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Father James Bates
Ordained in Danbury

25-40 Annual 'Vals and Sals' High School Roundup

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PROCLAIMING THE GIFT OF THE EUCHARIST
Feast of Corpus Christi

Readying our hearts to receive the Lord

By BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

On June 2, I had the privilege to participate in two Eucharistic processions to commemorate the Feast of Corpus Christi. The first was held at St. John Church in Darien, following the 11:30 am Mass. The other was a procession for the deanery of Norwalk, Darien and New Canaan that originated at St. Matthew Church and extended over two miles to Norwalk Community College. This procession was attended by over 400 people. Both processions were a beautiful public testimony of our Catholic faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The historic origin of the Corpus Christi procession gives us a spiritual lesson to reflect upon in our own age and time. In earlier ages, many Christians, acutely aware of their personal sinfulness, did not come forward to receive Holy Communion. In fact, tradition holds that St. Francis received Holy Communion just a few times in his life, so unworthy did he consider himself to be to receive so great a gift. The result was the rise of an annual procession that allowed many believers to look upon the Eucharistic Lord and to enjoy a spiritual communion with him by glimpsing his presence and adoring him.

It seems to me that the spiritual practice of our earlier forebears reminds us that we, too, must never take for granted the great gift of the Eucharist. When we come forward to receive, we must do so consciously and with a contrite heart for our sinfulness. We must never receive the Sacred Body and Blood of the Lord if we are aware of grave sin in our lives and have not yet approached the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance. Just as we couple our hands to receive the Eucharist, creating a throne of honor for the Lord, so too let us always ready our hearts and spirits to receive the Lord’s Real Presence in our lives, seeking new life in him. For to invite so great a Guest “under our roof,” we must be ready in mind and spirit to welcome him.

(This reflection originally appeared on Bishop Frank Caggiano’s Facebook page. Follow the bishop for daily reflections and weekly videos.)
$5.5 Million gift to Foundations in Education

By JOE PISANI

A lifetime ago, when Tom McInerney was a sophomore at St. Augustine High School in Brooklyn, his world history teacher, Mr. Hitti, took him aside for the kind of talk teenagers would rather avoid.

Mr. Hitti didn’t mince his words. He told Tom that he was “way underperforming” and had to do something about it... fast.

“He really made an impression on me,” Tom recalled. “And I often think back to that conversation, which I still remember after 60 years.”

It was one event that changed the course of a teenage boy’s life. One event he remembered through his senior executive positions in the business world. And one event among others that inspired him to become a lifelong supporter of Catholic education.

Tom and his wife Paula recently gave a $5.5 million gift to Foundations in Education, which Bishop Frank J. Caggiano says will “transform the paradigm of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport.”

The gift will finance a Personalized Learning Initiative—Tom McInerney of Westport meets diocesan teachers at a recent meeting to introduce a new “Personalized Learning Initiative.” Almost 100 faculty and staff from six schools came together to launch the pilot program. They gave McInerney a standing ovation for his generosity and commitment to the program, which introduces the latest technology to the learning process.

Personalized Learning Initiative (see article on page 27) that will be launched this fall with pilot programs at six schools, and eventually rolled out at all Catholic elementary schools over the next three years.

“These programs will serve as the foundational cornerstone for the transformation of our schools and support our mission as we seek to form hearts in faith, inform minds in truth and transform the lives of young people so that they will live as missionary disciples of our Lord,” Bishop Caggiano said.

Dr. Steven Cheeseman, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, said, “This is an historic moment for the Catholic schools of the diocese. We are reimagining what the Catholic school classroom can look like and we are excited about what the future holds for our schools and our students.”

Tom McInerney, who is chair of Foundations in Education and CEO and co-founder of Bluff Point Associates, a private equity firm based in Westport, recently attended the introductory session for the initiative.

“It’s relatively easy to write out a check,” he said. “What they’re doing is the hard work. They’re going to have to learn new things. Some will be frightened, others will be energized by it, but they have to do the heavy lifting because they’re the people in the front lines when it comes to providing good Catholic education—the principals and teachers who are in the classroom every day. I cannot exaggerate the importance of what they do. What I do is helpful, but it is only giving them ammunition to fight the wars.”

The Personalized Learning Initiative will provide an updated technology infrastructure, new hardware and student devices and programs to support the traditional Catholic school educational experience, Cheeseman said. The technology will not only improve academic performance among students but also increase their self-confidence and give them lifetime learning skills.

Tom McInerney, who is a product of lifelong Catholic education, attended Holy Cross Elementary School and St. Augustine’s High School in Brooklyn, followed by Cathedral College, a junior seminary, and later St. John’s University, where he received a degree in English literature and served on the board of trustees for 13 years, five as chairman. He also attended New York University Stern School of Business and received an honorary doctorate of commercial science from St. John’s.

“I am absolutely convinced that the years I spent in elementary school and high school and, to a slightly less extent college because I was going at night, were very formative,” he said. “You learned about right and wrong and about your religion and the tenets of the Catholic faith. As part of that process, you also learned about integrity and morality, and the importance...

Bishop meets Pope at CAPP-USA Conference

VATICAN CITY—“New Policies and Life-Styles in the Digital Age” was the theme at the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifici (CAPP) Foundation’s 25th Anniversary conference, held at the Vatican on May 24-26.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, assistant ecclesiastical counselor to CAPP in the United States joined 30 CAPP-USA members and guests to attend the conference.

While in Rome, the bishop also met the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

“It was a great grace to have met our Holy Father Francis last month! Let us continue to pray fervently for the Pope and his ministry in the Church,” Bishop Caggiano said.

On my recent trip to the Vatican, I had the great blessing to meet Pope Francis in person. It was during the closing session of the CAPP Conference, which ended with a brief address by the Pope and an opportunity to briefly meet with him,” said Bishop Caggiano, who noted there were over 500 people in attendance and the Pope met with every single person individually.

“In my brief remarks to the Pope, I expressed how great a blessing it was to finally meet him and promised him continued prayers each day. At first he smiled, then he laughed and very gently said ‘thank you.’ It was a simple, humble response that the whole world has come to deeply value in the Pope. It was a real moment of grace to be able to encounter such simplicity and humility in the midst of so much pomp and circumstance. It was a vivid reminder of what really matters in the life of faith,” the bishop said.

Commenting on the relevance of the conference’s topic, Pope Francis said, “One of the challenges linked to this theme is the threat families are facing from uncertain job opportunities and the impact of the digital cultural revolution. As the preparation process for this year’s Synod on Young People has made clear, this is a vital area in which the solidarity of the Church is actively needed.” Pope Francis went on to tell members, “Your own contribution is a privileged expression of the Church’s concern for the future of young people and families.”

Manifesting the “Pro Pontifice” (For the Pontiff) of CAPP’s name, Pope Francis’ address marked the 25th consecutive meeting and talk with the group by successive Holy Fathers. Especially poignant was His Holiness’ personally greeting each of the over 500 people in attendance.

The conference was highlighted with two addresses on “A Common Christian Agenda for the Common Good,” the first by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, and another by His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Reflecting on these talks Pope Francis observed, “Indeed this is an activity where ecumenical cooperation is of special importance, and the presence of Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople at your conference is an eloquent sign of this common responsibility.”

Joining Cardinal Fernando...
Father James Bates Ordination

Bishop: ‘Bring restless hearts to God’

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

“Always be obedient to the holy restlessness that has brought you to this day,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano before ordaining James K. Bates to the priesthood on Saturday, June 2, in St. Joseph Church in Danbury. The 11 am Mass was an occasion of joy as priests, friends and family members gathered to celebrate the ordination of the 56-year convert to Catholicism who grew up in Brookfield.

“Do you know him to be worthy?” the bishop asked to begin the ordination rite. After an affirmative answer the bishop said, “We choose James our brother for the order of the priesthood,” and the church broke into prolonged applause as James Bates beamed standing before the congregation.

In his homily, the bishop thanked Father Bates for responding to the call to priesthood. “Today we celebrate the remarkable journey of your life that has brought you to us,” the bishop said, “We choose James our brother for the order of the priesthood,” and the church broke into prolonged applause as James Bates beamed standing before the congregation.

In his homily, the bishop thanked Father Bates for responding to the call to priesthood. “Today we celebrate the remarkable journey of your life that has brought you to us,” the bishop said, “We choose James our brother for the order of the priesthood,” and the church broke into prolonged applause as James Bates beamed standing before the congregation.

The bishop said that Father Bates’ journey toward the priesthood began at his baptism when the “indwelling of the Holy Spirit” touched his life. Referring to the autobiography of St. Augustine, the bishop said that every human heart is restless for the truth, and that each person has a different path toward God.

“Never forget that at the heart of each priest’s life is the Eucharist. There is no more sacred duty. Become the living bread to your brothers. Wrap your life around the one sacrifice of Calvary,” the bishop said.

Noting that priests are called upon to live sacrificially, the bishop said Eucharist gives the priest strength to lead a life of prayer and service to others.

“As you and I become less, more grace is unleashed and the world grows in sanctity,” he said. “Make the Lord visible through your priesthood.”

At the end of the ordination rite the bishop presented Father Bates a paten holding the bread and chalice containing the wine mixed with water. “Receive the oblation of the holy people to be offered to God. Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s Cross,” the bishop intoned to complete the rite.

The newly ordained Father Bates then joined him in the liturgy of the Eucharist and distributing Holy Communion.

Twice during the rite the more than 40 priests in attendance came forward; first in the “Laying on of Hands” to bless Father Bates, and again after his anointing to give the newly ordained the fraternal kiss of peace.

Jennifer Marazzo, sister of Father Bates, and Ashley Citron, his niece, served as gift bearers, while the readings were handled by family members Joseph Marazzo and Christopher Marazzo.

After Mass, bishop thanked Father Samuel Scott, pastor of St. Joseph’s, for helping to nurture the vocation of Father Bates, who attended St. Joseph as his home parish. A reception was held in the St. Joseph School hall.

The beautiful music, including antiphons and songs in English and Latin, was provided by the St. Joseph Parish choir under the direction of David Baranowski, and ensemble “Tolle et Lege” directed by David J. Hughes.

The ordination program distributed to all in attendance concluded with this quote from St. Jean Eudes: “The priest is the living image of Christ in this world, of Christ watching, praying, preaching catechizing, working, weeping, going from town to town… suffering, sacrificing himself and dying for the souls created to his image and likeness.”

Three ordained Transitional Deacons

By ANDRÉ ESCALEIRA

On May 19, the Diocese of Bridgeport celebrated joyfully the ordinations of three men to the Transitional Diaconate. This is traditionally the last step before ordination to the priesthood. Rev. Mr. Peter Adamski, Rev. Mr. Christopher Ford and Rev. Mr. David Roman (Rev. Mr. is the formal title for transitional deacons) were ordained deacons by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in a beautiful Ordination Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral.

In the midst of a rainstorm, faithful from across the diocese crowded into the cathedral to pray with and for these three men and their families. The atmosphere in the cathedral was characterized by a deep spirit of joy and thanksgiving for the gift of the diocese’s three newest deacons.

In his homily, Bishop Caggiano exhorted the three men to selfless service, saying to them: “To be ordained is to be set apart, because you will be a living sacrifice of service. You will remind us of what we are all called to do, by virtue of our baptism, for we are all called to be holy. You are a sacramental sign of that call.”

Indeed, the bishop told the men that he wanted them to “preach with courage, with boldness. I want you to preach the fullness of the truth.” He even exhorted them, saying: “Never be afraid to be a herald of the Gospel!” As the “living sacrifice of service,” while preaching courageously and boldly, Bishop Caggiano encouraged these three new deacons to “be the living bridge between the table of life and those who are seeking that life! Go where others are afraid to go, bring God’s love to them.”

Following the Ordination Mass, many of the more than five hundred faithful in attendance gathered at Kolbe Cathedral High School next door for a light reception to celebrate and congratulate the new deacons and their families.

To celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost the following morning, the new deacons gave their first homilies at their respective parishes in the presence of family, friends and parishioners.
Ordinations

Bishop ordains three permanent deacons

By Elizabeth Clyons

Family, friends and community gathered at St. Augustine Cathedral around Joseph Huong, Joseph Koletar and David Rivera as they celebrated their ordination to the Permanent Diaconate on Saturday, June 9.

The candidates received a standing ovation from all gathered after coming forward to testify to their worthiness of being ordained to the Order of the Diaconate.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the celebrant of the Mass, along with principal concelebrants Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general; Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka; Father Joseph Marcello; Father Michael Novajosky; and the Deans of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The Gospel of Matthew reflected the occasion celebrating such an important ministry as it proclaimed, “The harvest is abundant; but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest” (Matt 9:37-38).

During his homily, Bishop Caggiano addressed the candidates, “The Holy Spirit will set you apart and configure you to Christ the servant.” The bishop explained, “Christ has chosen you for this ministry so that you might be configured to receive this additional indwelling of the Spirit.”

Bishop Caggiano gave the candidates encouragement for their ministry as he said, “Everything you do from this day forward will be an invitation to holiness for those around you… to connect God’s people to the Sacrifice of Christ.”

Bishop Caggiano said that the meaning of charity, of love, is “the gift of oneself to another” and that in their ministry, the candidates would receive a hundredfold of that love in return. “You, my brothers will be teaching the world the saving message of that love in Christ,” the bishop said.

Reflecting on the feast days of both the Sacred Heart of Jesus (June 8) and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (June), the bishop explained the need for the faithful to understand what the Lord is asking of us.

“Brothers, never be afraid to have your heart wounded, broken in love, as both Our Lord and Our Mother’s were…” For when it is broken, grace finds a way to flow to the hearts around you that have also been broken,” he said.

Addressing the candidates directly and thanking them for saying “Yes” to this vocation of service, the bishop urged them to “allow the Holy Spirit to give you the courage to have your heart given over in love.” Bishop Caggiano then thanked the candidates for saying yes to this vocation in service of the Church.

As each candidate came forward to declare their resolve in accepting the duties and responsibilities of the diaconate, they knelt before the bishop and promised respect and obedience to him and his successors.

The elect then prostrated themselves as the congregation sang the Litany of the Saints.

One by one, each candidate knelt before the bishop as he laid his hands on them.

After the prayer of ordination, the newly ordained stood and were vested with a diaconal stole and dalmatic. Once vested as Deacons, the newly ordained knelt before the bishop as he placed the Book of the Gospels in their hands, saying, “Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.”

The bishop gave each of the newly ordained the fraternal kiss. All the deacons present processed forward to do likewise and congratulate their newly ordained brothers.

In his closing remarks, Bishop Caggiano thanked the newly ordained, as well as their wives, children and the mentors who helped them along their journey, saying, “Pray for these, my brothers. We must show the world to Jesus Christ; and these three, our new deacons and brothers, will help us every step of the way.”

Bishop Caggiano honors Consecrated Life

WESTPORT—The annual Celebration of Consecrated Life was held at St. Luke Parish, Westport, on May 15.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the main celebrant of the Mass, with ten other clergy concelebrating. Directly after Mass, a dinner was provided for 125 Religious, clergy and friends.

During this time, Bishop Caggiano recognized Religious sisters and priests with special anniversaries. In total, twenty-six women’s societies and congregations and thirteen men’s were represented.

“Religious women and men serve or have served the People of God here and abroad in many apostolates, including Catholic university, secondary and elementary education, parish religious education, nursing, mission work, social work, prison ministry and hospital chaplaincy,” said Sister Nancy Strillacci, ASCJ, delegate for Religious for the Diocese of Bridgeport. “Just for the Jubilarians this year alone, they have given a total of 1,200 years of service. The diocese benefits from their works and also importantly by the prayer and example of individual Religious in their living of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.”

Those living or serving in the diocese celebrating milestones were:

- 70 years of professed life: Srs. Theresa Curley, RSM; Margaret Mary Forsyth, SSND; Mary Georjanne Pearson, SSND; M. Julianna Poole, SSND; and Mary Ann Tantalo, SSND.
- 60 years: Srs. Helen Mary Dolan, SSND; Maureen Francis Fleming, SSND; Ethel Howley, SSND; Ann Marie Keemon, CSFN; Dorothy Mary Kosarko, SSND; Mary Mendum, SSND; Mary Ilona Mensik, SSND; Catherine O’Connell, SSND; Mary Ann Socha, CMGT; and Julia Mary Van Rossem, SSND.
- 50 years: Revs. Michael J. Doody, SJ; Thomas J. Fitzpatrick, SJ; and Stefan Morawski, OFM, Conv.
- 25 years: Revs. Francis T. Hanneley, SJ; and Christopher Johnson, OCD.

NEWLY ORDAINED DEACONS—Deacons Joseph Koletar, Joseph Huong and David Rivera meet with Bishop Caggiano after he ordained them to the Order of the Diaconate at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport. “Everything you do from this day forward will be an invitation to holiness for those around you,” the bishop said.

What does a vocation to the Religious Life Look Like?

- Single Practicing Catholic
- Serious about Prayer
- Involved in Parish Life
- Likes Serving Others
- Happy, but Wondering
- If It Were Possible to Do More for Christ
- Like, Maybe Full Time...

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June 2018
Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share

By PAT HENNESSY

“There’s a joy in giving back if you have been blessed in terms of your own life,” says Msgr. Laurence Bronkiewicz, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield and chair of the Priest Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Annual Catholic Appeal.

While parishioners in Ridgefield tend to be blessed financially, Msgr. Bronkiewicz, who was raised in Norwalk and served at parishes throughout the diocese, says that hearts filled with the joy of faith are always eager to share their gifts with others. In their generous response, richness of faith counts for more than financial wealth.

“‘Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share,’ the title of this year’s appeal, is how parishioners respond in love and thanksgiving for the blessings they have received from God and want to give to others,” notes Appeal Director Pam Rittman, echoing his observation.

“The Annual Catholic Appeal reaches people who need help in their life journey in so many different ways,” Msgr. Bronkiewicz says. The appeal helps to fund ministries and programs and activities throughout the diocese, many of them far beyond the ability of any single parish.

“The most appealing piece for our people is the assistance offered by Catholic Charities,” he says. “We neighbor on Danbury, and our parishioners are involved in helping at the Dorothy Day shelter and Morning Glory breakfast program. A number of them are involved in making the Midnight Run to New York City, bringing down food and clothing—that’s especially needed in the winter months.”

St. Mary’s has also benefited from the assistance of a number of seminarians over the years, and enjoyed the presence of James Bates, who was ordained to the priesthood this month, during his service as a transitional deacon. “We will have another seminarian this summer, Anh Vu, who is originally from Vietnam,” adds Msgr. Bronkiewicz.

St. Mary’s partners with St. Peter Parish in Bridgeport, and parishioners have shared projects together. Beyond that, St. Mary’s parishioners are aware of the wider world served by the diocese and areas of ministry that even their parish’s energetic outreach will never directly contact.

“When we talk about the Annual Catholic Appeal, we tell them ‘You’re touching lives you never meet, people you will never know and experiences you will never have.’ They respond to that,” says Msgr. Bronkiewicz.

“I’ve heard many reflections of the joy they experience knowing that they have had an impact. They realize that what they are giving is making a difference in someone’s life.”

In Ridgefield’s neighboring town to the south, Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton shows an equally generous response to the “Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share.”

HEARTS FILLED with the joy of faith are always eager to share their gifts.

These volunteers are serving lunch at the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport, which receives donations from the appeal through Catholic Charities.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE!

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Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap.

— Luke Chapter 6:38
June 2018

Good Counsel Chapel

Unity generated in the sacraments

By JOE PISANI

When Robert Wauthier of Stratford decided he wanted to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, he reached out to Rose Talbot-Babey, the coordinator of faith formation for the Diocese of Bridgeport. There was a lot to be done. He needed religious instruction, and for several months they worked together to prepare him for the sacrament.

Rose was also instructing a group of candidates who would be baptized on Pentecost at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel in Bridgeport, so she suggested to Robert that he might be able to be confirmed at the same time. He thought about it and decided to visit the chapel on Ortega Avenue with his wife Izabella and their two-year-old daughter, Reese Ann.

The minute they pulled up to the church, he realized something amazing. It had been his mother Maryann’s church, where she and his father Raymond were married almost 40 years ago, the same church where he and his two brothers had been baptized. When he called his mother to tell her, she began to cry with joy.

On Pentecost Sunday, Robert joined 11 other children and adults who were receiving Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation at the chapel. Robert, who is the manager of Red Lobster on Main Street in Bridgeport, wanted to be confirmed the same day Reese Ann was baptized, but her date had to be postponed because she got sick. His father Raymond was his sponsor.

The church was filled with excitement as families and friends arrived, and Talbot-Babey got all the candidates ready.

Father Stephen Gleeson, who will mark his 55th anniversary as a priest in several weeks, looked out at the congregation and said, “We come together on this glorious feast, and we have so much to celebrate because of the beautiful sacraments Jesus has given us.”

Talbot-Babey has been working at the chapel since January to prepare the group to receive the sacraments, which were administered by Father Gleeson. She explained that on Pentecost Sunday, pastors and administrators are given the faculties to confirm adults.

“My focus is on the sacraments and the impact they have on those who receive them,” she said. “They draw people closer to Christ, and they are a door-way to get them back to church. Everyone’s story is different, and we give them all an opportunity to experience Christ.”

As part of her mission at Our Lady of Good Counsel, she is working to reenergize the community. Since the beginning of the year, she has instituted a Baptism and sacraments program, adult education and Bible study, and a faith formation program for children.

During the time that parents were bringing their children for preparation, she made an important discovery. “We quickly realized that some parents, themselves, had not received all the sacraments,” she said. “So now parents and children are here together, and it came about by working with the families.”

It is so wonderful to see different people receiving the sacraments at different times in their lives alongside the children,” she said.

Mass was followed by fellowship and refreshments in the community room and a photo session with Father Gleeson.

Rose believes it was providential that Robert was confirmed at Our Lady of Good Counsel, where his parents had been parishioners years before. For his confirmation name, he chose Patrick, and when she looked up in the choir loft, she saw there was a picture of St. Patrick.

At the end of the Mass, Chris Elsberry, who was also confirmed and is a member of the parish’s leadership team, told the congregation, “For the first time in a long time, I have seen baptisms, communions and confirmations at this chapel. What a wonderful day it is.”

The candidates were:

- **Baptisms**
  - Jessenia DeJesus
  - Danny Casiano Jr.
  - Janette Iris Casiano
  - Alejandro Casiano Jr.
  - Jahniyah Casiano
  - Jharness Casiano
  - Issac Joel Perez
  - Tiffany Ashley Perez
  - Ashley Angie Rivera

- **First Communion**
  - Brian Corasaniti

- **Confirmation**
  - Chris Elsberry
  - Robert Wauthier

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**SACRAMENTS DRAW PEOPLE CLOSER TO CHRIST** said Rose-Talbot-Babey (l.), diocesan coordinator of faith formation, who was a Confirmation sponsor at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel on Pentecost Sunday. Father Stephen Gleeson conferred the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in a multi-generational celebration.

“People are spiritually wealthy when they realize that God is working with them,” Father Norman says. They share that joy in every way they can. “Time and talent are just as valuable as treasure,” he says, noting that parishioners in both his former and his present parish are generous in every way.

The Annual Catholic Appeal assists ministries and programs throughout the diocese. “Sometimes the parishioners don’t know all the needs, or exactly what the diocese does,” says Father Reggie. The programs assisted by the appeal are many and varied. Future priests discern their vocation through St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford and retired priests retain independent living at Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Retired Priests Residence. Chaplains bring the love of Jesus to nursing homes and hospitals. The Leadership Institute enriches the faith formation of adults. Young couples are prepared for marriage through the pre-Cana program, youth can take part in the Catholic Service Corps and the CYR chorus, directors of religious education and catechists receive support and training, and the most vulnerable unborn and elderly have a voice through the Respect Life Office.

“We’re the universal Church,” says Father Norman. “People are happy to do their part. Ours is a culture of giving. It resonates with them and expresses the joy of their faith. They trust that their support will go where it will be most useful.”

There are a number of ways to donate to the Annual Catholic Appeal. Pledge envelopes are available at every parish, and may be placed in the Sunday collection. The appeal also offers the opportunity to make gift and pledge payments online. Some companies have a Matching Gift Program, particularly to Catholic Charities or to education in Catholic schools, including St. Catherine Center for special needs. It is also possible to make a charitable gift from a traditional IRA without having to pay federal income taxes on the distributions.

“It’s easy to make a gift this way, but please contact your financial representative for more information,” says Rittman.

(For more information or for assistance on donation opportunities, call 203.416.1479 or email 2018ACA@ diobpt.org.)
Share the Journey
Keeping families together

By PAT HENNESSY

“Getting a green card was life-changing,” says Anna Kozak Duarte. “It was a gift from God. Before that, every day was like carrying a huge stone of uncertainty. We had no stability.”

Anna, her husband Victor and their three children live in Norwalk. They are members of St. Mary Parish, where their son is an altar server. The children, proud of their heritage, are trilingual—English, Polish and Spanish.

Anna and Victor met when she came to the United States on a travel and study visa. A native of Poland, Anna was midway through a master’s degree in teaching English as a foreign language. “I wanted to get a better sense of American culture and speech patterns,” she said.

While working in a summer program she met Victor and “something clicked.”

Victor had come to the U.S. at age 18 to join family here. He got work through his brother, who is a citizen. “I had a boss who was willing to sponsor me for employment-based authorization, and we had filled out the paperwork,” he recalls.

Then the laws changed. The paperwork was finished but not processed, leaving Victor without documentation. “For years I kept trying and trying to get my green card through work,” he says.

It was under these circumstances that the two young people met. Anna returned to Poland, finished her master’s degree, and came back to America on a study visa. The two were married in 2006. Their struggle for permanent resident status was ongoing. A study visa is not a work visa, and neither of them confers permanent resident status—a green card. “Because I had come on a student visa, I was only here legally if I continued as a full-time student,” Anna explains.

“We had children and I wanted to help out with the finances, but I had to keep going to school.”

At one point, with a job possibility in hand, she paid an immigration lawyer to complete the necessary paperwork. The lawyer was sloppy or careless or indifferent, or all of those things, and filed the forms incorrectly—a frustration many immigrants know too well.

Finally, she met the head of a small private school in the area who was willing to become a sponsor. A better lawyer filed the appropriate paperwork. Even though she had an advanced degree in Poland, and further studies here, her education held no particular value from an immigration point of view. Immigration only accepted her application for one position: a child monitor.

“Basically, I got a work visa as a nanny,” Anna says.

With the help of another sponsor, she was able to apply for permanent resident status.

Victor’s status, meanwhile, was still uncertain. “It was very stressful with a family, with kids,” he said.

The three Duarte children had attended Room to Grow preschool in Norwalk, which is sponsored by Catholic Charities. Anna had been an active volunteer at the preschool, and Director Nancy Owens learned of the couple’s difficulties.

“Anna was always ready to help, and they were a delightful family,” says Owens. She suggested they get in touch with Alex Arevalo, immigration counselor for Catholic Charities.

Now they had a knowledgeable advisor to help them navigate the confusing legal process. Under the immigration law of 1996, only a U.S. citizen could be a sponsor for his or her spouse; a permanent resident could not.

But by the time Anna and Victor came to Catholic Charities, Arevalo knew that a promising change was on the way, making it possible for lawful permanent residents to be sponsors.

“A lot of these provisions were put in place to keep families together,” Arevalo said. “But that only gets you on the waiting list,” he added, explaining why he encouraged Anna and Victor to begin the paperwork immediately, even before the new regulations were in place.

When the change became law in 2016, they had already started. The process requires multiple steps, including proof of extreme hardship if a spouse is removed from the country. For Anna and Victor, the legal process took about a year and accumulated 500 pages of supporting documents, including school records, financial documents and affidavits from friends.

This year, Victor received his green card, and permanent resident status.

“This year, Victor received his green card, and permanent resident status.

“Now we have a wonderful, reunited family,” says Arevalo. “That’s one of the major goals of the immigration service at Catholic Charities—keeping families together.”

Anna and Victor’s long, tense journey has come to a successful conclusion. Now Victor is a sous chef in a Stamford restaurant, and Anna is a teacher.

This summer, they are planning to embark on another, eagerly anticipated, journey. With the security of permanent resident status in place, Anna and Victor, with the children, are finally free to visit her family in Poland.

Bishops statement:

Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez, Bishop of Austin and Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration, issued the following statement:

“Forcibly separating children from their mothers and fathers is ineffective to the goals of deterrence and safety and contrary to our Catholic values. Family unity is a cornerstone of our American immigration system and a foundational element of Catholic teaching. ‘Children are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward.’ (Psalm 127:3) Children are not instruments of deterrence but a blessing from God.

“Rupturing the bond between parent and child causes scientifically-proven trauma that often leads to irreparable emotional scarring. Accordingly, children should always be placed in the least restrictive setting: a safe, family environment, ideally with their own families.

“My brother bishops and I understand the need for the security of our borders and country, but separating arriving families at the U.S./Mexico border does not allay security concerns. Children and families will continue to take the enormous risks of migration—including family separation—because the root causes of migration from the Northern Triangle remain: community or state-sanctioned violence, gang recruitment, poverty, and a lack of educational opportunity. Any policies should address these factors first as we seek to repair our broken immigration system.”

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has also issued a statement calling for an end to the policy and emphasizing that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has consistently advocated for bi-partisan immigration reform that is both lawful and compassionate.

“As a son of immigrants, the thought of separating children from their parents as an instrument of immigration policy is personally very troubling to me. It is also inconsistent with our moral values and with Catholic Social Teaching. The Lord Jesus could not have been more explicit about welcoming the stranger and protecting the dignity of all human persons,” the bishop wrote.

“We cannot be silent when children are being detained without a support system. We cannot let them be separated from their parents in a land where they do not speak the language, and in a venue where they are treated as though they are criminals, although the decision to come here was not theirs to make.”

(To read Bishop Caggiano’s full statement, visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/cannot-pick-choose-parts-truth-wish-believe.)

POSITION AVAILABLE

Finance Director
Villa Maria School, Stamford

Villa Maria School is a small elementary and junior high school for children with learning disabilities sponsored by the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters.

The Finance Director would need to be well versed in QuickBooks and general accounting principles, as well as have some knowledge of or experience working in a ministry sponsored by a religious congregation.

The position begins on or before August 1, 2018

To request a position description or to apply for the position contact DMcmanus@villamariaedu.org
Religious Travel

Pilgrimage enriches the heart of faith

By PAT HENNESSY

We celebrated Mass on a boat in the Sea of Galilee. It was a peaceful day, no need for Jesus to calm the storm. But Jesus was with us, body and blood, soul and divinity, as we received the Eucharist in the place he knew so well.

I was part of a pilgrimage tour by the Legionaries of Christ, a religious order whose U.S. headquarters are in Cheshire, CT. We followed in the footsteps of Jesus, from Nazareth to Cana, from Capernaum to the Mount of Beatitudes to Magdala, and from there to Jerusalem and the Way of the Cross.

A pilgrimage is not a vacation tour. You see the actual places where Jesus lived and worked. It brings his world alive. More than that, watching men work on fishing boats by the Sea of Galilee, walking into the safe comfort of a sheepfold, standing on pavement that knew the steps of Jesus, hearing Mass in Bethlehem and joining a candlelight procession to the cave where he was born, opens the heart as well as the mind to a deeper faith.

Our pilgrimage first took us to Nazareth. In the time of Jesus, it was a village of 400 or so people in the middle of nowhere. Archaeologists estimate that it had about 25 homes, mostly one or two rooms dwellings set in caves on the hillside. The village lies in a natural bowl, with a spring in its center. Mary would have walked about ten minutes every day from her home to the spring to do washing, gossip with friends, and carry a jug of water home for the evening meal. This is the place where the Son of God grew up. A more insignificant setting would be hard to find.

The Church of the Annunciation in modern Nazareth sits atop a one-room cave home venerated for centuries as Mary’s house. Walking around the inside of the church and the courtyard beyond, we saw images of Mary from countries around the world, Ethiopia and Bulgaria flanking the more expected France and Italy. Without words, these images testified to us that the girl from this village in the hills is honored as our mother in every corner of the globe.

When he began his public ministry, Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, went into the wilderness where he prayed and fasted, and then returned to Galilee. There he chose the fishing town of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee as his center of operations. We followed his path. In Capernaum, there is only one synagogue. We walked into the ruins from Byzantine times, but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
of dealing with people on a fair basis.”

They were lessons that stayed with him throughout his life, he said, and values that he brought with him into his professional life and the business world.

Occasionally, he would tease some of his junior colleagues at a firm where he worked. “I used to tell them that just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should do it. There are rights and wrongs, and you have to be conscious of what they are.”

Paula shares his commitment to Catholic education. Before moving to Connecticut, they made a $3 million pledge to convert 29 Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of New York from a traditional educational model to blended learning by providing computers, iPads and software so that teachers could monitor student progress and review it at the end of the day.

As Tom says, “This is not your grandfather’s classroom anymore. Students get to pursue the subject matter at their own pace. It is a much more decentralized, individual approach to education. I’ve seen it in action and I’ve spoken to teachers, students and parents. Everyone is glowing in their praise of this new approach. I’m a convert.”

When they lived in Manhattan, they were also patrons of Catholic schools through the Inner City Scholarship Fund. Paula had two schools and Tom had two, including St. James on the Lower East Side, which claimed Catholic presidential candidate Al Smith as a graduate, and St. Gregory the Great on the Upper West Side.

Prior to Bluff Point, Tom was a general partner of Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe for 24 years, was president and CEO of Momentum Technologies, and a group vice president of Automatic Data Processing’s (ADP) Brokerage Services Division and a group Vice President of ADP’s Financial Industries Services. He also co-founded and served as CEO of Dama Telecommunications Corp. He began his career at the American Stock Exchange. He and Paula have five children and 13 grandchildren.

“From the point of faith and religious beliefs, going to a Catholic school molds a kid with the right kind of thinking about his or her role in life and how to behave and to do the right thing,” he said. “But there’s another element—if you give a good kid a good education, you end up vastly improving that person’s chances to have a good life. With Catholic education, the most important thing is the development of morality, ethics and faith. But it also has the material benefit of creating an environment where a student can break the cycle of poverty.”

The six pilot schools where the Personalized Learning Initiative will be unveiled are Assumption School in Fairfield, St. Gregory the Great in Danbury, Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton, the Upper School at the Catholic Academy in Stamford, Our Lady of Fatima in Wilton and the new multi-age school, St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Brookfield.

“To survive and prosper, we have to provide an education at least as good as and ideally better than the public schools,” he says. “It has to be an excellent education. And I think individual learning is a clear improvement on educational methodology.”

(Foundations in Education is a non-profit initiative created to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to support Catholic Education in Fairfield County. For more information, contact Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine: holly@foundationsineducation.org or visit foundationsineducation.org.)
Parish News

Farewell Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius

By MARYJEAN DA SILVA

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

In 1954, Father John Filip, administrator of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Stratford, negotiated with the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius to staff a proposed parochial school. Two years later, three Sisters of the religious order arrived at Holy Name to reside in the convent then located on College Street.

The Sisters conducted religious instructions and formed children’s choirs. A first grade class was held in the church basement until the school was completed and dedicated on September 8, 1957. Grades 1 through 4 were taught by the Sisters. A grade was added each year, with the first class graduating in June 1965.

Our parish has been blessed with vocations to both the priesthood and the religious life, including Sister Gloria Marie Kacsk, SSCM, who has worked for the diocesan Catholic schools office and currently helps with parish office work. In the early 1990s, though Holy Name School closed, the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius’ presence continued. Over the years they took charge of the children’s Faith Formation program, where Sister Joseph Therese has currently been the director, and served on renewal committees, parish office assistance and spiritual outreach to many parishioners.

But as we know, change is inevitable. At the end of the 2018 school year, Sister Joseph Therese and Sister Gloria Marie will be returning to the SSCM motherhouse in Danville, Penn. On Pentecost Sunday, Holy Name recognized and paid tribute to the Sisters for their years of faithful service.

“The Sisters’ presence over the years has enriched our parish in so many ways,” said Father Mariusz Olbrys, Holy Name’s pastor. “We ask God to continue to bless their ministry.”

Kashulon Foundation Gift

BRIDGEPORT—On behalf of the John and Ethel Kashulon Foundation, Board of Directors member T.R. Rowe (l) recently presented two checks to Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. The first was in the amount of $10,000 and will be used to support a diocesan seminarian-in-need, and the second was in the amount of $7,500 for the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Retired Priests’ Residence in Stamford, in appreciation for all that newly-retired Msgr. Joseph Pekar did for Ethel and her parish of Sts. Cyril & Methodius over the 47 years he served as pastor. Ethel and John Kashulon were longtime members of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish in Bridgeport. The mission of the Kashulon Foundation is to improve people’s lives through the funding of programs whose mission and projects align with the three unified goals of enhancing educational, children’s and cultural opportunities.

At the presentation, Bishop Caggiano, on behalf of the entire diocese, expressed his deepest gratitude for the generosity of the Kashulon Foundation.

SUPPORT THE 2018 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL THROUGH AN IRA TAX FREE DONATION

You can have your donation sent DIRECTLY to the Appeal from your IRA.

WHO Qualifies For This Strategy?

• You must be age 70½ or older at the time of the distribution.
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• Rules apply for all charitable organizations. Contact your financial advisor, who can help you evaluate and determine if this works with your overall estate plan.

An acknowledgement IRA gift transfer letter can be found on the Annual Catholic Appeal donation page on the diocesan website, www.bridgeportdiocese.org/agm/donate/. Go to CLICK HERE for more information about an IRA tax free donation and for the link to the letter.
Marvel

May crowning in English and in Spanish. Young voices raised in song. Graduates throwing caps in the air. Teenagers seeing God in the glory of nature. Eagle Scouts helping to restore an inner-city playground. Processions giving visible energy to the declaration of our faith. Men and women dedicating their lives to the Lord.

Our diocese has so much to enjoy, so much to celebrate. Faith enriches the beauty God has created, giving our appreciation an added depth and richness. Catholics are lucky—“blessed” is how we usually term it, but lucky we are. Every week at Mass we’re reminded that God loves us. We leave Mass to sunshine or rain, knowing that God sends both to nourish us. We can look at a flower and not just appreciate its beauty but wonder at the glory of its existence. “God saw that it was good.”

This June issue gives earned recognition to schools and graduates. More than that, it offers so many things that give joy—from ordinations and pilgrimages and First Holy Communion to the personal stories of immigrants and converts. Dip in; see how wonderful our world is. Give thanks to the creator, who gave us the grace to marvel at its grandeur.

A Reflection of Gratitude

“My dear friends in Christ. It has been five years since the Holy Father gave me the great privilege of being your shepherd and serving as Bishop of Bridgeport. These have been years of great blessings for me, as you and I have made progress in working together and moving the diocese forward. My heart is filled with gratitude. We have done much together and we have much to celebrate.”

The bishop’s words are taken from the beginning of his new video, “A Reflection of Gratitude.” The video, released on social media and available on the diocesan website, has drawn thousands of viewers.

In his brief reflection, the bishop looks back on the achievements of the past five years and the fruits of the synod, but also very much looks forward to completing the important work of renewal in the diocese.

In addition to expressing his deep gratitude, Bishop Caggiano issues a challenge: he tells us it’s time to move forward, to create more welcoming parishes, to evangelize, and to accompany others in their journey of faith in the spirit of Pope Francis.

If you have not seen the video, please visit Bridgeport Diocese on YouTube and join the bishop in taking a quick look at all we have done together to renew the Church for the next generation.

Extraordinary Gifts

This spring the diocese received two extraordinary gifts in support of Catholic Education. As reported in the May issue, Barbara and Peter Ripp of Greenwich donated $1 million to launch the Christopher Ripp Early Learning Center program for three- and four-year olds who are among the most vulnerable children in our schools. That gift was followed by a $5.5 million gift from Tom and Paula McInerney of Westport (see story on page 3) in support of Personalized Learning Initiatives.

The gifts are good news for students and parents throughout the diocese and represent not only extraordinary generosity but also confidence and enthusiasm about the future of Catholic education. Both gifts were received through the new Foundations in Education created by Bishop Caggiano to strengthen and transform the mission of Catholic education.

In a short time the foundation has lived up to its promise to raise funds for innovation, professional development and scholarship assistance in diocesan schools. The foundation also manages the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, which distributed $2.58 million that was donated through the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) this past year to provide tuition assistance to 1,302 students in our elementary schools. It all adds up to profound generosity at every level of giving in our diocese.

Inspired by Bishop Caggiano’s vision for the future of Catholic schools, people are stepping up to support schools that nurture lifetime literacy while forming young people in the faith. As we celebrate our graduates and schools in this issue, we express our gratitude to all those who have given generously and sacrificially to pass on the gift of Catholic education.

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

**Pastor**

**Father Henry J. Hoffman**, Parochial Vicar, Saint Jude Parish, Monroe, to Pastor, Saint Jude Parish, Monroe. Effective date is June 30.

**Father Peter F. Lenox**, Parochial Administrator, Saint Joseph Parish, Norwalk, to Pastor, Saint Joseph Parish, Norwalk. Effective date was June 1.

**Father Carl D. McIntosh**, Parochial Vicar, Saint Theresa Parish, Trumbull, to Pastor, Saint Roch Parish, Greenwich. Effective date is June 30.

**Father Marisuz M. Olbrays**, Parochial Administrator, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Stratford, to Pastor, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Stratford. Effective date is September 30.

**Director**

**Father G. Frantz Desruisseaux**, Episcopal Chaplain of Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport, to Director of the Haitian-American Catholic Center. Effective date is June 30.

**Episcopal Chaplain**

**Father Lanh T. Phan**, Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Bethel, to Episcopal Chaplain to Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport. Effective date is August 15. Father Phan will reside at The Cathedral Parish in Bridgeport.

**Father Eric W. Silva**, Parochial Vicar, Saint Joseph Parish, Brookfield, to Episcopal Chaplain to Saint Joseph High School, Trumbull. Effective date is July 31. Father Silva will reside at The Cathedral Parish in Bridgeport.

**Parochial Vicar**

**Father James K. Bates**, newly ordained to the Diocese of Bridgeport, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Jude Parish, Monroe. Effective date was June 2.

**Father Karol Ksiazek**, Parochial Vicar, Saint Edward the Confessor Parish, New Fairfield, to Parochial Vicar, The Cathedral Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date is June 30.

**Father A. Alexis Moronta**, IVE, Parochial Vicar, Saint Ann Parish, Bridgeport, to Parochial Vicar, The Cathedral Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date is July 16.

**Father Lourduraj Pitchai**, O.F.PRAEM, new to the Diocese of Bridgeport from Saint Norbert Abbey, Janmtara, Jabalpur, India, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Ridgefield. Effective date was May 15.

**Chaplain**

**Father Jean-Rony Philippe**, Director of the Haitian-American Catholic Center, to Chaplain, Danbury Hospital, Danbury. Effective date is June 30. Father Philippe will reside at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Rectory, Danbury.

**Adjutant Judicial Vicar**

**Father Zbigniew Zielinski**, to Adjutant Judicial Vicar for the Diocesan Tribunal. Father Zielinski will remain Judge for the Diocesan Tribunal. Effective date is July 1.

**Other Priestly Ministry**

**Father Amobi Atuegbu**, SMMI, Chaplain, Danbury Hospital, Danbury, to providing priestly coverage at parishes. Effective date is June 30 through August 31. Father Atuegbu will reside at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Rectory, Danbury.

**Resignation**

**Father Jhon J. Gomez**, from Pastor, Saint Joseph Parish, Norwalk, for health reasons. Effective date was June 1.

**Sabbatical**

**Monsignor Dariusz J. Zielonka**, Pastor, Saint Jude Parish, Monroe, to Sabbatical, while retaining the office of Judicial Vicar. Effective date is July 1.

**Deacon**

**Deacon Joseph N. Huong**, newly ordained for the Diocese of Bridgeport, to Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date was June 9.

**Deacon Joseph M. Koletar**, newly ordained for the Diocese of Bridgeport, to Saint James Parish, Stratford. Effective date was June 9.

**Deacon William A. Koniars**, from the Cathedral Parish, Bridgeport, to Saint Jude Parish, Monroe. Effective date is June 30.

**Deacon David Rivera**, newly ordained for the Diocese of Bridgeport, to Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date was June 9.

**Retirement**

**Deacon Vincent J. Heidenreich**, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, to retirement. Effective date was June 15.

**Father Joseph A. Marcello Vicar for Clergy, June, 2018**
Let the children come

A WOMAN’S VOICE
By KATIE-SCARLETT CALCUTT

Katie-Scarlett Calcutt is the mother of four and a member of St. Ann Parish.

Family lore has it that when my father asked for my mother’s hand, her father pulled him aside. “Now I don’t know if you are religious, son, but I suggest you find religion quick. Nothing is more helpful when raising children.”

There’s truth here—though the top of my list also includes boxed macaroni and red wine. But the alternate is just as true. I have needed children to truly dive into “religion.” Who is God and why does he have so many rules? Will I have the strength to follow him? How much does he really love me?

When it comes to these perennial questions, obedience and trust hold the answers. They are humble little virtues, underestimated and misunderstood, that form the core of a healthy relationship with my children. They are just as indispensible to my adult relationship with the Father.

Consider obedience. On one level, a child’s obedience is necessary for personal safety. Think of all the “don’ts” a parent can shout: “Don’t touch the stove! Don’t cross the street! Don’t eat the toothpaste!” On another level, obedience is encouraged by trust for a relationship to flourish. “Use kind words. Wait your turn. Spit the toothpaste in the sink, not on Mama.”

Obedience to God’s word is the same. It may seem like God, or the Church, shouts a lot of “don’ts.” My child may not understand why he can’t follow his ball into the street because he doesn’t even suspect the car barreling towards it. Similarly, I may not always see with God’s perspective. Although my child may want the ball dearly and the ball isn’t inherently harmful, in the wrong context—a busy street—the ball can lead him to harm.

The same goes for all the “balls” I can chase. In the wrong context, my pursuit of intimacy, food, success, or leisure can lead to heartbreak, scandal and addiction. How lovely is the little child who stops immediately when his parent commands him.

This obedience is easiest when encouraged by trust. I’m not a perfect parent, but my children trust me. How much more should I trust the perfect Father, even when I don’t understand his designs? Remember the Gospel when Jesus urges his apostles to “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

I used to think Jesus was extolling a child’s innocence. But anyone who has met a child knows they can be rambunctious, feral little creatures with predilections towards selfishness, laziness and cruelty. Yes, children may not be as dangerous as adults, but they’ve got potential … or at least mine do.

No, the kingdom isn’t reserved for the innocent. Jesus doesn’t require we be untouched by sin, victorious over each temptation, untaught. When Jesus tells us the kingdom is made for such as these, he is asking us to trust like the young child trusts.

Instinctively. No one teaches an infant to inch towards her mother at the slightest discomfort. Boldly. Adult preoccupation, sadness, or weakness do not deter a child from asking for the moon if she wants it.

Without entitlement: A baby doesn’t expect to be fed because he earned it or because of some contractual agreement. He’s hungry. Mom’s got food; he trusts her.

I have a child who is known to wake up most nights deliciously yelling requests—big and small—with great urgency: Fix my blanket! Find my cup! I fell out of bed! It is always irritating and...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

That Old House

A DAD’S VIEW
By MATTHEW HENNESSEY

Matthew Hennessey and his family are parishioners of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stamford.

My mother hated the house on Speedwell Avenue. She may have had her reasons. The kitchen was small, the sink was too far from the stove, there was one bathroom for six people, and the whole place drooped slightly so the bedroom doors wouldn’t close.

Then again, it was home.

We moved there in 1979. I was six. Before that we’d lived in the house where my dad grew up. It was built in 1886 by my great-grandfather John T. Murphy. My dad told us that John T.’s ghost still lived in the attic. I don’t think my mom liked that house much either.

I didn’t hate those houses. I loved them, especially the Speedwell house, which was quirky in the best way. I loved the sounds it made; the creaks in the floorboards; the squeaks; the little bell my mother hung in the floorboards; the squeaks; the quirky in the best way. I loved all of it in the way of a child. That’s the way that doesn’t see your parents struggling to pay the electric bill. That’s the way that doesn’t know how annoying it is to have a lawn with grass that just won’t grow or a white picket fence that’s missing a few pickets.

When I drive by that house now I’m shocked at how small the property looks. As a kid I thought it was plenty big—practically the whole neighborhood. Growing up in Speedwell, every party was a famous hooley. A platoon of friends and relatives would gather on the back porch. A bumper Mary Ann’s birthday party featured a keg of beer that she and her friends couldn’t quite drain. Me and my teenage friends tried to finish the job the following afternoon.

I did the lion’s share of my growing up on Speedwell Avenue.

I tell you all this because we moved recently, leaving behind a house—and a community—that we had grown to love. My son Patrick got emotional when I told him we’d be moving. He’s about to be 10, and probably thinks of Millport Avenue the same way I think of Speedwell Avenue.

Patrick didn’t know the house was too small for us. He didn’t know the long commute was poisoning Daddy’s soul. He didn’t know how badly his parents wanted a house of their own. Millport Avenue was just his home, the setting for his family memories, and he didn’t want to leave.

“I’m gonna miss this place,” he told me, his eyes brimming with tears. “I’m gonna miss all my friends.” I promised he’d make new ones. He didn’t care. All that mattered was that we were going and we weren’t coming back.

How much would I love to walk through that old house again—to hear the bell ring as I come through the door and the stairs creak as I take them two at a time, to flip that hall switch on my way into the bathroom, to sink a jumper from the left side of the driveway? I’d give anything to look up from the kitchen table and see my mom again, or to hear her sigh because the sink’s too far away from the stove.

I put my arm on Patrick’s shoulder and, pulling him to my side, said, “I know, bud. I know.”

June 2018

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC
Magnificat Women's Ministry

Father Couture’s journey

By EMILY CLARK

“If we serve only ourselves, God will not live within us.”

This was the message proclaimed by Father Jeffrey Couture to over eighty women who gathered at Tashua Knolls in Trumbull on Saturday morning, May 5, for a prayer breakfast led by the Triumphant Heart of Mary Immaculate, a Connecticut chapter of Magnificat. In coordination with the Diocese of Bridgeport, the event provided a full brunch for attendees and invited lay and religious leaders to share stories of their faith and lead the group in prayer and music. According to many of the women, the highlight of the event was listening to Father Couture, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston, who offered testimony of how the presence of God guided him on his journey of faith.

“This is a message of how God worked through someone’s life,” said chapter coordinator Fran Hood. “We hope these women feel inspired by the talk and that they feel the Lord within their lives and leave here with joy.”

Much of this joy resulted from the socialization the women experienced in gathering in communion with each other. By praying together, browsing the book sale, enjoying a meal, and talking around the tables, attendees likened this event to a mini-retreat.

“This is a wonderful way for women to meet other women and feel welcome,” said Teresa Pesce. “We understand that everyone has struggles. You get a sense of community here.”

It was that feeling of community and understanding that brought Deborah Mangone to the event. After battling medical and emotional struggles, she desired to have religious camaraderie with other women, believing that one “doesn’t always have to be in a church or religious building to pray. I hold my faith right here,” Mangone said, pointing to her heart.

Roxanne Angotta, assistant coordinator of the Triumphant Heart of Mary Immaculate chapter, who attended the event with her daughter Dana, echoed Mangone’s sentiments. “We come together for Jesus. We experience the love of God here and open up to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to Mary.”

After a blessing of the meal by Father Larry Carew, the chapter’s spiritual director, the program continued with a prayer and worship segment. Katie Koogler, a contemporary Christian musician from Newtown, invited the group to join her in choral selections, after which Angotta led everyone in a decade of the Rosary.

When Father Couture took to the podium, attendees quickly realized he was no stranger to difficult times. Beginning his testimony with the line “If we serve only ourselves, God will not live within us,” this keynote speaker shared how his struggles to Peggy and Christine!

Magnificat Prayer Breakfast—Father Jeffrey Couture, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston, shared his unlikely and deeply moving journey to the priesthood with women throughout the diocese at the breakfast held in Trumbull.

Neighborhood becomes kidney donor

By RONNIE LAZZARO

Do you remember an ad in this publication looking for a kidney donor? It showed a lovely lady standing on a patio and gave her name and contact information. We decided to follow up with the advertiser, Peggy, and see how things were going.

Peggy Karbonavec was a woman on a mission to live. Her ad was posted throughout Fairfield and New Haven Counties. Flyers were everywhere. She received inquiries, some more serious than others, but none bore fruit. Peggy lived her fragile existence with hope in spite of her failing health and disappointing meetings with prospective donors. She continued to care for herself and her home, inside and out.

One unremarkable day last July, Peggy was in her backyard tending to a rosebush when her new neighbor, Christine Jenney saw her and took the opportunity to introduce herself and her children. Christine and her family had relocated the month before from Texas for her husband’s job. There was an exchange of pleasantries that foreshadowed nothing of what was to come.

Christine, a young mother was always out and about in Fairfield with her kids. In the library, she was checking out the bulletin board for community news and happenings. One particular flyer caught her eye. It was a request for a kidney donor. Something about the flyer grabbed her attention. Not only was she interested in donation, but much to her surprise, she recognized the lovely woman pictured on the flyer: it was her new neighbor. She had no idea Peggy needed a kidney. It was not one of the pleasant exchanges during their first meeting in the backyard.

And so it began. She went home and discussed it with her husband, explaining that she wanted to become a donor for the woman she had only just met in the backyard over a rosebush. They decided together that she would act on her desire to help.

One thing led to another. There were tests, blood work, psychological profiles and counseling. The hospital required that no one know of her intentions, not even Peggy, until the evaluation was completed and she was approved. It was a protection for the recipient. It seems that people often back out at the last minute and the disappointment of the recipient was to be avoided at all cost.

Christine was a good match. So what began in their backyard in July would come to fruition on September 12 when the surgery was done and the donation completed. Both women did well, and I am delighted to report that they are both thriving and enjoying good health.

It is said that God’s time is not ours, but in the case of Peggy and Christine, God was on the fast track. They placed themselves in his hands and let God be God. While neither woman is Catholic, they both share a belief in God and their faith was evident as they discussed their journey.

Miracles do happen. Every day and everywhere God’s handiwork is visible. Often we must search for the signs and other times his goodness is on full display. When I met these two women, I came face to face with the beauty of God’s goodness as expressed in a supreme act of selfless giving and the joyful acceptance of that gift. Praise God and all good wishes to Peggy and Christine!
Deacon Brad Smythe
Led by Holy Spirit to the diaconate

By JOE PISANI

Brad Smythe’s path to the Catholic Church took a few twists and turns and an occasional detour. But step by step, the Holy Spirit led him to where he was meant to be—an ordained deacon at 65 years old.

He and his two younger sisters were raised Congregationalists by devout parents, and from an early age he was active in the church youth group and choir.

“When we graduated from Danbury High School, both parents said that it was our choice what to do about our faith, so I stopped practicing any religion and decided to go live my life,” he recalled.

He enrolled in what was then Norwalk Technical College and got a degree in tool manufacture and engineering (he eventually received his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering) and in 1966 he was hired by GE, where he worked for eight years. He later joined the Ethyl Corporation, a manufacturer of household products and pumps for fragrances, and managed plants in Chicago and Bridgeport.

In August 1970, he began dating a practicing Catholic who became his wife a year later. Brad and Marianne got married in the old St. Edward the Confessor Church. He was Protestant, she was Catholic, and for nine years of their marriage, they didn’t go to church.

Their first daughter, Lindsay, was born on March 2, 1976, and when they went to a pre-baptism class the priest said, “I hope you’re not just using us to get your kid baptized—and we’ll never see you again.”

That’s exactly what happened. Deacon Brad, who serves at St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, always shares that story with young parents who want to baptize their children. It is, he tells them, a lesson about what not to do.

“Most of them aren’t practicing either,” he said. “I tell them they’ll be asked, ‘Do you understand your responsibility to raise this child in the faith before God?’ Hopefully, their answer is honest. How can you raise a child in the faith if you, yourself, aren’t practicing it? Think about it and pray about it. And ask yourself, ‘Do I need to change how I’m living my life?’”

In 1979, Ethyl Corporation transferred him to Chicago, and that’s when his life began to change spiritually.

“We were there a couple of months and sitting on the neighbor’s porch in an Irish Catholic neighborhood, where the average number of kids in a family was about five ... and we had one,” he recalled. Their neighbor told them, “You guys gotta get going here.”

The man continued to admonish them and asked, “So, Marianne, are you going to wait until Lindsay gets married before you go back to church? I know you’re not practicing, and they’re hearing confessions right now.”

Marianne went home, changed her clothes and walked to the church, which was a block-and-a-half away. There in the confessional, she told the priest, “It’s been nine years since my last confession.” To which he responded, “Welcome back.”

Brad and Marianne got involved with the parish and started going to Mass, and soon their second daughter, Megan, was born. A year later, they moved back to Connecticut and began attending Mass at St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton.

That’s when the Holy Spirit made his next move.

“In 1984, I was at a funeral in New Jersey for a guy I had worked with who was Catholic,” he said. “I was sitting there, and during Communion I had the realization I needed to become a Catholic. Now I realize it was the Holy Spirit at work.”

He went home and told Marianne, who throughout 13 years of marriage had never asked him to convert. He received eight months of instruction, and on November 2, 1986, he became a Roman Catholic at the age of 40. Since then he had been baptized in the Episcopal Church at three months old and confirmed at 14 in the Congregational Church, all he needed was to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

“I was 40 years old when I made my first confession, and I really didn’t understand my own sinfulness,” he said. “By rights, I should have been in confession a few weeks.”

Ten years later, they moved to downtown Shelton and began attending St. Joseph Parish. From 1986 until 1993, he was going to Mass every week, but he said, “It was surface level and not very deep.” Then, something happened that accelerated his spiritual growth. In May that year, Marianne made a Cursillo. She encouraged Brad to do the same in October.

The Cursillo Movement, which began in Spain, centers on a three-day retreat weekend run by a team of religious and laypersons who give presentations and invoke the Holy Spirit with the goal of knowing Christ better.

“Marianne came back still Marianne, but there was something different,” he said. “She had a peace about her, a joy and enthusiasm about the faith that she never really displayed before. I saw that and said to myself, ‘I want that.’

“All I knew was that I was 47. I had a beautiful family, a good job, a nice house, cars and money in the bank—all those material things the world says should be enough and yet there was something missing,” he said. “It was a personal relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, and that is what I found on my Cursillo. I had a profound conversion. It changed my life. If I hadn’t made a Cursillo, I wouldn’t be a deacon today.”

He changed in many ways. He was more peaceful, he stopped swearing at work, his management style was less autocratic, he tried to do the right thing, he began openly discussing his faith, he listened to other people’s problems, and if they asked to pray with him, he would.

People noticed the changes and told him, “Wow, something really happened to you in a good way.”

In May 2005, he and Marianne gave a talk at a Cursillo day of reflection and afterwards, the facilitator approached him and said, “Every time I see you today, I heard the word ‘deacon.’”

“I knew the Lord was talking to me through her and I could no longer say no,” he said.

Deacon Brad Smythe was 60 years old when he started formation. After four years, he was ordained in 2011.

This August, he and Marianne will celebrate 47 years of marriage. Today, Lindsay lives in Beverly, Mass., and she is executive director of two Boys and Girls Clubs. Megan is an RN who works as school nurse at Shelton High School. She and her husband have three children.

Why did he become a Catholic? Deacon Smythe says that throughout his life, the Holy Spirit was directing him to the Church, which has “the fullness of faith.”

“This is where I need to be,” he said. “I love our faith in spite of our human weaknesses. I know that the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, will continue to make it prevail until he comes again.”

Today, he shares his faith with believers and non-believers alike, not to mention lapsed Catholics. He understands their indecision and indifference—and he knows their needs because he was once where they are in their spiritual journey.

“The happiest you can be in this life is in direct correlation to how much you have conformed your will to God’s will,” he says. “I’m still working on it. The closer I get to the Lord, the more I put his will before mine. That’s all I need. I don’t need a whole bunch of other stuff.”

Filoni, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, CAPP-USA was honored by Robert A. Naiewajek, executive vice president of CAPP-USA and a parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Riverside, delivering the closing speech, “Evangelizing the World with Catholic Social Teaching: A Lay Imperative.”

Another highlight was Bishop Caggiano joining Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, president of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, in celebrating Mass at the altar of the Chair of St. Peter in Saint Peter’s Basilica. Following Mass, participants processed to the tomb of St. John Paul II for special prayers.

CAPP is a lay organization founded by St. John Paul II in 1993 and charged with promoting the knowledge and practice of Catholic Social Teaching and establishing a dialogue between the curia and Catholic lay leaders. As Pope Francis told the group, “Your foundation has a vital role to play in bringing the light of the Gospel message to these pressing humanitarian concerns, and in assisting the Church to carry out this essential aspect of her mission. By continuing to engage with business and finance leaders, as well as union officials and others in the public sector, you ensure that the intrinsic social dimension of all economic activity is adequately safeguarded and effectively promoted.”

(For more information on CAPP, visit: www.centesimusannus.org and www.capp-usa.org.)
Vigil of Pentecost

Pentecost Mass celebrates the Universal Church

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

The rain did not stop over 500 people from coming to St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport on Saturday, May 19, at 7 pm to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost and the Confirmation of over 25 candidates. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the main celebrant, along with concelebrants Father Peter Towsley, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Danbury and episcopal delegate to ecclesial movements, and fellow priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

During the Mass, each of the readings and the prayers of the faithful were read in a different language, including Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Haitian, Vietnamese and English.

In his homily, Bishop Caggiano focused on the beauty and diversity of the Universal Church and what that means for Catholics. “This diversity, which extends to every nation, is a small piece of the mystical presence of the family of God.”

On Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, we remember, “It is because of the Holy Spirit that we are given a share in Christ’s victory,” bishop proclaimed.

Bishop Caggiano then explained that because we are called to strive for holiness, we have work to do. “How do we strive to be holy in the modern world in which we live where there is little room for God?”

“We have come to live what we proclaim and proclaim what we live.”

The bishop recalled the image of fire, as we remember the tongues of fire which appeared above the Apostles’ heads as they were filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Bishop Caggiano explained, “Just as fire gives energy; so too, the Spirit has come into our lives and mind to give strength to our hands, our feet, our voice, our heart; to do the works of love and mercy, to be the presence of God to those around us.”

Addressing the confirmandi, the bishop encouraged them, saying, “I want you to stand up, hold your head up high, be proud of who you are. You are children of God, you are the disciples of Jesus Christ, and you are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Allow the fire of Pentecost to come upon you.”

The bishop then called on the confirmandi to profess and affirm their baptismal promises and come forward to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Mass continued, accompanied by music from each of the choirs present. Dr. Sam Schmidt, organist of St. Augustine Cathedral, provided the music along with the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Youth Choir, the Brazilian Community, of Bridgeport, and the Vietnamese Lay Community, who each sang beautiful hymns in their respective languages.

Many who gathered remarked that one of the most moving aspects of the Mass was that each of the readings was proclaimed in a different language. Each reading and psalm proclaimed in a different language reflected the diversity of not only the diocese but also the Universal Church.

Manuel deSousa of the First Reading in Portuguese; Bozena Tomczylc; and Bishop Caggiano read the Gospel of John in English.

Father Frank Gomez, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bridgeport, served as the episcopal master of ceremonies, assisted by Deacon Jeff Kingsley. Deacons Frank Masso and Richard Scinto were also present. The seminarians of Redemptoris Mater Seminary acted as servers of the Mass.

After Mass, Deacon Jeff Kingsley, assistant master of ceremonies for the Vigil, commented, “It is inspiring to my faith to see the breadth and variety of the Holy Spirit’s work in the Church.”

“I heard the word of God in different languages, the hymns, sounds of heavenly music; I saw the Body of Christ, the Church, united under one roof in harmony with each other; felt the joy in our hearts united in prayer and the taste of heaven on earth in the breaking of the bread. Through the smell of the incense and our prayers rising up to our heavenly Father, I felt a oneness with the Holy Spirit,” said Diane Kingsley, trying to express the richness of her experience during the Pentecost Vigil.

In his closing remarks, bishop summed up the beauty of the liturgy, saying, “We form one beautiful mosaic as a Church.”
Nuestra Voz

Flores, símbolos de oración

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

El Padre Abelardo Vázquez fue el encargado de celebrar la misa de coronación de la Guadalupana en la Parroquia de San Ladislao en Norwalk. El Grupo Guadalupano de Norwalk obsequió cientos de flores a la Morena del Tepeyac bolsas de caramelos y a los niños, como parte de las tradiciones marianas del país azteca.

“Oremos por todos, en especial por sus hijos en esta precioso-sima celebración. Pongámonos en la presencia, la gracia y la paz de nuestro señor Jesucristo”, dijo el sacerdote e hizo una analogía sobre cómo responder cuando los católicos son acusados de “venerar imágenes” y narró un episodio sobre un hombre que el padre le dijo sí y sacó un billete que tenía el rostro de un presiden-te. A lo que el sacerdote le dijo: “¿Yo también podría decir lo mismo?: ¿usted venera una imagen de un billete? Lo que nosotros los católicos hacemos es amar, recordar y venerar a la Virgen porque ella le fue fiel a Dios. Enseguida, el religioso habló de la importancia de la docilidad y de aprender a escuchar la voz Mariana. “Debemos ser dóciles como San Diego que escuchó la voz de Jesús a través de María. Debemos responder a la Virgen María con nuestras oraciones. Cada oración es una flor a la Virgen y esa es la manera cómo deben conquistarla. Según el sacerdote, los tres últimos papas, San Juan Pablo II, Benedicto y Francisco, han tenido un amor profundo por la Virgen María, porque recono-cieron que en ella se esconde un tesoro de intercesión por cada uno de sus hijos ante el Padre Celestial. “La virgen intercede en esos momento de dificultad”. Y pidió a sus feligreses que recencn el Rosario, que se mantengan en oración y en comunión constante. “Debemos volver a rezar el Rosario. Espero que al salir de aquí estemos convencidos que debemos volver a rezar el Santo Rosario, como lo hacían nuestros padres y nuestros abuelitos. Nos hemos olvidado de conqui-tar a la Virgen María. Buscemos a esa voz que nos ilumina para que nuestro corazón se llene de amor”.

Antes de finalizar la homilía el Padre Vázquez pidió a la niña Alisson Figueroa Galiano que se acercara portando la corona a la Virgen de Guadalupe. Luego sus padres, Kelvin y Alma Figueroa.

El 5º aniversario del Padre Acosta

Hace cinco años, el 25 de mayo de 2013, el Reverendo Juan Gabriel Acosta, de Colombia, fue ordenado sacerdote en la Catedral de San Agustín en Bridgeport. Este año, en la misma fecha de mayo, sus devotos feligreses de la Parroquia de San Ladislao en Norwalk, junto con Monseñor Walter Orlowski, el Padre Abelardo Vázquez, el Padre Matthew Mauriello y el Díacono Daniel Ianniello se unieron en celebración con la Santa Misa el viernes por la noche.

Durante la ocasión, Monseñor Orlowski trajo saludos cordiales de los feligreses y sacerdotes de la vecina parroquia de San Mateo, y felicitó al Padre Acosta por su “extraordinario” trabajo durante sus cinco años de sacerdocio en la Diócesis de Bridgeport.

Además, el Padre Abelardo Vázquez compartió una sien-cer y sentida homilía bilingüe en honor a su amigo desde el seminario. “Hoy agradecemos a Dios, porque a través del Padre Juan Gabriel, hemos encontrado a Cristo. El se ha convertido en esa persona y ese puente que nos acerca a Jesús, nos acerca a los sacramentos y nos acerca a la Eucaristía. Le agradecemos por su dedicación. Y agradecemos a nuestro Padre Celestial por inspirarlo a decir si a esta comunidad.”

No cabe duda de que la diversa y creciente comunidad de St. Ladislao comparte el mismo sentimiento. Y que se sienten muy afortunados de tener al Padre Juan Gabriel como su párroco. Para ellos, es un sacerdote generoso y un verdadero ejemplo de alguien que vive el Evangelio.

¡Felicitamos al Padre Juan Gabriel Acosta en su Quinto Aniversario de Sacerdocio en nombre de la Diócesis de Bridgeport!

WITH A FULL CHURCH during the seven o’clock Mass at the end of May, the month of the Virgin Mary, the Guadalupano Group of Norwalk, with the support of St. Ladislaus Parish, crowned the Virgin of Guadalupe, a Marian tradition that is done year after year in parishes welcoming a centuries-old Mexican tradition.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

June 2018

17
Obituaries

Msgr. Thomas Green, professor of canon law

Msgr. Thomas Green, professor of canon law, died on April 28 at the Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Chester, Penn., at the age of 79.

Born in Bridgeport on August 10, 1938, to Thomas J. and Beatrice Green, he graduated from Fairfield Prep in 1956 and received his priestly formation at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, at St. John’s Seminary in Brighton, Mass., and at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Bridgeport on December 18, 1963, by Bishop Martin J. O’Connor at the Church of Sant’Ignazio in Rome. He earned an S.T.L. in 1964 and a J.C.D. in 1968, both from the Gregorian University.

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, Msgr. Green served at St. Ambrose Parish in Bridgeport, as vice chancellor of the diocese, director of the former College House of Studies and director of Continuing Education of the Clergy. He taught canon law at St. Louis University and at St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, Calif., before joining the canon law faculty at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in 1974. He had served there ever since, and at the time of his death was the Stephan Kutner Distinguished Professor of Canon Law. He served as department chair at CUA from 1984-87, was a consultant on the Canonical Affairs Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and a consultant to the Board of Governors of the Canon Law Society of America and chaired the society’s task force on canon law reform. He was named a Chaplain of His Holiness, with the title of Monsignor, by St. John Paul II on December 19, 1996.

Msgr. Green had served as editor of The Jurist, as a member of the Polish National Catholic–Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue, and as co-editor of two widely consulted commentaries on the Code of Canon Law. An active and widely-read intellectual, he was the author of several major publications in scholarly journals.

The body of Msgr. Green was received at 10 am on May 2 into Holy Name of Jesus Church, Stratford. Visitation followed until the Mass of Christian Burial, celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. Msgr. J. James Cuneo was the homilist. Interment followed at St. Michael Cemetery, Stratford.

Deacon Dean Finch

Deacon Dean W. Finch died on May 31 at his home, at the age of 72. Born in Batavia in northwestern New York State on May 1, 1946, Deacon Finch graduated from the State University of New York at Albany in 1968, with a B.S. in accounting. He subsequently was employed by the Citizens Utilities Company in Stamford as a director of internal audit. He married Beverly at St. John the Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, on June 15, 1973. The Finchs are the parents of four daughters, one of whom died in infancy.

Deacon Finch was ordained a deacon of the Diocese of Bridgeport on June 24, 2000, at St. Augustine Cathedral by Bishop Edward M. Egan. Deacon Finch’s entire diaconate ministry was exercised at St. Jerome Parish in Norwalk. “I had the unique fortune to know Dean as a friend, as a fellow deacon, and has a business executive,” said Deacon Mark Shine, who was in the same deaconate formation class and served at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk. “He was the best of corporate America, a talented business executive who always saw the good in people.” He remembers Deacon Finch as a dedicated servant and gifted preacher, with musical talents that he was happy to share with parishioners at St. Jerome.

“Most of all, his marriage to Bev was a wonderful model for everyone who knew them. They were the best of support for one another. Dean and Bev had the finest example of married life that I have ever seen.” Deacon Finch was received into St. Jerome Church on June 4 for a parish wake. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated a Mass of Christian Burial the following morning.

Deceased Clergy of the Diocese of Bridgeport June 24—July 28

JUNE
24 Rev. Franklin J. Corrigan……………………..1974
    Msgr. William A. Genuario……………………………1975
25 Rev. Albert A. Tomasiko……………………………1978
27 Rev. J. Barry Ferry……………………………………1982
28 Rev. John J. Draper……………………………………1966
31 Msgr. Thomas P. Mooney…………………………1956
    Msgr. John E. Tomis…………………………………1986

JULY
1 Rev. Anthony J. Inntagliata…………………………1990
2 Rev. Alfred J. Carmody………………………………1958
5 Msgr. John J. Hayes……………………………………1964
6 Msgr. Philip N. Salmo…………………………………1967
8 Rev. James J. Kane……………………………………1956
9 Rev. Sean F. Flynn……………………………………1978
10 Rev. Edward P. Doyle………………………………1981
11 Deacon Stephen Sebestyen…………………………2011
12 Rev. Edwin Coyne…………………………………………1965
13 Msgr. James P. Devine………………………………1972
14 Rev. A. Fred Constantino……………………………1981
17 Msgr. Walter R. Conroy……………………………1997
    Fr. Robert Terentieff……………………………………2011
19 Msgr. Bartholomew J. Laurelo……………………2004
20 Rev. John M. Comisk……………………………………1990
    Rev. Peter DeMarco………………………………………1955
    Rev. Kevin P. Fitzpatrick………………………………2008
    Rev. Chester Kicia, O.F.M……………………………2003
    Msgr. John J. Wigh……………………………………1995
21 Rev. David H. Krael………………………………………………2008
22 Msgr. Nicholas P. Coleman, P.A……………………1963
24 Fr. Paul Lalic………………………………………………2011
25 Rev. Hubert P. Carrig……………………………………1978
26 Msgr. Francis M. Wladasz…………………………1959
28 Rev. William G. Mahoney……………………………1973

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Handling every detail
By DON HARRISON

Within the space of three months, Notre Dame High of Fairfield captured state championships in two preeminent sports, boys’ basketball and baseball, making 2018 a noteworthy year in the school’s athletic history.

Coach Bill Mazzucco’s Lancers put the finishing touches on a memorial baseball season by defeating Coventry, 10-6, in the CIAC Class S state title game at Palmer Field in Middletown on June 9. It marked the school’s fourth state championship on the diamond.

“The championship game was on the last page in our scorebook,” Mazzucco chuckled. “So you can say it was a perfect ending to our season.”

Meanwhile, another Diocese of Bridgeport school, St. Joseph of Trumbull, garnered no fewer than two state titles on the same Saturday. Sophomore Payton Doiron pitched six scoreless innings en route to a 5-2 decision over Griswold in the Class M softball state title game at Biondi Field in West Haven. That morning, St. Joe’s boys’ lacrosse team upended two-time defending champion Somers, 11-6, in the Class S finale at Jack Casagrande Field in Norwalk.

Senior Dillon Higgins, who received both All-State and All-Academic recognition from the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA), pitched a gutsy complete-game victory for Notre Dame (20-7). He surrendered eight hits and five earned runs, but finished with a flourish by striking out the side in the final inning.

Three days earlier, Higgins had earned a save with three innings of one-run relief in the Lancers’ 7-5 upset of defending champ Holy Cross-Waterbury in the semi-finals. Higgins complemented his 9.3 pitching record this season with a .438 batting average.

St. Joe’s rich softball tradition embraces four of the last five FCIAC titles and six state championships, but as coach Jeff Babineau noted, this was the Cadets’ first victory in a state title game since 2010.

“We had only two seniors on this team, second baseman Kayla Giacobbe and outfielder Hannah Hutchison, but their leadership as co-captains made the difference,” Babineau said.

Hutchison, who was selected to the CHSCA All-State and FCIAC All-Star teams, sparked the offense against Griswold with three hits, including a triple the final inning.

Hutchison, but their leadership as co-captains made the difference,” Babineau said.

Hutchison, who was selected to the CHSCA All-State and FCIAC All-Star teams, sparked the offense against Griswold with three hits, including a triple the

launch launched a four-run rally in the fourth inning.

Two underclassmen also stood tall for the 23-4 Cadets. Maddy Fitzgerald, a freshman shortstop from Bethel, “played like a senior,” Babineau said, pointing out her .449 batting average, 40 hits and 31 RBIs. And Doiron, who pitched a five-hitter and struck out seven against Griswold, emerged as an FCIAC All-Star in her second season (21-3 record, 1.46 earned run average, 162 strikeouts).

“Her potential is enormous,” declared the coach. “She’s starting to feel how to pitch the game.”

In boys’ lacrosse, St. Joseph won its fifth state title in the past decade but the first under coach Brendan Talbot. Seniors Jared Mallozzi and Matt Lebath provided much of the offense against the two-time defending champs with four and three goals, respectively. Junior goalie Kyle Burbank stopped a flurry of Somers shots early in the game when the 13-6 Cadets wereclicking to a 1-0 lead and made 14 saves overall.

“To be the champ, you’ve got to beat the champ,” Talbot said. “We wanted to put St. Joe’s back on top.”

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One River, Many Streams

Potpourri
By Thomas H. Hicks

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

Never write up a diary on the Day itself.
It needs much longer than that to know what happened.
Christopher Morley, D-Day Plus X

Sooner or later, everyone wonders about what s/he has done in life. When we stand back and look at our lives certain questions arise: How and by what measure do we decide if one’s life has been a success? What is the shape of a good life? Have I done what was mine to do? What do I mean to others?

In the hard perspective of the years I’ve come to certain conclusions about truth. One is to acquiesce to Thomas Aquinas’ observation that “the end of one’s intellectual ascent is the realization of one’s ignorance.” The illusion of having answers crumbles, and often a quiet wonder takes its place. I’ve become open to the possibility that I’m wrong about many things. I’ve learned that one must step back from canonizing one’s interpretation of reality as the infallible blueprint for life. We often have to correct our view of life to some degree. Much of what had been important is no longer.

There are distinct methods to approach truth; truth has many aspects. In the middle of the second century, a Christian writer named Clement of Alexandria wrote: “There is one river of truth, but many streams fall into it on this side and that.” According to Hinduism, one can look at one and the same thing from a variety of perspectives, but none of them is exhaustive. Truth is always precious, but perhaps all truths are not equally relevant to all persons. There is not only one correct way to live one’s life. Everyone must follow an appointed path. It is impossible to talk with absolutists.

As Carl Jung pointed out, truth often isn’t where we suppose. Having passed through certain experiences, I realize that I had to unlearn much of what I was taught. The Buddha said: “Don’t believe what your teachers tell you unless your own reason and experiences confirm what they say.” I think there’s truth to that. Berthold Brecht’s play, “Galileo,” has this powerful line: “You can’t make a man unsee what he has seen.”

I’ve come to learn that eventually, one way or the other, truth reveals itself, and this truth is often uncomfortable, indeed, the truth often hurts.

Humans have always sacrificed truth to vanity, comfort, pleasure, and advantage. As I’ve said before, there is a truth that runs through all life, namely that this life needs more than itself, it needs the possibility to reach beyond the natural to the supernatural. There is a restlessness, a longing, a hunger, a loneliness, an ache that lies at the center of human experience. Plato explained this unrest by claiming that our souls come from Beyond, and that Beyond is trying to draw us back to itself. It was his way of saying that we sense that something is missing. Human beings are desires for God. Graham Green’s novel, The End of the Affair, expresses the belief that human love, which cannot satisfy the universal inner longing, is in some arcane way a search for God. Not every truth needs to be told. There are times when one realizes one has taken the wrong road.

We can confuse ponderous words with weighty thoughts. I have a specifically Christian conception of reality, a biblical view. This leads me to agree with something Dostoyevsky said about how one cannot think adequately about man without reference to God. Indeed, God is the explanation of everything; leave out God and, as I see it, you leave everything unexplained.

I think the ultimate meaning of life is found in Jesus’ words: “Be merciful just as your heavenly Father is merciful” (Lk. 6:36). Though it is fractured by every sort of strife, God’s mercy fills the earth. Psalm 33:5: “The earth is full of the steadfast mercy of the Lord.”

I think our greatest fear is our deepest desire: to love and to be loved.

Edith Stein said that “God is truth, and all who seek truth seek God, whether this is clear to them or not.”

Edith Stein also said: “I am coming to the conclusion that, from God’s point of view, there is no chance and that the whole of my life, down to every detail, has been mapped out in God’s Divine Providence and makes complete and perfect sense in God’s all-seeing eyes.”

Is Edith Stein right? Is there more to life than randomness? Is our life not haphazard? Was the whole really planned and thought out? Can the puzzling pieces of our life fit into a sensible and purposeful pattern? Is it true of every created person that “you were set apart from eternity and of old before the earth was made?” (Prov. 8:23). Do our lives have a plot? Is there a narrative structure to it?

A Hasidic Rabbi named Israel Baal Shem-Tov said that “God made human beings because he loves stories.”

Teresa of Avila said: “God’s love is a pure, burning light; he cannot and does not love unless he gives himself; he gives himself as light and not as darkness. God’s love is light itself.”

Teresa of Avila said: “God’s love is a pure, burning light; he cannot and does not love unless he gives himself; he gives himself as light and not as darkness. God’s love is light itself.”
My friend's 5-year-old son came home from school and started to share the day's events with his mother over a glass of milk and cookies. He told her about the show-and-tell that featured a daddy who worked in the hospital emergency department. He told her about the scuffle on the playground between a bully-in-training and a soft-spoken kid. And then he told her about the show-and-tell featured a daddy who worked in the hospital emergency department. He told her about the show-and-tell.

When I heard the story, I suppressed a gasp. My heart sank over a glass of milk and cookies. The sad reality is that many young people are growing up with no real understanding of God. Without the proper spiritual formation when they're children, young men and women wander aimlessly through life, mistaking the pursuit of money, pleasure, honor and power as the reason for living, and never realizing what their hearts long for is God because their hunger is a spiritual hunger.

They'll look for meaning in worldly ideologies and political causes that lead nowhere, and they'll never find true fulfillment because our souls are hard-wired for union with Christ. As St. Augustine observed, 1,600 years ago, long before the modern age of narcissism: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

At the very beginning, the Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly articulates our fundamental capacity for God: “The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.”

Even though secular society is trying hard to snuff out faith, the Holy Spirit is always at work, making all things new, so it is important to pray to the Spirit because the world has become relentless in its attacks on organized religion.

The Pew Research Center’s report “America’s Changing Religious Landscape” concluded the Christian population is declining, and atheists and agnostics are increasing, along with a group that gained the most adherents in recent years—the so-called “Nones,” who claim no religious affiliation.

News headlines proclaim the tragic state of affairs: “Christians drop. ‘Nones’ soar in new religion portrait” and “Americans becoming less Christian, more secular.”

One story said, “Atheists and agnostics have nearly doubled their share of the religious marketplace, and overall indifference to religion of any sort is rising.”

The poll concluded that each generation is less connected religiously than their parents. Consequently, more and more children are growing up with no knowledge of the God who loves them.

It's a modern tragedy that many parents neglect their most important responsibility, which is teaching their children about Jesus—not teaching them how to make a buck in later life or upload photos to Instagram.

Pray for children and young people everywhere. In addition to praying, actively help them along the path to Christ. Be a power of example and never be afraid to express your faith, because the days are surely coming when freedom of expression will be guaranteed to everyone but Christians.

(> Pisani can be reached at jopi@pisani.com.)
Thomas Merton Center

Helping people ‘Face To Face’

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Former NBC Universal President/CEO Bob Wright praised the Thomas Merton Center for its “broad range of programs” and urged the 250 in attendance to support its mission at the 24th Annual Celebrity Breakfast held May 23 at the downtown Holiday Inn.

Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities, said the breakfast raised $160,000 to support Merton Center, which serves and distributes more than $50,000 meals to the poor and hungry in the greater Bridgeport area each year.

Wright, who took a leadership role in supporting many non-profits as a national business leader, praised Merton Center and its volunteers for helping people face to face.”

He singled out the “transition from guest to volunteer” program as “an example of the way Merton Center empowers the working poor and homeless who rely on it for nutrition and other services.”

“Even one person doing that is a success story,” said Wright. “If we can’t serve as volunteers, like so many do, then our job is to provide financial support.”

Wright said that since his retirement and the death of his late wife Suzanne from pancreatic cancer in 2016, he has worked to fund research into pancreatic cancer and for autism, which afflicted one of his grandsons.

“This is my day job,” he said, referring to his advocacy for Autism Speaks, and for the Suzanne Wright Foundation dedicated to accelerating pancreatic cancer research.

When he first turned his attention to the treatment of autism, he found that care for the condition was not covered by insurance, and that many parents were paying out of pocket or with credit cards. Through his effort and the work of others, that has since changed.

He told the men and women in attendance that the mortality rate for pancreatic cancer has not improved since 1971, when the “war on cancer” was launched nationally. Ninety-one percent of those diagnosed with the illness will die of it.

Likewise, he noted that the “standard of care” for pancreatic cancer is inadequate and that much more research and advocacy is necessary.

During his talk the former GE vice chairman gave insights into the company’s current crisis and the challenges faced by new CEO John Flaherty.

“Many big companies are fighting for their survival,” he said, noting that the new GE leader has inherited $150 billion in liabilities. However, he said that GE’s foundation is built on “three good businesses” and that the expertise of its employee base will be an important resource going forward.

Brian Jenkins, executive director of Merton Center, said, “We could never accomplish all that we do without the help of volunteers. They make a difference in the growing needs of the poor in Bridgeport. We know that eliminating hunger is a building block of the mind and the body.”

Jenkins presented the volunteer Creative Service Award to Aldona and Lou Lengyel of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull. The food pantry volunteers have served the poor at Merton Center for ten years.

In brief remarks, Merton Center cook Sister Amanda Carrier, RSM, said that with the help of generous donations from area businesses such as Trader Joe’s, she has been able to introduce fresh fruits and vegetables to the diet of her guests.

Describing the “Hollow neighborhood around the Merton Center as a “food desert, where fresh produce is scarce and healthy food inaccessible to them,” Sister Amanda said that because they are poor, most guests can only afford processed food.

“I’m working to find a way to make Brussels sprouts appealing to our guests,” she said, adding that good food “fills their hearts as well as their stomachs.”

Louise Bayly Gidez is serving as chair of the Advisory Board. Marianne Kahn and Sheila McKinney served as co-chairs of the event.

Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim stopped by to greet the business and civic leaders in attendance and praise the mission of Merton Center. “What gets done through Merton Center is incredible. We need to understand the challenges that their guests face in their lives and realize our blessings,” he said.

In addition to its nutrition programs, Merton Center offers case management services to help guests become more independent, writing classes, spiritual groups, a women’s group, and other support groups. Guests can also take advantage of shower facilities two days a week.

(Thomas Merton Center is sponsored by Catholic Charities. It is located at 43 Madison Ave. in downtown Bridgeport. To volunteer or make a donation, call: 203.367.9036. Visit online: www.themertoncenter.org/about-us.)

POSITION AVAILABLE

Executive Director

Cardinal Shehan Center and the McGivney Community Center

The Diocese of Bridgeport is announcing the search for the new Executive Director of the Cardinal Shehan Center and the McGivney Community Center.

For a full description of the position and the application process, all candidates should refer to the Diocesan website at www.bridgeportdiocese.com on or after March 19.

**POSITION AVAILABLE**

**Director of Mission Advancement**

Maryknoll Lay Missioners

Maryknoll Lay Missioners is an independent, nonprofit, U.S.-based Catholic organization serving in overseas mission and dedicated to providing skills and resources that transform the lives of those in need.

Reporting to and working closely with the Executive Director, this highly visible management position will envision and develop a robust development and fundraising strategy; tightly integrate and direct the Annual Fund; and identify and target philanthropic prospects.

Resumes considered until July 15th, 2018

For a full position description, please visit www.mklm.org or email Barbara at: bbanovich@mklm.org

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INTERPRETING THE BIBLE’S MEANING will be offered at the Shrine of Lourdes in Litchfield, 50 Montfort Rd., Route 118, Litchfield on three Thurs. in July: July 12, 19 and 26 from 7-8:15 pm. No registration required; free will offering. For more info, call 860.567.1041 or email lourdes@shrinct@gmail.com.

CARNIVAL OF FUN will be held at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, Tues., July 10-Sat., July 14. Start time 6 pm nightly. Great foods, rides, games, live entertainment. Big raffle: 1st prize: $30,000 Amex gift card. For more info, go to www.stcath.org or call 203.637.3661.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS of Greater Danbury, (18-35), will gather for S’Mores & Stars on Fri., July 20, from 8:30-11 pm at St. Ann Church, 181 Clapboard Ridge Rd., Danbury. Join other young adults to watch the stars and to enjoy some Yummy S’mores over a fire pit!! Note that all events are subject to change. Email us at catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com for more info or to be placed on our email list. You can also join our Facebook Group “Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury,” for updates.

“COME AND SEE” if you are being called to a vocation in the Franciscan Secular Order. The Secular Franciscan Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Church, Fairfield, on Sat., July 21 at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass in the church with Msgr. Ernest Esposito. Social and meeting follow. For more info, call Pat Hele, OFS: 203.255.8801 or pheile5713@aol.com.

LAY FRATERNITIES of St. Dominic are establishing an affiliate chapter at St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull. Join us for an informal inquiry meeting to learn more about the Lay Dominicans Thurs., July 26, at 7 pm in the lower convent at St. Theresa’s. For more info, contact Stefano Santilli: 203.524.4945 or stecesantilli@gmail.com; or Michelle Rowe: 203.218.6882 or orarporno@cox.net.

YOUNG WOMEN’S RETREAT “You Are God’s Masterpiece,” finding your identity as God’s daughter. Women ages 18-26 are invited to join Magnificent Healing Women Ministry for a retreat at St. Joseph Parish, Danbury on Sat., Aug. 4, from 9 am-3 pm. The day will include speakers, small group discussion, music and reflection and a the film “Speaking to Sparrows.” Cost: $20 includes light breakfast & snacks. Bring your own bag lunch. For more info or to register, contact Roxane Angotta: angota36d@globalnet.net or 203.512.0201.

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VETERAN’S BRICK: The deadline for donating a Veteran’s Brick, to the St. Margaret Shrine Veterans Memorial, Bridgeport, is Mon., Sept. 10. The names of the veterans on the newly donated bricks will be read at our Annual Veterans Mass in October. For more info call 203.345.3244.

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY: A new 12-session program over nine months will begin at St. Jude Parish, Monroe, on Wed., Sept. 12, from 2:30-4 pm. Sessions will be held twice a month Sept. thru Nov., and then once a month concluding in May. Registration required. For more info or to register, call the parish: 203.261.6404.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY to Jordan, the Holy Land and Dubai with Fr. Marcel Saint Jean: Sun., Sept. 23-Sat., Oct. 6. Price: $3,899 includes airline tickets, all taxes, hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, sightseeing, tips for guides and transportation to JFK. For more info and for reservations, contact Fr. Marcel Saint Jean at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull: 203.434.7208, or 203.268.8695 or marcel saintjean@gmail.com.

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

PROJECT RACHEL: Are you or someone you know carrying the pain and sorrow of losing a child to abortion? Call our confidential phone line to find out about our upcoming Days of Prayer and Healing: 203.895.3554 or 203.416.1619, or email projectrachel@diobpt.org.

22ND ANNUAL SAINT MARY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH FAMILY FAIR 566 Elm Street, Stamford

Family times are fun times June 21-24
Opens: Thursday and Friday 6 pm and Saturday and Sunday 5 pm
midway by www.tufanoamusement.com

Over one hundred supporters of Catholic Charities turned out for the agency’s annual Aetna Golf Classic on June 4 at the Patterson Club in Fairfield. Golf enthusiasts enjoyed a buffet breakfast before a round of golf at the historic club, which was followed by a delicious dinner. Participants bought raffle tickets to win various useful gift baskets and raised their hands to bid on several unique live auction items.

Jon Vaccarella, co-chair of the event with Bill Tommins, was thrilled with the success of the event, which raised over $90,000 for Catholic Charities.

“Aetna has been our signature sponsor for over a decade and we are very grateful to the company for their continued support. We are also appreciative of our other generous sponsors and individuals who stepped up and participated. The event would not have been so successful were it not for everyone’s collective support,” Vaccarella said.

This year’s fundraiser honored the late Judge Dan Caruso, who was a dedicated supporter of the agency for many years. Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities, presented the Caruso family with an award to show appreciation for Judge Caruso’s commitment to helping those in need.

“Dan not only gave monetarily to Catholic Charities, but as importantly he also gave his time through volunteering,” Barber recalled. “He did it all quietly, without looking for recognition or praise. But we at Catholic Charities think Dan should be recognized, which is why we dedicated this year’s Aetna Golf Classic to him. He will be greatly missed.”

(To learn more about or donate to Catholic Charities, contact Bob Donahue at 203.416.1313 or rdonahue@ccfc-ct.org.)
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Class of 2018, Meet the World!

In this section, Fairfield County Catholic recognizes the top scholars of diocesan and private Catholic high schools, and includes articles and news on activities in schools throughout the diocese. This is the time of year to congratulate all graduates as they toss their caps in the air and complete this phase of their lives. You did it!

**Kolbe Cathedral, Bridgeport**

Kolbe Cathedral High School held graduation for its 75 seniors in St. Augustine Cathedral on June 7. One hundred percent of the graduates were accepted into college, and the graduation class earned $14.1 million in scholarships. Members of the Cathedral Girls High School Class of 1968, who are planning their 50th reunion, marched with the graduates and attended the ceremony at St. Augustine Cathedral. The school’s total enrollment is 310 students. Kolbe’s valedictorian is Amberlynn Pantoja, a graduate of New Beginnings Family Academy. Amberlynn is a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society. During her time at Kolbe Cathedral, Amberlynn was an active member of SADD, the Passing of Kindness group, and peer tutoring. Amberlynn will attend New York University. She is excited to move into New York City because of her love for Broadway plays. The salutatorian for the class of 2018 is Tiah Booker. Tiah is also a member of the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. During her time at Kolbe Cathedral, Tiah played on the girls’ soccer team and was also a member of SADD and the Passing with Kindness group. “The class of 2018 will be remembered as one of the few classes to win Harvest Party twice in their four years at Kolbe Cathedral,” says principal Henry Rondon. “They were champions in the classroom and in the fields. We wish them well in the future.”

**Immaculate, Danbury**

The 120 graduates of Immaculate High School received their diplomas on June 8. Immaculate is ranked as a top ten Best Catholic High School in Connecticut by NICHE and has the highest SAT scores in the Diocese of Bridgeport. The school has a new internship program for seniors, new engineering classes and was named a Connecticut Green LEAF School. The total enrollment this year was 486, coming from 28 communities in CT and N.Y. Valedictorian Kevin McCoy was awarded the Walter J.
Szewczuk Scholarship of $1,000 for his strong academic achievement, excelling in math and science. He earned a National Merit Scholarship Letter of Commendation, a Gold Academic Award, and the President’s Volunteer Service Bronze Award. He will be attending Georgia Institute of Technology and majoring in biochemical engineering.

Salutatorian Nicole Palmieri will be attending Christopher Newport University and majoring in history. She was awarded the Fayette L. Overholt Charitable Foundation Trust for $1,000 for her academic achievement, school and community service. Nicole was also named an Outstanding Senior, received the National Merit Scholarship Letter of Commendation and a Gold Academic Award.

In praising the valedictorian and salutatorian, Dr. Patrick Higgins noted that “in every way, Kevin is an outstanding leader of the Immaculate High School Class of 2018 who was dedicated to his studies, and Nicole is a superb student leader who excels academically, is self-motivated and has served as a peer role model.”

Notre Dame, Fairfield

Fairfield held its 58th graduation ceremony on June 1. The Class of 2018 is comprised of 127 graduates, representing 21 cities and towns, as well as Vietnam, China and Brazil.

Valedictorian Tina Savvaides is one of Notre Dame’s bilingual students. Tina can play many musical instruments by ear. She has been involved in a slew of ND extra-curricular activities, including the Book and Poetry Club, the Chess Club, the Care Club, Actor’s Club, Debate Club and the tennis team. Tina will be attending Fordham University in the fall, where she plans to major in environmental science. “Tina illustrates what we expect in a ND graduate,” says Principal Chris Cipriano. “She proves our motto correct in that we strive to build character, faith and intellect in each student.”

Salutatorian Lindsay Salvati’s resume includes participation in numerous campus ministry activities and serving as a three-sport athlete, being named captain of the Girls’ Soccer, the Indoor Track and the Girls’ Lacrosse teams. Lindsay was a starter on the back-to-back state championship girls’ soccer teams. Lindsay, a member of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, will be attending Connecticut College in the fall and is interested in a concentration in psychology.

Principal Cipriano noted, “Lindsay has obviously distinguished herself as an academic superstar, and her hard work certainly extends beyond the classroom. She is certainly an accomplished student-athlete.”

Trinity Catholic, Stamford

Trinity’s 80 graduates took to the stage on June 2 at 10 am. Trinity Catholic High School students hail from 16 communities throughout Fairfield and Westchester counties.

The son of Polish immigrants, valedictorian Damian Rydzewski is a member of the National Honor Society. He was captain of the Cross Country team and has been active in the Political Science and Multicultural clubs and the Crusaders for Life. He has volunteered at the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County, and was a catechist aide at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Stamford. James earned the Fairfield County Association of Secondary School Principals’ Scholar Leader Award 2018 and the President’s Education Award. He will attend the University of Connecticut on a full tuition Presidential Scholars Award, and is considering a blended major of engineering and German studies.
Adopting New Technology

Schools launch ‘Personalized Learning’ Initiative

BY BRIAN D. WALLACE

The Diocese of Bridgeport kicked off its Personalized Learning Initiative on May 4 when principals and teachers from six schools participating in the pilot program gathered at the Catholic Center to prepare for a fall launch of the program. During the meeting, Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of Catholic Schools, said the major technology and Personalized Learning Initiative will “transform Catholic education” thanks to a $5 million gift from Tom and Paula McInerny.

Almost 100 faculty and staff from the six schools met for a full-day professional development and networking session for teachers who will be innovating personalized learning stations in their classrooms in September. The initiative, which will be rolled out at all elementary schools over the next three years, will start this fall with pilot programs set for Assumption School in Fairfield, St. Gregory the Great School in Danbury, Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton, the Upper School at the Catholic Academy of Stamford, Our Lady of Fatima School in Wilton, and at the new multi-age school, St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Brookfield.

Throughout the day, Dr. Cheeseman introduced representatives from Apple, Fairfield University, Christian Brothers/ Catholic School Management and Catapult Learning, who are partnering with the diocese to bring personalized learning to the schools.

Dr. Cheeseman said that while many teachers in diocesan schools already personalize learning and differentiate instruction, the initiative gives them the tools to take what they already strive to do and bring it to the next level.

“The initiative will provide for an updated technology infrastructure, new hardware and student devices and programs to support the traditional Catholic school educational experience.” He said that in order to bring the latest technology to students, it must also be available to teachers who will be leading the process in the pilot programs.

“We realize that, just as our students deserve a personalized approach to learning, so do our teachers, and we will be walking teachers through the professional development, certificate programs, coaching and support that will be available to them as they bring this initiative alive in the classroom.”

Dr. Cheeseman said the use of technology to foster personalized learning will not only improve the academic performance of students, but also lead to increased self-confidence and lifetime learning skills.

“Why do we need to focus on personalized learning for students? Because we believe that all children are created in the image and likeness of God and each has been given unique gifts and talents. Instructional practices that promote personalized learning recognize those gifts and address student’s specific needs. They are part of an educational model that fulfills our Catholic mission. Academic excellence is not something we do separate and apart from our Catholic identity. It is something we work towards because of our Catholic identity.”

In the keynote talk, Greg Dhuyvetter, a consultant with Catholic School Management, said that children live and learn in a “tech rich” world, and that schools need to be prepared to innovate and take risks in their approach to technology and the classroom.

Dhuyvetter motivated and challenged teachers, telling them not to be afraid to try something new even if it fails, and that teachers are still central to learning. “Teachers won’t disappear. They’re more important than ever,” he said, predicting that the next ten years will be messy in both private and public schools as they work to bridge the generation gap in technology with students brought up on i-Phones and other digital devices.

Adopting the new technology is a “disruptive push that forces you to break old patterns,” he told the teachers.

Dr. Cheeseman has personally met with each of the faculty of the Phase I schools, and they are excited at the possibilities that this new initiative will bring. Pilot schools will dedicate a portion of each day to a “station-rotation” model in which students will utilize an instructional approach that incorporates an online suite of programs “that presents material and practice in a way that is adaptive and responsive to student ability, skill and performance,” he said.

He emphasized that the technology is not an end in itself but a way to further personalize learning “in order to support student learning in a way that addresses the needs of each individual student and demonstrates a recognition that all children are made in the image and likeness of God and that each brings unique God-given gifts and talents to the classroom.”

(To learn more about Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport and for registration information, visit www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholic-schools.com.)
Vals and Sals

as a part of the Eurotech program.
Salutatorian Katherine Janik was selected for Ten Teens to Watch in Stamford by Stamford Magazine. An FCIAC Scholar Athlete, she was captain of both the Varsity Girls Soccer and Varsity Girls Tennis teams and was named to the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference Leadership Council. She is founder and president of TCHS Ears for Years Club, raising awareness of hearing loss. A parishioner at Holy Spirit Parish in Stamford, she has participated in mission trips, retreats, youth groups and parish programs.

Katherine will attend the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., this fall with plans to major in architecture.

“Damian and Kate come from wonderful families and have always been regarded as intelligent, caring people who put the interest of others before their own,” says Principal Dave Williams. “They have been excellent ambassadors of Trinity Catholic High School and we are so proud of their accomplishments over the last four years.”

St. Joseph, Trumbull

The 178 seniors of St. Joseph High School graduated on June 2. The 2017-18 school year saw the opening of the health and wellness center, the incorporation of the wetlands nature boardwalk into the curriculum, and the introduction of an Aeronautical Engineering & Drone Pilot Course. St. Joseph’s has a total enrollment of 803 students.

Valedictorian Lavanya Sambaru is secretary of the National Honor Society and president of the Spanish Honor Society, as well as a member of the AV Club, Women’s Studies Club, Writing Center, Yearbook and Student-Alumni Committee. A practicing Hindu, Lavanya plans to attend UCONN as part of the Special Program in Medicine, a competitive eight-year program for aspiring physicians.

“Lavanya is one of our best and brightest,” remarked St. Joseph’s principal, Dr. James Keane. “The future of medicine is in great hands.”

“I actually transferred into St. Joe’s from being homeschooled, so it’s especially nice to have this accomplishment,” said Salutatorian James Bove. James is a member of various honor societies, founded the Astronomy Club, is captain of the Debate Team, a member of the Jeopardy Club, and is involved in this year’s spring musical. James has currently committed to UCONN and plans on double-majoring in physics and philosophy.

“I think it’s remarkable that James made the transition from homeschool to a large institution and just fit right in to the more structured curriculum,” remarked Dr. William Fitzgerald, Head of School. “James has made a significant contribution to St. Joes and we are very proud and confident that he’s ready to make a difference.”

In addition to five diocesan high schools, scholars from the Diocese of Bridgeport are prominent in the area private Catholic high schools. We are pleased to recognize their achievements.

Fairfield Prep

The 76th Commencement of Fairfield College Preparatory School was held on June 3. The 207 graduates wore the traditional white dinner jacket tuxedos to receive their diplomas. Prep has an enrollment of 825, with students coming from approximately 50 towns and communities. Prep does not rank students, but we are happy to feature two of their top scholars.

Alexander McMullen served as student government president. Fluent in Spanish, he was president of the Hispanic Culture Club. A member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, Alex received the St. Edmund Campion, SJ, Award, honoring the senior who demonstrated a quest for academic excellence which leads him to explore the possibilities of self, faith, goodness and justice in the world. Alexander was the senior leader of Encords, an a capella group that has performed at the NYC Jazz Festival. He performed over 100 hours of community service teaching piano to Bridgeport middle school students.

He will pursue pre-med studies at Duke University in the fall. Principal Dr. Robert Perrotta commented: “Alex is a quintessential scholar-leader. He is truly a young man of competence, conscience and action, with a compassionate commitment to the service of others in the Jesuit tradition.”

Nicholas Allen received the Biological Sciences Award from the Science Department, was editor-in-chief of the yearbook, co-founder of the Classics Club and editor of the Bellarmine Review literary magazine. Nick served as captain of Prep’s tennis team this year, and plays both singles and the top doubles position for the Jesuits. He was selected as a Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Athlete for the spring season. A member of Greenfield Hill Congregational Church in Fairfield, Nick volunteers at the Norwalk Grassroots Tennis and Education Center as a coach and academic tutor. He plans to study English at Columbia University in the fall.

“Nicholas is a true role model for others,” Principal Perrotta said. “He possesses the conscience to make wise decisions, a compassion for others and a commitment to justice in our global society.”

Sacred Heart Greenwich

Seventy-two young women graduated from Sacred Heart Greenwich on June 1. SHG has an enrollment of 700, drawn from 60 towns in Westchester and Fairfield counties. A total of 11,388 hours of community service were completed by Middle and Upper School students coming from approximately 50 towns and communities.

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Sacred Heart Greenwich

Seventy-two young women graduated from Sacred Heart Greenwich on June 1. SHG has an enrollment of 700, drawn from 60 towns in Westchester and Fairfield counties. A total of 11,388 hours of community service were completed by Middle and Upper School students coming from approximately 50 towns and communities. Prep does not rank students, but we are happy to feature two of their top scholars.

Alexander McMullen served as student government president. Fluent in Spanish, he was president of the Hispanic Culture Club. A member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, Alex received the St. Edmund Campion, SJ, Award, honoring the senior who demonstrated a quest for academic excellence which leads him to explore the possibilities of self, faith, goodness and justice in the world. Alexander was the senior leader of Encords, an a capella group that has performed at the NYC Jazz Festival. He performed over 100 hours of community service teaching piano to Bridgeport middle school students.

He will pursue pre-med studies at Duke University in the fall. Principal Dr. Robert Perrotta commented: “Alex is a quintessential scholar-leader. He is truly a young man of competence, conscience and action, with a compassionate commitment to the service of others in the Jesuit tradition.”

Nicholas Allen received the Biological Sciences Award from the Science Department, was editor-in-chief of the yearbook, co-founder of the Classics Club and editor of the Bellarmine Review literary magazine. Nick served as captain of Prep’s tennis team this year, and plays both singles and the top doubles position for the Jesuits. He was selected as a Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Athlete for the spring season. A member of Greenfield Hill Congregational Church in Fairfield, Nick volunteers at the Norwalk Grassroots Tennis and Education Center as a coach and academic tutor. He plans to study English at Columbia University in the fall.

“Nicholas is a true role model for others,” Principal Perrotta said. “He possesses the conscience to make wise decisions, a compassion for others and a commitment to justice in our global society.”
Students this year.

Valedictorian Kathryn Goodfriend, a parishioner at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Greenwich, was on the varsity tennis team and excelled in AP chemistry. She volunteers for the Shinnecock Bay Restoration Program in Southampton, N.Y., where she worked on restoring the bay after decades of overfishing and pollution.

Considering a major in economics, Kathryn chose Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Salutatorian Maria “Pau” Barbosa most enjoyed her biology, French and journalism courses and rowing for the Sacred Heart crew team. A parishioner at St. Clement of Rome Parish in Stamford, she participated on the Junior Committee for the Breast Cancer Alliance.

Maria will have a concentration in computer science or mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston.

“The members of the Class of 2018 accomplished so much during their time at Sacred Heart Greenwich: in the classroom, on the turf, in the chapel, at the anchor desk, in the lab, on the court, in the studio and behind the podium,” said Head of School Pamela Juan Hayes ’64.

“We look forward to seeing how far their academics, faith and commitment to others take them in the future.

**Sacred Heart Academy, Hamden**

Sacred Heart Academy graduated the largest class in the school’s history—133 young women strong—on May 26. More than 875 students, hailing from 60 towns, are currently enrolled.

Valedictorian Eunji Lee of Trumbull has been an officer in a number of clubs, was awarded the National Center for Women in Informational Technology Aspirations in Computing Award, was an AP Scholar with Distinction and a semi-finalist in the USA Biology Olympiad competition. Having played violin since she was six, Eunji served as SHA concertmistress all four years. In the summer of 2017, she was selected to the Yale “Discovery to Cure” program to work in the Clinical Chemistry Department.

She is headed for Stanford University in California, where she plans to major in computer science.

Salutatorian Amy Zibron of Watertown volunteered at the Connecticut Science and Engineering Fair and traveled to Alaska for a pre-college environmental conservation study with Brown University. Amy will attend the University of Vermont and plans to major in animal and veterinary science.

Joelle Cote was presented with the distinguished Mother Clelia Merloni Charism Award, given each year to the senior who consistently exemplifies the ideals of ice and repair—and the hallmarks of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A member of National Honor Society, she sings at her home parish of St. Joseph in Shelton, where she volunteers in the Vacation Bible School. She participated in retreat leadership for her senior class and went on a summer mission trip to Camden, N.J.

Joelle will attend the University of Scranton, Penn., as a health science major, with a theology minor. She aspires to be an occupational therapist.

Madison Brenchak of Seymour received the Sister Antonine Signorelli, ASCJ, Excelsior Award.

“The Class of 2018 is a class with a lot of class spirit and enthusiasm,” says Sister Kathleen Mary Cooman, ASCJ, Sacred Heart’s principal. “They care about each other, work well together, and have definitely left their mark on...”

**Auditions for the 2018-2019 Season**

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There are 6 rehearsal sites and times mentioned below. It will last no more than 15 minutes. All singers need to prepare The Star Spangled Banner to sing. (Words don’t matter, LA LA LA is fine!)

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**Weekly Rehearsal Days and Times**

- **Mondays** 4:30-6pm Our Lady of Fatima Parish Center 229 Danbury Rd., Wilton, CT
- **Tuesdays** 2:15-3:30pm Kolbe Cathedral High School 33 Calhoun Place, Bridgeport, CT
- **Tuesdays** 4:30-6pm The Catholic Center, Queen of Saints Hall 238 Hewett Ave., Bridgeport, CT
- **Tuesdays** 7-8:30pm St. Joseph’s High School 2320 Huntington Tpke, Trumbull, CT
- **Wednesdays** 4:30-6pm Trinity Catholic High School 926 Newfield Ave., Stamford, CT
- **Thursdays** 4:30-6pm Immaculata High School 73 Southern Blvd., Danbury, CT
GREENWICH—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has appointed the new Board of Directors for Greenwich Catholic School, which announced its transition to a new governance structure, known as an Academy model, in March.

“These individuals bring extensive experience, talent and energy to the school,” Bishop Caggiano said. “It is a great responsibility to undertake board service for our Catholic schools, and I am encouraged by this board’s commitment to our faith, to our children, and to the mission of Greenwich Catholic School.”

Although the majority of the new directors currently serve on the school’s Advisory Board, the shift in governance represents a major change relative to the authority of the board.

Under the new structure, the diocese will reserve certain privileges, such as approval of the members of the Board of Directors, guardianship of the school’s Catholic mission and ownership of the property. The Board of Directors will monitor and evaluate the operation of the school and evaluate, approve and revise as needed school policies and ensure the policies are implemented in accordance with GCS’s mission and the policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The Board of Directors will assume their responsibilities for Greenwich Catholic School on July 1, 2018. As one of their first official acts, the board hosted two listening sessions for school parents and community members on May 17 and 18.

The directors of the board are:

- **Joseph Bastone, P’05**: A senior account manager of business development at Metropolis Group, Inc., Bastone is the leading permit expediter in New York City. An experienced finance and construction professional, he has served as the GCS Facilities Committee chair for the past year. A graduate of Mercy College, he also serves as a catechist at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Greenwich where he and his wife, Gina, are parishioners.

- **Patrick Brilliant**: Working at Bridgewater Associates for the past 14 years, Brilliant is currently a senior manager in their front office. He received his undergraduate degree from Pomona College and his MBA from Harvard Business School. He and his wife, Jennette, are the parents of four young sons and are parishioners of St. Michael’s.

- **Dr. Steven Cheeseman, Ed. D**: Dr. Cheeseman is the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. Prior to joining the diocese in 2016, he was the associate superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Rockville Centre on Long Island. Dr. Cheeseman holds a doctorate in educational leadership and technology from Dowling College. He, his wife, Danielle, and their three children are parishioners of St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Trumbull.

- **Niamh Cronin, P’17**: Prior to moving to Connecticut in 2013, Cronin played a transformational role in fundraising and faith-building at St. Norbert School and St. Norbert Parish in Northbrook, IL. She chaired the Greenwich Catholic School Annual Fund for three years, in addition to serving on the leadership team for Walking with Purpose at St. Mary Parish in Greenwich. Originally from Ireland, she graduated from St. Wolstan’s Commercial College in Dublin and St. Patrick’s College in Maynooth. Cronin and her husband, Paul, currently coordinate and direct a Pre-Cana program, “Three to Get Married,” through Regnum Christi and are parishioners of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan.

- **James I. Dougherty, Esq., P’01**: In addition to being an

Valedictorians Lily Wald of Lauralton Hall, Milford—Caroline Favano, valedictorian

Lauralton Hall, Milford—Caroline Favano, valedictorian

Nashville where she is planning to major in neuroscience.

The school’s highest honor, the Catherine McAuley Award, was presented to Jessica Sanchez, a member of St. Gabriel Parish in Milford. This annual award is presented to the senior who best demonstrates the Lauralton mission of Mercy values, including compassion, courage, spirit of volunteerism and sound academic performance.

“The members of this class have shown through their character and conduct that they are Women of Mercy,” said Head of School Elizabeth Miller. “I know they will carry with them Lauralton’s spirit of lifelong learning, compassionate service and leadership as they go out into the world.”

**Congratulations**

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alumnus of Greenwich Catholic School, Dougherty has deep ties to the school dating back to his grandfather, Hugh Bruce Dougherty, who was one of the founders of GCS. His own father, James B. Dougherty, graduated from GCS in 1972 and remains an active supporter of the school. Atty. Dougherty is a partner in the private client and tax division at Withers Bergman, LLP, and specializes in domestic and international estate planning. He received his B.A. from Carnegie Mellon University and his J.D. from William & Mary Law School. He and his wife, Marissa, have a one-year-old daughter and are members of St. Michael’s.

Ginny Ertl, P’06,’10,’15: Ertl is the president and founder of GJ ConsultingWorks, LLC, which provides executive coaching to CEOs and their teams with a focus on implementing organizational change, enhancing organizational performance, and developing executive teams. Prior to founding her firm, Ertl spent 24 years at GE in numerous executive leadership roles. For the past year she served as co-chair of the Advancement Committee of the GCS Advisory Board and also sits on the board of the Child Guidance Center of Southwestern CT. She holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Boston College and is a Certified Public Accountant. She is a parishioner of St. Leo Parish in Stamford.

Mario Gaztambide, P’24,’25: Senior managing director and head of residential properties at the LeFrak Organization, Gaztambide received his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and his MBA from the University of Miami. He has served on the Greenwich Catholic School Advisory Board for two years in the positions of facilities chair and most recently as chair of strategic planning. He is a board member of the Rent Stabilization Association of New York. Gaztambide and his wife, Maria Elena, have two sons who attend GCS and are members of St. Michael’s.

Christine Green: As the Director of Religious Education at St. Paul Parish in Greenwich and former Director of Admissions at Trinity Catholic High School, Green brings extensive experience within the realm of Catholic education. Her children attended Stamford Catholic schools, where she served as a member of the Home School Associations and Advisory Boards for St. Cecilia School, Trinity Catholic Middle School, and TCHS. Additionally, she chaired the Enrollment and Marketing Task Force for the Greenwich Catholic School strategic planning process and has served as the enrollment and marketing chair for the past year on the GCS Advisory Board. A graduate of the Catholic University of America, she and her family are members of St. Leo’s, where she is also a member of the parish council.

Jan Jepsen Montana, P’21: Montana has been a member of the Greenwich Catholic School Advisory Board for the past four years. For the last three years, she served as chair, during which time the school successfully completed its first capital campaign and developed a five-year strategic plan. As a graduate of the University of Utah and the owner of JMJ Consulting, Montana works with numerous private medical practices and insurance brokerage operations in the areas of strategic planning and process evaluation. She and her husband, Bill, have one daughter who attends GCS. They are parishioners of St. Mary Parish in Greenwich, where Montana is a lector, Eucharistic Minister and the coordinator for Walking with Purpose.

GRADUATE INFORMATION SESSION — JULY 11
CT State Science Fair

Young St. Joseph scientists take home honors

By PAT HENNESSY

“When students compete in a science fair, they learn so much even when they don’t win a trophy,” says Jennifer Reilly, the science teacher at St. Joseph School in Danbury. “Just coming up with an idea for a project is daunting. Then they have to research the science behind their topic, and design their own experiment. They develop an independent mode of learning they couldn’t get from any textbook.”

Catholic schools in this diocese have demonstrated the excellence of their science education and their own independent thinking. Year after year the diocese is happy to report on the number of students who achieve honors, medals and trophies at the competition. Students from nine diocesan schools excelled again this year, seven at the middle school level and two from diocesan high schools.

At St. Joseph’s, eighth-grader Bronwyn Hyland took home a biotechnology trophy for his exploration of “Stunted Growth: How Do Cell Phones Affect Plant Growth and Can Certain Materials Prevent It?” He also got an award from the American Society of Safety engineers. This is a repeat performance for Bronwyn; he took home a trophy in the physical science division last year.

The seventh grade team of Christian Jeffers and Georen Chirayil took home a second place Life Science trophy for “Growing, Growing, Gone! A Fertilizer Experiment.” They also received an invitation to compete at Broadcom MASTERS. The Broadcom Foundation and Society for Science & the Public MASTERS competition (Math, Applied Science, Technology and Engineering for Rising Stars), is the premier science and engineering competition nationwide for middle school students.

St. Joseph’s second team of seventh-graders, Talia Pereira and Sadie Jarboe, earned a Pfizer Life Sciences Award for “Water You Drinking?”

Pride of place for the greatest number of awards earned by its young scientists goes to another Danbury school, St. Gregory the Great. Known for the number and quality of science fair honors over the years, St. Gregory’s contestants produced five award winning exhibits this year in both Life Sciences and Physical Science categories.

St. Rose of Lima School saw three seventh graders earn finalist status. In addition, fourth grade students recently participated in the Invention Convention and all of those were selected to move on to the National Convention.

Greenwich Catholic School had three finalists, with Sebastian

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 34
Wetland boardwalk nurtures knowledge

By PAT HENNESSY

“I found a frog! I found a frog!” shouted Cassie Cavallo, her call cutting through the excited chatter of her classmates. “I took a step, and it jumped!”

A freshman in honors biology at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, Cassie cupped the tiny creature, scarcely as big as her thumbnail, in her hands as she waited for her teacher, Dr. Dan Walsh, chair of the science department at St. Joe’s.

He identified it as a spring peeper, whose high-pitched call in pools and wetlands during spring evenings heralds the coming warmth. When he placed it on the ground, the tan frog blended invisibly into the leaf litter.

“She was in the leaves,” said Cassie. “If she hadn’t moved I wouldn’t have seen her. That was the highlight of my day, and it’s only 8:30 in the morning!”

Enthusiasm like that is exactly what the nature trail and wetland boardwalk provides for St. Joseph’s students. The school has always kept pace with—or ahead of—the times and was more eager to take advantage of its varied terrain on its 50-acre campus.

“We are always asking ourselves, ‘We’re already good. What can we do better?’” said Dr. James Keane, St. Joseph’s principal.

A strategic plan, developed over the past seven years, included innovative programming for an outdoor classroom. Thanks to generous donors, a boardwalk was constructed in 2017 in the wetland area. Student volunteers helped re-establish native vegetation around its borders.

“Our first step is introducing students to nature,” said Dr. Keane. “They have to experience it firsthand before they can appreciate it.”

“Our goal is to have every biology class come out here at least twice,” says Dr. Walsh. “We bring them out here in the fall semester to get a sense of the area, give them a feel of the beauty of nature and experience the fun of it.”

Biological students learn that oak and hickory trees prefer higher terrain while red maples welcome the wetlands. They may have the fun of finding a red-backed salamander under some rocks or fresh water clams in a scoop of water.

The curriculum at St. Joseph’s, though, uses the quiet acres for far more than science classes and the Go-Green ecology club. Space outdoors has been set aside for activities as varied as Scripture reading, which is rich in themes of God’s creation; time for quiet prayer and meditation; or an English class studying writer Henry Thoreau’s famous work, Walden; Life in the Woods, or experiencing the poetry of Emily Dickinson.

For the honors biology class, learning how living things interact goes even deeper. The spring peeper was a happy find, but teams have been studying a single plant and its immediate habitat this semester. They had come out three weeks earlier and made a data sheet on a given herbaceous plant, noting its height and width, the five nearest other plants and the nearest shrubs and tree.

Today’s follow-up yields plenty of surprises.

“This thing is massive!” says Cameron Reichenbach, measuring a water hemlock. “It’s gotten so much bigger. It’s over six feet—not a different height but a different width.” His teammate Dillon McDermott carefully navigates a fallen log near a yellow birch tree to get a ph reading from the nearest water source.

Further along the path, Eleanor Higgins and Maev Malone are checking out a struggling sensitive fern. “The water was a lot lower earlier,” they note. “It was almost on dry land.” The plant had sustained nibbles from a number of insects, including crickets, the girls surmise. “Now a spider is living here. It might eat the bugs that are eating the fern.”

Sunlight and shade, water level and acidity, ferns, false hellebore, and a dwarf ginseng plant that flowered and faded. Spiders, crickets, a painted turtle basking on the sun or a dragonfly alighting briefly on a frond—all of these make the many micro-worlds studied in St. Joseph’s woodland habitat.

“The students will come back and put together a report on how the micro-habitat has changed since their last visit,” said Dr. Walsh. “Even though this is an honors class, he knows that most of these students will not go on to major in the biological sciences. That’s not the point. “We want to give them a sense of zest, of enthusiasm for nature. If we’re going to conserve this for our future, they really have to get out there and appreciate it. It’s one thing to talk about it in the classroom or show a video, but there’s nothing like taking them out and being there.”

A reflection from freshman Jack Donofrio as the year’s class comes near its close gives voice to exactly what Dr. Walsh, Principal Keane and the school’s donors had hoped when they initiated the biowalk project.

“The biology wetlands lab has both increased my knowledge of the natural world and provided me with a new outlook on our relationship with God and his creation,” Jack wrote. “Perhaps the first thing I noticed was the quiet tranquility of the forest. It is said that God speaks to us in the silence of our hearts. However, I believe that he also speaks to us through the chirping of sparrows and the croaking of bullfrogs. One can learn a great deal about God and all life by simply contemplating the beautiful nature of every life form.”
St. Peter School, Danbury

Share happiness with community projects

By VALERIE BOYLE

What is the true meaning of community? The students and staff of St. Peter School in Danbury have been models of this Gospel value in many different ways. From kindergarten students making cards for veterans for Veteran’s Day to a school-wide project of collecting canned goods and toiletries for the Dorothy Day House, this school loves to work together to help others. These community service projects are just a few of the ways the school has followed the example of Jesus. The students in second grade participated in a community project created by a Danbury High School Senior, Hayden Turk, to help encourage kindness in the Danbury area. Along with Hayden and her friends, Holly Rivers and Shivani Patel, the second graders painted rocks with colorful pictures and positive words. These rocks will be placed all around the city of Danbury. The hope is that these rocks will make whoever finds them smile. The students loved painting and could not wait to share the rocks with the community. Who knew that helping others could be so much fun?

The whole school has participated in the Pennies for Patients campaign for the past four years. This community project is organized by the Student Council. The students collect money from family and friends for about a month. This money goes to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation to help children with leukemia and other childhood cancer. In both 2017 and 2018, the school collected over $3,000. The class that collects the most money enjoys a pasta lunch from Olive Garden. What a delicious way to celebrate helping others in the community!

The kindergarten and first grade classes held a bake sale in January to benefit St. Jude Children’s Hospital. This community service activity raised over $300. The students brought in baked goods and helped to sell the yummy treats to the school community. Even the youngest students at St. Peter School take pride in helping others.

For the past four years, the entire St. Peter School has held community visits to the Elmwood Senior Center throughout the school year. From a Halloween Costume Parade with kinder-

garten through third grade to a Christmas Concert with the whole school, the senior citizens at Elmwood Senior Center look forward to seeing the St. Peter School students. The seniors also have visited St. Peter’s on Read Across America Day to read to the students in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday. This intergenerational friendship exemplifies the true meaning of community.

During this Lenten season, the sixth grade class organized a canned goods and toiletry drive for the Dorothy Day House. They collected canned vegetables, toothpaste, deodorant and soap to help those in need.

Along with these community service projects, the school also participates in a Coat and Clothing Drive every fall, as well as many other activities in the individual classrooms. The Student Council is organizing a Talent Show in the spring and the cheerleaders have participated in activities for Ben’s Bells in Bethel.

The students at St. Peter School believe that helping in the community models how to follow the example of Jesus in our everyday lives. This just shows that even the youngest students can set an example for how to live like Jesus did. We hope that by helping the community, we can encourage others to do the same.

(Valerie Boyle is the second grade teacher at St. Peter School, Danbury.)
St. Augustine Academy

Mural brightens the hallways of the Academy

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

Gathered after school, a select group of eighth graders at St. Augustine School, along with local artist Cleiton Ventura, picked up paintbrushes and pallets to enliven the hallway with their art.

The result is a striking mural that brightens the hallways of St. Augustine Academy on the cathedral campus in downtown Bridgeport.

The mural is a reflective piece on the eighth-graders’ experience of transitioning to high school. The left side represents the challenges and ups-and-downs they have experienced, while the right side represents their hope for a positive and bright future, says St. Augustine Academy art teacher Jennifer Strausser.

“Originally, I was forming an idea for students to work together as a team. I wanted a way for this concept to be turned into a visual piece that everyone in the school community could see and enjoy. It ended up being way more powerful as the group of students bonded over their experience,” recalls Strausser, who also serves as art teacher at St. Raphael Academy in Bridgeport.

Strausser found out about local artist Cleiton Ventura, who is well known for his murals and whose work was featured on a local blog. Ventura has produced artwork for schools in the area and is recognized for his graffiti-style lettering.

Working together, the students began to bring their ideas to life and color.

Many faculty members who passed by commented on how much the mural brightened up the hallway, one even saying that it brought a whole new perspective to the space. A group gathered to admire the work of the St. Augustine students.

“I was both shocked and impressed at how involved the students were both artistically and emotionally,” Strausser says. “The mural represents something everyone can relate to and appreciate.”

A fellow teacher commented on how the students should be really proud of their hard work and dedication to the project, which would bring so much joy to the school community.

The eighth graders were all smiles as they added color to the mural and talked excitedly about their upcoming graduation. A few students worked on adding color to the background, while some enhanced and outlined the featured lettering.

The Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation.

HALLWAY ART—This striking mural brightens the hallways of St. Augustine Academy on the cathedral campus in downtown Bridgeport. Eighth graders worked on the project to express their feelings about making the transition to high school and their plans for the future. Their project was funded by the Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation.

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College Commencements

2,000+ graduate from Sacred Heart University

FAIRFIELD—More than 2,000 Sacred Heart University students embarked on a new phase in their lives in mid-May after receiving diplomas and words of advice and encouragement from leaders, scholars and classmates. The SHU class of 2018 includes 1,217 undergraduates who earned bachelor’s degrees and 1,130 graduate students have earned master’s degrees, professional certificates and doctorates.

In his opening address, President John J. Petillo encouraged undergraduates to continue to be curious—as he encouraged them to be four years ago at their opening convocation. “Continue to cultivate with curiosity the notions of respect, inclusiveness and compassion,” he advised.

He also presented an honorary degree to Caitlin Nelson, who passed away a year ago. Two of her Kappa Delta sorority sisters picked up the degree for Nelson, who would have graduated this year.

The Honorable Linda McMahon, a member of President Trump’s Cabinet and former SHU trustee, delivered the keynote address to the undergraduates. She also received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, degree.

In her remarks, McMahon chose to eschew the usual platitudes and share memories of the unexpected things life brought her way, from buying a prom dress and wedding dress on the same day to finding out she was pregnant the day before she graduated from college. “Real life isn’t scripted. There is no first draft,” she told the graduates.

“No one will edit out the bloopers or promo the highlights. It’s like live TV—you get one shot. Make this version of your story one that counts. And in doing so, reflect on this: Reputation is what men and women think of us. Character is what God and angels know of us.”

Samantha Pignatelli, president of the graduating class, took her peers down memory lane and reflected on what they had gained during their time at SHU. “Sacred Heart feels like home and became just that for each of us. This university is so much more than just a place where we went to receive our degrees; instead it is a community that is incomparable. A community that celebrates together, a community that mourns together and a community that has changed each and every person who has gotten the privilege to become a part of it,” she said.

Gabriella Lind, of Monmouth County, N.J., studied English and psychology at SHU. “The past four years here at Sacred Heart have been nothing short of incredible,” she said. “I found my second home, my second family and most importantly, I found myself.”

Jordan Velez, 22, studied athletic training at SHU. He said he’s been replaying some of his greatest and happiest moments at SHU. “All the friends that I have made, all the people I have met and all that I have learned is hitting my brain like a tsunami. These last four years have been the most amazing experience I could have ever imagined. Coming into SHU, I never thought I’d be as happy as I am now,” said the West Orange, N.J., native. Velez will attend Florida State University for his master’s degree in sports management.

10,000 gather for Fairfield’s 68th

FAIRFIELD—On Sunday, May 20, Fairfield University’s Class of 2018 undergraduate and graduate students received their degrees during the university’s 68th Commencement exercises. This was the first Fairfield University Commencement for Mark Nemec, PhD, the university’s ninth president. He asked the graduates to commit to three things: to never stop learning, to always develop the mind, body and spirit, and to engage in broad conversation.

“Never forget that the world needs what you do,” he said. “Embracing the wider world as a partner in both our thoughts and our deeds is what civic and global engagement is certainly all about.”

Undergraduate speaker Brother Guy Joseph Consolmagno, SJ, director of the Vatican Observatory and president of the Vatican Observatory Foundation, spoke to the graduates during the morning’s undergraduate ceremony of the importance of conversation, and how integral listening and observation are in relation to the arts and sciences and life.

“Before we can join in, we have to spend time listening in, to find out what topics are current and what the jargon means. That’s called being a student. Only gradually do we know enough that we can get to enter the conversation; and that’s where you are now,” he said. “Only after you’ve been a part of the conversation for a while do you have the ability, and the right, to introduce new topics, and shift the conversation to a new direction.”

As an astronomer, he conveyed his hope that each Fairfield student has found their own stars—moments that bring each person peace, joy and wonder. “And then,” he said, “make time to tell your friends about the peace and joy and wonder that you’ve found; and make time to listen and appreciate their stories. Time for conversation is sacred time, and we’ve got a lot to talk about.”

William Egan ’67, P’99 was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Egan is an owner of the Boston Celtics. He is a former trustee of the university, and helped to open the new Marion Peckham Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies. Honorary Doctor of Laws degrees were also given to Father James Michael Bowler, SJ, former director for Fairfield University’s Center of Ignatian Spirituality, and M. Shawn Copeland, PhD, professor of Systematic Theology and African and African Diaspora Studies at Boston College. She is the first African American woman to serve as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, among many other accolades. The Honorable Mark Dybul, MD, received an Honorary Doctors of Science Degree for his work as a leader in Global Health issues.
Scout’s Honor

St. Raphael playground project

By PAT HENNESSY

“What jumped out at me was that I had a very concrete project that we could do,” says Luke Feretti about his Eagle Scout project. “I knew it was going to help kids who don’t have a lot of places to play in their neighborhood.”

Luke, who just finished his junior year at Trumbull High School, is a member of Troop #65 at Long Hill United Methodist Church in Trumbull. His search for an Eagle Scout project brought him to Janet Wrable, director of religious education at his home parish of St. Stephen in Trumbull. His first thought was for a project that would help the parish.

Wrable knew that the diocesan Deacons Wives Ministry (DWM) assisted inner-city schools. After contacting them, Luke was soon on the campus of St. Raphael Academy in Bridgeport, studying a playground that was calling for help from strong young arms and hands.

“We try to assess the area of most need each year,” says Sister Christine Hoffner, ASCJ, St. Raphael’s principal. “At the end of last spring, we began to look at the playground for the pre-K through first grade youngsters. Supports were sagging and the surfacing needed replacement.”

“When I visited, Sister Christine outlined the problem of clearing the existing playground, and took me around to meet the kids who would be using the new one,” says Luke. Eagle Scout projects go through a three-step vetting process. First, Luke went to his scoutmaster and Eagle Scout coordinator and made an assessment of the number of man hours the project would take and how many people would be involved.

After that, he made a presentation to the Eagle Scout committee. “I passed around brochures and photos with a brief summary and what the project would entail,” he explains. Then the project went for final approval to the Boy Scouts Connecticut Yankee Council in Milford. They approved Luke’s project.

Approval in hand, Luke met with a local contractor to arrange for a dumpster to be brought to the site. He had to enlist a team willing to commit to the project, and make provision for the tools needed for the job.

The finished requirements came through as winter warmed toward spring. The dumpster arrived, the tree stumps removed, and Scouts showed up bright and early to clear the playground.

“They worked all day,” says Sister Christine, who popped out to appreciate their progress as the hours passed. “They had a blast!”

The Scouts dug, hauled and tossed. They used a sledgehammer to break old cement, filled the holes and cleared the old playstation with pickaxes and wrenches. At the end, they raked the surface smooth and left a climbing geodome in place for the active youngsters.

By August, with the new school year approaching, Sister Christine will be inviting the Scouts back. This time it won’t be to fulfill badge requirements.

“I actually met the kids who are going to benefit from the new playground, and I want to be a part of this,” says Luke. “I definitely see myself seeing it through to the finish.”

Class of 2018 College Matriculations

Babson College
Boston College (5)
Boston University
Brown University
Bucknell University (5)
California Institute of the Arts
Colby College
Colgate University
College of Charleston
College of the Holy Cross (2)
Columbia University
Cornell University (3)
Eliot University (3)
Fairfield University
Florida State University
Fordham University
Georgetown University (6)
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Johns Hopkins University
King’s College
Lafayette College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Middlebury College
Northeastern University
Providence College
Rhode Island School of Design
Sacred Heart University
Smith College
Southern Methodist University
St. Lawrence University
Stetson University
Syracuse University

Temple University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Connecticut
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh
University of Southern California
The University of Texas at Austin (2)
University of Virginia
Vanderbilt University
Villanova University (2)
Wake Forest University (2)
Washington University in St. Louis
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
“This is what we are all about—creating students focused on excellence,” said Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. Speaking on what he called “one of my favorite days of the year,” he welcomed students and parents to the annual Breakfast of Champions.

Joined by their administrators and pastors, the students were being honored not just for their academic achievement but, as Bishop Frank J. Caggiano wrote in his welcoming letter for “their exceptional leadership and character and Christ-like virtue… They are each a great example to their peers and to all of us who join together today.”

In his opening remarks, Dr. Cheeseman emphasized that “Champion” is not just a noun. “Champion is a verb,” explained the superintendent. “It’s what you do, who you stand for and support. More than just academics, we are recognizing the character you demonstrate—the values you champion. Always be a champion and an advocate; always stand up for the virtue and the values you’re recognized for today.”

More than 200 pastors, administrators and parents joined at the breakfast to honor the 41 awardees. Elementary and high school students chosen for the St. Thomas Aquinas award demonstrated academic excellence and lived faith through service to others. High school recipients selected for the St. Sebastian Award have shown leadership in sports as captain of an athletic team and have achieved success in that particular sport.

“I’m a good student, and I always try my best,” said Ola Kozak, the St. Thomas Aquinas awardee from St. James School in Stratford. She enjoys science, particularly biology, and English. Also good in math, Ola, who will attend Shelton High this fall, thinks it might be interesting to check out a career in architecture.

“We chose Ola because she’s kind, she’s caring, she’s always looking out for other children,” says Principal Jack Lynch. “She’s everything you could look for in a young woman.”

Her parents, Agata and Janusz Kozak, feel especially blessed this day. “We grew up in Poland, and the faith was always important to us. We loved St. James Parish, and thought Ola would do well in the school. We never expected to be a part of something like this. I feel so honored, so proud.”

“We are so blessed!” said Agata. “We knew Ola would get a good foundation at St. James, and that she would be well cared for. I think she’s on a good path to the future.”

In his closing prayer, Msgr. Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, took special time to thank parents for their appreciation and effort. He told the students, “Your parents are your greatest supporters.”
2018 Award Recipients

The recipients of the St. Thomas Aquinas Award were selected for excellence in academics and exemplifying Gospel values.

St. Thomas Aquinas Award
(Academics, Community Service, Christ-like Behavior)

8th Grade Recipients
Natalie Becue—Greenwich Catholic School, Greenwich
Shauna Contreras—Assumption Catholic School, Fairfield
Katerina Crowe—St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown
Ryan Donovan—Saint Mary School, Ridgefield
Arshel Flores—St. Gregory the Great School, Danbury
Danielle Garcia—St. Peter School, Danbury
John (Jack) Gibowicz—St. Joseph School, Danbury
Aleksandra (Ola) Kozak—St. James School, Stratford
Michael Lamonica IV—St. Mark School, Stratford
Mark MacDaniel—Holy Trinity Catholic Academy, Shelton
Sinead McGuirk—St. Ann Academy, Bridgeport
Emmaline Moore—St. Joseph School, Brookfield
Maivi Nguyen—St. Augustine Academy, Bridgeport
Caroline Richmond—St. Theresa School, Trumbull
Anabelle Rivera—St. Andrew Academy, Bridgeport
Tyler Salta—All Saints Catholic School, Norwalk
Riley Stenger—St. Aloysius School, New Canaan
Jessica Tara—St. Catherine of Siena, Trumbull
Caroline Tucker—St. Mary School, Bethel
Morgan Vossler—The Catholic Academy of Stamford, Stamford
Avery Woodworth—St. Thomas Aquinas School, Fairfield
Anna Zahrah—Our Lady of Fatima School, Wilton

12th Grade Recipients
Jack Guiry—Immaculate High School, Danbury
Ryan Haack—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull
Katherine Janik—Trinity Catholic High School, Stamford
Natalie Massaro—St. Catherine Academy, Fairfield
Ceanna Scinto—Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport
Emma Sweeney—Notre Dame High School, Fairfield

The St. Sebastian Award recipients were selected for leadership in their respective high schools as the captain of an athletic team.

St. Sebastian Award
(Athletics—High Schools)

12th Grade Recipients
Jude Andrzejewski—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Football
Tory Bike—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Soccer
Katherine Cassetta—Immaculate High School, Danbury, Cross Country
Noreaga Davis—Notre Dame High School, Fairfield, Basketball
Michael Dilorio—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Football
Ronan Doherty—Immaculate High School, Danbury, Basketball
Hannah Hutchison—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Volleyball
Jared Mallorzi—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Football
Connor Murphy—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Football
Isaiah Payton—Immaculate High School, Danbury, Basketball
Joshua Reaves—Notre Dame High School, Fairfield, Basketball
Kyle Federici—Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport, Basketball
Jesse Veilleux—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Football

Congratulations to the 79 members of the Portsmouth Abbey School Class of 2018 who will be attending more than 50 different colleges and universities next year!
Foundation provides programs and funding in order to create meaningful educational experiences and life-changing opportunities through the arts. This foundation was created in memory of Jamie Alaine Hulley, a young woman who was passionate about the arts and was pursuing a career in such before she lost her battle with aggressive lymphoma at a young age.

The non-profit foundation is dedicated to supporting artists who share her passion by awarding annual scholarships, awards, grants, and providing educational programs in the arts. “Our grant program makes it possible for individuals and community groups to follow a dream, to try something innovative, and to share the gift of the arts with their community,” they explain.

Strausser expressed her desire to continue this project with future students and her hopes of expanding the mural to other areas of the school. “It’s a great way for students to build confidence and camaraderie while working toward the same goal.”

These traits are essential for creating an environment in which every student may develop, grow and reach his or her true potential,” said Sister Magnetti.

This strong base prepares inner-city children to succeed. Over 90 percent of Catholic Academy students go on to complete college.

The Catholic Academy applied to the Tauck Family Foundation for assistance in a program already underway. “We seek funding to help implement a social and emotional learning initiative, which is intended to help our students derive the most from their education and life. We aim to implement this project through participation in programs at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence,” the grant proposal stated.

To date, a small pilot group from the St. Augustine campus attended training at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Those participants began implementing the principles they learned, and observed improved emotional and social well-being on campus. On that basis, the Catholic Academy seeks to implement this project on every campus.

The concise plan, the rigorous education, combined with moral, emotional and spiritual development and a sense of nurturing community all contributed to the selection of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport to be part of the Tauck Family Foundation’s Second Investee Cohort. “We are grateful for your passion and commitment,” said the Foundation in making its announcement, “and we are honored to partner with you to support the work that the school is carrying out to empower Bridgeport children and help them reach their full potential.”