he verbally attacked me was that I looked like an idiot and that I am a sick man because I want to be a priest. Underlying all of that was a challenge coming from his heart. What he was really saying to me was, “Prove it. If you are here to help me and love me, prove it.”

I wonder if he were to look at my daily, ordinary life, would it prove to him that I was really there to help him and love him? On the surface, it appears that I am doing such great charitable works, but the challenge from the poor man from Portland would still stand uncontested. Just because I go on a mission trip for several days and do some good works does not mean that I am authentically being charitable.

To truly serve, to truly prove that my giving is authentic, my charity cannot be isolated acts of kindness for which I set out a block of my day or month or life to perform. Rather, to serve must penetrate to the deepest part of my being. It must seize my heart. That is what it means to be service hearted. It is a disposition of the heart, a way to see one’s life with the premise that an individual cannot be fulfilled by serving himself. It is so temptingly easy for all of us to create a box for our service. It is easy to go on a mission trip for a week, serve, and live the same old way once we get home. It is easy to limit our giving to tithing at church or doing a rice bowl during Lent. Those things are good and beautiful. I am certainly not saying that we should cease doing these works of charity. They become a problem, however, when they are used as a means of justification for our charity. Too often we can fall into the temptation of doing many forms of charity work but never let charity work in us. Too often we keep charitable works as just another thing on the schedule, but we must let charitable works seep into our hearts and thereby change the way we see the world around us. The poor are all around us. Not just the fiscally poor, but the communally and spiritually poor as well. We are called to serve the communally and spiritually poor just as much as we are called to serve the fiscally poor, and we do so not just with mission trips and tithing programs, but with simple acts of kindness to those we are surrounded by every day. As simple and easy as this may sound, it is incredibly difficult. I fail at it often. But let us challenge ourselves to live a life with a servant’s heart by directing all our actions and thoughts to the service of others.
CT Challenge: A ride with a life-saving purpose

By DON HARRISON

Four members of the Cook family were among 1,187 participants in the 13th annual CT Challenge bike ride on July 29. Most of the funds raised by the riders—expected to exceed $2 million by the mid-October cut-off date—will be directed to the Challenge’s non-profit Mission Training Center in Southport.

Some in this vast assemblage of men and women, boys and girls, are cancer survivors. But Don Cook, the retired director of athletics at Sacred Heart University, was taking part to keep alive the memory of his son, Christopher, who was just 48 years old when he succumbed to the disease in 2014. Chris, a loving husband and father, was a vice president at Hitachi Capital America Corp. in Norwalk.

Sacred Heart, long recognized for its commitment to outreach programs, including Habitat for Humanity in Bridgeport, established the Christopher Cook Scholarship Fund two years ago. Thus far six students who survived cancer have been presented scholarships. Once awarded, they receive it through graduation.

“There are multiple benefits for me to ride each year and to keep the scholarship growing,” explains Cook, a parishioner at St. Anthony of Padua in Fairfield. “Every time I sit at the keyboard, he’s there with me. It also gives me the chance to reconnect with my former players, Chris’ teammates and former colleagues.”

Prior to his arrival at Sacred Heart, Don Cook was a fixture at his alma mater, Fairfield University, coaching baseball for 19 seasons and serving as athletic director (1971-86). Chris, a 1988 Fairfield grad, played four years of varsity baseball there and was a star first baseman as a junior and senior.

This year, Cook was joined for the ride by his niece, Erin Harrison French, her daughter and Don’s grandniece, Lauren, 11, and Don’s grandnephew, Luke Anderson, 11. Each rode 10 miles, starting and culminating at the Fairfield County Hunt Club in Westport. (Another niece, Alexis Harrison, rode in several CT Challenges, but she relocated to Seattle last summer.) Many participants ride greater distances, ranging from 25 to 100 miles. Hitachi, Chris’ former employer, sent 17 riders to this year’s event. Said Ryan Collison, the company’s president: “Every dime we raise will go to the Chris Cook Scholarship at Sacred Heart University.”

The Mission Training Center, which opened in the fall of 2012, is an 8,000-square-foot combination gym, nutrition and wellness center. Nationwide, it is the only stand-alone facility dedicated to the post-treatment of cancer survivors; to state it fills a void is an understatement. The center is open seven days a week.

“We call it our incubator for best practices. For survivors to reconnect with my former players, Chris’ teammates and former colleagues.”

I believe 56 to 58 percent of cancer survivors diagnosed in the last 10 years are still with us,” notes Don Cook. “The center helps people look forward, not backward. It helps them retrieve their lives, both in body and spirit.”

The center is the brainchild of its president and co-founder, Jeff Keith, a cancer survivor, who on Christmas Eve in 1974 had his right leg amputated above the knee. He was just 12 years old. Yet Keith overcame the odds by captaining the Fairfield Prep ski team and playing goal for Boston College’s lacrosse team. Shortly thereafter, he ran across America on one leg and prostheses—from Boston to Los Angeles, a journey that encompassed eight months and raised $1 million for the American Cancer Society.

“I realized there were three things that could help people: Exercise, nutrition and support groups, or psycho-social,” he says. “I woke up every day lucky to be alive. You try to give back…it’s in my DNA to give back.”

(To make an online donation to the Mission Training Center, visit www.bike.ctchallenge.org. To contribute to the Christopher Cook Scholarship Fund, contact cookd@shu.edu.)
Summer gathers up her robes of glory, And like a dream of beauty glides away.

(Sarah Helen Whitman, A Still Day in Autumn)

September—the ninth month of the year, but the seventh according to the old Roman calendar: “septem” in Latin means “seventh.”

The sun edges south. Days are shorter. Nights deepen. The crickets and katydids have a lifespan from late August to the first frost. From this interesting fact many different morals have been drawn. September mornings begin to be frosty. They can have a sparkling freshness. September brings a slight different tincture of light, and you can see the change of seasons in the way the shadows fall. September sunlight is gentle and understanding, mellow. Perhaps the sun grows tired. The grass looks exhausted, and there is a dullness to the green on the leaves. The waning flowers are living their last days. Color begins to brighten some treetops, usually the sugar maples.

“The querulous cricket grieves And shrilling locust weaves A song of summer dead.” (William Howells, In August)

The crickets and katydids are loud in the lengthening night. They chirp and rasp as they have chirped and rasped long before humans appeared on the earth. Their sounds are filled with gentle melancholy. Their voice is the voice of summer’s ending. It’s like taps of life’s passing like a river flowing. It seems that just last week the window shut and the summer was over. The rhythm of life changes; summer’s leisure is over. The tyranny of time tells us that all problems are impermanent things also.

Perhaps the tyranny of time passing like a river flowing. It seems that just last week the ground hog saw its shadow. September leaves me with a sense of the common sadness that another end has come into life. A summer gone leaves me with a sense of the common fate of all things rare and lovely. The time of its sweetness will be short-lived. Like the migrating birds, everything is flying, hurtling through time. And we are in the race. What is loved, celebrated, cannot last. All that one loves is at risk. Time steals that which we love. One comes to know that in a profound sense all life is being left behind. We try to get as much as we can before the window shuts. As William Blake said, we must learn to “kiss the joy as it flies.”

We yearn for permanence, for beauty that will stand firm in the flow. Perhaps the tyranny of time tells us that all problems are impermanent things also.

“I know that summer, scarcely here, is gone until another year” (Edna St. Vincent Millay, The End of Summer)
Twice a month my wife takes my aunt grocery shopping. Then, they stop at the pharmacy for her medication, at the convenience store to buy some scratch-offs and anywhere else she needs to go.

My aunt’s life follows a predictable routine: Run errands, visit friends, check blood pressure, go out for pizza, see the doctor and attend the grand-nieces’ dance recitals. All the usual activities with one omission.

There’s no Sunday Mass.

I find that alarming for a woman who had 12 years of Catholic education, starting with St. Augustine’s School in Bridgeport. I still remember her taking me to Confession at the cathedral on Saturday afternoon, back when the lines stretched five people deep at three confessionals—except the one occupied by a priest known to occasionally yell.

“When did you stop going to Mass?” I asked.

“A long time ago.”

“Why?”

“I just stopped.”

Sad to say, dozens of my family members and friends live the same life. If you mention God, their response is almost like “God? Hey, how’s he been? I haven’t thought about him in a while. Give him my regards, will you?”

You could call them fallen away Catholics, former Catholics, lapsed Catholics or lazy Catholics. They didn’t stop because of Vatican II, the sex abuse scandal, bad homilies or because a priest yelled at them. They stopped, quite simply, because Mass wasn’t important enough to them to keep going. They stopped because—prepare yourself for an unsettling medieval concept—Satan persuaded them to. What? How does that happen? It happens slowly and subtly. It starts with a voice in your head that says you have something more important to do.

Then, a few weeks later, you skip Mass because you want to sleep in. Then, the kids start playing soccer and that takes priority. Then, the family needs to drive to the factory outlets to buy school clothes. One Sunday at a time, we convince ourselves something is more important than Mass, until eventually everything is more important than Mass. It’s an insidious self-deception.

For many lapsed Catholics, Mass had become a habit, and in the end they substituted another habit. If your faith isn’t continuously growing stronger, it’s getting weaker. If your faith is lukewarm, eventually it will be cool.

I’ve seen it. Even though my mother took my sisters to Mass every week and they went to CCD classes and took part in the May crowning, those are distant memories now. And I won’t take the inventory of my kids because I’m sure they’d tell me, “Take your own inventory.”

For many of us, distractions and diversions push God aside. We create substitutes for God that include political causes, sports, careers and possessions, none of which can genuinely satisfy the spiritual longing we all feel.

It’s a fundamental principle of spiritual life that if you’re not moving closer to God, you’re moving further from God. And Satan is always ready and willing to help us re-prioritize so that God keeps getting pushed down the list until he’s nothing more than an after-thought, except when you have a crisis. The one who should be the central character in our life, becomes a bit player.

There are also people who say—and we’ve all heard this—“I don’t need to go to church to pray to God.” That logic suggests a serious lack of understanding about the Mass, not to mention a lack of appreciation for the fundamental importance of the Eucharist in our lives.

Anyone who truly believes in the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ will accept no substitutes. God—if I may speak for him—is always trying to draw them back, using people and events to get their attention in the hope they’ll realize that yoga class, the gym and Great Books Discussion group are no substitute for the Real Deal.

None of us will want to reach the end of our life and realize too late what might have been and what should have been. Instead of the Sunday softball game, there was something tremendously more important we should have attended—Mass. Of course, God is infinitely merciful and forgiving, but our regret will be profound and Satan’s self-satisfaction will be enormous.

At Mass last week, the lector read the prayer intentions and one of them was appropriate: “For those who have drifted from their faith and the challenges of life have overcome them, may they realize a compassionate God has all the answers.”

Let us all pray to the Lord.
CAR RAFFLE: Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford, is now selling raffle tickets now for a 2017 Nissan Altima, along with two drawings for lottery tickets. Only 400 tickets were printed. Cost: $100 each. For more info or for tickets, call the parish: 203.377.4863 or contact Mike Morin: mikef.morin@gmail.com or 203.520.7319.

HOLY HOUR: Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury, (18-35), will gather on Tues., Sept. 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.

BLOCK PARTY: At Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford, will take place Sat., Sept. 9, starting at 5 pm. Cost: $15 adults; $5 kids. For more info, contact Mike Morin: 203.520.7319 or mikelmorin@gmail.com.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (Sept. 9) at 10 am following the 9 am Respect Life Mass. Dr. Jeanne Hostink will speak on “How Science Supports the Church’s Teaching on Same-sex Attraction.” For more info, contact John Juhase: 203.762.3661 or juhaszjw@optonline.net.

ANNUAL FESTIVAL at St. Pius X Parish, Fairfield, will take place Sun., Sept. 10, from 12 noon-5 pm. Live music, food vendors, tent sales, inflatables and games. For more info, contact the parish: 203.268.6217.

TRADITIONAL FOOD FEST will take place at Holy Cross Parish, Fairfield, on Sun., Sept. 10. Polka Mass, 11 am; picnic from 12 noon-6 pm. Slovenian & American foods prepared by the parishioners, children’s games and crafts. For more info, call the parish: 203.372.4595.

GOLF TOURNAMENT: Notre Dame High School Fairfield will host the Annual Lancer Open in Memory of Bob Shea on Mon., Sept. 11, at the Great River Golf Club, Milford. For more info, contact Theresa Marzik: tmzarzik@notredame.org or 203.372.6521 ext. 242.

HOLY HOUR: Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury, (18-35), will gather on Tues., Sept. 11, 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.

SOCIAL: Admission: $10. The Diocese of Bridgeport Women’s Day of Healing, Sat., Sept. 17, at 7, 8:30, 10, 11 am at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, for a series of Masses and socials for women of all ages. For more info, call 203.757.3901.

SIBLINGS RETREAT: Have you or someone you know lost a sibling to abortion? You are not alone! The Diocese of Bridgeport is hosting a retreat weekend specifically for siblings, Sept. 22-24. For more info, call the Project Rachel confidential phone line: 203.895.3554 or contact Entering Canaan at enteringca-naan17@gmail.com.

FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL at St. Philip Parish, Norwalk, returns on Sat., Sept. 23, from 9 am-5 pm. Rain or shine. Live music, vendors, food, classic cars, Touch A Truck for kids, face painting and games. For more info, call the parish office: 203.847.4549 or ask for Fr. Joe or at office: 203.847.4549.

SPECIAL HEALING MASS for victims of sexual abuse as a minor and for family members, spouses others who have been impacted will be held Sun., Oct. 29, at 2 pm at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 149 South Pine Creek Rd., Fairfield. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will celebrate the Mass. To learn more about this Mass, upcoming gatherings and resources that are available in this diocese, contact our victim assistance coordinators, Erin Neil, LCSW: 203.650.3265, or Michael Tinruper, LCSW: 203.241.0987.

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