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Synod: The Next Step

Synod ‘alive and evolving’

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The Fourth Diocesan Synod is over but the consultative process is still very much underway in the diocese, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano told more than 100 delegates who reconvened for the second Post-Synod General Session on April 15 at St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

The bishop thanked the delegates for coming back together and said that he wants to hear from them as the diocese gives shape to the many new programs and initiatives inspired by their synod deliberations.

“What we gave birth to is a living process. September 19 (the date of the Synod Closing Mass Celebration last year) didn’t end anything. Implementation is not static, it will continue to evolve,” the bishop said. “We may do things we didn’t envision in our process but they will be born out of that which we discussed and discerned.”

Throughout the morning, delegates received status reports from diocesan officials and ministry leaders about new synod initiatives, including the Diocesan Leadership Institute, the Catholic Service Corps and Faith Formation programs.

Those who have left the Church were still very much on the minds of delegates who asked that the new programs be effective in bringing back men and women who no longer participate in parish life and in better engaging the young people between the ages of 17 and 23, who are at the greatest risk of leaving.

The bishop said his thoughts on the post-synod process have been guided by “three words: patience, discernment, and perseverance, as we continue to be obedient and listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as a diocesan family.”

The bishop told delegates that he originally thought of the synod as a “roadmap” but as implementation moves forward, he has come to understand it as a “mosaic” with many bright pieces and figures.

“A roadmap has a clear line to the destination, but in a mosaic, each piece of the puzzle has its own life and character. When we put all these pieces together, we can create a new picture, a new chapter in the life of the diocese.”

The bishop, who drew laughter when he quipped that he was “not known to be a patient man,” said the implementation was taking longer than he initially expected, and then added, “We have to learn to do this in the mind of Christ and with his grace. If that takes longer than I thought, that’s okay, as long as it’s done right.”

Patrick Turner, director of strategic and pastoral planning, and Father Michael Dogali, Episcopal vicar for planning, offered an overview of the Strategic Planning Process now underway in the diocese.

Turner said that over 400 parish taskforce members participated in planning workshops held during the month of March and that parishes are now working on self-assessment forms. The self-assessments will be completed by May 15 and each parish is expected to have a strategic plan drafted by next September.

“Planning is going to be an integral part of parish life going forward,” he said. “This is not a one-time process.”

Father Dogali, who has been visiting with pastors across the diocese, said that the diocesan strategic planning commission is reviewing key diocesan services such as communications, information technology, and human resources backgrounds from across Fairfield County.

The commission has identified four key areas to study and established sub-committees to review diocesan policy in the following areas: Communications, Information Technology, Procurement Strategy, and Human Resources. Each of the sub-committees has brought in other leaders to assist in the analysis of their respective issues.

“I like to thank all the commission leaders and volunteers for agreeing to assist us as ‘subject matter experts’ by serving on one of our four sub-committees,” said Rooney. “We greatly appreciate their support and look forward to moving ahead in all of these areas.”

Rooney said that each of the sub-committees have been meeting with diocesan department leaders and will come together later this month to share a progress report with the goal of presenting a preliminary plan to Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in July.

Steve Ronan, who is also serving on the Information Technology Sub-Committee, said that early discussions have given members a better understanding of the diocesan system, while they look for opportunities to integrate resources.

“We’re trying to get our arms around the current state of technology use in the diocese, to review staffing and purchasing, and to find out what works well, what doesn’t, where the gaps are and how best to meet needs,” Ronan said.
Two men to be ordained to the priesthood

BRIDGEPORT—Late June will see the ordination of two priests for the Diocese of Bridgeport. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will ordain Philip Lành Phan and Eric William Silva to the priesthood for the Diocese of Bridgeport in St. Augustine Cathedral on June 25.

“Once again the Lord has called faithful and generous men to serve the Church,” says Father Robert Kinnally, rector of St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford. “We are blessed to have seen the good work God has done with these future ministers of Word and Sacrament and look forward to experiencing the grace that will come from their service to the Church of Bridgeport.”

Philip Lành Phan
Philip Lành Phan, 31, was born in Vĩnh-Long, Vietnam. His parents still live there, where they are members of Sacred Heart Parish in the city of Tra-On. A sister and brother also live in Vietnam. Both parents will be on hand for the Ordination Mass, where his mother will be a gift bearer. The Mass will include readings in Vietnamese by Brother Vincent Vu, O. Carm.

Father Phan attended local schools and graduated from Can-Tho University in 2007 with a bachelor of science degree. Following graduation he worked as a technician for the Golden Rice Pesticide Company in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in Vietnam.

“During the first half of my life, about fifteen years ago, I dreamt of becoming a businessman, a successful engineer, or whatever profession that could make me a significant and outstanding person. Becoming a priest was not in the category at all, since I was not a Christian,” he says.

When he was 20, he had a personal encounter with Christ that led him to the Catholic faith. He was baptized in 2004.

“My whole life changed,” he says. “It was like the moment when Jesus called Peter and Andrew to follow him. They were fishermen, and they thought that all they wanted was to become skillful fishermen. Yet, Jesus called them and made them fishers of men instead.”

Coming to this country, he entered St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford in 2007 for language training. In 2010 he was transferred to Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., and completed his seminary studies this year. Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Stamford is his current home parish.

He was ordained to the diaconate in St. Augustine Cathedral on June 20, 2015, by Bishop Caggiano and served his deacon internship at St. John Parish in Darien and St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Waynesboro, Penn.

“Like the two Apostles, I will keep my dream of becoming a significant and outstanding person—but not in a worldly success, only in God and in serving his people as a priest.”

Father Phan, being bilingual, will celebrate his first English Mass on June 25 at St. John Church in Darien at 4:30 pm. Father Frank Hoffmann, St. John’s pastor, will give the homily. He will celebrate his first Vietnamese Mass on June 26 at St. Augustine Cathedral at 2:30 pm, Father Justin Le from San Jose, Calif., will deliver the homily.

Eric William Silva
Eric William Silva, who will turn 26 in August, is one of three sons of Richard and Virginia McGowan Silva. He grew up in Trumbull, where St. Theresa is still his family’s home parish. He went to Booth Hill Elementary School in Trumbull and graduated from St. Joseph High School in 2008.

During his years at St. Joe’s,

Foundations Inaugural Dinner raises $300,000

DARIEN— More than 250 people turned out on Friday night at Wee Burn Country Club for the inaugural Foundations in Education Dinner, which raised over $300,000 to support Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

“This is an historic event in the life of the diocese,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “You are now partners in a venture that will enable our schools to remain on the cutting edge of innovation in the 21st century.”

The bishop said the goal of the new Foundations “is not simply to raise funds to face financial challenges but for innovation transformation and growth of our schools for years ahead.

“The new philanthropic Foundations in Education will make resources available to train, form, and support our teachers, principals and administrators, so that they have the knowledge they need to bring our schools into the future,” said the bishop.

It was a night of powerful personal testimony about the ability of Catholic schools to change lives and create opportunity for students.

George Irish, retired president of Hearst Newspapers and vice president and Eastern Director of the Hearst Foundations, discussed his own Catholic boyhood in the 1950s and said that families today “are under pressure” and many cannot afford the cost of Catholic education without financial assistance.

Irish said the real narrative of Catholic education is not that schools are closing but that there continues to be a strong demand and enthusiasm for the schools on the part of Catholics and even those who are members of another faith.

“The miracle of Catholic education is that it makes a difference in lives of students across the globe.”

Irish said that in his work on the Inner-City Foundation for New York Catholic Schools, he has seen that many non-Catholics are coming forward to contribute because they believe in the “remarkable value” Catholic schools bring to society.

Roderick Ricketts, a physical education teacher at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, delivered the most powerful testimony of the evening when he said that Catholic education saved him from the life of the streets.

His talk was interrupted several times by applause from the audience when he discussed being overcome by the loss of his brother to street violence in Bridgeport, and his struggles to remain in school.

Ricketts, who is married and the father of six children, said he was the first in his family to earn a college degree, and he credited his mother’s personal sacrifice and the generosity of donors for helping him to make that possible.

He also praised the family atmosphere he found at Kolbe for helping him to move on in life and become a teacher.

“Now I strive to be a role model,” he said. “I’m very thankful. I don’t know where I’d be without Catholic education. It really changed my life.”

CNBC senior correspondent Larry Kudlow, who served as master of ceremonies for the evening, said that Catholic education gives students a “language of the head, language of the heart and language of hands” that shapes them “in the image of Christ, who is the center and focus of Catholic schools.

In his concluding remarks the bishop said that the new
BRIDGEPORT—The Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) has surged over the $8 million mark, representing 70 percent of its $11 million goal, after a strong response to the in-pew weekend held at the end of April.

“I’m very grateful for those who took the time to fill out pledge cards during in-pew weekend,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “In the spirit of co-responsibility necessary for the renewal of our diocese, every baptized person must assume responsibility for a portion of the Church. “We cannot achieve what the Lord has asked us to do without deepening our unity in faith, hope and love, and we are always called upon to foster works of charity and justice,” the bishop said, noting that the programs supported by the Appeal reach out to the most vulnerable and needy in Fairfield County.

William McLean, chief development officer of the diocese, said that May and June are critical months for the Appeal, because they’re the last two months of the public phase, and a strong response helps the entire diocese with budgeting and planning for the year. However, many parishioners choose to contribute to the Appeal after June 30, and gifts are gratefully accepted through December 31.

“It has been encouraging to see that people are responding to the ACA and picking up the pace in giving,” he said. Participation is critical to the overall health and success of the Appeal. He said the number of donors is up over 1,000 from last year, and the average gift for the campaign is $500.

The theme of the 2016 Annual Catholic Appeal is Renewed in Hope, Hope and Charity. The overall $11 million goal funds the major programs and ministries of the diocese, including schools, Catholic Charities, religious education, St. John Fisher Seminary and the Catherine Denis Keefe Queen of Clergy Retirement Residence in Stamford.

McLean said that while not all of the results are in, the in-pew weekend pushed the Appeal much closer to goal. The final in-pew will be held the weekend of June 4-5 for parishes that did not conduct it in April. A final mailing to donors who have not yet responded is planned for May and June.

“The in-pew is important because it broadens the base of the Appeal. In his many stops throughout the diocese, Bishop Caggiano has mentioned how important it is to expand the base of giving and for everyone to give according to their ability,” McLean said. “It sends a strong signal of the importance and concern for others in our diocese.”

More than 6,000 Catholics choose to give each year through the in-pew weekend rather than responding to direct mail or other materials.

Last year nearly 24,000 people throughout the diocese contributed to the campaign, which funds the major programs and ministries provided by the Church in Fairfield County.

Julie and Rowan Taylor of New Canaan are serving as the chair couple. The Pastors’ Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Appeal is led by Msgr. Laurence Bronkiewicz, chair, and Father Reginald Norman, vice chair.

Pam Rittman, director of the Annual Appeal, says that receptions held throughout the diocese will help take the Appeal off to a strong start. She believes that there’s a growing awareness of the role of the Appeal in funding programs at work throughout the diocese.

“It’s important to be aware of all the good the Appeal does in the lives of so many people throughout Fairfield County. By serving others, we grow in faith and respond to the Gospel,” she said.

“While there are many different programs geographically in each part of the diocese, they all support the larger Church and reach out to people who often have no other source of support and encouragement. “This is the time to make your gift and help put the Appeal over goal.”

(For more information or to give online, go to www.2016ACAbridgeport.com or call 203.416.1470.)

Make your gift by June 30.
Gifts accepted through December 31, 2016.

Select Gift

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Three take the next step toward priesthood

BRIDGEPORT—On June 18, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will ordain three men as deacons for the Diocese of Bridgeport. All three are currently completing seminary studies and hope to be ordained to the priesthood next year.

Because two of the men are of Hispanic background, readings at the ordination will be in Spanish and English. Both Harry Prieto and José Vásquez were born in Bogotá, Colombia; Timothy Iannacone was born in Stamford.

“As these three men reach this important step in their journey to priesthood, the Church of Bridgeport recognizes the many gifts each will bring to God’s people,” says Father Robert Abriola, rector of St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford and chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport. “Their service as deacons will enrich the faith life of those to whom they are sent and deepen their own resolve to serve as a priest with humility and a generous heart.”

Harry Alfredo Prieto

Harry Alfredo Prieto, 29, was born in Bogotá, in a family of three boys and one girl. His parents, Alfredo and Juzar Santo Prieto, are parishioners at Santiago Apostol Parish in Bogotá.

He attended Annunciation Elementary school and graduated from Neruda High School in Bogotá in 2003. Always interested in intellectual challenges, he earned first place in a Regional Problem Solving Competition during high school.

Discerning a religious vocation, he went to the Seminario Mayor de Bogotá, then earned a bachelor of science degree from the Universidad Javeriana in that city. Coming to this country, he completed a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fordham University, where he was elected a member of Phi Sigma Tau National Honor Society in philosophy in 2013.

After graduating Fordham in 2014 he entered the Theological College of Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he expects to complete his S.T.B. degree in 2017.

Deacon Prieto will assist at his first Mass in his home parish of St. Joseph in Danbury on July 3 at 12 noon. Father Samuel Scott, St. Joseph’s pastor, will celebrate the Mass and deliver the homily.

“Being in love with God is the deciding factor, the greatest source of inspiration to serve the Christian community,” he says. “From this comes the spiritual resolve to become more and more like Jesus Christ, who healed, supported, comforted and challenged, and laid down his own life so that we might have life.”

José Abelardo Vásquez

José Abelardo Vásquez, 32, was also born in Bogotá. His parents, Bernardo and Elsy Campos Vásquez are members of Santiago Apostol Parish. He has one brother, Rodrigo, also living in Bogotá. An energetic young man, active in soccer and accomplished on the guitar, he attended Antonio Norrito Elementary School and Polytechnico Mayor high school, graduating in 2005.

He entered the Seminario Mayor de Bogotá, and earned a bachelor’s degree from the Universidad Javeriana in 2010. Responding to a call for priests in this diocese, he entered St. John Fisher Seminary and studied at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield. His home parish is the Church of the Assumption in Westport. He will complete his theological studies at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., in 2017.

“One reason I have discerned the priesthood is because I want to answer the call of the Lord Jesus Christ,” he says. “The world needs more holy priests dedicated to serving God and his people. I want to administer the sacraments of the Church, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, in order to bring people closer to Jesus.”

Timothy A. Iannacone

Timothy A. Iannacone, who will be 26 when he is ordained, was born in Stamford and currently lives in Norwalk, where his home parish is St. Mary’s. His parents, Patricia and Henry Iannacone, and brother Christopher are members of St. Thomas the Apostle in Norwalk. He attended Wolfspit Elementary School and Norwalk High School.

Always active in jazz bands and symphony orchestras throughout the years, he graduated from Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass., in 2012 with a B.A. degree in religious and theological studies and a second degree in philosophy. He received the Augustinian Award from Merrimack in 2009, and the Lamond Award for witness to the Catholic faith in 2012. He was inducted into Theta Alpha Kappa, the National Honor society for Religious and Theological Studies in 2012. He is currently fulfilling his seminary studies at the Theological College of the Catholic University of America, hoping to complete his degree in 2017.

“My spiritual development during my time of formation has been a gradual process,” he says. “I now approach my faith with a greater understanding of the Church, realizing that belief cannot be based on some sophomoric notions I clung to earlier in life. Rather than being disillusioned by the temporal faults of the Church, I have learned to focus on the fullness of the Church’s message and her role as the merciful redeemer of mankind. Furthermore, my spiritual development has given me a greater ease in knowing that I have no obligation to control every aspect of my spiritual life, instead leaving myself open to God’s will.”

At the recent Information Technology sub-committee meeting held at the Catholic Center, Raffaele Scotti, diocesan director of information technology, told the group that the Catholic Center is currently migrating to Office 365, a cloud-based storage and information system that will better position it for the future. He also acknowledged that at present, the 32 Catholic schools are on a different information system than the diocese.

The sub-committee agreed that parishes throughout the diocese have a strong need for information technology support along with website and social media resources.

James Abriola of Trumbull is leading the Procurement Sub-Committee, along with Kathy Vogt of Stratford.

“We have been fortunate to bring on volunteer members with key procurement expertise gained from corporate experiences,” he said. The Procurement Sub-Committee is starting off by reviewing the present purchasing guidelines, vendors and contractors used by the diocese.

“Going forward we desire to develop a standard procurement process for the diocese to identify and evaluate cost advantages for services and merchandise,” said Abriola.

“Ultimately the diocese can use its unified purchasing power to realize savings from qualified vendors and free up funds to support other initiatives.”

Dr. John Murphy, president/CEO of Danbury Hospital, and Mark Dailey of Norwalk are leading the Human Resources Sub-Committee.

Sue Stone of Greenwich and Otis Shelton of New Fairfield have been leading the Communications Sub-Committee, which is working on the development of an overall communications plan based on identifying diocesan “stakeholders.”

“Our mission is to recommend improvements to the internal and external communication ecosystem of the diocese, including the methods of reaching and engaging internal diocesan personnel, clergy, lay leadership, school staff, directly-engaged Catholics and the Catholic population in Fairfield County,” Stone said.

The sub-committee, which includes marketing and communications experts from the area, has already met several times to draw on the expertise of its members and work with the diocesan communications team.

Members of the Strategic Planning Commission of the Diocese of Bridgeport include: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano; Father Michael Dogali, episcopal vicar of Strategic Planning; James Abriola of Trumbull; Kathy Vogt of Fairfield; Mark Dailey of Norwalk; John Murphy, M.D., president of Danbury Hospital; Stephen Ronan of Stamford; Robert Rooney of Greenwich; Susan Stone of Stamford; Otis Shelton of New Fairfield; and Patrick Turner, director of Strategic and Pastoral Planning for the diocese.
TRUMBULL—“Every moment of your married lives, you remind us all that Christ is present, alive and faithful to his sheep,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano to more than 200 couples who attended the recent Wedding Jubilee Mass at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull.

“I thank you for your witness, your togetherness, for being good parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, and for being images of Christ’s love in our midst. I wish you every grace and blessing for many more years of married life.”

The bishop blessed the marriages of couples celebrating anniversaries ranging from 25 to 75 years. A reception was held after Mass and photos were taken with the bishop.

Among those recognized during the Wedding Jubilee Mass were Stanley and Gladys Gwiazdzinski (75 years) of St. Paul Parish in Greenwich; William and Bertha Fredette (70 years) of Holy Family Parish in Fairfield; Lawrence and Ruth Schmidt (70 years) of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Stamford; and Joseph and Florence Romano (66 years) of St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk.

The bishop told the couples that over the years they have “come to learn to listen to one another, not just with the ear but with the heart and mind as well,” and that they have learned to be selfless in their love.

“You have come to surrender and give everything to each other. In doing so, faithfully and grace filled, you give all of us a great gift. You give us hope and help us to remember that where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I.”

In his reflection on the 10th chapter of John, “I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me,” the bishop told the couples that when he visited his grandfather’s farm as a young man in Italy, he was amazed to see all the sheep in the neighborhood gather together, but still stay behind. His sheep recognized the voice of the shepherd as their protector.”

He said the one essential quality of sheep is their ability to follow the shepherd.

“The message is simple. You and I are disciples of the Lord, and he tells us that if we wish to be with him one day in glory, he will give us the path to him, but we need to recognize his voice, trust his voice and surrender to what it says to us, because he is our protector, provider and guardian who loves us more than we love ourselves.”

(On THURSDAY evenings, from 7-8:30 pm:
Vicariate I: Holy Spirit, Darien
Vicariate II: St. Matthew, Norwalk
Vicariate III: Our Lady of the Assumption, Fairfield
Vicariate IV: St. Catherine of Siena, Trumbull
Vicariate V: St. Matthew, Trumbull
Vicariate VI: St. Augustine Cathedral, Bridgeport)

On TUESDAY evenings, from 7-8:30 pm:
Vicariate I: St. Thomas More, Darien
Vicariate II: Assumption, Westport
Vicariate III: St. Pius X, Fairfield
Vicariate IV: St. Theresa, Trumbull
Vicariate V: Sacred Heart, Danbury
Vicariate VI: St. Charles Borromeo, Bridgeport

The bishop also asked priests from every parish to assist in hearing Confessions from time to time at the Centers of Mercy in their Vicariate. “Many thanks for your collaboration in this important initiative of our local Church during this Year of Mercy,” Bishop Caggiano told the priests.

WHERE TWO ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME—More than 200 couples celebrating anniversaries from 25 to 75 years of marriage were blessed and honored at the recent Wedding Jubilee Mass.

ORDINATIONS FROM PAGE 3

he became active in the High School Apostles youth leadership program. He attended St. Anselm College in Manchester, N.H., until the spring semester of his junior year before entering St. John Fisher Seminary and finishing his undergraduate degree at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

“My own call to the priesthood began with the realization that I was made for much more than the life I was living,” he says. “After having entered the seminary, I came to know who God and his Church are at a level that I could have never have encountered had I not left college to pursue the call that God put before me.”

He was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Caggiano on June 20, 2015. He served his deacon year pastoral assignment on Mt. St. Mary’s University campus in their campus ministry office in Emmitsburg, Md. He completed his fourth year of theological studies at the seminary there this year.

“From the first day I entered the seminary, through daily prayer, a frequent reception of the sacraments and a pursuit of virtue, God made apparent that the way in which I am called to best love him and his children is as his priest. It is a life and a vocation that I hope to live, thanking God each day for having created me for this. I can think of no better way than to spend life here on earth serving God through serving his people.”

Father Silva will celebrate his first Mass on June 26 at 12 noon at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull. Father Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, will give the homily.
Reflections of a Young Priest

‘Sharing your relationship with God’

By BETH LONGWARE DUFF

Father Andrew Vill has been the parochial vicar at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Stamford since last July. The young priest grew up in Ridgefield, where he attended local schools and was a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. After graduating from Ridgefield High School in 2006, he spent a year at the University of Connecticut majoring in mechanical engineering. It was during that time that he experienced a call to the priesthood that led him to enter St. John Fisher Seminary in 2007.

Father Vill graduated from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield and completed his bachelor of sacred theology degree at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome while living at the North American College. After his ordination to the priesthood by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in May 2014, Father Vill returned to Rome to complete a degree at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family.

Fairfield County Catholic recently interviewed Father Vill about his experiences as one of the diocese’s newest parish priests. His day up to that point had included corresponding with couples preparing for marriage, bringing Holy Communion and a meal to elderly parishioners, and meeting with a person in the process of converting to Catholicism. As the conversation ended, he was heading out yet again, this time to an evening parish function.

FCC: How do you define your relationship with God?

Father Vill: It’s a role that takes many different forms. A lot of parochial vicars are newly ordained, so part of the reality is learning from your pastor how to lead the parish. The idea of being a pastor-in-training is a newer thing, but it’s a bit like being the first mate on a ship. I’m fortunate because there are three priests at St. John’s: The pastor, Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni; myself, and Father Al Audette, who’s in retirement but who helps out more than I do.

FCC: You have spoken in the past of a transformative Confession experience you had during an Emmaus retreat in high school. How has your perspective on that sacrament changed now that you’re a priest?

Father Vill: When you go into the confessional, it’s beautiful because you see God working in a way that you’ve only seen from your side of the confessional as a penitent. Once you’re a priest, you’re able to see it from the other side, and you can tell when somebody has the joy of forgiveness. I can recognize it because I’ve lived it. I don’t think you can believe in the true presence of the Eucharist until you believe that God can and does forgive sins, and you’ve experienced his mercy in confession.

FCC: After you gave your first homily as a priest, you were quoted as saying, “I was preaching to a whole spectrum of believers, but I made sure to address all phases of belief.” How important is that?

Father Vill: One of the golden nuggets of advice that we got in our preaching practicum in the seminary was “Assume that the congregation believes.” The priest told us that if, as new priests, we go out with the idea that nobody believes, then we're going to bring the faith to the people, it’s just an angry homily. Ideally, a priest or deacon is a man of prayer, and when you’re preaching you’re sharing your relationship with God with people. Nobody relates to God the same exact way that I do, and I need to be cognizant of that. I want to make sure that no one feels alienated because I’m speaking to a crowd that they don’t feel they’re a part of.

FCC: Let’s talk about the Faith on Tap program that you’re involved in at St. John’s.

Father Vill: We realize the need for young people to feel comfortable in their own environment, so we offer Faith on Tap each month at Murphy’s Bar in Stamford. It’s open to anyone aged 21 to 39, and we’ve had talks on chastity, dating and relationships as well as God, Jesus and the Church. We had a talk called “Relationships Beyond the Battle of the Sexes” with a Catholic psychologist from our parish. Given that my area of study is marriage and family, I texted some friends asking what they thought people would want to hear about, and somebody suggested answering the question “Why get married in the Church?” which was the topic in April.

FCC: Your face and your words have been featured as part of the Diocese of Bridgeport’s Annual Catholic Appeal this year. In the ACA video, you talk about how you and other seminarians benefited from the generosity of donors to the campaign. How have your thoughts on the ACA changed now that you’re a parish priest?

Father Vill: It’s been great to know that not only do we have the support of the bishop, but that we have the support of the people in the parish. Our parishioners are very generous, and they show that in the weekly collection. We like to say here at the basilica “We do Catholic well.” We want to have a beautiful liturgy and we want to have the sacraments available to the people, and I think they appreciate that. It’s the same with the Annual Catholic Appeal—people believe in the mission of the Church. It’s hard to put it into words, but if you really believe that Christ came to give us life in abundance and you’ve experienced the joy that he brings us, why wouldn’t you want to be part of that mission and spread it to other people?

FCC: Finally, how have your friends from high school reacted to you being a priest?

Father Vill: I think it was more of a shock when people found out I was in the seminary! I really haven’t encountered too many people that haven’t heard that I’m a priest or don’t recognize me. This year is the ten-year anniversary of my high school graduation, and it would be cool to go to the reunion as a priest!
Commemeration

Holocaust Remembrance is a Sacred Duty

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The mood was somber, the words heartfelt and healing, and the music and candle lighting ceremony were transcendent at the 33rd Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony held May 5 in Fairfield. More than 300 people filled First Congregational Church for the annual interfaith commemoration, which included Holocaust survivors and their families.

“This is one of the most somber and important nights in the life of the community,” said Rev. David Spollett of the First Congregational Church, “We come here to bear witness, to give testimony, and to commit to ourselves that we will never forget.”

In his invocation for the evening Rabbi Marcelo Kormis of Congregation Beth El said that some lives and times are blessed while in other times, such as the Holocaust, “People must walk through the valley of the shadows of death.”

“Help us to recall their lives and their destruction, and to bring us to the sacred place of memory,” Rabbi Kormis said.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, the first non-Holocaust survivor to give the main address, told the gathering that it isn’t enough to simply remember the Holocaust as an historical event.

“The act of remembering is a sacred duty,” he said. “We are a society in grave danger if we forget the evil of the past.”

The bishop began his talk by recalling the stunned silence that filled a theater in Brooklyn long after the credits rolled on the movie Schindler’s List. The bishop told the gathering that his elderly mother had asked him to take her and that he was deeply moved by her reaction.

He said that they were the last to leave the theater and that when his mother broke the silence between them, she said in Italian, “We must never forget.”

The bishop said that the movie’s depiction “of a small sliver of the larger horror of the Holocaust forever changed her life and my life.”

The bishop quoted St. Pope John Paul II on his March 23 2000 visit to Yad Vashem, Israel’s official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. “Pope John Paul II said ‘In this place of memory, our mind, heart and soul feels an extreme need for silence.’

No words are strong enough to recall those who were stripped of human dignity and murdered in the Holocaust.

The bishop said that on a commemorative evening it is important “to clear the noise that fills our ordinary lives” and to reject all forms of anti-Semitism, bigotry and hatred.

He said the “survivors in our midst here tonight give us courage in our own troubled times, and inspire us to form a collective conscience that says to the world ‘Never, ever again!’”

The bishop said the best way to honor Holocaust victims and the survivors “is stand free of darkness and stand together in the light that calls each of us to the greater good that we are meant to be in our lives.”

Music for the commemoration was provided by the Fairfield Warde High School Chamber Orchestra and the Chamber Singers of the Fairfield County Children’s Choir.

The powerful candle lighting ceremony included the reading of the names of the death camps and the names of local survivors.

At the end of the ceremony the Holocaust survivors processed out down the center aisle of the Church. Some relied on walkers and canes. They were accompanied by second-generation family members.

SYNOD FROM PAGE 2

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HOLOCAUST COMMENORATION—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano pauses to talk with (l) Rabbi Evan Schulz of Congregation B’nai Israel in Bridgeport, a member of the Holocaust Commemoration Committee and Fairfield Police Captain Joshua Zabrin, co-chair of the committee with Father Charles Allen, SJ. At the reception after the commemoration, Bishop Caggiano met with many of those who attended, including Holocaust survivors.

‘Never, ever again!’

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Catholic Charities 100th

Mass celebrates Christ-centered services

NORWALK—“If we really believe in feeding the hungry and serving the least among us, why does Catholic Charities have to serve one million meals a year and provide 15,000 counseling sessions?” Father Reggie Norman asked in his homily at the Mass celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Almost 400 friends of Catholic Charities turned out at St. Matthew Church for the Mass celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. He was joined on the altar by Msgr. William Scheyd, Msgr. Walter Orlofski, Father Robert Kinnally and Msgr. J. Peter Cullen.

Father Norman, who is pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton and vice chair of the Priest Advisory Council of the Annual Catholic Appeal, said that society shouldn’t blame people for their poverty or simply try to put a band-aid on the wounds of human suffering.

“We need a Christ perspective,” said Father Norman in his reflection of the Gospel of Matthew. “We worship a God who is entangled in the suffering of humanity and he invites us to join our love to his love.”

Noting that over one billion people live on less than $2 a day and have inadequate access to fresh water, Father Norman said that “Christ is mysteriously present in those who need help,” and that people need to move beyond their comfort zones.

“The reason why the world is in chaos is that things are being loved, and people are being used,” said Father Norman. “In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that we will be judged by how we treat the least among us.

Sometimes we call people who live in a different zip code—

if they have one at all—marginalized. But we should stop calling them that. They are our brothers and sisters.” he said.

Father Norman quoted Horace Mann, “Doing nothing for others is the undoing of ourselves,” and the spiritual author, Matthew Kelly, “You can’t become more like Jesus Christ if, at the same time, you stay as you are.”

In his homily Father Reggie Norman told the gathering that we may be “margin-alized by zip code,” but we’re all “brothers and sisters in the Lord.”

At the end of Mass, Bishop Caggiano praised Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities, for “putting the mission of Catholic Charities at the center of his life,” and for his compassion in dealing with the poor.

Referring to the 100-year history of Catholic Charities, Bishop Caggiano said the agency “stands on the shoulders of giants, whose names have receded” while the mission continues in the present. Urging people to remain committed to the mission, he said that “others to come in the future will stand on our shoulders.”

“In a society that wants to turn its back on those who live in the shadows, Catholic Charities speaks for those who have no voice. Where else would they get help if not from us doing what we do in the name of Jesus Christ?” he concluded.

More than 40 members of the Diocesan Youth Choir sang throughout the liturgy, including a beautiful version of “Ave Maria” as a meditation hymn after Communion.

Deacon Patrick Toole of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull served as master of ceremonies for the Mass. Catholic Charities board members Bill Tommins and Jon Vaccarella did the readings, and Anne McCrory, chief legal officer of the diocese, read the Prayer of the Faithful. The Knights of Columbus formed an honor guard, and members of The Order of Malta led the procession.

A reception following Mass was held in the great room of the parish and had the feeling of a large family reunion with Catholic Charities board members, staff, volunteers, and donors coming together to celebrate the 100th Anniversary.

(For more info on Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, visit www.ccfairfield.org.)

Parish garden honors Msgr. Shea

TRUMBULL—St. Catherine of Siena Parish in the Nichols section of Trumbull dedicated a new parish garden in April to honor its former pastor, Msgr. Richard J. Shea, and to celebrate his 80th birthday.

On April 24, Msgr. Shea, who led the parish for 23 years, returned to St. Catherine’s to celebrate the 10:30 am Mass the day before he turned 80. After Mass, parishioners moved outside on a festive and beautiful morning for the re-dedication of the Marian Prayer Garden in Msgr. Shea’s honor.

“It was a picture-perfect day outside,” said Father Joseph Marcello, now pastor of St. Catherine’s. “It reflected the joy of our parish to welcome back Msgr. Shea, to wish him the best of God’s blessings on his 80th birthday, and to thank him for over two decades of generous and dedicated priestly ministry here at St. Catherine’s. We pray that our Blessed Mother, whose prayer garden at our parish is now named for Msgr. Shea, will continue to watch over him always.”

A celebratory gathering was held in the church hall afterward.

Msgr. Richard Shea was born in Elmhurst, Queens, N.Y., on April 25, 1936. After graduating from Bishop Loughlin High School in Brooklyn, he entered St. John’s University, also located in Brooklyn at that time. He completed his theological studies at the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels, Niagara University, N.Y., and was ordained by Bishop (later Cardinal) Lawrence J. Shehan at St. Augustine Cathedral on May 20, 1961.

In May 2011, Msgr. Shea celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination with a Mass of Thanksgiving at Saint Catherine’s. He retired in January 2015, and Father Marcello, former priest secretary to Bishop William E. Lori, was named pastor.

(St. Catherine of Siena Parish is located at 220 Shelton Road, Trumbull. For more info or to contact the parish, call 203.377.3133, ext. 10, email office@stcathtrumbull.com, or visit www.stcathtrumbull.com or twitter@stcathtrumbull.)
Talking music & faith with John Michael Talbot

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

One of the most frequently made comments during the “listening sessions” for Synod 2014 was the need to improve the quality of music at Mass. Some wanted traditional, others contemporary. Fairfield County Catholic couldn’t resist putting these and other questions to Christian music legend John Michael Talbot, who was in the state for the first time in eight years for three evening concerts at St. Jude Parish in Monroe.

Talbot played some of his best-known songs, including “Holy Is Thy Name,” which are now standards in liturgical worship and on the concert circuit. The multi-platinum artist has recorded 55 albums and tours eight months of the year in the U.S. His work bringing prayerful and meditative standards in liturgical worship is Thy Name,” which are now known songs, including “Holy Parish in Monroe.

three evening concerts at St. Jude moved fast. Maybe they’ve become too concert-oriented in mega churches—too much of a show. We don’t have that problem, we’ve moved really slowly—we’re stuck in the 60s.

You believe that music can help to change that? Keep in mind that for millennia, the Church was the primary patron of the arts... and the artwork best suited to prayer is music.

The mega churches have great sound and lighting and qualified people employed by the church. They really pop. The Church should be all about supporting and patronizing musicians and artists to bring forth a deep spirituality.

Why is it that, outside of yourself and a few others, most of the voices in contemporary Christian music are not Catholic? The Church missed out on it. When the Christian contemporary music genre was birthed, my mentor, Billy Ray Hearn, went to Catholic churches and offered to bring it to their services. The evangelicals ran with it and moved fast. Maybe they’ve become too concert-oriented in mega churches—too much of a show. We don’t have that problem, we’ve moved really slowly—we’re stuck in the 60s.

Some people feel contemporary music is a total failure and would like to see the Church return to Latin and other traditional music.

I think part of the problem is that after Vatican II, we did it awkwardly without grace. A lot of people got turned off to it, but an over-reaction to that music is a mistake. We need a response, not a reaction. We need fundamentals without becoming fundamentalists in our Catholic faith. It’s important to think about the rules but you have to have spirit and life in those things.

The challenge is to create contemporary music that’s authentically Catholic and adapted to the culture in which local Church finds herself.

Prince’s death underlined the great power of secular music and the spiritual values people attach to it. Any thoughts on that? Music by its nature is sacramental, which means it’s mysterious. When a great player plays, it reaches down and stirs something in our humanity, and that can be deeply spiritual. Prince led a hedonistic life and then became a Jehovah’s Witness—the spiritual side of his life should not be overlooked. And he played a mean guitar!

Do you think Catholics can agree on an approach to music? There have always been music wars. Once the early Church moved from the synagogue system into the Greek world of mysticism and music, there were immediate tensions. Ambrose and Augustine were cautious about the use of popular Greek musical tones and sounds, but they were also proponents of music in worship. We shouldn’t be discouraged by the music wars—what’s too much or too little in relation to the secular world. It’s not enough to use contemporary music or to go back to Gregorian chant. We must do it with joy and love and invite others to come along on the journey.

Despite the challenges, are you hopeful? We need to re-engage people. It’s not rocket science, not complicated, not hard to do. We have to give people permission to get excited about our Catholic faith again. We need bishops and pastors to hold up the banner and say, “follow this way.”

The Pope has given us the answers. He has told us what to do, and that is to invite every Christian to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Every Mass is an altar-call, an opportunity to stand up and give our lives to Christ. We have what we need in the Eucharist.
Parish News

Rainbows gives hope to grieving children

By PAT HENNESSY

“My mother died when I was eight years old,” says Mary Curley, co-facilitator of Rainbows for all Children at Holy Spirit Parish in Stamford. “I got through it, but it could have been a lot easier if we’d had something like Rainbows when I was a child.”

Rainbows for all Children helps youngsters and teens who are grieving because of the loss of someone they love. “There are all kinds of loss, not just death,” emphasizes Lynn Cerrone, the other Rainbows facilitator at Holy Spirit, pointing out that the process of going through death or divorce is the same. “These kids are in such a fragile place.”

This year, over 65 million young people in the U.S. will suffer loss due to death, divorce or other life-altering events. They do not have the tools to process that loss and they may feel isolated and alone, or may blame themselves in some way for what has happened.

Started in Chicago in 1983 as a healing ministry for children ages 3-18, Rainbows now has more than 9,000 sites in over 17 countries. While it is already more than 9,000 sites in over 100 countries, the program at Holy Spirit Parish, established in nearby states, the parish currently has 17 council who designed the Holy Spirit/Rainbows logo, and the encouragement of Msgr. Royal, Curley got approval for a Rainbows program at the parish. “It was never just for the parish,” she emphasizes. “It’s not exclusive. They come from throughout the area, and it’s free for all kids and teenagers.”

Although Rainbows trains the facilitators, they are not therapists. They could more accurately be called compassionate companions, who know that each loss is different and each person deals with it in their own way. “It’s a space for kids to heal,” says Curley of the weekly sessions, “a relaxed, informal gathering where they can find hope for the future.”

“I lost my mother, a beloved grandmother to my children,” says Danielle Jean-Guillaume Stipol, a single mom, whose mother lived just down the street. She describes her children’s grandmother as “almost a co-parent.”

“My eight-year-old really did not communicate after her death. The first time she came to a Rainbows meeting, she sat to one side until a little boy went over and asked her to join them.”

This peer-to-peer companionship is at the heart of the Rainbows experience. “The kids heal each other. That’s at the core of it,” says Lynn Cerrone. “The kids bond; they’re developing trust.”

Children in the 14-week Rainbows programs meet weekly in small groups and are guided through age-appropriate activities, from building mobiles or paper chains with their feelings written on them to making a pizza together while they talk with each other.

“It’s amazing how kids process things,” says Curley. “They’re adjusting to change and dealing with feelings—anger, fear, trust, forgiveness. These kids have these awful fears in their heads. By talking about it, they can help each other through it. They develop coping skills to go through their loss. It’s amazing some of the insights kids have.”

Holy Spirit currently has three groups of children, with an age range from four to 13, in its Rainbows program. If there’s a problem beyond the range of Rainbows, the facilitators can help families make contact with a therapist.

The parish holds a prayer service halfway through the program, with another at the end. In addition, prayer volunteers gather in the church for “Rainbows Prayers” every Tuesday at 4 pm.

They do not know the children in the program—confidentiality is key—and the children don’t know them, but families are comforted to realize that they are cared for and supported through these prayers.

The current session of Rainbows will end June 5, but children can join at any time and Curley and Cerrone are always ready to talk to families. Additional 14-week fall and spring sessions are already being planned.

In addition, Holy Spirit is holding an afternoon for families: “What to say when you don’t know what to say” on May 22, which will include a dramatic reading of Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing after Loss. The gathering will be held from 4-6 pm and includes prayer, background on the Rainbows program, and time for questions with professional counselors.

(For more information on Rainbows for all Children or on the gathering on May 22, call 203.323.3722 or email rainbows@holyspiritstamford.org.)
Catholic Charities 100th

On May 7, more than 400 people gathered at St. Matthew Church in Norwalk for a special Mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

And there’s much to celebrate: Beginning with its care for widows, orphans and early immigrants, Catholic Charities has brought quality senior housing to Fairfield County; created a network of counseling and mental health programs for people losing control of their lives; established soup kitchens that have served millions of meals to the working poor and homeless; and brought together generations of adoptive families.

Its workers were also on the ground ministering to diocesan families in two of the darkest days in our recent history: the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the still-unthinkable loss of 26 lives at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

Catholic Charities never asks anyone’s faith or worthiness—they meet people at the level of human need and suffering. In one of wealthiest counties in the U.S., their work is a reminder that many are not invited to the table and would have nowhere else to turn without their help.

After Mass, the bishop praised Al Barber, who has ably led the agency for last 12 years in the face of many challenges. Al has been tireless in his own personal charity and in his advocacy for all of those served by Catholic Charities. He has given his heart and soul to the mission.

“We stand on the shoulders of giants,” Bishop Caggiano said in his brief remarks about the work of the agency over 100 years.

“Many of the names have receded into history,” the bishop added, “We stand on the shoulders of giants,” Bishop Caggiano said in his brief remarks about the work of the agency over 100 years.

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Many thanks go out to the dinner sponsors and benefactors, the organizers, to the new Board of Trustees and to all those who participated in the evening.

Off to a Great Start

If the inaugural dinner for the new Foundations in Education is any indication, we can look forward to great things in the future. A total of 250 men and women turned out for an evening that brought together business, civil and educational leaders. The event raised more than $300,000 to launch Foundations, which will support the transformation of schools and spur investment in Catholic education in the diocese.

The mission of Foundations in Education is to ensure that Catholic schools remain at the cutting edge of innovation for the 21st century. Its philanthropic efforts will make resources available for the training and continuing education of teachers, principals, and administrators as they design the schools of the future.

During the evening Bishop Frank J. Caggiano shared his vision for Foundations: “What brings us here this evening is the celebration of the great gift of Catholic education, a gift well known to all of us, and one that many of us have profited from in our own personal journey.

“When we speak of education, we understand it to mean the passing of knowledge and truths about the beauty of life: that there is something greater than the eye can see, and there is a destiny for every human heart that far exceeds the material things of the world. We want young people to know that there is a truth to life, and that truth is being introduced to Jesus Christ.”

The bishop said the successful Bishop’s Scholarship Fund would be incorporated into Foundations, whose trustees “are committing themselves to provide much needed support, so that the miracle of Catholic education is and will forever be available to every family that desires it for their children.”

Many thanks go out to the dinner sponsors and benefactors, the organizers, to the new Board of Trustees and to all those who participated in the evening.

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

REVEREND ROBERT M. KINNALLY, Rector of Saint John Fisher Seminary, Stamford, to Pastor of Saint Aloysius Parish, New Canaan. Father Kinnally will continue to serve as Chancellor. Effective date is December 31.

REVEREND JOSEPH GILL, Parochial Vicar of Saint Mary Parish/Saint Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat Parish, Stamford, to Episcopal Chaplain at Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford. Father Gill will continue to reside at Saint Mary Parish in Stamford. Effective date is July 1.

REVEREND MONSIGNOR WILLIAM SCHEYD, Pastor of Saint Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, to retirement. Monsignor Scheyd will continue to serve as Episcopal Vicar for Senior Priests. Effective date is December 31.

DEACON DEACON JOHN C. D’TARANTO, Deacon of Saint Jude Parish, Monroe, to Deacon of Saint Stephen Parish, Trumbull. Effective date is June 1.

Of Saint Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, to retirement. Monsignor Scheyd will continue to serve as Episcopal Vicar for Senior Priests. Effective date is December 31.

REVEREND GONZAGUE TARANTO, Deacon of Saint Joseph Parish, Bridgeport, to a subscription. To cancel, change or add a subscription, please email: fco#diobpt.org.

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Editorial

‘Well, that devolved rather quickly’

A WOMAN’S VOICE
BY KATIE SCARLETT CALCUTT

Katie-Scarlett Calcutt is the mother of two and a founding member of Mass Mob of Fairfield County.

What had started out as a cheerful bath time ended with tears from (nearly) all present. I think even my stalwart husband was crying on the inside.

Highlight reel: Mother asks Brother to get out of the tub. Ever the temper, he splashes Sister in the face with water. Sister begins screaming. Enter Father and the “Reprimand.” Oldest begins screaming. Enter Father and the “Reprimand.” Oldest begins screaming. Near the “Reprimand”? I have never been more yells.

Lesson: Sin breeds sin. An act of anger, met with another act of anger, quickly snowballs—and lingers—to devastate an entire family’s night. From the babies who you’d think wouldn’t notice to the adults who should know better, people struggle to resist the temptation to greet anger with anger, violence with violence, sin with sin. Everyone . . . is . . . yelling.

Epilogue: Later that night, the cherubs are peacefully in bed, but the incivility remains. Father and Mother resume a difficult conversation, finding they are unable to resolve it and go to bed angry. There may have been more yelling.

Be fruitful, multiply

A DAD’S VIEW
BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

We’re having a baby. Number Five is due in July. I know what you’re thinking—nobody has that many kids anymore, mister. Well, you’re wrong. Plenty do. The Hennesseys are friendly with quite a few families with more—sometimes many more—than five. In the crowd we run with, five players is a mid-sized roster. I’m one of four. Back in the 80s, having four kids made our family the biggest on the block. Few of my friends had more than a sibling or two. Now, four passengers is considered a sold-out flight.

In previous generations, though, even four wasn’t considered much. My mother was one of seven. My friend Nancy Grimm of St. Theresa’s in Trumbull is the youngest of eight. Her husband Leon is one of 17.

These days, large families prompt questions. “How will you send them all to college?” “Where will they all sleep?” “How many refrigerators do you have?” “What about individual attention?” “Don’t you forget their names?” Baked into these inquiries is an assumption: No family can love and provide for more than a certain number of children—and that number is certainly fewer than four or five. Unless you have unlimited resources, someone is going to get cheated.

This is balderdash.

Money doesn’t raise kids, love does, and love is not a finite resource. Happiness is not a pie cut ever-thinner slices. Parenting is not a zero-sum game.

Behold,” says King Solomon in Psalm 127, “children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.”

When we open our hearts to the gift of life, our reward is infinite, just as his love for us is limitless and everlasting. Unhappiness comes from closing our hearts to this heritage. We fall down when we substitute our own judgment for his.

Remember when Pope Francis said we don’t need to breed like rabbits to be good Catholics? It got a lot of press. Much of it misinterpreted his point. What didn’t get any press was his clarification.

“Healthy families are essential to the life of society,” he said. “It provides us with consolation and hope to see so many large families who welcome children as a gift from God.”

I tell the young people I work with to get married and start having children as soon as possible. It’s not a popular message. It’s like telling them to eat more carbs. They want to get their careers going before starting down the family path. They want fun now; responsibility later.

“Money doesn’t raise kids, love does, and love is not a finite resource. Happiness is not a pie of ever-thinner slices.”

“We Catholics used to be known for our large families. It was a living symbol of our commitment to the purpose of marriage. These days, sadly, even many faithful Catholics think of large families as a relic of the past. I hope that is changing. We’re doing our bit, anyway. Pray for us.

From the babies who you’d think wouldn’t notice to the adults who should know better, people struggle to resist the temptation to greet anger with anger.”

We could talk all day about incivility “out there.” In politics, in the media, in other people’s homes. It is an entertaining distraction for me to think: at least I’m not (insert hated reality TV star here). But my standard isn’t a reality TV star. My standard is Christ.

So, the next time my three-year-old screams at me for not putting the right amount of ice in her water or my husband, once again, makes me late to an appointment, I can’t get it with anger or even passive aggressiveness. I have to change the tone. I first control the tone in my own heart, and then in my own home. I can’t underestimate the effect that can have on the world at large.

While I know the power one splash can unleash, I am also confident even the largest “splash” cannot withstand the power of mercy, charity, and humility: especially when rooted in Christ.

A WOMAN’S VOICE

Lesson: Sin breeds sin. An act of anger, met with another act of anger, quickly snowballs—and lingers—to devastate an entire family’s night. From the babies who you’d think wouldn’t notice to the adults who should know better, people struggle to resist the temptation to greet anger with anger, violence with violence, sin with sin.

Everyone … is … yelling.

Epilogue: Later that night, the cherubs are peacefully in bed, but the incivility remains. Father and Mother resume a difficult conversation, finding they are unable to resolve it and go to bed angry. There may have been more yelling.

Lesson: Sin breeds sin. An act of anger, met with another act of anger, quickly snowballs—and lingers—to devastate an entire family’s night. From the babies who you’d think wouldn’t notice to the adults who should know better, people struggle to resist the temptation to greet anger with anger, violence with violence, sin with sin.
Venerating Mary

MARY: Why we love her and need her

Back in the early centuries of the Church, there was a series of thoughtful theories, as well as crackpot heresies, on the "nature" of Jesus Christ. One view was that Christ was solely divine, another that he was just a wise and mesmerizing human being—subject to the same human pressures and temptations to which we are all subject.

The Church has taught us, since its beginning, that he was both—the Son of God, and a human—the son of Mary. His fairly brief life, and the miracles he performed, confirm his divinity. His agony in the garden, and the miracles he performed, confirm his divinity. His agony in the garden, and the enormous power of Mary, the mother of Christ, are not—at least they were not to me, and perhaps not to most Catholics.

You know the story: big wedding; servants and waiters all over the place, wine flowing like the Jordan River; nervous bridegroom overseeing the festivities. Then—horror of horrors—the wine "ran short," in John's amusingly contemporaneous phrase. One can imagine the distressed fluttering of the waiters, as an embarrassing disaster loomed for the bridal couple.

Mary picked up on their distress, and, in this case, the need for divine intervention. To Jesus, hanging with his friends: "Son, they have no wine."

Jesus, irritated with his mother—as some time or other we all are with ours—replied: "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour is not yet come: coloquially translated to "C'mon, Ma, you know I'm not ready for this…"

And Mary, in the face of the expressed wish of the Son of the Living God, and driven no doubt by heartache for the impending disgrace to the bride and groom, ignores him, and turning to the servants tells them, "Do whatever he tells you."

I obviously cannot divine the attitude of a woman of two thousand years ago, but I bet it was this: "I know who you are, son, and have known since the day I was visited by the angel, but I am your mother and as long as we are on this earth together you will comply with my reasonable requests."

Jesus, of course, probably shrugged and smiled in the direction of his friends ("You guys know mothers; they don’t take no for an answer") and proceeded to create as much as 180 gallons of what was undoubtedly the best wine in history.

His mom asked him—told him—to do it, so he did.

Any doubt that the Son of God was truly a man? And should there be any doubt that our sweet Mary was a doting but persistent mother who bent Jesus to her views and supplications? Any doubt, finally, that in her eternal role as Queen of Heaven, she can take our prayers to the one who, no doubt, thinks of her as his loving mother, and will for all eternity?

We love Mary for the way she gently, lovingly, and firmly, managed the Christ as a child and young man.

Most of all, we need her, as our "lawyer," if you will, to intercede with her son on our behalf. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

Abortion healing

During the Jubilee Mercy, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano reminds Catholics of the Church’s outreach to women who have been wounded by an abortion. “Our local diocesan ministry has recently implemented a new healing model under the Project Rachel umbrella called Entering Canaan,” he said. “This model ensures constant and consistent support for those beginning their healing journey.”

Entering Canaan includes days of Prayer and Healing, monthly gatherings of support groups and weekend retreats. Days of Prayer and Healing are scheduled on four Saturdays throughout the year: May 14, July 9, September 10 and December 10. For more information, contact Maureen Cardiello: 203.416.1455 or mcardiello@diobpt.org; or the Project Rachel phone line: 203.416.1619 or projectrachel@diobpt.org. All contacts are confidential.
St. Joseph School, Shelton

$70,000 ‘Bob Scinto Scholarships’ announced

SHELTON—Thanks to a generous grant from Bob Scinto, well-known real estate developer and business leader in Shelton, thirty-five Bob Scinto Scholarships, each worth $2,000, are being given to new students registering in St. Joseph Elementary School in Shelton for the 2016-17 school year.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano made the announcement of the Bob Scinto Scholarship program, worth $70,000, at an open meeting attended by 100 members of the local community on April 5. Announcing Scinto’s generous grant, Bishop Caggiano observed that “St. Joseph School is serving the type of students that a Catholic education was traditionally created for: a multicultural, racially and ethnically diverse student body, spanning all socio-economic backgrounds.”

Bishop Caggiano voiced his strong support for the renaissance taking place at St. Joseph School under the leadership for the past two years of Principal Steve Anderson, former principal of Central High School in Bridgeport and Connecticut’s 2007 Principal of the Year.

Msgr. Chris Walsh, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, which has sponsored St. Joseph School for 89 years, says “I am delighted that, due to the Bob Scinto Scholarship, the $3 million Bishop’s Scholarship Fund (available for new students) and the local Guardian Angels Fund (available for new and current students), attending St. Joseph’s school next year will be more affordable than ever which is great news for The Valley.”

Scholarships are exclusively for students attending St. Joseph School. This particular scholarship program also includes new students in grades K-8 whose older siblings already attend the school. The Bob Scinto Scholarship is given on a first-come, first-served basis.

Youth Ministry welcomes national speakers

BY EVAN PSENCIK

DARIEN—On May 7, thirty-five youth ministry leaders and catechists representing 19 parishes from around the diocese gathered together at St. John Parish in Darien for the inaugural Bridgeport Youth Ministry Formation Day.

The keynote speaker for the day was Bob Rice, internationally known speaker and professor of Youth Ministry and Catechetics at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. He began the day with a keynote speech entitled, “An Organic and Comprehensive Approach to Youth Ministry.” His presentation made some important points about the formation program also includes new

Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Brooklyn, presented on helping youth transition from high school to young adulthood. “We must find new and effective ways to reach out to the millennial generation and connect them to our parishes,” he told participants.

Ela Milewska, director of the Office of Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese of New York presented a workshop on The Art of Accompaniment. “Pope Francis is challenging us as ministers to walk the journey along side young people today.”

Patrick Donovan, director of the Diocesan Leadership Institute presented a workshop on effective strategies in youth ministry. “We must plan and vision a Church which looks past outdated models of youth ministry and looks forward to the young Church of 2025.”

After lunch, Rice delivered a second keynote on Incarnational Ministry. “Youth ministry isn’t about programs, it is about people. It must be an organic, living ministry that reaches out and meets young people where they are.”

The day ended with a blessing and with the following to say about the day, “It was such a blessing to be here today. I was able to bring two other people from my team. We learned so much that will help us build our youth ministry program.”

(For more information on young adult programs in the Diocese of Bridgeport, contact Evan Psencik, coordinator of youth and young adult formation: epsencik@diobpt.org.)
New Covenant Center

Sports and community highlight
NCC Celebrity Breakfast

STAMFORD—New Covenant Center held its 12th Annual Celebrity Breakfast at the Woodway Country Club in Darien on April 19.

The event hosted over 250 people who were treated to an enjoyable new guest speaker format. This year featured an interview style discussion with Mark Lazarus, chair of NBC Sports Group, interviewed by Rob Simmelkjaer, senior VP of NBC Sports Ventures, and the former honorary chair of the New Covenant Center Capital Campaign.

They shared information about the importance of NBC Sports volunteering at New Covenant Center and other charities, and a fun “behind the scenes” glimpse of the logistics of putting on the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Phil Shalala, chairman emeritus of New Covenant Center, was honored with the first “Founders Award” for the creation of the Celebrity Breakfast event and for his 16 years of devoted service. Additionally, John Gutman, executive director, revealed a new logo for the center that better reflects the range of services offered in the new facility. Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, proudly discussed this year’s 100th Anniversary of Catholic Charities, of which New Covenant Center is a program.

The Celebrity Breakfast set a new record for funds raised for New Covenant Center, and all proceeds go to support New Covenant Center meals, food pantry and human services programs.

Thanks go to all Celebrity Breakfast sponsors.


In-kind donations were provided by The Advocate/Greenwich Time, Moffly Media, and Stamford Florist.

Founded nearly 40 years ago, New Covenant Center is an interfaith project of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, serving the homeless, elderly, disabled, working poor, and children. No one is turned away. There are no requirements to enter the New Covenant Center doors, except a mutual exchange of respect and dignity.

Last summer, New Covenant Center opened a new 8,000 sq. ft. facility at 174 Richmond Hill in Stamford. The center serves hot meals twice a day, 365 days a year. Including the breakfast program and food pantry, it provides over 700,000 meals a year. The new facility includes an efficient and modern kitchen, a welcoming dining area, expanded food storage area and refrigeration, a spacious food pantry area and additional space for other services.

(To learn more or to donate, go to newcovenantcenter.org or contact John Gutman, executive director JGutman@cfc-ct.org.)
Founder of the Order of St. Birgitta

Blessed Mother Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad

ROME, Italy—On June 5, Pope Francis will canonize Blessed Mother Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad, who revived the Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Birgitta, better known as the Sisters of St. Bridget.

Their mission, warmly in evidence at their guest house in Darien, is prayer and hospitality for the unity of all Christians.

Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad was born in Sweden June 4, 1870, and baptized a Lutheran. She immigrated to the United States in 1886. Mary Elizabeth cared for the sick at New York City’s Roosevelt Hospital while she pursued her medical studies and continued in her life-long search for God.

In 1898 she became gravely ill, and was sent for a rest with the Catholic Dominican sisters in Saratoga Springs. It was here that she started to feel an attraction to Catholicism. After her recuperation, she returned to work. She saw to the education of her brothers and sisters, rose from nurse to directress at Roosevelt Hospital, prepared for her degree in medicine and converted to Catholicism.

In Rome in 1904 she asked permission to receive the Brigittine habit, worn by an order of nuns founded by St. Birgitta of Sweden in the 14th century. Coming from a Lutheran background, she saw her order’s mission as working for Christian unity by offering their hospitality to people of all religions and those with none.

Today semi-cloistered Sisters sponsor guest houses in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Americas. There are 55 communities offering the order’s unique charism of prayer, hospitality and ecumenism in 16 countries.

Mother Elizabeth’s dream of opening a convent of Prayer and Hospitality in the United States was fulfilled when a small group of Brigittines arrived in Darien on May 29, 1957. Although she didn’t live to see the opening of the convent in Darien, she was actively involved in plans to transform the beautiful “summer cottage” and its peaceful acres overlooking Long Island Sound into a house of prayer and hospitality. She died in Rome on April 24, 1957, just a few weeks before four Sisters set sail.

St. Birgitta’s guest house and retreat center in Darien is still the only Brigittine convent in the U.S. It is also known locally as Vikingsborg, the original name of the 10-acre Darien coastal estate that was donated to the Sisters. The Darien estate had belonged to the family of Richard Tjader who, coincidentally, like Mother Elizabeth had emigrated from Sweden to the United States.

The Convent of St. Birgitta is to open to overnight guests and non-denominational meetings and retreats. Visitors who find their way to Vikingsborg discover a spiritual haven in a setting of great natural beauty. Some come regularly for Mass, for dinner or retreats; others come for longer stays in search of rest and spiritual renewal.

“Everyone who finds their way here seems to have their own particular reason, and many keep coming back—so they must be finding whatever it is they need,” said Sister Eunice Kulangarathotiyl of India, the convent’s superior. “Many times people come here in great crisis, other times just to enjoy the great peace and tranquility.”

(For more information about Mother Elizabeth, her canonization in Rome, or the apostolate of prayer and hospitality in Darien, contact Convent of St. Birgitta: 203.655.1068 or conventsb@optonline.net.)
Book Review

Cardinal Egan’s columns

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan, had two unfinished projects on his desk on the day he died, March 5, 2015, and they both involved the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The first was a fundraiser for St. John Fisher Seminary, which he founded in the diocese in 1989. On the morning of his passing, Cardinal Egan was working on a guest list with his former priest secretary, Father Michael Jones, who is now vicar for development for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The second project required putting the finishing touches on a collection of his columns from Fairfield County Catholic, written between 1989 and 2008, when he served as Bishop of Bridgeport.

Perhaps there was no one better to assist him in that task and to complete the unfinished work than Dr. Joseph McAleer, who served as director of communications and editor of Fairfield County Catholic from 1999 to 2008.

The two had been working on the book for months and the Cardinal had culled the collection to 50 representative columns. After the Cardinal’s sudden passing at age 82, Dr. McAleer moved ahead with his wishes for the project, providing the final edits and writing an insightful introduction to the volume titled *Practice for Heaven*, True Stories from a Modern Missionary, (Sophia Institute Press (293 pages), Manchester, N. H., 2016.

In an era before Facebook and the immediacy of social media, Cardinal Egan wrote more than 230 columns for both *Fairfield County Catholic* and *Catholic New York*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of New York.

As Dr. McAleer notes in his excellent introduction, the title of the book is derived from the Cardinal’s often repeated remark that all of his efforts as a priest, “were practice for getting into Heaven.”

In summarizing Cardinal Egan’s considerable achievements and legacy in Bridgeport and New York, Dr. McAleer includes some of the Cardinal’s statements on the sexual abuse crisis; however, none of the columns directly address the issue. He also offers a concise, revealing biography that mentions the Cardinal’s two-year struggle with polio as a boy.

The columns bring back what many in the diocese had the pleasure of reading in *Fairfield County Catholic* and hearing in his elegant voice—his great charm and story telling ability. He could set up a column with the gifts of a short story writer, and he had a natural gift for describing the many people he encountered in his ministry and his travels as a priest and a bishop.

“Her Magic,” a column he wrote on Mother Theresa’s visit to the South Bronx, is remarkable in its scene setting and dialogue, and in the alarming story he tells of a young man who staggers down the aisle of the Church during Mass after being beaten and bloodied by a drug dealer outside. Much to the Cardinal’s amazement, Mother Theresa and her young Sisters immediately attend to the man and send him on his way with prayer and hope in his heart.

Readers may also want to read the memorable profile of John Paul II written in June 1998, on the 20th anniversary of his pontificate. The piece is based on the Cardinal’s many face-to-face meetings and encounters with St. John Paul II and offers a privileged look at this remarkable man.

Sometimes he is at best in minor pieces such as “Repentances,” in which he relays the story of a lost Caravaggio that is found in an old rectory in Dublin, where it hung over a sideboard in the dining room. In his patented style, he draws us into the meaning of the column through the elegant veneer of his description. The tale then moves to New York City and a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in 1997, after the Met had acquired what was believed to be the last undiscovered Caravaggio. While he delights the reader with his understanding of art and his easy companionship with his fellow museumgoers, he ends up delivering a devastating homily on betrayal, repentance, and the need we all have to ask for forgiveness.

Cardinal Egan emerges from these columns as an enormously urbane observer of the international Church and defender of the faith of others, wherever he found it—in Rome, Prague, Havana, Dublin, Damascus, Budapest, and Nanning (Southwest China) to name just a few of his stops. He frequently mentions walking, taking the subway, and boarding a bus, and his love for his adopted city of Manhattan is evident.

In this handsome volume, readers will discover a man who is a great traveling companion on the journey of faith. He has the eye of a painter, the ear of a musician, the soul of a parish priest, always willing to accompany others and to find joy and meaning in life as he “practiced for heaven.”
Sports: Legendary Coach Honored
Now it’s Bisacca Court at Fairfield

By DON HARRISON

Eight men have coached basketball, with varying degrees of success, at Fairfield University since George Bisacca retired in the spring of 1968.

It was Bisacca, though, who transformed Fairfield basketball from a little-known Division-II program into one capable of challenging Providence, Holy Cross, Boston College, St. Bonaventure, Duquesne and, indeed, on one January evening in 1968, even No. 1-in-the-nation Houston. His 10-year record at the Stags’ helm, from 1958-68, was 151-87.

So, fittingly if somewhat belatedly, the Jesuit university recognized its retired director of athletics and coach in a ceremony at Alumni Hall on November 6. George and Millie, his wife of 66 years, were there for the unveiling of George R. Bisacca Court. (The Bisaccas are long-time parishioners at St. Thomas Parish.)

They were joined for the event by the six Bisacca children and their families; George’s brother, Pat Jordan, author of the acclaimed “A False Spring” and other books; at least a dozen of the coach’s former Fairfield players and several of his Fairfield Prep players, many long-time supporters, and perhaps 1,500 fans.

“The whole thing was a shock,” Bisacca, 87, explained later. “When I went to lunch with (current Director of Athletics) Gene Doris and he told me to put November 6 on my calendar, I said I didn’t want to do it. My time is over and all of the people I knew are dead.”

Doris persevered, though, and Bisacca finally agreed to participate, noting that “it would be worthwhile to remind people of the commitments made by so many in the early years to establish a first-class program at Fairfield Prep and the university.

Bisacca’s links to the Jesuits extend to his childhood. He was a member of Fairfield Prep’s first four-year graduating class, in 1946, and played three seasons of basketball for Prep. He earned both his bachelor’s and law degrees from another Jesuit institution, Georgetown. He also played basketball for the Hoyas.

By the early 1950s, he was a practicing attorney and newly married with a growing family, but he agreed to coach Prep basketball—for a stipend of $500 per season. He guided the Jesuits to an 89-32 record across six seasons. When the coaching job at the university opened in 1958, Bisacca accepted the Stags’ offer of $1,700 a season. “It was a no-brainer for me,” he cracked. “To get three times what I was making and a chance to coach in college. Why negotiate for more?”

After winning three straight Tri-State League titles and his 1961-62 Stags being voted the top College Division team in the East, Bisacca—now the university’s athletic director as well—convinced the school’s administration to elevate the basketball program to Division I.

The transition paid dividends from the outset. Sparked by a pair of All-State players from New Haven’s Hillhouse High, Mike Branch and Jim Brown, and former Hartford Public star Pat Burke, the Stags made their D-I debut in 1964-65 with a creditable 14-7 record. The streak began with a 100-93 road upset over Bob Cousy-coached Boston College. The 1965-66 Stags concluded with a lustrous 19-5 record, but Burke’s accidental death, from an off-campus accident in mid-February, cast a pall over the season.

Years three and four of major-college competition produced winning records, too, 12-9 and 16-10, but Bisacca, weary from his taxing schedule as lawyer, coach, athletic director, father and husband, relinquished the coaching reins in March 1968.

“I can think of nothing more challenging, more inspiring and more rewarding than the coaching of young men in athletic competition,” said Bisacca, who called his decision to leave coaching “the most difficult one I have ever made.”

County-coached Boston College.
Sports: St. Joseph’s High School

Williams following in Russell’s footsteps

By DON HARRISON

Nicole Williams never saw Jen Russell pitch, but she is aware of her myriad of accomplishments at St. Joseph High School, Sacred Heart University and, briefly, with the amateur champion Brakettes. Williams, a 17-year-old senior and two-time All-State selection at the Trumbull-based high school, hopes she’s on a similar softball path. Entering the second half of the 2016 spring season, her career numbers already rival Russell’s. Consider:

• Won-lost record: 67-7
• Earned run average: 0.80
• Strikeouts/innings pitched: 673/473
• Shutouts: 36
• No-hitters: 6
• One-hitters: 13

“From her freshman year to today, Nicole has learned how to compete at this level of play,” says Jeff Babineau, now in his seventh year as the Cadets’ head coach. “She has the size and speed to succeed; she’s working on her pitch location. She’s very dedicated, too.”

“Softball is pretty much year-round for me,” says Williams. “It’s five days a week during the off-season. During the season it’s pretty much every day, with St. Joe’s and my travel team (Xtreme Chaos). We also give clinics for younger kids.”

Williams won 11 of her first 12 decisions this spring, highlighted by a no-hitter against Greenwich and a personal-best 17 strikeouts against Stamford in a four-hit, 4-0 shutout. She also pitched a five-inning perfect game against Brian McMahon, striking out 14 of 15 batters. The Cadets lead the FCIAC’s Eastern Division with a seamless 9-0 record and are vying for their third straight conference title. While FCIAC championships are nice, co-captains Williams and Lauren Blose and the other St. Joe’s seniors are determined to complete their scholastic careers with a Class M state title.

“We’ve had such good teams and haven’t been able to win the states,” says Williams. “We’ve gotten one step closer each time, reaching the semi-finals two years ago and the state championship game a year ago.”

In the 2015 state tournament, Williams threw a pair of shutouts—against Ellington and Morgan—and, in the semi-finals, allowed six hits and contributed a home run to a 5-3 verdict over Seymour. She pitched shutout ball against Oxford for five innings in the title game, but Oxford broke through with four runs and prevailed, 4-0. That was her lone loss of the season following 23 wins.

Babineau, who was inducted into the Connecticut Softball Hall of Fame for his exploits with Midas Touch Jewelers, is no stranger to championships, as player or coach. Midas, with Babineau as one of its infield stars, competed in several ASA Major slow-pitch national tournaments during the 1990s. In his coaching debut at St. Joe’s, the Cadets captured the 2010 Class M state title.

Williams is the youngest of three children from an athletic family in Ansonia. One brother, Tyler, was a New Haven Register football All-Stater and a member of Ansonia High’s undefeated 2011 Class M state champions. Her dad, Karl, also played football for the Chargers, and her mom, Lynda, was a softball star at the school. Her other brother, Michael, played soccer there.

So why did Nicole opt to attend St. Joseph? “I liked it here right away,” she responds. “Here, I kind of get a sense of going to college.”

Williams will enter Manhattan College on a softball scholarship in the fall. The Riverdale, N.Y.-based Lasallian Catholic school began recruiting her early on. She made a verbal commitment to attend Manhattan in her sophomore year and signed a letter of intent last fall. There, she’ll be reunited with two former St. Joe’s softball teammates, Lauren Pitney and Jenn Vazquez.

First things first, though. That elusive state title.

“We all have one goal this year, and it’s to win states,” says Williams. “I think it helped us, advancing to the title game. It was a really big stage last year. We know how close we got, and we want to make it happen this year.”

The heroic witness of Native American Christians:
Kateri Tekakwitha & the 86 Florida martyrs

By Mary Soha, MD: Vice Postulator for the Martyrs of La Florida and former member of the Commission for the Canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha

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Father Robert J. Usenza, 81

WEST HAVEN—Father Robert J. Usenza died peacefully at his home in West Haven on April 18. A priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Father Usenza had spent the major part of his priestly ministry in service to the U.S. military.

He was born on September 21, 1934 in Brooklyn, N.Y., and prepared for the priesthood at St. Mary’s College, St. Mary’s, Ky., St. Thomas Seminary, Bloomfield and St. Mary Seminary, Baltimore, Md.

Father Usenza was ordained by Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan, first Bishop of Bridgeport, at St. Augustine Cathedral on May 20, 1961. He was assigned as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Stratford; St. Mary Parish, New London; and St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport. He also was in residence at Our Lady of Grace and St. Joseph Parish, Shelton, and was temporary administrator at St. Andrew’s.

Father Usenza served as the spiritual director at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull and Cathedral Girls’ High School (now Kolbe Cathedral) in Bridgeport. In addition, he was appointed priest chaplain at Norwalk Community College.

He completed graduate studies at Fairfield University in counseling and attended Naval Chaplains’ School in Newport, R.I. He served as a U.S. Navy chaplain until 1969, when he became a chaplain in the Naval Reserve Training Center in Bridgeport. He was released to do military service again in 1976, this time in the U.S. Marines and U.S. Army, which continued until 1984.

“You’re really part of a family when you live on base in the military,” says Father Ed Colohan, who was ordained with Father Usenza and later served as an Air Force chaplain. “You don’t stay in your office—you’re out with people. Bob liked being out among the troops, being with people on and off duty. It’s a very warm, very close experience with your people.”

The two men would compare experiences whenever they met. “There’s a camaraderie among chaplains,” Father Colohan adds. “It’s interfaith, too, being close to chaplains of other faiths and helping people of every religion.”

Father Usenza retired from active priestly ministry in 1988 and was generous with his time, helping at parishes near his West Haven home.

Deacon Harold Lynch, 79

EASTON—Deacon Harold J. Lynch, 79, a deacon at Notre Dame Parish in Easton, died at home in the care of his family on April 13 after a battle with cancer.

“He had been a member of our parish for over 30 years and faithfully served the Notre Dame Community for 27 years as a permanent deacon,” said Father Michael Lyons, Notre Dame’s pastor. “Deacon Hal will be greatly missed.”

Harold Lynch graduated in 1954 from Power Memorial Academy in Manhattan. He joined the United States Marine Corps the following year. He served from 1955 to 1963, attaining the rank of Sergeant.

In 1965, he received his bachelor of science degree from Fordham University and enjoyed a long and successful career as a sales and marketing executive of primary metals for Anaconda, AMAX and ASARCO. During his retirement he consulted with SIDICH, Belgium.

In 1989, he was ordained a deacon for the Diocese of Bridgeport and served in this capacity at Notre Dame of Easton and at Our Lady of Victory in Manhattan. As a deacon, he most enjoyed serving as a facilitator for the Prepare Enrich Program and pre-baptismal classes.

He was passionate about world news and politics, and would share his views with anyone that would listen. He was an enthusiastic reader, a diehard Giants fan, an avid golfer and—most important—the number one cheerleader and supporter of his granddaughters at all their sporting and musical events.

Deacon Lynch was brought into Notre Dame Church the afternoon of April 19. A Memorial Mass was celebrated on April 20. Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, was the celebrant. Father Lyons delivered the homily. Interment followed at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Carmen Barraza Lynch, three children and three granddaughters.

Lion King

BROADWAY BOUND—On a day like no other, the third grade class from St. Raphael Academy in Bridgeport went to see the Lion King on Broadway.

Recognizing that most inner-city children lack the chance to experience a Broadway show, the deacons’ wives in this diocese, through DW Ministries, solicited funds from parishes, Knights of Columbus councils and the Trumbull Rotary, along with many well-wishers, to send the children to the play.

While there, they had the opportunity to go backstage. Jim Ferris, who played the part of Timon the meerkat, took time from his schedule to speak personally with the students.

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Obituary

Father Emidio Gregori, 93

STRATFORD—Father Emidio O. Gregori, a priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport for over 58 years, passed away on Monday, April 11 in Stratford at the age of 93.

Father Gregori was born on May 19, 1922 in Collagna, Italy. He grew up in Danbury, attending Danbury High School; the Junior College of Bridgeport, where he received an associate degree in science; and earned a bachelor’s degree, also in science, from Syracuse University, N.Y. He proudly served in the United States Army during World War II. He engaged in combat at the Battle of the Bulge and received the Purple Heart after being wounded in action. While spending 15 months in hospitals, he began to consider a vocation to the priesthood rather than his original intention to become a doctor.

While visiting family in Italy, he had the opportunity to talk with St. Padre Pio, who encouraged him in his priestly vocation.

He was prepared for the priesthood at St. Mary Seminary, St. Mary, Ky., and St. Mary Seminary, Baltimore, Md. Father Gregori was ordained on May 3, 1958 at St. Augustine Cathedral by Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan, first Bishop of Bridgeport.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at St. Roch Parish in Greenwich. He later served at St. Mary Parish in Stamford, St. Raphael Parish in Bridgeport, and St. James Parish in Stratford, where he remained until his retirement in 1997. He had also been named temporary administrator at St. James. He celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest in June 2008.

Father Gregori completed post-graduate studies at the University of San Francisco and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkley. He also served on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and was active as a director of District CYO in Greenwich.

Father Gregori’s body was received into Our Lady of Peace Church, Stratford, by Father Nicholas Pavia, pastor, on April 18. A parish Vigil Mass was celebrated that evening by Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Father Pavia was the homilist.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 19 by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. Father Richard Murphy, former pastor of Our Lady of Peace, was the homilist. Interment followed at St. Peter Cemetery, Danbury, with full military honors.

Father Gregori is mourned in this diocese by his brother and sister-in-law, Oreste and Joanna Gregori, family members, and friends.

What to say when you don’t know what to say...

A dramatic reading of Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing after Loss!

Holy Spirit Parish
Sunday May 22, 4-6pm

4-4:10 pm Gather & greeting
4:10-4:20 pm Intro & Prayer
4:20-4:30 pm Background/Rainbows
4:30-5 pm Reading of Tear Soup
5-5:30 pm Q&A with Professional
5:30-6 pm Refreshments

If you, or someone you know, are grieving: have suffered a loss due to divorce; death of a loved one; change in health status; loss of a job; or some other traumatic event, come learn about making Tear Soup. This is a free, family event—all ages welcome—sponsored by Rainbows at Church of the Holy Spirit 403 Scofieldtown Rd., Stratford.

For more info, call 203.322.3722 or email rainbows@holyspiritstratford.org

Funeral Guide

Collins Funeral Home
92 East Avenue • Norwalk
866-0747

DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT: MAY 15—JUNE 18

MAY
16 Rev. Alfred J. Bietighofer ..............................2002
17 Rev. Miroslav L. Sultus .................................1992
18 Msgr. Charles B. Ratajczak, O.F.M. ...............1957
23 Rev. Thomas M. Garrick ..............................1955
24 Deacon Hans Jakob Gram ..............................2010
25 Rev. Mark Grimes .........................................2008
26 Rev. Joseph A. Ganley .................................1957
26 Msgr. William Loughlin ..............................2014
27 Rev. Joseph F. Sohovich ................................1957
29 Msgr. John J. Barney .....................................1973
30 Rev. Harry Holbrook .....................................2005
31 Rev. Adelard A. Alpert Report .........................1961
3 Rev. Michael F. Blanchard ............................1982
7 Rev. James J. O’Malley .....................................1996
9 Msgr. William F. Scalan ................................2004
13 Deacon Anthony LaBua ................................1988
15 Msgr. John H. Landry ....................................1967

June
2 Rev. Thomas M. Ford .......................................1992
3 Rev. Michael F. Blanchard ............................1982
5 Rev. Richard J. Grady .....................................1993
5 Msgr. John Hayes ...........................................1964
6 Rev. Thomas J. Hanley ....................................1954
7 Rev. James J. Dennis ......................................2003
8 Msgr. Bernard S. Scanlon ..............................2004
9 Msgr. James G. Lengen ....................................1999
13 Deacon Anthony LaBua ................................1988
14 Msgr. William F. Kearney ............................1974
15 Msgr. John H. Landry ....................................1967

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PRE-NEED FUNERAL PLANNING
MATthew K. Murphy,
FuneraL diRector
FRED D KNAPP
267 GreenwOOh avenue
GREENWiCH, CT 06850
203-869-0315

“Rainbows”

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Word Youth Day

Shrine of the Divine Mercy

By JANET S. DAVIS

The Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki, Poland, is situated within the district of Krakow about four kilometers (slightly more than two miles) south of where our World Youth Day pilgrims will be staying in the city center.

Located in the center of the Shrine of the Divine Mercy is the chapel which contains the image of the Merciful Jesus and the tomb of St. Faustina. This small church, consecrated in 1891 to St. Joseph and built within the complex of the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, all these years later has millions of people visit each year. Most pilgrims come asking for graces and leave votive offerings.

The chapel holds the white marble coffin with the relics of St. Faustina. One relic has been placed in the marble prie-dieu before the altar. The chapel rose to the rank of the Shrine of the Divine Mercy decreed by Cardinal Franciszek Macharski on November 1, 1992.

Lagiewniki, the district where the shrine is located, was thought to have settled first in the fourteenth century. Starting as an agricultural center and north-south trade route, the village built its first factory in the seventeenth century. The industrial development continued to grow at a significant pace in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. During World War II, Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II, labored in one of these factories adjacent to the convent.

During the First World War, part of the property was taken and became a military hospital. Many of the soldiers who died during this period are buried behind the wall of the convent. During the Second World War, throughout the Nazi occupation, the land was taken by the Germans. The Sisters continued to run the convent but were required to supply the Germans with a certain quantity of vegetables grown on their land.

By 1982 the Communist took most of the property away. It was not until 1989 that the state authorities gave back most of the land to the Sisters. Now the nineteenth-century convent of the Sisters of God’s Mother of Mercy is part of a much larger complex that contains a church, an array of chapels, a viewing tower, and a hostel. On August 17, 2002, Pope John Paul II consecrated the sanctuary’s new 1,600-square-meters basilica.

While our pilgrimage will take us to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki, I encourage you to join us by praying at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Bridgeport dedicated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano this past April. The community of the cathedral, under the direction and care of Father John Ringley, pastor, and Father Augustine Nguyen, parochial vicar, built a beautiful shrine for all of us to visit and pray right in our diocese. Please pray for the WYD pilgrims and we will pray for our diocese as we lift our prayers and spirit together in union to God.

(Please let us know if you have specific prayers you would like brought to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy, please send them to me at jdavis@diobpt.org and I will be honored to bring them to Poland for you.)

THE MODERN CHAPEL OF DIVINE MERCY, a destination for diocesan World Youth Day pilgrims, contains the image of the Merciful Jesus and a white marble coffin with relics of St. Faustina.
“A man will have to give an account of judgment day for every good thing which he might have enjoyed but didn’t” (Talmud).

Many famous thinkers have written about the Via Dolorosa of life:

“The world is a prison, and everyone is under sentence of death and liable to torture along the way” (St. Thomas More, A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation).

“Reality, looked at steadily, is unbearable” (C.S. Lewis).

One could add many more names to this list. The most provocative would be one from the great Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, who told us that the life of a Christian is characterized by a “pessimistic realism. Christianity does not oblige us to see reality in an optimistic light. On the contrary, it obliges us to see existence as dark and bitter and hard” (Foundations of Christian Faith, 1978, p.403).

I can understand what these thinkers are saying. In many ways this earth is a land of grief and partings, like flowers in a time of snow. But so many things tip the balance. One can come to cherish the world at the same time one struggles to endure it. The Muslim poet, Hafiz, spoke of being in “this Blessed Calamity of life.” Hafiz also wrote of “the music of the dance of life.” I think we all experience more pain and conflict than we feel there should be. There are things I look at that seem tired, but so many things are too beautiful and precious to ever grow tired of: sea, birds, trees, being loved, being well, the exercise of one’s talents, a simple meal, watching the day slowly turn into evening, etc. There is much to celebrate in life, so much to be thankful for. There is a sadness that flows under the skin of things, like blood. It is a part of life. But there is a good deal of goodness and beauty in this world. It is good to be alive, to be on this earth. So much can enchant one with a sense of the magic and mystery of things. I still marvel at the wonder of being alive. It is good to be here. I won’t be able to leave without tears. Paul Claudel wrote, “How magnificent heaven must be to have such an earth as an anteroom” (Discours, 39).

There’s an Irish limerick that goes:

God made a most hopeful beginning, And man later spoiled it by sinning.

We know that story Will end in God’s glory; But at present the other side’s winning.

At times one can often feel “the other side’s winning,” but there are times when one can have a sense of the quiet goodness of life, a sense of life as a gift, a thing of goodness, a place of delight.

When Ralph Waldo Emerson was close to death, he wrote a poem titled Good-Bye in which he wrote:

“Good-bye, proud world! I’m going home: Thou art not my friend, and I’m not thine.”

I had a friend name Albert who was vastly kind and a little shy. But he was enthusiastic—the kind who would stop mowing his lawn to listen to a bird. He always said “absolutely” instead of “yes.” I can still hear his marvelous laugh. He never made it to the age of seventy. He died in his sixty-ninth year. It is reported that the last words he spoke were, “Thanks, thanks for everything. Praise, praise for it all.”
I still remember the day my oldest daughter and I were driving to the train station and I made a painful discovery that changed my life.

Commuting together should have been an occasion to bond as father and daughter, but instead it was an early morning tussle over everything from my driving to politics and what was for dinner that night.

Finally, I said, “Joanna, at 6 am, I want to say my prayers, not listen to you complain.”

On this particular day, she was grumbling about her best friend’s rude and nasty father. Without thinking, I asked, “What kind of father was I?” expecting her to respond, “You should have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Parenting” or “You should have been inducted into the Fatherhood Hall of Fame” or “I’m surprised no one developed a TV series about your unique skills and called it ‘Father Knows Everything.’”

Instead, with no forethought—which was her modus operandi, possibly inherited from her father—she promptly replied, “OK … I guess.”

“OK?” I expected something a little more laudatory. What kind of grade do you get for an “OK” performance? “C” or “C-”? I never asked that question again.

The crazy thing is my four daughters have become self-proclaimed experts on parenting despite the fact that only one has a kid. It looks so easy, anyone can do it, and yet even those who do it well often come away feeling like they failed the course.

Parenting is arguably the most important thing we’ll do, not to mention one of the most humbling experiences in life. No matter how hard you try, something always goes wrong. And it’s especially difficult nowadays because society and popular culture put up countless obstacles to raising moral children with faith in God. When I think of my one-year-old granddaughter, and the two grandsons soon to be born, I get anxious about the world they’ll inherit.

My friends constantly worry about protecting their children. They realize the sanctuary of the family is their only defense against forces that pull young people away from God. One mother is struggling to protect her son from influences like materialistic advertising, the decadence, sex and violence on TV and the Internet, and the destructive undercurrents that pervade our streets, our schools and social media.

You see the effects everywhere. Increasingly, children pattern their behavior after celebrities, rather than follow the example of faith-filled adults.

“Our culture is at war with families,” psychologist Mary Piper said in The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families. “Almost every force in our culture works against families. Parents do not know how to protect their children from crime, media, poverty, alcohol and bad company. They can no longer give their children childhoods.”

Despite their deficiencies, our families are the most important lifeline in a hostile society, the greatest source of intimacy, acceptance and faith. In family relationships, we learn love and trust, which we seldom learn in the corporate world, the workplace or the classroom.

Legislation and educational programs won’t solve these problems. They can only be solved by conscious and committed parenting, which requires love, patience and prayer. All of us have to strive to do better than an “OK” performance. Our children are at stake.

We have to tell our kids and grandkids that just because everyone—their friends, their teachers and their favorite celebrities—is doing something, that doesn’t make it right. There are a lot of trendy immoral causes in the news nowadays.

My mother drilled it into our heads: “If everyone jumps off the bridge, are you going to?” Guess what, everyone is jumping off the bridge. Don’t jump!

Most importantly, if you pray together as a family, the Blessed Mother will keep your children under her protective mantle. I recently came upon this prayer, which seems perfect for our age:

“Mary, Mother of God and Mother of all Christians, you presented your Divine Son in the temple. Now, I present to you the children whom God has graciously given me. By the grace of their Baptism, which incorporated them into Christ, you became their mother. I entrust them to you, to your guidance and vigilance.

“Make them healthy in soul and body. Help them become useful citizens of their country, but let them not forget the Kingdom of God. If they go astray, lead them back to your Son so they may obtain forgiveness and peace. Enable us all to reach eternal happiness with you and your Divine Son in heaven.”
**TAG SALE** will be held at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, on Sat., May 14, from 9 am-4 pm and Sun., May 15, after all Masses. For more info, call 203.261.4378.

**MASS MOB:** Join us on Pentecost (May 15) to celebrate the birthday of the Church! We will converge upon Blessed Sacrament in Bridgeport for the 11:30 Gospel Choir Mass. As always, the mission of Mass Mob is to gather as many worshippers as possible together to celebrate the Eucharist. Bring a friend! For more info, visit Facebook: Mass Mob Fairfield County.

**MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE** celebrated on Mon., May 16, at 7:30 pm at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton, with Fr. Bill Eagan. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.268.8253.

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35) meets at the Newman Center (off the campus of Western CT State University) #7 8th Ave., Danbury and other nearby locations. Wed., May 18, Theology on Tap at Down the Hatch, 292 Candlewood Lake Rd., Brookfield, from 6:30-8:30 pm. Fr. Peter Towsley, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, will speak on “Slaying the Dragons in our Lives.” For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com or join us on Facebook at Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury.

**5K FUN RUN** “She’s the First” in memory of Rebecca Draper-Townsend will be held Sat., May 21, at Immaculate High School, Danbury, Mustang Valley Field. Registration: 9:30-10 am; start time 10:30 am. Cost: $25/person or $65 for a family of five. All proceeds will be donated to “She’s the First,” an organization that provides scholarships for education to girls in low-income developing countries. To register, go to www.immaculatehs.org/sf5k.

**DOCUMENT SHREDDING** fundraiser will be held at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, on Sat., May 21, from 12 noon-3 pm. Cost: $10 per box or $25 for 3 boxes (standard size of a paper box) All shredding done immediately in your presence. Proceeds benefit the St. Stephen Youth Ministry Merton House feeding program. For more info, contact the parish: 203.268.6217 or ststephenfaithformation@gmail.com.

**ENCOURAGE** apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions or gender ID issues, meets the third Sat. of the month (May 21) at 10:30 am and is strictly confidential. For more info contact the Norwalk Chapter: EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com.

**TAG & BAKE SALE** at St. Patrick Parish, Redding Ridge (Rt 58), on Sat., May 21, from 8:30 am-4 pm. Two buildings bursting with treasures for all ages. Boutique items, Depression Glass, Studio 56, Star Wars, Betty Boop, home decor, designer jewelry, name brand NEW clothing, housewares, clothing, furniture, toys, sports, small electronics & more. Delicious baked goods from our fabulous parish bakers. For more info, go to www.stpatredding.org or call 203.938.2253.

**GUEST ARTIST DAY** at St. Emery Parish, Fairfield, will take place Sun., May 22, at the 9 am Mass. The St. Emery Festival Choir welcomes guest artist alto Kristin Butler. Choral selections will include a special “Ave Maria” composed by Michael Cooney, music director of Assumption Parish, Fairfield. Reception follows. For more info, contact the parish: 203.334.0312.

**MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENINGS** offered free or lost-cost through St. Vincent’s Imaging Center: 203.576.5500.

**ASSUMPTION PARISH INVITES AREA CLERGY to join in the 22nd Annual Memorial Day Service sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council #11077 at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Fairfield, on Sun., May 29, at 12 noon. Local veteran organizations will be participating along with CT state and local representatives, Knights of Columbus officials and community residents. For more info, contact Fr. Peter Cipriani, pastor: 203.333.9065 or Fred Coseglia, chairman: 203.371.8181.

**PIE 33 EMMAUS RETREAT** for young adults age 18 and up who have graduated high school, held Fri.-Sun., June 3-5,
at the Seton Newman Center in Danbury. Deepen your relationship with God while you make friendships that will last a lifetime! It is a weekend of great Faith, great Food, new Friends, and lots of Fun! For more info, call Kristin Nauheimer: 203-512-5285 or visit www.danburyyemmaus.org.

SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYERS and St. Marguerite Bourgeois Parish Take on King Lear on Sat., June 4, at 11 am. Fr. Shawn Cutler, pastor of St. Marguerite Bourgeois Parish, will lead Queen Elizabeth I (8 year old Lillian Mancusi) and will lead Shakespearean Players, ages 4-19, will be performing King Lear. After the performance, the Queen will host English Teachers, students, alumni, family and friends are welcome to join the team or make a donation. This year’s event will take place on Sun., June 5, at Columbus Park in downtown Stamford. The 5k and 10k runs start at 8 am; the walk starts at 10 am. To register or donate, go to www.hopeinmotion.org, click on “Walk & Run” and search for team Trinity Catholic HS & MS. The funds raised go directly to the Bennett Cancer Center in Stamford.

BENEFIT CONCERT at St. Emery Parish, Fairfield, will be held on Sun., June 5, at 3 pm with “Phantom of the Opera” star Frank Mastrone, the St. Emery Festival Choir, and parish music director Anthony Procaccini. Music of Irving Berlin, from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Oklahoman,” and by J.S. Bach, Zoltan Kodaly, Franz Liszt. Donation: $10; children under 12 are free. A reception follows the performance. For more info, contact the parish: 203.334.0312.

ANNUAL SOCIAL JUSTICE Conference “Rooted in Faith: Caring for Our Common Home,” hosted by the Archdiocese of Hartford’s Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry will take place Sat., June 11, from 8 am-3 pm at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. Keynote speaker, Sr. Damien Marie Savino, FSE, Ph.D., will explore Pope Francis’ message in Laudato Si’. Prayer, music, exhibits and workshops. For more info, call 860.242.5573 or visit CatholicSocialJustice.org/social-justice-conference.

GOSSIP OF LIFE SOCIETY meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (June 11) from 10 am-12 noon, after the 9 am Pro-life Mass. For more info, call Eileen Blanchini: 203.847.7277 or smargyols@aol.com.

WOMEN’S GROUP at Christ the King parish, Trumbull, will hold a closing luncheon on Mon., June 13, at 12 noon at Roberto’s Restaurant, Monroe. For more info, call 203.268.6178.

SECULAR FRANCISCAN Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Emery Church, Fairfield, on Sat., June 11, at 10 am for a Mass of Profession into the Secular Franciscan Order for Susan Baldwin, celebrated by Fr. Gene Szantyr. Social and business meeting follows. “Come and See” if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. For more info, call Pat Heile, OPS: 203.255.8801 or pheile5713@aol.com.

STAR OF THE SEA Family Catholic Retreats for parents and their children are being offered the weeks of July 3-8 and July 31-August 5 at Miramar Retreat Center, Duxbury, MA. For more info, contact Deacon John and Peggy Scarfi: 845.621.70000 or www.starofthesearetreats.com.

PILGRIMAGE to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Mexico, Thurs.-Tues., July 7-12, with Mgr. John Sabia, spiritual director. For more info, contact www.206tours.com/tour206 or Melissa Mulligan: 800.208.8676 at 206 Tours Inc., Hauppauge, NY.

JOIN BISHOP CAGGIANO AND THE FAITHFUL FROM THE DIOCESE ON OUR PILGRIMAGE TO WASHINGTON D.C. FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2016

DESTINATION: Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC

EARLY MORNING DEPARTURES LOCATIONS:
Bridgeport, Catholic Center
Bethel, Saint Mary Parish
Fairfield, Saint Pius X Parish
Greenwich, Saint Paul Parish
Norwalk, Saint Matthew Parish
Trumbull, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish

COST/PERSON: $75 for transportation and box dinner.

Register by October 14:
Visit rallybus.net/DOBPilgrimage via credit card or call 1-855-725-5928 to register and pay via check.

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JUNE 10, 11, & 12
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★ Saturday, June 11______________________2-11 pm
★ Sunday, June 12______________________12-10 pm
★ Sunday Outdoor Mass/Procession________10 am

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• Riccardo: Saturday, 2-6 •
• I’Luguri with Roberti: Saturday Night, 7-11 •
• Riccardo: Sunday, 1-5 •
• I’Luguri with Angela Bruno: Sunday Night, 6-10 •

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Find out if you qualify at ascension.org/veterans.