



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

SEPTEMBER 2014 | VOLUME 31, NUMBER 8 | BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



6 *Blue Mass honoring First Responders on September 14*



8 *The America magazine interview with Bishop Caggiano*

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## Catholic Charities

## Responding to a Humanitarian Crisis

Dear Friends,

Many Catholics throughout the diocese have written or called us concerning the plight of unaccompanied children from Central America, and our need to respond as a diocese to this

humanitarian crisis.

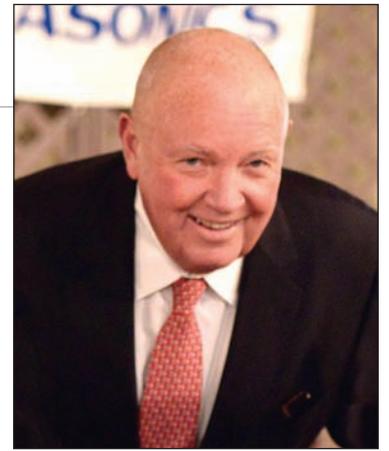
As you know from the many recent news reports, children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are migrating to the United States alone in record numbers. It is believed that more than 52,000 unaccompanied chil-

dren are at great risk. While not a new phenomenon, the number of children who are making the perilous journey alone has increased exponentially.

A number of these children have already been located to Bridgeport and Stamford, and many more are in great need of temporary housing and other services. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has also asked churches across the country to welcome the children

diocesan property available to programs that may provide temporary housing for children who are awaiting deportation hearings.

The sanctity of the family and the need to protect the vulnerable is an integral element of Catholic approach to service and pastoral care in the United States. The 2003 bishops pastoral statement on migration specifically addresses the plight of the unaccompanied child, noting this



the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops promotes humane and compassionate immigration reform that preserves the family unit as the cornerstone of the immigration system.

It is within this spirit of

## Solemn Vespers Service

*All are invited to attend*

Friday September 19, 7:30 pm  
*Evening Prayer*

The Opening Ceremony of Synod 2014  
St. Augustine Cathedral  
399 Washington Avenue, Bridgeport

*The first General Session of Synod 2014 will be held the next day, Saturday September 20, when 350 delegates gather in the St. Catherine of Siena Parish Center, 200 Shelton Road, Trumbull.*



in partnership with the federal government.

Bishop Caggiano has instructed Catholic Charities to explore ways the diocese may partner with Catholic Charities USA, local social service agencies and city governments to respond to the crisis. As part of this process, we are looking into the possibility of making unused

special population's heightened vulnerability, and the corresponding need for special consideration and care that these children should receive.

It is the view of the Church that protecting family values should not depend on a family's nationality or immigration status. Through its Justice for Immigrants Campaign,

"welcoming the stranger" that Catholic Charities of Fairfield County is moving forward to respond to this crisis. There are many challenges ahead, but we ask for your understanding, prayers and support.

Sincerely,  
Al Barber, *President*  
Catholic Charities

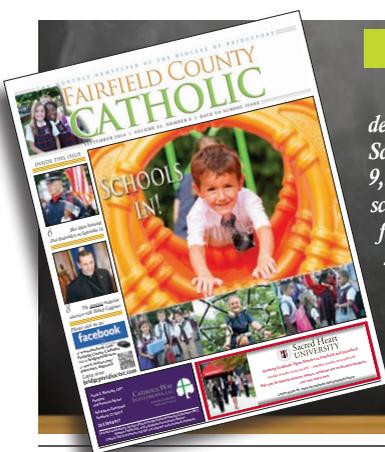
## ON THE COVER

**DECLAN MCCLURE ENJOYS** his first day in kindergarten on the new playground at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Fairfield. (See story on p. 13). This month, 9,100 students return to Catholic elementary and high schools throughout the diocese. More than 800 full-time faculty and administrators from all 35 diocesan Catholic schools filled St. Augustine Cathedral for a Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano to begin the school year. **ABOVE THE FOLD**—Charlotte Conway, Nelson Conway, and Imani Chanka at St. Ann School in Black Rock, Bridgeport. (Photos by Karyn Leito and Amy Mortensen)

## CONTENTS

- 5 **TALKING CHANGE**  
Profile of Deacon John DiTaranto
- 7 **WOMEN'S CONFERENCE**  
To meet at Trumbull Marriott
- 11 **TEACHERS' CONVOCATION**  
Bishop gives an assignment
- 16 **NEW NORWALK PRESCHOOL**  
Catholic Charities at All Saints

- 22 **FAIRFIELD COUNTY MASS MOB**  
Young adults gather at St. Peters
- 24 **DOO WOP PROJECT**  
Inner-City Foundation Gala
- 27 **SISTERS OF LIFE**  
Radical Witness to Jesus Christ
- 28 **COLUMNIST JOE PISANI**  
Takes on Atheism



## Local News

## Bishop to speak on 'State of the Diocese'

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will deliver a major "State of the Diocese" address on September 9 at 7:30 pm in the auditorium of All Saints School in Norwalk.

Almost 500 priests, religious, and lay leaders throughout the diocese have been invited to attend the talk, in which the bishop will outline a "turnaround plan" to reorganize the management and administrative functions provided by the Catholic Center and move the diocese forward to a new model of service to parishes and the faithful.

"The talk is meant to give a summary of the state of the diocese today, administratively, pastorally and financially. It will indicate the major initiatives that we will be launching in the coming year to address the immediate challenges and the long-term opportunities that we face in all three areas," said Bishop Caggiano.

Bishop Caggiano said that the Diocesan Synod, with over 350 delegates throughout the diocese, will address the longer-term pas-

toral challenges, but that it's also important for the diocese to move forward with administrative and financial changes to support the major synod directions.

"Given the synod's task to address our long-term pastoral challenges, work is also underway to address those administrative, financial and pastoral challenges that are more immediate in nature. These more immediate issues must be addressed simultaneously with the synod so that a proper support structure and needed financial resources will be available to implement whatever initiatives and directives will come from the synod," he said in his invitation to attend the address.

The turnaround plan is a response to findings from the strategic analysis of the Catholic Center by the National Executive Service Corp (NESC), commissioned by the bishop in February. The goal is to create a 21st Century model of organization that takes advantage of exciting opportunities and helps the diocese respond to challenges faced by the Church.



About 100 people work in the Catholic Center in the North End of Bridgeport, which houses the chancery, or diocesan curia, represented by the Bishop's Office, the vicar general and the chancellor, along with offices for diocesan schools, Pastoral Services, the Tribunal, Catholic Charities, Development, Finance, Clergy Personnel, Communications, Human Resources, and other ministries and apostolates.

Another 30 Catholic Center employees work off-site at St. John Fisher Seminary in

Stamford, Catholic Cemeteries, the Catherine Denis Keefe Queen of Clergy Residence for retired priests in Stamford, and in the pastoral care teams of local convalescent facilities.

NESC is a team of volunteer consultants with a wide range of experience in business and management settings. Its goal is to strengthen the management of non-profit organizations through a high-quality, affordable consulting service.

The Diocese of Bridgeport includes more than 460,000 regis-

tered Catholics in Fairfield County. In addition to its 82 parishes, the diocese sponsors 30 regional elementary schools and five diocesan high schools, educating 10,000 youth, the St. John Fisher Seminary, the Queen of Clergy Residence and a wide range of social services through Catholic Charities and other institutions.

Bishop Caggiano was installed as Fifth Bishop of Bridgeport on September 19, 2013 at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull, and began almost immediately to take steps to reorganize the diocese.

On February 22, 2014, he formally convoked the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport, the first in 32 years, as an opportunity for renewal and pastoral planning for the future of the local Church. After a series of listening sessions with over 4,000 comments by laity, priests and religious across the diocese, the bishop announced the Synod 2014 themes of empowering youth, building up the community of faith, fostering evangelical outreach, and promoting works of charity and justice. ■

## Sister Mary Grace announces new principals

The Superintendent's Office has announced the appointment of new principals for diocesan elementary and high schools. "I am thrilled with the excellent and dedicated principals we have in the Diocese of Bridgeport," says Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, PhD, superintendent of schools. "I know that our schools will flourish under their capable leadership."

**High Schools**

The diocesan high schools will see two new principals. Henry Rondon, who has served as dean of students at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, will be the new principal at Kolbe. Dr. Mark Karagus, who comes from Norwalk High School, will take the helm as principal of Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford.

Henry Rondon has more than 15 years of experience at Kolbe, coming first as a religion and physical education instructor in 1998. He became athletic director in 2007 and dean of students in 2011. He earned his bach-



NEW PRINCIPALS GATHER for orientation at the Catholic Center.

elor's degree in religious studies from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, and holds his MAT and 6th Year Certification in administration from Sacred Heart as well.

He and his wife, Colleen, have three children. The family are members of Assumption Parish in Ansonia.

Mark Karagus, Ed.D, is the new principal of Trinity Catholic. A member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, Dr. Karagus has served as an administrator in elementary and secondary schools in a number of school districts. His experience at Norwalk High School

as a housemaster from 2003-13 gave him the opportunity to supervise a large staff. This past year he served as an interim assistant principal at Naramake Elementary School in Norwalk.

A certified teacher, guidance counselor and administrator, Dr. Karagus earned a B.A. in English from Sacred Heart University, an M.S. in school counseling and his 6th Year Certification in educational administration from the University of Bridgeport. He holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

**Elementary Schools**

The elementary schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport will welcome a number of new principals this year. Most already have experience in the diocesan school system; others come with experience in area public schools.

Bardhyl Gjoka has become the principal of St. Aloysius School in New Canaan. The former assistant principal of All Saints Catholic

School in Norwalk, he was a math and engineering teacher at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport for seven years. Prior to that, he was a math and physics teacher and high school principal in his native Albania.

A Connecticut certified teacher and school administrator, Gjoka earned his B.S. in math and physics from the University of Shkoder in Albania, and M.A. in education from Fairfield University and a 6th Year Certificate in educational leadership from Sacred Heart University.

His wife, Vjollca Zefi, is a teacher at All Saints, and both their boys go there as well. The family are members of St. Jerome Parish in Norwalk.

Patricia Griffin, who has served for the past two years as the principal of St. Jude School in Monroe, has returned to St. Ann Academy in Bridgeport, where she had enjoyed teaching for six years. She holds a B.S.

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

## Diocesan News

## Deacon DiTaranto named special assistant

BRIDGEPORT—Deacon John DiTaranto, a consultant in business process improvement and organization change, has been named special assistant to Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. The appointment was announced by the bishop on August 11.

“As a professional consultant, John DiTaranto is known for his ability to promote change in a number of diverse operations and settings, and as a deacon, John brings a love and commitment to the Church along with an understanding of the challenges and opportunities we face,” he said.

His major responsibility will be to oversee the reorganization of management and administrative functions provided by the Catholic Center and move the diocese forward to a new model of service to parishes and the faithful.

He will also work to imple-



DEACON JOHN DITARANTO

ment the recommendations of the National Executive Service Corp (NESC) study commissioned by the bishop in February. The goal is to create a 21st Century model of organization that takes advantage of new opportunities and helps the diocese respond to challenges faced by the Church.

Bishop Caggiano will further

discuss the NESC report and actions steps for the future at a special “State of the Diocese” speech on September 9 at 7:30 pm in the auditorium of All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk.

Deacon DiTaranto was ordained to the permanent diaconate by Bishop William E. Lori on June 7, 2008. He has served since then as deacon at St. Jude Parish in Monroe. Recently, Bishop Caggiano appointed him a member of the Synod 2014 Commission, which will plan for the future of the diocese over the coming year.

Deacon DiTaranto comes to the diocese from his own consultancy, helping organizations build self-sufficiency for managing change and setting new strategic direction. He has extensive experience in change acceleration, building effective teams, enhancing communication

channels, leadership training and executive coaching.

“I have a consulting business working with companies on change management issues, pro-

“John DiTaranto is known for his ability to promote change in a number of diverse operations.”

moting strategic communication and delivering essential leadership training,” he said. “My new role with Bishop Caggiano will give me the opportunity to take some of the skills I’ve applied in the secular world and bring them

to the service of the diocese.”

He worked for General Electric globally for 23 years before becoming a consultant and executive coach. He has worked extensively with global businesses in manufacturing, insurance, banking and education, and has instructed more than 2,000 associates at all levels of Six Sigma learning.

Born and raised in the Bronx, Deacon DiTaranto attended Cardinal Spellman High School there. He earned a bachelor of engineering degree from Manhattan College and an MBA in international marketing from Southern New Hampshire University, and he hopes to complete his master’s in religious studies in the next two years.

Deacon DiTaranto and his wife, Maureen, are the parents of four children. They reside in Monroe.



## Building Bridges in Faith and Charity

### 2014 Annual Bishop's Appeal



# 96% of Goal Raised to Date!

If you haven't made your gift, please help us reach our goal today.

## A Helping Hand



It's hard to imagine that every day there are individuals and families who struggle to find nutritious meals and a safe place to sleep, and deal with overwhelming problems that cause them to lose control over their lives.

The 2014 Annual Bishop's Appeal, Building Bridges in Faith and Charity, supports Catholic Charities nutrition, counseling and housing programs, and provides a hand-up to assist individuals in leading productive lives.

When you make a gift, your support provides counseling sessions, daily meals and housing for thousands of people who are determined to take the necessary steps to improve the situations they face and provide for their families.

The Appeal supports Catholic Charities' mission to serve the most vulnerable in Fairfield County without regard to age, race, religion or the ability to pay.

Charity and Justice is one theme of the 2014 Synod, which is about to convene its first General Session. That theme promotes Catholic Charities' response to the needs of the homeless, the hungry and the lonely.

Please use the enclosed envelope in the **Fairfield County Catholic**, visit [www.2014ABA.com](http://www.2014ABA.com) or call **203-416-1479** to make your gift today and support the good works of the diocese and help us to plan for the future.

Thank you for your support.



## Profile

Talking change with  
Deacon John DiTaranto

When Deacon John DiTaranto isn't working, you can usually find him in the kitchen or in the garage. He loves to putter with cars and machinery, and he's a self-taught chef, always experimenting with his own creations as he enjoys taking over the cooking chores for his wife and four children.

Born and raised in the Bronx, he's a Catholic school boy all the way from St. Frances of Rome elementary to Manhattan College, where he graduated with a degree in engineering. The deacon, who comes to the Catholic Center from the corporate world where he has considerable experience in training and transforming organizations, has been tapped by Bishop Frank Caggiano to oversee the reorganization of the Catholic Center. Deacon John believes that "cultural change" requires an open, imaginative and democratic approach and the ability to travel light and turn on a dime. On good days, he can be seen driving his Aprilia "Scarabeo" scooter to work, a memento from the four years he spent living in Florence while on assignment for GE. Deacon DiTaranto recently sat down with FCC to discuss change, challenges and opportunity as the Catholic Center moves into a new era.

**Part of your charge will be to help to change the work culture of the Catholic Center. How do you go about that?**

What's going to be on the top of my list is cultural change. The unwritten rules we live by are the toughest to change. It's the way we do things, and it's hard to break those cultural norms. People should understand that the transformation that we'll be working to bring to the diocese

is about how we conduct business and serve others—we're not changing Church teaching. We'll be working to improve communications and to create a more effective leadership group in the diocese. It involves working as a team with a common goal, building trust, and communicating more effectively. People need to know what you expect them to do and to be aware of their goals and responsibilities.

**You've said that getting organizations to change must involve everyone in the process.**

Yes, but people react to change in different ways and there is always push-back. And not everyone is on board at the same pace. The question is, how do we move everyone forward? If I ask, "Why are you doing things that way?" and you respond, "Because it's the way we've always done it," then we have to peel the onion back another layer and ask, "Is there a better way?" We want people to work smarter, not longer, or by the most difficult route.

**In working to be more efficient and professional in our practices, do we run the risk of becoming too business-like or corporate in our approach?**

There's no contradiction between the two. The values we bring to our work will make us even stronger in the way we take care of business and serve others as an organization. There's got to be a vision statement that dovetails both work and faith together, that uses the best practices but is also faith-filled. Because we have Catholic faith, we bring those values into the workforce. That's the way we should be thinking. Our values have to come from Christ. What should always be at the front of our minds is that our work here is about leading people to Christ. If we're not doing things that help us to do that, then why are we doing them?

**As a member of the Synod Commission, you attended all of**

**the listening sessions and heard thousands of comments. What did you take away from that experience?**

First of all, it's great for a leader to sit and listen. The opportunity to allow people to express themselves is important, and we need to do more of that. As I listened, I was amazed how passionate people are about their Church and their faith. They are willing to step forward and express themselves.

I was really blown away by the youth listening session. They had great ideas and it was inspiring. I'm hoping that the synod will enable them to flourish and go forward. The kids understand their faith and know that the world has to change. If we don't keep up, they'll eventually look someplace else. We should embrace their thoughts and move forward.

**While you work to re-engineer the Catholic Center, synod delegates from across Fairfield County will be planning the future. Do these work hand-in-hand?**

In a sense they are two trains running side by side because the process has to happen simultaneously. As the bishop has emphasized, the changes we make here at the Catholic Center are necessary to support the work of the synod, and the synod's recommendations will shape further change in the diocese. As a member of the Synod Commission and as special assistant to the bishop, I'll have a foot on each train, and look forward to when both tracks come together.

**What kind of reaction do you get when people learn that you're working for the bishop?**

Many people have written to me and congratulated me. Others have said that I'm the right person for the position, and I'm really pleased to hear that. The response has been very positive and supportive and I think many people are pleased that the bishop has chosen a deacon for the job. I'm really looking forward to it. ■



Register today!

FIRST DIOCESAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE  
**"HANDMAIDS OF THE LORD"**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2014  
Trumbull Marriott, 180 Hawley Lane, Trumbull, CT

Mass with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano

Speakers include:  
Dr. Dianne Traflet  
Sr. Clare Matthiass, CFR  
Genevieve Kineke

Adoration, confession, venerate relic  
of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)

Breakfast and plated lunch



\$45 through September 20  
\$50 after September 21  
\$55 at the door

8:30am Mass with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano  
Conference ends at 4:30pm

Link to register:  
[www.officeforpastoralservices.org](http://www.officeforpastoralservices.org)

For more information please contact  
[womensconference@diobpt.org](mailto:womensconference@diobpt.org)  
203-416-1446 or 203-416-1445



Women's Conference Diocese of Bridgeport

# Blue Mass and Red Mass

## Blue Mass set for September 14

BRIDGEPORT—The Annual Diocesan Blue Mass honoring fire, police and rescue workers will be held on Sunday September 14, 11:30 am at Saint John Church in Darien. A reception following Mass will be held in the Blanchard Center on parish grounds.

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

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

Now in its 13th year, the Blue Mass has grown into a moving and memorable commemoration of the courage and commitment of the uniformed personnel who protect

our health and safety every day of the year in Fairfield County.

“In the words of the Lord, ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends,’” said Bishop Caggiano. “In remembering the heroism and loss of 9-11, we also celebrate the courage and commitment of all those who put their lives on the line to protect us.”

The Blue Mass takes its name from the blue uniforms worn by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by Bishop William E. Lori, the Blue Mass was initiated to celebrate the life and heroism of those who died during the 9-11 tragedy in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. Each year it also recognizes local first responders.

Chaplains of the Fairfield County fire, police and emergency medical service departments include: Father Charles H. Allen, S.J., Fairfield Town Emergency

Services; Father Michael A. Boccaccio, Norwalk Police Department; Msgr. Laurence R. Bronkiewicz, Ridgefield Police Department; Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, Stamford Police Department; Father Thomas Lynch, Stratford Fire Department; Father Joseph Malloy, Bridgeport Fire Department; Msgr. Frank McGrath, Westport Fire and Police Departments and Noroton Fire Department; Deacon John Moranski, Bridgeport Police Department; Deacon William Murphy, Germantown Fire Department; Father Raymond Petrucci, Danbury Police Department; Father Robert Post, Stamford Fire Rescue Department; Msgr. William Scheyd, New Canaan Emergency Services and Norwalk Fire Department; Msgr. Richard Shea, Trumbull Police Department; Father Thomas Thorne, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Father

Terrence Walsh, Stamford Police Department; and Father Frank Winn, Glenville Fire Department.

The Fairfield County Knights of Columbus sponsor the Mass.

(For more info, contact Father Charles Allen: 203.254.4000, ext. 2316, or the Diocese of Bridgeport: 203.416.1358.)



## “Religious Liberty” topic of Red Mass

FAIRFIELD—The biennial diocesan Red Mass for members of the legal profession will be celebrated on September 28 at 9 am in the Egan Chapel of Fairfield University.

The Mass and the breakfast reception are being hosted by Father Jeffrey von Arx, S.J., president of Fairfield University.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be the principal celebrant and homilist. The public is invited to attend, along with members of the legal profession.

Attorney Noel J. Francisco, Jones Day partner and head of the Government Regulations Practice Group, will be the featured speaker at the breakfast. His topic will be “Religious Liberty after the Hobby Lobby Decision.”

The Red Mass requests guidance from the Holy Spirit for all who seek justice, and offers the opportunity to reflect on the responsibilities and challenges faced by Catholic legal practitioners.

“Religious liberty is one of the most pressing issues in our country and around the globe. The recent Hobby Lobby decision by the Supreme Court is of profound interest to all as we struggle with this complex issue,” said Anne McCrory, Chief Legal and Real Estate Officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Francisco represents companies and individuals in civil and criminal litigation involving federal and state governments, including lawsuits against governments, enforcement actions by governments, and congressional investigations. He has been working most recently as a part of the team of litigators at Jones Day who have been providing pro bono support for those entities claiming that the HHS contraceptive mandate presents a violation of the religious freedom.

The National Law Journal recently named Francisco as one of “The 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America.”

Francisco has testified before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law on separation of powers, and administration law reform issues. He also provides commentary to the major media on a wide range of legal issues and has appeared on ABC’s “Nightline,” CNN’s “Larry King Live” and “Paula Zahn Now,” MSNBC’s “Hardball with Chris Matthews,” “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” and several National Public Radio programs. Noel graduated from the University of Chicago, where he earned a J.D. with high honors 1996.

Paul E. Knag, partner at Murtha Cullina in Stamford, is chairing this year’s Event Committee.

(The cost of the breakfast is \$35/person. For reservations, go to [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/rsvp](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/rsvp) or contact Deb Tietjen by September 21st, at [dtietjen@diobpt.org](mailto:dtietjen@diobpt.org) or 203.416.1358)



## FOR THOSE WITH DOWN SYNDROME, THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Fr. Markey will celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass  
on the feast day of St. Robert Bellarmine

**September 17, 2014 at 12:10pm**

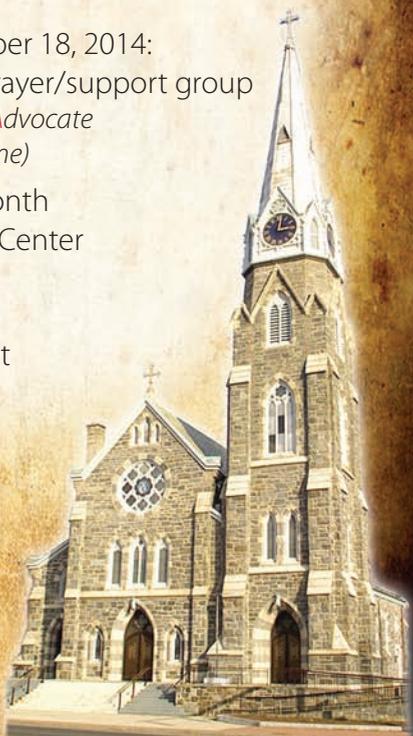
St. Mary Church

669 West Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut 06850

Also announcing, starting September 18, 2014:  
New day and time for the **MOMS+DADS** prayer/support group  
(*Mother Of Mercy Spiritual Divine Advocate*  
for those with *Down Syndrome*)

Third Thursday of every month  
at 7:30pm at St. Mary’s Parish Center

Inquiries welcome at  
[aschanne@optimum.net](mailto:aschanne@optimum.net)



# Women of Faith

## Conference will focus on vocation of women

BRIDGEPORT—“We as women need to take time for ourselves,” says Gina Donnarummo, diocesan director of adult formation. “We need time to come together in a prayerful and spiritual way to explore our dignity and vocation as women.”

The Office for Pastoral Services, with the encouragement of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, has put together a day-long women’s conference with the theme, “Handmaids of the Lord.” It will be held on October 25 at the Trumbull Marriott. The day will include both breakfast and lunch.

Through speakers, Adoration, Confession, veneration of a relic of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross and Mass with Bishop Caggiano, women will be looking at how they can respond to what the Lord is asking of them.

Three speakers will present aspects of that call and response during the conference:

Genevieve Kineke converted to the Catholic faith as a young adult. She was immediately drawn to the question of how women image God. In 2008, she

was asked to address the participants of a Vatican congress honoring the 20th anniversary of “On the Dignity of Women”, an encyclical of Pope John Paul II. She will bring her perspective to the conference.

Dr. Dianne Traflet earned a licentiate and a doctorate in Sacred Theology from St. Thomas Aquinas University in Rome, focusing on the life of St. Edith Stein. She will draw on that expertise, at the conference, giving a talk titled: “To Unveil Christ in the Heart of Another: Edith Stein’s Understanding of the Vocation of Women”

Dr. Traflet is associate dean and assistant professor of pastoral theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J. The founder and co-director of the seminary’s new Institute for Christian Spirituality, she currently serves on the Theological Commission of the Diocese of Paterson and the Newark Archdiocesan Advisory Committee for Continuing Education and Ongoing Formation of Priests.

Sister Clare Matthiass, CFR, entered the Community of the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal, a community committed to following in the footsteps of Saint Francis by living the Gospel and serving the poor, in 1998. She has served as the vocations director and as postulant director, and is currently the community vicar.

Sister Clare’s topic for this conference will be, “Dignity and Vocation as Women.”

The conference has already received 160 registrations, which include a cross section of the diocese in age, professional background, and geographical distribution across Fairfield County.

“We are pulled in so many different directions today, whether we are at the beginning of our careers, raising children or being caregivers to aging parents,” says Maureen Ciardiello, diocesan Respect Life director. “It is important for us to set time aside to ground ourselves in our Catholic faith to help us navigate the challenges of life.”

(For more info or to register, go to [www.officeforpastoralservices.org](http://www.officeforpastoralservices.org) or call 203.416.1446.)

## Magnificat hosts Bishop Caggiano

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be the guest speaker at a Magnificat Women’s Breakfast on October 18 from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at the Ethan Allen Inn, Danbury.

Magnificat, a nationwide ministry to Catholic women, has a twofold purpose. “It’s an evangelizing group,” says Fran Hood, coordinator of the Triumphant Heart of Mary Immaculate, the diocesan chapter. “We want to welcome women who have walked away from the Church, for whatever reason, and to help all women be more open to the Holy Spirit through a deeper commitment of their lives to Jesus.”

Magnificat carries out its mission through women’s breakfasts, usually held twice a year in different locations throughout the diocese. Along with conversation, prayer and music, the centerpiece of each breakfast is a personal testimony, usually from a local woman, of the way God has worked in her life.

“Primarily these are before-and-after testimonies—where they were, what happened to change their life, and where they are today,” says Hood. “It has great appeal to those women who may be struggling with faith or who have lost touch with the Church.”

Hood will give her own personal testimony at the upcoming Magnificat breakfast in addition to the bishop’s talk. “We want him to get a sense of who we are, and how a meeting would be held under ordinary circumstances,” she explains.

After the meal, there will be a time of prayer for the needs of all present. Women can come up to request individual prayer with Father Lawrence Carew, Magnificat’s spiritual advisor, and members of the prayer team.

(The cost of the prayer breakfast is \$25. Registration needed by Saturday September 27. No tickets will be sold at the door. For more info, call Fran Hood: 203.744.1856 or [s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net).)

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**September 7: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost:** The Mean Mass (Sheppard);

*Domine exaudi orationem / Et non intres* (Byrd); Passacaglia in C minor [BWV 582/1] (Bach)

**September 14: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross:** *Missa Nos autem gloriamur* (La Rue);

*Vexilla Regis* (Palestrina); *Salvator mundi I* (Tallis); Fugue in C minor [BWV 582/2] (Bach)

**September 21: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost:** *Missa Tristezas me matan* (Morales);

*Repleatur os meum / Clementissime Pater* (Rore); *Carillon* (Mathias)

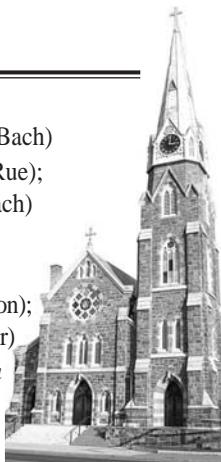
**September 28: Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost:** *Missa Dictes moy toutes voz pensées* (Mouton);

*Domine in auxilium* (Lassus); *Inclina Domine* (Lassus); Allegro from Symphony No. 6 (Widor)

**October 5: External Solemnity of Our Lady of the Rosary:** *Missa Ave sanctissima Maria*

(La Rue); *O Domina mundi* (Gombert); *Ave Maria...Regina caeli* (Verdelot);

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## Church reform from below:

## An interview with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano

By SEAN SALAI, S.J.

**Editor's Note:**

On July 27, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano recorded an extraordinary interview with Jesuit Scholastic Sean Salai, S.J., an America magazine reporter. In the interview, titled "Church Reform from Below," Bishop Caggiano discusses his hopes for the Synod and his reasons for moving forward with a call for renewal in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The 4th Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport will move forward in earnest this month, beginning with the Convocation on Friday, September 19, 2014 at 7:30 PM during the celebration of Vespers at Saint Augustine's Cathedral in Bridgeport. The first full working session of the Synod will follow the next day on September 20, when 400 delegates meet at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

**What inspired you to call for this synod, which is the first in the Bridgeport diocese in 32 years?**

When I first came to the diocese, I felt I needed to spend a significant amount of time listening and learning. Because I have an active personality, it was a conscious decision on my part to be receptive. Soon after I began to visit the different parishes and schools, I realized there was a need to engage the laity in a very significant way—the lay leadership in particular, given the wonderful people we have in the diocese. Many are very professional, they're very well educated, they want to learn about their faith and they want to take rightful leadership in the Church. I thought to myself that the best vehicle we had to engage them in discerning what the challenges really are which exist in the diocese, and prioritizing what we have to address and how to address them, was to call a synod. I made that decision at the beginning of January and it really has been very well-received by the people of the diocese.

**How is the Bridgeport diocese a microcosm of the larger Church?**

Part of this learning process I've gone through over these past 10 months as bishop has been coming to recognize the great richness, diversity and variety of the diocese—which, to be

honest, I was not aware of as a New Yorker looking at Fairfield County with the stereotype that it is a monolith. It really is not. In many senses, it really is a microcosm of the Church. For example, 18 percent of the population of Fairfield County is Hispanic. We have tremendous diversity economically from areas of significant affluence—like Darien, Westport and Greenwich—to places of economic challenge like Danbury and sections of Norwalk, to sections of real economic hardship like Bridgeport. We also have a tremendous ethnic diversity. We have a very large Vietnamese, Brazilian and Haitian population in addition to the Hispanics. So in many ways, Fairfield County is very reflective I think of the American Church, particularly in its larger metropolitan areas.

**What are the most vibrant areas of Catholic life in your diocese?**

There are a number. I am very impressed, for example, with Catholic education and its mission. We have 35 Catholic schools and 18 of them are blue ribbon presidential schools. So we provide an excellent, superior, I think unmatched education in the county that's also very Catholic. The Catholic identity is extremely strong and my hope is to strengthen it even more. That's one area that's vibrant. I think Catholic Charities does a phenomenal job of reaching out to the poor, the disabled, the immigrants. Recently, I myself was surprised to learn that Catholic Charities is the largest provider of social services in Connecticut outside of the state government itself. They do tremendous, effective and I think indispensable outreach to the needy.

Other areas? Our parishes are very different, but overall I've been very impressed. There is a great attention to liturgy in many of them, an interest in justice and charity. Our priests, by and large, are very dedicated to their work. I think the synod is going to pay special attention to how we can help them, particularly pastors, reimagine their work given the administrative burden they carry. We're blessed with a great college seminary, St. John Fisher, which has celebrated its 25th anniversary. About 80 of our priests have come

out of that program and now serve in the diocese. So there are many aspects that are vibrant. There are also challenges that we face.

**What are the biggest challenges right now?**

First and foremost, there's a tremendous need for evangelical outreach. We have perhaps 20-25 percent of our Catholics attending Mass on Sunday, maybe closer to 20 percent, which means four out of every five Catholics are not worshipping regularly. I think that's the single greatest challenge. That challenge highlights other challenges. For example, those Catholics who no longer feel they are welcomed, those who are disaffected because of the state of life they live—perhaps they're divorced, perhaps they're divorced and remarried. Perhaps some disagree with the teachings of the Church in social areas or moral areas. But we have too many Catholics not involved in the life of the Church. The same is true with the young. The young people I've dealt with, and I've dealt with hundreds of them in these listening sessions for the synod, are tremendous. But for every one that's involved in the Church, there are perhaps eight or nine who are not involved. What came across clearly in the seven listening sessions—almost 2,000 people made interventions—is that the single greatest challenge that everyone agreed on is this need for outreach to Catholics, to welcome them back to the Church, both the young and everyone else.

**In dealing with these sorts of pastoral challenges, Pope Francis has encouraged bishops to formulate creative solutions at the local level. Why should Church reform start at the bottom rather than at the top?**

Two basic reasons. First, all religion and all politics is local. And if that motto is true, then the Church has been and always will be most alive at the parish and school level. The diocese is at its best when it's at service to the parishes and schools and is almost invisible in the life of the Church. The more locally we engage discussion, the more creative it is, the more receptive it is, and the more reactive it can be to the real problems. So that's

number one. The second thing is "many hands make light work." My experience has been—both in Brooklyn and now certainly in Bridgeport—that most people are eager to be of help. But they need to be part of the solution-making process. They need to be asked their thoughts and input and then encouraged to become involved. People don't just want their opinions asked; they also want to have some possibility of formulating what the program and the response is going to be. So on both levels, I think the Holy Father is absolutely on target, and

"There is nothing to be afraid of when people speak their minds honestly and respectfully because the truth is the truth."

at times we have not done such a great job of engaging lay leaders in creative and constructive ways. The synod is really meant to be the catalyst to do that.

**Part of your synod's work will involve lay participants attending learning sessions at Fordham University, discussing best practices from other places in the Church. What does this sort of discussion contribute to the life of the U.S. Church?**

There are many benefits. But speaking about the delegates themselves, I'm hoping that—in exchange for all of their hard work, and their time, and their generous commitment to the process that is very significant—they will come out spiritually blessed and enriched. And both personally and theologically, more attuned and educated so that they are ready to do whatever God asks them to do. I want the delegates to be able to come out as more engaged, more knowledgeable, more on fire in faith. I want it to be a personal journey as well as an ecclesial journey. That's why I asked for the formation sessions, and from what I can gather, the initial reports are that

people are very enthusiastic about them precisely because they are coming away with material for them to reflect on personally in their own prayer life apart from what the synod is going to do. You cannot give what you do not have; you cannot give he who you do not know. I've mentioned that in my talks many times, and for many of these delegates, the synod is an opportunity for them to grow in faith personally. That is beyond price when it comes to the value to a parish, a school or a diocese. I mean, the Lord picked 12, and after the coming of the Holy Spirit 11 of them converted the world. Can you imagine, if we had 50,000 people, what they would do?

**The local churches in Miami and Juneau completed synods last year. Do you think more U.S. bishops should hold local synods?**

Two other dioceses have already contacted our office inquiring about the process we're going to use. I think there is more interest now among bishops to have synods. To be honest, I think there is precious little to lose and far too much to gain when a bishop discerns whether or not to have a synod. I would encourage every diocese to have one because we all face challenges. Some are unique to our areas and some are universal to the Church. But to engage all leadership—not just lay leadership but priests, deacons and consecrated men and women—and bring them to a forum where we can really begin to discuss issues in a very frank and transparent way can only strengthen the Church.

So I would encourage all bishops to have one. If you were to ask me "what are some concerns bishops may have in calling a synod," it's true that I've had a number of people say to me: "Well, how do you control the synod?" And my response is it's not for me to control. There is nothing to be afraid of when people speak their minds honestly and respectfully because the truth is the truth. The truth prevails regardless of circumstance, person, participants or venue. I firmly believe that with all my heart. When we allow people to speak their minds, then that process itself

# Bishop Frank Caggiano

is healing. People sometimes just want to be heard even when they know that what they're asking cannot be. But that's a service to that person and to the Church if we allow that venue to happen. Growing up in an Italian house, which was for lack of a better word quite a lively experience, I don't have any fear of the synod being a place where people speak frankly. I encourage it. Even when people disagree, I encourage that too if it's on people's minds, provided they do it respectfully.

**Reports from the pre-synod listening sessions you held in the spring indicated a wide variety of perspectives, with some people wanting a stronger devotional life and others voicing more progressive concerns. As a bishop, how do you balance people's pastoral needs in a way that makes everyone feel cared for?**

This is at the heart of what a synod is and I think it's going to be very hard for most people, and at times even myself, to understand that a synod is more a process of discernment than it is of deliberation. And that is where, as Americans, we might be a bit behind the eight ball, because we tend to understand gatherings of individuals assembled to address problems as a deliberative action. That is, we identify what the problem is and we make a decision to address it. That is not what a synod is, though. A synod is a discerning process in which, once the issue has been clarified, we need to sit and listen to the voices who can inform us of what the program or solution needs to be. And I think that's part of that formational process. We need to suspend our initial reaction that "we're going to solve this problem by doing X" and take a step back and deliberate—to allow a discernment to occur, to allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten us about what God is asking us to do. Because it's not our Church, it's his Church first and foremost.

So that's where I think the challenge is. Now the second piece of the question is "to whom do we listen?" That is where the rubber hits the road. There's a bias in contemporary society that the only voices we hear are the ones who speak to us here and now. You know, I call it the "blog phenomenon." But in fact, the voices we listen to are the voices of the tradition, starting with the apostles and working



our way up to you and me. And that's where the discernment comes in. And that's why the synodal process is personally enriching, but it's also a heck of a lot of work to get all the voices in the mix. It's the magisterium, it's the sacred scripture, it's the tradition and all the great teachers from the Fathers of the Church onward who are able to inform us of what the Holy Spirit might be asking us to do. Because the bottom line is this: There is precious little that is new under the sun. We as contemporaries think all of our problems are new, and that we have to come up with new ideas, and new programs, and that's balo-

"My hopes for the future is that in a few years all of our parishes and schools will be growing, our vocations will be on the rise, we will have an army of lay leaders engaged in the life of the Church..."

ney. There is very little that's new after 2,000 years that the Church has not struggled with in other ages. So why reinvent the wheel? Why not go back to those times and have those voices inform us? I'm not sure, but for the synodal delegates, I think that will be the hardest piece of this process.

**As you've mentioned, one of the themes for your synod is building bridges to those who have left the Church. Do you have any initial thoughts on how to move forward with that issue?**

Yeah, I have just one, and it's a foundational principle that has come to the fore in my own reflection and prayer over the last six or seven years—and it is a radical change from what I used to think. I say "radical" because it really

reworks a lot of what I used to consider the hallmarks of success. It's this: Up to recently, the Church has usually turned to creating a pastoral program when facing a pastoral challenge, to address that challenge. Now, that will always have a place in the life of the Church. But I think the genius of Pope Francis is that he has expressed in words what I was intuiting, when he speaks about missionary discipleship, that we need to reach out one person at a time. That has phenomenal implications for the life of the Church. If the methodology is "one person at a time," then each and every baptized person is called to get involved. That's the only

way we're going to do it. It also implies that we're going to have to invest time to sit and listen to the people who we wish to invite back, to allow them to tell us their story, for healing whatever needs to be healed. And it implies that success has to be measured by sowing seeds, even when you don't see the seed grow initially, because the person who comes after you sees the seed blossom. It demands a spirituality, it demands a discipline in prayer and it demands a pastoral faith reflection which will for many people be a brand new experience. That's my initial insight going into the synod. It could be leaven for tremendous renewal of people's lives because there are no more spectators at the synod.

In the minds of many people, Pope Francis has issued his own

pastoral game plan for the universal Church in his apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium."

**Do you see any particular areas of congruence between what the pope's doing and what you're doing in Bridgeport?**

It's this intuition I just mentioned that I'd like to bring to the synod as one of the foundational principles for everything we're going to do, because I think that's ultimately what the pope is challenging us to do. The only additional reflection the pope is offering is to emphasize what allowed the primitive Church, in our initial history, to grow in such an unparalleled way. Why was there such unparalleled growth? It was missionary growth, one person at a time, and the charism of the early Church was joy. As the pope is saying, joy is infectious. I mean, the early Christians went to their crucifixion singing the psalms, expressing a deep-seated joy. The Romans probably looked at them and said "what is the matter with these people? They are going to get crucified, so what is it that they have and we don't have?" Of course, it's not a "what" but a "who." Again, the pope has hit the nail right on the mark, it's the joy. But joy is not a program. The synod's not going to say, "O.K. we're going to be joyful." It will be the fruit of the work of the synod, if we do it well. In my dealings with young people, if there's anything in the faith that resonates in the hearts of young people, it's when they encounter real joy. Then they are hooked, because there's precious little joy in the secular society of their ordinary experience. There's plenty of happiness in the "pursuit of happiness," but there's precious little joy. Joy is the only

other element I hope we'll bring out of our synodal process.

**In terms of reform or renewal, what do you believe the Catholic Church needs most right now?**

We need to force the dialogue on every level. That ultimately is what we need to do going forward into the future. Now most people would suggest that there are ecclesiastical structures that have to be changed, that disciplines have to be changed, but in my estimation it is a posture that's more important than those sorts of changes. It's a change of attitude towards listening and dialoguing. Too many people feel isolated and alone and unwelcomed, even within the Church. And even among clergy and religious, many of them feel their superiors are not really listening to their concerns. So that would be my greatest suggestion, whether it's really reform or just renewal, that everyone adopt more of a stance of dialogue and listening with the heart. I think that would bring the Church a long way towards the renewal that we want.

**What are your hopes for the future?**

My hopes for the future, at least for the Diocese of Bridgeport, is that in a few years all of our parishes and schools will be growing, our vocations will be on the rise, we will have an army of lay leaders engaged in the life of the Church in every aspect and at every level of our diocese. If we could realize that, I would be absolutely delighted, and that's my hope.

**Any final thoughts?**

It's a lot of work, but I find it very gratifying to be part of this process in Bridgeport, and I owe it really to the work of the Spirit. If you had asked me when I was named the bishop last September if we'd be going through this process, I would not have believed it myself, and yet we're in it. I'm grateful that we're in it and I don't believe it's my doing. I believe it's the work of the Holy Spirit that's moving all of us that way. So my last thought is that I'm grateful to the Lord and I'm looking forward to some great things happening.

*Sean Salai, S.J., is a summer editorial intern at America.*

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## St. Philip Parish

VOTF asks God's blessings  
with Mass for synod

NORWALK—Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) has invited all delegates to the 2014 Synod and the general public to attend a special Mass for the success of

the synod on September 11 at 7:30 pm at Saint Philip Church in Norwalk.

Father Michael Boccaccio, pastor of Saint Philip, will be the

celebrant and will offer a special blessing to all synod delegates in attendance. Light refreshments will follow the liturgy.

"We are hoping that delegates will come to the liturgy and in some way be uplifted by it. It's all about intercession because we are asking God's blessing on the synod to bring us together as people of God and what's best for the diocese," said Jamie Dance, VOTF chair and a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Darien.

Dance will be one of four delegates from VOTF who have been invited to participate in the synod.

"We're praying for the success of the synod, and we hope that the Mass and blessing will inspire the delegates as they work on items that will be beneficial to the parishes and people throughout the diocese," she said.

Dance thanked Bishop Caggiano for his leadership and said the Mass at St. Philip is another step forward in the reconciliation process with Voice of the Faithful. It will be the first time in a decade that members have been able to meet in a Catholic Church.

"We are grateful for our bishop's leadership and courage as he guides us on the path of New Evangelization for the Church in Fairfield County. He has given us yet another opportunity to grow in unity and mutual respect," she said.

Bishop Caggiano made history in March when he reached out to



"WE ARE ASKING GOD'S BLESSING on the synod to bring us together as people of God," said Jamie Dance, VOTF chair. She thanked Bishop Caggiano for his leadership and said the Mass at St. Philip is another step forward in the reconciliation process with Voice of the Faithful.

Voice of the Faithful by attending their meeting in Norwalk. The story was widely reported in local media and across the U.S. Describing the present as "a singular moment of grace" in the history of the local church, the bishop invited VOTF representatives to be among the 350 delegates to the Fourth Diocesan Synod that has gathered to plan for the future of the diocese.

"The synod won't be top down or bottom up, but 'us' coming to discern about the most urgent issues facing the diocese," he said. The bishop said he was deeply troubled by the disaffection of young people who are un-churched and the numbers of Catholics who have left the Church in the last decade.

Dance, who attended three of the listening sessions, said she hopes the synod will be successful in reaching out to Catholics who have left the Church and bring them back into the community.

"One thing is always mentioned by those of us who have children and grandchildren—the fact that so many have left the

Catholic Church, often for no known reason. No one did an exit interview. We need to know why they left, and offer hope that they may return to Church and become brothers and sisters in the faith with us again."

Dance said the Mass will also be an opportunity to commemorate one of the most tragic dates in our nation's history. "On this date of 9-11 so prominent in our memory, let us remember those who suffer still through the loss of loved ones on that day. May our suffering from these attacks awaken in us an awareness of the pain and fear that so many around the world live with each day."

The synod formally begins on September 19 at Saint Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport with a Solemn Vespers Service, followed by the convening of the first General Session for delegates on September 20 at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

The goal of the synod is to address and evaluate the current situation in the diocese and to formulate a five-year plan to respond. ■



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# Special Mass Starts School Year

## Bishop Caggiano gives teachers an assignment

BRIDGEPORT—More than 800 full-time faculty and administrators from all 35 diocesan Catholic schools filled St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport on August 27 to pray together at the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year.

“I am going to be the first person to assign homework this year, homework that I am also assigning to myself,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said to teachers during his homily.

“First, take time each and every day of your mortal life to pray. Never say that you are too busy. Always keep your eyes fixed on the ‘pearl of great price,’ the Lord Jesus; listen to him and let him caress your heart. Second, by the integrity of your lives and your witness in the coming of the school year, call out the greatness in your students as St. Monica did for her husband and son. Call your students to a greatness they do not even know they possess.”

Sister Mary Grace Walsh,

ASCJ, PhD, superintendent of schools, said the bishop’s homily resonated with teachers and helped them to begin the school year on a positive and prayerful note.

“The bishop reflected on the mission and vocation that all Catholic school educators share with him as teachers and individuals with a powerful and lasting role in the formation of young people, and he challenged all those assembled to continue to bring young people to the faith.”

Sister Mary Grace said the bishop’s reflection on St. Monica reinforced the power of prayer in its ability to transform lives.

“Since the liturgy was celebrated on the memorial of St. Monica, mother of our diocesan patron St. Augustine, the bishop explained that through her prayers and tears her husband came to the faith and her son was converted and baptized,” she said.

The episcopal chaplains and priest-teachers from the high schools and priests of the



BISHOP CAGGIANO REFLECTED on the mission all Catholic school educators share at the August 27 Convocation at the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year.

Cathedral Parish concelebrated the mass with Bishop Caggiano.

Following the Mass, high school educators traveled to St. Mark School in Stratford, where they had professional development sessions on 21st Century

Learning with Dr. Mary Jane Krebbs, associate dean of the Graduate School of Education at St. John’s University. Elementary school educators had professional development on classroom management with Dr. Harry and Dr.

Rosemarie Wong at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield.

The Diocese of Bridgeport sponsors 35 Catholic elementary and high schools, serving over 9,000 children with 900 teachers and other staff members.

Fifty percent of diocesan elementary schools have achieved the Blue Ribbon of National Recognition, with students in grades 3-8 in Blue Ribbon schools ranking in the top 15 percent of schools in the country in reading and math. In the five diocesan Catholic high schools, average SAT scores in critical reading and writing are above state and national norms. Ninety-nine percent of all diocesan high school graduates continue on to post-secondary education.

(To find a Catholic school in your area, visit the website: [www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicsschools.com](http://www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicsschools.com).)

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# Young Adult Ministry

## 'Summer Splash!'

By **AUDREY COZZARIN**

"Summer Splash Meet & Greet at the Beach" with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was held on August 17 at Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Stamford. A kick-off event for the new diocese-wide young adults group, 85 strong, it was by all accounts a great success.

"Summer Splash" included a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano, followed by a party on West Beach located behind the church with a DJ, pizza, and refreshments.

The impetus for the "Summer Splash" began at the Malta House Gala in May. I spoke to Bishop Caggiano and offered to help create momentum with our young adult population (ages 21-35) to gather in friendship with their peers in faith. His immediate reaction was positive:

"Terrific! Email me."

I had plenty of help from my teammates in planning this first-time event: Father Peter Towsley, vicar for evangelization and episcopal delegate to the ecclesial movements of the diocese, and Deacon Steve Pond from St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan. We rolled up our sleeves and, with the assistance of Damien O'Connor, senior director of Pastoral Services, and Julie Rodgers, MCR, director for youth ministry, "Summer Splash" was born.

Some scary statistics gave our planning an extra push. According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, the so-called "millennial generation," ages 21-35, is statistically the age group leaving the State of Connecticut in the largest numbers. Finding it difficult to afford to marry, buy a home, and raise a family, this group leaves our state in search of their fortunes

in other states.

The mission behind "Summer Splash" is to help galvanize young adults and give them the energy to remain rooted right here in our state, in their parishes, as important members of our community.

The young adults attending "Summer Splash" were thrilled to meet the bishop. Splash-goers were also happy to meet so many of their peers.

"I feel like I am outgrowing my old friends," said Victoria LaBella of Stamford. "They don't understand why I attend church. I'm glad to have this opportunity to meet other people my age who share my faith and values."

"I'm happy to be a part of the family of God in a context like this," agreed Colin Williams of Norwalk.

"This is so exciting! It's a really good idea!" said Jackie



YOUNG ADULTS ATTENDING the "Summer Splash" met the bishop, who stayed to chat with the crowd in the sun and sand. "I'm glad to have this opportunity to meet other people my age who share my faith and values," said Victoria LaBella of Stamford.

Conigliaro, summing up the day.

We particularly want to thank the sponsors of "Summer Splash": Tony Gervasio of Star Distributors in New Haven; Tony Caraluzzi of Taunton Wine & Liquor in Newtown; Sam Cingari of Grade A ShopRite in Stamford; Ellen Baker of Darien; and the entire O'Rourke family in Stamford.

Special thanks go to Father Piotr Smolik at Star of the Sea for providing a stunning location for the Mass, with the beach right next door.

The next young adult gather-

ing of will be Friday, September 12, from 6-7 pm at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan. We'll be working on the creation of a "steering committee" to help with future events and opportunities for the Young Adult Group of the diocese.

(Audrey Cozzarin can be reached at [cozzarin@snet.net](mailto:cozzarin@snet.net). Visit the *Diocese of Bridgeport young adults webpage for news; upcoming events; lists of YA groups, with contact info, in Fairfield County and NYC; national conferences; articles; music and more: [www.dob-ya.com](http://www.dob-ya.com).*)

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# Fairfield University

## Bishop to speak in Fairfield

FAIRFIELD—A talk by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be one of the highlights as Fairfield University's Center for Catholic Studies continues its tradition of bringing notable theologians and award-winning writers to the Fairfield campus to share their perspectives on important topics of the day. All events are free and open to the public.

The November 4 talk by Bishop Caggiano will focus on how the Diocese of Bridgeport initiated its fourth diocesan synod, and the bishop's hopes that it will be a catalyst for pastoral discernment and renewal.

Fairfield University's Center for Catholic Studies' 2014 calendar of events is as follows:

**"Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis"**  
*Christiana Z. Peppard, Ph.D., assistant professor of theology, science, and ethics, Fordham University*  
Wednesday, September 17, 8 pm  
Dolan School of Business Dining Room

**The 14th Annual Anne Drummey O'Callaghan Lecture on Women in the Church—**



**"Cuéntame: Counting (and Recounting) the Latino Presence in U.S. Catholicism"**  
*Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Ph.D., associate professor of religious studies, Manhattan College*  
Wednesday, October 1, 7:30 pm  
Dolan School of Business Dining Room

**The 2014 Catholicism and the Arts Lecture—"Imagination and Passion in Christian Spirituality: Lessons for Writers from the Ignatian Exercises"**  
*Mary Karr, poet, memoirist, and author of "The Liars Club," "Cherry," and "Lit."*  
Tuesday, October 7, 8 pm  
Dolan School of Business Dining Room

**The 21st Annual Christopher**

**F. Mooney, S.J. Lecture in Theology, Religion & Society—"On Calling a Diocesan Synod: Hopes and Dreams"**

*Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport*  
Tuesday, November 4, 8 pm  
Quick Center for the Arts

This fall's **Living Theology Workshops** will explore inter-faith questions by an interfaith panel. Each will take place in the DiMenna-Nyselius Library Multimedia Room, and are free and open to the public.

**"What is Religious Freedom?"**  
Saturday, September 20, 9:30 am-12 noon

**"Is There Life After Death?"**  
Wednesday, October 22, 4:30-5:45 pm  
*\*Note change from usual day and time*

**"Giving Up Religion: Why do People Do It?"**  
Saturday, November 15, 9:30 am-12 noon

(For more info, call 203.254.4000, ext. 3415, or visit [www.fairfield.edu/catholicstudies/lectures](http://www.fairfield.edu/catholicstudies/lectures).)

## New playground is 'outside classroom'

A playground is more than just a space for children to play. It is an outside classroom where life lessons are taught and learned. It is a place where boundaries are lifted and imagination is allowed to take over.

Just in time for the start of school, the new playground space at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School was blessed and opened to students to enjoy for many years to come.

St. Thomas Principal Patricia Brady says that the playground is very much a vital part of the school's program. The challenge was that playground equipment is expensive and school budgets are tight, a dilemma every principal faces.

The school's solution was the "N.U.T." (No Uniform Today) program. Each N.U.T. booklet contained five No Uniform Today coupons at a cost of \$20 per booklet. The execution of the program was simple: The day a student wanted to come to school out of uniform, all they needed to do was present a N.U.T. pass to their homeroom teacher.

Although the N.U.T. program was a huge success, raising slightly over \$13,000, additional funds were needed to complete Phase I of the project. Through the generosity of the school community and the Home School Association, Phase I has been successfully completed. Students were greeted with a great outdoor play and learning space when they returned to school this week. ■



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## EDITORIAL

## School's In!

It's official. The yellow buses are rolling, kids with backpacks are waiting by the curb, moms are waving a tearful goodbye to brave kindergarten heading off to "real" school.

In a sense, fall is the time for all of us to go back to school. Learning is a life-long process. We receive a promotion, with new responsibilities and a new set of rules to master. Parents get older and fragile, and we learn more about medical jargon and insurance forms than we ever wanted to know. Sometimes picking up a new skill—photography, say, or cake decorating—is fun. Sometimes not so much. (Get the new Windows 8.1 for your computer; that's a steep learning curve for sure.)

The best models for lifetime learning are those kids waiting for the bus. They don't know what they're in for this year, a nice teacher or a tough one, new friends or old hostilities. They grumble a little, slide into school clothes, shoulder their backpacks and head out for the bus.

So let's do the same. Grumble at the alarm clock, pull on a jacket and head into what adults laughingly call the "real world." Clear the desk, clean out closets, pull over the calendar and begin to make appointments. School's in.

## Time for Change

If another September could be busier or more consequential in the life of the diocese than this month, you would have to search a long way in our 61-year history.

On September 9, at All Saints Middle School in Norwalk, Bishop Caggiano will deliver a major "State of the Diocese" address to discuss an administrative, financial, and pastoral turnaround plan for the diocese. The following weekend, on September 19, at 7:30 pm at St. Augustine Cathedral, a special Vespers Service will mark the convocation of the Synod. And the long awaited first General Session will begin the next day as 350 delegates meet at St. Catherine of Siena Family Center in Trumbull to undertake the formal work of Synod 2014.

It's no accident that the first General Session of the year-long synod begins on the anniversary of the bishop's first year in Bridgeport. After a year of listening, prayer, and getting to know the diocese, Bishop Caggiano is poised to move ahead. It is a time for transformation and change as the diocese confronts challenges and plans for the future.

The bishop is ready to move forward. After absorbing the Listening Sessions of the Synod, he has articulated a vision for the future; one that empowers youth, welcomes back those who have left, introduces a new generation of charitable programs and builds communities of faith.

Whether serving as delegates or not, the work of the synod is a task we all share, and the bishop will be asking for our help and support in many ways during the next year. His challenge goes beyond programs or policies: he has urged us to become evangelizers, to invite people of good will to share the good news of the Gospel, and to create a profoundly welcoming Church in the depth of its faith and a spirit of joy.

## Where did summer go?

How often we ask that question as we rush from season to season, somehow aware that the fullness we seek eludes us. And at some point, we all may find ourselves asking, "Where does a life go?" As quick as a summer day! Or so brief like something unseen that sends ripples across the water only to disappear! What imbues us with the deepest sense of being alive? Bishop Caggiano offers us a valuable insight in his recent homily to teachers at the special Mass to launch the new school year. "First, take time each and every day of your mortal life to pray. Never say that you are too busy. Always keep your eyes fixed on the 'pearl of great price,' the Lord Jesus; listen to him and let him caress your heart." Prayer takes us into the depth of our experience and the fullness of time; it slows the seasons and connects us with what is truly lasting. ■

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Delegate Formation Session

By PAT HENNESSY

Being named a delegate to Synod 2014 is an honor. It is also a commitment requiring not only active participation but spiritual and intellectual preparation. Toward that end, the synod committee asked delegates to attend one of three formation sessions offered during the summer.

More than simply a nuts-and-bolts "how to" session, these were more in the spirit of a retreat day.

The morning talk at each session was presented by Dr. Colt Anderson, dean of the Graduate School of Religion at Fordham University and a noted Church historian and theologian.

"Develop purity of heart, be humble, try to listen," he told the delegates, defining true piety as "a commitment to following the divine law of love."

As part of their preparation to participate in the synod, he urged delegates to read the Letter of James in the New Testament for its advice on how to live in a Christian community: "Wisdom... is peaceable, lenient, docile, rich in sympathy and the kindly deeds that are its fruits, impartial and sincere. The harvest of justice is sown in peace" (James 3: 17-18).

While Dr. Anderson focused on spiritual preparation, in the afternoon Dr. Joan Kelly led the delegates into an exploration of the meaning and history of synods, particularly as they affected this diocese. Well-known in this diocese, Dr. Kelly is an adjunct professor at Holy

Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, and is on the faculty of St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford.

"Synod," she explained, is the Greek word for "gathering." Specifically, a synod is a gathering focused on sustaining the viability of the Church. The first synod in this country was held in 1791, two years after the founding of the Diocese of Baltimore, the first Catholic diocese in the new United States of America. The diocese covered the entire country, with Catholics a mere one percent of the population.

"There were 17 Catholics in



Bridgeport in 1830," Dr. Kelly told the delegates, helping them

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

## PASTOR

REVEREND LEONEL MEDEIROS, from Parochial Vicar, Saint Peter Parish, Danbury, to Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Danbury. Effective date was August 30.

## EPISCOPAL VICAR

REVEREND LEONEL MEDEIROS, to Episcopal Vicar for the Brazilians. Effective date was August 30.

## DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIANS

REVEREND SAMUEL KACHUBA, to Director of Seminarians. Fr. Kachuba will remain Vicar for St. John Fisher Seminary, Stamford and Episcopal Chaplain to Trinity Catholic High School, Stamford. Effective date was August 25.

## ADMINISTRATOR

REVEREND TERENCE WALSH, from Parochial Vicar, the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, Stamford, to Administrator, the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, Stamford. Effective date is September 6, 2014 and ending September 1, 2015.

Reverend Ian Jeremiah, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy Personnel  
September, 2014

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USPS no.: 12-117. Periodical postage paid at Bridgeport, CT 06601, and additional mailing offices.

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano  
Publisher

Brian D. Wallace  
Executive Editor bwallace@ccfc-ct.org

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Madeline Ghilardi  
Copy Editor (Consultant)

## Circulation

Every registered Catholic household in Fairfield County is entitled to a subscription. To add or change an address, call 203.416.1461, or email: fcc@diobpt.org

## Annual Subscription Price

\$20 (within diocese)  
\$50 (outside diocese)

## Postmaster

send address changes to:  
Fairfield County Catholic  
238 Jewett Avenue  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606-2892

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# Editorial



## A weird assignment

### CATHOLIC BY GRACE

BY DENISE BOSSERT

*Denise Bossert is a convert and a syndicated columnist. Her column has been published in 60 diocesan newspapers.*

It was such a weird assignment. But, then again, it was a college sociology class, so that may explain a lot.

The assignment? Deliberately do something counter to social mores, observe reactions of those around you, and write about it in your journal.

One student—a middle-aged man with a large beer belly—went to McDonald's and ordered a Happy Meal. He asked for a boy's toy and proceeded to sit directly in front of the counter and eat the meal himself.

Then, he played with the toy.

Another student entered an elevator and stood in front of the closed elevator doors—staring at the other people in the elevator rather than standing face-forward in silence like everyone over the age of five has learned to do.

I remember the assignment because it was extremely uncomfortable. I like to fit in. I care what people are thinking about me. I feel this crazy compulsion to explain myself to perfect strangers even when I merely suspect that my actions might not

make sense to them.

I don't like breaking social mores—ever.

I like to blend.

But the world has changed. Catholics cannot just blend in with society at large. We stand out because we stand up for Christ and his Church, and we hold to Church teaching.

There was a time when that meant there wasn't very much difference between Catholics and the rest of the grown-ups in the United States. Yes, there was Mary and the Pope and no-meat Fridays, but in general, we could blend.

Today, people look at us like we are a grown-up who just purchased a Happy Meal and is entertained by the toy inside. Today, people think we are as odd as the person in the elevator who faces away from the doors rather than staring at the closed doors in silence.

No college assignment required. We break social mores all of the time.

And it is kind of uncomfortable.

At a glance, our Catholic practices and beliefs don't make sense to the public. But they do make sense. There is a Truth here that is so deep, so rich, so eternal that we must not sacrifice it to feel like one of the crowd. The stakes are too high.

Now more than ever, we must be the Salt of the Earth—even if the world has lost its taste for this kind of salt. More than ever, we must be the light of the world—even if the world likes to dance in the dark and play dangerous games with their eternal souls.

The world may like us to follow along blindly. But we cannot. The Shepherd is calling us to follow after him.

So, we stand and face the people in the elevator when we stand up for the unborn, for holy matrimony, for chastity, for beauty, for sacrificial living, for suffering-among-us, for peace and peaceful resolutions to conflict, for the

aged-and-infirm, for family meals and family values, for Mass attendance because Jesus IS waiting for us in the Eucharist. The crowds may say we are only playing with McDonaldland toys when we pick up our Rosaries and light candles in the Adoration Chapel.

Get used to feeling uncomfortable under the gaze of the world. St. Paul's prediction is upon us:

“For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith” (II Timothy 4:3-7). ■



## A whiff of the pipe

### A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

Grandpa smoked pipes. They weren't fancy or expensive—just cheapo, disposable corncobs with plastic stems that stained easily and looked as worn and used as he did after eight decades of simple American living.

Today, you could buy pipes like the kind Grandpa smoked for two bucks. The one I have tucked away in the cigar box in my closet probably cost him a quarter. To me, though, it's utterly priceless. It's the only thing I have of his. Somehow, that pipe bears his indelible imprint.

Grandpa was born while Teddy Roosevelt was president. He died the year Bill Clinton was elected. All the big moments

of the twentieth century happened on his watch: the Great Depression, the two World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam, but also the flu pandemic, Prohibition, Apollo 11, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. You could say he had a good run.

Grandpa was a Bronx boy, but his was a different kind of Bronx than the one you're maybe imagining. As a young man he sometimes slept in a hay barn on Gun Hill Road. I don't imagine there are too many of those left. He was delighted when I got into Fordham.

Although he never got past the eighth grade, he could sing the entire Fordham fight song from memory: “To the Ram, to the Ram, to the Ram for victory!”

Grandpa's passions were simple. He loved baseball. A lengthy retirement afforded ample evenings in his favorite armchair watching the Yankees on Channel 11. I was lucky enough to see my first game at “The House That Ruth Built” with a man who'd actually been there while the Babe was building it.

When the Yanks were on the West Coast, Grandpa would gladly put on a windbreaker and his Bear Bryant hat and head for the bleachers of the local middle school to watch a beer league game. He just loved the sport of it all.

Visiting Grandpa meant a suspension of the normal rules governing this boy's life. There was coffee cake for breakfast and a pigeon coop in the backyard. My brother and I slept on cots in the basement where Uncle Michael had, in his hippie days, painted a giant American flag on the ceiling. Far out, man!

But the pipe smoke was the main thing. The fragrant, earthy, enveloping smell of pipe tobacco was Grandpa's trademark. A whiff of pipe never fails to carry me off to the kitchen in that little house in Northern Westchester

that Grandpa built with his own two hands and where he and my wee Irish Nana raised seven kids, not counting the orphans, foundlings, and foster children they took in as a matter of simple Christian charity.

How did they do it, I often wonder? How did they manage on his meager salary as a Westchester County Parkway Policeman and, later, her part time work at the A&P?

It's a mystery of course. How do any of us manage? But one thing's for sure—they had faith. Every room in that house was adorned with Rosaries and religious images. The light switch covers had little crosses on them that glowed in the dark. The Blessed Virgin Mary stood guard in the garden.

But all of that was ornamental. They were truly and completely devoted to Christ and his Church. They were daily communicants, my grandparents. Nana even floated the idea to me of becoming a priest.

Grandpa came once or twice to our house in New Jersey with a training basket full of pigeons in the trunk of his car. He'd release

them from our yard and drive back to Westchester to time their arrival. I could never fathom how these primitive creatures could find their way over hill, river, and dale without a map. But something inside was pointing them home.

Grandpa was old when he died and by then we were not terribly close. I was a teenager and focused on many things other than racing pigeons and baseball. But his death rattled me. He was the first person in my little world to fly away.

At his funeral, I asked Nana what she would do with Grandpa's pipes. “Would you like to keep one?” she asked. Would I ever.

Now, when I open that cigar box and the first, faded tobacco smell hits me, I feel closer to him than ever. It's a cool summer morning and we are sitting together at that kitchen table sharing a piece of coffee cake. I am thinking about exploring the field behind the pigeon coop. He, of course, is puffing on that pipe.

And something inside is pointing both of us home.

(Follow Matt on Twitter: @matthennessey) ■

# Catholic Charities

## Preschool opening in Norwalk

NORWALK—Room to Grow Preschool of Catholic Charities has announced the opening of its second location in Norwalk at 139 West Rocks Road, behind All Saints School. The pre-school program for children from three to five years old will officially open its doors on September 8, 2014.

“We are proud to bring this very successful program to a second location in Norwalk,” said Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities. “This is a proven program that has been a remarkable resource for children and families. We know that quality, affordable and safe early childhood educa-

tion is one of the most pressing needs a family can face, and this program answers that need.”

Nancy Cook Owens, director of Room to Grow, said there are still some subsidized school readiness slots available to eligible Norwalk residents, along with full-tuition spaces open to all in the greater Norwalk area and neighboring communities.

Cook Owens said the new location can accommodate a total of 46 children. It is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 to 5:30.

Room to Grow Preschool is a State licensed and nationally accredited facility that provides high quality care and education for children ages three to five years old. The 208 East Ave. campus of Room to Grow Preschool, located in the back wing of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Center, serves 83 children.



HAPPY FACES at Room to Grow. The preschool just announced the opening of a second location in Norwalk.

The subsidized slots are grant funded through a School Readiness grant, which requires that a child be a resident of the City of Norwalk. These spots are available on a sliding fee scale based on family income.

“Our curriculum is based upon the philosophy that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting. During the preschool years, play is one of the most fundamental activities of the developing child, providing the foundation of academic learning.

The most important goal of our curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners,” said Cook Owens.

“The program wait-list policy necessitates priority going to the siblings of families already enrolled or returning to Room to Grow. We currently have more than a two year waiting list, so we ask families to please plan accordingly.”

(For more info on enrollment, contact Nancy Cook Owens: 203.831.8200; email [nowens@cfc-ct.org](mailto:nowens@cfc-ct.org).)



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HSPT Prep Course Students are invited to stay for lunch and football game on Saturday, October 25.

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# St. Luke Parish News

## Adult formation twentieth anniversary

WESTPORT—A few weeks ago parishioners of St. Luke Parish met for this year's final session of "Faith Forum" and to plan for the upcoming year. The session marked the completion of the group's twentieth year.

Deacon Brian Kelly started this group when he came to St. Luke in 1994. Based on his own experience, he thought that much of the reading material he studied in the diaconate formation program would be of interest to adult Catholics. To see if this would work as an ongoing parish program, he invited parishioners to meet with him weekly to discuss books they would like to read together.

Word quickly spread. From five members the first year, attendance has grown so that there are now about 25 adults reading the same books. The group encourages those in attendance to share their thoughts about how the readings apply to current issues the Church is facing. This takes place

in an environment open to differences of opinion and respectful of every participant's perspective.

"When asked what about the group they have valued, they

**"To date, about 75 books on spirituality have been read and discussed."**

all say that it has enriched their love of Jesus and deepened their appreciation of the Church," says Deacon Kelly. "They also express appreciation for the openness of the discussion and the variety of experiences people bring."

Several members have told him that they had very little knowledge of the Church's teaching and history prior to joining the group, while others came with a lot of exposure to Church teaching and history. Either way,

all report that they have learned a lot and grown spiritually and theologically since they began participating in Faith Forum.

"One member claimed to be a 'Crayon Catholic' with elementary school knowledge of the faith but has now gone on to enroll in classes at Yale Divinity School as a result of the exposure received in Faith Forum," he says.

Another long-time member reported that her only prior exposure to the faith was the Baltimore Catechism and that the Faith Forum has deepened her love of Jesus and the Church immensely.

To date, about 75 books on theology, Church history and spirituality have been read and discussed. While each book has been valued and informative, the group has had its favorites over the years. Richard McBrien's

"Catholicism," which they read twice several years apart and spent the entire year on each time, is considered to be the most influential book on the list. As one member stated: "Wow, what an eye-opener!" Other group favorites include John O'Malley's histories of Vatican II and "Trent," James Martin's "My Life with the Saints" and "A Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything." Ilia Delio's "The Emergent Christ" and Richard Leonard's "Where the Hell is God?" were popular and challenging reads.

Additional books that made the list of favorites include "Truly Our Sister" by Elizabeth Johnson, Henri Nouwen's "The Prodigal Son," Father Larry Boadt's "Understanding the Old Testament" and Gerhard Lohfink's recent book on Jesus. They also read three books by

Michael Casey; the most popular of them is "Toward God." The group even read and enjoyed an as yet unpublished book on marriage authored by Deacon Kelly.

The group has read so many good books that it is difficult to stop listing them. Participants often buy extra copies of their favorites to give as gifts.

As one member noted: "We have read so many wonderful books that I would not have read without my participation in Faith Forum, even though I have a long history of interest in religion and theology."

*(Faith Forum meets on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 am in St. Luke's Parish Center. They begin again on Tuesday, September 23, with Cardinal Walter Kasper's book on Mercy. For more info, call Deacon Brian Kelly: 203.373.9753 or brian9987@att.net.)*

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# New Principals

PRINCIPALS FROM PAGE 3

in elementary education, M.Ed. degree in guidance and counseling and a second M.Ed. in special education. She completed the Education Leadership Program at Sacred Heart University. During her years at St. Ann's, she served as the Teacher Learning Community (TLC) coordinator for the Bridgeport Catholic Elementary Schools.

She and her husband, Gerard, are members of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton.

Peter Rodgers is the new principal of St. Catherine of Siena School in Trumbull. He was a member of the religious studies department St. Joseph High School in Trumbull for the past four years and has served as a coach and moderator of a number of clubs and activities. He also assisted in the professional development of teachers during his tenure there.

As a member of the U. S. Air Force, Rodgers served with honor and distinction overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He continues to serve in the Air Force Reserves.

He earned his B.A. degree from University of Connecticut

and an associate of science degree in criminal justice from Northwestern Connecticut Community College. He earned an MDiv degree from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md. Rodgers is currently pursuing his 6th Year Certificate in school administration at Southern Connecticut State University.

Rodgers lives in Milford, where his home parish is St. Mary's. He is engaged to be married this December to Margaret Mary Cronin.

Patricia Libero is the new principal of St. James School in Stratford. Most recently, Libero served as the director of teaching and learning at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield, where she developed a Learning Center that addressed the needs of the students. Prior to that, she served as co-principal and co-director of education at the Charles F. Hayden School and Boys and Girls village in Milford, principal of Mackrille Elementary School and May V. Carrigan Middle School in West Haven, as well as assistant principal at West Haven High School and Harry M. Bailey Middle School. She has also

worked at the University of New Haven as an adjunct professor and supervisor of student teachers.

Certified by the State of Connecticut in comprehensive special education (Pre-K-grade 12) and school administration and supervision, Libero earned a B.S. and M.S. in special education as well as a 6th Year Certificate in educational leadership from Southern Connecticut State University.

A resident of West Haven, she is a graduate of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall, and attends Our Lady of Victory Parish.

Stephen Anderson has been named the principal of St. Joseph School in Shelton. He joins St. Joseph after two years as principal of Central High School in Bridgeport. He also served as principal of East Haven High School, and for seven years in the Connecticut Technical High School System. His first experience as a principal was at Thomaston Center School. Throughout his career, he has been a teacher, supervisor of instruction, director of adult education and a manager of several specialized educational programs.

A resident of Southbury and a parishioner at St. Rose of Lima

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

He and his wife, Cheryl, have one grown daughter.

Patrick Higgins, Ed.D., is the new principal of St. Jude School in Monroe. A member of St. Mary Parish in Bethel, he comes to St. Jude's with a wide variety of experience as an educator, supervisor, building administrator and school leader. A former social studies instructor at Darien High School, he had previously served as dean of students and director of student activities at Joel Barlow High School in Redding.

Dr. Higgins holds his Ed.D. in instructional leadership and educational psychology from Western Connecticut State University, where he also received his M.A. in history and international relations and B.S. in justice and law administration. He holds his 6th Year Certificate from Sacred Heart University.

He and his wife, Tammy, a cardiac nurse practitioner at

Danbury Hospital, have two grown children. They are members of St. Mary Parish in Bethel, where Dr. Higgins is a 3rd Degree Knight of Columbus in Pavia Council #48. He has been a religious education instructor at his parish for 13 years.

Donna Wuhler has become the principal of St. Mark School in Stratford. A native of Trumbull, she earned a B.A. and M.A. in education from Southern Connecticut State University and is currently pursuing her administrative certification. Early in her teaching career she taught at Assumption School in Westport and Holy Family School in Fairfield and at Greenwich Country Day School.

She has held various leadership positions, including assistant to the director of special education in the Diocese of Bridgeport and coordinator of the New Parishioner Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Family Life Program at St. James Parish in Stratford where she and her husband, Matthew, are parishioners. The couple has one grown son.

Wuhler is the assistant for Associate Relationship for the Congregation of Notre Dame in the United States. In this posi-



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# New Principals

tion she acts as liaison between the associates and the Provincial Team and oversees the initial formation of new associates as well as developing programs, workshops and materials for ongoing formation.

Sister Colleen Therese Smith, ASCJ, has been named the next principal of St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown. A native of St. Louis, Mo., she earned her bachelor of arts degree in English from Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, her master of arts degree in theological studies from Providence College, R.I., and her master of science degree in educational administration and supervision from Manhattan College. She is a certified teacher and administrator.

Sister Colleen currently serves as the vocations director of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Hamden. Prior to being asked to assume her vocation ministry, Sister Colleen served as a high school principal at Sacred Heart Academy and as an elementary principal at Our Lady of Pompeii Catholic School in Greenwich Village, N.Y.

Sister Colleen lives with the Sacred Heart of Jesus Community at St. Joseph Parish, Shelton.

## St. Catherine Center for Special Needs

In addition to the diocesan elementary schools, the Diocese of Bridgeport has a special education school, St. Catherine Academy, the only Catholic school dedicated to the education of students with special needs. As part of diocesan reorganization, St. Catherine's now incorporates the diocesan Ministry for Special Needs. Brian Farrell has become the new director of St. Catherine Center for Special Needs.

A member of Sacred Heart Parish in Southbury, Farrell has served as the director of special services for the Redding Public Schools since 2005. Prior positions include serving as interim director of pupil personnel and special education for the Ridgefield Public Schools and as supervisor of special education at Wolcott Public Schools.

He received his BA from Stonehill College in Massachusetts and Master's Certificate of Advanced Studies School of Psychology from Fairfield University. Farrell has worked as a school psychologist and is certified in the State of Connecticut both as a school psy-

chologist and administrator.

Farrell and his wife, JoAnne, had two daughters. One is a teacher in Brooklyn, N.Y. Their other daughter, Sara, a special needs child, passed away 14 years ago.

## Assistant principals

In addition to the incoming principals, the Superintendent's Office has announced four assistant principals for diocesan schools. On the high school level, Gene Holmes is the new assistant principal at Kolbe; Annamarie

Wellington takes that post at Trinity Catholic. Two elementary schools have new assistant principals: Daniel Ferreira has become assistant principal at All Saints; Marianne Licari is assistant principal at St. Mary School in Bethel. ■

## Laska honored by St. Vincent's

BRIDGEPORT— At the recent St. Vincent's College graduation, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Dr. Martha K. Shouldis, college president/CEO, presented the Vincentian Award for service to the college and the community to Board Chair Marianne Laska, RN.

Laska, a Stratford resident, served on the College Board for nine years, the last four as chair. Under her leadership, the college recently graduated 154 students, the largest class in its history.

Laska retired from St. Vincent's Medical Center in 2000 after working in the medical and surgical units for 30 years. She has served as a volunteer nurse at Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport and is one of the founding nurses of the St. Vincent's Parish Nurse Program.

A native of Rotterdam, Holland, she earned her nursing degree at Rotterdam Nursing College and attended St Vincent's College after emigrating to the U.S. and starting her family.

She is married to former Connecticut Post publisher and current Hearst newspapers consultant Robert Laska. They are the parents of two grown boys and recently became grandparents for the first time. The couple are members of St. James Parish in Stratford. ■



MARIANNE LASKA (r) receives the Vincentian Award from Dr. Shouldis.

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# Parish News

## A great day at St. Roch's

GREENWICH—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was among those in Greenwich in August to observe the traditional St. Roch proces-

sed through the streets of Chickahominy yesterday for over two hours, they returned to St. Roch Church in time for



sion, which ended with Mass and the traditional Italian Fest to celebrate the Church's patron.

After parishioners and other Greenwich residents pro-

cessed through the streets of Chickahominy yesterday for over two hours, they returned to St. Roch Church in time for the 11:30 Mass, which Bishop Caggiano celebrated with Father Matt Mauriello, pastor.

Many of the first parishioners came to Chickahominy from a

small village in Southern Italy, where they prayed to San Rocco as their protector.

"The St. Roch procession is an event that is steeped in history and tradition in the town and the parish," said Bishop Caggiano.

"Known as the patron saint of the sick and the plague-stricken, St. Roch offers a beautiful and enduring example of caring for the sick and vulnerable that is as relevant in our time as it was in his."

In a statement before the procession, the bishop said that at a time when we are inundated with the voices of the here and now, the joyful procession through the neighborhood is a reminder of how tradition nourishes us even across cultures and continents.

"And that the deep roots of faith bring grace and meaning to the experience of living and celebrating our good fortune." ■

## Chapel dedicated

FAIRFIELD—Bishop Frank Caggiano visited St. Pius X Parish to celebrate a Pontifical Mass marking the dedication of the Chapel of Mary Mother of God in the parish's new Faith Center.

The bishop also served as the homilist for the Mass on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Many parishioners gathered for the 2 pm ceremony, which began in the chapel courtyard with the Presentation of Chapel Keys by Grace Rodriguez, Parish Council president, and the Opening of the Chapel Doors by Father Michael Dogali, pastor of St. Pius.



NEW ST. PIUS X Chapel in Fairfield.

During the ceremony, the bishop was presented with the building plans. He also blessed the new building with holy water. During the Mass following the prayer of dedication, a relic from St. Pius was sealed in the altar stone to signify that the sacrifice of the parishioners has its source in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The new chapel seats 102 faithful. Beginning August 18, daily Mass at 8:30 am will be celebrated in the new chapel.

The project began with renovations to the church and the building of a 14,000 square foot, L-shaped addition, which houses the chapel, office space and a multi-purpose area for social and educational events, along with exterior landscaping that transformed the 13-acre campus. ■



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## Parish News

## Blessed Sacrament spotlights local performers

By KAREN DYDZUHN

"We've shown that there are great things happening at Blessed Sacrament," says John Torres, chair of the Bridgeport parish's "Got Talent" buffet dinner and talent show.

Blessed Sacrament will host its second annual 'Got Talent' buffet dinner and show on September 13, from 6:15-11 pm, at Vazzano's Four Seasons in Stratford. This year's entertainment includes salsa dancers, vio-



linists, trumpet players, vocalists, comedians and a storyteller.

"What really manifested last year was that people saw us come together as a parish and as a community," Torres stated. "I think we all realized that anything is indeed possible."

Ina Mariano, a 45-year member of Blessed Sacrament, agreed. "Blessed Sacrament is a parish with diverse backgrounds," Mariano said. "We are a warm, loving, and welcoming congregation. Anyone who comes to our church will feel the warm presence of the Lord. Many of the people at our church have been there for over 40 years. We have a gospel choir and praise dance team."

Mariano's grandson, Jordan Crawford, 15, is one of the lead dancers, who partners with LaShaya Stroud, 22, to create inspirational movements to augment the Gospel readings. Jordan describes the choreography as "a mixture of modern, lyrical and a little bit of jazz."

Jordan, a sophomore at Notre Dame Catholic School, said the pair started performing in church as

"another way to praise the Lord."

They will open this year's 'Got Talent' show.

"Our dance routine will include some jazz and hip hop," Jordan said. "We want to show the audience that we can do a little bit more than what they've been seeing at Mass on Sundays."

Blessed Sacrament's administrator, Father Skip Karcinski, is also slated to perform. "I am grateful to the committee, and all of its members, for placing me as one of the final performers" says

Father Skip. "All of the talented people ahead of me will inspire me, and watching the enthusiasm and shared joy of the audience will reassure me before I even take the stage."

Torres notes that the 2014 "Got Talent" show features more performers than last year. There were also a record number of tickets sold a month before the event.

"Last year we had about 300 people in attendance and we thought it was a very successful fundraiser," Torres said. "We set our goal for \$10,000 and we ended up making \$12,000. This year we've sold more than 400 tickets and we're hoping to make \$20,000."

The proceeds will be used to support the church's operating costs. Along with 'Got Talent,' Blessed Sacrament's Fundraising Committee also organized a Spring Fling Dance in May and a Chocolate Chip Cookie Bake-Off.

About a year ago, a group of parishioners were concerned about Blessed Sacrament's future, explained parishioner Maria Feliciano. "John came up with the idea of having a talent show to raise money for the parish," she said. 'Got Talent' came out of the goal of helping Blessed Sacrament have the doors stay open."

Torres describes the success of last year—and this year's—"Got Talent" show to the congregation. "It's a team effort," he said. He also expressed gratitude for Blessed Sacrament's "Sister Parish," St. Jude Church in Monroe, as well as local merchants who donated prizes for the fundraiser's raffle.

"We're excited about this

year's show," Torres said. "I really think it's going to be a home run!"

(Donations to Blessed Sacrament Parish are welcome and may be mailed to 275 Union Avenue,

Bridgeport, CT 06607. The \$30 admission covers a full-course buffet, soft drinks, dessert and coffee.) ■

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# Warmth and Welcome

## First Fairfield County “Mass Mob”

By KATIE SCARLETT CALCUTT

The First Mass Mob has come and gone, and I am still riding high. 230 people filled St. Peter Church in Bridgeport. There are towns that size where I come from. Nice work and thanks for coming out!

The lucky ones who were able to attend were rewarded with a beautiful church, and a beautiful liturgy. Wowza. The stained glass windows are their prized treasure, and rightly so. Zettler windows

like this are famed the world over, and tucked away on Colorado Ave. is our own set depicting the highlights of Peter's life and Christ's. And while the windows are a “can't miss,” I found myself finding little spots all over the church full of great artistic care.

The Stations of the Cross are mosaics that look like they were set into the wall. Ornate wooden carvings adorn the confessionals. High above sightline rest four stone statues, recessed into the wall. They must be huge, but

they were so high up, you had to strain your neck to see them.

I was telling all of this to a third-generation parishioner after Mass, and he said he remembers seeing the ceiling beams up close as a little boy and each one was etched to match the pews below. He said you can't even tell this craftsmanship exists when you are sitting many feet below. But it is up there. Being beautiful just because. And he wondered how the blue-collar Irishmen who built the church possibly paid for it,

with its great attention to detail.

And I thought: that is what love does. It pours itself into the details. And it is a beautiful thought that generations ago, the families that built St. Peter tried to give God back a bit of the love he showers so freely on us. As a child, I remember seeing a microscopic image of a snowflake with its intricate crystal patterns and thinking “I'm glad someone took a picture, so this wasn't wasted.” But think: everyday millions of snowflakes fall, melt, and no one ever sees them. And we are told each one is different, unique, beautiful. And God does this because beauty is his nature and his language. So I



MASS MOB at St. Peter Church.

wonder if those parishioners long ago said: “Let's give God some beams he can really love. Even if he is the only one to see them. Because, man, that guy gives us snowflakes.”

(For more info: Mass Mob of Fairfield County: Facebook: Mass Mob Fairfield County email: massmobfc@gmail.com Website: www.massmobfc.webs.com.)

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## Young Adult Groups in Fairfield County

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**St. Joseph College-Age and Young Adult Group of Shelton/Bethel**—meets every Wednesday during school year. We are building community among young adults through faith, fun, and service. All young adults ages 18-29 are invited, including graduated seniors from high school. For info, contact Kim Barbosa: 203.526.6878; Ashley Moura: 203.520.8755; Erik Siclari: 203.610.2748 or [esiclari92@gmail.com](mailto:esiclari92@gmail.com). Come be part of a great group of Catholic young adults who wish to explore their faith and support one another in Christian fellowship! Visit the Shelton/Bethel College Life Facebook page: College Life-Shelton/Bethel.

**Young Adult Group at St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan**—All are welcome to our meetings which involve community service, fellowship and encouraging one another's growth in the Catholic faith. Most recently we have met in a home setting. Contact Steve: [swpond@hotmail.com](mailto:swpond@hotmail.com), or Beth: [bethwieber@gmail.com](mailto:bethwieber@gmail.com).

**Multi-Parish Young Adult Group St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield**—singles and married couples age 18-39. Activities, prayer, great food and social events. For info, call Maria M.: 203.798.6923 or Maria V.: 203.775.2135.

**Young Adults: 20s and 30s at St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull**—events include Bible Study, volunteer opportunities, and social gatherings. Email Theresa: [raytar.theresa@gmail.com](mailto:raytar.theresa@gmail.com).

**The Catholic Fellowship of Connecticut at Assumption Parish, Westport**—a young adult ministry serving Catholic professionals, both single and married, in their 20s, 30s and 40s with social, spiritual and community service events. We seek to grow closer to God and Church, and to unite young adults to promote further good. We are part of the Catholic Fellowship, a Catholic professional and community service organization in the tri-state area. For more info, go to [www.cfnetwork.org](http://www.cfnetwork.org) or contact us at [catholicfellowship@ymail.com](mailto:catholicfellowship@ymail.com).

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# Fan the Fire Youth Rally

## “Made for More”



NEWTOWN—More than 400 teens attended this year’s Fan the Fire Youth Rally on the grounds of St. Rose of Lima Parish over the weekend.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano joined with other inspirational speakers and youth ministers to encourage young people in their faith within a welcoming and prayerful environment.

The 9th annual Eucharist-centered youth rally is a day of fun, music, inspiration, intense prayer, and coming together for the Teen Mass celebrated by

Bishop Caggiano.

“It’s a one-day event designed to help teens deepen their relationship with Christ,” said Julie Rodgers, MCR, director of Youth Ministry for the diocese, who said the day also featured dynamic speakers and opportunities for Adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and recitation of the Rosary.

One of the most dramatic moments of the day was observed when Bishop Caggiano processed the Eucharist through the grounds and into the hall

for Adoration. The young people knelt reverently and silently throughout.

Before celebrating the Teen Mass to conclude the rally, the bishop also had many opportunities to meet young people and speak with them about their lives and their faith.

Speakers included Father Sam Kachuba, director of vocations, Paul J. Kim, Julie Rodgers, Scott Anthony and Rodd Blessey, youth minister from St. Rose of Lima. ■



### DELEGATE FORMATION FROM PAGE 14

to appreciate the tenacious faith of their ancestors. “When St. James Church, now St. Augustine Cathedral, was built in 1842, Catholics from Norwalk walked 14 miles to go to Mass on Sunday.”

Dr. Kelly traced the steady growth of the Church, thanks to strong immigration throughout the following century and a half, highlighting the formation of

the Diocese of Hartford—then including all Connecticut and Rhode Island, in 1843. The Diocese of Bridgeport was born a hundred years later, in 1953.

Each synod reflected the atmosphere of the time, she said. “In 1961, when Bishop Lawrence Sheehan called the first synod in the Diocese of Bridgeport, we were living what is called

the golden years of Catholicism in the U.S.A. The Church was growing, and JFK, the first Catholic president, was in the White House.”

At that time it would have been unthinkable to invite a member of the laity to attend, even as an observer.

Bishop Walter W. Curtis called two synods, the first in 1971 to implement the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council, with emphasis on the liturgy in English, ecumenism and—for the first time—the role of the laity. The Third Diocesan Synod, in 1981, focused on one of the documents completed after Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope).

By this time, lay members were a strong presence in the synod process.

That is even more evident in the Fourth Diocesan Synod. From listening sessions to synod topics to the Delegate Formation Sessions, the laity have been encouraged to attend and speak out.

The Delegate Formation Sessions were only the beginning. “Discernment,” Dr. Anderson told the delegates, “is absolutely necessary for the pastoral mission of the synod to be successful.” ■



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Carmela Manago-Executive Director

## Broadway cast members set for annual benefit dinner

GREENWICH—The twenty-third annual benefit dinner for the Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education will take place on October 18 at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich. The black-tie gala begins with a recep-

tion at 6:30 pm, followed by dinner at 7:30 pm.

Marc B. Lautenbach, president and CEO of Pitney Bowes, is the corporate committee chair for the event. Janie and Dean Gestal of Greenwich are the Benefit Committee chairs. They are being assisted by Audrey and Daniel Dornier, Helen and Dan FitzPatrick, Vilma and Dick

Matteis, and Bill Mitchell who are serving as co-chairs of the Benefit Committee.

The evening will feature a concert performance by the the Doo Wop Project, featuring cast members from Broadway hit shows Hairspray, Jersey Boys, Sister Act and Motown The Musical—including Tony nominee Charl Brown—performing a selection of doo-wop hits and inspired renditions of contempo-



rary songs. They will be accompanied by a band of Broadway veterans including accomplished Broadway musical director Sonny Paladino.

The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education has awarded more than \$26 million in grants since 1992. In addition to providing scholarship funds for diocesan schools in Bridgeport, other organizations receiving grants include the Boys and Girls Club of Stamford, Cardinal Shehan Center, Caroline House, Carver Center, Child Guidance Center, Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Family & Children's Aid, Kids in Crisis, Liberation Programs, Mercy Learning Center, Morning Glory Kitchen, New Covenant House of Hospitality, Regional YMCA of Western CT, Stamford Shelter for the Homeless and Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers.

(For more info, to purchase tickets or to make a donation, visit the Foundation's website: [www.innecityfoundation.org](http://www.innecityfoundation.org), or call 203.416.1496.)



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## Steubenville East 2014

## 'Set the world on fire'

*Eighteen teenagers from St. Edward the Confessor Parish in New Fairfield were among 3,500 young people and chaperones from New England who attended Steubenville East 2014, a weekend of evangelization for Catholic teens, held July 18-20 in the Ryan Center at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston. It was sponsored by the Franciscan University of Steubenville and hosted by Life Teen, which serves parish youth ministry. Following are reflections by three who attended.*

I have had the pleasure of being a chaperone for Steubenville East 2014 through St. Edward the Confessor's Youth Group in New Fairfield. Eighteen wonderful teenagers helped me make this experience all it could be for me. I did not know what to expect from the event or from the kids and I was surprised at how much they seemed to get out of it. I was impressed with how respectful they were during the programs, and how they treated each other, including adults.

Another thing that impressed me was how organized the whole weekend was; with 3,500 people in the same arena at the same time, it was hard to believe that any order could exist. But it did seemingly without a glitch.

Our first program was a "small" group of all Connecticut parishes. That set the tone for the rest of the weekend. It was amazing. We sat through motivational speakers throughout the three days, and you would think the kids would stop paying attention. But it was obvious how engaged they were by the reactions and responses after each session.

The high energy in the music was a way for all of us to praise God in song, and to be comfortable doing it together. Even during Mass the music was high energy, yet solemn.

My own spirituality was enhanced in many ways. First, with the sheer volume of people. Next, was the fact that I don't have to know the lyrics to sing along. As a matter of fact, I couldn't help but sing.

We attended three Masses within 48 hours. There was nothing boring during any of them. The part that most affected me was Eucharistic Adoration. As Father John carried the mon-

strance through every aisle in that arena I was not aware that I had been kneeling on a concrete floor for more than an hour, not realizing that I had not been using my cushioned kneeler. I had a hard time keeping my eyes off the Body of Christ. And the only light I could see was that on the monstrance as it moved around that arena. It was absolutely AWESOME.

—Kathie Murtha

*(Murtha is a long-time catechist and youth group volunteer at St. Edward's.)*

When asked to describe my experience at Steubenville East this year, I wasn't even sure where to begin. Not only was this weekend a good excuse to spend more time with my current friends from St. Edward's parish and to make new ones along the way, it was an opportunity to grow in my faith.

Very often our lives at home become too busy or too stressful to focus on things as important as daily prayer and growing in our faith. This is not how it should be. Steubenville was an opportunity for me to escape any and all troubles I face in daily life and enter into a world where everyone I talked to has the same strong faith and good morals that I can find within the members of the youth group at St. Edward's.

Of course, our group always welcomes new members with open arms, but being able to experience such strong emotions as I did with those who participated in Steubenville East this year really showed me that it's not the size of a youth group that makes it better or worse but rather the quality of the friendships and the faith that you can find within the members. Coming back home from this journey was definitely tough but I know that the friendships I made in those three short days will last a lifetime.

I would certainly recommend Steubenville Conferences to anyone interested, no matter what level you're at with your faith, and I can't wait for next year! Thanks again to anyone who donated their time or money to help the youth of our parish experience such a powerful event. We really appreciate it! Go Steubie!

—Maria Hitchcock

*(Maria is a senior at Brewster High School, Brewster, NY.)*

I was one of the 18 kids from St. Edward's who spent a weekend at the University of Rhode Island at a retreat called Steubenville East. I truly never thought my life could be completely changed over the course of three days, but it was.

Before Steubenville East, I attended church, took part in youth group and had always believed in God. My outlook on my faith though was a fairly narrow one. I hadn't taken enough time to understand or examine God, Scripture and, most of all, my relationship with God. Steubenville East though completely changed all that.

There were 3,500 kids from all walks of life there that weekend. Some kids were close to God, others were far from him and some, such as myself, were puzzled about their faith. In the end though, it didn't matter because we were all there for one purpose: to worship God and immerse ourselves in his love.

On Saturday night, the night of Adoration, not one person wasn't touched in some way by Christ's presence. As Father John Parks slowly paraded around the Ryan Center at the University of Rhode Island with a monstrance, people began to sing, pray and stretch their hands out. To be completely honest, I had never gotten visibly emotional in church before. However there was something so graceful, vibrant and amazing about adoration and Christ's presence that I became tearful and overwhelmed with God's love, and I could see that same reaction in everyone around me.

Between the music, prayer and friendliness of the youth and adults at Steubenville East, I can truly say it was one of the best weekends of my life, and most of all, I left Steubenville with these two things in mind: God is real and God is love. I saw and felt more of God's presence that weekend than I had in a long time.

St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, once said, "Go forth and set the world on fire," referring to spreading God's love. And that's exactly what I plan on doing: sharing God's love, and embracing my faith. From power-



ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR YOUTH head to Steubenville East 2014.

ful Adoration to playing music with others and giving out free hugs, I spent a weekend with my youth group that I wouldn't trade for anything, and it is one that I

will remember and cherish for the rest of my life.

—Christopher Mannion

*(Chris is a senior at New Fairfield High School.)*

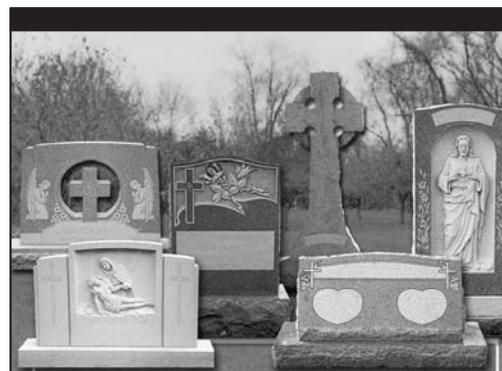
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## Obituaries

Sister Dorothy Synkewecz,  
RSM, taught at Luralton

Sister Dorothy Synkewecz, RSM, of the Sisters of Mercy died August 17 in her Milford home. Born and raised in Waterbury, she entered the Sisters of Mercy on September 8, 1951. Sister's death occurred on the anniversary of her vow day 60 years ago.

She earned a B.A. from the diocesan Sisters' College in Madison and an M.A. from St. Joseph College in West Hartford and taught elementary grades in several schools throughout the state including the former St. Joseph School in South Norwalk and St. Mary School in Bridgeport, but it was at the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall in Milford that



SISTER DOROTHY SYNKEWECZ, RSM

she truly found her niche, ministering there for 27 years as a religion teacher, pastoral counselor

and outreach coordinator.

In 2011, the school honored her with the prestigious Claven Award. Sister Dot, as the students called her, loved people in general, but especially the faculty and the young women at Luralton, with whom she kept in touch long after graduation. A long-time member of the Mercy Justice Commission, she was committed to mercy and justice and instilled in her students an interest and deep concern for others.

Sister Dorothy's life was celebrated with a Mass of the Resurrection on August 21 in the chapel of Luralton Hall. Burial was the following day in St. Mary Cemetery in West Hartford. ■

Sister Hedwig,  
OSU, dies at 77

Sister Hedwig Owsiak, OSU, died August 16, 2014 at the Brookhaven Memorial Hospital in Brookhaven, NY. She was 77 years old.

She was born June 23, 1937, in Norwich. She graduated from William H. Hall High School in West Hartford in 1955 and attended St. Joseph College, also in West Hartford, before entering the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk on September 8, 1956, taking the religious name of Sister Matthew. She professed her final vows six years later.

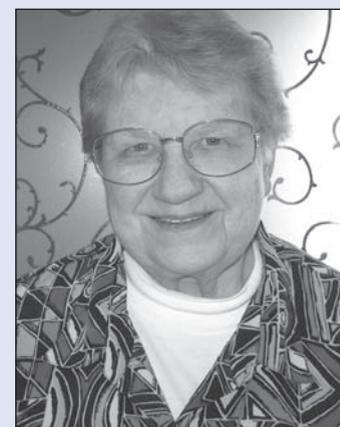
She received a bachelor of science degree in education and a masters in philosophy from St. John's University in Queens, N.Y., and received a diploma from Lumen Vitae in Brussels, Belgium. Sister Hedwig started her career teaching on the elementary school level on Long Island. She came back to Connecticut to teach at the former St. Maurice School in Stamford.

She became an adjunct lecturer of philosophy at St. John's University in 1966. In 1969 she was called to become the coordinator of Parent and Sacrament Formation for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, serving the diocese for five years. From 1971-1974 Sister Hedwig was an adjunct lecturer of catechetical theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Douglaston, N.Y.

In 1975 she served as provincial of the U.S. Province before serving 18 years as assistant and general superior in the Ursuline congregational government in Belgium.

From 1999-2003, she served at the Sophia Center in Cleveland, Ohio. She retired from active ministry in 2004 and moved to St. Ursula Center in Blue Point, where she continued to serve her community in spirituality and prayer.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Hedwig on August 20 at the St. Ursula Center Chapel in Blue Point, N.Y., followed by interment at the cemetery of the Ursuline Sisters in Blue Point. ■



SISTER HEDWIG OWSIAK, OSU

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12	Rev. Frank D. Yoia.....	1974
15	Rev. Joseph V. Rossitto.....	2004
16	Rev. William J. Conklin.....	1992
	Rev. Martin Dennehy.....	2013
17	Rev. John A. Sullivan.....	1953
	Rev. Robert L. Christopher.....	1958
18	Rev. Msgr. Normand A. Methe.....	2002
20	Rev. Joseph J. Maglione.....	2003
	Msgr. Edward B. Karl.....	2009
23	Rev. Msgr. Edmund J. Hussey.....	1991
	Rev. Frederick H. Olschefskie.....	1956
	Deacon Paul Tupper.....	2013
28	Rev. Edward A. Morgan.....	1992

## OCTOBER

2	Deacon Joseph Filingeri.....	2013
3	Msgr. John H. Anderson.....	1967
5	Msgr. Victor Balcerak, O.F.M. Conv.....	1960

# Women Religious Sisters of Life: Radical Witness to Jesus Christ

By FATHER COLIN MCKENNA

“Today is the festival of hope for every disciple who follows the Lord!”

—Bishop Caggiano

On a beautiful summer morning at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford, seven Sisters of Life made their profession of vows before hundreds of family, friends, clergy, and sister religious.

The Mass of Consecration on the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, was slated to begin at 11 am, with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano as principal celebrant and homilist. By 10 am, the grounds of St. John’s and the sidewalks around the church were already flowing with attendees and participants.

Outdoor face-to-face Confession stations were set up on the lawns in front of and beside the church. Lines of penitents were long as the time for Mass drew close. Those who would rather use traditional confessionals had that option within the church.

There was a sense of joy,

excitement and anticipation in the air as the attendees arrived. Many of the Sisters of Life were circulating in the crowd and handing out programs near its entrance. Joyful reunions abounded as friends, family, invitees and other attendees greeted each other.

A large chorale, composed of different singing groups, was practicing in the choir loft along with musicians of various instruments.

The program for the Mass itself was ten pages in length and included substantial Latin chant. The cover of the program portrayed a young mother with her child—a modern rendering of the Madonna—inscribed with the charism of the Sisters of Life: Consecrated for the protection and enhancement of the sacredness of human life.

When the Mass began, nearly 70 Sisters of Life joined the seven who were to make their profession of vows in the front pews of the church. Some 80 priests processed into the sanctuary to concelebrate the Mass along with the bishop. Between the sacred music, the solemn procession and the sheer number of Sisters in solidarity with one another, it was

truly a moving liturgical event.

With reference to the late Cardinal John O’Connor, the founder of the Sisters of Life, who himself was an admiral in the U.S. Navy, Bishop Caggiano likened the Sisters of Life in his homily to an anchor of hope in a pervasive culture of death. “If the journey of discipleship has not already become arduous enough,” he said, “in a world that is marked by consumerism, materialism, and a disregard for so much that you and I consider

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



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## Column



## Atheism markets young people

## SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

A friend of mine from California, where everyone thinks deep thoughts when they're not surfing or stalking Kim Kardashian, sent me a study that said atheists have higher IQs than Christians. I wondered how atheists can be all that smart and get things so terribly wrong.

The next day, he sent me another article that offered an

elaborate explanation why the numbers were flawed—which I couldn't understand because I struggle just to balance my checkbook. Besides, I have no desire to know how my IQ, whatever it is, measures up against the average atheist's.

And my friend, who's an evangelical Christian, has degrees from Stanford, UCLA and Northwestern and a juris doctor-

ate in there for good measure, all of which means to say he's smarter than the majority of atheists.

Fortunately, God doesn't calculate our eternal reward based on our intellectual achievements. How unfair it would be if the only ones in heaven were people at the top of their class and Phi Beta Kappas. It's all about love, not IQs.

It is remotely possible that atheists do have higher IQs, but it doesn't really matter because all that brain power leads them to the wrong conclusion and deludes them into thinking they possess the truth. And my experience has been that most atheists are driven by intellectual pride, not to mention anger. Worldly knowledge doesn't necessarily make them smart, as my mother would say. Or as Jesus put it, "I give you praise, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, you have revealed them to the childlike."

In recent years, as atheism has become more militant, it has started marketing itself to young people through the Internet, 1-800 numbers and social media. There are national rallies where they denounce everyone from the Pope to the Dali Lama, along with a growing assortment of lawsuits and billboards attacking everything from prayer at sports events to Christ at Christmas.

To make matters worse, when students set out in the world of higher education, where believers are a decided minority, they often discover academia can be an aggressively atheistic environment—it must be that fake IQ phenomenon again.

There has also been a proliferation of celebrity atheists, whose books clutter the best-seller list, among them *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, the British biologist who made a career out of condemning religion, and *God Is Not Great* by the late Christopher Hitchens, whose antics turned him into a pop icon.

Young people are most susceptible because they're deluded into thinking it's hip to reject traditional Christianity. I recently saw an opinion piece titled, "Why are Millennials leaving Church? Try atheism." The author argued

that Christianity is too old-fashioned, politicized and hostile to gays to appeal to the Millennial Generation, those 78 million young people 18 to 34.

To many of them, atheism is cool because it's not the stodgy faith of their parents, not the faith that says "no" to the things that our culture says are trendy and good.

A few weeks ago, I sat next to a young man on the train who was reading *God Is Not Great*. He had his requisite tattoos, body piercings, scruffy beard and the gnarled look of a Bohemian-in-training, or at least a Bohemian wannabe, so what better book to be carrying around to earn his credentials?

Bringing the Millennial Generation to Christ is one of the greatest challenges of the Church today. Atheists are fond of pointing out that the fastest growing category in religious polls are the so-called "nones," the ones who check "none" when asked what organized religion they belong to.

Unfortunately, we've entered a new era when people want religion to agree with their personal beliefs, and if it doesn't, they discard it. In the old days, we

tried to adhere to the precepts of our faith and not make the faith adhere to our views.

A few months ago, I received an email from a young follower of Richard Dawkins, who got worked up over something I wrote. He wanted to argue about the supernatural and everything he thought was wrong with the Church. After praying to the Holy Spirit, I sent him my response: "I've lived long enough to know I'll never convince you God exists. But if you sincerely seek the truth with an open heart and ask God to reveal himself, he will show you the way." That suggestion ended our discussion.

You don't need to rehash the cosmological arguments and the ontological arguments to God's existence. All you have to do is ask ... and God will respond. Sad to say, atheists are often too proud to countenance that God might exist and their hearts are usually closed to the action of the Holy Spirit. Only prayer and grace can cure that spiritual malady, so I started novenas for the fellow who wrote me and the young man on the train, because nothing is impossible for God—even when it comes to atheists. ■



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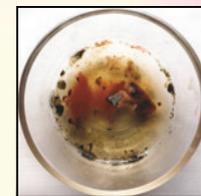
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# Column



## Life runs out of next times

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

**I**n your house I am a passing guest, a pilgrim like all my fathers. (Psalm 39)

September—youngsters have their grudge against it and so do teachers. The summer days slipped by like beads on a golden chain, and another end has come into life. The sun grows tired and edges south, twilight comes earlier, there's a growing chill of the nights, and already birds gather in restless flocks, migration on their minds.

The poet Thomas Parsons (*A Song for September*) caught the mood of September well:

*The world is brighter than before—  
Why should our hearts be duller?  
The scarlet leaf and sorrow,*

*Sunny weather and sad thoughts!  
This glory and this grief.*

Summer's lease has been all too short, and September brings a sense of time hastening.

There is the mystery of Time itself—time that continues relentlessly. There is no conquest over time; its slow grinding eclipses all of us.

My own awareness of time has become almost constant and even oppressive.

Job 14:5: "Our days are determined, and the number of our months is known to You, and You have appointed the bounds that they cannot pass." How aware I have become of how things run their course from their appointed starting point to their appointed end.

One of the better gifts of grow-

ing older is that time becomes more meaningful. You are aware of it always. Send not to know for whom the leaf falls, it falls for thee. Moments are savored. We begin to count the ones that may be left to us. There is no time to waste anymore. We finally learn to be more fully alive. We take each day of life and treat it carefully.

I like the graduation talk Hollywood Squares host Peter Marshall gave a number of years ago. He encouraged young people not to take themselves too seriously: "as famous as you become, they won't know who the hell you are in thirty years. Ask a youngster about Bing Crosby or Al Jolson or Maurice Chevalier. They won't know. A man who helped me and was my idol was Dick Haymes. Nobody remembers Dick Haymes." (Who reading this remembers Peter Marshall or Hollywood Squares?)

Marcus Aurelius put it his way: "A little while and you will have forgotten everything; a little while and everything will have forgotten you."

All things come, in due course, to their season in the sun, but nothing lasts. That is possibly the great truth in human affairs. All things crumble away. There is an appointed end for all things. Life runs out of next times. "Days steal on us, and steal from us" (Lord Byron, *Manfred*). There is the dreadful transitoriness of it all. At the door of our unhappiness is transience, the passage of time, the appalling brevity of our existence.

When I was younger I often pictured life as being a marvelous play. Each day the curtain would rise on an exciting new scene. But now I realize that this succession of scenes can't go on forever, and would I want it to? Eventually, even the most enthusiastic playgoer will grow bored and weary. No matter how exciting the play, does one want to stay in the theater all night?

Something else I think about: Do past happenings slip into nothingness, undergo an absolute perishing? Can it be possible that in some fashion or other the past still lives on?

Can it be possible that what seems over and done with has been laid up in eternity?

Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote somewhere that "each day lives

forever." It was Pavel Florensky, the Russian philosopher and priest, who wrote this in 1919: "The past has not passed away, but is eternally preserved somewhere or other where it continues to be real." Is it possible that instead of losing time which flees, we recover it in eternity? Maybe nothing is lost. All the events of

this earthly life are not simply past and gone, but belong to us for eternity. With God nothing passes away. All things are held in God, eternally held in the divine remembrance, in the eternal present. It's an interesting idea.

*In manibus tuis sortes meae*  
(my days are in your hands)  
(Psalm 102).

### SISTERS OF LIFE FROM PAGE 27

sacred, it has indeed become more difficult to follow the path of discipleship in a world that no longer values human life."

Referring repeatedly to the Transfiguration, Bishop Caggiano said, "There can be no better day for us to gather with these our Sisters—the Sisters of Life—to receive these vows, than on this day, the festival of our hope." He thanked all of the Sisters gathered, especially those who were to profess vows, for giving their lives away "to Jesus Christ, their spouse, and the author of all life." He also thanked the Sisters for giving such great witness for us by their lives of faith. He called them "a great gift to us all."

At the end of the Mass, directing his attention to those who had made their profession of

vows during the Mass, Bishop Caggiano prayed: "God inspires all holy desires and brings them to fulfillment. May He protect you always by His grace, so that you may fulfill the duties of your vocation with a faithful heart."

After the Mass of Profession, all were invited to a reception at Villa Maria Guadalupe, the Stamford mission and retreat house of the Sisters of Life.

On the back cover of the program for the Mass, the Sisters included these brief but poignant words: "We thank you for sharing in our joy this day. May God Bless you!"

*(A version of this article was picked up by Vatican Radio and posted on its website. Fr. Colin McKenna can be reached at fr.colinmckenna@yahoo.com).*



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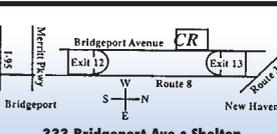
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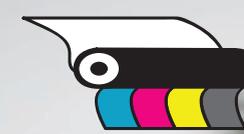
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**ENCOURAGE** is an apostolate for family members of loved ones with same sex attractions. Meetings are held monthly on Sat. mornings at 10:30 am and are strictly confidential. For more info, visit [www.couragerc.org/encourage/about](http://www.couragerc.org/encourage/about), or contact the Norwalk Chapter: [ncouragenorwalk@gmail.com](mailto:ncouragenorwalk@gmail.com).

**PRAYER INTENTIONS** will be offered in the chapel of St. Jude Parish, Monroe, every Thurs. from 7-7:30. Call the office to add your intentions: 203.261.6404.

**BIBLE/BOOK STUDY** on Frank Sheed's "To Know Christ Jesus" has begun at St. Marguerite Parish, Brookfield. Classes run weekly on Thurs. from 7-9 pm.

For more info, call the parish office: 203.775.5117, ext. 1, or [parishoffice@stmarguerite.org](mailto:parishoffice@stmarguerite.org).

**PARISH PICNIC** at St. Pius X Parish, Fairfield, will take place Sun., **Sept 7**. All are welcome. Outdoor Mass at 10:30; picnic starts immediately after. For more info, call the parish: 203.255.6134

**CURSILLO ULTREYAS** are held around the diocese: Mon.,

**Sept. 8**, at St. James Parish, Stratford, at 7 pm; **Mon., Sept. 15**, at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford at 7:30 pm; and **Thurs., Sept 18**, at St. Mary Parish, Bethel, at 7:30 pm. For more info, contact Jeanette: [jkovacs@snet.net](mailto:jkovacs@snet.net).

**WOMEN'S GROUP** at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will have a Welcome Tea on **Mon., Sept. 8**, at 10 am. For more info, call 203.261.8020.

**BIBLE STUDY** on the Gospel of Mark will be held at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, Mon. evenings, **Sept. 8-Nov. 10**, from 7:30-9 pm and Tues. mornings, **Sept. 9-Nov 11**, from 10-11:30 am. For more info or to register, call 203.637.3661 or go to [www.stcath.org](http://www.stcath.org).

**PRAYERS FOR PEACE:** St. Vincent's Medical Center will hold Adoration Prayer for Peace, **Wed., Sept. 10**, **Thurs., Sept 18**, and **Fri., Sept. 26**, in St. Vincent's Medical Center Chapel from 7 am-4 pm. For more info, call the Pastoral Care office: 203.576.5110.

**BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY** will begin at St. Jude's Parish, Monroe, on

**Wed., Sept 10**, from 2:30-4 pm. Registration required. For more info or to register, call the parish: 203.261.6404.

**BIBLE STUDY:** "Bible Timeline—the Story of Salvation" is starting at St. Cecilia Parish, Stamford, on **Thurs., Sept. 11**. Meetings will be Thurs. nights, 7:15-9:30, repeated Fri. mornings 9:15-11:30. For more info or to register, contact Vicki Alton: 203.322.8526 or [VickiA@optonline.net](mailto:VickiA@optonline.net).

**SEPTEMBERFEST** will be held at Assumption Parish, Fairfield, the weekend of **Sept. 12-14**. **Fri., 6-10 pm**; **Sat., 1-10 pm**; **Sun., 1-6 pm**. For more info, contact the parish: 203.333.9065 or [www.assumptionfairfield.org](http://www.assumptionfairfield.org).

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** events planning meeting will be held **Fri., Sept. 12**, at St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, from 6-7 pm. We will go out to a local restaurant afterward. For more info, email [swpond@hotmail.com](mailto:swpond@hotmail.com) or call 203.856.7804.

**SECULAR FRANCISCAN** Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Emery Church, Fairfield, on **Sat., Sept. 13**. Fr. Norman Guilbert will celebrate a 9:30 am Mass, followed by a social and meeting. For more info, call 203.255.8801.

**GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY** meets the second Sat. of the month (**Sept. 13**) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 10 am after the 9 am Pro-Life Mass. Speaker is from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or [stmarygols@aol.com](mailto:stmarygols@aol.com).

**INTERNATIONAL POT LUCK DINNER** at St. Philip Parish, Norwalk, will take place **Sat., Sept. 13**, following the 5:30 pm Mass. For more info or to sign up, call Claudette: 203.984.2005.

**5K RUN** to remember Candace Lee Williams, who lost her life on 9-11, will be held **Sat., Sept. 13**, starting at Tarrywile Park Danbury. For more info, go to [www.friendsofcandace.com/5k-run-info/](http://www.friendsofcandace.com/5k-run-info/).

**SOPRANO KRISTA ADAMS SANTILLI** will sing for the Feast of St. Pio, **Sun., Sept. 21**, at an outdoor Mass at 12:30 pm at St. Margaret Shrine, Bridgeport, followed by a 2 pm luncheon at Testo's Ristorante. Reservations needed by **Sat., Sept. 13**. For more info or for reservations, call Paola:

203.926.9862.

**POLKA MASS** and parish picnic will take place at Holy Cross Parish, Fairfield, on **Sun., Sept. 14**. Mass will be at 11 am; picnic from 12 noon-6 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.372.4595.

**"ADDICTION AND THE BRAIN"** the first in the series of Round Table Discussions will be held **Sun., Sept. 14**, at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, from 11:45 am-1 pm. For more info, contact Janis Pataky, director of Faith Formation: 203.637.3661, ext. 329.

**STUDY ON MARY:** "A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother" will be offered at St. Mary Parish, Ridgefield, beginning the week of **Sept. 14**. Session times are **Sun.: 9-10:25 am**; **Mon.: 9:30-11:30 am** or 7-9 pm. For more info and to register, call Kristin McSpedon: 203.438.0495 or [kscmcspe@comcast.net](mailto:kscmcspe@comcast.net).

**ANNUAL PICNIC** at the Cathedral Parish, Bridgeport, will be held on the St. Augustine Cathedral lawn on **Sun., Sept. 14**, from 9 am-5 pm. For more info, call 203-335-0106.

**MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE** sponsored by the Charismatic Renewal Office will be offered on **Mon., Sept. 15**, at 7:30 pm at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton; and **Mon., Sept. 22**, at 7:30 pm, Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, with Fr. Larry Carew. For more info, call 203.268.8253.

**BIBLE STUDY:** "Psalms: The School of Prayer" starts at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Stratford, **Tues., Sept. 16**, from 7-8:30 pm. For more info, call Linda: 203.375.8992.

**CIRCUS FOR CHILDREN** with special needs and chronic diseases will be held **Tues., Sept. 16**, and **Wed., Sept. 17**, from 11:30 am-1 pm under a large tent in Bridgeport's Beardsley Park. Circus is by invitation only for the children and their caretakers. For more info, contact St. Vincent's Foundation: 203.576.5451.

**BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY** will begin at Our Lady of Peace Parish, in the Lordship section of Stratford, beginning **Wed., Sept. 17**, from 7 to 8:30 pm. Registration required. For more info or to register, call the parish office: 203.377.4863, ext.10.

**ADULT SCRIPTURE STUDY:** The Way of Justice and Peace will be held at Saint Jude Parish, Monroe, beginning

**Thurs., Sept. 18**, at 7:30 pm. For more info, call Marie D'Ostilio: 203.261.6404.

**DINNER WITH A CAUSE**, a series at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, will highlight the work of New Covenant House on **Thurs., Sept. 18**. Supper at 6:30. RSVP to [psloane@optonline.net](mailto:psloane@optonline.net) for the supper. Presentation is from 7:15-8:30 pm. For more info, visit [www.stcath.org](http://www.stcath.org).

**THEOLOGY OF THE BODY:** High School Edition, a 12-session course, will be offered at St. Joseph Parish, Shelton, starting **Fri., Sept. 19**, at 6:30 pm. For more info, visit the St. Joseph Senior Youth Group page: [www.sjcshelton.org/](http://www.sjcshelton.org/).

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS** Awards Dinner will take place **Sat., Sept. 27**, at the Stone Barn, 175 Shelton Rd. (Route 110) Monroe, starting at 6:30 pm. Reservations needed by **Fri., Sept. 19**. For more info, dinner choices and reservations, call Pete D'Ostilio: 203.261.0593.

**"THE BIBLE TIMELINE:** The Story of Salvation," a journey through the entire Bible, will be presented at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, on **Fri. mornings beginning Sept. 19**, from 9-10:45 am. For more info, call Liz: 203.268.8695 or [ctkparish@aol.com](mailto:ctkparish@aol.com).

**MEN'S SCRIPTURE STUDY:** St. Paul's Letters to the Romans begins **Sat., Sept. 20**, at 7 am at St. Jude Parish, Monroe. For more info, call Manny Cambra: 203.261.6404.

**HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP** at St. Mary-St. Benedict parishes in Stamford starts **Sun., Sept. 21**, 5:30-7:30 pm. For more info, call 203.324.7321.

**MARY:** A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother, will begin at St. Michael Parish, Greenwich, **Mon., Sept. 22**, at 7 pm. Cost of study guide: \$28. For more info or to register, call Mary Ellen: 203.859.4000, ext.167, or email [mtiernan@gcsct.org](mailto:mtiernan@gcsct.org).

**FAITH FORUM** book group at St. Luke Parish, Westport, will start **Tues., Sept. 23**, at 10:30 am. For more info, contact Deacon Brian Kelly: 203.373.9753 or [Brian9987@att.net](mailto:Brian9987@att.net).

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP** will start **Wed., Sept. 24**, from 4-5:30 pm at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull. For more info and to register, call the parish office: 203.268.6217.

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Appeal" with Fr. Peter Lynch. Come be surprised the last Wed. of every month (**Sept. 24**) from 6:30-8:30 pm at Walrus + Carpenter Smokehouse/GastroPub, 2895 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport. For more info, contact St. Ann Parish: 203.368.1607, or on Facebook at St. Ann Black Rock.

**40 DAYS FOR LIFE CAMPAIGN** will start Wed., **Sept. 24**, and end Sun., **Nov. 2**. For more info, call Christine Murphy: 203.438.4866.

**BIBLE STUDY:** "Mary—A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother" will start Wed., **Sept. 24**, at St. Edward the Confessor Parish, New Fairfield, from 7-8:30 pm. For more info or to

register, contact Carol Zinser: 203.746.4270 or [czinser@saintedwardchurch.org](mailto:czinser@saintedwardchurch.org).

**MAGNIFICAT** women's prayer breakfast with Bishop Caggiano will take place Sat., **Oct. 18**, from 9:30-12:30 at Ethan Allen Inn, Danbury. Pre-register by Sat. **Sept. 27**. No tickets sold at the door. For more info, call Fran Hood: 203.744.1856 or [s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net).

**MARIAN EUCHARISTIC DAY RETREAT** will be held Sat., **Sept. 27**, from 8:45 am-3 pm at St. Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown. Registration required. For more info and for registration, call 203.426.2333, ext. 3, or go to [www.strosechurch.com](http://www.strosechurch.com).

**JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP** (grades 6-8) at St. Mary-St. Benedict parishes starts Sun., **Sept. 28**, from 5:30-7:30 pm. For more info, call 203.324.7321.

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING CLASSES** begin at St. Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown, on Fri., **Sept. 26**, and continue **Oct. 17**, and **Nov. 21** from 7-9:30 pm. For more info, contact Adrienne and Al Keogler: [a.keogler@att.net](mailto:a.keogler@att.net).

**SCRIPTURE STUDIES:** A variety of courses will be offered at St. James Parish, Stratford, beginning the week of **Sept. 29**. For a complete list and to register, visit [stjamesstratford.com](http://stjamesstratford.com) or call 203.375.5887.

**PUBLIC ROSARY** will be recited on Sat., **Oct. 4**, at 12 noon on the lawn of St. Peter Parish, Danbury, by the statue of Our Lady. For more info, call the parish: 203.743.2707.

**VETERANS' BRICK** application deadline for St. Margaret Shrine, Bridgeport, is Sun., **Oct. 5**. Veterans Day Mass: Sat., **Nov. 8**, at 8:15. To donate a brick honoring a veteran (living, deceased or currently serving), call 203.345.3244.

**BIBLE STUDY** Pillar II: Sacraments, a 12-week course, will begin at Assumption Parish, Fairfield, on Thurs., **Oct. 9**, at 9:15 am and 7 pm. For more info or to register, call the rectory:

203.333.9065.

**YOUNG ADULT SEMI-FORMAL** will be held at St. Theresa's Parish, Trumbull, on Sat., **Oct. 11**, at 7 pm. For info, contact Katie Martin: [klloydmartin@gmail.com](mailto:klloydmartin@gmail.com).

**VENDORS NEEDED** for the Harvest Craft Fair at St. Mary Parish, Stamford, Sat., **Oct. 11**, from 10 am-4 pm. For more info, contact Sharon MacKnight: 203.327.1606 or [smacknight@optonline.net](mailto:smacknight@optonline.net).

**BREAST CANCER AWARENESS** at Assumption, Fairfield, will be held the weekend of **Oct. 11 & 12**. For more info, call Vincent Maiolo: 203.367.1030.

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