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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the recent scandalous events regarding the crimes of sexual abuse against minors have come to light in the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report and the earlier revelations regarding Archbishop McCarrick, I have been sick to my stomach. Words like horrifying, betrayal, and diabolical come to mind describing the evil that was perpetrated against children, who were robbed of their innocence, and often of their faith and future. The failure of some bishops to report this evil is equally stunning and deeply sinful.

I believe that the Church is facing a moment of crisis that demands honesty and repentance from the bishops and decisive action to ensure that these failures will never happen again. The credibility of the bishops has been tarnished in the eyes of many, including many of our faithful. For some, it has even provoked a personal crisis of confidence in the Church itself, leading some to consider leaving their parishes. This is a wound that has been inflicted upon the Church that will not heal easily.

I invite you to join me to accompany one another during this time of sadness and anger and to strengthen one another in our Catholic faith. The strengthening of faith requires that the bishops of the Church acknowledge past failings among their brother bishops and hold everyone guilty accountable for their failures and crimes, whomever they may be.

The betrayal we feel concerning the cover-up of abuse pales in comparison to the suffering endured by the victims of sexual abuse—our sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews, relatives and friends, who have been so deeply wounded and have struggled with the lifelong consequences of abuse. To those who suffered the evil of abuse, I wish to say that I am deeply sorry for the pain and suffering that you have endured. I am sorry for the times that you came forward and were not heard. I am sorry for the silence of those who could have stopped what you endured. I am sorry that you were betrayed at the hands of those who were to serve as your fathers in faith.

We stand with you and will continue to accompany you with our prayers and resources to find healing and peace. We must make this a defining moment for all those who have suffered, by doing everything humanly possible to root out the sin of sexual abuse from our Church.

Over the past few days, I have read intently many of the concrete proposals that bishops and lay leaders have put forward to address the past failures in leadership and to strengthen the measures already in place ensuring that our children, young people, and vulnerable adults are safe and can flourish in our midst. Some of the proposals are innovative and merit greater reflection. It is my hope and prayer that through honest dialogue and careful reflection, the Church’s clerical and lay leaders on every level can create a plan to bring purification and renewal to our Church.

Despite the raw emotions that we may be feeling during this difficult time, I would encourage us to resist the impulse to despair or dismiss the sacrificial work of so many good priests whom you have come to know in your life of faith. For our good priests are also suffering because of the sins of their brothers.

It is also important that we not lose sight of the tremendous protections now in place in our diocese and other dioceses across the country. For over fifteen years, our Safe Environments programs have been effective in preventing abuse, encouraging early reporting, and ensuring swift removal of perpetrators through the Diocesan Review Board. Contact information for our Safe Environments Office can be found on the diocesan website and in the back of the Church.

In our diocese, we have also established a Misconduct Review Board, composed principally of lay members, to review any allegations of adult misconduct on the part of clergy.

Perhaps we have never been so aware of our frailty. Yet, while this is a serious time of challenge and crisis in the Church, there is always hope. I don’t come to you with an easy solution to a complex evil, but I believe that if we move forward in the solidarity of faith, a spirit of transparency and commitment to absolute accountability, we will renew the Church.

My friends, I am praying for you and your families each day at Mass during this difficult time. Please pray for me and my brother priests as well.

May the great Mother of God, our protector and intercessor, accompany us as we move forward to purify and renew our Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport

(Visit page 8 for the Bishop’s action plan for our diocese.)
Bishop announces Clergy Mass of Reparation

BRIDGEPORT—In response to national priest sexual abuse, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead a Holy Hour with Rosary and a Clergy Mass of Reparation and Purification on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, Saturday September 15th, at the Cathedral of St. Augustine, 399 Washington Avenue in Bridgeport.

The day will begin at 9:30 am with a Holy Hour followed by Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano and diocesan priests at 10:30 am. The bishop has asked all priests throughout the diocese to attend, and the Mass is open to the public.

“During this time of trial, we must come together as a family of faith and beg the Lord for forgiveness and to offer reparation for the sins committed by priests, bishops and any member of the Church, especially the depraved sins against children and the vulnerable. It is also a time to ask God to heal those who have been wounded by sin, to turn our hearts away from anything that is evil and to renew our commitment to holiness,” said the bishop in a letter to priests.

The bishop said he hopes that the Mass is “the first tangible step towards renewing confidence and trust in the Church for many of our faithful. I invite all faithful to join me and accompany one another during this time of sadness and anger, and to strengthen one another in our Catholic faith.”

In this issue (see page 8) the bishop has issued the first in a series of letters that over the next few months will outline real, concrete administrative, spiritual and pastoral actions designed to achieve the highest level of transparency and accountability.

The letters will address the ongoing needs both of survivors of sexual abuse and the good priests who remain faithful to their vocation.

The bishop said that it is his sincere hope that these measures will help foster a spirit of reparation and conversion in the lives of all clerics and throughout the diocesan Church.

“Further recognizing that all of us in the community of the faithful will have unique healing needs in these difficult times, there will be additional spiritual initiatives,” he said. “With these measures we will begin to restore confidence in Church leadership on all levels and to bring healing and reconciliation to our Church.”

In his letter to priests, the bishop also instructed them to recite the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel at the end of each and every Mass celebrated in the diocese, beginning on the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows. The prayer will be said immediately before the recessional hymn is sung.

“Christ has conquered sin and death, but we are still in the midst of a spiritual battle. For that reason, I would like the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel,” said the bishop. “I believe that the Church is facing a moment of crisis that demands honesty and repentance from the bishops and decisive action to ensure that these failures will never happen again.”

He has asked pastors to celebrate a local Mass of Reparation in their parishes no later than October 31, 2018. In the coming weeks, the bishop will announce additional spiritual initiatives and administrative measures to address the sexual abuse scandal in a spirit of transparency and accountability. A complete list will be published on the diocesan website.

Bishop to confer Papal Honors

BRIDGEPORT—The Most Rev. Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport, will confer Pontifical Honors granted by His Holiness Pope Francis on twenty lay faithful of the diocese during a Vespers Prayer Service set for Saturday, September 29th at 4 pm in St. Augustine Cathedral, 399 Washington Avenue, Bridgeport.

“The Papal Honors are a recognition of these individuals and a celebration of the entire diocese. The recipients are role models and they are joined in their generosity by so many others throughout the diocese who give sacrificially in faith. Through these honors, the Holy Father recognizes the good work going on in the diocese. This is also an opportunity to celebrate all donors and those who serve the Church,” the bishop said.

Bishop Caggiano said that several months ago he personally wrote to the Holy See in order to request that Pope Francis bestow the honors on those “who have distinguished themselves by their faith, wise counsel, and generous support of the mission of the Church.”

Ten faithful will be inducted into the Order of Saint Gregory the Great, and ten will be inducted into the Order of Pope Saint Sylvester.

The Order of Saint Gregory was instituted on September 1, 1831 by Pope Gregory XVI in honor of his predecessor Pope Saint Gregory the Great. The honor is bestowed upon lay faithful in recognition of their personal service through their unusual labors and their excellent example set forth in their communities and their countries.

Instituted by Pope Pius X on October 31, 1841, the Order of Pope Saint Sylvester was founded to recognize those lay faithful who are actively involved in the life of the church, particularly as it is exemplified in the exercise of their professional duties.

Those to be inducted into the Order of Saint Gregory the Great are: Mr. Rocco Cingari; Mr. George Landegger; Mr. Frank Martire; Mrs. Marisa Martire; Mr. Thomas McNeney; Mrs. Paula McNeney; Mr. Denis Nayden; Mrs. Britta Nayden; Mr. Paul Queally; Mrs. Anne Marie O’Malley; Mr. Thomas O’Malley; Mrs. Mary Alice O’Malley; Mr. Joseph Roxe; Mrs. Maureen Roxe; Mr. Brian Young; Mrs. Anne Young.

Those to be inducted into the Order of Pope Saint Sylvester are: Mr. Lawrence Bossidy; Mrs. Nancy Bossidy; Mr. Salvatore Cingari, Jr.; Mrs. Catherine Cingari, Jr.; Mr. Thomas O’Malley; Mrs. Mary Alice O’Malley; Mr. Joseph Roxe; Mrs. Maureen Roxe; Mr. Brian Young; Mrs. Anne Young.

A reception will immediately follow the Vespers Prayer Service. The public is invited and all priests, deacons, religious, and lay faithful of the Diocese of Bridgeport are encouraged to attend.
Lifelong Faith Formation

The Face of Prayer 2.0 to launch

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

Emma Ryder, Coordinator of the Face of Prayer for the Diocese of Bridgeport shares some insight about this exciting initiative launching on September 8th.

What are you most excited about for this campaign?
We are creating an interactive video catechism based on the lives of our bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders across the country. This new approach to catechesis not only serves as a resource for personal use, but also for parents, teachers, catechists and youth ministers to utilize as they pass on the faith to the next generation.

What sparked your interest in becoming coordinator?
I grew up in the Diocese of Bridgeport, but spent about seven years in Boston going to school and working. I felt a deep desire to come back home and began looking for a job that would fit well with my passion for teaching and my faith, as well as a newly discovered love for working with technology and social media to enhance the mission and vision of an organization or project. The Face of Prayer filled these desires quite nicely, and I am very blessed that I get to serve in this ministry back at home in my diocese.

What are some of the goals of the initiative?
The goals of this initiative are to engage the faithful in three actions—Ask. Watch. Witness. Everyone has questions about their faith, the Church, or the adversity they face in the world we live in today, and we want to provide a platform for people to ask those questions and let them answered in a personal way. We also want people to witness to their faith and be “The Face of Prayer” if you will, to those around them by sharing the truth and having an active prayer life. Sharing Bishop Frank J. Caggiano’s weekly video series or the upcoming video catechism series on social media is a great way to share what the Church teaches and to learn more about the faith. Subscribing to the daily prayer intention is another way we can cultivate active prayer lives by praying every day.

How do you see this program growing/changing/spreading?
The Face of Prayer is not only a diocesan initiative; it’s nationwide. As we continue to collect questions and reach out to catechists, The Face of Prayer will continue to grow and expand based on the needs of those engaging with the site.

What can we expect from the Face of Prayer coming soon?
The Face of Prayer began in April 2017 on Divine Mercy Sunday as a text and selfie campaign to engage people in prayer and show, with Mary our Mother as the perfect model, how each of us can be the face of prayer to those around us. On September 8, 2018, the feast of the Nativity of Mary, we will be launching The Face of Prayer 2.0, which is the intentional shift to create a video catechism based on the questions of the youth. We will be launching a newly designed website that includes a video gallery of hundreds of questions that have been answered by bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders from around the country. It’s exciting to be taking this campaign beyond the diocese and creating a resource that can be used nationwide. Each video is about 2-3 minutes long and includes additional resources that are integrated into the videos, keeping the youth safely on one site at all times. These Q&A videos are a great resource for teachers, catechists, parents, and youth ministers to use in their ministries, as well as a way to personally learn more about the Church and faith.

If there is one thing that you want people to know about the Face of Prayer what would it be?
The Face of Prayer is for everyone! We are all called to be witnesses to the truth, and we can only do that if we continually ask questions, learn more about our faith and the Church, and cultivate a relationship with Christ. We are all invited to be the face of prayer to those around us! We invite you to join the movement today by texting a selfie or PRAY to 55778 or by visiting www.thefaceofprayer.com.

Anchor Byron Pitts

to speak for “Shepherds”

On Thursday evening, October 11th, Shepherds, a mentoring and scholarship non-profit based in Bridgeport, will celebrate 20 years of “changing students lives” with a gala at The Inn at Longshore in Westport. The evening will feature highly respected TV journalist and co-anchor of ABC News’ Nightline, Byron Pitts, speaking on his life experience growing up in inner city Baltimore. NBC 4 New York’s weatherman, Dave Price will be the emcee and two of the Shepherd’s most experienced and dedicated mentors, Tammy Taylor of Darien and Greg Dillon of North Haven, will receive the prestigious Founder’s Award. Byron Pitts has covered national news stories and in-depth features for ABC, reporting across the news division, including “Good Morning America,” “World News Tonight with David Muir,” “This Week” and “20/20.” He is a multiple Emmy award winning journalist and news veteran with over 20 years of experience and is known for his thoughtful storytelling, on-the-ground reporting and in-depth interviews. In addition, Pitts is the author of Step Out on Nothing: How Faith and Family Helped Me Conquer Life’s Challenges and Be the One: Six True Stories of Teens Overcoming Hardship with Hope.

Shepherds supports inner-city teens from the New Haven and Bridgeport areas where the graduation rates from public high schools are significantly below their suburban peers. Shepherds employs these students to build a foundation for their success by providing 4-year scholarships to a college preparatory education at Notre Dame West Haven and Kolbe Cathedral high schools, academic and life skill programs, and the positive role model and support of a committed Shepherds mentor. Results over 20 years have demonstrated that Shepherds students have a much higher likelihood of graduating from high school, pursuing higher education, breaking the cycle of poverty and becoming productive members of society. Two hundred sixty-five students who might otherwise have dropped out of high school have graduated and gone on to institutions of higher learning or to military or civil service roles.

Shepherds has been successful because of the loyal support and commitment of its many mentors and sponsors. This year’s recipients of the Shepherds’ Founder’s Award have mentored several students during their time with the organization. Tammy Taylor has been a mentor since 2002 and is a longstanding board member. She has served as chair of the Mentoring Committee overseeing all mentoring activities including recruitment, training and support.

Shepherds WELCOMES ANCHOR—Shepherds to host gala featuring highly respected TV journalist and co-anchor of ABC News’ Nightline, Byron Pitts, speaking on his life experience growing up in inner city Baltimore.

Mr. Dillon has mentored eight students through graduation from his alma mater, Notre Dame High School in West Haven. He will join Shepherds Board of Directors in recognition of his incredible support for the organization.

(Would you like to change a life? Visit www.shepherdsmentors.org or call 203.367.4273 to purchase tickets to experience and celebrate Shepherds’ success at the anniversary dinner or to learn more about Shepherds sponsor- ship and mentoring opportunities.)
Redemptoris Mater Seminary

Different paths lead men to Christ

By JOE PISANI

After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Marco Pacciana and his friends were caught up in the heady excitement that spread across Europe, inspired by the dream of universal freedom and peaceful coexistence. For them, a new era was dawning, but it didn’t necessarily involve Christ.

Like many young people in Europe, Marco had been raised Catholic in his hometown of Ginosa, Italy, but left the Church before his Confirmation.

“In those years, I fell into the cycle of sins typical of teenagers, even though God preserved me from many of them,” he recalls. He realizes now that God was always calling him even during his wayward years.

In 1992, he went on a vacation to Buffalo, NY, and visited relatives. While he was there, he began reading “Strength to Love” by Dr. Martin Luther King and “rediscovered the message of love for our enemies that Christ preached.” His understanding of the depth of Christ’s love led him to conclude He was much more than a great philosopher — He was the Son of God.

“After this experience, I went back to practicing my faith,” he says. Two years later at 19, he joined the Neocatechumenal Way, a 55-year-old worldwide community in the Church, dedicated to Christian formation and the New Evangelization. Marco’s catechist and friends started telling him he had a vocation to the priesthood.

“How is it possible I was the only one who didn’t see it?” he said. “The Lord didn’t have an easy job with me—I struggled.”

He went on a retreat, and the only thing he remembered after four days were the words “Young man, do not be afraid because this is not the story of your faithfulness to God, it is the story of God’s faithfulness to his promises.”

Marco said, “Lord, if this is you calling me, I will come.”

Soon afterward, he left his home, his mother and his handicapped brother for the seminary.

In 2011, after 11 years in the seminary, which included five years of missionary training in Israel and the Pacific islands, he was ordained. Today at 43, Father Marco Pacciana is the rector of Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Stamford and oversees the formation of eight young men who are discerning whether they have a calling to the priesthood.

Here are three of their stories.

David Klein played power forward on the Trumbull High School basketball team and was even being recruited by colleges. He was admired in high school and had everything going for him by the world’s standards.

“An arrogance was developing in me. I felt I got this on my own and could do it on my own,” he said. All that changed seven years ago on Good Friday, when he and his family members were pulling out of a church parking lot and another car crashed into them.

“Where I had been sitting, the car was completely destroyed,” he recalled. “It was a miracle I was alive.”

His pelvis was broken in three places and his lower back was fractured. He was in the hospital for three days and couldn’t walk for a month. He couldn’t play basketball for six months.

“In a spiritual sense, it was a big turning point,” he said. “When I was in the hospital bed, I asked, ‘God, why is this happening?’ I realized I wasn’t invincible, and from that moment I began a dialogue with God and began to pray and speak with him as a friend.”

He went to Fairfield University and studied history, like his father who is a history teacher. Both his parents belonged to the Neocatechumenal community at St. Raphael Church in Bridgeport and had raised their five children according to its teachings. After the accident, David became more involved in the Way.

“Things started to change in my senior year in 2015,” he said. “I went on retreat and was praying God would enlighten me to what my mission in life was. I had a feeling God was calling me for something, but I wasn’t sure what.”

Then, one night he woke with a tremendous peace and joy, and in that moment, he put his life in God’s hands. He missed his graduation from college because he went to the University of Maryland, where Kiko Arguello, a cofounder of the Way, was speaking about vocations.

That summer he did mission work in Utah and went from parish to parish, talking to people and spreading the Gospel. The experience led him to believe he might be called to do missionary work as a priest. He was one of the first seminarians at Redemptoris Mater in Stamford and is about to begin two years of “itinerancy” — doing mission work on the island nation of Kiribati (Gilbert Islands) in the center of the Pacific.

“I am extremely excited to get started and I see this whole experience as a gift from God and an incredible opportunity to announce the Gospel to the ends of the world,” he said.

Ricardo Batista Comim grew up on a small farm outside of São Paulo, Brazil. His family moved to the United States when he was 11 years old, and his father moved to the Catholic Church. He joined the Neocatechumenal Way, a 55-year-old worldwide community dedicated to Christian formation and the New Evangelization. Marco’s catechist and friends started telling him he had a vocation to the priesthood.

“In 2011, after 11 years in the seminary, which included five years of missionary training in India, he was ordained. Today at 35, Father Ricardo Batista Comim is the rector of Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Stamford and oversees the formation of eight young men who are discerning whether they have a calling to the priesthood.

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Catholic Charities
From Corporate America to Catholic Social Service

By JOE PISANI

When Al Barber was 15, he went to summer camp in the Catskills ... and saw his future. He was a girl named Gina Johnson, someone he would share his life, his faith and his family with. Five years later they were married.

That was 52 years, five children, and seven grandchildren ago. It was also a few career moves ago.

Was it serendipity? Was it luck? Al likes to think it was the workings of the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit who led him through a number of senior executive positions with GE, NBC, CNBC and other companies to where he is now ... the president of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, one of the largest private non-profit human services providers in Connecticut with 30 programs in 23 cities and towns. That offer food, housing, behavioral health, adoption, immigration and family support services to the needy and vulnerable of all faiths.

As Al likes to say, “We don’t do what we do for Catholics. We do what we do because we are Catholics.”

His tenure at the agency began in 2004, shortly after he attended a breakfast to benefit Catholic Charities and got a call from Bishop William E. Lori, who made him, as they say, an offer he couldn’t refuse—the opportunity to take a venerable social service agency into the 21st century.

It was something he wanted to do even though he suspected the cultural changes could be challenging, moving from the corporate world into the non-profit world to run a 100-year-old charitable organization.

Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has an $11 million budget, 150 full- and part-time employees and 1500 volunteers who serve the needy through its programs. It was 30 cities and towns. They feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, counsel families and individuals, assist immigrants ... and touch almost 11,000 lives a year.

Michael Tintrup, the Chief Operating Officer, who has worked at Catholic Charities for 35 years, recalls Al’s introduction to the agency.

“We didn’t think he would understand the service environment and the kind of struggles that we have, and the challenges we face.”

But Al acclimated, and he acclimated to the new culture quickly.

Tintrup continued, “He committed himself to this in a major way, and eventually went out to every one of our major programs to immerse himself and to understand what that program was about, what its environment was, what the clients looked like and what their profiles were, and to learn about the life experiences which brought our clients to our doorstep in need of help.”

Tintrup, a licensed clinical social worker who provided direct service to clients for two decades before he moved into administration, says, “Now, Al is one of us.”

Of course, Al Barber understood the non-profit landscape ... and the challenges. During the mid-1970s when he lived in San Francisco, he ran the March of Dimes campaign, and after he moved to Connecticut, he assisted the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport, which provides meals and shelter to more than 300 people weekly. (Catholic Charities, with its various food programs, serves more than 1.3 million meals a year.)

“In most every case, the demand for service exceeds our capacity,” Tintrup said. In the food programs alone, there has been a 20 percent increase over the past three years. And the counseling services are confronting longer waiting lists.

In the fourth quarter, Al says they will launch Foundations in Charity, an independent entity from Catholic Charities, which will help alleviate some of the pressure for fund-raising and help pay for programs at a critical time in the organization’s history, when federal and state funding are being cut back.

“Al has brought a keen corporate administrative eye to Catholic Charities,” Tintrup said, having spent almost 30 years in GE in nine different businesses. But he also brought something else — his strong faith, which is shared by his wife Gina.

“I was raised by a mother who went to two or three Masses a day, so I was exposed to the Church as a youngster,” Al said. He grew up in Rye. He attended the College of the Holy Cross, along with nine other members of his family. His father was a member of the Class of ’35, and met his wife Helen there. Al’s sister was in the second graduating class of women.

Al and Gina live in New Canaan and attend St. Aloysius and St. Matthew parishes. Both have been members of the Order of Malta for almost 20 years and are Eucharistic ministers. He describes Gina as a very giving person, who volunteers at St. Camillus Center in Stamford, where she serves the elderly residents and regularly prays with them. She also volunteers as an art teacher at St. Catherine Center for Special Needs in Fairfield.

Barbara Ripp of Greenwich, a longtime supporter of Catholic Charities and Catholic education, first met Al when she moved to Connecticut 12 years ago. She and her husband Peter, like the Barbers, are members of the Order of Malta, a Catholic lay organization whose mission is to defend the faith and serve the sick and the poor.

“Al seemed to be everywhere ... and he was,” she recalls. “Aside from all his professional commitments, he often serves as a volunteer auctioneer at many fundraising events. He has a big personality and isn’t at all shy about using it to raise money to help any organization that asks him. Al and his Gina have done much to make Fairfield County a better place to live for so many.”

Al has high praise for Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, whom he calls “a real champion of Catholic Charities” and for the people who work at all of its programs—volunteers and employees who bring the spirit of Christ to what they do every day, who are practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy for anyone in need regardless of their beliefs. He finds inspiration in their spirit, their commitment and their dedication.

He laughs when he recalls Bishop Lori’s job offer back in 2004. “I told him that I would help him for four or five years, and here I am 14 years later.”
Conversion Stories

From many gods to the One True God

(Author and source information is not visible in the provided image.)

When Mina Lawrence was growing up in Hong Kong, her parents taught her the importance of reading sacred scripture, fasting and praying to the gods. Looking back, Mina realizes that throughout her early life she was being pursued by the one True God. She heard, she listened, but she hesitated, partly out of concern for her family and what they would think of their daughter leaving the religion they loved for Christianity, which among Asians is considered a Western religion.

Mina, who is a controller at a medical imaging company in Shelton, her husband John and son Jared are members of St. Joseph Parish in Shelton. Hers is a story of God's persistent love and pursuit.

When her grandfather, who was a religious and giving man, passed away in his early 70s, Mina confronted questions about God and the purpose of life for the first time. She was 15.

"I started to think about life and death and faith," she said. "I put aside my thoughts of converting and decided to learn more about Hinduism, and I began reading different books, including the Hindu sacred scriptures—the Vedas." She learned about karma, reincarnation and the epic stories of Hinduism.

In her pursuit of knowledge, she entered the RCIA program and in 1995 was baptized a Roman Catholic. At St. Joseph Parish, Lawrence is a part of the charismatic prayer group and serves as a lector.

MINA LAWRENCE—of St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, grew up in the Hindu faith but always felt a pull toward Christianity and the sacraments. She entered the RCIA program and in 1995 was baptized a Roman Catholic. At St. Joseph Parish, Lawrence is a part of the charismatic prayer group and serves as a lector.

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From many gods to the One True God

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A MINISTRY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
BISHOP’S RESPONSE

‘The time for action has come’

1. I will lead a Holy Hour and offer a Clergy Mass of Reparation on Saturday, September 15th, Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, at Saint Augustine Cathedral. The Holy Hour (with Rosary) will begin at 9:30 am, followed by Mass at 10:30 am. I have invited all the priests and deacons of the Diocese to participate. You are also invited to attend so that our entire diocesan family may turn to the Lord in this hour of need and seek the grace of reparation and renewal.

2. I have asked all pastors to celebrate a local Mass of Reparation in their parish no later than October 31, 2018. A complete list of these Masses will be published on the Diocesan website.

3. We must recognize that we find ourselves in the middle of a great spiritual battle, for which we need God’s help. For that reason, I have mandated that the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel be recited at the end of every Mass celebrated in the Diocese, beginning on September 15th.

The official version of this prayer can be found on the Diocesan website.

It is my hope that these measures will foster a spirit of reparation and conversion in the lives of all clerics and throughout our Diocese. Recognizing that all of us have different healing needs during these difficult times, there will be additional spiritual initiatives announced in the coming weeks.

There is an urgent need for administrative action. To this end, I announce the following initiatives:

1. Accountability of the Bishop. When the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was adopted in 2002, a separate Statement of Episcopal Commitment was approved. Recent events make it clear that the provisions in that Statement need to be strengthened. While we wait for this to happen on the national level and reaffirming the fact that no one is above the law, including the bishop, I hereby submit myself to these additional provisions. Effective immediately, if an accusation of sexual abuse against a minor or a failure to act on an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made involving the bishop, an independent Review Board from outside our Diocese will exercise the duties and responsibilities enumerated in the Charter and will report its findings to the Holy See. A detailed summary of this process, including the Review Board that will serve in this capacity, will be published shortly on the Diocesan website.

2. Diocesan Accountability Report. I have also authorized that a comprehensive accountability review be assembled addressing two important areas:

   a. Transparency regarding past incidents of sexual abuse of a minor: I will ask a qualified, independent firm to perform a comprehensive review of the sexual abuse of minors by Diocesan clergy to inform the people of the Diocese. I will provide information on the details and the timing of this review in the next few weeks.

   b. A financial report regarding the past sexual abuse of minors: We will issue a comprehensive financial report on settlement amounts for past claims of clergy sexual abuse of minors from the establishment of the Diocese to date, including the sources from which the money was obtained to settle those claims. We will also publish a verified account of the financial support currently provided by the Diocese, and the source of that support, to any priest who has been accused of sexual abuse of a minor and who is currently on administrative leave or has been laicized. This financial report will be issued no later than October 30, 2018.

   Allow me to conclude by offering a personal reflection. My heart breaks at the damage done by predator clergy and incompetent or compliant leadership. I wish to express my heartfelt apology to all those affected by this tragedy. I also recognize that restoring trust will require the heroic witness of holiness on the part of every priest, especially myself. I am confident that the Lord will heal and strengthen us, one person at a time.

   During these troubling days, please be assured of my prayers for you and your families. I also ask that you continue to pray for the lay leadership of the Church, our clergy and for me.

   Sincerely yours in Christ,

   Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
   Bishop of Bridgeport

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Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God, cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.
Editorial

One Thing, the most important thing

**Swimming Upstream**  
By Joe Pisani

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

E very day I get emails from my non-Catholic friends about the crisis of sex abuse and accountability in the Church. They want to know: What is the Church doing about this? What am I doing about this? And why am I still a Catholic?

One article they sent was written by a man who had an outburst at his pastor during Mass and angrily walked out. I think of the sixth chapter of John’s Gospel, when disciples start abandoning Jesus because He said they must eat His Body and drink His Blood to have eternal life. He asks Peter, “Do you also want to leave?” And Peter responds, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

Do you remember the movie “City Slickers” with Billy Crystal and Jack Palance, who won an Oscar for his role as Curly, the grizzled and crusty cowboy? Do you remember how Curly raised his index finger, smiled enigmatically and said, “One thing…” He never explained what he meant, but whatever that one thing was, it was everything to him.

As Catholics, it should be clear to us what the One Thing is. That One Thing is something we can never walk away from, and it should be the focus of our lives—not our political causes, our professions, our social circles or our material successes. It is Christ in the Eucharist. Nothing more.

In 2007, Our Lord and Our Lady began to speak to the heart of an anonymous Benedictine monk in the silence of Eucharistic Adoration. He was told to make reparation in front of the Blessed Sacrament for priests wandering in darkness and succumbing to carnal sins.

The monk, who is believed to be from Connecticut and lives in a monastery in Ireland, published the messages in a book titled “In Sinu Jesu.” Buy it, read it, meditate on the words of Jesus and Mary, sit in front of the Eucharist, and make reparation for the sins of priests.

Even though we may not realize it, Jesus is in control. Without Him, the Church will never be purified. There are many secularists who think prayer, adoration and reparation are ineffective medieval responses. But Jesus told the monk that Eucharistic Adoration chapels are “the radiant, pulsating centers of an intense activity that goes beyond the walls of the place where I am adored to penetrate homes, and schools, and hospitals; to reach even those dark and cold places wherein souls are enslaved to Satan; to penetrate hearts, heal the infirm, ...”

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Defend Us In Battle

**A Dad’s View**  
By Matthew Hennessey

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

I ’m a student of pubs. Maybe it’s because my dad owned one. Maybe it’s because they smell so good, especially that front-door bouquet of stale beer, hamburger, air conditioning, and disinfectant. The flavor profile at my dad’s place included the unmistakable overlay of nicotine, but even without that, the pub smell is a sensory experience beloved of the truly cultured.

Many of the best pubs are decorated with framed Irish blessings. “May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back”—that kind of thing. Here’s a good one: “May those who love us, love us. For those who don’t love us, may God turn their hearts. And if He doesn’t turn their hearts, may He turn their ankles, so we will know them by their limping.”

A lifetime of study has taught me that roughly 72 percent of the Irish pubs in New York feature a toast ending thusly: “May you be in heaven a half hour before the devil knows you’re dead.”

We talk a lot about the devil, even if we don’t usually think much about what we mean by the word. Sometimes we use it as a kind of synonym for temptation, or a catch-all excuse for our own bad behavior. “The devil made me do it the first time,” sang Waylon Jennings in 1973, before adding, “the second time I done it on my own.”

The idea of the devil is a bit of a cartoon to us now. If you’re my age, you remember that great line delivered by Kevin Spacey in “The Usual Suspects”: “The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist.”

The devil most certainly exists. From the grand jury report exposing the shocking sexual abuse of 1,000 victims in Pennsylvania over seven decades to the New York Archdiocese review board’s finding that the allegations of sexual abuse against Cardinal Theodore McCarrick were “credible and substantiated,” this summer has reminded every Catholic that the enemy always has the one true Church in his sights.

My wife and I, like all parents, have always wondered how to approach the problem of evil with our children. When to tell them about the worst things in the world? How to keep innocence from descending into ignorance? No one wants to place vile ideas in a child’s mind. So what’s the right answer? Our love for our children makes us, naturally, protective.

Then again, no one wants a child to end up in a vulnerable position because they’ve been kept in the dark about the filth in the world. We love our children, and we are compelled to keep them safe, but there comes a point when you have to lay it on the line: The devil exists, and he’s working hard to defile everything that’s good, true, free, and holy.

Watch your back. The devil has nothing better to do than try to keep you out of Heaven. And he’s got more than 30 minutes to do it.

My wife and I homeschooled our children. This has afforded us the ability to regulate more aggressively than is typical our children’s exposure to the funkier stuff. But we know that it also makes it more likely that they will find out later than their peers that there is a real satanic people that it’s better to be safe than sorry. In his wisdom, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has decreed that in response to the abuse scandal all parishes shall recite this prayer after Mass. I hope it catches on in other dioceses.

Evil spirits seeking the ruin of the souls? Yes, kids, and if St. Michael does his job, you will know them by their limping.
Catholic Schools

Diocese names new principals

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

Dr. John Alfone
Principal, St. Aloysius School
NEW CANAAN—Dr. R. Alfone has been named principal of St. Aloysius School in New Canaan, effective July 23, 2018. His appointment was announced by Dr. Steven Cheeseman, Superintendent of Schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Among his many posts in Catholic and public schools settings, Dr. Alfone formerly served as Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Dr. Alfone, who currently resides in Branford, will be relocating to the area. In addition to his impressive educational background and professional accomplishments, he enjoys travel and ballroom dancing, finding his greatest joy in his two daughters, and three grandchildren.

Mrs. Pamela Fallon
Education Director, St. Joseph Catholic Academy, Brookfield
BROOKFIELD—Mrs. Pamela Fallon has been appointed Director of Education at St. Joseph Academy in Brookfield. Raised in Vermont, Pam Fallon came to SICA after serving as a middle school Language Arts teacher at St. Rose of Lima in Newtown. She served in the Nashua Public Schools as the district’s Interdisciplinary Curriculum Specialist and as the assistant principal at Fairgrounds Elementary School (FES), an urban school with 850 students. It was at FES that Pam became familiar with the multi-age, personalized learning education platform and

in 2009 was named Teacher of the Year. “The students in the multi-age program experienced such great success. Academic rigor, service and leadership skills were some of the competencies mastered by students,” says Pam. Pam and the SICA staff have been engaged in professional development to ensure that the multi-age, personalized learning curriculum, resources and classroom arrangements for the new St. Joseph Catholic Academy are ready for the first day of school. In addition to her role as Director of Education, Pam leads the “Walking with Purpose” Bible Study in New Canaan. “I cannot wait to meet all of the students and their families in the next few weeks,” exclames Pam. “The excitement and enthusiasm of our teachers and staff has been extraordinary.”

Mr. Bardhyl Gjoka
Principal, St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown
NEWTOWN—Mr. Bardhyl Gjoka has been appointed the new principal of St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown. He comes to St. Rose School from St. Aloysius School in New Canaan where he was the principal for the past four years.

“Bardhyl Gjoka is a strong and experienced administrator with an impressive STEM background. During his time at St. Aloysius, enrollment increased, teacher turnover diminished and more than half the students performed above 90% on a nationally-recognized, norm-referenced test,” said Dr. Cheeseman. In the past, Mr. Gjoka has been the assistant principal of All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk and has also taught math and engineering at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, and the High School Engineering Academy in Fairfield.

A Connecticut-certified teacher and school administrator, Mr. Gjoka earned a bachelor’s degree in math and physics from the University of Shkoder in Albania, a master’s degree in education from Fairfield University and a sixth-year diploma in educational leadership from Sacred Heart University.

Monsignor Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose Church, said there was an extensive search for the new principal who would understand the mission of Catholic education while also proving to be a creative and innovative educator.

“We were looking for a person of integrity and faith who is a proven leader, an exceptional educator and an innovative thinker. Mr. Gjoka clearly fits all of these criteria and we are delighted to welcome him aboard.”

Mrs. Lisa Lanni
Head of School, Holy Trinity Catholic Academy
SHELTON—Mrs. Lisa Lanni has been appointed Head of School at Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton. Mrs. Lanni was born and raised in New York where she attended Catholic school from first grade through post graduate school. Upon completing her bachelors degree in a dual major of mathematics and special education, she began teaching at a local Catholic elementary school. She obtained a masters in special education and a masters in religious studies by 1993. She is currently a doctoral candidate in Church leadership at Fordham University. After seven years of teaching a variety of grade levels, she became a Catholic school principal in the Archdiocese of New York.

For the following 14 years, Mrs. Lanni served on various education committees to help form instruction and use data from standardized testing to meet students’ needs. In addition, Mrs. Lanni was an instructor of teachers to help them embrace the vocation of being a Catholic school teacher. After moving to Connecticut in 2002, Mrs. Lanni became the principal of Saint Joseph School in Danbury in 2009. As in New York, Mrs. Lanni sat on several committees for the Superintendent’s Office in the Diocese of Bridgeport. She is most proud of the work that was done in creating the Gospel Values and Religion Curriculum revision. In January 2018, Mrs. Lanni was asked to take the position as Head of School for Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton. She is very excited to help this newly formed school provide an academically challenging, Gospel-inspired education to all who enter its doors.

Mrs. MaryLou Torre
Principal, St. Peter School, Danbury
DANBURY—Mrs. MaryLou Torre has been appointed principal of St. Peter School in Danbury. Mrs. Torre has over twenty years’ experience in school and district administration, with a strong background in teaching and special education. Prior to being an administrator she was a special education teacher at Newtown Middle School. Mrs. Torre holds a bachelor’s degree in history and english (WCSU), a masters degree in special education (SCSU), and a sixth year degree in educational leadership (SCSU) and was former adjunct instructor at Post University and University of New Haven. Mrs. Torre has held a variety of administrative positions including assistant middle school principal, supervisor
of special services, director of special services, elementary principal before retiring in 2015. Since retirement, she has been interim principal in Region 15 and interim director of special services in Easton and Redding.

Mr. Eric Spencer
Principal, St. Catherine Academy, Fairfield
FAIRFIELD—Saint Catherine Academy welcomes Eric Spencer of Guilford as its new principal.
The private special education school in Fairfield serves students of all faiths who are impacted by developmental disabilities. "Those experiences had a profound impact on me," Spencer says. "Working at Saint Catherine’s feels like a return to my roots. And with 25 years’ experience as a school counselor and administrator in public schools, working in a Catholic school will be a welcome change."

As the school year begins, Spencer’s first priority is to get to know the staff and students, and become familiar with the teaching and individualized learning process of each class. "I can tell by my first interactions that Saint Catherine’s is a very special place. I am impressed with the kind, talented people who work here. Their commitment and passion remind me of the importance and mission of serving others."

Mr. Scott Smith
Principal, Trinity Catholic, Stamford
STAMFORD—Mr. Scott Smith has been appointed principal of Trinity Catholic high school in Stamford. Ansonia native Scott Smith began his career in education as a teacher and administrator in Waterbury public schools, and as dean of academics for the Elm City College Preparatory elementary school with Achievement First charter schools. This year Trinity Catholic is starting The Learning Academy, which will cater to students with learning disabilities. They’ve also started a new division, Cardinal Kung Academy, offers a classical education. Prior to coming to Trinity, Smith worked in both public and charter schools with a four-year dabble working pharmaceutical sales, a nod to his bachelor’s degree in business. But he went back to education, where his heart lies, with a new desire to bring his love of problem-solving to schools.
He went on to earn his 092 certification to work in administration. "This is much more about my spiritual journey," says Smith. "This wasn’t just another step in my career. It was a calling."

Smith’s faith has always been very important to him, and he believes it is this faith that makes Catholic schools unique. Smith explains, "What makes us different than public school options?" he said. "It’s the faith-based piece that’s a big piece. What you get here that you don’t get in public schools is that here, when we look at each other, you want to look at each other in the likeness of God. You want to see God in everybody—students, staff—because if you look at everybody like that, you treat everybody with kindness. That’s as God intended. It’s really that faith piece that sets us apart and that’s what we’ll emphasize." Due to his experience working with inner-city students, Smith believes that faith plays a big part in guiding young people and hopes to bring this mindset to his work at Trinity.

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Bishop blesses Early Learning Program

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

DANBURY—The Christopher Ripp Early Learning Program at St. Peter School in Danbury started to acclimate students and their parents to the program on Tuesday, August 21st. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was present on Friday, August 24th to bestow a blessing to family and friends of the program. Students and families that were registered for the program were invited to attend.

The newly formed Christopher Ripp Early Learning Program was made possible by a generous grant given by the Peter and Barbara Ripp family to the diocese through Foundations in Education.

The Ripp Early Learning Program consists of three six-week sessions of classes geared toward three and four-year-old students and their parents. Children are engaged in learning through music, movement, singing, art and storytelling. The sessions are a “wrap around” after-school program from 4 pm until 7:30 pm on Tuesdays. Parents can stay for classes concerning literacy, numeracy and behavior, where tools and techniques are provided to help themselves and their children with their education. Older siblings can be in attendance as well and receive homework help while classes are in session.

The goals of the program are to assist parents as primary educators of their children by giving them tools to help nurture social, physical, emotional and academic growth in a faith-filled and family-centered learning community and to provide tuition assistance to children who want to attend the state readiness program or who wish to be enrolled in the school pre-K3 and pre-K4 programs.

The blessing of the Christopher Ripp Early Learning Program welcomed 45 attendees, including Bishop Caggiano, Fr. Mecca, St. Peter Advisory Board members, Program Working Committee members, Barbara and Peter Ripp, Office of the Superintendent, Principal Torre, program director, teachers and participants.

Mrs. MaryLou Torre, the new principal of St. Peter School welcomed all guests and introduced Deborah Hocking, Program Coordinator for the Christopher Ripp Early Learning Program. Hocking provided a program description, introduced program teachers/volunteers, and spoke about plans to expand the program to other parishes/schools in the future. Father Mecca, pastor of St. Peter parish then provided an opening prayer and introduced Bishop Caggiano.

One bilingual family of six has two children enrolled in the program. In attendance were Mom—Lilia, Angel (five), Jayden (nearly four), Angela (nearly three). Not present at blessing was Dad—Angel and their 10-month-old, Layla. Jayden and Angela are enrolled in the program and attended the introductory session last week. “They cannot wait to return,” said Lilia.

Bishop Caggiano spoke to the crowd about dreams. “God asks us to dream because by dreaming, something deep in our hearts can become a reality. Barbara and Peter Ripp are dreamers.”

Foundations in Education is a non-profit initiative created to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to support Catholic education. Its primary purpose is to raise money to support Catholic education through student scholarships, innovation and leadership grants for the professional development of teachers and other education-based initiatives.

(For more information, contact Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine: holly@foundationsineducation.org or visit foundationsineducation.org.)
Catholic Academy

A plan for Catholic education in Stamford

By JOE PISANI

STAMFORD—Two years ago, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano launched an initiative to ensure “sustainable Catholic education for years to come” by combining four schools to create the Catholic Academy of Stamford, which will be located on a central campus with Trinity Catholic High School and St. John Fisher Seminary, where he resides.

Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools, said, “The idea behind this whole project was the goal of creating a revitalized sector for Catholic education in Stamford. That is why the bishop moved there, because it offers an important opportunity to lead from the center of Stamford.”

Dr. Cheeseman said construction has begun at Trinity Catholic, where science labs are being added and the lower level will be renovated to accommodate the middle school. Three elementary schools have been consolidated at St. Cecilia’s campus on Newfield Avenue, where they will remain for another year or two before moving into the middle school building.

Deacon Patrick Toole, Episcopal Delegate for Administration of the diocesan school, the Catholic Education Reimagined project was an outgrowth of the fourth diocesan synod and has as its goal the evangelical renewal of the diocese, starting with the city of Stamford.

Part of that vision was to “transform five existing failing Catholic schools into a new single Catholic school that will serve young people from ages three to 18, providing them with authentic Catholic and disciplined formation as disciples, and a superior academic education utilizing blended personalized learning, centered in Eucharistic spirituality.”

The project began two years ago when Bishop Caggiano put together a study committee to examine the state of Catholic elementary schools in Stamford, said Patricia Brady, who is the Head of School for the Catholic Academy and for Trinity Catholic High School.

The committee’s recommendation was to form the Catholic Academy of Stamford from St. Cecilia, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Holy Spirit and the Trinity Catholic Middle School so that there would be one pre-K3 to 6th grade on a single campus. The lower school consists of pre-K3 to 5th grade and the upper school of 6th to 8th grades. The lower level of the Trinity Catholic building is being renovated to accommodate the upper school.

“This vision that the bishop has is to strengthen Catholic education in Stamford by improving our facilities and launching a major initiative in personalized learning,” Ms. Brady said. “Without this vision, we may have had to close schools. Instead, on one campus we will have everyone—3-year-olds to seminarians. It will truly be an epicenter for Catholic education in all its forms, with the bishop living on the campus.”

Phase one of the project was completed in August and involved the construction of science labs at the high school. Immediately following, phase two began—the demolition of the entire guidance area and third floor of the high school to build new classrooms, a state-of-the-art media center, offices and the Learning Academy to accommodate special-needs students. This will be completed by Thanksgiving, she said.

In early December, phase three, the demolition and renovation of the lower level of the high school will begin in order to create space for middle school students. It is expected to be completed by April 2019.

Sharing resources is another advantage to having the students on the same campus, Ms. Brady says. Faculty, for example, may teach pre-algebra to upper school students and algebra to the high school students.

“Being in the same building will permit the sharing of resources and faculty,” she said. Under the plan, each division will have a principal.

“The reaction of parents who chose to have their children stay has been very positive,” Ms. Brady said. “Change is hard for people, but I believe they are going to see we are committed to Catholic education in Stamford, and in two to three years, we will be getting enrollment back up to where we want it.”

She anticipates the 6th-8th grades will move to the new location at the Trinity High School building in August 2019. After the middle school students are in the high school, the planning will continue for pre-K3 to 5th grade students’ location.

The bishop said the planning group did complete evaluations of the schools to determine which facility would best allow for Catholic education to not only continue, but grow.

“Our goal is sustainable Catholic education for years to come,” Bishop Caggiano said. “The Diocese of Bridgeport is committed to strengthening programs to continue to attract new students. Our Catholic schools are known for being faith-filled centers for student development, for 21st century teaching and for producing graduates who are prepared to be leaders in their community and the world.”

Michael Macari, director of communications and marketing for Trinity Catholic, said this is the second major renovation for the high school, following a $2.7 million upgrade of the athletic field two years ago.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION REIMAGINED—Construction has begun at Trinity Catholic in order to create Bishop Caggiano’s initiative to ensure “sustainable Catholic education for years to come” by combining four schools to create the Catholic Academy of Stamford. Three elementary schools have been consolidated at St. Cecilia’s campus on Newfield Avenue.
Marriage and Family

Mass and Social celebrates newlyweds in diocese

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

NEWTOWN—24 couples and 22 children gathered Friday evening for a Mass in celebration of up to ten years of marriage. Couples were able to partake in a wine and cheese social afterwards and had the opportunity to hear from national Catholic speaker Chris Padgett about principles that help make a marriage work.

Many gathered remarked that this event was a time for them to give thanks to God for the blessing of their marriage and to mingle and talk with other newlyweds in the area.

“The Newlywed Mass and Social was an inspiring and fun event where couples were reminded to focus on our common goals and connect with our spouses,” commented Jess Nayden, Coordinator of the Catholic Service Corps for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Couples in attendance had the opportunity to visit tables which provided helpful information and details on upcoming events. Speaker Chris Padgett offered time for questions, as well as displayed a book that he and his wife have written.

Matt and Amy Taylor provided a table of information about an upcoming Financial Peace University class that they will be facilitating at St. Rose this fall.

Al and Adrienne Keogler shared information about their Natural Family Planning class that will take place at St. Rose beginning on September 22nd.

“The Newlywed Mass and Social was a success,” commented Monica Ortega, who helped envision and plan the event along with her husband Renzo. “A special thank you needs to be shared with the beloved ministry teams in St. Rose who donated the wine and appetizers. Another thank you to the childcare ministry who offered free childcare for the couples. It was so special to be able to participate in a special date night with my husband with other couples in similar stages of life. To celebrate our sacrament of marriage was such a gift!”

Paulo, Brazil. “My parents were in the Neocatechumenal Way,” he said. “They did not have much to give me materially, but they taught me the importance of love, respect and faith, and they helped me know what it means to be a Christian.”

As a teenager, he dreamed of becoming a professional soccer player and tried out for several teams in São Paulo, but eventually decided to concentrate on his education. He got a job as a motorcycle mechanic even though from an early age he thought God might be calling him to the priesthood.

“I was always looking for something more, but the world could not give me what I wanted,” he said. “I know now the only thing that could satisfy me was the love of God. I had been living for myself, and then I learned God had a beautiful plan for me that was more than money. The Lord took me from this selfish life so that I could give my life in service to others and to do His will.”

Through his parish priest, he realized he was being called to follow Christ. In 2010, he went on a retreat and was sent to the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Newark and eventually came to Stamford, where he is beginning his second year in theology.

Thomas Cruz, the fifth of seven children, grew up in New London. In the 1970s, his parents came to America from El Salvador to escape the civil war. He first thought he might have a vocation to the priesthood when he was on retreat at 12 years old. When he was 16, after

DIFFERENT PATHS FROM PAGE 5
Camp Veritas
Faith, Friends, and Fun

By EMILY CLARK

When most teenagers think of summer camp, it may involve images of playing basketball, staying up late and meeting new friends in a different environment. But playing basketball with priests? Staying up late to attend Adoration? Meeting new friends by praying the Rosary? Absolutely.

For scores of Catholic teens throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport and around the country, this was their reality for one week this summer at Camp Veritas.

“I can honestly say it was the happiest week of my life,” said Lauren Vitola, a high school sophomore from St. Theresa parish in Trumbull. “The camp balanced faith with fun and brought me closer to God than I have ever been.”

Camp Veritas is a week-long spiritual journey for kids ages 12-18, a sleep-away camp with full immersion in the Catholic faith through sacraments and activities.

Parishes throughout the diocese have begun to embrace the value of Camp Veritas, especially for those young people preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation. According to local priests and many students who have attended the camp, this experience sparks a passion within them and assists in forming a unique relationship for them with God and their community.

It is this relationship with a priest in an inclusive Catholic environment that Fr. Terrence Walsh, pastor of Christ the King Church in Trumbull, hoped his Confirmation students would find at Camp Veritas. He feels that teens praying together should be a “normal and joyful experience.”

Father Brian Gannon, pastor of St. Theresa in Trumbull, new friends who shared the same love for God as I did,” he added. “Daily Rosary and Adoration became my favorite activities.”

Teens who attend Adoration in their home parishes as an extension of Mass or religious education classes may understand this experience as one of silent, reflective time with God. At Camp Veritas, however, Adoration takes on a whole new meaning. With over 500 students gathered in the gymnasium-turned-chapel at Mountain Saint Mary College each evening, the Camp Veritas Worship Band played songs like “Your Grace Is Enough” and “My Lighthouse” to excite them as they prepared to meet Jesus.

“Singing is praying twice,” said Jenna Donovan, whose husband Kevin is the camp’s music director. “It has the power to engage people’s hearts and help them be more receptive to the Spirit.”

As the lights dimmed and the music calmed, campers quietly prayed, worshiped Jesus in the monstrance, and listened to priests speak inspiringly with each of them—an experience many felt was the highlight of their time at Camp Veritas.

Lauren Vitola of Trumbull said this occasion provided her with a sense of inner peace and added, “Adoration felt to me like a one-on-one meeting with Jesus.”

For freshman Julietta Sicia of Christ the King, it was here at Camp Veritas that she witnessed Eucharistic Adoration for the first time. “This was such a moving experience for me,” she commented. “It brought many campers to tears.”

Whether it is a cathartic release or a quiet realization, Adoration and Mass truly allow these young people to know Jesus Christ. And when they are celebrated in an environment specifically relatable to teens, transformations are bound to occur.

“When teens begin to pray, their hearts open to the faith,” said Fr. Walsh. “Camp Veritas is a great catalyst for this.”
By PAT HENNESSY

BRIDGEPORT—“The Lord has called us back to the ministry we share,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in welcoming teachers to the 9 am Mass opening the convocation on August 28, the Feast of St. Augustine. The Mass was enriched by the voices of the Kolbe Cathedral High School Choir, directed by Joe Elbertson.

The Mass was both a celebration and an acknowledgment of a harsh reality. In the reading from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus denounced the Pharisees as frauds and blind guides. “Jesus did not mince words,” said the bishop, calling perpetrators of the latest child abuse scandal “scandalous, criminal, diabolical predators.”

Telling the Catholic educators, “We need to seek the renewal of the Holy Spirit,” the bishop held out a path to hope during this crisis, which has shaken the faith of so many. “St. Augustine wrote that hope gives birth to two beautiful daughters: anger and courage. Our anger can help us strive to be heroic witnesses to our faith. Be women and men of faith in class, on the playground, in the lunchroom.

“In this moment, take a step back and ask the Holy Spirit to make us heroic witnesses to Jesus Christ. Despite the tears and sorrow in our hearts, strive for greater conversion to holiness. Show the world that Christ is alive in this world. Be a people of hope.”

The response to the Offertory Petitions was “Lord, teach us to serve with an open heart.”

Following the Mass and a short break, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Cheeseman addressed the educators. “We are raising the next generation of Christian leaders,” he said. “We must inform their faith and inform their minds. We must transform the way they see the world and the way they see people and make them missionary disciples.”

In making the introduction to the convocation’s keynote speaker, he added, “We are called to a sacred duty to educate each child to the maximum of his or her ability.”

The convocation’s keynote address was given by Father Nate Wills, CSC, who spoke to the assembly on new and innovative ways to bring education alive through the Personalized Learning Initiative being introduced in six pilot schools this semester.

“Just having technology in the classroom is not a good in and of itself,” he made clear. Instead, “technology allows and students to map out a learning trajectory along a path, gives students some control of time, path and pace, and gives teachers a clear idea of where each student is in his or her learning,” allowing teachers to see which students are moving ahead quickly and where more time and attention may be needed.

“The most important person in the classroom is the teacher. Technology assists the teacher,” he said. “It allows teachers to meet all learners at their own rate.”

The Personalized Learning Initiative, which will be rolled out at all elementary schools over the next three years, will start this fall with pilot programs set for Assumption School in Fairfield, St. Gregory the Great School in Danbury, Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton, the Upper School at the Catholic Academy of Stamford, Our Lady of Fatima School in Wilton, and at the new multage school, St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Brookfield.

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Safe Environments

Survivors share their stories of hope and healing

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

“Most of us think that these things happen somewhere else...but it happened to my family, and it can happen to anyone,” said Peggy Fry, one of three survivors who shared the story of their experience with abuse.

The Office of Safe Environments held a VIRTUS training session on Thursday, August 23rd for about 40 school employees who are new to the diocese and other volunteers from 2-5pm at St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull.

“What we have in place is so important...especially because of what is going on now...” said Erin Neil, the Director of Safe Environments for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

In light of recent events, the testimonies of these survivors stood as a powerful message for all.

Survivor, Jim DiVasto, spoke of the unexpected and long-term effects his experience with abuse had on him. “I would ask myself why this was happening,” he said. “It affected my relationships and caused problems with communication and intimacy.”

“I am so glad that you are here,” Jim explained the importance of these training sessions, “when this happened to me, there wasn’t such thing as VIRTUS.”

“God was and still is the center of my life,” Peggy Fry assured, “God did everything he could to keep me in the palm of his hand.”

She encouraged the group to watch for warning signs and clues of abuse. “Allow yourself to be the eyes, ears, and mouthpiece for these children...they may not have the courage to speak up for themselves.”

“When a child has the courage to tell us something that is going on, our only reaction should be ‘I believe you and it’s not your fault’,” said Deacon John DiTaranto, Safe Environments Program Assistant and presenter of the session, encouraging the group of the importance of listening to the victims and being their advocates.

DiTaranto explained the purpose of training sessions such as this one, saying, “Our program is called Safe Environments because our focus is to be aware that a child should never be allowed to be in this vulnerable position...because if a predator does not have access to a child, they can’t abuse a child.”

Fran Cann, mother of a survivor, shared her heartfelt testimony, describing the warning signs her son displayed, which at the time were attributed to his diagnosis of ADHD. She noticed he was withdrawn and angry, had personality and attitude changes, problems with relationships, and wasn’t the same fun-loving boy she once knew.

As an adult, her son eventually died of an accidental overdose about 2 years after sharing about the abuse he experienced as a child.

“Maybe we could have helped...”

— Continued on page 25 —
Foundations in Education is gearing up for its 2nd Annual Innovation and Leadership Grants program, open to all teachers and administrators working in diocesan-sponsored Catholic schools in Fairfield County.

According to Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine, “Educators in the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic schools are invited to dare to dream about new projects that will promote innovation in the classroom to improve student learning or provide professional development.”

Foundations in Education’s grants committee reviews and evaluates each proposal and submits recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval.

2017 marked the historic first year of providing teachers with the opportunity to apply for grants that encourage innovative initiatives and turn creative ideas into real projects that positively impact student learning. Nineteen grants across 15 schools, totaling $105,000, were awarded for projects for the 2018-19 school year. Funding this year has increased to $125,000.

Immaculate High School in Danbury received funding to promote their High School Credit Distance Learning Program which offers prospective students in local diocesan elementary schools the opportunity to take online algebra 1 honors course in their 8th grade year. Grant recipient and distance classroom teacher Monica Ortega says, “The funding has provided me professional development to teach a virtual class that offers greater differentiation, particularly in the areas of assessment and group projects.” Monica shared how the program has grown from 15 to 28 students and how web-based conferencing will enable reaching more students. Grants funded Makerspaces at three different elementary schools: Greenwich Catholic, All Saints School in Norwalk and St. Mark School in Stratford. All three schools are excited to debut their grant-funded Makerspaces this year, providing learning environments where students collaboratively explore interests and learn to design and build innovative objects and processes to solve real world problems.

All grant recipients are encouraged to share their project ideas and outcomes with schools across the diocese, thereby promoting a broader opportunity for innovation throughout our school communities.

Also funded was a professional development grant request by the Office of the Superintendent to bring Partners in Mission to the Diocese of Bridgeport. School administrators and volunteer leaders across all 26 schools will be invited to attend a 2-day workshop this fall to learn best practices in the area of enrollment retention, development, marketing and branding. “These opportunities for collaboration, partnership and learning are key in ensuring Catholic education remains on the cutting edge and will transform our students into our next generation of thinkers, leaders and entrepreneurs,” remarked Dr. Cheeseman.

Foundations in Education is a non-profit initiative created to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to support Catholic education in Fairfield County by supporting innovation in academic and extracurricular programs, fostering opportunities for the professional development of school leaders and providing scholarship assistance to families in need.

(To learn more about Foundations in Education or to learn how your gift can help transform the lives of Catholic school students, please visit www.foundationsineducation.org.)
A little boy’s prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes

By JOE PISANI

Every night before he goes to bed, Chad Chlebowski, 10, says his prayers. He prays for his mother and father, he prays for his twin brother and his sister, he prays for his grandparents and great-grandparents … and he asks the Blessed Mother for a very special intention. That someday he will walk.

Chad was born with a rare genetic disorder called Pelizaeus-Merzbacher disease, which affects the central nervous system, coordination and motor abilities. While it is a rare disease, Chad has an even rarer form, his mother Angela says, and the doctors don’t know how it will progress.

In January, Angela was contacted by Father Samuel Kachuba, pastor of St. Pius X Church in Fairfield, about a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council 5890 at St. Mary Church in Washingtonville, NY. Chad was invited to be one of six children to visit one of the most revered Marian shrines in the world — the place where the Blessed Mother appeared in 1858 to a peasant girl named Bernadette Soubirous in a grotto at Massabielle in the foothills of the French Pyrenees.

Every year, 5 million pilgrims travel to Lourdes to pray and praise Our Lady. Many go in the hope they will receive a spiritual or physical healing at the spring the Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bernadette. In the 160 years since the apparitions, thousands of people have been healed in the waters, and 70 have been recognized as miraculous cures by the Church.

Over the past 44 years, the Knights from Council 5890 have taken 175 children with their guardians to Lourdes, according to Walter Kozlowski, chairman of the program and past Grand Knight. Walter, who has been involved with the initiative for 20 years, has made 16 pilgrimages to Lourdes and says, “It has always been a moving experience.”

Angela, who is Interim Director of Nursing and Allied Health Programs at Norwalk Community College, said, “I have a strong faith and I’m a very active Catholic, but I didn’t have this specific devotion to Our Lady, and when we were asked to go, I wasn’t sure what to expect.”

Angela, her mother Mary Ann, and Chad, who is a fifth-grader at Osborn Hill Elementary School, arrived in Lourdes for the 11-day pilgrimage the beginning of July.

“All I did was walk through the gates, and I broke into tears, just feeling the presence of Our Lady” Angela recalled. “That happened several times throughout the trip. I would be crying because I felt her overwhelming presence and so close to her.”

“Chad has a lot of faith,” Angela says. “He has stronger faith than any person I know. He loves church and when we’re at Mass, he is very attentive. He prays every night for people, and every night he prays he is going to walk one day.”

Even though they had taken him to healing Masses, they never thought of visiting Lourdes. While they were on the pilgrimage, they saw the incorrupt body of St. Bernadette and went to Mass every day at a different chapel. They both received the Anointing of the Sick and went into the baths from the healing spring. Chad went in four times, and Angela would kneel near his side and pray while the attendant brought him into the water.

“It was a very moving moment for me,” she said.

Chad said the water was cold but he was happy to get candy with the other boys and girls who went into the baths for children. He also attended a Eucharistic healing service in the underground basilica and was part of a candle-lit procession with 30,000 people, singing Ave Maria.

On the fifth night, Chad said, “Mom, I have to tell you something—Mary is real.”

Angela said, “But you knew that before.” And he responded, “But now I REALLY know it.”

The next day Walter Kozlowski took Chad to the crypt chapel to light a candle and pray. Chad asked if he should say his prayer to himself or out loud and Walter said whichever he preferred. “Please, Mary, I need you to help me walk,” he prayed.

On their last night, Angela said, Chad started to cry and she asked him why. He responded, “Mary didn’t come to me, Mom.”

Angela said, “Of course she came to you.” But he said, “No, she didn’t. I still can’t walk.”

“Mary did bless you. She did come to you. We don’t know what that blessing is just yet, but in time we will find out,” she told him.

The Chlebowskis don’t know whether Chad’s disease will progress, but Angela and Chad continue to pray every night to the Blessed Mother and bless his body with holy water from Lourdes.

“He was sad at first, but after his first time at the baths, he told me his legs felt different and he has said that every single night since then,” Angela said.

Her faith has grown twofold after the pilgrimage, and she plans to return with her other children so they can have the same experience. “It’s very hard to put into words,” she says. “It is such an overwhelming flood of feeling with Our Lady so close to you.”

Two years ago, when Chad was in a New York hospital for the entire summer, Father Sam would visit him. They talked and they prayed. Chad counts Father as one of his best friends, so it was natural they would talk about Lourdes and his expectations.

“I know he went wanting one thing, but he had a great experience that was very special for him,” Father said. “I tried to tell him that even though prayer isn’t answered exactly as we expect, there are a lot of things God is doing for us that we can’t see. Chad prayed for a lot of other people while he was there. And because of his faith, he was a witness to others — what a tremendous gift for other people to see his faith.”

(For more information about the Lourdes Program, go to lourdes5890.org. Walter Kozlowski says they want to expand the program into Connecticut and interested councils should contact him at kozlowskik@gmail.com.)
Encouraging teens to be courageous for Christ

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

NEWTOWN—The theme of this year’s Fan the Fire Youth Rally, which took place at St. Rose of Lima Parish on August 11th, was “Be Courageous.”

“We live in a world that has very little time for God or Jesus,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said, addressing the teens during his homily at Mass. “Jesus is going to ask you and me to stand up for the truth and to say it clearly in word and action...to be His hands and feet in the world...to go where others will not want to go, to be missionaries in the world,” the bishop continued calling the faithful to action, “For wherever there is love there is God, as St. John tells us.”

In his homily, Bishop Caggiano proposed to teens a question, explaining that the answer to the question would make all the difference for them: “What am I willing to pay as a price to follow Jesus?”

Expanding on that question, the bishop asked, “How far are you and I willing to walk with Jesus to remain faithful to Him?”

He explained that the more we walk with Jesus the more He asks of us and that this will be challenging, so much greater the need for the gift of courage.

“Courage is the one gift God has already given you in Baptism and in Confirmation...the gift of the Holy Spirit lying in your heart,” the bishop said.

Bishop Caggiano also gave examples of Saints who were courageous in giving their lives for the sake of Christ, both St. Lawrence and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, explaining that although we may not be asked to give our lives, we will be asked to give a lot.

He explained, “It will be Christ’s Spirit that will allow you to do what you could never imagine doing before, and that, my friends, is the gift of courage—to persevere in what you know is right even when it hurts.”

The rest of the day included worship music by the St. Rose Worship Band, opportunities for confession and adoration throughout the day, a service project provided by the Catholic Service Corps, the Rosary led by members of the High School Apostles, a comedy performance by Nun and Nunner and a holy hour to wrap up the evening in prayer.

National Catholic speaker Chris Padgett gave keynotes in both the afternoon and evening, during which he spoke to teens about Pope Francis’ call to be missionary disciples, evangelizing through their lives and how they can live this out.

Breakout workshop sessions provided teens with the opportunity to hear from different speakers about a variety of topics including being made for life-giving love, Marian devotion and the example of Mary, the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church, and how Jesus calls us to love ourselves as He loves us.

As Bishop Caggiano observed about the gathered in his homily, “I am looking into the faces of young women and men who are destined to be great, courageous disciples for Jesus Christ.”

“Because you, in the Spirit, can be that missionary, you can do whatever the Lord is asking... because He will help you every step of the way,” bishop encouraged teens.

“One day, years from now, there will be young people sitting in this church remembering your name because of the courageous faith you have in Jesus,” said the bishop, sending off the teens off to the rest of their transformative and powerful day at Fan the Fire.
2018 Red Mass
Judge Hardiman to speak

FAIRFIELD—Judge Thomas Hardiman of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit will be the featured speaker at the 2018 Red Mass and Breakfast that will take place on Sunday, October 14, 9 am at the Egan Chapel of Fairfield University, 1073 N. Benson Road, Fairfield.

Msgr. Thomas Powers, Vicar General, will concelebrate the Mass with members of the Jesuit community of Fairfield University. Breakfast will immediately follow in the Oak Room in the campus center.

The public is encouraged to attend the Red Mass along with all attorneys, criminal justice and legal professionals.

“The Red Mass has become a welcome forum for exploring many of the major legal challenges of our day within the framework of Catholic teaching. We’re grateful that Judge Hardiman can join us to share his thoughts on issues of interest to us all. He brings a fascinating life story to his outstanding work as a judge,” said Anne McCrory, Chief Legal and Real Estate Officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The Annual Red Mass, celebrated across the country in many dioceses, traditionally seeks guidance from the Holy Spirit for all who strive for justice, and offers the opportunity to reflect on the responsibilities and challenges faced by Catholic legal practitioners.

Judge Thomas Hardiman
In 2003, at the age of 37, Hardiman was nominated by President George W. Bush to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania; he was confirmed by the Senate by a voice vote. Four years later, Bush nominated Hardiman to the 3rd Circuit, and, after uncontroversial hearings, he was confirmed by a vote of 95-0.

Judge Hardiman, 51, was on President Donald Trump’s short list for appointment to the Supreme Court to fill the seat vacated a year ago by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Hardiman was born in Winchester, Massachusetts, and was raised in Waltham. The future judge financed his law degree by driving a taxi. He graduated from Waltham High School and from the University of Notre Dame. He was the first person in his family to go to college as a Notre Dame Scholar—a merit-based award given to exceptional students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. He earned his law degree at the Georgetown University Law Center, where he was Notes and Comments editor of the Georgetown Law Journal, in 1990.

(The cost is $50/person. They can email dtietjen@diobpt.org or call Deb 203.416.1385.)

New FCC Writer/Editor

BRIDGEPORT—Elizabeth Clyons of Trumbull has been named Communications Associate in the Office of Communications of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

She will work as a staff writer and editor for Fairfield County Catholic and the diocesan website, and also report for the various diocesan social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Clyons, a 2016 graduate of Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, comes to her new post from St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, where she has served as youth minister since August 2017.

She earned her bachelor’s degree at Salve Regina in liberal studies with a concentration in elementary and special education, and is currently completing work on a master’s in catechetics and evangelization from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio.

As a student she assisted the St. Catherine of Siena Youth Group Minister. Her volunteer commitments include service to Caroline House summer program and Big Brothers Big Sister of the Ocean State, Newport, RI.

Clyons is a member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, and Catholic Young Adults sponsored by the diocese. She can be reached at elizabeth.clyons@diobpt.org; phone: 203.416.1338

The Office of Communications publishes the monthly Fairfield County Catholic newspaper, which goes out to 100,000 people across the diocese. More than 13,000 people follow Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on Facebook and 7,100 like the diocese. The bishop also has more than 5,000 followers on Twitter @BishopCaggiano. For further information visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.org.

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St. Charles Parish

Bishop meets parish leaders

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano met with the leaders of St. Charles Parish recently to discuss circumstances surrounding the resignation of their former pastor, Father Frank Gomez, and ways the parish might move forward in the future.

In a candid and informal exchange that lasted an hour and a half, the bishop fielded questions from 20 parish leaders who gathered in the conference room of the Urban Retreat Center on parish grounds.

Parishioners thanked the bishop for meeting with them, shared their concerns and sadness over the loss of their pastor and their hopes going forward.

The diocese announced the resignation of Father Gomez from the priesthood on August 24 after the end of July the bishop asked Father Gomez to step aside from ministry and seek help when he made the decision to discontinue evaluation and treatment at the healthcare center he had entered at the bishop’s request.

At the end of July the bishop explained that Father Gomez had texted and given gifts to minors without parental permission.

Erin Neil, Diocese Director of Safe Environments, told parishioners that the diocese has a “rule of two” related to online texting and meeting with minors. Two adults must always be present when meeting in person and parents should be copied on any texts or emails to minors.

She said that the Safe Environments handbook and regulations are posted on the diocesan website www.bridgeportdiocese.org.

Parishioners said they were grateful to their former pastor for the work he did to revive the parish and for his personal ministry to them.

“People are angry. I understand that,” the bishop said. “The loss of a pastor this way is a wound to the parish and to the Church.”

When asked about the diocesan plans moving forward, the bishop said, “We have to talk about it together and work on a vision for the parish. The rebirth doesn’t have to end. This should not be a moment of discouragement. We are the People of God, and we will move forward.”

The bishop said he would return to the parish at the end of October to meet with young people and their parents.

Msgr. Christopher Walsh, who is serving as temporary administrator of the parish, is fluent in Spanish, and said the closing prayer at the meeting.

“(St. Charles Parish, located on East Main Street, is the largest parish in Bridgeport. It offers Masses in English, Portuguese, Spanish and Creole to serve its diverse community.)

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Erin Neil, L.C.S.W.
Director of Safe Environments & Victim Assistance Coordinator
Office: 203.416.1406
Mobile: 203.650.3265
eniel@diobpt.org

or Michael Tintrup, L.C.S.W.
Victim Assistance Counselor
Mobile: 203.241.0987

and the CT Department of Children and Family (D.C.F.) Child Abuse and Neglect Care-line within 12 hours of first becoming aware:

1.888.385.4225

For a report involving a vulnerable adult, call Protective Services for the Elderly at the Department of Social Services:

1.888.385.4225
FAIRFIELD—First-year students experienced all “the feels” as they embarked on the first days of their college experience at Sacred Heart University.

Their academic experience officially kicked off with SHU’s annual New Student Convocation in late August as the class of 2022 walked up the hill and into the William H. Pitt Center led by the marching band. The new students heard inspirational speeches from their peers, administrators and faculty encouraging them to do their best, take advantage of the many opportunities that will be presented to them and learn from their mistakes over the next four years.

Sacred Heart’s largest and most academically talented group of Pioneers in University history arrived with their families to move into their new residences just days earlier. They unloaded vehicles that were filled with everything they needed for a year away from home and gratefully accepted assistance from upperclassmen from SHU’s many extracurricular clubs and sports teams. The volunteers brought boxes of clothes, food, school supplies, toiletries and much more into rooms while the freshmen signed in and filled out required paperwork.

Tara Hagerman, 17, of Long Island, N.Y., briefly waited in the Toussaint lobby before being taken to her room by an orientation leader. Hagerman said she decided to come to SHU because she fell in love with the campus. “I had a relative who went here and had a positive experience, so I wanted to see what it was all about,” she said. “It’s beautiful. Everything is brand new and everyone is so nice.” Hagerman, a nursing major, said she’s looking forward to meeting new friends, join the club volleyball team and get involved in other activities as well.

First-year student Adrianna Braid, 17, of Bergen County, N.J., was on the fifth floor of Toussaint Hall unpacking her belongings with her parents. She said she was most excited to meet new people and try new things. The exercise science major plans to join the exercise science club and intramural sports.

**Newcomers’ statistics**

There are 1,496 students in the class of 2022, chosen from an applicant pool of 10,619, the largest in SHU’s history. This is a 73 percent increase in full-time freshmen enrollment dating back to the fall of 2012.

The new freshman class distinguishes itself by its academic accomplishments, as evidenced by an average high school GPA of 3.5. More than 340 freshmen are National Honor Society members.
St. Gabriel Parish

2000 Hail Marys

STAMFORD—Every first Saturday of the month at Saint Gabriel Parish in Stamford, 30-40 devotees gather to pray 2000 Hail Marys between 6 am and 4 pm in the St. Philip Neri Chapel to “honor and praise the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” says coordinator, Tess Senerador of St. Gabriel’s.

Tess learned about the 2000 Hail Marys event “about six years ago,” she says. It was held every month in someone’s home. As the years progressed and the threats of war and violence became more prevalent, she discerned a need to start this at her own parish. At first, she held the event at her home. After inviting her parish priest to one of the gatherings, they agreed to hold it at St. Gabriel’s, where it has been ever since late 2016.

Madeleine Terenzio has been attending the 2000 Hail Marys event for a year now. Her experience has had a profound effect upon her, so much so that she tries to return to the event monthly. She says, “Tess is amazing. Being around her and the others gives me the incentive to be a better person.”

A recent day of prayer began at 6 am, and Mass was offered at 8 am by pastor, Father Liam Quinlan. The Hail Marys were prayed via “a special rosary that has one hundred beads,” says Senerador. This rosary was prayed twenty times, thus amounting to 200 Hail Marys. Each rosary was prayed for a different petition, and the prayers covered “almost every,” she says.

Terenzio can attest to the beautiful, prayerful environment that praying the rosaries creates. The “quiet, yet repetitive meditation and the people around you are wonderful,” she says. “Everyone is different in gender, color, ethnicity, shape and size, yet we are all there for the same purpose. It really is so beautiful when someone starts praying in their comfort language and we all respond in English. How universal can you get? So far, I have heard French, Italian and Spanish.”

I asked God to reveal himself to me because I wanted to know the truth. He is loving,” she said. “Whenever I prayed, I always asked God to give me signs that I was on the right path. And then something happened that would change your life completely.

She met a young man named John Lawrence who worked in information technology and was moving to the United States ... and he was Catholic. “We both discovered we had similar values, but I didn’t think it was going to work out,” Mina said. “He asked if we got married and had kids what would their faith be, and I told him Catholic. Shortly afterward, he proposed to me.” They were married in 1993 and moved to the United States.

I told my husband I wanted to go to church with him every week, and I loved it,” she said. She entered the RCIA program and in 1995 was baptized a Roman Catholic at St. Patrick Church in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. In 1999, the couple moved to Connecticut and started worshipping at St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton and eventually moved to St. Joseph Parish in that city, where she joined a charismatic prayer group and became a lector. “When I told my father, he said it was good that we both went to church on Sunday to worship, and when he visited America, he came with us,” she said. “Sometimes I think, ‘Who am I that Christ should call me like he did?’ I am so fortunate.”

Today, she strongly believes we are called to evangelize and share the Christian message with our family and friends. “It is very important to continue the work of Christ on earth, and I want to share the Good News with my family members and friends and pray that he will show them the way.”

God was leading her to himself all along.

Diaconate Discovery Evenings

Have you ever wondered if you were being called to become a deacon? Has someone, your pastor, a priest or a deacon ever mentioned to you that they can see you as a deacon? Do you feel that God is calling you to live your faith differently, perhaps as a deacon? Want to learn more?

Join me and explore some of these questions and others that you may have about the Diaconate. Diaconate Discovery Evenings will be a consistent space to wonder, explore, pray and share with other men of faith regarding serving the Church as a Permanent Deacon.

- Be with other men of faith who are wondering if God is calling them to become a deacon.
- To have an opportunity for prayer and reflection.
- To form relationships and build community.
- Meet deacons from around the diocese witnessing their ministries and journey of faith.

If you are interested in attending, or have any questions, please feel free to contact Deacon Tim Bolton, Coordinator of Diaconate Vocations: dnbolton@diobpt.org.

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10-11-18 | St. Stephen | 6948 Main Street, Trumbull
11-08-18 | St. Philip | 1 Father Conlon Place, Norwalk
12-13-18 | St. Stephen | 6948 Main Street, Trumbull
01-10-19 | St. Philip | 1 Father Conlon Place, Norwalk
02-14-19 | St. Stephen | 6948 Main Street, Trumbull
03-14-19 | St. Philip | 1 Father Conlon Place, Norwalk
04-11-19 | St. Stephen | 6948 Main Street, Trumbull
05-09-19 | St. Philip | 1 Father Conlon Place, Norwalk
06-13-19 | St. Stephen | 6948 Main Street, Trumbull
07-11-19 | St. Philip | 1 Father Conlon Place, Norwalk
08-08-19 | St. Stephen | 6948 Main Street, Trumbull
09-12-19 | St. Philip | 1 Father Conlon Place, Norwalk

The above meetings will take place from 7:30 pm at St. Stephen in the lower church and St. Philip in the mansion.

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Trinity’s Jones earns place in Hall of Fame

By DON HARRISON

Only a handful of Connecticut high school players scored more career points than Rashamel Jones, Trinity Catholic Class of ’95. He amassed 2,301 across four varsity seasons with the Crusaders.

But Jones achieved a distinction that eluded the five people ahead of him and all others who developed their game at the Nutmeg State’s secondary schools: He was co-captain (with Ricky Moore) of the University of Connecticut’s first NCAA men’s basketball national championship team, in 1998-99.

Next month, the 42-year-old Jones will be among six inductees into the Fairfield County Sports Hall of Fame at the Sports Commission’s 14th annual dinner on October 15 at the Stamford Marriott. He’ll be reunited that evening with Mike Walsh, his coach and mentor at Trinity Catholic and a 2016 Hall-of-Fame selection.

“We built a legacy together (at Trinity) and to join Coach Walsh there is an honor,” Jones said. “I still speak to coach this day. He’s like family and a big part of my life.”

Jones’s daily trek to the Stamford-based high school required equal parts stamina and patience. For his first two years, he rode a Metro-North train from Mount Vernon, N.Y., to Stamford, and then hopped aboard a bus or the school van to campus. His commute was slightly shorter as a junior and senior. He boarded the train in Port Chester.

“A after practice, sometimes Coach Walsh would give me a ride to the station,” Jones recalled.

The Catholic school setting was a distinct plus for Jones. He matured quickly, especially on the court, earning New Haven Register All-State honors his final three seasons and the state’s Gatorade Player of the Year award as a senior.

At UConn, the 6-foot-4 Jones joined a multi-skilled squad that included 1995-96 All-American Ray Allen—who most eyes the Huskies’ greatest player. Slightly later, 1998-99 All-American Richard Hamilton, 6-foot-11 center Jake Voskuhl and point guard Khalid El-Amin were among his teammates. All would advance to the National Basketball Association ranks.

Connecticut had become a national power under Coach Jim Calhoun, reaching the NCAA Regional Semi-finals in Jones’ freshman season and the NCAA Regional finals during his junior year. It all came together in 1998-99, when the Huskies won their first 19 games of the season en route to their third Big East title in four seasons and best-ever 34-2 won-loss record.

Victory No. 34 was the sweetest—coming against 9 ½-point favorite Duke in the NCAA national championship game at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Fla.

“I’ll tell you a story,” said Jones. “Coach Calhoun used to hold a lot of meetings with the co-captains in our room. He’d just left and ESPN was on television.

Back in Durham they’re celebrating. They’ve got tee-shirts that say ‘Duke Won.’ Newspapers saying ‘Duke Wins Title.’ ”

“We hadn’t even played the game yet!” he noted with disgust.

“That was the best motivation. We knew we were going to win. We were confident.”

Hamilton soared for 27 points, Ricky Moore provided 13 and the game’s defensive stop in the closing seconds, while Jones contributed three points and two rebounds off the bench. UConn prevailed over the Blue Devils, 77-74.

Jones, who now lives in Bolton, a small community in upstate Connecticut, is filled with pride about his election to the Fairfield County Sports Hall of Fame. He’s hoping his parents, his sister Tarra Crenshaw, his fiancée Nicole and a cousin, Stew Williams—“my biggest fan”—will join him at the dinner to share his proud moment.

“This is the highest honor I’ve achieved,” he said. “It speaks highly of your work, of what you’ve accomplished as an athlete. The hall of fame will outline me. It (his plaque) will still be there when I’m gone.”

(For dinner ticket information, call 203.984.4806 or email tomchip21@aol.com.)
Obituaries

Msgr. DeProfio, 91

STAMFORD—The Reverend Monsignor Louis A. DeProfio, P.A., passed away on August 15, 2018, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Stamford. He was 91 years of age.

Perhaps best remembered for his long and distinguished service as pastor of St. Theresa Church in Trumbull, Msgr. DeProfio held many posts and assignments throughout the diocese and remained active as a priest in retirement at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy Residence in Stamford.

“Msgr. DeProfio was a man of remarkable vitality, energy and optimism. He brought good cheer, necessary leadership and deep faith to his sacrificial service as a priest. He inspired generations of Catholics and leaves a lasting legacy of the joy of faithful witness,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “I ask all to please pray for the repose of the soul of Monsignor DeProfio, and for the consolation of his family.”

Louis Anthony DeProfio was born in Bridgeport on May 20, 1925, the youngest of the seven children of Luigi and Lucia (Dostilio) DeProfio. Following his graduation from Central High School in Bridgeport and a year’s service in the United States Navy, his priestly formation began at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. He continued studies at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore and was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Bridgeport by the Most Reverend Lawrence J. Shehan at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport on Ascension Thursday, May 10, 1956.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar of his home parish, St. Raphael in Bridgeport. He served also as parochial vicar of Sacred Heart in Stamford before being appointed diocesan director of the C.Y.O and diocesan director of Social Action.

In addition to his service on various boards and committees, and as a time as administrator of St. Margaret’s Shrine in Bridgeport, Monsignor DeProfio directed the second Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport in 1971, and was the Campaign Chair for the Faith in the Future diocesan capital campaign in 1995.

On September 11, 1971, Monsignor DeProfio became pastor of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, where he served with great distinction until his retirement from active ministry in May 2003.

Thereafter, he served as director of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford. He was appointed a Prelate of Honor of His Holiness, with the title of Monsignor, by Pope John Paul II on January 4, 1983, and a Protonotary Apostolic supernumerary, also by Pope John Paul II, on December 19, 1996.

Monsignor DeProfio’s body was received at St. Theresa Church, Trumbull. Monsignor Thomas Powers was the celebrant, and Father Joseph Marcello was the homiliist. Bishop Caggiano celebrated the funeral Mass on Friday, August 24, at 11 am, and Monsignor Andrew Varga was the homiliist.

Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Carol Mackno at 92 Phyfe Road in Fairfield, Connecticut 06824. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Queen of the Clergy Residence, 274 Strawberry Hill Ave., Stamford, CT 06902, St. Margaret Shrine, 2523 Park Ave. Bridgeport, CT 06604, or to St. Theresa’s Roman Catholic Church, 5301 Main St. Trumbull, CT 06611, in memory of Reverend Monsignor Louis A. DeProfio. (Visit the website to read Father Marcello’s tribute to Msgr DeProfio www.bridgeportdiocese.org/read-fr-marcellos-tribute-to-msgr-deprofio).

Sister O’Brien, 93

WILTON—Sister Sheila O’Brien, O.P., age 93, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Springs of Bridgeport, went to the Lord on Saturday, August 4, 2018 at Lourdes Health Care Center, Wilton. Born in Glen Cove, Long Island on March 11, 1925, she was a daughter of the late Patrick and Julia Martin O’Brien.

Sister Sheila received her master’s in education at Hunter College in New York and was a brilliant educator for over 30 years. She was a New York sports enthusiast following all the New York teams closely but her true passion was the Yankees. She was preceded by brothers, Patrick and Jeremiah and her twin sister, Eileen. Survivors include many nieces and nephews and many great nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Tuesday, August 7, 2018 at 12 noon at Saint Jude Church in Monroe. Interment followed at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull.

Sister Sheila O’Brien, O.P.

DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT SEPTEMBER 9—OCTOBER 13

SEPTEMBER

9 Rev. Colin McKenna ........................................... 2015
12 Rev. Richard Monahan ........................................... 2010
14 Aloysius J. Hribek ........................................... 2014
15 Rev. Joseph V. Rossetto ........................................... 2004
16 Rev. William J. Conklin ........................................... 1992
17 Rev. Martin Dennehy ........................................... 2013
17 Rev. John A. Sullivan ........................................... 1953
18 Rev. Robert L. Christopher ........................................... 1958
20 Rev. Msgr. Normand A. Methc ........................................... 2002
23 Msgr. Edward B. Karl ........................................... 2009
25 Rev. Frederick H. Olsefskie ........................................... 1956
26 Deacon Paul Tupper ........................................... 2013
28 Rev. Edward A. Morgan ........................................... 1992

OCTOBER

2 Deacon Joseph Filingeri ........................................... 2013
2 Rev. Robert Morrissey ........................................... 2014
3 Rev. Ralph Seraphim Kohlman ........................................... 2017
5 Msgr. John H. Anderson ........................................... 1967
5 Msgr. Victor Balcerak, O.F.M. Conv. ........................................... 1960
6 Deacon William Owen Murphy ........................................... 2017
8 Rev. Francis Postluszny ........................................... 2015
12 Deacon Michael Wolfer ........................................... 2013
Mis Hermanos y Hermanas en el Señor

Muchas palabras se han dicho acerca del crimen de abuso sexual a menores y los escándalos que han resultado de dichos abusos, estas palabras han sido necesarias para expresar el dolor, rabia y confusión que todos sentimos. Sin embargo, las palabras no son suficientes, ha llegado el tiempo de actuar.

Les escribo hoy para compartir las primeras de una serie de medidas que tomaré, como su Obispo, para enfrentar la crisis que afecta a nuestra Diócesis. Mi esperanza es que estas medidas empiecen a sanar las heridas que sentimos, que demuestren el deseo legítimo de cambio real y ayuden a reestablecer nuestra confianza en cada nivel de liderazgo con el objetivo de realizar a plenitud la misión divina de la Iglesia.

Estas medidas se suman al trabajo extensivo que venimos llevando a cabo desde 2002 de contactar y apoyar a los sobrevivientes de abuso sexual por parte del clero en nuestra Diócesis y de proveer entrenamiento y protección para nuestros niños y que asegura que los adultos reconozcan las señales de advertencia de cualquier abuso potencial a menores.

Con este objetivo en mente, deseo atacar la raíz del problema de abuso sexual por parte del clero en nuestra Diócesis y de proveer entrenamiento y protección para nuestros niños y que asegura que los adultos reconozcan las señales de advertencia de cualquier abuso potencial a menores.

1. Liderare una Hora Santa y ofreceré una Misa de Reparación para Clero el Sábado 15 de Septiembre. Rememoraré de Nuestra Señora de Dolores en la Catedral de San Agustín. La Hora Santa (con Rosario) empezará a las 9:30 am seguida de Misa a las 10:30 am. He invitado a participar a todos los Sacerdotes y Diáconos de la Diócesis. Tu estas también invitado a asistir, así nos podemos unir como familia Diocesana en este momento de necesidad y buscar la gracia de reparación y renovación.

2. He pedido a todos los pastores que celebren una Misa Local de Reparación en sus parroquias antes del 31 de Octubre de 2018. La lista con todas estas Misas será publicada en nuestro sitio Web Diocesano. Deben reconocer que nos encontramos en medio de una batalla espiritual, por la cual necesitamos la ayuda de Dios. Por esta razón, he pedido que la Oración a San Miguel Arcángel sea recitada al final de cada Misa celebrada en la Diócesis empezando el 15 de Septiembre. La versión oficial de esta oración estará disponible en nuestro sitio Web Diocesano.

Es mi deseo que estas medidas procuren el espíritu de reparación y conversión en la vida de cada clérigo y en toda nuestra Diócesis. Reconocemos que todos tenemos diferentes necesidades espirituales para lograr la sanación, habrá iniciativas espirituales adicionales que serán anunciadas en las semanas siguientes.

Ante la urgente necesidad de acciones administrativas, la siguiente medida será instituida:

1. Responsabilidad del Obispo. Cuando el Capítulo para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes fue adoptada en 2002, también fue aprobado una Declaración de Compromiso Episcopal. Los eventos recientes hacen evidente que las provisiones de dicho Compromiso necesitan ser reforzadas. Mientras esperamos que esto suceda a nivel nacional y reafirmamos que no hay nadie por encima de la ley, incluyendo al Obispo, por medio de la presente me adhiero personalmente a las siguientes provisiones adicionales. Desde este momento, si sucede una acusación de abuso sexual a un menor o en caso de que no se actúe efectivamente en caso de alegaciones presuntamente, abuso sexual a un menor que incluya al Obispo, una Junta de Revisión independiente de fuera de la Diócesis tomará la responsabilidad y deberes enumerados en el Capítulo y reportará sus hallazgos a la Santa Sede. Un resumen detallado de este proceso, incluyendo la Junta de Revisión que servirá en esta capacidad, será publicado en nuestro sitio Web Diocesano.

2. Reporte de Responsabilidad Diocesana. También he autorizado que se prepare una revisión de responsabilidades que aborde dos áreas importantes:

a. Transparencia en relación con incidentes de abuso sexual a menores en el pasado: Solicitaré que una firma calificada e independiente prepare una revisión completa de los casos de abuso sexual a menores por parte del clero Diocesano y le sea informado al público de la Diócesis. Anunciaré información acerca de los detalles y los tiempos de esta revisión en las próximas semanas.

b. Un reporte financiero acerca de abuso sexual a menores del pasado: Prepararemos un reporte financiero completo que incluya las cantidades de acuerdos financieros establecidos ante acusaciones pasadas de abuso sexual a menores por clero desde el establecimiento de la Diócesis hasta el presente. Este reporte incluirá las fuentes de proveniencia de dinero para financiar dichos acuerdos. También publicaremos una cuenta verificada del apoyo financiero actualmente provisto por la Diócesis y la fuente de soporte financiero a cualquier sacerdote que haya sido acusado de abuso sexual a un menor y que se encuentre actualmente en licencia administrativa o aquellos a quienes se ha dado de baja sus funciones eclesiásticas. Este reporte financiero será concluido a más tardar Octubre 30, 2018.

Me gustaría concluir ofreciendo una reflexión personal. Mi corazón se acongoja ante el daño causado por el clero predador y por los líderes eclesiásticos incompetentes y complacientes. Quisiera expresar mis más sentidas disculpas a todas aquellas personas que han sido afectadas por esta tragedia. También reconozco que reestablecer la confianza requerirá la presencia santísima y heroica por parte de cada Sacerdote, especialmente a mí mismo. Confío que el Señor nos sanará y fortalecerá a cada uno de nosotros.

En estos días difíciles, por favor, sepán que mis oraciones acompañarán a cada uno de ustedes y sus familias. Les pido que oren por los líderes laicos de la Iglesia, por el clero y por mí. Sinceramente suyo en Cristo,

*Frank J. Caggiano*

Mas Reverendo Frank J. Caggiano
Obispo de Bridgeport
Septiembre 7, 2018
September’s call to look back

Column: Thomas Hicks

God comes to you disguised as your life" (Richard Rohr)
The sun sets south. Days shorten. Nights deepen. The days are loud with cicadas and nights loud with katydids. It is September. Birds are already gathering in restless flocks, migration in the air. A mother may paste the summer in an album. Most youngsters have a grudge on their minds. A mother may be listened to, to be understood by Him? It’s an amazing idea. Sometimes I have a sense that I’m just another fleck of life who has my own small importance for a brief span of time. Sometimes I think that we all make some noise in the world for a little while and then get off the stage.

Whenever we tell stories about our lives, we can be expected to engage in a good deal of fanciful reconstruction, cover ups and deceit. It is difficult to see our lives truthfully. We are frightened creatures who are cowered upon to make up stories about ourselves in order to get by. I think of all the people I’ve been: the bouncing boy, my mother’s pride, the pimply adolescent and secret sensualist. I am no longer these selves, but occasionally I remember scraps and pieces about them. I have a snapshot of myself aged twelve or so with my backpack and rainy weather gear, and secret sensualist. I am no longer these selves, but occasionally I remember scraps and pieces about them. I have a snapshot of myself aged twelve or so with my backpack and rainy weather gear.

God comes to you disguised as your life” (Richard Rohr)

Those with Down Syndrome, their family and friends are invited to
The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass asking for the intercession of St. Robert Bellarmin
Father Joseph Koterski, S.J., celebrant
Father Tim Ianni, concelebrant
Sunday, September 16, 2018
12 noon at St. Pius X Church
834 Brookside Drive, Fairfield, Connecticut 06824
Reception following the Mass, all are welcome

Please come and join the MOMS+DADS prayer/support group
(Mother of Mercy spiritual Divine Advocate for Down syndrome)
Third Thursday of every month, 7:30pm
at St. Mary’s Parish Center, Norwalk, Connecticut
Next prayer meeting will be September 20, 2018
Inquiries welcome at strapostolate@optimum.net

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BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one will meet at St. Stephen Parish, 6948 Main St., Trumbull. A series of 10 weekly meetings with experienced counselors will begin on Thurs., Sept. 13 from 4:00-5:30 pm. Must register in advance. For info call the parish office at: 203.268.6217.

APPLE RUN event brings athletes of all ages and abilities together for a computer timed 5K run/walk and a shorter untimed event for any- one will meet at St. Stephen Parish, 6948 Main St., Trumbull. For info call the parish office at: 203.268.6217.

APPLE RUN is combined with a full weekend of devotions to Saint Padre Pio! Our Lady of the Assumption Church (next to the Maritime Aquarium). Oyster Shell Park in Norwalk. Games, good food, fun activities, shopping and music! TOUCH-A-TRUCK event brought to you by St. James' School at Deluca Field in Stratford on Sat., Sept. 22 from 10 am-3 pm. Over 60 amazing trucks on display! $5 a person/$20 max per family. Quiet time 10-10:30 am.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING SERIES will be held on the following Sat. mornings: Sept. 22, Oct. 20, and Nov. 17 from 9 am-11 am at St. Rose of Lima in Newtown in the Rectory Conference Room. For more info about NFP and/or to register for class, please visit the website: celi.org. Contact Albert and Adrienne Keogler at a.keogler@att.net with any questions.

BISHOP’S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS
Nationally known Catholic speaker Jon Leonetti on Thursday, October 4 at 7 pm at Assumption Parish in Westport with reception to follow. There is no cost but we ask that you RSVP online or by phone. For more information call 203.416.1670 or visit formationreimagined.org.

SEPTEMBER FEST!
Our Lady of the Assumption Church Annual September Fest enters its 25th Year on the church grounds located at 545 Stratfield Road in Fairfield. The September Fest tradition kicks off on Fri., Sept. 14 at 6 pm and ends on Sun., Sept. 16 at 6 pm.

AN EVENING WITH FRANK MASTRONE AND FRIENDS will take place at Sacred Heart Church in Stamford, for its 95th anniversary with “An Evening with Frank Mastrone and Friends” on Sat., Sept. 15 from 6 pm-11 pm. Please call Jeff Curtis at: 203.968.1234 or Fran Bianco at: 203.329.2126 for more infor and tickets.

GOLF TOURNAMENT at Ridgefield Golf Club on Fri., Sept. 21 from 9 am-4 pm at St. Philip Church in Norwalk. Games, good food, fun activities, shopping and music!

TOURNAMENT DATE: Fri., Sept. 21 from 9 am-4 pm at Ridgefield Golf Club.

Bishop’s Lecture Series Presents
Nationally known Catholic speaker Jon Leonetti on Thursday, October 4 at 7 pm at Assumption Parish in Westport with reception to follow. There is no cost but we ask that you RSVP online or by phone. For more information call 203.416.1670 or visit formationreimagined.org.

Golf Tournament at St. James’ School, Deluca Field in Stratford.

FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL will be held at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Riverside on Sat., Sept. 15 and Sun., Sept. 16 after all Masses. For more info contact Pam Slone at: pslone@optonline.net.

PADRE PIO WEEKEND at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull will be taking place from Sept. 22-23. Our favorite annual family event of games, picnic fare and fellowship is combined with a full weekend of devotion to Saint Padre Pio!

A DAY WITH MARY is a free Marian Eucharistic Day Retreat with the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Oratory. Sat., Sept. 22 at 8:45 am-3 pm. Retreat is FREE.

FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL will be held at St. James' School at Deluca Field in Stratford on Sat., Sept. 22 from 10 am-3 pm. Over 60 amazing trucks on display! $5 a person/$20 max per family. Quiet time 10-10:30 am.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING SERIES will be held on the following Sat. mornings: Sept. 22, Oct. 20, and Nov. 17 from 9 am-11 am at St. Rose of Lima in Newtown in the Rectory Conference Room. For more info about NFP and/or to register for class, please visit the website: celi.org. Contact Albert and Adrienne Keogler at a.keogler@att.net with any questions.

PILGRIMAGE INFO SESSION on Thurs., Sept. 27 at 6:30 pm to learn about the beautiful Italy Pilgrimage with Fr. Brian Gannon from Feb. 3-14, 2019. We will go over the details, answer questions and you will be able to sign up for the trip that night. Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to vedad@crusieplanners.com by Sept. 20.

ST. ANN GOLF TOURNAMENT will take place on Sat., Sept. 29 from 12 pm-7 pm. Golfers will enjoy, lunch and 18 holes at Fairfield Wheeler golf course in Fairfield. Registration 12 pm. Shotgun start 1 pm, followed by a 6 pm cocktail hour & dinner at St. Ann Academy. You can purchase dinner only tickets for only $50. Dinner reception will be at St. Ann Alumni Hall 6-7:30 pm.

2018 FUN RUN GAMES is being held by Catholic Charities of Fairfield County to benefit Room to Grow Preschool on Sun., Sept. 30 from 1-3 pm at Oyster Shell Park in Norwalk (next to the Maritime Aquarium).

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford, will be conducting a free program from Oct. 3 to Dec. 3. The group will meet every Wed. from 12-2 pm.
and call home those who have wandered far from Me.

Eucharistic Adoration is “supernaturally efficacious.” He said that failure is certain for those who put their faith in human schemes, in plans devised by the worldly-wise, and in programs drawn up along short-sighted human principles. And so they go, and will continue to go, from failure to failure, and from disillusionment to disillusionment.... Woe to those who trust in purely human solutions to the problems that beset My Church! They will be grievously disappointed, and many souls will fall away because they have neglected to take up the supernatural weapons I have prepared for them in this time of spiritual combat.”

Here is a prayer He told the priest to say for his fellow priests mired in sin:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Priest and Victim, Lamb without stain or blemish, I come before Thy Face, laden with the sins and betrayals of my brother priests and with the burden of my own sins and infidelities.

Allow me to represent those priests who are most in need of Thy mercy. For them, let me abide before Thy Eucharistic Face, to purify and heal them, to sanctify their delusions.

For them, let me abide before Thy Eucharistic Face, laden with the sins and betrayals of my brother priests and with the burden of my own sins and infidelities.

I come before Thy Face, laden with the sins and betrayals of my brother priests and with the burden of my own sins and infidelities.

Allow me to represent those priests who are most in need of Thy mercy. For them, let me abide before Thy Eucharistic Face, to purify and heal them, to sanctify and refresh them, and, at the hour of their death, to make them worthy of joining Thee before the Father in the heavenly Holy Place beyond the veil. Amen.”

One Thing.

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**Swimming Upstream from Page 9**

and refresh them, and, at the hour of their death, to make them ever flows from Thy Heart, to purify and heal them, to sanctify forth upon all the priests of Thy Church that torrent of mercy that Heart of Thy Mother, Advocate and Mediatrix of all graces, pour Thy mercy. For them, let me abide before Thy Eucharistic Face, to purify and heal them, to sanctify and refresh them, and, at the hour of their death, to make them worthy of joining Thee before the Father in the heavenly Holy Place beyond the veil. Amen.”

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**Bits and Pieces**

**Special Needs Mass**

Being held on Sun., Oct. 7 at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Riverside, welcoming, accompanying and accommodating persons of all ages with disabilities and special needs. Mass will be held at noon with a lunch immediately following.

A ROSARY RALLY will be held at St. Margaret Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield on Sat., Oct. 13 at 12 noon in front of our outdoor statue of Our Lady in celebration of the 101st Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima and the Miracle of the Sun. Bring your rosary and join us! Please arrive at 11:45 am.

PROJECT RACHEL is offering an Entering Canaan Day of Prayer and Healing on Sat., Oct. 13 from 9 am-4 pm for women who are suffering from a past abortion. Please contact 203.895.3554 or projectrachel@diobpt.org for more info and confidential registration.

OFF THE STREETS A BENEFIT FOR THE HOMELESS: Joe Utterback national acclaimed pianist will entertain with blues, ballads, Broadway and traditional jazz music from his famous American Songbook. This fundraiser will take place on Sat., Oct. 13 at 6:30 pm at St. Thomas Church Auditorium in Fairfield. Cabaret style: BYOB and snacks. Coffee and dessert provided. Cost: $30.

TO MAKE RESERVATIONS AND OBTAIN TICKETS PLEASE CALL ELLEN MOORE: 203.880.9814.

RAIN DOWN is an incredible gathering of youth for prayer, fellowship, food, fun, and Eucharistic Adoration. This event is taking place Sun., Oct. 28 from 2:45 pm at St. Cecilia Church in Stamford and is open to youth in grades 8-12! The keynote presentation and entertainment will be provided by the international performer Tony Melendez. The cost is just $10 per participant. Register today as space is limited!

VENDORS WANTED for Christmas Fair at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel at 163 Ortega Ave. in Bridgeport on Sat., Nov. 10 from 9 am-4 pm. To reserve a table for $25 call Johanna Cinotti at 203.372.3740.

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**Casual Friday**

Celebrity Dinner & Raffle Drawing 9pm

FRI. SEPT 28, 2018 7PM

The Italian Center Stamford

Tickets & Info: www.maltahouse.org

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**“God made us to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him.”**

Know Him, read: GOD REVEALS HIS DECREES – In 1622 God, St. Michael and the Blessed Virgin Mary dictated to Venerable Sr. Mary of Agreda. Recorded published in 1657 as “Ciudad de Dios.” Published in English in 1914 by Ficar and Marcon. Condensed in good Latin text 1,076 pages (8 books) to 190 pages for brevity and reverently paraphrased for easy reading by M. D’Maio, Paperback, $12.


It greatly enhanced my Rosary meditations.” — Reader

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LEADING HEALTHCARE FORWARD
AND THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

Sacred Heart University is proud to welcome St. Vincent’s College as part of the SHU family. Here in Fairfield County, we will lead the way in moving healthcare education forward. Starting with nursing and radiography, we will educate new generations of healthcare professionals who are exceptionally well-prepared to care for our community. Our graduates will take our spirit of service and compassion wherever they go.

St. Vincent’s College at Sacred Heart University

Apply today for Fall 2018! www.stvincents.sacredheart.edu
St. Vincent’s Stroke Symposium

Public program

Attend a no-cost seminar and screening for patients and families on stroke education, presented by the experts at St. Vincent's Medical Center.

Wednesday, Oct. 3

Hawley 1 & 2 Conference Rooms
St. Vincent’s Medical Center
2800 Main St., Bridgeport, CT 06606

10 a.m.-noon
Symposium

Lunch provided
noon-2 p.m.
Health assessment screening

Seminar topics to include:
• Stroke basics
• Managing high blood pressure
• Healthy diets
• Cooking demonstration

For registration or more information call 475-282-2855, email elizabeth.lopez2@ascension.org or visit stvincents.org

Free parking.

Symposium speakers

Joseph Mattana, MD, FACP
Chairman, Department of Medicine

Srinath Kadimi, MD, FRCS
Stroke Director

Abby Caron, RD