Planning for the National V Encuentro

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Growing in the faith
Leadership Summit: Catechesis

People in ministry must become lifelong learners

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

“What does effective learning look like in a digitally connect-ed world? How are we helping youth take information and transform it into knowledge and wisdom? How are we engaging our communities in faith in a digitally connected world?” asked Charlotte McCorquodale, president of Ministry Training Source.

Speaking at a Leadership Summit held on June 20 in the Queen of Saints Hall at the Catholic Center to more than 150 catechists and others involved in ministry in the diocese, Dr. McCorquodale urged those currently serving in ministry to become lifelong learners and to understand the impact of new technologies on young people.

Dr. McCorquodale, an international educator, researcher and consultant for the fields of lay ecclesial ministry, discussed Going, Going, Gone: The Dynamics of Disaffiliation in Young Catholics published by St. Mary’s Press, a new study which gives insight into why young people might be leaving the Church.

“Increasingly young Catholics are weakly attached to the Church,” Dr. McCorquodale said, presenting a challenge to her listeners to recreate the world around them in order to re incorporate those who have become unaffiliated.

The Leadership Summit was held to discuss the progress of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano’s invitation to Lifelong Faith Formation and how the Diocese of Bridgeport is working to meet the needs of each and every parish.

Members of the diocese who serve in many different ministries at their respective parishes were able to hear about programs and initiatives that are available to them and those they serve.

Patrick Donovan of the diocesan Leadership Institute kicked off the evening by addressing the fact that those who serve in ministry are an ecletic audience made up of a number of different specializations and age groups.

“We share ministry, we need to make sure we share information,” Donovan told the gathering.

In the keynote talk, Dr. McCorquodale explained that at the heart of ministry is storytelling, meaning we are both storytellers and witnesses to those we serve.

Ministry leaders were able to interactively answer questions about what learning means, how learning has changed in today’s world and what this means for the modern learner.

Dr. McCorquodale described learning as “the making of meaning,” and encouraged all gathered to recognize that they are all lifelong learners. She then went on to explain that the growing influence of technology has changed the way that we think and learn, as well as our relationships and the way we relate to one another.

The speaker also drew examples from the book The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge, which discusses practices of becoming a learning organization.

Dr. McCorquodale explained that real learning starts with experience, and that it is important to transform information in a way that encourages and invites others into an experience. She encouraged the audience to embrace creative tension, because it creates energy for change and growth and it is then that a transformation can take place.

Ministers must embrace a new vision of leadership and help those they serve by being designers and stewards of learning, and they do this by being lifelong learners themselves, continually deepening and broadening their personal vision, she said.

In her closing remarks Dr. McCorquodale encouraged those gathered, emphasizing that they are not alone in ministry and are supported by the Diocese of Bridgeport, the Leadership Institute and the different programs and initiatives it provides.

During the evening, those in attendance also heard updates on Safe Environments, communication policies and best practices, The Face of Prayer 2.0, new liturgical norms and ways that the Diocese of Bridgeport plans to encourage ongoing formation for all.

Ministry leaders were able to gather information about these programs, ask any questions and meet and discuss with other ministry leaders.

(For information on upcoming Leadership Institute summits and other programs, visit www.formation-reimagined.org)
By PAT HENNESSY

“Leadership training is key,” says Father Gustavo Falla, episcopal vicar for Hispanics. “We need trained lay leaders who will take more ownership of their faith.”

Father Falla, the pastor of St. Mary and St. Benedict/Nuestra Señora de Montserrat parishes in Stamford, is heading the V Encuentro in this diocese. This Fifth Encuentro has been a four-year process, from its preliminary planning and development through the formation of parish and diocesan teams. With the encouragement of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, parish delegates met for a diocesan Encuentro this past February at St. Mary Parish in Stamford, and 59 delegates attended the Regional Encuentro in Hartford on March 10. This diocese is part of Region I, which encompasses all New England.

In late September, ten delegates from this diocese will attend the National V Encuentro conference in Texas.

The first National Encuentro was held in 1972. The Spanish word translates as “Encounter,” a chance for people from all over the United States to explore their similarities, differences and challenges. “It was an opportunity for the Spanish-speaking community to gather and share their experience in the Hispanic Church,” explains Father Falla. “After exchanging information, they came to the evaluation that they were not doing too well.”

In the aftermath of that first national meeting, and aware that other minority groups in the Church began to explore similar experiences, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops opened the Office for Multicultural Affairs, with a division for Hispanic Ministry. The most recent national meeting, in 2006, focused on pastoral outreach to youth.

The main goal of the V Encuentro is to discover how the Church in the United States can better respond to the Hispanic presence, and to strengthen the ways in which Spanish-speaking Catholics respond to the call to become missionary disciples serving the entire Church.

To help with both aspects of that challenge, the Regional Encuentro in March gathered demographic, social and religious statistics for each participating diocese. Father Falla helped with the report for the Diocese of Bridgeport, which held some surprising results.

The overwhelming majority of Spanish-speaking residents in Fairfield County were either born here or have become U.S. citizens. They are, by and large, working-class families with a stable income. More than half are fluent in English, with the elderly having the greatest problem with both the language. As with any population, the spread includes wealthy families and those who are struggling; sadly, ten percent of children in Hispanic families live below the poverty level.

The report shows an area of concern for the life of faith in this diocese. Only 47 percent of Hispanics in Fairfield County consider themselves Catholics. This comes at a time when the Spanish-speaking population is experiencing strong growth, while the number of English-speaking families is decreasing. About one out of every five Catholics in the Diocese of Bridgeport is Hispanic. There are 18 parishes with an organized Hispanic ministry, and 18 Spanish-speaking priests are active in the diocese.

That is approximately one priest for every 5,000 Hispanic Catholics. The phrase “not doing too well” is appropriate.

In this context Pope Francis’ words on Missionary Discipleship come in high relief. “All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized.”

The V Encuentro is designed to achieve this goal. The national meeting will suggest recommendations stemming from the parish and diocesan Encuentros and include tools to help the delegates identify the most important needs, and it hopes to provide resources and support at every level in the Church.

“Leadership training is key,” says Father Gustavo Falla. “So far, it tells us that we need to build properly trained and empowered lay with a sense of leadership and service to the community.”

He notes that this aim matches exactly the findings of the Fourth Diocesan Synod, which also reported the need for informed lay leaders. One of the fruits of the synod has been the diocesan Leadership Institute. In the future, Father Falla hopes that some of the programs the institute is developing will be available in Spanish.

“We have to work with one another. Spanish-speaking people bring so much to the expression of our faith: public professions like those on Good Friday, an intense pro-life experience, and strong family values. Building on this base of faith, we need people trained in youth ministry, in assistance to the elderly and most of all—in outreach to those Catholics on the periphery.”

No matter what the language, and no matter what strengths and needs any given group brings to the Church, lay leadership is key to a strong and growing faith in the Diocese of Bridgeport and throughout the country. Pope Francis’ words sum up what the V Encuentro and the Fourth Diocesan Synod, are all about.

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This is an opportunity to see what is really going on with our people,” says Father Falla. “So far, it tells us that we need to build properly trained and empowered lay people with a sense of leadership and service to the community.”
Bishop named delegate to Vatican Synod on youth

WASHINGTON—Pope Francis has ratified the members elected by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to represent the United States at the upcoming XV Ordinary General Assembly: Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment. The Synod will take place October 3-28.

The delegates are:

• Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
• Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, Vice President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
• Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth
• Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Diocese of Bridgeport, member of the USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth
• Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron, Archbishop of Los Angeles, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis

The XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops has been convened by the Holy Father, Pope Francis, along with the Vatican Synod Office. In preparation for this Synod, the USCCB and other episcopal conferences, as well as ecclesial movements, associations, and experts in the field, were consulted throughout 2017 on the topic of “young people, the faith, and vocational discernment.” In addition, the Vatican collected responses from an online questionnaire aimed at youth and young adults conducted last year. In March 2018, over 300 young adult delegates gathered in Rome, where Pope Francis convened a pre-synod gathering to listen directly to the voice of young people from around the world. The gathering produced a Final Pre-Synodal document.

The Working Document (Instrumentum Laboris) for the October Synod was released in late June 2018 and includes a summary of all the Synod consultations to date. It describes the purpose of the 2018 Synod of Bishops as an opportunity for the Church “to accompany all young people, without exception, towards the joy of love,” realizing that “taking care of young people is not an optional task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission in history.”

Cardinal Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R., of Newark, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, and Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., of Philadelphia, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, welcomed the recent release of the Synod Working Document, saying: “After a lively discussion with our brother bishops at the Spring 2018 General Assembly on the topic of the Synod, we are happy to receive this Instrumentum Laboris, and look forward to exploring how it sheds light on the pastoral challenges of the United States. The 2018 Synod will powerfully renew the Catholic Church’s engagement with youth and young adults, and provide a deeper understanding of vocational discernment.”

The official Vatican website for the Synod, which is inclusive of the Pre-Synod gathering, is www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en.html.

The official USCCB webpage for the Synod is www.usccb.org/synod-2018.
Priest Retirements

‘This is what I was meant to be’

By PAT HENNESSY

“Pastors retire—priests don’t,” Father Richard Gennaro Cipolla said in his final sermon as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Norwalk. “I shall do in the future what priests are called to do: to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to minister to people.”

Father Cipolla, 76, officially retired as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Norwalk on June 30. He had been pastor there since 2007 and as parochial vicar since 2005, serving over a decade at the parish. Ordained by Bishop Walter W. Curtis in St. Augustine Cathedral on January 28, 1984, Father Cipolla, a former Episcopal clergyman, was the first married priest ordained for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Growing up in Rhode Island, he attended Classical High School, a public magnet school in the City of Providence, and earned a master’s degree in chemical engineering and a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from the University of Rhode Island.

He had been baptized a Methodist but was confirmed in the Episcopal Church. When he responded to God’s call, he studied at Yale Divinity School and received a D.Phil. in sacramental theology from Oxford University.

He received his Episcopal ordination in 1971 in Rhode Island, and had been married for 14 years when he requested permission from Pope John Paul II to become a Roman Catholic priest. His wife Cathie and their two young children were on hand for his priestly ordination in St. Augustine’s. Father Cipolla’s first assign-

ment was to St. Ann Parish in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. He also served at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan and St. Mary Parish, Stamford. Supporting his family, he also taught chemistry, physics and calculus at Fairfield Prep and chemistry and calculus at Fairfield University.

When he became chaplain for the Sisters of the Convent of St. Birgitta in Darien, he taught Latin at Brunswick School, a college preparatory school in Greenwich, becoming chair of the Classics department.

When requests for the return of a traditional Latin Mass became frequent, Bishop Edward M. Egan tapped Father Cipolla to fulfill that need. With the encouragement of Father Richard Futie, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Stamford, he started celebrating a traditional Latin Mass there. “That’s been my guiding force ever since,” he says. “This is what I was meant to be as a priest.”

The traditional Mass, “the Mass of the Ages,” is, he says, “the heart and soul of St. Mary’s in Norwalk. ‘Its spirit infuses the whole parish and its beauty spills over to all Masses celebrated here, whether in English or in Spanish,’” Father Cipolla says.

In his final sermon, Father Cipolla preached on the beauty of friendship. “I have been so blessed by one of his heroes, St. Therese, the Little Flower, ‘My greatest work is ahead of me.”
Parish News

Prayer and fun at Vacation Bible School

By MICHELLE P. ONOFRIO

With summer in full swing in the diocese, many parishes have created activities that combine summer fun with the opportunity for children to discover and grow in their faith. Vacation Bible Schools mix summer camp and faith in a fun, interactive and enjoyable experience that engages young people in understanding the Catholic faith.

The Bible Schools are also a way for pre-teens, teens and adults to get involved in their parish communities through volunteering.

St. Mary Parish in Bethel just wrapped up this year’s Bible School, and it was “fabulous,” according to Mary Ferri, Director of Religious Education. Sixty children, ranging from the ages of 3 to 10, participated in the camp, where they opened each day in prayer, viewed video skit performances, made crafts, sang and danced to music, played games and listened to Bible stories, all relating to the camp’s theme: “Son Rock.”

The focus of this theme was salvation, with emphasis on their ability to turn to Jesus whenever they need.

Another popular Bible School theme this year is “Shipwrecked.” The children imagine they are “on a deserted island” for the week, but to “have no fear because Jesus always saves,” says Patricia Nettleton, Director of Religious Education (DRE) at St. Mark Parish in Stratford. To showcase this theme, the camp will feature a raft with a tattered sail that will be patched with pieces of paper bearing descriptions of “God-sightings.” Throughout the week, children will be invited to “look for Jesus everywhere,” says Nettleton, “in kindness, in nature, then remember what they saw and write it down.”

By the end of the week, the sail will be repaired by the presence of God in the lives of the children. St. Mark’s has not held a Bible School for six years, as their facilities have recently undergone structural repairs. Nettleton is very much enthusiastic about and looking forward to this year’s camp. Laura Robertson of St. Mark’s has had three of her children participate in Bible School in the past. This year, they will be helping as volunteers. As a parent, she believes the camp is “definitely worthwhile.” They usually sell out and have 100 children in attendance. “For me, the best part is seeing campers excited to come back as helpers and be role models to the younger campers,” she says.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Ridgefield is also employing the “Shipwrecked” theme in their Bible School. “I hope the children realize that Jesus is there for them,” said camp director Ellen Adamski.

She is also enthusiastic about children developing friendships through fellowship within the parish. She says their Bible School is unique in that it is open to middle school students and is a wonderful opportunity for them to grow in their faith, too.

Parents of campers also attest to this. Mary Ann Paladino of St. Elizabeth’s has had children attend and volunteer with Bible School for many years (her family has been involved since her oldest, who is now in college, was in kindergarten). She says the Bible School is “a wonderful community that is enjoyable and welcoming for the children. It’s a week of joy and growing in the faith where the kids learn about Jesus and have fun while doing so.”

St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk recently concluded their summer Bible School (the theme was also “Shipwrecked”), as well as St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown (whose theme was “Parade Around the Our Father”).

At St. Jude Parish in Monroe, 67 students and teen teachers participated in the Vacation Bible School. Each morning began with prayer offered by their pastor, Father Henry Hoffman or their newly-ordained priest, Father Jim Bates, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sister Melanie Hannigan, OP, was the Scripture storyteller. The children then did Bible lessons from material of the day. “The program largely centered on a water theme, i.e. Moses in the River; John the Baptist, baptism, etc...” said Karin Tierney. “Our crafts and games reinforced the Scripture of the day. Each grade learned a song from our program, ‘Splash Canyon,’ which we presented in our closing ceremony.”

In keeping with our theme, one of the highlights of the week was the waterslide, which kids and staff “absolutely loved,” said Tierney. (Check the Diocese of Bridgeport website to find a Bible School taking place near you.)
BRIDGEPORT—More than 300 faithful from St. Mary’s Parish in Bridgeport and points beyond turned out for the recent one-day retreat to Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto in Litchfield. Amanecer y Atardecer con Cristo was a one-day pilgrimage that took the parishioners to the Grotto located just below the historic Litchfield center green.

“It was a unique experience that allowed us to unify with nature in prayer,” says Fr. Rolando Torres, St. Mary’s Pastor.

“Originally we only expected about 100 parishioners and we thought that many were not going to answer, because of summertime and families being on vacation, but how wrong we were,” says Fr. Torres.

Fr. Torres said the idea for a retreat in a natural setting first arose during his time as vicar in St. Mary’s in Greenwich. During the five years he worked with the Hispanic community there, they gathered in Bruce Park and it was a total success, he recalls.

In 2018, after having been the Pastor of St. Mary’s in Bridgeport for three years, he decided to try again and to have this experience with his community but on another level.

“God led us to this big and beautiful place, so we arrived at the Grotto for a very special day of prayer and celebration guided by the Fathers of the Montford Missionaries.”

Fr. Torres said the retreat drew parishioners from all different parts of the Diocese: Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford, and even from New York and Hartford.

Despite the heat and humidity, the pilgrims felt blessed with a beautiful day—and plenty of shade on the Grotto ground. The day, that began at 8 am and ended at 6 pm with the Holy Eucharist, “was just amazing,” Fr. Torres says.

“Needless to say, God was with us at every moment. We are grateful for all those who shared their time, talent, and treasure—from the people who helped with breakfast and lunch, to those who cooperated with the rosary, cleaning and even the music,” said Fr. Torres.

“It was a total blessing. The day was beautiful and we were able to share the word of God, eat together, pray together, sing together and bless the Lord together, as brother and sisters, praising Him in every creation,” he says.
Diocesan News

**Diocesan youth take ‘SHU Journey’ to deepen faith**

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

On June 26, the second day of SHU Journey 2018, high school students are gathered in a Sacred Heart University classroom to discuss what it means to be servant leaders.

With notebooks and pens ready, they are attentive and ready to engage. Dr. June-Ann Greeley told students, “We are called to be leaders; we are called to be servers.”

They discuss how service and leadership are integral parts of the spiritual journey. Students also discussed Christ’s perfect love and what one can learn from that. Drawing examples from St. John Paul II, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and St. Francis of Assisi, students discussed how, especially as Catholics, we are called to be servant leaders in our everyday lives.

“I think good leaders are servants. You should be leading by example, as Jesus washed the feet of the apostles,” a student explained. “If we are giving of ourselves, if we are acting like Jesus, that is how we are showing perfect love,” another student added.

Faith, learning, identity and community are all encompassed in the six-day residential summer experience that is Sacred Heart University Journey. Six college student leaders from Sacred Heart University serve as mentors to twenty-four high school students from around the diocese as they dive deeper into their faith education.

**Melkite Patriarch visits his flock**

By PAT HENNESSY

“How great are your works, O Lord!”

With chant and incense, prayers and Psalms, the people of St. Ann Melkite Greek Catholic Parish in Danbury welcomed the head of their church, Patriarch Joseph Asbi, to an Order of Great Vespers to celebrate the Feast of St. Ann.

“Patriarch Joseph has come to meet his people here, to encourage us and to strengthen the bonds between us,” said Father Michael Skrocki, St. Ann’s pastor.

Patriarch Joseph, Patriarch of Antioch and head of Melkite Greek Catholics worldwide, visited St. Ann’s on July 13 and led the Vesper Service that evening. He had been installed as Patriarch of Antioch in 2017; this was his first visit to parishes in the United States.

At this point, a little clarification is in order. The majority of Catholics in the United States are Roman (Latin rite) Catholics. But the universal church has about 14 rites. “St. Ann’s is an Eastern Catholic Church in union with Rome,” explains Father Skrocki.

“Melkites follow the Byzantine Rite and have a rich history and tradition expressed in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and other celebrations and sacraments. We are a parish family of diverse backgrounds although our historical roots are in the Middle East.”

Their foundation goes all the way back to the earliest days of Antioch, Patriarch Joseph is St. Peter’s direct successor. “His visit reminds us that we are all brothers and sisters in faith,” said Father Skrocki.

Patriarch Joseph told the congregation at St. Ann’s, “You are in the heart and mind of the Mother Church.”

In keeping with their heritage, the Vespers Service was chanted and sung in both Greek and English, and included the beautiful Psalm 116: “Praise the Lord, all you nations, exalt him, all you peoples.”

Although Patriarch Joseph was born in Damascus, Syria, he is a naturalized American citizen. His mother and many of his family live in California. He hoped to visit them when his pastoral trip reached the west coast of the U.S.

“Our faithful are spread throughout the United States,” noted Bishop Nicholas J. Samra, bishop of the Eparchy (diocese) of Newton, which has its chancery in Massachusetts but includes the entire U.S.

“Our roots are in the Near East, but our richness is that we are not limited to one area. We are universal. Patriarch Joseph’s visit gives him the chance to meet with his people and pray with them, to keep the connection strong.”

Following Vespers, Patriarch Joseph spoke to the congregation about the difficult conditions in the Near East. “Our Mother Church has suffered,” he said. “Reach out to them, so that we will be one heart.”

LEARNING TO BE SERVANT LEADERS—Twenty-four teens throughout the diocese took the “SHU Journey” this summer, a six-day residential experience to explore their faith and enjoy fellowship at Sacred Heart University. The journey integrates faith, leadership and fun for young people.

By EliZABETH clyoNS

“SHU Journey is a great opportunity to work with high school students and a way to integrate both faith, leadership and the fun of a typical summer camp,” says Anthony, a junior at Sacred Heart University and SHU Journey mentor, whose involvement in campus ministry inspired him to apply to the program.

Sierra O’Keefe, a recent graduate from Notre Dame Catholic High School and alumna of SHU Journey, said, “I was fortunate enough to attend Sacred Heart Journey two years in a row. SHU Journey not only taught us about our faith, but allowed us to express our faith, whether it be through the service we did or the classroom discussion we had. It helped me make more friends in Christ and gave us the leadership skills necessary to show Christ to others. It was so much fun and I would encourage all who have the opportunity to participate.”

The Lilly Endowment Summer Theological Institute for High School Youth, focuses on viewing God and the world through the Catholic intellectual tradition and how this applies to their lives. The Lilly Endowment provides grants to Catholic and Christian colleges of other denominations to run similar institutes around the country.

The goals of the program are to educate students in faith and help them relate what they learn to their lives and the greater world, and to foster the ability for them to become leaders in their faith.

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**FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC**

July/August 2018
Youth Ministry

**Fan the Fire Youth Rally coming soon**

**By PRISCILLA MAHAR**

After a summer of camps, conferences, and an abundance of pizza provided by your local youth minister, one might wonder how much better a summer in the Diocese of Bridgeport could get for a Fairfield County teen. The answer is to close out a busy summer with a day encompassing all the ways we are called to imitate Christ—Fan the Fire Youth Rally.

On Saturday, August 11, from 9:30 am to 10 pm, St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown will be hosting hundreds of teens for Fan the Fire. This year’s theme for the youth rally is “Be Courageous,” emphasizing the Lord’s call for all of us to live radically and follow him. According to St. Rose youth minister Rodd Blessey, it is an event not to miss. “The 2018 Fan the Fire CT is going to be one of the best ever,” stated Blessey. “We have an outstanding lineup of speakers and musicians including Chris Padgett and a comedy/music act Nun and Nunner.”

Fan the Fire is a day for teens to reconnect with the Lord. During the rally, participants will get the opportunity to listen to insightful talks based around living out the faith as a high school student, and take part in praise and worship, Mass, and Adoration.

Many teens attending the rally are frequent goers of parish youth groups, as well as other Catholic events held throughout the summer. For them, Fan the Fire will act as a reminder to keep pursuing the Lord, even once they’re back at school.

For some, Fan the Fire may be the only time during the year when they are able to experience God in such a communal way. Being surrounded by peers who are visibly living out the faith is extremely important for young people in the Church. It serves as a reminder that they are not alone in this journey to heaven and that there are others like them who are striving for holiness.

“Our goal for this event is to allow teens to come together from all over the area to have fun while exploring their faith, develop their relationship with God and explore how their Catholic faith fits into their everyday lives,” said Blessey explaining why so many leaders come out to serve the teens of the diocese for this event.

Many of those at St. Rose of Lima as well as throughout the diocese have felt the call to serve this great event. “I am so excited about this event returning to St. Rose this summer,” Blessey said. “We have updated the schedule to allow for more priests to celebrate Mass with their teens in the morning, and musicians will include our St. Rose music ministry led by Kevin Donovan and Katie Keogler.”

Knights of Columbus, security ministry and Walking with Purpose will also be providing their services to help throughout the day. Teens can also look forward to a service opportunity provided by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), where they will take part in packing 10,000 meals for those in need.

“Fan the Fire will be held at St. Rose of Lima, 46 Church Hill Rd., Newtown. Cost is $45 and students from grades 8-12 are welcome to attend. You can register online at fanthefirerally.com. For more information, contact Jessica Nayden: jnayden@diobpt.org or 203.416.1454.”
Humanae Vitae

Reexamining a Prophetic Encyclical at the Basilica!

By JOE PISANI

Fifty years after Blessed Pope Paul VI issued what one historian has called the most reviled and misunderstood Catholic document in modern history, a group of experts gathered to reexamine the encyclical Humanae Vitae in light of the social upheaval that has occurred since the sexual revolution.

The symposium, “Making Room for God’s Love: Humanae Vitae at 50,” was held at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford, and featured talks by leading Catholic thinkers, along with a presentation by a panel of medical experts.

“Fifty years later, we have a great opportunity to discuss this encyclical and what it means for us today,” said Father Andrew Vill, the organizer of the event. Pope Paul VI’s seventh and last encyclical, issued July 25, 1968, upheld the Church’s teaching against artificial birth control, reaffirmed the sanctity of life and marital love, and emphasized the importance of responsible parenthood. The encyclical incited an immediate controversy among theologians, the laity and the clergy.

George Weigel, columnist and author of best-selling biographies of St. John Paul II and Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, told the gathering of more than 200 men and women that “The encyclical landed at the worst possible moment in 20th century history.” The sexual revolution had begun, and represented “a new kind of Galileo crisis for the Church, which demanded a response that had to be fresh and imaginative,” he said.

Weigel talked about the role of John Paul II in drafting Humanae Vitae and developing the “theology of the body,” which has influenced Catholic thought in recent decades. “It restores a sense of sacramentality to the body, which is not a machine, but an expression of who we are,” he said. “The body makes love, and emphasizes the importance of marital love and human dignity, especially of women.”

The controversy over the encyclical intensified because Paul VI accepted the minority view of a commission studying artificial contraception, which included a contribution from John Paul II, then Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Krakow. Archbishop Wojtyla had examined a draft of the encyclical and was critical of the document that had been prepared for Paul VI because it was a compilation of previous papal statements, Weigel said.

Archbishop Wojtyla recognized that one of the most urgent questions of our age involved love and the family and that the encyclical had to emphasize the importance of marital love and not just procreation and that it should stress “family planning is the means most congruent with human dignity, especially of women.”

Fundamental to John Paul II’s theology was the belief that “Our love is a truly human love when it is a gift of myself to another ... and not the use of another, which is the type of exploitation that characterizes the modern world’s view of sexual relations.

Weigel told the audience, “We need to say on this 50th anniversary of Humanae Vitae that we are the ones who take this seriously....We need to ask ‘how do I live a sexual love that conforms to my dignity as a human person?’”

A panel of medical experts was moderated by Angela Marchetti, a Creighton natural family planning practitioner. They discussed the adverse effects of hormonal birth control, and the benefits of natural family planning and natural procreative technology to monitor women’s health.

There is a growing appreciation for the lessons Humanae Vitae offers ... and what many believe were prophetic warnings that have come true since the sexual revolution erupted in the 1960s.

Mary Eberstadt, essayist, author of several books about religious freedom and faith, talked about what she called the “prophetic nature of Humanae Vitae.”

Eberstadt, author of Adam and Eve After the Pill: Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution, said that while the encyclical is the most revered in the modern era, “It is the most explanatory document of our time.” Increased use of contraception, contrary to the thinking 50 years ago, has led to increased abortion even though the prevailing view back then had been “reliable birth control would prevent unwanted pregnancy.”

There was also a seismic shift in male attitudes in the post-pill era, she said. Because of the toxicity of the sexual revolution, “pregnancy has become a woman’s responsibility alone.”

Mary Hallan Fioreito, an attorney who specializes in human life issues and is the Cardinal Francis George Visiting Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, says there is a “General lack of understanding among Catholics about what Humanae Vitae says and means” and that the encyclical has been surrounded by “myths and misconceptions.”

The prevailing attitude when the FDA approved oral contraception in 1960 was that “it would free women and the planet would be better off because fewer people would be polluting it.” At the same time, opponents of abortion were told they should support contraception because it would make abortion unnecessary.

“However, the outcome was different,” Fioreito said. Instead, hormonal birth control had adverse side effects, there is sexual objectification, gender inequality and record low birth rates. In addition, abortion for purposes of sex selection has become commonplace, causing a serious imbalance between the number of men and women in countries like China.

Participants for the symposium were selected after Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni suggested reaching out to Weigel, who was a former classmate of his. In his introduction, Weigel praised Msgr. DiGiovanni as “one of the great priests of his generation.”

COLUMNSIST AND AUTHOR—George Weigel, best-selling biographer of St. John Paul II and Senior Fellow of the Ethnic and Public Policy Center, was one of the main speakers at the recent Humanae Vitae Symposium held at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford. More than 200 attended the event to reexamine the prophetic encyclical.
Vocations

From ‘Rock Dreams’ to priestly calling

By JOE PISANI

Trevor Kelly thought his destiny was to be a rock star. His mother, his father, his grandparents, his aunts, his uncles and his cousins, said he was meant to be a priest. They were right. He was wrong.

Trevor, who teaches theology at St. Joseph High School and played in the band Eyes to See at Sacred Heart University, is entering the Jesuit novitiate in Syracuse this August and leaving behind his aspirations of rock ‘n’ roll fame.

His former bandmate Bill Haug, who is director of marketing at SHU’s west campus, said, “Playing music with Trevor over the years has been a pleasure. There’s no one else in the world that I have that kind of musical chemistry with. I’ll never forget the first time we played together. It was instant. We earned our chops together in our college band, playing gigs anywhere and everywhere. Most importantly, we grew as musicians, brothers and as people.”

Most of Trevor’s life seemed to point toward a career in music and the priesthood, from the time he became an altar server in the second grade through his years at Xavier High School in Middletown and Sacred Heart University, where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Elder Law/TITLE 19/MEDICAID-Planning, Veteran’s Benefits - “Aid & Attendance”, Estates/Probate/Real Estate, and philosophy and a minor in Religious Studies, and mentors in the Theology and Philosophy departments, and he studied in Ireland for two weeks with associate professor June-Ann Greely.

Trevor graduated with a double major in religious studies and philosophy and a minor in music. At Sacred Heart, he also sang in the liturgical and concert choir, Four Heart Harmony and a chamber ensemble.

As fate—or Providence—would have it, Trevor saw him again for the first time in 20 years when he was recently concelebrating Mass at the Church of the Assumption in Ansonia, where Trevor was singing.

As Father Tom tells the story, “I admired the young man who was singing, and I said to him, ‘I don’t know how much they’re paying you, but if you come to my church, I’ll pay you more.’”

Trevor realized immediately this was the priest who had such a tremendous influence on him as a boy—the man who during his children’s liturgy had a teddy bear dressed up as a priest that told Gospel stories and the man whose example inspired Trevor to enter the Society of Jesus.

“I was very honored when he told me his story,” Father Tom said. “We both teared up and hugged, and he took a selfie with me.”

Despite his early interest in the priesthood, Trevor spent 20 years focused on another path.

“I felt very strongly that I was meant to be a dad and a musician, so I couldn’t be a priest, and I began to shut the door on the priesthood,” he recalled. Since he was 16, he has worked in the Catholic Church in various ministries, including cantor, youth minister and catechist. He has also performed in many bands, singing groups and choirs. His first band as a teenager was Virgo Down, an alternative rock group in which he sang and played keyboard. His current praise and worship ensemble, Joseph and the Saints, performs at Assumption in Ansonia.

Throughout his life, Trevor has had a love of music, which he got from his parents, Peter and Lisa, who encouraged their children to sing together as a family. However, when Trevor told them his dream was to be a rock star, they suggested other options. “They did everything to talk me out of a career in rock music,” he recalled. “They said I wouldn’t make money and that I needed to find work that would pay better, so I continued to play but made a course correction when I went off to college.”

His love of the Catholic Church, the liturgy and the sacraments, along with the example of his teachers at Xavier pointed him toward religious studies. Sacred Heart University had everything he was looking for.

“The moment I stepped on campus, I knew I was somewhere special,” he said. “I was enchanted by the campus, and I enrolled there with the intention of being a religion teacher at a Catholic high school.”

He found friends, educators and mentors in the Theology and Religious Studies, and Philosophy departments, and he studied in Ireland for two weeks with associate professor June-Ann Greely.

Trevor graduated with a double major in religious studies and philosophy and a minor in music. At Sacred Heart, he also sang in the liturgical and concert choir, Four Heart Harmony and a chamber ensemble.

COntinueD ON PAge 20
EDITORIAL

Fan the Fire

When you think of the many good things going on in the diocese this summer, it doesn’t get much better than the annual “Fan the Fire” Youth Rally set for August 11, at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown. In its 13th season, “Fan the Fire” is a day of inspiration, fun, service and faith for teens.

Each year hundreds of young people throughout the diocese spend a day in prayer and adoration, listening to great speakers, receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation and participating in Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano.

The youth rally inspires and changes lives. Young people experience the company of others, while growing vibrantly in the faith.

Special thanks go to youth minister and host Rodd Blessey who created “Fan the Fire” and has been its guiding spirit, and to his team including youth group coordinator Jenna Donovan, and musicians Kevin Donovan and Katie Keoggler.

“Empowering youth” was one of the main goals of Synod 2014. “The youth are not our future, they are our present,” Bishop Caggiano has often said. Events such as “Fan the Fire” and many other retreats and formation activities—from Vacation Bible School to the “Summer Splash” for Young Adults—happening in the diocese this summer are re-engaging youth in the Church and creating hope.

Encuentro

This issue features a look at the findings of a self-study report occasioned by the Fifth Encuentro process for Spanish-speaking Catholics now underway in the diocese and across the nation. It paints a remarkable portrait of a growing, vibrant and faithful community with a deep spiritual witness.

The report, led by Fr. Gustavo Falla, Pastor of St. Mary and St. Benedict/Nuestra Senora de Montserrat parish in Stamford and Episcopal Vicar for Hispanics in the diocese, gathered demographic, social and religious statistics about Spanish-speaking Catholics in preparation for the National Encuentro set for September in Grapevine, Texas. Among its findings: about one in every five Catholics in the diocese is Spanish-speaking, and the overwhelming majority of residents were either born here or have become U.S. citizens. More than half are fluent in English.

While there is much good news, much more work needs to be done to respond to the needs of Spanish-speaking Catholics and to encourage lay leadership. At present, 18 parishes have organized Hispanic ministries led by 18 Spanish-speaking priests. However, there is only one priest for every 5000 Spanish-speaking Catholics in the diocese. While there are many affluent families, ten percent of the children of Hispanic families live below the poverty level. Some families have left the Church for other denominations.

“Spanish-speaking people bring so much to the expression of our faith,” said Fr. Falla, “Building on this base of faith, we need people trained in youth ministry, in assistance to the elderly, and most of all in outreach to those Catholics on the periphery.”

Rest & Prayer

A summer reflection by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano originally printed on Facebook

“The gift of rest is important to our life for at least two important reasons. First, sufficient, quality rest is essential to the proper stewardship of the gifts of our physical and mental health. Proper sleep, time for recreation and opportunities to "unwind" are essential to mitigate the effects of stress and fatigue. While we often forget that good health is one of the greatest gifts that God has given us, we can equally forget that it is our responsibility, to the best of our ability, to care for this great gift. Rest is essential in the stewardship of good health.

Periods of rest are also very important in the proper development of our spiritual lives. For example, when we pray, how often have we experienced distractions because our minds are running ahead of our ability to quiet them down? How many times have we fallen asleep while praying because we are physically tired? Have we ever become cross or angry with our family and friends, for no apparent reason except that we were “irritable” (often caused because we are tired or distracted)? A healthy prayer life demands that we take time to rest and rejuvenate ourselves so that we can spend quality time with the Lord in prayer and service of His people. Rest also allows us to take a step back from our ordinary life and see the world anew, with a fresh and rested set of eyes.

Summer is the time when we have the opportunity to take some time away and rest. Let us use this time well. Our spiritual, physical and mental health depend upon it.”
Graduation and the (first) Job Search

A Woman’s Voice
BY DEBRA TOMASELLI

Debra Tomaseelli writes from Altamonte Springs, Florida. She can be reached at dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com

It’s easy to knock on every single door.
I recently pushed me toward employment. Although I wanted office work, I think I need to hear anyone!

My complaint landed on deaf ears.
I’ll be waiting for you,” she said firmly. “Be sure to knock on every single door.”

My recent graduation pushed me toward employment. Although I wanted office work, I dreaded the job search. This was before Internet days. You found jobs through classifieds, knocking on doors, completing applications and face-to-face interviews.

I cringed at the thought, bolstered by endless excuses: There weren’t any good jobs in the classifieds. I didn’t own a car yet. I didn’t have work experience. The knee heals I’ll make sure to

It’s an old injury that flares up once in a while and cripples me. It’s my beautiful wife and my inno-

“Do you have time to take a test?”
“Sure,” I said.

I breezed through the quiz. Moments later she announced a manager would like to interview me. I agreed, making myself comfortable.

By the way,” I said. “What kind of an office is this?”
“Insurance,” she replied.

Aetna Insurance offered me a job that day and a career that lasted a lifetime.
I bought my first car while working for Aetna, moved to Florida with Kemper Insurance, then joined an insurance agency. When I married and had children, I left full-time work to create an independent, flexible schedule. I used my insurance skills to train employees, create continuing education programs and alleviate work overflows.

We've been around and taking the sickbed heat when it would be so much easier to up sticks and walk away must be among the heaviest crosses to bear. Love endures all things. Love does not seek its own interest. It is not quick-tempered. Love does not easily get angry, does not keep a record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

We call our family members “loved ones,” but the truth is we aren’t always that loveable. The daily grind of home and hearth is not without friction. When you’re in a bad place, the ones you love best usually get it the worst. Who wakes up and thinks, “I wonder how I can make this house happier?”

My knee goes out periodic-

W e call our family members “loved ones,” but the truth is we aren’t always that loveable.

The daily grind of home and hearth is not without friction. When you’re in a bad place, the ones you love best usually get it the worst. Who wakes up and thinks, “I wonder how I can make this house happier today?”

My knee goes out periodically. It’s an old injury that flares up once in a while and cripples me. Probably it dates back 30 years to the time I whiffed on a soccer ball and tore something important.

The episodes don’t last long, but while they’re ongoing I get moody. Hobbles around like an invalid turns me into a muttering crumbum. I get snippy with people who don’t deserve it—namely my beautiful wife and my innocent children.

“Who put these bowls on the bottom shelf?” I bark like a mad dog. “Don’t you know how to load a dishwasher? The kids are working for Aetna, moved to Florida with Kemper Insurance, then joined an insurance agency. When I married and had children, I left full-time work to create an independent, flexible schedule. I used my insurance skills to train employees, create continuing education programs and alleviate work overflows.

We've been around and taking the sickbed heat when it would be so much easier to up sticks and walk away must be among the heaviest crosses to bear. Love endures all things. Love does not seek its own interest. It is not quick-tempered. Love does not easily get angry, does not keep a record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

We call our family members “loved ones,” but the truth is we aren’t always that loveable. The daily grind of home and hearth is not without friction. When you’re in a bad place, the ones you love best usually get it the worst. Who wakes up and thinks, “I wonder how I can make this house happier today?”

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

We're all said silly things while in the grips of a high fever or under the influence of strong medicine. My grandmother once went into the hospital for a minor procedure requiring a general anesthesia. When she came out of it she groggily asked, “Boy or girl?”

Honest mistake. She was a mother of seven.

It’s not uncommon for suddenly uninhibited sick people to lash out at their caregivers. The mean, naked, shivering truth rears up in extremis. Absorbing a barb under such trying circumstances requires deep reserves of humility and compassion. Love endures all things.

My friend is afraid that his frustration will tip over into despair. His wife feels it, too. They both feel they are failing as parents. They fear the constant stress will permanently scar their other children.

Please pray for that family, and for all who find it within themselves to love the seemingly unloveable. May their holiness rub off on the rest of us. Love never fails.
Stamford News

Talking about Mother Teresa at Stamford High

By FRANK DEROSA

About five years ago, Randy Stone, a Stamford High School teacher, sat spellbound in his car as the radio broadcast the gripping story of a young Manhattan doctor suddenly summoned to Calcutta in 1989 to save the life of the revered Mother Teresa. Unable to break the persistent and possible viral hemorrhagic fever of the saintly missionary to the poor, her Indian doctors observed her getting weaker, her condition seriously deteriorating. With justification, they feared they would lose her.

Meanwhile, back in New York, Dr. George V. Lombardi was sought out by a woman with close ties to Mother Teresa who believed that the physician, an infectious disease specialist, whom she had never met, could help. Stunned by an unexpected invitation to employ his medical skills on such an esteemed person, the next day the 32-year-old doctor found himself propelled by a series of dazzling events, orchestrated by the woman, Jan Petrie, onto the Concorde on the first leg of a mission to India. Events can unfold at breakneck speed when a future saint is the subject. Dr. Lombardi hadn’t even possessed a valid passport. It had expired. But as if by magic, that was expeditiously resolved.

Stone, a veteran and respected English and speech teacher, listened intently to the radio program he had stumbled upon, as Dr. Lombardi revealed his tale. "I was blown away by the story," said Stone, recalling his reaction the day he heard the broadcast. "It was incredible." When Dr. Lombardi arrived in Calcutta, he became aware of the tension and worry among the people as the beloved nun appeared to be inching closer to death. There were candlelight prayer vigils. He said the drumbeat of a death watch had begun. He also carried with him the somber words the Indian Consul General in New York had spoken to him before he left, "The eyes of the world are upon you."

On arriving at the small hospital in Calcutta, he consulted with Mother Teresa’s doctors. Courteous and elegant, they had a deep and abiding concern for their patient, he said.

Dr. Lombardi began his examination, collecting blood cultures, smears and stains and eagerly sending them to the lab for analysis. Like a student looking anxiously for the posting of grades that guarantee graduation, he awaited the results that would explain the cause for the infection and send him back home to his family.

For five days he waited. Then, a report: septic shock with a bacterial origin. His conclusion: a dormant pacemaker needed to be inserted. The drumbeat of a death watch had been silenced. The fever broke. The drama didn’t end, however, as he performed the delicate procedure. Anxiously, he prepared to do so. Despite his inexperience in performing the delicate procedure, he managed to release the pacemaker. But the drama didn’t end. The wire attached to the pacemaker was lodged in her right ventricle. Handled improperly, the wire could insert a hole that would lead to a quick death from bleeding.

Dr. Lombardi made a decision: "I prayed to Mother Teresa for her life," he said. "I just loved the story," said Stone, a former actor and TV reporter. As a teacher, he wanted his Stamford High students to hear the unusual tale and to observe Dr. Lombardi’s interesting and creative way of telling it.

So Stone began to incorporate into his speech and honors English courses the YouTube video of the doctor’s talk, “The Moth: Mission to India.” To date, some 500 students have watched and studied it. (The Moth is a group dedicated to the art and craft of storytelling.)

A chance first-time meeting at a literary event gave Stone the opportunity to invite Dr. Lombardi to speak to students in two of his classes. He accepted, and in early May, he drove up from Manhattan to visit the school.

“He’s modest, humble, a regular guy,” Stone said. “His humanity comes through.”

The students had a glimpse of it when Dr. Lombardi recalled the first time when he stood at her bedside on arriving at the Calcutta hospital.

Lying on what could have been her deathbed, she implicitly declared her affection for her adopted country and its people, when, not knowing what the future held, she said to him, “I will never leave India. Do not disagree with my Indian doctors.”

“It was a touching, emotional moment for me,” Dr. Lombardi said. “She was incredibly courageous.”

Catholic radio is coming…

At the dawn of the new millennium, St. John Paul II called the Church to “take up her evangelizing mission with fresh enthusiasm” and “open wide the doors for Christ!”

Veritas Catholic Network is the newest EWTN Radio affiliate answering the Holy Father’s call for a New Evangelization, bringing the joy of the Gospel and the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church to listeners over the radio.

In 1996, Mother Angelica offered to provide Catholic programming for any Catholic who owned or operated a radio station. EWTN Radio affiliates quickly began popping up around the country; Michigan, Nevada, and Florida were among the first areas to broadcast 24 hours a day of faithful Catholic programming.

Today, there are almost 400 affiliate stations in the US run by 90 entities. They are broadcasting faithful, entertaining radio programming 24 hours a day. Catholic radio has had remarkable effects in society and particularly in Catholic communities—conversions to the faith, deeper understanding of Catholic teaching among the faithful, strengthening Catholic families, support for Catholic schools and parishes as well as for Catholic business owners who provide underwriting to these stations.

A survey of 1100 listeners conducted a few years ago by an EWTN Radio network asked “How has Catholic radio impacted your life?” A strong 66 percent said Catholic radio helped them teach their children, 58 percent increased giving their time and talent, and 51 percent increased their...
**McGivney Center**

A legacy of community service

By JOE PISANI

Twenty years ago, Julio Martinez and his four siblings lived on the East Side of Bridgeport in a neighborhood where drug dealers, prostitutes and gangs prowled the streets. Julio never knew his father, and his mother struggled to raise her children ... and protect them.

“My mom wouldn’t let us roam the streets,” he recalled. “She made sure we stayed within two blocks.”

Across from their apartment was the McGivney Community Center on the campus of St. Charles Borromeo Church.

“The McGivney Center, where he eventually worked as a counselor and basketball coach. He always tried to be a role model for young boys because he knew what it was like growing up in a single-parent family,” he said.

When the parish learned about his family, it enrolled them in the program and provided help for their mother, who had become seriously ill.

When she died two years later, her children were separated, and Julio, then nine years old, went to live with a parish family before being placed in foster care.

Despite the challenges life presented Julio, he found hope at the McGivney Center, where he eventually worked as a counselor and basketball coach. He always tried to be a role model for young boys because he knew what it was like growing up in a single-parent family.

He was accepted at Villanova, Fairfield University and University of Connecticut, and with help from people at McGivney, he received full financial aid to Fairfield U.

“I was the first person in my family to graduate high school and the first in my family to graduate college, but I could never have done it without Stacy Ray, the executive director, and Cynthia White, the president of the board, at the time,” he said.

Today Julio is vice president of the McGivney board and has a successful career in finance. He and his wife Brandy are the parents of a young daughter.

After two decades of involvement with the McGivney Center, Julio says, “I just wish I could pull people to the center to see the kids during the summer program, and they’d understand the impact we’re making every day. I have seen the success stories. I have seen some kids who had it ten times worse than me. And I have seen the changes McGivney has made.”

His is one success story among many the center has had since it was founded 26 years ago. Its mission is the same now as then: “To provide stimulating and enriching programs that foster academic success and self-esteem for our youth.”

Program Director Joe DeSabella said what began as a summer camp program in 1992 for 50 kids now serves more than 400 youth annually; 100 are enrolled in the after-school program, which draws students from 20 elementary schools and offers homework assistance, enrichment and recreation.

The summer program serves 90 students, from K-to-8, providing athletic, academic and enrichment activities to stem the “summer learning loss” so that students can return to school well-prepared in September.

“When I first came to this area, there were gangs, drugs and prostitution,” Joe said. “I’ve seen it improve in the last 10 years. Kids need this kind of environment, where they’re supported and their academic performance improves.”

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**McGivney brothers**

While it is often assumed the McGivney Center at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bridgeport was named after Father Michael McGivney, whose cause for sainthood is being considered by the Vatican, it is actually named after his two brothers, Patrick and John, who played a decisive role in the history of St. Charles Parish.

The new church was formed from the northern section of St. Mary Parish on the East Side of Bridgeport in 1902 to serve Irish immigrants. Father William Lynch, who was the first pastor, laid the cornerstone for a school in 1903 and began construction on the lower church in 1907.

In 1913, he was succeeded by Msgr. Patrick McGivney, who was responsible for construction of the convent in 1921, and the upper church, which was completed in 1925 at a cost of $400,000. The impressive Tudor Gothic structure seated 1,400 and had stained glass windows from Bavaria, statues carved from Italian marble, main and side altars, and reproductions of paintings in St. Peter’s Basilica.

For 25 years, Msgr. Patrick McGivney also served as chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, and during World War I, he visited the battlefields and hospitals in France.

When he died in 1928, his younger brother John succeeded him as pastor and supreme chaplain. Msgr. John McGivney, who served until 1939, was responsible for building the rectory and parish hall, which would eventually become the McGivney Center.

The McGivney brothers were credited with making St. Charles one of the finest parishes in New England, with five buildings occupying an entire city block. Today the parish, led by Father Frank Gomez, is one of the most vibrant in the diocese and serves immigrants from various ethnic communities, including Latinos from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, Haitians, Brazilians, Laotians and Vietnamese.
Young Adults

Calling All Catholic Young Adults (CYAs)!

Join us for the 3rd Annual “Summer Splash” on Sunday, August 5, 2-5 pm.
Hosted by the Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury (CYAGB), we’ll gather at St. Francis of Assisi parish in Weston, CT, for Mass celebrated by Fr. John Connaughton of St. Thomas More parish, Darien, followed by a party with music, games, and fun food. A suggested $10 donation per person helps bring Catholic young adults together for fellowship and laughs.

In the past, “Summer Splash” has been held at Our Lady Star of the Sea parish in Stamford with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrating Mass, followed by a party on the beach. This year, CYAGB organizers have offered to host this unique summertime event featuring fun and meaningful activities at this year’s “Summer Splash” on August 5 in Weston. Sign-up/RSVP at signup-genius.com/go/60b044cabae-2aaf85-summer today! Bring your friends and enjoy this year’s “Summer Splash” planned just for you.

Veritas Catholic Network will broadcast locally 24 hours a day, as well as have a presence on mobile devices and social networking. They plan to be completely enmeshed in the Catholic and secular community and will have a presence all over the diocese—from parish fairs and Catholic school plays, to the Norwalk Oyster Festival and Ridgefield’s Gone Country. They are excited about plans to involve the young people of the diocese in their work—by conducting and broadcasting from Catholic school events and contests, by hosting FOCUS mission-aries, and by highlighting local students on the air and on their website.

As part of their service to the diocese and the community, they will offer a broadcast voice for a community calendar, supportive businesses, local announcements and priests’ birthdays. In their plans, they will eventually offer time for the bishop and local priests to be on the air, produce and broadcast a local morning drive-time show, and have a student-run program with youth on the air, doing production and marketing the show.

(To contact Veritas Catholic Network, email info@veritascatholic.com. For updates, go to www.veritascatholic.com.)
BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Education is pleased to announce the appointment of Austin Ryan as assistant director of development.

“We are delighted to welcome Austin, who complements the great work being done by Foundations in Education in support of our schools,” said Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine. “Austin brings his unique talents to our effort with promises to help Foundations advance in our mission in support of students, faculty and of course the Diocese of Bridgeport School Superintendent, Dr. Steven Cheeseman’s vision to create best-in-class schools for all our children.”

As assistant director of development for Foundations in Education, Ryan is tasked with managing a comprehensive development program including annual giving, major gifts, grants, events, donor cultivation and stewardship.

He pursued his Catholic education at Fairfield Prep and Marquette University and began his professional career in 2010 at Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas, TX. Ryan returned to his alma mater, Fairfield Prep in the summer of 2014 as director of alumni relations and was promoted to gifts officer in the winter of 2016.

Ryan and his fiancée Melissa will celebrate their wedding this August.

The mission of Foundations in Education is to strengthen and transform Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport by supporting innovation in academic and extra-curricular programs, fostering opportunities for the professional development of school leaders in innovation and leadership and providing scholarship assistance to families in need.

(For more information about Foundations in Education, visit www.foundationsineducation.org.)

Foundations in Education Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine commented, “I have had the very good fortune to know Leslie professionally for many years and am delighted she has elected to share her time, talent and wisdom with us. Her commitment to Catholic education is without limit and her knowledge of our mission extensive, making her an amazing ambassador for Foundations in Education.”

“During my formative years, I had 12 years of quality Catholic education,” remarked Leslie. “In turn, transforming lives through the same educational system is very dear to me. Joining the FIE Board of Trustees is a grand way for me to share my experience.”

Lopez named to Board of Trustees

Foundations in Education is pleased to announce the appointment of a new member to its Board of Trustees. Joining the board, effective July 1, 2018, is Leslie Lopez, JD CFRE.

Leslie Lopez currently serves as Director of Development for the School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province in Wilton, CT. Leslie is a lawyer (JD) and a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), earning her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law and Bachelor of Science from the College of New Rochelle. Leslie currently resides in Greenwich, CT.

Over the past 20 years, as a nonprofit executive, Leslie advised a wide range of organizations—religious, educational, healthcare, international, the arts and community organizations—where she enhanced the culture of engagement in order to grow support and meaningful relationships.

Prior to nonprofit management, Leslie provided legal consultation in the areas of international business, contracts, real estate and business development.

Foundations in Education Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine commented, “I have had the very good fortune to know Leslie professionally for many years and am delighted she has elected to share her time, talent and wisdom with us. Her commitment to Catholic education is without limit and her knowledge of our mission extensive, making her an amazing ambassador for Foundations in Education.”

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Searching for deeper meaning and life purpose?
For a more personal relationship with God?
Satisfy your spiritual hunger at Fairfield University’s Center for Ignatian Spirituality.

Based upon the life experiences and teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the six-month Ignatian Spirituality for Today journey focuses on practical methods of prayer and discernment. The program includes:

• Lecture and Prayer Experiences
Four Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.: October 6 & 20, and November 3 & 17, 2018.

• Faith Sharing Groups
Six Sessions in January and February 2019: Dates and times to be determined.

• Week of Directed Prayer
March 16 to 23, 2019: Group prayer on Saturday mornings, and daily one-on-one weekday meetings with an experienced spiritual director. Flexibility allows retreatants to schedule around work and family obligations.

Fairfield University
For more information or to register, contact Colleen Gilbertson at 203-254-4000, ext 5468.
A donation of $150 for the entire program is requested. Space is limited to 24 participants.
Feeding the Hungry
Serving at the Master’s Table

By JOE PISANI

When Jim Fedak Jr. was 9 years old, he knew what he wanted to be. Most boys imagine themselves as firemen, rock stars and professional athletes. Jim, however, wanted to feed the hungry, his mother Marie says. And today he does. It was an ambition that inspired him from an early age and continued through his teen years, when he volunteered at soup kitchens and food pantries in Florida until eventually, his dream became a reality.

With a lot of work and the dedicated assistance of his wife Janette, his family and friends, Jim developed the Master’s Table Community Meals, a volunteer organization that offers food, hope and assistance to the less fortunate.

Jim says. “I worked in human services for 15 years and volunteered in soup kitchens when I lived in Florida for 11 years. When I came to Connecticut, I realized we could do something here. You could call it a God moment.”

The idea had been in his mind for years, and he believes God put it in his heart. He discussed it with Janette and later with Mark Riccio of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, whom he met at a Bluefish baseball game in Bridgeport. They held an organizational meeting with several others, including parishioners from St. Joseph and St. Lawrence parishes in Shelton ... and then put their ideas into action.

Mark, who is a senior accountant at Bigelow Tea, quotes St. Vincent de Paul: “Those who help the poor will have sunshine in their life and never have to worry on their judgment day.”

“It is very easy to get wrapped up in your own life,” he says. “The volunteers at Master’s Table could be doing a million other things and choose to give up their Sundays to help put on this meal. It’s one thing to go to church 55 minutes on Sunday, and it’s another thing to live it.”

Mark works in the kitchen at the community meals, which are held the second and fourth Sunday of the month at the Church of the Assumption in Ansonia. He assists professional chef Vinny LaRocca of St. Lawrence in preparing up to 150 meals for the guests at the community gathering, in addition to the homebound and a women’s shelter.

When the group started, they approximated expanding on St. Vincent’s idea about Master’s Table. Jim says their first meal attracted only 23 guests, which grew to 28 and eventually 100 or more, depending upon the time of year.

“Master’s Table refers to the Last Supper,” he says. “Christ welcomed anybody at his table—saints, sinners, prostitutes, the poor—and we follow the same philosophy.”

“We work really hard to give our guests a good experience,” Jim says. “It’s not only the food but also the socialization. For some people, this is the only interaction they have. People make friends and start talking. The social component is very important. We provide a good home-cooked meal and get raves from our guests.”

Jim says that attitude is fundamental to the mission of Master’s Table: “To feed all who are hungry and do so willingly and with compassion and understanding.” He believes God led him to the fulfillment of his childhood dream.

“It is something how God works,” he says. “He puts the idea in your mind and your heart ... and all you have to do is act on it.”

(For more information, visit www.masterstablemeals.org or call 203.732.7792.)
Trinity Catholic High School

Classical program set for Cardinal Kung Academy

STAMFORD—Beginning in September, students at Cardinal Kung Academy in Stamford will be reading Aquinas and Augustine and studying Latin, logic and rhetoric, along with traditional subjects such as science and mathematics, as part of a curriculum commonly referred to as a “classical education.”

Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools for the Bridgeport Diocese, announced the formation of Cardinal Kung Academy as a division of Trinity Catholic High School this past April. “This new program will open up Catholic education to families who have not traditionally chosen to attend our schools,” Dr. Cheeseman said. “Our goal is to make Catholic education as accessible to as many people as possible, and I think this is another step in that direction.”

Cardinal Kung Academy will offer students the unparalleled excellence of a classical education that will prepare them to think critically, to express themselves eloquently, and to bring Truth, Goodness and Beauty to a world desperately in need of it,” concluded Jennifer Docherty, a literature teacher at Cardinal Kung Academy.

Consistent with the diocesan philosophy of making Catholic education available to any child and knowledge to advance the mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport.”

Leslie Lopez joins the existing Foundations in Education Board of Trustees: Most Reverend Frank Caggiano, David Cappiello, George Coleman, R. Bradford Evans, Michael Hanlon, Lawrence Kudlow, Andrea Maldon, Daniel McCarthy, Anne McCrory, Tom McNerney, Julia McNamara, Joseph Purcell, Bernard Reidy, Gerard Robilotti, Robert Scinto, Michael Shea, Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ and Holly Doherty-Lemoine, CFRE.

Foundations in Education started as Bishop Frank J. Caggiano’s vision to promote the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to advance Catholic education in Fairfield County. The primary purpose of this non-profit initiative is to support Catholic education by providing tuition assistance to students and grants for faculty and administrators that promote classroom innovation and professional leadership development and other education-based programs.

(For more information about Foundations in Education, please visit www.foundationsineducation.org)
Catholic Charities

First Annual Charities Cup a huge success

By ELLEN McGINNESS

In describing the international sport of rugby, Pope Francis has said, “It makes us think of life, because our whole life we are heading for a goal. We need to run together, pass the ball from hand to hand, until we get to it. Playing rugby is hard; it is no walk in the park. I think that makes it useful to toughen the spirit, the will.”

Taking inspiration from the Holy Father’s words, rugby teams from around Fairfield County came together on June 23 at Fairfield University’s Rafferty Stadium for the first annual “Charity Cup,” a fundraiser in support of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC). Organized by Fairfield Yankee rugby player and St. Joseph High School theology teacher Michael Pappa, in tandem with CCFC board member Pete Maloney, the day brought in over $3,500 for the agency.

“The first ever Charity Cup was a win all around. Local players volunteered their time playing in a healthy competition to support a great cause,” Pappa summarized.

Over one hundred rugby players, from middle schoolers to seasoned veterans, competed in multiple matches throughout the day. For the youth teams, Fairfield Rugby Club defeated Aspetuck Rugby in three consecutive matches. On the adult side, the Fairfield Yankees, Danbury Madhatters, Greenwich Rugby, Fairfield Lady Yankees, and Danbury Women’s Rugby battled it out in a round-robin format.

With support from agile college players and hometown-hero-turned-professional player Myles McQuone, the Fairfield Yankees men’s team overcame their competition with relentless fast-paced play. In the women’s division, the experience, skill and depth of the Danbury Women’s Rugby team led them to victory, despite a valiant effort by their opponents, the Lady Yankees.

Dr. Mark Nemec, president of Fairfield University, and a hard-nosed rugby player, participated in the touch rugby matches and presented trophies to the winning teams. Rugby United New York, the metropolitan area’s first professional rugby team, was a sponsor of the event and had representatives on site in support of the day. Additional sponsors and supporters included Grace O’Malley’s, Yankee Social, Deli and Grille and American Medical Response.

Before pursuing his master’s, he took a year off and taught music and band at St. Augustine’s School in Hartford and continued to be involved in campus ministry.

“Once I was asked point blank ‘“ If you’re going to be priest, you have to enter the priesthood, and I said, ‘Sure, many times,’” he said. “When things were going badly or I had family issues or dark times, I would tell God, ‘If you can get me and my family or friend through this, I’ll do whatever you want. I was thinking I would give the priesthood a sincere shot, but I always pulled back my offer and thought, ‘Next time, God, next time.’”

In 2016, he began teaching at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull and although things were going well, the question of whether he should enter the priesthood persisted.

He reached out to several priests he knew, including Father Jeffrey Gubbiotti, who was pastor at Assumption.

“One of the priests told me I had over-romanticized the priesthood and that every one of the priests I knew was still an imperfect person, a sinner, and there was no version of me that was ever going to be good enough on my own accord,” Trevor recalled. “Jesus would work with me if I opened myself up to him, and He would more than make up for my many flaws.”

Trevor visited St. John Seminary in Boston to get a taste of the religious life and had a good experience but didn’t think parish life was for him. After discussing the possibility of joining a religious community, the Jesuits became a strong possibility. Their spirituality was similar to the Xaverian Brothers at his high school.

Trevor began doing things in his daily life that Jesuits have been doing for 500 years — praying the Divine Office with his students at St. Joseph’s, meditating on Scripture, conducting a daily examination of conscience and delving into Ignatian spirituality.

His interest in the Society of Jesus increased, and he had meetings with the Rev. Bret Stockdale, S.J., chaplain at Fairfield Prep, and the Rev. Mark Scalise, S.J., director of campus ministry at Fairfield University.

“I felt instantly at home with them,” Trevor said. “I felt a bond and kinship there. I left feeling completely and totally empowered, and I reached out to the vocation director at the Provincial Office in Maryland and had a two-hour interview over the phone.”

All the pieces seemed to fall into place, he said. He began spiritual direction at the Ignatian Spirituality Center at Fairfield University and reading about the Jesuit tradition. Last September, he sent the vocation director a letter and said he wanted to apply to the order.

The director called back and Trevor started to learn about the ways he could serve God in the Society of Jesus, including prison ministry, teaching, mission work and hospital ministry. In August, he will enter the Jesuit Novitate of St. Andrew Hall in Syracuse. After 20 years, Trevor believes he is finally where he was meant to be ... and that Jesus was patient with him as He led him along. His former bandmate, Bill Haug said, “I couldn’t be happier for him. Trevor has always been on a journey of growth, a search to become the best version of himself. We can all use someone like Trevor to inspire us and share his faith with us.”
George Bisacca: On- and off-the-court success

By DON HARRISON

“Compartmentalize” was the word George Bisacca employed most often when explaining how he was able to balance a dual career as an attorney and college basketball coach with family life.

The principal celebrant at his May 21st memorial service, the Father Charles Allen, SJ, spoke of Bisacca’s ability to “multitask,” a term not yet in vogue during the 10-year period (1958-68) in which he successfully maintained a law practice and coached at Fairfield University.

George R. Bisacca, affectionately known as the “Father of Fairfield Basketball” and for whom the court in Alumni Hall was dedicated in 2015, died just one month shy of his 90th birthday on May 8, following a brief illness. His beloved wife of more than 67 years, Mildred, passed away on December 14, 2016.

The mourners at his memorial service, conducted in the Egan Chapel on the Fairfield campus, ranged from the six Bisacca children and their spouses, 12 grandchildren and their significant others, and 10 great-grandchildren, to 11 of his former players.

KENT—Former Fairfield County Catholic photographer John Glover, 64, passed away suddenly of an apparent heart attack on Monday, July 9, in his home in Cornwall Bridge, CT.

Mr. Glover joined Fairfield County Catholic in 1998 as staff photographer at the invitation of Dr. Joseph McAleer, former executive editor and director of Communications for the diocese.

Born in Orange, N.J., on April 20, 1954, John R. Glover spent the early years of his life growing up in Weston, CT, where his late parents, John H. Glover III and Geraldine R. Glover had chosen to live and raise their family. He graduated from Weston High School in 1972, was an avid sailor and a collector of various works of art. He went to Union College, graduating with a degree in Economics and Physics in 1976.

After leaving Fairfield County Catholic, John travelled widely across the United States for French publisher Editions du Signe, photographing churches for commemorative diocesan publications, including a landmark book on St. Patrick’s Parish in Norwalk, among other titles. He moved to New York and on to the Vatican when Cardinal Egan received his red hat. Those present in St. Peter’s Square that bright February day will remember looking up at the top of the colonnade with pride and seeing John, in white t-shirt and shorts, pointing his lens at the crowd. He also represented the diocese on official press trips to Jordan and Israel.

John did not suffer fools gladly. Woe the person who was discourteous or overreaching. He would fearlessly argue with T.S.A. agents at the airport or demand an explanation why the I.R.S. was asking Woe the person who was discourteous or overreaching. He would fearlessly argue with T.S.A. agents at the airport or demand an explanation why the I.R.S. was asking perfect strangers on a wide variety of topics. He was a man of broad knowledge and strong opinions, always insisting—stubbornly, maddeningly—that he was right.

Funny thing is, he usually was.

John served as the official photographer of the Diocese of Bridgeport for 12 years. In that capacity, he visited every single parish, Catholic school, Catholic Charities location, and major event, often clad in his signature attire: white dress shirt, blue shorts, and brown mocassins (even in winter). Nuns in particular loved him.

John was not Catholic, but he was our Church’s best ambassador. You could not meet a man more respectful of the Mass. John took care to be discreet. He was unhappy when people were not paying attention or talking during Mass. John would gently advise a priest to put on his jacket or straighten his collar so as to make the best impression.

A favorite of then-Bishop Egan, John followed him to New York and on to the Vatican when Cardinal Egan received his red hat. Those present in St. Peter’s Square that bright February day will remember looking up at the top of the colonnade with pride and seeing John, in white t-shirt and shorts, pointing his lens at the crowd. He also represented the diocese on official press trips to Jordan and Israel.

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Well-intentioned but intense, John demanded a respect that most of us have given up expecting. He was unique, and how blessed we are for having basked in his very bright light.

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Informe resalta la necesidad de líderes laicos

POR PAT HENNESSY

“El entrenamiento de líderes es clave”, dice el padre Gustavo Falla, vicario episcopal para hispanos. “Necesitamos líderes laicos entrenados que se hagan más dueños de su fe”. El Padre Falla, párroco de las parroquias de Santa María y San Benito/Nuestra Señora de Montserrat en Stamford, encabeza el V Encuentro en esta diócesis. Este V Encuentro, desde su planificación y desarrollo preliminares, ha sido un proceso de cuatro años basado en la formación de equipos parroquiales y diocesanos. Con el aliento del Obispo Frank J. Caggiano, unos 75 delegados parroquiales se reunieron para un Encuentro Diocesano el pasado febrero en Sta. María en Stamford, y 50 delegados asistieron al Encuentro Regional en Hartford el 10 de marzo. Esta diócesis es parte de la Región I, que abarca la Nueva Inglaterra. A fines de septiembre, diez delegados asistirán a la conferencia Nacional del V Encuentro en Texas.

La palabra “Encuentro” se entiende como una oportunidad para que personas de todos los Estados Unidos exploten sus similitudes, diferencias y desafíos; el primer Encuentro Nacional se realizó en 1972. “Fue una oportunidad para que la comunidad de habla hispana se reúna y compartiera sus experiencias en la Iglesia estadounidense”, explica el Padre Falla. “Después de intercambiar información, llegaron a la conclusión de que las cosas no estaban funcionando muy bien”.

Después de esa primera reunión nacional, y conscientes de que otros grupos minoritarios en la iglesia expresaron una experiencia similar, la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos abrió la Oficina de Asuntos Multiculturales, con una división para el Ministerio Hispano. La reunión nacional más reciente, en 2006, se centró sobre el alcance pastoral a los jóvenes.

El objetivo principal del V Encuentro es descubrir cómo la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos puede responder mejor a la presencia hispana fortaleciendo las formas en que los católicos hispanohablantes responden al llamado a convertirse en discípulos misioneros que sirven a toda la Iglesia.

Para ayudar con los dos aspectos de este desafío, el Encuentro Regional de marzo reunió estadísticas demográficas, sociales y religiosas para cada diócesis participante. El Padre Falla ayudó con el informe para la Diócesis de Bridgeport, que mostró algunos resultados sorprendentes:

- La abrumadora mayoría de los residentes de habla hispana en el Condado de Fairfield nacen en los EE. UU. Son, en general, familias de clase trabajadora con un ingreso estable. Más de la mitad habla inglés con fluidez, siendo las personas mayores quienes tienen un mayor problema con el idioma. Al igual que con cualquier otra población, los números incluyen tanto a familias adineradas como a aquellas que están luchando; lamentablemente, el diez por ciento de los niños en familias hispanas viven por debajo del nivel de la pobreza.

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- Un informe muestra que la Iglesia es una oportunidad para ver qué está sucediendo realmente con nuestra gente”, dice el Padre Falla. “Hasta ahora, nos dice que tenemos que formar laicos capacitados con sentido de liderazgo y servicio a la comunidad”. El señor que este objetivo coincide exactamente con los hallazgos del Cuarto Sínodo Diocesano, que también habló de la necesidad de líderes laicos informados. Uno de los frutos del sínodo ha sido el Instituto Diocesano de Liderazgo. En el futuro, el Padre Falla espera que algunos de los programas que el instituto está desarrollando estén disponibles en español. “Tenemos que trabajar el uno con el otro. Las personas de habla hispana aportan mucho, públicamente, a la expresión de nuestra fe: procesiones del Viernes Santo, una intensa experiencia pro-vida y fuertes valores familiares. Sobre la base de esta vida de fe, necesitamos personas capacitadas en el ministerio juvenil, en asistencia a los ancianos y, sobre todo, en la difusión del Evangelio a los Católicos de la periferia”.

Sin importar cuál sea el idioma ni los aportes o necesidades de un grupo eclesial determinado, el liderazgo laico es clave para el incremento y fortaleza de la fe en la Diócesis de Bridgeport y, hecho, en todo el país. Las palabras del Papa Francisco resumen el propósito del V Encuentro y el Cuarto Sínodo Diocesano. “Cada cristiano tiene el desafío, aquí y ahora, de participar activamente en la evangelización... para salir y proclamar el amor salvífico de Dios”.
smelling rain, and the long, soft summer twilights. I am always moved by summer scenes in poems and novels and films. The heat of July for me is sweet and sad. One senses summer’s diminishing. Sadly one notices the long June evenings drawing in; daylight shrinks. The flood of summer light ebbs. Days that once stretched to 9 pm have had their hours cut back to 7:45. Sunrise now is three-quarters of an hour later than it was at summer’s turn. The day, as it say, is edging south; it has begun its slow journey back to the equator. The lilacs are past and the leaves hang heavy. The grass has a sixed looked, and the shade is darker than it was. The chorus of birdsong diminishes now. The time of ardent song is past. There are fewer songs of ecstasy, more parental alarms and scoldings. The birds no longer sing their territorial songs. How much of summer is over before it begins. Thoreau wrote in his journal, “How early in the year it begins to be late!”

The wish of childhood revives again, the longing to hold back the season, the wish to be back at the beginning when the road seemed like it would go on and on. I let each summer day slip away unwillingly. Summer’s stay is all too short; it is too beautiful to stay. Summer’s end always brings to me the loneliness of a summer lost. Indeed, it makes me think of all lost and lovely things. I’ve known a number of dying people who hoped and prayed for the gift of another summer. The withering away of this happy season may be a spiritual lesson of the season. The summer is like life—it is later than you think, the business can be over and done with before you fully begin. There is the tyranny of time. You cannot conquer time. I become angry with time for passing. I sigh for lost years, for those lost days never to be relived. “Time tires of everyone” (W.H. Auden, “Doomsday Song”). In his poem “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” Gerard Manley Hopkins compares the transitory nature of life with sand slipping inevitably through an hourglass. Life runs out of next times. It drums the certainty into one’s mind about the unique treasure of each moment. We accept time as long as it is given to us and use it as well as we can. Galatians 6:10: “Therefore, while we have time, let us do good to all people, especially to those of the household of the faith.”

Everything has an end. How small a part of time we share. But right now, summer is still with us. It is still the time of long golden days and soft blue nights. Let us not let them go unused. Let us exult in them, when it is a joy just to be alive. Blessings on your summer.

Yesterday it was a thousand small coins ringing in your pocket—your hand dipped in scooping three at a time, giving them away. Sometimes, you’d drop one in the luck grass, unaware it was lost. Today comes in a different disguise: … you measure it carefully, like a woman preparing to sew…. return any small change; cherish every moment under the leaden sky. (Cortney Davis, “Taking Care of Time”)

I love the sounds of summer: the hum of a fan, the slam of a screen door, the creak of a porch swing chair, the hiss of pop-top cans being pulled, ice-tingling in a tall glass, the lap of waves, gulls crying. The lawn mower seems the very voice of summer.

When I look back, so many of the good memories of my childhood are connected with summer which gave me sea and sand, ice cream trucks jingling through the neighborhood, backyard cookouts, picnics, remembered vacations. There were the times when nothing was more important than the choice of ice cream. I have a vivid memory of a time when I was eleven years old and it was a summer morning, and the day stretched ahead vast and shimmery, promising nothing but good. There is summer’s sweet needs are met. It’s a place where they feel comfortable and safe with a caring staff looking after them. We have a lot of good kids here.”

One of the “good kids” was Lehayla Cruz, who recently graduated from Mitchell College in New London and is doing an internship at McGivney.

“This place did a lot to provide opportunities for me when I was growing up,” she said. “It kept me on track and focused on my education.” Lehayla started the summer program at six years old and stayed until she was 13. After Kolbe Cathedral High School, she enrolled in Mitchell, where she earned a degree in sports management and health and fitness. Her dream is to open a recreational center in Bridgeport.

An Idea Becomes Reality

It all began almost 30 years ago, when two men from St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull went on retreat … and discussed how they could make their small part of the world a better place. Tony Forni was a retired GE executive, and Greg Salmini was president of J.P. Salmini Company in Milford. Greg listened as Tony told him about the food pantry at St. Charles Parish and about an idea he had to help youth on the East Side. “Tony had looked at the gym at St. Charles, and it was a mess,” Greg recalled. “He said, ‘Wouldn’t it be great to refurbish this building so kids could have a safe place to go?’”

When Tony had an idea, he pursued it with enthusiasm. He and Greg enlisted Stuart Schloss of Paint Products, and approached the pastor, Msgr. Joseph Potter, who gave them the green light. They got a grant from the state and they hired contractors. In less than a year, the renovations were complete and they named a director. “Tony was the moving force,” Greg recalled. “He was a marketing guy from GE and knew how to get things done. He never gave up. He even got Jack Welch and his wife to donate appliances.”

Msgr. Potter leased the St. Charles gym to the McGivney Center for one dollar a year. From the beginning, their strategy was simple: attract youth with sports and recreation programs and strengthen them academically. Tony would say, “The only way out of poverty is through education.” Appropriately, the center’s logo includes a basketball and a book. Forni died at 95 years old in 2015 and was honored posthumously by the other two founders at the 25th anniversary of the McGivney Center. To this day, Greg recalls what Tony told him as they drove home from the retreat: “It’s not just what you do on Sunday, but what you do the rest of the week that counts.”

Terry O’Connor, executive director of McGivney Community Center for the past six years, has seen the success of young men and women in college and professional sports, in business, politics and civic leadership, all of them inspired by the athletic, educational and social opportunities the center provides.

O’Connor, who will retire at the end of the year, is credited with significant changes to the McGivney Center, including refurbishing the gym, along with upgrading the kitchen, computer room, ‘chill spot’ and arts and crafts room. In addition, he has planned for several new learning programs. He says the McGivney Center is now, as it has been since its founding, committed to the community and loyal to its motto, “Kids at McGivney don’t come and go, they come and grow.”
Swimming Upstream

By Joe Pisani

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

I pray to many saints. Certainly Our Lady and my patron, St. Joseph. And I can’t forget St. Ann, although I often forget St. Joachim. Then, there are the virgin martyrs like Agnes and Agatha, whom I often think about when I have a personal ordeals and realize how small my suffering is compared to what they endured.

Of all the saints, one of my favorites is St. Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus. Perhaps because she was a complainer, and I can identify with complainers. Perhaps because she was a compulsive homemaker, and I can identify with compulsive homemakers since I’ve lived with them throughout my life. Or perhaps because she got stuck with all the work while everyone else was enjoying themselves. Does that sound familiar?

This is St. Luke’s account of what happened when Jesus and his disciples visited Martha’s home in Bethany.

“Martha was distracted by many tasks; so she came to him and asked, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.’”

Over the centuries, Scripture scholars have used the story to illuminate the difference between the active and contemplative life. I’ve often wondered if there was part of that exchange between Martha and Jesus that Luke left out, which might have gone something like this:

Martha: “Lord, tell my sister to get in here and help me.”

Jesus: “Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Martha: “Well, I guess no one’s going to be eating tonight.”

All of us have that same sense of violated fairness that provoked Martha to complain to Jesus. We’ve heard it since childhood, especially if we got stuck doing all the chores while our siblings were outside playing. As kids we’d typically complain, “It’s NOT fair!”

I’ve lost count of the times I’ve heard my wife’s voice bellowing from the kitchen, “NO ONE IS HELPING ME! YOU BETTER GET IN HERE NOW!” while my four daughters and I were preoccupied with computer games, the Internet, music, reading or chitchatting. And promptly, iPads were shut, books were closed, headphones were taken off and everyone snapped to attention.

Mary may have taken the better part, but Martha stands out in all her wonderful human imperfection in the Gospel. Like her, I’m usually “worried and distracted by many things.”

On another occasion when the chips were down, Martha got up and got out, leaving a house filled with mourners to run and meet Jesus on the road after her brother Lazarus died. She was fortunate enough to confront the Son of God with her plaintive plea, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!” which was followed by her ardent profession of faith: “Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

It’s so easy to relate to Martha’s humanity, and certainly her faith and love of Christ. We have devotional candles to St. Martha, whose name means “Lady of the house,” in our prayer room, and I never hesitate to call out to her for help because if she got up and went to Christ after her brother died, she’ll do the same for us and intercede before the Throne of God. Martha is the patron saint of cooks and servants, and her feast day is July 29. Even those of us who don’t know how to cook can identify with her because she was just like us—and yet she was privileged to serve the Son of God.

The last story about Martha in the Gospel occurs when Jesus stops in Bethany on his way to Jerusalem and his Passion. Mary anoints his feet with expensive perfume. And John simply notes, “Martha served.” How telling are those words?

In so many ways, Martha shared Our Lord’s commitment to service. In Mark’s Gospel, one statement captures the essence of Jesus’ mission when he says, “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Martha served.

(Joe Pisani can be reached at joe-pisani@yahoo.com.)

Column: Joe Pisani

A saint like the rest of us

The Blue Mass takes its name from the blue uniforms worn by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by Bishop William E. Lori, the Blue Mass was initiated by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founder of the Blue Mass.

Mary and Lazarus. Perhaps because she was a complainer, and I can identify with complainers. Perhaps because she was a compulsive homemaker, and I can identify with compulsive homemakers since I’ve lived with them throughout my life. Or perhaps because she got stuck with all the work while everyone else was enjoying themselves. Does that sound familiar?

This is St. Luke’s account of what happened when Jesus and his disciples visited Martha’s home in Bethany.

“Martha was distracted by many tasks; so she came to him and asked, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.’”

Over the centuries, Scripture scholars have used the story to illuminate the difference between the active and contemplative life. I’ve often wondered if there was part of that exchange between Martha and Jesus that Luke left out, which might have gone something like this:

Martha: “Lord, tell my sister to get in here and help me.”

Jesus: “Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Martha: “Well, I guess no one’s going to be eating tonight.”

All of us have that same sense of violated fairness that provoked Martha to complain to Jesus. We’ve heard it since childhood, especially if we got stuck doing all the chores while our siblings were outside playing. As kids we’d typically complain, “It’s NOT fair!”

I’ve lost count of the times I’ve heard my wife’s voice bellowing from the kitchen, “NO ONE IS HELPING ME! YOU BETTER GET IN HERE NOW!” while my four daughters and I were preoccupied with computer games, the Internet, music, reading or chitchatting. And promptly, iPads were shut, books were closed, headphones were taken off and everyone snapped to attention.

Mary may have taken the better part, but Martha stands out in all her wonderful human imperfection in the Gospel. Like her, I’m usually “worried and distracted by many things.”

On another occasion when the chips were down, Martha got up and got out, leaving a house filled with mourners to run and meet Jesus on the road after her brother Lazarus died. She was fortunate enough to confront the Son of God with her plaintive plea, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!” which was followed by her ardent profession of faith: “Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

It’s so easy to relate to Martha’s humanity, and certainly her faith and love of Christ. We have devotional candles to St. Martha, whose name means “Lady of the house,” in our prayer room, and I never hesitate to call out to her for help because if she got up and went to Christ after her brother died, she’ll do the same for us and intercede before the Throne of God. Martha is the patron saint of cooks and servants, and her feast day is July 29. Even those of us who don’t know how to cook can identify with her because she was just like us—and yet she was privileged to serve the Son of God.

The last story about Martha in the Gospel occurs when Jesus stops in Bethany on his way to Jerusalem and his Passion. Mary anoints his feet with expensive perfume. And John simply notes, “Martha served.” How telling are those words?

In so many ways, Martha shared Our Lord’s commitment to service. In Mark’s Gospel, one statement captures the essence of Jesus’ mission when he says, “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Martha served.

(Joe Pisani can be reached at joe-pisani@yahoo.com.)
**Bits and Pieces**

**MINISTRY** support group meets the second Sunday of every month (Sept. 9) at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton. For more info, call 203.929.8499.

**VETERAN’S BRICK:** To ensure installation, by Veterans Day 2018, 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.

**GOLFERS:** reserve your spot for the IHS Golf Outing to take place on Wed., Sept. 19, at Richter Park, Danbury. Includes 18 holes of golf, cart fee, continental breakfast, lunch, awards reception, dinner and silent auction. For reservations, go to www.immaculatehs.org/golf. For more info, contact Debbie Basile: 203.744.1510, ext. 159 or dbasile@myimmaculatehs.org.

**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.

**VENDOR APPLICATIONS** now being accepted for the Fall Festival at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield to be held Sat., Nov. 3. For an application, visit “Breaking News” at stmarguerite.org or call 203.775.5117, ext. 213.

**ENCOURAGE** apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same-sex attractions or gender ID confusion. Confidential meetings are held monthly. For more info, email EnCourageNorwalk@gmail.com.

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

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**YOUNG WOMEN’S RETREAT** “You are God’s Masterpiece” for women between the ages of 18-26 will be sponsored by Magnificat Women’s Ministry on Sat., August 4, at St. Joseph Parish, Danbury, from 9 am-3 pm. The day will include talks from local young women, small group discussion and the documentary film “Speaking to Sparrows.” Cost: $20; includes snacks and drinks. Bring your own bag lunch. For more info, contact Roxane Angotta at angotta@stglobal.net or 203.512.0299.

**ST. VINCENT’S SWIM** Across the Sound is sponsoring the 21st Annual Memorial Service for loved ones lost to cancer Sun., August 5, at 8:30 am at Captain’s Cove Seaport in Bridgeport. Registration begins at 8 am. No charge, and open to all who have lost a loved one to cancer. The service will include the reading of names of deceased loved ones submitted by participants, followed by the symbolic scattering of sunflowers, representing each person and the glory of life, onto Long Island Sound. For more info, contact Lucinda Ames: 475.210.5550 or lames@ascension.org.

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of Greater Danbury (18-35) will gather Tues., August 7, at 6:45 pm for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, followed by a social at a local eatery. Email 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.

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

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of Greater Danbury (18-35), will be road-tripping to the Palisades Mall, 1000 Palisades Center Dr., West Nyack, N.Y., on Sat., August 18. The carpool will meet at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, at 2 pm; return around 10 pm. Come join us for some fun at a five-story mall where we will go to Dave and Busters and other fun places. Email 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.

**BLOCK PARTY** at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford, on Sat., Sept. 8, starting at 5:30 pm will feature food, live music, children’s games and fun for all. Cost: $15; adults; $5 for children under 12 years old. For more info or to volunteer, contact Mike Morin: mikef.morin@gmail.com or 203.520.7319.

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