



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

SEPTEMBER 2016 | VOLUME 33, NUMBER 8 | BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE

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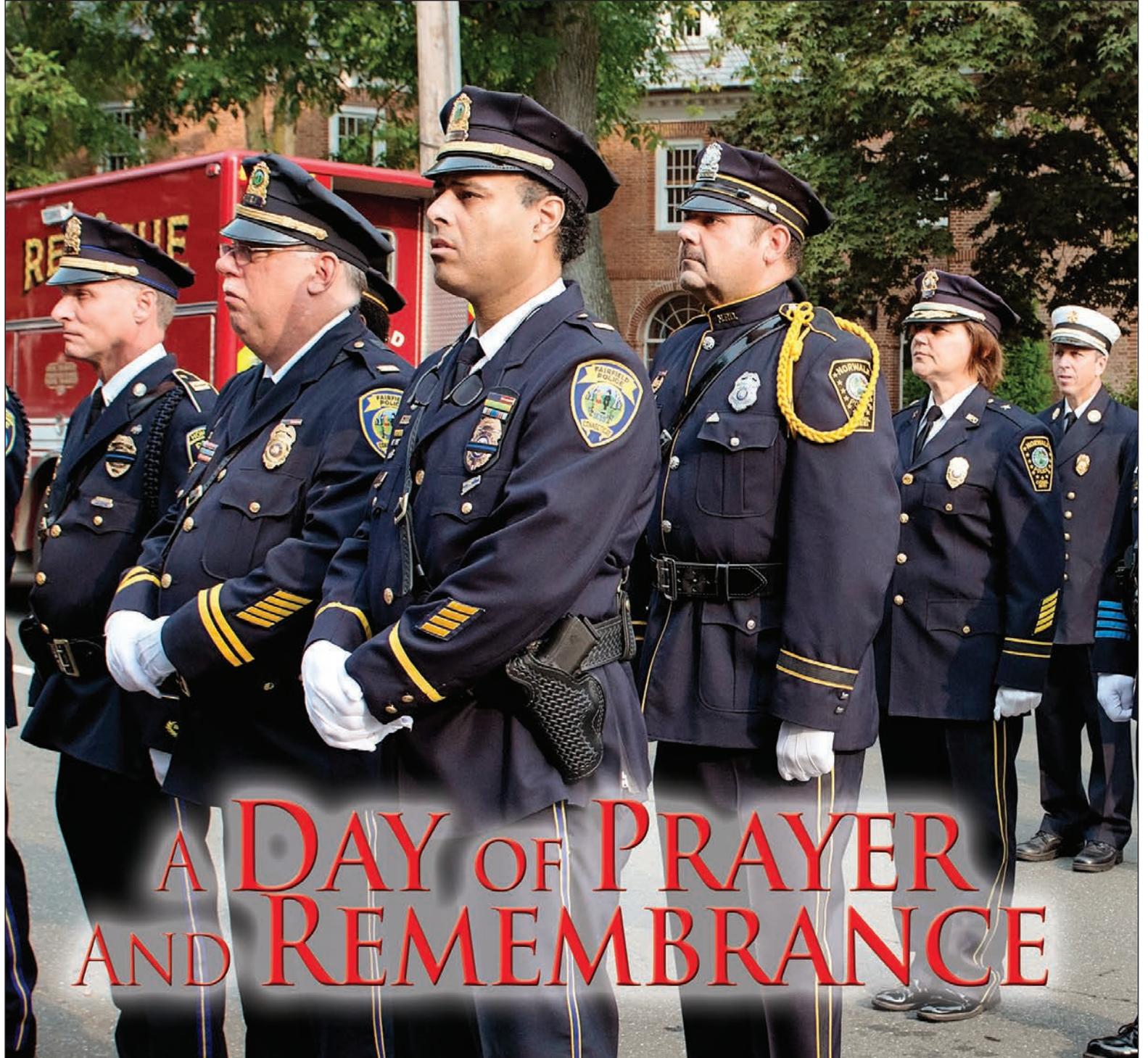
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Join us at the *St. Augustine Medal Ceremony* on October 15



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- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
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# Pilgrimage and Consecration

## A diocesan journey of faith

BRIDGEPORT—On Saturday, November 5, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will consecrate the Diocese of Bridgeport to the Sacred Heart of Jesus at St. Augustine Cathedral.

This act is the culmination of the consecration of the diocese to Mary's protection under the title of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which took place at the Synod Celebration Mass on September 19, 2015.

The pilgrimage and consecration of the diocese were announced at Synod 2014 as the prayerful foundation for the change and renewal underway in the diocese based on synod initiatives to create more vibrant and welcoming parish communities.

"It is my hope that the faithful throughout the diocese will join us for this pilgrimage of prayer and consecration. We have so

much to be thankful for, and so much more work to do. Putting our faith and trust in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and our Blessed Mother will help us in our personal and diocesan pilgrimage of faith and renewal," said the bishop.

The original plan for the pilgrimage was to travel to Washington, D.C., to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. However, the plans were changed to accommodate those who wished to participate in the pilgrimage but could not make the trip to Washington.

"After receiving feedback from pastors and various ecclesial movements in the diocese, the venue was changed so that there could be greater participation in this important event. So we've made it a local day

of prayer and pilgrimage," said Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese.

Msgr. Powers said that while many people think of pilgrimages as something from the past, they are still very much part of the Church's life.

"Pilgrimages are privileged, spiritual opportunities for all of us to grow in our faith. Just as our whole lives are a journey through time, with the goal of that journey being to reach safely the presence of Christ himself, so too a pilgrimage is a journey made by a person of faith to a site which holds some deep spiritual significance," he said.

Pope Francis has encouraged the faithful to consider a pilgrimage as an instrument of conversion. "The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the

journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a viator, a pilgrim travelling along the road."

### The schedule for the day is as follows:

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1 pm    | Arrival   |
| 1:15 pm | Welcome and Opening Remarks   |
| 1:30 pm | Recitation of the Scriptural Rosary ( <i>Start of Confessions</i> )   |
| 2 pm    | Eucharistic Adoration and Presentation by Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR |
| 3 pm    | Divine Mercy Chaplet ( <i>Conclusion of Confessions</i> )             |
| 3:30 pm | Break   |
| 4 pm    | Eucharistic Celebration ( <i>with Consecration</i> )                  |



ASKING OUR LADY'S BLESSING—The bishop concluded the Synod Celebration Mass by kneeling in silent prayer before thousands at the Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport and dedicating the diocese to our Blessed Mother. The new statue, donated for the occasion, is now enshrined at St. Augustine Cathedral.

solidarity of faith and for reparation for sin. All persons between the ages of 18 and 59 are invited to abstain from meat and to take only one full meal and two smaller meals that together are not equal to the full meal.

The bishop will also ask pastors to use the prayers for the Votive Mass for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus for all Masses celebrated in the Diocese of Bridgeport on Sunday, November 6 (including the Saturday Vigil Masses).

"Together with Pope Francis, who reminds us that 'mercy is a goal to reach, and requires dedication and sacrifice,' let us pray that we, together with our brothers and sisters across our diocese, will respond enthusiastically to this invitation to grace, so that our diocesan pilgrimage and consecration on November 5 will be a day of joy, and of lasting grace, for this local Church in this Jubilee Year of Mercy," said Msgr. Powers.

All are welcome to attend.

(For further information about the pilgrimage, contact, Janet Davis: 203.416.1636 or [jdavis@diobpt.org](mailto:jdavis@diobpt.org).)

## 2016 St. Augustine Medals of Service set for October 15

BRIDGEPORT—The Saint Augustine Medal of Service prayer service and awards ceremony will be held at St. Augustine Cathedral on Saturday, October 15, beginning at 1 pm. A reception will follow at Kolbe-Cathedral High School on the grounds of the cathedral campus.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead the prayer service and present medals to more than 150 recipients from parishes and ministries across the diocese.

"True generosity comes

from those who are grateful for their lives and who faithfully use the gifts God has given them," said Bishop Caggiano. "We will celebrate the St. Augustine medalists as mentors, guides and prophets in their love and service. I look forward to meeting them and their families and recognizing their great commitment to others through the Church."

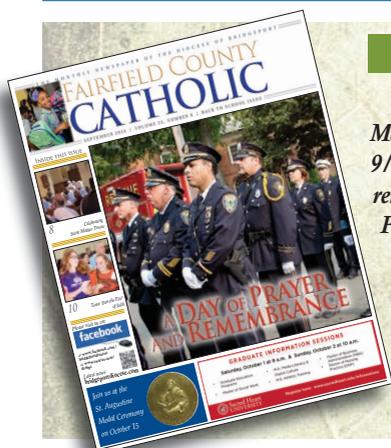
Last year, more than 700 friends and family of the recipients turned out for the Medal of Service ceremony.

Pastors, priests and deacons throughout the diocese accompa-

ny the recipients as they come forward to be presented the medal by Bishop Caggiano.

The St. Augustine Medal of Service was instituted in 2005 to recognize the "unsung heroes" who unselfishly give of their time and talents to build up parish communities. On one side of the medal is an image of St. Augustine of Hippo, patron saint of the diocese. The reverse features the coat of arms of the diocese.

(For more information, contact Janet Davis: 203.416.1636 or [jdavis@diobpt.org](mailto:jdavis@diobpt.org).)



### ON THE COVER

**DIOCESAN BLUE MASS**—This year's Blue Mass, celebrated on the 15th Anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist acts, was a time of prayer and remembrance in the diocese and across the nation. Photo by Amy Mortensen

(Above the fold)—**BACK TO SCHOOL!**—Students of St. Augustine Academy in Bridgeport received a great back-to-school present when Radio Stations WEBE108 and WICC600 gifted them through their "Backpack Giveback" program. Photo by Michelle Babyak

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# Latest News

## Queen of Clergy dedication set

STAMFORD— Work is progressing on the new wing of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford. Construction of the 16-suite addition for retired priests began in January of this year.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead a Sunday, October 9, dedication ceremony for the residence located at 274 Strawberry Hill Ave. in Stamford.

"This is a very exciting time for the diocese and for our retired priests who are looking forward to moving into their new home at Queen of the Clergy Residence. It's a beautiful residence and a place of great dignity where our retired priests can live in prayer



NEARING COMPLETION, the new wing of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence will be dedicated on October 9. The addition will add 16 suites for retired priests of this diocese.

and continued service," said Bishop Caggiano when he visited the site earlier this summer.

According to William McLean, chief development officer of the diocese, the capital campaign for the residence has raised almost \$3.5 million of the \$4 million needed for the new wing and for the repair and renovation of the existing facility.

Needed improvements to the current structure include replacement of the existing roof; expansion of the kitchen to accommodate service for additional residents, with new refrigeration and appliances; new carpeting and furnishings in the common area; interior and exterior painting; and upgraded fire alarm, HVAC

and electrical.

Msgr. William Scheyd, episcopal vicar for senior priests, said there are 80 priests in the diocese over the age of 75. Some retired priests continue to live in parish settings, while others live on their own or with family. "Many of the retired priests in the diocese continue to help out in parishes, schools, nursing homes and other settings," he noted.

The current residence provides 17 suites for independent living for retired priests. Vickey Hickey is serving as administrator.

(For more information, phone 203.358.9906. To make a gift online, go to [www.bridgeportdiocese.org/queen-clergy/home](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/queen-clergy/home))

## Blue Mass honors First Responders

BRIDGEPORT—"Each of you are our community's first responders. You're there 24/7. We know you by name," said Father Victor Martin in his homily for the 15th Annual Blue Mass held on Sunday, September 11, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Fairfield.

Almost 600 people turned out to honor local police, fire and first responders and commemorate all those lost in the 9/11/2001 terrorist acts.

They processed into the church to the tune of "America the Beautiful," while the stirring recessional began with "Taps," followed by the National Anthem and the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

The church was filled with men and women in uniform and the bright honor guard flags they carried down the aisle.

"Fifteen years and it seems like yesterday," said Father Martin, pastor of St. Thomas, who noted that 2,996 were killed on that day and another 6,000 injured in the attacks on New York, Washington D.C. and over the skies of Pennsylvania.

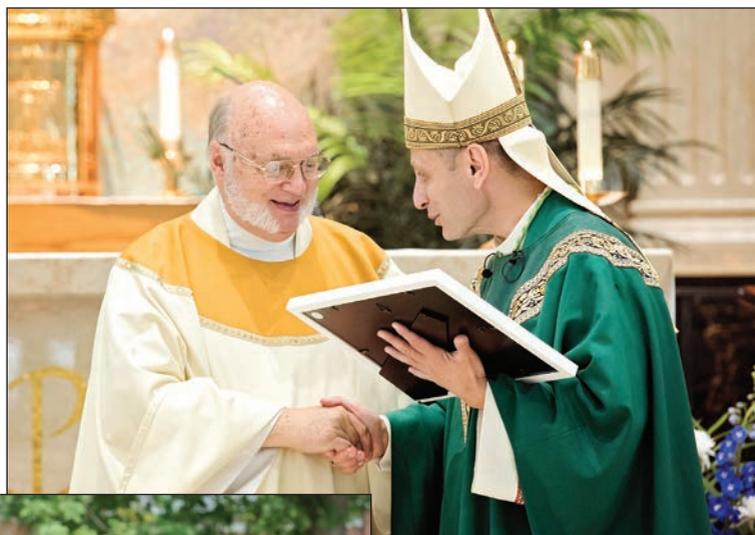
Father Martin said he had recently visited the 9/11 Museum and was struck by an inscription on the ceiling, "We came in as individuals but we walked out together."

In praising local police, fire and rescue workers, Father Martin

said they are always ready to save others at the worst moments. "You enter at your own risk. From our hearts, we thank you. May God bless you always and always keep you safe."

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated the Mass with Father Martin and other priests from the diocese. "When you run into danger, Christ's victory comes with you. He stands with you every step of the way," the bishop said to all those who serve.

At the end of Mass, Bishop



Caggiano presented special awards for compassion, service and bravery to Greenwich Police Sergeant Michael B. O'Connor; Norwalk Police Officer Mark Suda; Fairfield Police Officer Mark Letsch; Sir Knight Angelo Fernandes of Bridgeport; and long-time police and fire chaplain

Msgr. Willam J. Scheyd, pastor of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan.

Msgr. Scheyd became the first diocesan priest to receive special recognition at the Blue Mass. The gathering rose to give him a standing ovation for his 51 years of service as a priest and as a

fire, police, and EMT chaplain throughout Fairfield County.

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 terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

Music for the 9/11 Mass was provided by the St. Thomas Aquinas choir under the direction of David Harris. The Mass is sponsored each year by the Fairfield County Councils and Assemblies of the Knights of Columbus.

Police and Fire chaplains now at work throughout the diocese:

Father Charles Allen, SJ, Fairfield Town Emergency Services; Father Michael Boccaccio, Norwalk Police Department; Father David Blanchfield, Norwalk Police Department; Msgr. Laurence Bronkiewicz, Ridgefield Police Department; Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, Stamford Police Department; Father Bruce Roby, Stratford Fire Department; Father Thomas Thorne, Westport Police and Fire Departments and Federal Bureau of Investigation; Father Francis Hoffmann, Noroton Fire Department; Father Christopher Perrella, Noroton Heights Fire Department; Deacon John Moranski, Bridgeport Police Department.

Also, Deacon William Murphy, Germantown Fire Department; Father Samuel Scott, Danbury Police Department; Father Robert Post, Stamford Fire Department; Msgr. William Scheyd, New Canaan Emergency Services and Norwalk Fire Department; Msgr. Richard Shea, Trumbull Police Department; Father Terrence Walsh, Stamford Police Department; Father Frank Winn, Glenville Fire Department; Father Michael Dunn, Weston Police and Fire Departments; Father Joseph Cervero, Redding Police Department; Deacon Frank Masso, Huntington Volunteer Fire Company No. 3; and Father Nicholas Pavia, Stratford Police Department.

# Foundations in Education

## Greenwich reception to Benefit Foundations

BRIDGEPORT—A reception to benefit Foundations in Education will be held in the home of Frank and Lynn Mara of Greenwich on Friday, October 14, from 7-9 pm.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will attend and offer brief remarks on the foundation, which was established earlier this year to support Catholic education in the diocese.

Gerard Baker, editor in chief of *The Wall Street Journal* and Dow Jones Newswires, will speak with the guests about the importance and value of Catholic education in the lives of individuals and the larger community.

"I am very grateful to the Mara family, to the newly formed Board of Trustees, and to all those who will be attending the reception," said Bishop Caggiano. "Support for the foundation is critical as we move forward with many initiatives to sustain and grow Catholic education in the diocese."

The evening will include three



EXPLORING THE WONDERS OF TECHNOLOGY, an elementary school student gets individual guidance from her teacher. Along with academic excellence, Catholic schools offer students a chance to experience and grow in the life of faith.

special auction items highlighted by use of a New York Giants luxury suite for the November 20 game against the Chicago Bears at MetLife Stadium. Kickoff is at 1 pm. The luxury suite includes 24 tickets, 6 parking passes and a \$1,500 credit toward food and

beverages.

Other auction items for the evening include Mass and brunch (for up to 20 people) with Bishop Caggiano in his Trumbull chapel and residence, and a hand-crafted Rustic Barn Wood American Flag, size 8' x 11', by painter and

visual artist Lynn Mara, whose work has earned wide recognition in galleries and other installations.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will support two of the major goals of the newly established foundation; professional development for teachers and administrators and an innovation fund to support curriculum and other advances. A fundraiser for the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, the third major program of the foundation, will be held in the Spring of 2017.

Trustees of the newly formed Foundations in Education include David Cappiello, Robert Dilenschneider, John Eppolito, R. Bradford Evans, Lawrence Kudlow, Ned Lautenbach, Daniel McCarthy, Thomas McInerney, Julia McNamara, Bernard Reidy, Gerard Robilotti, Joseph Roxe, Robert Scinto and Michael Shea.

**About Gerard Baker:** Gerard Baker assumed the role of editor in chief of *The Wall Street Journal*

and Dow Jones on January 1, 2013. Prior to that appointment, Baker served as deputy editor in chief of *The Wall Street Journal* and Dow Jones. Before joining the *Journal*, Baker was the U.S. editor and an assistant editor of *The Times of London*. From 1994 to 2004, he worked for the *Financial Times*, first as Tokyo Correspondent, where he wrote about the country's financial crisis, and then, from 1998 to 2002, as Washington bureau chief. Before joining the *FT*, Baker worked for the BBC from 1988-94, as a producer, then as U.S. producer, and finally as economics correspondent for TV and radio. He was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford University, where he graduated in 1983 with a First Class Honours degree in philosophy, politics and economics.

(The cost of the reception is \$500/person. For more information, contact Maggie Granado: 203.416.1378 or [mgranado@diobpt.org](mailto:mgranado@diobpt.org).)

### Catholic Education Transforms Lives...

Interview: Lynn Mara

On the evening of October 14, Lynn and Frank Mara will host a fund raising reception at their home in Greenwich to benefit the new Foundations in Education, which was recently established to support Catholic education in the diocese.

When asked by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano to consider hosting the event, the couple immediately said yes.

"It's a humbling request, but we're big fans of the bishop," Lynn Mara said, "and we have always been willing participants when it comes to our faith and the Catholic Church." In the

interview below, she discusses her commitment to Catholic education and her hopes for the evening.

#### Did you and your husband attend Catholic Schools?

"Frank and I come from large families. He's one of eleven. And I am one of six. We are both products of a Catholic education from start to finish, as are our four sons. I think our faith was the greatest gift our parents gave us. And we have passed that gift along to our kids. The motto at the Catholic high school they attended is to become 'Men for Others' and to 'Live Jesus in our hearts, FOREVER!'"

#### Your commitment to Catholic schools extends to a history of personal volunteerism.

"Yes, we volunteered at Greenwich Catholic School beginning with the pre-school years and ultimately spent twenty one years there! At GCS, we made our best friends in life while our boys were being outfitted with a GPS system for life. Anything we do is small compared to what we have received.

"I believe we have all been called to minister in any way we

can; using the gifts each has been given. The truth is the bishop had us at "hello," really. And so, that's how it began."

#### How was Catholic education formative in the life of your family?

"Frank and I feel very strongly about our Catholic education experience. We wouldn't trade that gift for anything. It has taught us how to navigate life while receiving excellent educations.

"Thinking back on my own Catholic school experience, there is one lesson that stands out above all in my mind. Something my first grade teacher Sister Dorothy at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Southampton, Long Island, said that has resonated with me all these years. She taught us that our purpose in life was 'To know, love and serve the Lord.' Imagine receiving the information you need at the age of six to unlock life's most pressing mystery: 'Why am I here? And, what is my purpose?'"

#### Catholic education's ability to transform lives seems more important now than ever.

"This is a time in our life and



culture when we are suffering a crisis of purposelessness. So it's easy to recognize that the most important lesson I ever learned was so basic and yet so profound. I was only six.

"We owe so much to our parents and teachers; sisters, brothers, and priests. They laid the foundation for our faith. They shared their faith with us and they nurtured that calling in each of us. If transforming people one at a time is at the heart of God's plan for the world, then Catholic schools are to credit for much of this transforming."

#### What can guests expect for the evening?

"Guests will have a special opportunity to be in the presence of Bishop Caggiano, listen to the personal testimony of a special guest, Gerry Baker of *The Wall Street Journal*, and enjoy an evening among friends with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and music.

"To cap it off, we'll have a live auction that offers some extraordinary opportunities. Our goal is to raise at least \$100,000 for Foundations in Education! We look forward to seeing as many people as possible."

# Local News

## Michelle Smith named coordinator of CSC

BRIDGEPORT—Michelle Smith has been named coordinator of the new Catholic Service Corps (CSC), a synod initiative created in response to the call for service and the need to engage youth in faith and good works.

“Michelle’s experiences as a religious education teacher, events planner, fundraiser and media director will provide faithful leadership as we work to bring the Catholic Service Corps to full fruition,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “She understands that works of service are grounded in faith and part of the formation process for our young people.”

Smith’s first priority has been the development of partnerships and volunteer opportunities for the upcoming September 24 Day of Service. The day will include projects across the diocese, concluding with a Mass celebrated by

Bishop Caggiano in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

“I’m very excited about this opportunity to launch the Catholic Services Corps,” said Smith who grew up in St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston. “When I was a young person, these service opportunities didn’t really exist. It’s exciting that they’re available to young children today. Engaging young people in service is important to the future of the universal Church.”

She said the CSC will put service “in the Catholic context of social justice and make young people more aware of the challenges in our diocese. The haves and have-nots live side by side in Fairfield County, co-existing with one another, and there are many needs. Social justice surrounds



MICHELLE SMITH

the need for service.”

Smith said she hopes that the corps “ignites a flame or pas-

sion in the kids to grow in their faith. They will be able to look right and look left and see how many others are involved in service doing service. Hopefully, it will also lead them to Mass on Sundays.”

Smith said the goal isn’t simply to put young people to work but she hoped to create a volunteer experience that is “inviting, affirming, inclusive, social and fun.”

Smith joined Fairfield Prep this fall as a member of the Theology Department. She has served as campus minister, theology teacher, and director of middle school social justice and service at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich since 2010. She is also currently a doctoral candidate in religious education at Fordham University.

Smith, her husband, Jim, and

their four children are long-time parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

(For more information on the Catholic Serve Corps, contact Michelle Smith: [msmith@diobpt.org](mailto:msmith@diobpt.org).)

### Youth Day of Service Set

The diocese will formally launch the new Catholic Service Corps (CSC) with a day of service and a Mass celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on Saturday, September 24.

More than 100 young people who are participating in pilot programs for the service corps will be at work in a variety of settings including Merton Center in Bridgeport, New Covenant Center in Stamford, Connecticut Food Bank, Morning Glory in Danbury, Al’s Angels in Westport, and the St. Vincent DePaul Society on the grounds of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Norwalk.

Michelle Smith, the newly named coordinator of the Catholic Service Corps, said the young people will be painting, serving food, stocking shelves, wrapping gifts, and doing yard work and clean-up projects for those in need.

Smith said some of the 15 CSC chapters involved in the pilot program may be sending as few as five young people, while others may send 20 or more. Each service project will combine young people from various groups in order to provide a better learning experience and to reinforce the universal call to service.

The young people will work at their assignments from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm. Each chapter will begin their service with a brief prayer and reflection on the work they are about to undertake, Smith said.

After four hours of service, they will gather at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart University for Mass with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano who will ask the youth to reflect on their service as an outgrowth of their faith.

The Mass will be followed by a picnic on the grounds of the university that will give the young people from different parishes and organizations the opportunity to meet and socialize. Each young person will receive a Catholic Service Corps T-shirt.

Smith said that interest in the Catholic Service Corps is growing. At present, when asked about joining, she directs them to existing chapters. In year two of the projects, she hopes to be able to add new chapters to the diocesan effort.

## First Niagara Bank donates \$15,000

NEW HAVEN—First Niagara Bank, N.A., a wholly owned subsidiary of KeyCorp, recently donated \$15,000 through the First Niagara Foundation to the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, a program of the newly launched Foundations in Education to support Catholic education in Fairfield County. The money will be used to offset the cost of tuition for Fairfield County students.

Last year the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund distributed \$2.2 million to more than 1,800 students in need of financial assistance to attend a Catholic school. Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport said that qualified students typically receive half or full tuition assistance through this program. The average cost of tuition within the diocese is \$6,400 for elementary students and \$12,100 for high school students.

“Support from local companies like First Niagara is the reason so many families in Fairfield County are able to choose Catholic schools for their



SUPPORT FOR BISHOP’S SCHOLARSHIP FUND--Representatives from First Niagara Bank recently presented a \$15,000 check to Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of Catholic Schools (l-r) Karen Crane, senior communications manager; Art Rhatigan, middle market sales leader; Bishop Caggiano; Dr. Cheeseman; and Bonnie Geppart, senior account executive, First Niagara Benefits Consulting.

children,” said Bishop Caggiano. “First Niagara’s commitment is essential to this year’s scholarship fund, and we are extremely grateful for their generous contribution.”

The Diocese of Bridgeport educates more than 9,000 students in its 31 Catholic schools (grades pre-K to 12) including five high schools, 28 elementary schools, and one school for student with special needs. More than 60 percent of students in diocesan schools receive financial

assistance, and 15 percent of students are non-Catholic.

“Education in Catholic schools provides a unique opportunity for children to achieve academic excellence in a faith-filled environment that nurtures and forms them. Those who support Catholic education support the entire community and invest in the future of our young people,” said Dr. Cheeseman.

Foundations in Education was established in 2016 by

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano as part of a new model of funding for Catholic education in the diocese. In addition to the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, the fully independent Foundations in Education houses funds to support professional development of teachers and staff and to promote innovation in the curriculum. It also included an endowment to support inner-city schools.

“First Niagara is proud to support organizations that make the communities we serve better places to live, work and attend school,” said Jeff Hubbard, First Niagara’s New England Region president.

“The scholarship program is an excellent example of an organization working hard to create quality educational opportunities for all students and we are excited and honored to have contributed to this worthwhile cause.”

(For more information on Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport, visit [www.dioceseof-bridgeportcatholicschools.org](http://www.dioceseof-bridgeportcatholicschools.org). For more on First Niagara Bank, visit [www.key.com](http://www.key.com).)

# Inner-City Foundation

## Harry Connick, Jr., to perform at Inner-City benefit

Harry Connick, Jr., will perform at the 25th Annual Benefit Dinner for the Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education on November 1 at the Hyatt Regency in Greenwich. The annual benefit provides critical funding for the charity's support of programs serving the neediest adults and children in Fairfield County. This year marks the charity's 25th annual benefit dinner.

"We are delighted and honored that Harry Connick, Jr., will perform at our benefit in November," says Richard T. Stone, executive director of the Inner-City Foundation. "We really wanted to mark our 25th year, and honor all those who have helped us for the last quarter century, in a significant way. Harry Connick, Jr., is a world-class star, and having an intimate per-

formance by him at our benefit is going to make it an extremely rare and special evening."

It will be rare indeed to see Harry Connick, Jr., in such an intimate setting, since he regularly sells out much larger venues around the world. The multiple Grammy award winner has been entertaining audiences since the age of five, when he performed the music of his native New Orleans as a pianist and vocalist. He moved to New York at age 18, signed with Columbia Records and three years later achieved multi-platinum success. Over the past three decades, he has established himself as a legendary musician, singer, composer, live performer and best-selling artist with millions of records sold around the world. He is also an accomplished actor and television personality,

and has received Emmy awards and Tony nominations for his work on the stage and screen. He joined "American Idol" as a judge in 2013 alongside Jennifer Lopez and Keith Urban. His new nationally-syndicated daytime television variety show "Harry" kicked off on September 12.

Despite his busy career, Connick has always found the time to be charitable and has done some of his most important work in his efforts to help his native New Orleans rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

He now lends a hand to assist a similar population here in Fairfield County. The foundation expects that his name will render their benefit a hot ticket this fall, and that it will be a boon to their 25th year fundraising effort to raise \$2.5 million this year—more than twice what they typically raise in a year.

"Need is up but funding is down," says Stone. "State budget cuts in April have had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of our community."

Founded in 1992, The Inner-City Foundation supports organizations providing food, clothing, shelter, education and counseling to at-risk and needy children and adults of Fairfield County. Organizations may apply for grants; all applications are thoughtfully considered, says Stone.

"We carefully vet all these organizations to make sure they are efficient and effective, and we look for organizations that are providing not only a safety net but also a springboard to a better future," says Stone. "And because of our experience, minimal staff and dedicated, passionate volunteer board members, we're highly efficient. Ninety percent, or 90 cents, of every dollar that we raise goes directly to the organizations we support."

This year, the Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education awarded close to \$1 million in grants to 48 different organizations throughout the county. About half of the funds awarded went to education, particularly in Bridgeport, with a significant portion awarded to Fairfield County programs that provide for the disabled,



HARRY CONNICK, JR.

the hungry, the homeless, or programs that provide help for victims of domestic violence or addiction.

"This is frontline, important support," says Jeff Wieser, president and CEO of Homes with Hope, a grassroots organization addressing homelessness in Westport. "The Inner-City Foundation has, for more than 16 years, supported the many mothers and children who find safety, comfort and life skills here. Over the past year alone their support for our organization has helped 15 families move from homelessness to a stable positive housing experience."

"The need has simply never been greater," says Stone. "If we can convince 25 corporations, as well as 25 individuals, to each donate \$25,000, that will go a long way towards getting us to our goal of \$2.5 million in the

coming year."

Emmy award-winning television weather and news anchor Dave Price of NBC 4 New York will be the Master of Ceremonies for the 25th Annual Benefit Dinner. Barbara and Ray Dalio, Bill Mitchell and Jack Welch are honorary chairs of the event. The Mitchell family is chairing the Benefit Committee along with co-chairs Audrey and Daniel Dornier, Helen and Dan Fitzpatrick, and Vilma and Dick Matteis. Bill Tommins of Bank of America chairs the Corporate Committee, and Joe Lane and Brian Moran co-chair the 25 for 25 Campaign, the cornerstone of the charity's 25th year appeal.

(For tables and tickets or for more info about the Inner-City Foundation or to donate to the 25th year appeal, visit [www.innercityfoundation.org](http://www.innercityfoundation.org), email [communications@innercityfoundation.org](mailto:communications@innercityfoundation.org) or call 203.416.1496.)



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# Local News

## World Youth Day's impact

BY REBECCA VODOLA

BRIDGEPORT—During the ten days spent in Poland for World Youth Day, the 231 pilgrims from the Diocese of Bridgeport visited pilgrimage sites around Poland, including the home of the Black Madonna icon and St. John Paul II's boyhood home; praying, singing and dancing with other pilgrims from close to 190 countries; and welcoming and celebrating Mass with Pope Francis. Organizers estimate that close to two million people gathered in Krakow for the festivities.

"To see the rich diversity of the group, to participate in the joyful song of our music leaders, to witness the dance of praise that accompanied the morning prayer was to see the beauty of our Church at its best," shared Bishop Frank J. Caggiano via his Facebook page.

The pilgrims faced impassable rain, miles-long walks each day and outdoor camping to participate in World Youth Day gatherings. The group was preemptively heeding Pope Francis' advice from his Sunday homily. "When it comes to Jesus, we cannot sit around waiting with arms folded; he offers us life—we can't respond by thinking about it or 'texting' a few words!" exclaimed the pontiff.

One of the most intense experiences came when the pilgrims visited Auschwitz, the largest of the Nazi's concentration and death camps.

This visit was especially moving for the delegation from Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, named after St. Maximilian Kolbe who died at Auschwitz. "Knowing that I was standing in the cell where St. Maximilian Kolbe was executed, after having learned about him at school, was overwhelming," said Benedicte Kabongo, who is entering his senior year at Kolbe.

"I was so moved by the entire experience and most especially when in the cell where St. Maximilian Kolbe had been held and executed," said Travis Sanders. "As a Kolbe Cathedral student, that place, our school's namesake, held special meaning. It is difficult to explain, but there was a sense of horror at what happened there, while at the same

time a sense of holiness due to the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe."

Father Augustine Nguyen, Kolbe's chaplain, was also moved by the experience. "For me personally, the highlight of the pilgrimage was the day when we went to Auschwitz," he said. "There were thousands of young people, but you could not hear a word. It was a powerful and solemn moment; most people were either praying silently or meditating. This was especially true when we visited Block 11, where St. Kolbe was killed."

The culmination of the pilgrimage came as the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims gathered for Sunday's World Youth Day Closing Mass with Pope Francis in Krakow.

Pope Francis encouraged the



ONE OF THE MOST INTENSE EXPERIENCES for these pilgrims from Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport was a visit to Auschwitz. "There was a sense of horror at what happened here, while at the same time a sense of holiness due to the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe," recalls Kolbe's Travis Sanders.



MAXIMILLIAN KOLBE, the Polish Franciscan friar, who volunteered to die so that save another prisoner's life.

young people not to forget their faith after returning home. "The Lord doesn't want to remain in this beautiful city or in cherished memories alone. He wants to enter your homes, to dwell in your daily lives: in your studies, your first years of work, your friendships and affections, your hopes and dreams. How greatly he desires that you bring all this to him in prayer!"

Pope Francis announced at the Closing Mass that the next World Youth Day will be held in Panama in 2019.

## District Judge to discuss justice system challenges at Red Mass

FAIRFIELD—United States District Judge Edgardo Ramos will discuss the current crisis in the justice system and incarceration trends at the 2016 Red Mass and breakfast that will take place on Sunday, October 2, at 9 am in the Egan Chapel of Fairfield University.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will concelebrate the Mass with Fairfield University's president, Father Jeffrey von Arx, SJ, who will be presented the St. Thomas More Award for his support of the Red Mass over the years. Breakfast will immediately follow in the Oak Room in the campus center.

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

"This is a timely and intriguing topic for our breakfast program and we're very grateful that Judge Ramos will share his unique perspective on these issues," said Anne McCrory, chief legal and real estate officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport. "From his position behind the bench, as well as his experience as a prosecutor,

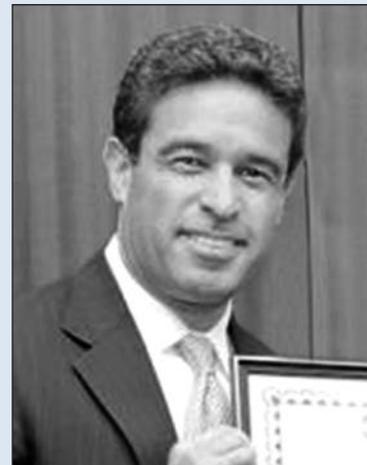
Judge Ramos faces these issues routinely. As we continue in our journey through the Year of Mercy in the Church, it is important for Catholic legal professionals to be aware of the issues causing and resulting in human struggles around us. We look forward to Judge Ramos' remarks."

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

### U.S. District Judge Edgardo Ramos

Edgardo Ramos was appointed United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York on September 15, 2011, after being nominated by President Barack Obama. He began his term as a judge on December 15, 2011.

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Judge Ramos earned a B.A. in 1982 from Yale University and a J.D. in 1987 from Harvard Law School. From 1987 until 1992, he was an associate with the law firm of Simpson Thatcher



EDGARDO RAMOS

& Bartlett. In 1992 he entered public service as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of New York, serving in that capacity for 20 years.

Judge Ramos joined the law firm that would ultimately become Day Pitney LLP in June 2002 as a partner in the White Collar and Internal Investigations Group. In 2003, he was appointed by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to serve on the Commission to Combat Police Corruption. Judge Ramos has served on the governing boards of the Hispanic

National Bar Association, the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association and the Puerto Rican Bar Association of New York City. He has also served on the Criminal Law and Municipal Affairs Committees of the New York City Bar Association. In 2008 Judge Ramos was elected as a James W. Cooper Fellow of the Connecticut Bar Foundation.

Bishop Caggiano has urged all legal professionals including attorneys, legislators, judges and other legal professionals to attend the Red Mass and to consider joining the St. Thomas More Society, an association of Catholic attorneys with a long history of charitable work. The bishop will recognize the work and dedication to Catholic education of Father von Arx, the host of this year's Red Mass, with a St. Thomas More Award.

(Fairfield University is located at 1073 N. Benson Road, Fairfield. The cost of the breakfast is \$45/person; tables are \$450. For tickets, go to [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/RSVP](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/RSVP). For questions, email [dietjen@diobpt.org](mailto:dietjen@diobpt.org) or phone: 203.416.1385.)

# St. Peter's Parish, Bridgeport

## Local Mass honors Saint Mother Teresa

By ALEXANDRIA FAIZ

The same day pilgrims flooded into St. Peter's Square at the Vatican to observe Pope Francis canonize Mother Teresa on Sunday, September 4, an overflowing crowd filled St. Peter Parish in Bridgeport at 2 pm. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving to honor the deeply beloved foundress of the Missionaries of Charity and mark the Jubilee for the Workers and Volunteers of Mercy.

Although she is now officially "St. Teresa," she will always be called "Mother" by those who follow her loving example.

The bishop called Mother Teresa a "modern-day apostle of charity" and began his homily with the question "Why are you doing this?" This bewildering question, the bishop explained, was posed both by the extremely poor individuals whom Mother Teresa embraced in India as well as by authorities whom she challenged with her selfless acts. Her response started with "I love you" but it didn't end there.

"She dared to go to the poorest of the poor and dared to love. She clothed them, she fed them, she touched them—just as Jesus did." The bishop said many people thought she was crazy, but in truth her life defined what it means to be a Christian. We are



AN OVERFLOW CROWD filled St. Peter Parish in Bridgeport for a Mass to honor the canonization of Mother Teresa, now St. Teresa of Calcutta. The local Mass took place on September 4, the same day the Vatican canonized St. Teresa in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The only convent of the Missionaries of Charity, the religious order she founded, in Connecticut is located near St. Peter's. (PHOTO BY ALEXANDRIA FAIZ)

all workers of mercy, he reminded the congregation. "We must love until it hurts and expect nothing in return."

The Mass attracted Catholics from parishes around the Diocese of Bridgeport and even from New York. Multiple vans filled with members from various religious orders pulled up in front of the church just before the celebration.

It was the group of six Sisters who walked to St. Peter's wearing the same simple white habit with blue trim worn by Mother Teresa who received the warm-

est welcome. The Missionaries of Charity, a worldwide order founded by Mother Teresa and now composed of over 5,600 women and men in approximately 140 countries, has occupied a convent on Beechwood Ave. in Bridgeport since 2001. Purchasing that home, the only one for the order in Connecticut, was one of the first acts done by Bishop William E. Lori when he became Bridgeport's Bishop in March 2001. Bishop Lori actually met Mother Teresa when he worked in Washington.

Joining Bishop Caggiano and Father José Rebaque, pastor of St. Peter's, for the Thanksgiving Mass was Father Brian Gannon, pastor of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, who met Mother Teresa in Rome when he was a seminarian. He celebrates Mass for the Bridgeport Sisters once a week and, during the Thanksgiving Mass, he held a first-class relic containing a drop of Mother Teresa's blood for the congregation to venerate.

Mother Teresa has other direct connections to Connecticut. Chris Fagan, a Yale University graduate, created the oil painting that was selected as the official portrait of Mother Teresa at the Canonization Mass at the Vatican. Also, Dr. Jeremiah J.

Lowney, Jr., a former board member of People's United Financial, headquartered in Bridgeport, now heads the Haitian Health Foundation after becoming close friends with Mother Teresa.

Throughout the lobby and downstairs hall at St. Peter were posted handwritten biographical pieces and historical photos of Mother Teresa, urging more local residents to be inspired by her example. One recalled the "call within a call" that Mother Teresa received on a train ride from Calcutta to Darjeeling in India on September 10, 1996. It was then she heard Jesus tell her: "My little one, come, come, carry me into the holes of the poor. Come, be my light. I cannot go alone. They don't know me, so they don't want me... How I long to enter their holes, their dark, unhappy homes."

The Bridgeport Sisters distributed framed portraits of Mother Teresa along with T-shirts, prayer cards, and miraculous medals to each family at the Sunday reception, so others can bring the new saint into their homes.

"Fully embrace the Cross where mercy was born," advised Bishop Caggiano. Adding that he can't avoid being frank (being that's his first name), he ended his homily with these words: "As different as we are, actions define us." While policies are being hotly debated, people are still hopeless, homeless, and hungry. Mother Teresa taught us that true renewal, true rebirth, happens one person at a time. "Mercy and charity will reform the world." ■

## SAVE THE DATE

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# 24

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# Women's Spirituality

## Register now for Women's Conference

By **REBECCA VODOLA**

Women of all ages are invited to participate in the third annual Women's Conference for the Diocese of Bridgeport, "Made By Love, For Love," to be held Saturday, November 12, at the St. Catherine of Siena Family Center, 210 Shelton Rd., Trumbull.

The conference will run from check-in at 9:30 am until the closing Mass at 5:30 pm.

Enjoy time spent away "from

the world" to focus on personal spiritual health while surrounded by other Catholic women doing the same. The conference will feature dynamic keynote speakers, Mass celebrated by Msgr. Thomas Powers, opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and private Eucharistic adoration, Eucharistic procession, communal prayer and Catholic vendors.

Speakers include Simcha Fisher, Catholic mom and blogger; Damon Owens, certified

speaker for the Theology of the Body Institute; and Sister Mary Elizabeth Wusinich, SV, Vicar General for the Sisters of Life.

Simcha Fisher is a cradle Hebrew Catholic, freelance writer, blogger, and mother of nine young kids. She received her BA in literature from Thomas More College in New Hampshire. Fisher contributes to *Crisis Magazine*, *Aletheia*, and *Faith & Family Live*. She is the author of *The Sinner's Guide to Natural*



### Family Planning.

Damon Owens keeps a full international speaking schedule at conferences, marriage seminars, universities, high schools, seminaries, and parishes on the good news of marriage, sexuality, Theology of the Body, Theology of the Family, adoption, and NFP. He is married and has eight children.

Sister Mary Elizabeth Wusinich, SV, after finishing studies in Theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville, she entered the Sisters of Life in 1993. She has served as postulant

director, novice director, director of the Family Life-Respect Life Office for the Archdiocese of New York and currently as the vicar general for the community.

(Conference cost is \$45/person, includes breakfast, lunch, snack, and hospitality bag. Religious Sisters are free. Accommodations are available for nursing moms of infants. Financial assistance is available for women in need or students. For scholarship information, contact Maureen Ciardiello: [mciardiello@diobpt.org](mailto:mciardiello@diobpt.org) or 203.416.1445. For more information on the conference, visit [www.bridgeportwomensconference.org/](http://www.bridgeportwomensconference.org/).)

## St. Vincent's honors Volunteers of the Year

BRIDGEPORT—St. Vincent's Medical Center honored its 2016 Volunteers of the Year including Bridgeport resident Laura Durkin and Branford resident Brian D. Sager. More than 150 of the hospital's dedicated volunteers attended the annual Recognition Reception, marking service anniversaries ranging from 100 to 10,000 hours. In total, 300 volunteers donated more than 46,000 hours during the past year and have served the Medical Center well in many departments.

"Our volunteers are truly the heart and soul of our hospital," explained volunteer services director Julie Lawrence. "They enhance the patients' experience, support our staff, and lead by example by demonstrating service to others."

### Laura Durkin

When Laura Durkin moved to Connecticut from Brooklyn five years ago, she immediately missed the bustling city environment and looked for an opportunity to connect with more people. Fortunately for St. Vincent's, Laura applied to be a volunteer, and since then has been bringing smiles to patients and families. She also has never missed a SWIM Across the Sound event and lends her talents to several departments, including the St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation, information desk, Mission Services, and Pastoral Care. She also serves as a Eucharistic minister.

"I need a lot of people around



me and I empathize with the patients who are looking to talk to someone and who need to be comforted," said Durkin. "St. Vincent's is such a welcoming place. The staff and volunteers are friendly and I always look for ways we can work together in order to help patients and families."

"Laura is a model for Volunteer Services behavior. She raises her hand to fill in where we need her, and wherever she is—front desk, SWIM events, Foundation, or patient areas—she is making people smile!" shared Lawrence.

### Brian D. Sager

A Stanford University graduate and minor league baseball pitcher isn't who immediately comes to mind when you think about a nursing student. However, Brian Sager is just that, and he's pursuing his calling to be an RN at St. Vincent's College. Brian has served as president of the college's chapter of the

Student Nursing Association and has been a very active volunteer, first with the annual SWIM Across the Sound Marathon and then at St. Vincent's Special Needs Services. Brian was introduced to St. Vincent's Special Needs by its director of nursing Christina Longden, and has since volunteered for the annual Easter Egg Hunt, FEROLETO Day, the Special Needs School Prom, the Elizabeth M. Pfriem Circus, and much more.

"The students and staff at Special Needs are amazing people," said Sager. "It's my philosophy to jump right in and help out when I can. I would encourage anyone to volunteer there."

"Brian is an all-star to the students," said Lawrence. "He is compassionate and caring and has stepped up to coordinate fellow nursing students to volunteer with him to support our children with special health care needs." ■

## Respect Life

# Put on the Mind of Christ

By **MAUREEN CIARDIELLO**

Respect Life encompasses many different aspects. Certainly it is about protecting the unborn, but it also means extending compassion and love to those who may have been coerced and pressured into a decision or felt that there was no other way out.

Respect Life is a ministry of accompaniment, meaning we are available and willing to walk spiritually, emotionally and physically with anyone who is at their most vulnerable in life, whether it is during times of trauma, an illness or health challenge, death of a loved one or providing means for food and shelter. It is a willingness to set aside judgments and put on the mind of Christ, to be that loving witness of compassion and tenderness that he so often extends to us. It is our way of "paying forward" through him, with him and in him.

I can think of no better witness who emulated this for us in modern times than Mother Teresa, now known as St. Teresa of Calcutta. How many images have we seen of this great saint in which she caressed the sick and comforted the sad, poor and lonely? She put into action the very meaning of human dignity, treating each person no matter the sins and circumstances, whether they were clean or dirty, with the utmost respect. This is what Respect Life is all about.

Let us keep these things in mind, along with this quote from Mother Teresa as we celebrate Respect Life Month. "Each one of them is Jesus in disguise."

(October is Respect Life Month. Father Bob Kinnally, chancellor of the diocese, will celebrate the Respect Life Mass on Sunday, October 2, at 11:30 at Holy Spirit Parish in Stamford. For more information, contact Maureen Ciardiello director of Respect Life Ministry: 203.416.1445 or [mciardiello@diobpt.org](mailto:mciardiello@diobpt.org).)

# Youth News

## Teens 'Fan the Fire' on a 100 degree day

By REBECCA VODOLA

Nearly 500 young people turned out for the 11th annual Fan the Fire Youth Rally for a day of praise, prayer, worship and fellowship grounded in faith.

Despite the day's sweltering heat that permeated St. Rose's gymnasium, teens jumped and danced to praise and worship music led by Katie Keogler and Kevin Donovan. A crowd favorite was Hillsong Young and Free's "Real Love," a song about living in the love of God.

"In Your heart, I'm found," shouted hundreds of teens waving glowsticks as darkness fell outside. "Yeah, this love is for real."

Fan the Fire is a day-long, sacrament-based youth rally held annually in three U.S. locations. The spiritual youth rally was originally created to "fan the fire" of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of youth after summers filled with Catholic youth conferences and mission trips. The Connecticut rally, held at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Mass with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Eucharistic Adoration.

"Adoration gave me time to reflect on why I really came to Fan the Fire," shared Grace Gilbertie, incoming tenth-grader and parishioner at St. James Parish in Stratford. "The whole day is about expanding your

faith, and Adoration gave us all time to think about doing that."

The theme of the day was #(hashtag) Witness. Teens heard witness talks and had the opportunity to share their own faith witness in small-group discussions.

Colorado-based Steve Angrisano, musician, songwriter and youth minister, shared a witness talk and provided entertainment for the day. Angrisano urged teens to frequent the Sacrament of Reconciliation, even if they had not been to Confession in a while.

Visiting priests from parishes around the diocese traveled to St. Rose to hear confessions. Dozens of teens took the opportunity to receive the sacrament.

Throughout the day teens joked with their friends, played games like a variation of rock-paper-scissors that involved dinosaurs and ninjas, shared stories about the recent events of World Youth Day and spent time in the makeshift adoration chapel in Holy Innocents Hall throughout the day.

Rodd Blessey, St. Rose's high school youth minister, organized the event. Knights of Columbus from the Virgilius Council 185 volunteered as security and staff, taking shifts standing outside in the record-breaking 100-degree heat to serve the faithful teens.

In his homily, Bishop Caggiano brought laughter from



the young people when he shared a story about his struggles as a young priest to "fan a fire" that almost got out of control during one Easter Vigil as he attempted to light the Pascal candle. The Easter Vigil starts each year with the priest lighting the Paschal candle from a larger fire and intoning the words, "May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds."

"I tried to light the vigil fire three times. Finally, the altar servers fanned the budding flame, and it leapt up toward me," Bishop Caggiano recounted. "It was so hot and powerful that it nearly burned off my eyebrows!"

The bishop's story illustrated the effect Fan the Fire hopes to have on the hearts of youth across the diocese. With eyebrows intact, the teens left the event burning with the fire of the



WORSHIP, FRIENDSHIP, FUN AND FAITH weave in an energetic mix at Fan the Fire Youth Rally. The day-long event gives teens a chance to share, deepen and expand their faith.

Holy Spirit.

In an age when the Church is often viewed as antiquated, hun-

dreds of teens proved that she is alive and well.

"Yeah, this love is for real!" ■

## Off the Streets gets people housed

By PAT HENNESSY

"People need to know that the homeless are out there. They're working people you meet in the elevator, they're parents you see at the PTA," says Deacon Kevin Moore, administrator for Off the Streets ministry in the Bridgeport/Fairfield/Trumbull area.

The Off the Streets ministry was originally started by Deacon Michael Oles in Danbury. Deacon Moore learned about the ministry at a Northeast Regional Deacon Convocation in 2012, where Michael Oles was conducting a talk on helping the homeless. "I was impressed. They were actually getting people into apartments, not just giving them a blanket against the cold," he recalls.

After he retired in 2013 he determined to start a chapter of the ministry in this part of Fairfield County.

"Kevin won't talk to you about how hard it was to get his ministry started," says Joe Simons, who took over the Danbury ministry when Deacon Oles moved to Pennsylvania. "He just talks about how important it is and how many people have been helped."

Both men emphasize that Off the Streets focuses on a particular segment of the homeless population, those with a reliable source of income. "They may be working, or on Social Security disability, or be veterans," Deacon Moore explains. "We help people who will be able to pay their own rent once they're stabilized."

"Being homeless is like having your feet stuck in quicksand," adds Simons. "No matter how hard you try, you can't put your life back together. You lose hope."

Deacon Moore serves at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Fairfield. The parish gave the ministry a boost by letting them use their former convent to hold furniture and household goods. Maureen Boda, an Assumption parishioner, is treasurer.

Ellen Moore, Kevin's wife, is the ministry's secretary. "What we see are a lot of people who get minimum wage," she notes. "They have jobs, they work very hard, but they can't save for the deposit to get an apartment."

In the past three years, with the help of Off the Streets, 53 people have been moved into stable, affordable housing.

Referrals to the ministry come from agencies in the area, including Catholic Charities, Operation Hope in Fairfield and Prospect House in Bridgeport. Off the Streets always works in

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

## SAINT MARY'S CHURCH

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Deacon Stephan A. Genovese

Parochial Vicar: Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro

### MASSSES:

#### Daily Masses:

Monday-Friday 8:00 am, 12:10 pm;  
Wednesday 6:00 pm Extraordinary Form;  
Saturday 9:00 am Extraordinary Form

#### Saturday Anticipatory Mass:

4:00 pm, 7:00 pm (Spanish)

#### Sunday: 8:00 am, 9:30 am Latin High Mass,

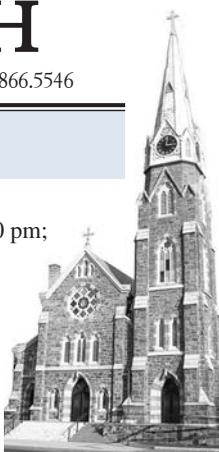
11:30 am English High Mass,  
1:15 pm (Spanish)

### CONFESSION SCHEDULE:

Monday-Friday: 11:30 am-12:00 pm;  
Wednesday: 5:30-5:50 pm;  
Saturday: 3:00-4:30 pm

### ADORATION:

Wednesdays: 8:30 am-5:15 pm;  
Fridays: 8:30 am-5:30 pm



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# Feature

## Unlocking the Mystery

# One man's journey into sacred art

By **BETH LONGWARE DUFF**

Dr. Frank DeStefano's interest in sacred art should come as no surprise, given his PhD in history from Fordham University and a stint teaching the subject at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield before switching to a career as a financial advisor. The



**DR. FRANK DESTEFANO**

writer and lecturer has traveled extensively in Italy pursuing his passion for Renaissance artists, including one named Giorgione who remains something of a mystery to this day.

DeStefano will teach a class on how to look at a Venetian Renaissance painting on Wednesday, October 12, as part of the Lifelong Learners' program at the Fairfield Senior Center.

He will also conduct his annual tour of the stained glass windows at his church, Our Lady of the Assumption in Fairfield, on November 20.

"Even in his own time, Giorgione was regarded as one of the greatest painters of the Renaissance, but he died from the plague at the age of 33," says DeStefano, explaining his fascination with the painter. "There's an air of mystery not only about his paintings, but also about his own person."

The Renaissance was a culturally rich period that began in Italy and encompassed the 14th to 17th centuries, bridging the Middle Ages and modern history. Aptly named (Renaissance means "rebirth"), the movement contributed wide-ranging developments in philosophy, literature, music and art that ultimately spread across the continent.

Best known among the Italian Renaissance artists are Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Rafael and Titian. Giorgione—a contemporary of Titian and co-founder with him of the Venetian school of Italian Renaissance painting—is lesser known but influential nevertheless.

Born Giorgio Barbarelli da Castelfranco in 1477, Giorgione was one of the first Venetian painters to work in oil paints. Only a handful of surviving paintings are clearly attributed to him, including "Tempest" and "Three Ages of Man." DeStefano has studied both in depth and has reached his own interpretations of



THE "THREE AGES OF MAN," an enigmatic Renaissance painting by Venetian painter Giorgione, is open to many interpretations. Dr. DeStefano believes that it may reflect a religious theme.

the subject matter.

"You see something and you have an intuition about what it is, and then the work comes afterward," he says, explaining his process. "You find out that no one knows what the painting is—even the greatest scholars—so it could be something that no one has ever thought of before."

"Tempest," he maintains, could be more aptly titled "The Rest of the Holy Family on the Flight into Egypt," in "Three Ages of Man," DeStefano sees "The Encounter of Jesus with the Rich Young Man" based on the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

As he notes on his online blog, the title "Three Ages of Man" is actually based on pure guesswork

and the disparity in ages of its three subjects because Giorgione left no written notes regarding his work. DeStefano also rejects a previous interpretation that the painting is of a music lesson.

Instead, he believes that the painting is, in fact, sacred art that illustrates Matthew's story of the wealthy young man who asked Jesus what he must do to gain eternal life. He describes the process that brought him to this conclusion as being based on "seeing with my own eyes" and "obvious details."

"That man on the right obviously looks like Jesus. Is there an incident where he's talking to a young man? Obviously, we have the story from St. Matthew's Gospel," explains DeStefano. "If you read a little further in the

Gospel, St. Peter comes into the picture and asks Jesus, 'What's going to happen to us?'"

He buttresses his argument by finding significance in the way the subjects are dressed and the colors Giorgione used. Jesus wears a garment or vestment that's green, the color used by the Catholic Church during Ordinary Time. In the middle of the painting, the younger man's garment has golden lapels and he's sporting a fashionable (for the time) hat, both indications that he is well off. On the left side of the painting, St. Peter is robed in red, the color reserved for the feast days of martyrs.

DeStefano's advice to people who are interested in gaining a greater understanding of art is to take advantage of the resources offered by the museums they visit—including docents and audio guides—to gather as much information as they can. Then, carefully examine all the elements of a painting.

"Even without a guide, you have to understand that every detail in a Renaissance painting is important. It's never there by accident," he notes. "Most Renaissance paintings tell a story, and most of the time it will begin in the background, then move to the middle ground and finally to the characters in the foreground. View them in that order and consider how these things are related."

(Additional information about DeStefano's exploration of sacred art can be found at [www.giorgionetempesta.com](http://www.giorgionetempesta.com).)



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## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MUSEUM




# St. Ladislaus, Norwalk

## Parish welcomes newcomers

By **MARICARMEN GODOY**

On February 20, 2015, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano asked Father Juan Gabriel Acosta, a priest of this diocese born and raised in Colombia, if he would be willing to take charge of St. Ladislaus Parish in South Norwalk, a parish that had been established by Hungarian immigrants.

After almost four generations the parish had few Hungarian parishioners left and their pastor, Father Michael Bachman, was then at retirement age. Father Bachman had no skill in Spanish, and the neighborhood had filled in recent years with Hispanic families.

"The bishop told me that the parish hadn't been able to respond to the needs of the changing neighborhood," recalled Father Acosta. "He asked me if I would be willing to assume that task."

Father Acosta at that time was 31 years old and had been ordained only a year and a half earlier. He was serving as parochial vicar at nearby St. Joseph Parish.

It was a huge task for a priest so recently ordained. On March 2 he received the keys to the buildings, the accounts and ledgers and ecclesiastical records. With great hope, the young pastor embarked on a faith-filled pastoral endeavor.

He immediately began distributing flyers throughout the neighborhood, letting everyone know of his appointment and announcing that St. Ladislaus was beginning a new Hispanic Ministry, including four Masses in Spanish each week—daily Mass on Mondays and Tuesdays, a Saturday vigil Mass at 6:30 pm and Sunday Mass at 12:30. He also announced a special schedule for the Sacrament of

Reconciliation in Spanish and the establishment of personalized spiritual counseling.

The first Mass in Spanish with Father Acosta as pastor was celebrated on Palm Sunday, 2015.

"I thank God that, since that first Mass, the church has always been full," Father Acosta said.

Parishioners, both those of Hungarian background and their English-speaking neighbors, have welcomed 350 Hispanic families into the parish, giving it a new, multicultural feeling. The parish is now home to about 1,000 parishioners.

All parishioners are energized by the strong growth the parish has shown under Father Acosta's initiative. The parish had three altar servers when he came to St. Ladislaus. In the past year this number has multiplied many times over; now he has 31 servers. The number of children in



TRADITIONAL DEVOTIONS like this one to Our Lady, initiated by Father Juan Acosta, have welcomed a growing number of Hispanic families into St. Ladislaus Parish in South Norwalk.

religious education has grown from 20 students to 100. They are guided by bilingual teachers, since the classes are in English and many of the children are newly arrived in this country and need extra assistance.

As the number of children in religious education has grown, so has sacramental preparation. Next spring, St. Ladislaus will see 42 children receive their First Holy Communion.

From only one marriage in 2014, the parish saw three in 2015; this year has already seen four weddings celebrated in the first half of the year, with

three more scheduled through September.

Baptisms have shown an even greater increase. There was only one baptism in 2014. After he announced the beginning of the Hispanic Ministry outreach, Father Acosta presided at 45 baptisms last year and 30 more in the first half of 2016. This summer he will baptize 10 more.

Unlike the original Hungarian founders of St. Ladislaus, the newest parishioners share a language but come from a number of different countries with different traditions. The Colombian community

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



### HELP US HELP THOSE IN NEED

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# Catholic Charities

## Boylan Awards to be presented at 100th Gala

At its 100th Anniversary Gala Celebration on September 24, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC) will recognize nine individuals with an award named in honor of its foundress, Dr. Marguerite T. Boylan.

Deeply rooted in Christian values, Dr. Boylan was known for her commitment and devotion to serving those in need. A recognized pioneer and leader in professional social work, she was considered an “unsung hero of the poor.”

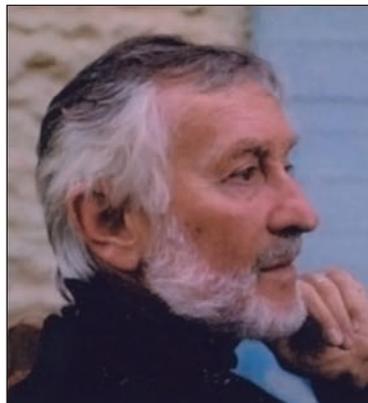
The Dr. Marguerite T. Boylan Awards will be presented to the following “unsung heroes of the poor,” who have demonstrated through their actions the philosophy and spirit of Dr. Boylan herself.

**Peggy Ceponis:** An active parishioner at St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield, Ceponis helped reignite the parish youth group, mobilizing young people to organize food and clothing drives for the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport; tutor other youth at St. Peter Parish in Bridgeport; serve breakfast at Morning Glory; and cook dinners at New Covenant Center in Stamford. In 2008 she focused her energies on CCFC’s Morning Glory Breakfast Program and helped launch the Market Place food pantry there. Ceponis has found that she connects with the homeless population, and now devotes most of her time and efforts to their needs. Ceponis said, “Catholic Charities has always encouraged me to see the whole person, and not just the wrong turns in their life.”



PEGGY CEPONIS

**Father John Guiliani:** The Thomas Merton Center would not exist were it not for Father John Guiliani. In the 1970s, he and a group of students joined forces to establish the Thomas Merton House of Hospitality in Bridgeport and then the Good Shepherd House of Hospitality in South Norwalk, both of which served as models for New Covenant Center in Stamford and Dorothy Day House in Danbury. Never one to slow down, in 1977 Father John, along with two others, founded The Benedictine Grange. The Grange explored a new monasticism, balancing a life of contemplation with a life of active works of social justice. In recent years, the Grange has extended its concerns to assisting the undocumented through support to individuals and to the Office of Immigration Services at Catholic Charities. Father John represents a hybrid of roles—priest, teacher, artist, liturgist, poet, theologian, activ-



FATHER JOHN GUILIANI



ANNE AND MARY SOMMER

ist, humanitarian and faithful servant.

**Bruce and Linda Koe:** Bruce and Linda Koe’s approach to giving back is nothing if not down-to-earth. Both are extremely active in Trinity Church, Greenwich, where they co-founded Loaves and Fishes, a group that regularly cooks and serves meals at New Covenant Center. Bruce founded Men’s Social Outreach; and Linda serves on the Missions, Outreach and Justice committee. Due to Linda’s passion for addressing food insecurity, they took a deep-dive into New Covenant Center. Linda served as secretary of the New Covenant advisory board, founded the annual Harvest Table fundraiser six years ago, and has devoted countless hours of volunteer time. Between monetary donations and on-the-ground action, the Koes have been instrumental in supporting the New Covenant Center of the future.

**Denis and Britta Nayden:** There’s a strong magnet that draws Denis and Britta Nayden to take action: young people. The Naydens have been stalwart supporters of the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, St. Catherine’s



BRUCE AND LINDA KOE



MSGR. ROBERT WEISS

Academy, Trinity Catholic High School and the University of Connecticut. Another youth-centered cause that’s close to their hearts is Build On, an organization that helps break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy worldwide.

In honor of Denis’ brother, the Naydens established the William Nayden Memorial Scholarship at Trinity Catholic High School. Over the last 13 years, this scholarship has grown into a \$1.2 million dollar endowment, providing over 30 scholarships for Trinity Catholic students. Why do these members of St. Leo Parish in Stamford do so much to help others? Denis explained: “Our family grew up in Catholic schools and churches, where there’s a constant reminder of what’s actually important to do in life.”

**Anne and Mary Sommer:** The Sommers’ tale is a generational one. Anne, now in her 90s, has been the guiding-star of her family of eight children. She instilled a passion for helping others by bringing her young flock to serve at the Thomas Merton Center, where she was a board member for many years. Her eldest child Mary, a Supreme Court Judge for the State of Connecticut, was



DENIS AND BRITTA NAYDEN

inspired early on by her mother to jump into social action. Mary has served on advisory boards for child advocacy programs, prison literacy programs, and juvenile justice activities. Mary’s husband, Jay Sandek, is a lead trustee with the Singer Foundation, which donated \$500,000 to New Covenant Center. The Sommer women have truly manifested “faith in action” with their continued commitment to CCFC. Mary says, “I believe so deeply that Fairfield County would be a very different place were it not for Catholic Charities.”

**Msgr. Robert Weiss:** When the Sandy Hook shooting struck four years ago, Msgr. Weiss, the pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, was faced with a community in shock, despair, and loss. But he provided comfort, guidance, and hope to his extended community. “The Sandy Hook School shooting required endless hours of caring people reaching out to those who were afraid, those most deeply affected by loss and injury and a community in shock. Charities was there from the beginning,” he says, “and stayed by our side for months, providing what they provide the best: confidence that darkness will not overcome light, hurt can be healed and forgiveness leads us to hope.”

*(The Catholic Charities 100th Anniversary Gala celebration will take place on Saturday, September 24, at the Marriott Hotel in Stamford. Festivities begin at 6:30 pm and will include dinner, dancing to the music of the JK Band and a special musical performance by “Shadows of the 60’s: A Tribute to Motown.” To purchase tickets go to [www.100thgala.eventbrite.com](http://www.100thgala.eventbrite.com) or call 203.416.1333)*

### ST. LADISLAUS FROM PAGE 12

contributes the largest number, followed by families from Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras and Peru. They are joined by the enthusiastic participation of Mexican Catholics who have brought to the parish their strong devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

A group devoted to Our Lady under that title is meeting on a regular basis with Father Acosta to plan celebrations. Cristiana Soriano, who has been a member of a Marian group at St. Ladislaus for 18 years, is pleased that the parish has embraced the traditional Mexican observances. “Father himself took charge of looking for a mariachi band

for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He will celebrate the Mass and we will prepare the kinds of food that traditionally accompany the fiesta.”

Norwalk Police Officer César Ramirez of the Department of Community Relations, a parishioner at St. Ladislaus, considers that the coming of Father Acosta has meant a resurrection of the parish. “With his charisma and his youth he has managed to attract, invigorate, and give a new dynamism to the faith of the new immigrants who live in South Norwalk.”

*(Maricarmen Godoy is an editor with La Voz Hispana de Connecticut.)*

## EDITORIAL

## New Beginnings

What do you think when you see the first yellow school bus on the road? Well, as a driver you're likely to think of traffic tie-ups and a slower commute. But for the moms, dads and kids along the route, life is about to go into high speed. The lazy, crazy, hazy days of summer are done. This is a time of new beginnings, a fresh start, and endless possibilities.

All children, whatever school they attend, will have the opportunity to grow and stretch their minds this school year. For students in Catholic schools, the new year is a change to grow in the knowledge of faith as well. "A Catholic education provides the springboard to realizing the person God intends each one to be," says Lori Wilson, new principal of the St. Andrew Academy campus of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport.

That's what all of us want, for ourselves as well as our children. As they hop aboard the bus, filled with promise, they are heading into the future. In a world gone crazy, we adults hope that the world they build will be founded on faith, love, caring and compassion. Share a little of that hope, along with a short prayer, while you wait behind the yellow bus.

A good thought to start with is one offered by Dr. Gail Kingston, the new principal of St. Lawrence School in Shelton. It comes from Mother Teresa, newly canonized as St. Teresa of Calcutta: "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

## A Third Anniversary!

On September 19, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano sailed past his Third Anniversary as Fifth Bishop of Bridgeport—and what a remarkable three years it has been!

The 2014 Synod brought together hundreds of delegates in a year of planning for the renewal of the diocese, and that number grew to thousands at the closing Celebration Mass at Webster Bank Arena. In the last year alone, the diocese has launched the Diocesan Youth Choir, taken 300 young people and their chaperones to World Youth Day in Poland, and moved forward with many new initiatives based on the energy and recommendations of the synod.

A pilot program for the new Catholic Service Corps will bring young people together later this month for a diocesan day of service. Likewise, the new Leadership Institute is working toward the launch of an exciting new online effort that will deepen the encounter, formation and discipleship of all Catholics in our diocese. Alongside these initiatives is the ongoing work of change in the strategic planning and self-assessment efforts that have the potential to revitalize schools and parishes, and better position them for growth and vitality in the future.

To be certain, there is much hard work ahead, and perhaps some difficult decisions as the diocese responds to present challenges and future needs. However, Bishop Caggiano has been with us every step of the way, working tirelessly as reaches out to the faithful in so many liturgies and activities throughout the diocese, while also fulfilling his national responsibilities by serving on several committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

While we have much to be grateful for in his sacrificial leadership, the bishop would be the first to express his gratitude to all of those who have responded to his call and who have given so generously and faithfully over the past three years to move the diocese forward. On behalf of all, we wish him a happy Third Anniversary and many more to come!

## Change rooted in Prayer

January may get the official title as New Year, but for many of us the year really begins in September: the kids are back in school, and there's a whirlwind of activity throughout the diocese. In the midst of all of the meetings, initiatives, and acts of service, the bishop has always emphasized that the change we seek must be rooted in prayer and worship. With that in mind, you may want to plan on attending some of the upcoming prayer services:

- **Diocesan Pilgrimage**—Plan now to spend an afternoon at St. Augustine Cathedral on November 5, 1-6 pm, for what will prove to be a memorable and deeply prayerful day to re-consecrate the diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as we move forward with plans for the future.
- **Vespers for the Strategic Plan**—The Vespers service, to be led by Bishop Caggiano on October 11, 7:30 pm at the Cathedral, will be an opportunity to pray over the work and discernment that has gone into the Parish Self-Study.
- **Evening Prayer for Leadership Institute**—As the diocese moves toward the launch of the Leadership Institute, it will host an Evening Prayer Service on November 3, 7 pm, at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk. ■

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Surprise!

BRIDGEPORT—Catholic Center staff surprised Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on his 10th anniversary as a bishop when they presented him with signed photos of the World Series Championship N.Y. Mets from the 1969 and 1986 seasons.

The bishop, who grew up in Brooklyn and is a lifelong Mets fan, was genuinely surprised and delighted by the framed photos and autographs of Met legends. He thanked all diocesan employees for their dedication and teamwork in making the diocese successful.

"My ten years as a bishop have been the most marvelous and challenging in my life," the bishop told the gathering of about 70 employees and the seminarians who came up from the St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford to participate in the Mass and brunch that followed.



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

## RECTOR

REVEREND PAUL N. CHECK, Executive Director of Courage International to Rector, Saint John Fisher Seminary, Stamford. Effective date is December 31.

## PASTOR

REVEREND MICHAEL F. DOGALI, Episcopal Vicar for Strategic Planning to Pastor, Saint Joseph Parish, Shelton. Effective date was September 3. Father Dogali will no longer serve as Episcopal Vicar for Strategic Planning.

## PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND RUSSELL A. AUGUSTINE, Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Ridgefield to Parochial Vicar, Saint Mark

Parish, Stratford. Effective date was September 15.

REVEREND SEAN KULACZ, Parochial Vicar, The Cathedral Parish, Bridgeport to Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Ridgefield. Effective date was September 15.

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

REVEREND JOSEPH GILL, has been appointed to serve as Spiritual Director of the Choir for Youth (C4Y) of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Effective date was September 1. Father Gill will remain Episcopal Chaplain for Trinity Catholic High School, Stamford.

## RESIDENCE

REVEREND MICHAEL P. NOVAJOSKY, Saint Jude Parish,

Monroe to Saint Augustine Cathedral, Bridgeport. Father Novajosky will remain Episcopal Chaplain for Saint Joseph High School. Effective date was September 15.

## DEACON

DEACON THOMAS FEKETE, Deacon, Saint Ann Parish, Bridgeport to Deacon, Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford. Effective date was September 8.

ASSISTANT MASTER OF CEREMONIES  
DEACON JOHN DITARANTO, has been appointed to serve as Assistant Master of Ceremonies. Effective date was September 1.

*Monsignor Thomas W. Powers,  
Vicar General, September, 2016*

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# Editorial



## Taking the Year of Mercy to the street

### A WOMAN'S VOICE

BY DR. LENORE SNOWDEN OPALAK

*Dr. Lenore Snowden is affiliated with St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, and is a parishioner at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Fairfield.*

In calling for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote, "Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters... and recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help."

If, in this home stretch of the Year of Mercy, you are looking for a way to act as "God's Co-worker," to go out of your comfort zone to bring God's Mercy and Love to those most wounded and vulnerable, look no further than the upcoming 40 Days for Life prayer vigil,

September 28-November 6. During the 12-hour per day vigil (with 1-2 hour prayer shifts) prayers are raised for the conversion of hearts and minds, for God's all-encompassing love to reach women desperate enough to seek an abortion, and for compassion and healing of the many hidden wounds of abortion.

"Did you know that when you pray for the living and the dead, you are performing a Spiritual Work of Mercy? Did you know that when you refer a woman with a crisis pregnancy to Malta House or the Sisters

of Life, you are performing a Corporal Work of Mercy? Did you know that when you help a pregnant woman obtain an ultrasound so that she might see and fall in love with her baby, you are performing a Spiritual Work of Mercy?" reflects Sharon Boland, one of the coordinators of 40 Days for Life in the Diocese of Bridgeport. In cooperation with God's plan, much can be accomplished through prayer coupled with sacrifice and service.

While prayer is the cornerstone of the 40 Days for Life initiative, the public witness of the vigil touches hearts and provides opportunity for encounter and potential evangelization. During the most recent 40 Days for Life in Danbury, held during Lent of this year, the sight of the prayers along Main Street drew the curiosity of passersby, some of who stopped to engage in conversation and ask questions about why we pray, what we are praying for, and what we believe.

Among these were a lapsed

Catholic, somewhat wistfully wanting to know about the Church he had been away from for years, and Christians of other denominations wanting to find out more about Catholicism.

There was also an outpouring of kindness and plenty of encouragement, from the friendly waves and thumbs-up of drivers, to strangers bringing coffee, snacks and words of gratitude. While the fruits of

prayer remain largely unknown, one story recounted by a participant in a previous vigil dispels any doubt about the effectiveness of the peaceful witness of the prayer vigil: "On the second day at the vigil, a van pulled up, with a young woman driver who smiled and beckoned us closer

to her car. She told us that the year before, she had scheduled an abortion, but when she arrived at the clinic and saw the people in prayer, with the signs showing a beautiful smiling baby, she

**"Did you know that when you pray for the living and the dead, you are performing a Spiritual Work of Mercy?"**

could not go through with the abortion. After she told us this, she hopped out of the van, opened the side door, and pointed to an infant girl with tousled curls sleeping in her baby seat. The

young mother looked at us and said, "This is the baby that I was scheduled to abort." And then she thanked us."

*(For information on the next 40 Days for Life, to be held September 28-November 6 in front of Planned Parenthood, 44 Main St., Danbury, go to 40daysforlife.com.)*



## Miracle on Perryridge Road

### A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

Ever seen a miracle? Five beautiful babies have been born right before my eyes, each bearing my own family name and placed right into my arms. I'd say that's a miracle. Baby William James—called Billy Boy by some—joined us in July.

The Big Lad came out the same way the rest of them did—kicking, carrying on, and looking like an Irish potato. There's a family resemblance. Once, I would have said he takes after my dad. Now I have to own it—he takes after me.

The birth of a baby is a beautiful thing, though not without

anxious moments. The build-up is intense, like a Cape Canaveral countdown or a World Cup shootout. When the moment comes, the release is exhilarating.

I'm a mush, so I weep. It slays me every time.

Hail Mary, full of grace, bless this child and pray for us sinners—today, tomorrow, and until the end of time. Under the hot medical lamps of the delivery room, happy tears and swirling devotions meet the hospital aroma of green soap and foot ink in an epic sensory bouillabaisse, a true life event marked by baby's first hungry cry, a moment you know will flash before your eyes

at the hour of your death.

I love it so much that I always want to do it again right away. Maybe that's why labor and delivery nurses seem so happy with their jobs. It's hard work, always challenging. But at the end of it all, a baby is born. Wonder of wonders; miracle of miracles.

Of course, there can be tragedy in a delivery room. I've seen enough of death to know that life—and living, and babies being born—is the far-superior option. For the righteous, something glorious awaits in God's arms. Let's not rush to get there, shall we?

Billy Boy's stay in the hospital was peaceful. No one tried to speak to him about global warming or Donald Trump. Time

stands still for a newborn baby. Nothing matters but mommy.

What kind of world awaits our miracle? One shudders to think how low humanity might go in the next 85 years. I was born in 1973, the season of Watergate and of Roe v. Wade. All in all, not an auspicious time to debut. Things turned out. They often do.

Young Billy's homecoming was marked by celebration. Luckily, our Clara has all the baby-crazy instincts you'd expect in a 12-year-old girl. It's nice to have an extra pair of hands handy. She even changes diapers.

Along with the uplift came upheaval. The new arrival altered the delicate balance of our family system. The rookie has some of the veterans worried about losing their spots in the batting order.

**"What kind of world awaits our miracle? One shudders to think how low humanity might go in the next 85 years."**

Our Sally—called Little Sal by some—isn't quite four. She's taken the new arrangement hardest. The love for her new brother is there, but the commitment to peaceful coexistence isn't—not yet, anyway. It's a textbook case of sibling rivalry. She has been displaced.

Expression is the need of our souls. Though Sally can't quite find the words, she has found several new sounds. These sounds are dreadful sounds, trembling sounds, the kinds of sounds you hear at the edge of the forest during a full moon.

Little Sal has regressed. So what? It happens to the best of us. One step up, two steps back, and all that jazz. I can't say I'm operating at my peak these days either. With sleep patterns and eating habits on tilt, my tongue is sharper than usual and my temper shorter than ever.

I firmly intend to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. In the meantime, I rejoice in all that is good and great about the family way.

Keep an eye open. Miracles happen every day.

# Catholic Education

## Restructuring increases effectiveness

BRIDGEPORT—With the support of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, the Office of the Superintendent has been restructured to best meet the needs of the 28 diocesan elementary school campuses, five high schools, and St. Catherine Academy for special needs children.

"I am confident that the new team will work together to ensure a bright future for our schools and our approximately 9,000 students," said Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. "We will, in collaboration with principals and community stakeholders, establish strategic goals and implement initiatives to address individual school needs and to ensure challenging and innovative educational programs throughout the diocese."

### Assistant Superintendent

Sister Marilyn Muldoon, OSU, who previously served as



SISTER MARILYN MULDOON, OSU

director of inclusive services for diocesan schools working out of St. Catherine Special Needs Center in Fairfield, has been named assistant superintendent of schools. Deeply connected to the diocese, she was born in Norwalk and baptized at St. Joseph Church there, then moved as a young child to Brookfield,

where her family made another St. Joseph's their home parish.

"I went to diocesan schools—St. Joseph's in Brookfield and Immaculate High School," she says, proud of her Diocese of Bridgeport roots. She also taught at St. Joseph's in Brookfield before joining the Ursuline Sisters.

Sister Marilyn holds her bachelor's degree from WestCONN, and earned three master's degrees, the first from Fairfield University in education and the other two in administration and special education, both from the College of New Rochelle in New York.

She joined the New York Province of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union, and has taught and been principal in the Diocese of Ogdensburg (upstate New York) and the Archdiocese of New York. Coming home to this diocese, she taught at St. Theresa School in Trumbull

before being named principal of St. Catherine Academy in 2000.

In her position as director of inclusive services she worked closely with teachers and principals throughout the diocese. "I've been able to see what makes each school a special place," she says. "Even so, every time you change positions you learn something new. We're all lifelong learners."

Sister Marilyn is a member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

### Associate Superintendent

Stacie Stueber hails from the East End of Long Island. She and her husband, Rick, and their four children are members of St. Isidore Parish in Riverhead, where she serves as a lector.

"I am a product of Catholic education," she says proudly. "I have actually taught at two of my alma maters, St. Isidore School, my elementary school, and Mercy High School (now McGann-Mercy High School) both in Riverhead."

Stueber holds her BA degree in English, with a minor in education, from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, a MA degree from SUNY Stony Brook, a second master's from Fordham University in the Catholic School Leadership Program and an Advanced Certificate from Fordham in School District Leadership.

She has taught every grade from K-12, beginning at St.



STACIE STUEBER

Isidore where she was the school's first technology teacher. She taught second grade at Our Lady of Mercy Regional School in Cutchogue before moving to the high school level. At McGann-Mercy she taught literature, journalism and digital photography to grades 8 through 12. She also coached softball and cheerleading at the JV and Varsity levels

Stueber's most recent position was principal of Our Lady Queen of Apostles Regional School in Center Moriches, a PreK-8 school.

"I am blessed to be a part of the Diocese of Bridgeport and am very excited to begin this new school year," says Stueber, who plans to visit all of the diocesan schools during the upcoming year. "I look forward to working with all of the schools in carrying out the mission of providing an excellent Catholic education to the students in Fairfield County."

In addition to these appointments, Theresa Sciallo, who has been assistant director of marketing and enrollment for the past five years, is now director of community engagement. Martin Tristine will continue in the position of assistant to the superintendent. ■

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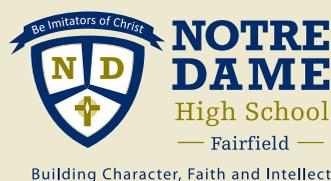
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# Catholic Education

## Superintendent's Office welcomes new principals

By PAT HENNESSY

The Diocese of Bridgeport has announced the appointment of eight new principals for the upcoming school year. "Our principals bring a wealth of expe-

the parents of four grown children, are parishioners at St. Philip Parish in Norwalk.

"I am so excited about becoming a part of the St. Augustine Academy family," she says. "It is a wonderful school full of

children and have three grandchildren. Her home parish is St. Paul's in Greenwich.

"I'm excited to be working

in Bridgeport," she says. "I feel that it is a privilege to be part of the education of any child, as it opens windows of opportunity for

them to create a better world. A Catholic education provides the foundation of learning that is a

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



A WARM WELCOME from Dr. Steven Cheeseman (l), superintendent of schools, greeted the new elementary school principals at a meeting in the Catholic Center. (l-r) first row, Eunice Giaquinto, St. Catherine of Siena, Trumbull; Natalia Cruz, Star of the Sea, Stamford; (middle) Anna-Marie, Alteri, St. Peter, Danbury; Dr. Deborah Boccantuso, St. Augustine Academy, Bridgeport; Dr. Gail Kingston, St. Lawrence, Shelton; (back) Lori Wilson, St. Andrew Academy, Bridgeport; Abbey Camillery, Trinity Catholic Middle School, Stamford; and Stanley Steele, Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton.

rience, energy and enthusiasm to their new positions, says Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools. "I am confident that they share my excitement for the future of our schools."

### St. Augustine Academy

St. Augustine Academy campus welcomes Dr. Deborah Boccantuso. A native of Norwalk, she began her teaching career at the former St. Joseph Elementary School. She received her bachelor's degree in special education from Southern Connecticut State University, her master's from Fairfield University and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Connecticut, Storrs.

Dr. Boccantuso has over 30 years experience in education, most recently serving as principal of Middlesex Middle School in Darien for 13 years. While there, she led Middlesex to become a Blue Ribbon school, and established programs to meet the needs of all students, including those with learning challenges.

She and her husband, Vincent,

dedicated teachers and amazing children. I look forward to an amazing year!"

### St. Andrew Academy

St. Andrew Academy campus is pleased to announce the appointment of Lori Wilson as the new principal. After growing up in Michigan she moved eastward, earning her bachelor's degree in psychology from the College of New Rochelle, N.Y., and her master's degree in theology from St. Joseph Seminary (Dunwoodie) in Yonkers. She worked for nine years as DRE at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Harrison, N.Y. Coming to Fairfield County, she has taught theology at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich for 15 years, where she was the director of Campus Ministry and Service, and the Summer Enrichment and SophieConnect, an online course initiative. At CSH she worked as coordinator of Formation to Mission, and led service trips to Uganda.

She and her husband, Jeff, are the parents of three grown

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# Catholic Education

## PRINCIPALS FROM PAGE 17

springboard to realizing the person God intends each one to be.”

### St. Peter, Danbury

Anna-Marie Alteri has become the principal of St. Peter School in Danbury. No stranger to the Diocese of Bridgeport, she has over 14 years of experience with technology integration, implementation of diocesan initiatives and classroom instruction, most recently as the fifth grade teacher at the St. Augustine Academy campus of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. Her work there earned her the prestigious 2014 Tim Russert Making a Difference Award for Urban Education.

She holds her MS degree in education from the University of Bridgeport and a second degree in social sciences from Post University in Waterbury.

A resident of Beacon Falls,

Alteri, her husband Mark and their son are members of St. Michael Parish, where she was also the director of religious education (DRE) for 11 years.

She comes to St. Peter's with her favorite quote from St. Francis of Assisi in mind: "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

### St. Lawrence, Shelton

Dr. Gail Kingston brings an extensive background to her appointment at St. Lawrence School. She holds her bachelor's and masters' degrees in education from Connecticut College, her 6th Year Certificate in administration from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, and her doctorate in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. Dr.

Kingston has been principal of the Little White Schoolhouse in Mystic, CT, serving students with cerebral palsy; the Mashantucket Pequot tribal school in North Stonington; and St. Gabriel School in Milford.

She was raised in Pennsylvania, and moved to Connecticut 33 years ago due to her husband Dewey's career in the U.S. Navy Submarine Force. Their home parish is St. Mary's in Groton; they have four grown children.

"I am looking forward to an exceptional year," she says. "St. Lawrence School just celebrated its 50th anniversary. The school has a reputation for opening its doors and hearts to all children. Every student is unique and brings with them many exceptional gifts. It is up to our educators to draw upon their gifts in order to help the students embrace their educational experience with excitement and pride."

Her favorite quote comes from Mother Teresa: "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

### Star of the Sea, Stamford

Natalia Cruz comes to this diocese as the new principal of Our Lady, Star of the Sea, a Pre-K-5 school in Stamford. She holds her BS degree from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and earned her master's

in education from Mercy College, N.Y. She is currently completing a graduate program in administration at Mercy.

She brings to her new position over ten years of experience as a primary, middle and junior high school teacher at St. John Chrysostom School in the Bronx, which is also her home parish. She and her husband, Edwin, have been married 17 years and have three school-aged children.

"My goals as leader of Our Lady Star of the Sea School are to ensure that a high quality education is provided to all children, to lead great teaching and learning, and to build a strong school community focused on parent and community engagement," she says.

### Trinity Middle, Stamford

Abbey Camillery begins her first year at Trinity Middle School in Stamford with a strong background working with this age group. She holds her bachelor's degree from the State University of NY at Stony Brook, Long Island, and two masters' degrees, both from Dowling College, one in adolescent education and the second for students with disabilities. She also holds a Professional Diploma from Dowling in school administration. She taught junior high and high school at Bishop McGann-Mercy Diocesan High School on the East End of Long

Island, and was director of the school's Summer Academy.

She was born and raised in Miller Place, a small town on Long Island's North Shore, and called nearby St. Anthony of Padua in Rocky Point her home parish. She has recently relocated to Stamford with her dog, Martha Washington.

"I am dedicated to and fully believe in Catholic education," she says. "Every child deserves the right to a Catholic education, educating not only the mind and body, but the spirit as well. Middle school years are the most fundamental years for a student."

### St. Catherine of Siena, Trumbull

St. Catherine of Siena School in Trumbull welcomes a familiar face to a new role as Eunice Giaquinto takes the helm as principal. Giaquinto has taught in the diocesan school system for 31 years, 30 of them at St. Catherine of Siena School. She grew up in Trumbull, in a family with five brothers; St. Catherine's is also her home parish.

She earned her bachelor's degree from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield and her master's degree, also from Sacred Heart, with a concentration in reading. In her years at St. Catherine's, she has taught grades

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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# Catholic Education

## Greenwich Catholic School construction update

GREENWICH—Since school let out in June, construction on Greenwich Catholic School (GCS)’s upper school has been in full swing, with crews working around the clock to renovate and expand the building.

students’ educational experience. Academically, the renovations will allow for a more collaborative learning atmosphere for our middle school students, since their classes will now be located in the same space,” said GCS

exciting. I just keep picturing the students in their new classrooms and can’t wait for them to see

their new building.”  
(To donate to the upper school construction project, contact Cici

Coutant, director of advancement: [ccoutant@gcsct.org](mailto:ccoutant@gcsct.org) or 203.869.4000 ext. 139.)



AFTER ONLY EIGHT WEEKS, the upper school construction project at Greenwich Catholic School is past the half-way mark, with an estimated completion by mid-September. Through the choice of energy-efficient and sustainable materials, the school will see yearly savings on energy bills and maintenance costs.



Principal Patrice Kopas. “Teachers will regain valuable instructional time now that students will not have to travel between buildings for their core subjects.”

Construction on the upper school began at a critical juncture. The School Advisory Board facilities chair, Mario Gaztambide, explained, “The infrastructure had begun to age to a point where repairs were constant and costly.” The renovation not only addresses immediate needs, but is also an investment in the future of the school. “Through the deliberate choice of energy-efficient and sustainable materials, we’ll see yearly savings on our energy bills and maintenance costs,” added Gaztambide.

Funding for the project is due to the success of the school’s first capital campaign, “Imagine,” which to date has raised \$1.9 million. GCS is still accepting donations for the project, which is estimated to cost over \$2 million by its completion.

“We’ve been talking about this project for so long that sometimes it’s hard to believe it’s really happening,” Kopas said. “It’s

The school consists of six buildings on a 38-acre campus in Greenwich’s Byram neighborhood. The upper school houses students in grades 6-8.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will join GCS staff and benefactors for the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the renovated upper school building on October 11 at 10 am.

After only eight weeks, the upper school construction project is past the half-way mark, with an estimated completion by mid-September. The scope of the renovation includes the addition of two classrooms totaling 3,400 square feet, right-sizing of existing classrooms, renovated ADA compliant bathrooms, a new energy-efficient HVAC system, maintenance free exterior trim, and a new roof.

“The new building will have the greatest impact on our stu-

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# Social Media

## Weathering cultural hurricanes

By REBECCA VODOLA

BRIDGEPORT—Social media, the Internet, cell phones and the rapid rise of technology in recent years have all transformed the landscape of human relationships. In response to the present culture, Catholic clinical psychologist Dr. Tim Hogan presented “The Gift of Cultural Hurricanes: How to Build New Bridges that Transform Catholic Families” to more than two dozen school principals, catechists, parents and youth ministers gathered at the Catholic Center August 6.

“Today’s culture is wreaking havoc on our emotional nervous system. Research tells us that we are getting worse at empathy and depression rates are skyrocketing,” said Dr. Hogan. While social media allows immediate electronic access to other people,

it is not an effective substitute for human relationships.

Dr. Hogan shared strategies for combating an impersonal culture with a particular focus on rebuilding healthy parent-child relationships.

“Just like after a hurricane sweeps the land, the landscape of our culture changes with these ‘cultural hurricanes.’ We must change and adapt—not our faith, but our approach to catechesis and healing,” said Rose Talbot-Babey, coordinator of elementary formation for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Dr. Hogan facilitated group exercises to brainstorm solutions to real-life issues within families. His presentation explored how the family structure has changed in the present “post-modern” age, after weathering “hurricanes” including technological advancement, widespread divorce and

unstable family situations, sexual exploitation and pornography, attacks on traditional marriage and rising rates of depression.

All cultural hurricanes change the landscape, Dr. Hogan said, but not all are necessarily bad. These hurricanes simply change approaches to addressing cultural issues within the context of the family. The family is called the “domestic church” (*Lumen Gentium* 11) because this is where children are meant to be first catechized.

Unfortunately, many parents do not know how to properly catechize their children. Dr. Hogan shared some of the challenges he faces in raising his own three children. Children and young adults are constantly in stages of transition, Hogan said, which present new challenges and opportunities for parents to grow.

As a clinical psychologist

in the Detroit area, Dr. Hogan frequently encounters broken families struggling to foster healthy relationships with their children. Prevalent media further disconnect the family, he said, and Catholic parents often find themselves struggling to keep their children, especially teens, engaged in the Church.

“Is the catechesis going to stick, or are our children graduating from Catholic school or religious education and similarly think they will ‘graduate’ from the faith?” Talbot-Babey questioned.

Dr. Hogan encouraged participants to share with each other their struggles, then offered strategies to recover from “hurricanes,” to make family time and open dialogue within the family.

One participant shared via an evaluation sheet that, even in the midst of cultural hurricanes, “there is hope and a plan to help us.” Another wrote that Dr. Hogan’s presentation offered “a sense of optimism and simple ideas for par-



DR. TIM HOGAN encouraged participants at a presentation on modern Catholic Families to share with each other their struggles, then offered strategies to recover from “hurricanes,” to make family time and open dialogue within the family.

ents to implement” in the face of cultural changes.

“Dr. Hogan has the skills to motivate and inspire his audience to implement faith-fostering strategies,” said Talbot-Babey.

This fall, the diocese hopes to host Dr. Hogan for a series of similar presentations to parents, priests and educators.

(For more information or for updates on Dr. Hogan’s future presentations, contact Rose Talbot-Babey at 203.416.1648 or [rtalbotbabey@diobpt.org](mailto:rtalbotbabey@diobpt.org).)

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# Catholic Education

## Back to School with Backpacks!

BRIDGEPORT—Students at the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport were treated to a great surprise on their first full week back to school. Radio stations WEBE108 and WICC600 donated FREE backpacks filled with school supplies to 950 students at Bridgeport's Catholic elementary schools.

The radio station's operations manager, Danny Lyons, presented the backpacks to students at an assembly at St. Augustine Academy, one of the school's four campuses. The remaining backpacks were then distributed to the three additional campuses, St. Andrew Academy, St. Ann Academy, and St. Raphael Academy.

Dr. Debi Boccanfuso, principal at St. Augustine, remarked "Seeing the smiles on the students' faces when they heard they were getting new, filled backpacks was precious. Giving back to the community is just one of the many character-building principles we teach here at Catholic



Academy of Bridgeport. WEBE's generous donation helped us exemplify this valuable lesson to our students."

In an effort to display the school's appreciation for the donation, Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, the executive director of the Catholic Academy, had the radio station's call letters inscribed on the back-

packs, along with the school's logo.

"It's a small token of our gratefulness for this gift to our deserving school community," she said. "We know our parents invest in their child's education here at Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. Our students take pride in their academic achievement and I have no doubt they will take pride in sporting their new backpacks."

WEBE's donation is part of an annual campaign to give back to the local community. "Backpack Giveback" is now in its eighth year, and the number of backpacks donated has grown with each year. Lyons commented, "WEBE108 and WICC600 are committed to the children in our community through the Holiday Fund for Children, and this year, thanks to a generous donation from the Norma F. Pfriem Foundation and other sponsors, we are able to provide backpacks to all students attending the Catholic



SMILES OF DELIGHT shone on students' faces when they received new, filled backpacks from WEBE and WICC. The backpacks were blessed by Father Sean Kulacz in St. Augustine Cathedral.

Academy of Bridgeport. We wish each and every child a successful school year."

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# New Principals

## Sacred Heart Academy

HAMDEN—The Sacred Heart Academy, Hamden, community gathered on August 22 in the Alumnae Rose Garden to welcome their new principal, Sister Kathleen Mary Coonan, ASCJ, '76.

A native of Connecticut and a graduate of the academy, Sister Kathleen Mary entered the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus after her high school graduation and professed final vows in 1984. She holds a bachelor of science degree in education from Duquesne University and a master of arts in administration and supervision from Manhattan College.

Sister Kathleen Mary begins her ministry as principal of Sacred Heart Academy with 36 years of experience in education both as teacher and administrator. She has taught on the elementary and secondary levels in Connecticut, Missouri and Pennsylvania, was principal of St. Raphael School in Bridgeport



**SISTER KATHLEEN MARY, ASCJ**

from 1992 to 2002, and served as assistant principal at Sacred Heart Academy from 2002-06. For the last 10 years she has been principal of Cor Jesu Academy in St. Louis, Mo., Sacred Heart's sister school.

At Cor Jesu, Sister Kathleen was the first principal to work in the president/principal leadership model, a model Sacred Heart

uses. Throughout her tenure there, Sister strengthened the solid tradition of academic excellence and faith formation, hallmarks of a Cor Jesu and a Sacred Heart education.

"I am very happy and excited to be back at Sacred Heart Academy," Sister Kathleen Mary said. "Sacred Heart is a strong community of learners who continually use the gifts that God has given them to grow to their full potential and to reach out in service to others. Since I have returned, I have experienced the enthusiasm and the joy of faculty, students, and parents and I look forward to being a part of this community."

"As we work together this year I pray that we may be the compassionate presence of God for each other and support and encourage one another as we embrace the gifts that God has given us to strive ever higher."

In welcoming her to Sacred Heart Academy, President Sister Sheila O'Neill, ASCJ, '71, gave her high praise. "Sister Kathleen Mary Coonan leads with a caring and kind heart, and seeks to inspire students to achieve their fullest potential."

## Villa Maria School

STAMFORD—The Board of Trustees of Villa Maria School is pleased to announce the appointment of Diane McManus as its new Head of School, effective July 1. Villa Maria is an independent day school for grades K-9 in Stamford. The school has built a reputation over the last 40 years as a specialist in teaching children with learning disabilities.

Barbara Ryan, president of the board said, "We are thrilled to have Diane join Villa Maria to lead our strong administrative team."



**DIANE McMANUS**

McManus is a graduate of Lehman College and has a master's degree in English and education from Iona College, a master's degree in school administration and a professional diploma in special education from Manhattanville College. She has professional

certifications in teaching children with learning differences, school leadership and in English instruction. She taught English for many years in New York City and Westchester County. She comes to Villa Maria from Good Counsel Academy, where she served as assistant principal of supervision, curriculum and instruction.

The board is also happy to report that Sister Carol Ann, who has led Villa Maria for so many years, will remain in a new role as director of mission advancement. Sister Carol Ann will be an invaluable resource to McManus and the entire school community as Villa Maria expands its outreach.

In addition to McManus, the Villa Maria School community welcomes Stephen Bennhoff as its new assistant head of school for admissions and external relations. Bennhoff brings 24 years of working in independent schools as a teacher, principal, admissions officer and Head of School. Most recently, he was director for enrollment management at St. Michael's Country Day School in Newport, Rhode Island. He earned his B.A. in art history from Northwestern University and his Ed.M. from Harvard University.

(For more information on Villa Maria, contact Stephen Bennhoff: [sbennhoff@villamariaedu.org](mailto:sbennhoff@villamariaedu.org) or 203.322.5886, ext. 104.)

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# Book Review: *Imitation of Christ*

## Self improvement, Thomas à Kempis style

When it comes to Best Seller lists, self-help books often top the charts. The American appetite for self-improvement and a formula for success never diminishes. These books tend to offer ten-step programs and the power of positive thinking to boost your self-confidence and make you a winner. Spiritual self-help books are also a big part of the market. The self-empowerment business is a national religion.

These thoughts came to mind while reading Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* recently. The *Imitation* was written by a 15th century German monk. You might call it a medieval self-help best seller, a book that has remained in print for over 500 years. But that is where the similarity ends. Kempis' book of devotions makes no easy promises or claims. In fact, it can be downright devastating to read this Catholic classic and compare it to your own feeble prayer life and spiritual development. This is a book that demands everything and promises nothing—nothing but the presence of God in his mysterious ways.

One immediate difference is that Kempis didn't believe in the self as a route to holiness. He would be completely unfamiliar with and probably baffled by the contemporary American idea of the self as the center of all strength. For him the self was something to be wary of and perhaps even despised. "Know that self-love hurts you more than anything else in the world." The spiritual life for him consisted of deadening the self and its demands for sensual satisfactions and even spiritual pride. The best success you can have is not to think of yourself as a success at all. "Yet remember, Lord, that I am nothing. I have nothing, and can do nothing."

Kempis' *Imitation* grew out of a monastic practice of "raparia." In raparia the monks copied excerpts from their reading and also recorded their thoughts about them. These home-made books were passed around and shared as a spiritual exercise. This gives the *Imitation of Christ* its structure of aphorisms and short meditative passages. You can't read it through in one night.

It is a text for slow, humble reading and constant reflection. There are no ten steps to success or assurances of the kind of control and confidence that modern self-helps offer. Our contemporary idea of success is the exact opposite of what Kempis preached. He saw wealth, power, fame—and even outward religious shows—as impediments to our relationship with Christ. "We are all weak and frail; but you should regard no one frailer than yourself."

Doubtless, today's believers might well be confused or taken aback by some of Thomas' harsher Augustinian tones concerning pleasure and contentment. Our over-sized modern egos will feel pinched and bruised by the hardness of his vision and the grim combat between this world and the next. Not surprisingly one of the greatest and fiercest chapters in *Imitation* is "The Royal Way of the Cross" from Book II. In this section Kempis makes no bones about it. The call of Christianity is to the cross of Christ. "Why do you dread to take up the cross, since it is the very way to the

kingdom of heaven?" This stark but lyrical chapter flies in the face of the notion that you can have it all. "Do you think you can escape what no other human has been able to avoid?" For Kempis the dying of the self is the inner message of Christianity. Nothing more, nothing less.

What is the modern reader to make of such a stern and total vision of faith? Kempis makes no attempt to palliate the high stakes and ceaseless labor of spiritual life. Most of us would throw our hands up and surrender to our own mediocrity. Yet, in some ways, it may be just what we need to hear. The present offers us false visions of material comfort and constant excitement, a life of instant gratification and perpetual contentment. Beneath this, however, there is an uneasiness and anxiety about the meaning of human life and the certainty of our own transience. Kempis saw the only way to peace and truth was in the life of Jesus.

The *Imitation of Christ* explores a profound sense of human frailty and our conflicted human



THOMAS A. KEMPIS

natures. He doesn't flinch from the presence of evil and our all too easy espousal of a faith we profess without practicing. Strong stuff indeed. The self that Kempis recognized was the soul of man open to the gift of God's grace. You may find yourself literally out of breath reading such a demanding and nakedly honest book, but it was Kempis' intention to demolish our defenses and to challenge us to see that only God can fill our souls, not with the self, but with the selfless recognition of Jesus and the Way of the Cross. ■

### OFF THE STREETS FROM PAGE 10

cooperation with a social worker to determine the exact needs of an individual or family.

A large part of the effort at Off the Streets is to connect a person or family with decent housing they can afford. A small apartment in the area may charge \$900-\$1,400 a month; a room may rent for as little as \$550. The ministry pays the security deposit directly to the landlord.

"Landlords are happy to work with us," says Ellen Moore. "They know we have checked out the situation and that the tenant can afford the rent. All they need from us is the down payment."

Other times the call may be for a family that has been put into an apartment, but has no furniture. "What people need first are beds, and a kitchen table and chairs," says Deacon Moore. "That gives them some place to sit and talk to each other."

Off the Streets has no overhead; all donations go directly to get people into housing. All workers are volunteers and all furnishings are donated. Dale and Fran Lichtenberg of Assumption Parish handle furniture requests; soccer moms and football moms are happy to volunteer some "muscle" on moving day.

"Cleaning supplies are the only expense," says Ellen Moore. "Volunteers clean the apartment before the tenant moves in, and we give each tenant a supply of cleaning items to start them off."

Looking forward, Off the Streets is hoping for enough contributions to enable them to plan ahead, so that they will know in advance whether they can help in a given situation. Donations to Off the Street are fully tax exempt.

"Sometimes, the only thing keeping a homeless person from being housed is a security deposit," concludes Deacon Moore. "Every donation helps someone get off the streets and into a place of their own."

(The Bridgeport/Fairfield/Trumbull chapter of Off the Streets ministry is sponsoring a dinner dance on Saturday, October 1 at Assumption Parish in Fairfield, starting at 6:30 pm. Tickets: \$75/person. For reservations, Ellen Moore: 203.880.9814. For more information on the Off the Streets ministry, go to [www.offthestreetsnow.com](http://www.offthestreetsnow.com).) ■

### PRINCIPALS FROM PAGE 18

one, three, and five. For the past two years she was the school's assistant principal.

"It has been a blessing to be part of this caring, loving, and spiritual community," she says. "I believe that all children should have an academic learning environment that instills strong moral values and that nurtures each child spiritually, academically, and socially, as well as prepares them to be Christ-like citizens who live as true disciples of Jesus. The St. Catherine of Siena School family has become part of who I am."

#### Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton

Stanley Steele has become the principal of Our Lady of Fatima School in Wilton. He holds his BA degree from Bethany College, W.V. and earned an MSW degree and a certificate in educational leadership from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He grew up in Buffalo and attended St. Gregory the Great School in Williamsville, N.Y. His first

job teaching was as a sixth-grade teacher in the same school.

He holds three advanced certificates: district administration, educational policy fellowship and district data administration. He worked at Pocantico Hills School in Sleepy Hollow for ten years as an assistant principal and then for ten years as a principal. In 2016, he was nominated Empire State Supervision and Administrator Association Administrator of the Year.

Steele and his wife, Maryellen, have six children; the four oldest have graduated from Catholic universities. The family lived in Ridgefield for ten years before moving to Tarrytown, where they are members of the Church of the Magdalene Parish in Sleepy Hollow.

"Our family made a pilgrimage to Fatima, Portugal, in 2010," he says. "For me, it is a fantastic honor and a privilege to have been named principal at Our Lady of Fatima School in Wilton."

#### Diocesan high schools

Three diocesan high schools will have experienced hands to

guide them as they continue the search for new principals.

Tony Pavia has agreed to step in as interim principal at Trinity Catholic High School. Pavia served as principal of Trinity from 2011-14, and then transitioned into the president position. At Immaculate High School in Danbury, President Mary Maloney will become interim principal. She has been president at Immaculate since 2014, and was previously principal of St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown, which she led to Blue Ribbon status.

Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport has planned a shift in roles for the 2016-17 school year. President Jo-Anne Jakab will assume the duties of principal, while Henry Rondon will serve as assistant principal for student life. These realigned leadership positions accentuate the strengths of the administration to better serve the school community's needs at this time. Jakab served as Kolbe's principal from 1991-2014. ■

# Sports

## Boyle goes for the gold at Rio Paralympics

By **DON HARRISON**

Paralympian cyclist Ryan Boyle, who was close to death when he was nine years old, considers himself a lucky man.

Boyle, 22, who spent most of his formative years in Monroe and attended St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, will be competing in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games in mid-September. The youngest member of the U.S. cycling team, he will go for the gold in two events, the T2 time trial and T2 road race.

"I'm just incredibly excited," he said via phone from the team's Colorado Springs, Colo., training base. "I can't wait to do my country proud. It's a dream come true. For the past five years I've sacrificed so much by training every day."

Such dedication has already paid dividends. In the 2013 World Cup held in Italy, Boyle captured a gold medal in the T2 time trial. (The T2 designation is for the lesser disabled; T1 indicates more disabled.) The following year, he earned a silver medal (time trial) at the World Championships in Greenville, S.C.

In 2015, he picked up a silver time trial and a bronze road race at the Parapan American Games in Toronto, and recorded a pair of third-place finishes in the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships in Switzerland.

"Despite running into mechanical problems," Ryan still finished third in the Paralympic Trials on July 2 in Charlotte, N.C.

Ryan Carl Boyle has few memories of that October morning in 2003 when he nearly died. He explains: "It happened exactly one month to the day before my 10th birthday. I was at a friend's birthday party. I was riding a big wheel backward and slid down the driveway. A speeding pickup truck hit me and dragged me. The back of my head took the brunt of it."

A traumatic brain injury, said the doctors, who expected Boyle to die or, at best, be confined to a bed connected to machines for the remainder of his life. Emergency brain surgery performed at Yale-New Haven Hospital saved his life, and he was in a comatose state for two months.

He was transferred to Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, N.Y., one of just 19 pediatric children's hospitals in the U.S. dedicated to the care and treatment of children with complex illnesses. At Blythedale, over the next seven months, 10-year-old Ryan learned to breathe, swallow, speak, sit, stand and walk again. "Ironically, Valhalla means heaven," he says. "But it wasn't my idea of heaven."

When he entered St. Joseph as a freshman, the younger of Nancy and Matthew Boyle's two sons traversed the hall with four-arm crutches. By his sophomore year, he required just a cane.

Boyle has fond memories of two faculty members at St. Joe's.

"Mrs. Donna Karagus, who took care of the special needs classes, was a great asset to me," he said. "I served as the manager for varsity basketball for two years, and Coach Vito Montelli really helped me. He's a big teddy bear, a great guy who looks out for people."

Prior to his junior year, Boyle spent the summer at the Shepherd Center, a world-renowned hospital in Atlanta specializing in treating people with brain and spinal cord injuries. Discovering that Ryan "needed to be down there to get the best treatment," the family pulled up stakes and relocated to Georgia.

He graduated from Blessed Trinity High School in Roswell, Ga., in 2011, but St. Joe's, well



CLOSE TO DEATH A DOZEN YEARS AGO after he was struck and dragged by a truck, paralympian cyclist Ryan Boyle, now 22, became the youngest member of the U.S. cycling team at the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

aware of his extraordinary recovery and cycling accomplishments, awarded Boyle an honorary diploma, Class of 2012.

(Ryan Boyle's inspirational story can be found in his autobiography,

*"When the Lights Go Out: A Boy Given a Second Chance,"* published by WestBow Press of Bloomington, Ind., in 2012. To obtain a copy, visit Ryan's website, [www.ryan-boyle.me](http://www.ryan-boyle.me).)

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# Sports: Mets Players Remembered

## Gil and Mike: ballplayers with faith

By **FRANK DeROSA**

Gil Hodges was one of my favorites among the “Boys of Summer,” the team that excited Brooklyn Dodgers fans in the decade that preceded the sad departure for Los Angeles in the ‘50s. It wasn’t just his smooth fielding at first base or the home runs he launched into the left field seats at Ebbets Field that set him apart. There was the solid Catholic faith he practiced without fanfare, that you could say lay in his spiritual DNA.

Though Hodges never made it to Cooperstown, I thought of him when former New York Met Mike Piazza was finally and deservedly inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. As Gil might have done if so chosen, the first order of Mike’s special day was to go unannounced to the 7:30 am Mass at St. Mary’s Our Lady of the Lake Church in the village where the Hall of Fame is located.

On that July Sunday morning, after the final blessing, Piazza sought out Father John Rosson, the pastor, who celebrated the Mass, and quietly requested a blessing. Caught by surprise, he said, “I was tongue-tied when he asked.” Then, as Mike bowed his head, he prayed, “Lord, you have given him great abilities. Bless him and his accomplishments.”

Having Piazza appear at the parish was a memorable and moving experience for him and for parishioners, Father Rosson said by phone. “Mike didn’t desire to attract attention. I was awestruck by his humility. That day the Hall of Fame reached into Sunday worship.” It was clear to him that religious faith is a motivating part of Piazza’s life.

The priest, who said he doesn’t really follow baseball closely, was eager to mention that in his induction speech, the Hall of Famer did something probably no other inductee has ever done. He unapologetically quoted words from a pope he has said he admires.

Recalling his long journey and hard work from the 62nd and final round in the 1988 baseball draft to Cooperstown, Piazza drew a thought from the 2007 encyclical of Benedict XVI, “Spe Salvi”: “Those who have hope live differently.”

It wasn’t the first time he had referred fondly to a pope. After an audience with Pope John Paul II

at the Vatican in 2002, when he gave the pontiff a Mets jersey as a gift, Mike described him as inspirational, “a true spiritual warrior.”

Many Mets fans will remember that Piazza enjoyed a strong bond with a devoted fan, Auxiliary Bishop Ignatius Catanello of the Diocese of Brooklyn, until the latter’s death from a brain tumor three years ago.

Bishop “Iggy,” as he was affectionately known, became the team’s chaplain in 2001. He celebrated Mass on Sundays at Shea Stadium, with Piazza and manager Bobby Valentine among the 50 or so Mets players and others who attended.

Over a dozen years, the bishop and the catcher became particularly close; conversations on spiritual direction not uncommon. When Mike married Alicia Rickter in Miami’s St. Jude’s Church in 2005, the bishop witnessed the ceremony. In later years he baptized their daughters. “He and I became very good friends,” Mike has said.

As Piazza does, Hodges had a solid faith. It was influenced by devout parents and nurtured by the priests at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Petersburg, Ind., where he was an altar boy. Even after leaving home for Dodger stardom in Brooklyn, he maintained a friendship with the pastor, Father Lawrence Vieck, visiting him when he could and corresponding by mail.

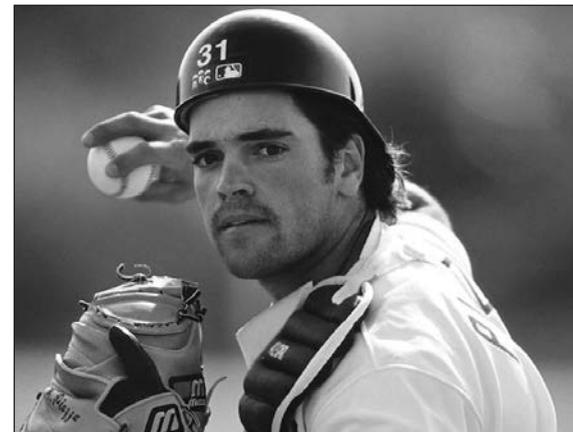
Never forgetting his Sunday obligation, Hodges slipped into his regular pew for Mass at his adoptive Brooklyn parish of Our Lady Help of Christians, and “he always stayed until the Mass was over,” said Father Charles Curley, the pastor, preaching at Gil’s funeral in 1972. “His life was lived for his family, his faith and the game of baseball.”

The story goes that when the Dodgers were aboard a flight on a Friday when Church discipline did not permit eating meat on that day, a meat entrée was offered to the team. Gil politely declined, saying “we are too close to headquarters.”

So beloved did he become in the “Borough of Churches” that during a hitless streak in the 1952 World Series, a Brooklyn priest, Father Herbert Redmond, announced at a Sunday Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church that it was too hot



**GIL HODGES**



**MIKE PIAZZA**

for a sermon and now famously told his congregation to “go home, keep the commandments and say a prayer for Gil Hodges.”

Such was the impact of the faith-filled first baseman, admired “for his many virtues: his sterling character, his fairness, his gentle dignity,” as Father Curley said.

Despite a spectacular and lengthy career in Dodger blue, marked by powerful slugging

statistics the envy of others, a surprising World Series title in 1969 as manager of the previously woebegone Mets, and his unsailable character, those credentials inexplicably never satisfied the Hall of Fame voters, who denied Hodges the accolade that many today still feel he deserved.

While some athletes fail to serve as role models, others, with or without religious affiliation,

wear their uniforms with class, as the late Dodger and the former Met did.

In some future Faith Hall of Fame, Gil Hodges and Mike Piazza would easily be enshrined as charter members. As for Cooperstown, Mike’s entry is its gain, Gil’s absence is, sadly, its loss.

*(Frank DeRosa is the retired director of the Public Information Office of the Diocese of Brooklyn.)*



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# Obituaries

## Msgr. Edward Scull dies at 90

BROOKFIELD—Msgr. Edward J. Scull, age 90, the retired pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, passed away peacefully on August 26. Born in Bridgeport, the son of the late Joseph and Marguerite Scull, he was a graduate of St. Augustine School and Central High School, both in Bridgeport, and St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. He completed his theological studies at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore, Md., and later did graduate studies in education at Fairfield University.

Msgr. Scull was ordained by Bishop Henry J. O'Brien in St. Joseph Cathedral in Hartford on May 3, 1951. The Diocese of Bridgeport was established in 1953.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at St. Mary Parish in Bethel, followed by St. John the Evangelist in Stamford. He

served on the faculty at Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield and as principal of the former Central Catholic High School in Norwalk, while in residence at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull and Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton.

His first position as pastor was at St. Gabriel Parish in Stamford. He led that parish from 1968-72. On January 1, 1972 he was installed as pastor of St. Pius X Church, retiring exactly thirty years later, on January 1, 2002. Most recently Msgr. Scull had been a resident priest at St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield.

He was appointed Prelate of Honor to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, with the title of Monsignor, in 1997. He served on the Presbyteral Council, was chaplain of the Catholic Daughters of America and was

named director of retired priests.

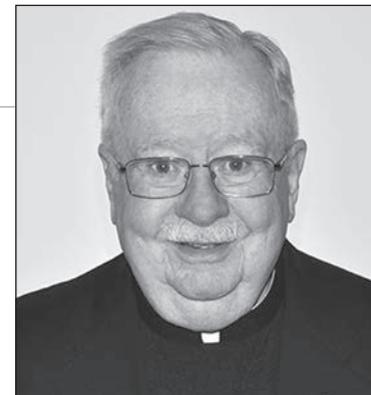
He was proud of the Scull family history in Bridgeport. It is documented that the first Mass celebrated in the City of Bridgeport was in the home of his great-grandfather, James McCullough, in 1830 with 17 Catholics present. Not surprisingly, he was also a proud member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

"He was an old-school priest's priest," says Father Chip O'Neill, pastor of St. Joseph in Brookfield, who enjoyed Msgr. Scull's company as priest in residence. "His love for the priesthood and for his brother priests was so evident. He was a good mentor and a good friend. He will be missed."

He is survived by his sister, Mary Anne Dolan of Milford.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Msgr. Scull on August 31 at St. Pius. Bishop

Frank J. Caggiano was the principal celebrant. Father Michael Boccaccio, pastor of St. Philip Parish in Norwalk, gave the homily. Burial followed at St. Michael Cemetery, Stratford.



MSGR. EDWARD J. SCULL

## Sister Gloria Czarniewicz, CSFN

MONROE—Sister Mary Gloria Czarniewicz, a long-time educator who served in elementary and high schools throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, died peacefully on August 20 at the Mary Immaculate Convent (Marian Heights) in Monroe.

The third child of Polish immigrants, Victoria Czarniewicz was born on September 27, 1927 in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, N.Y. She worked as a bookkeeper for five years before deciding to enter religious life. She entered the novitiate on August 18, 1951, and professed her final vows on August 13, 1959.

Before beginning her teaching career, Sister Gloria assisted with payroll and accounts payable at Nazareth Hospital in Philadelphia.

Sister Gloria received a bachelor of science degree from Holy Family College in Philadelphia and a master of science in business education from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. She retired from teaching in 1997.

Sister Gloria's 65 years of religious life also included time as local superior in Sea Cliff, N.Y. In 1992, she was secretary for the Congregation's 19th General Chapter in Rome. Drawing on her financial skills, Sister Gloria served as provincial treasurer for Immaculate Heart of Mary Province in Monroe from 1978-81.

In retirement, Sister Gloria worked in the finance department at Little Flower Children's Services in Wading River, NY. In 2005, she moved to Immaculate Heart of Mary Convent in Monroe, where she served as the convent's part-time receptionist. Those who knew her best also remember her for the delicious potato pancakes and Linzer tarts she made.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Gloria on August 23 at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Convent. Burial followed at Holy Family Cemetery on the convent property.

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### DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT: SEPTEMBER 18—OCTOBER 15

#### SEPTEMBER

|    |                               |      |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 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 |
|    | Rev. Robert Morrissey               | 2014 |
| 3  | Msgr. John H. Anderson              | 1967 |
| 5  | Msgr. Victor Balcerak, O.F.M. Conv. | 1960 |
| 6  | Rev. Francis Posluszny              | 2015 |
| 12 | Deacon Michael Wolfer               | 2013 |
| 14 | Msgr. Raymond H. Guidone            | 1965 |
| 15 | Msgr. William Schultz               | 2013 |

# Nuestra Voz

## Religiosos piden paz entre comunidad y policías

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

Un llamado a la unidad llevó a más de 200 personas de diferentes etnias y religiones a la sede de la policía de Norwalk, en donde 19 líderes religiosos ofrecieron oraciones y reflexiones pidiendo la paz y el respeto entre la comunidad y la fuerza policial. Los sacerdotes católicos de las iglesias circundantes, basados en el Evangelio, pidieron vivir en armonía entre la policía y la comunidad y recordaron que acorde con el Papa Francisco, “en este año de la misericordia” debemos vivir bajo este precepto.

En varias religiones y seis idiomas diferentes (inglés, español, francés, italiano, hebreo y creollo) el mensaje sobre la paz desde el punto de vista espiritual puso varias reflexiones sobre el aparente abuso policial, la resistencia civil y la necesidad de que haya paz y armonía entre las comunidades.

La gente felicitaba y agradecía al oficial de policía de Norwalk César Ramírez por organizar la vigilia. El dijo que fue inspirado por la reciente muerte de cinco agentes de policía en Dallas bajo un disparo de un francotirador. “Vi a todas las comunidades sufrir. Todo el mundo se convierte en víctima. No hay ganadores, todo el mundo pierde. En Norwalk tenemos una comunidad hermosa. Queremos mantener la paz y queremos estar unidos entre el departamento de policía y la comunidad”, dijo el Oficial Ramírez, feligrés de la Parroquia de San Ladislaus in Norwalk.



A CALL FOR UNITY drew more than 200 people of different religions and ethnic groups to police headquarters in Norwalk, where 19 religious leaders offered prayers and reflections calling for peace and community respect for the work of the police. Speakers delivered their message in six languages (English, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Creole and Hindi), giving a spiritual point of view in the face of apparent police abuse. A number of Catholic parishes were represented among the speakers because of the wide variety of cultures and languages in the diocese.

El servicio fue dirigido por el Rev. Carleton Giles, un oficial de policía de Norwalk retirado, quien señaló que las personas que estaban allí para apoyarse unos a otros y agradecer a Dios por mantener cualquier tradición para orar y para servir de guía y fortaleza en el mundo turbulento actual.

Bernadine Joseph, una joven de 20 años de edad, comenzó el servicio al cantar Amazing Grace; después dijo a todos que se den la mano y cantó Let it Be.

El Jefe de Policía Thomas Kulhawik estuvo sorprendido

por la multitud. El Alcalde Harry Rilling les dijo que tomen nota de lo que se ve en ese instante: “un grupo diverso de etnias, religiones y culturas. Eso es lo que representa Norwalk y de eso se trata.”

El Sargento David Orr respondió que de los 179 agentes de la Policía de Norwalk todos dedican sus vidas por mantener la paz.

El Padre Juan Gabriel Acosta, párroco de San Ladislaus, dio una reflexión en español. Se basó en el Antiguo Testamento y dijo que Dios habló a través del profeta Isaías y recordó sobre

el ayuno que a Dios le agrada para romper las cadenas de la injusticia, buscar la igualdad, la paz y la libertad. “Hoy venimos reunidos en una sola fe como un solo pueblo diferentes razas, naciones, y creencias. Y oramos especialmente por aquellas víctimas, por sus familias, por los más olvidados. Te pedimos Señor que reunidos en tu nombre nos ayudes y nos envíes la gracia para que restaures la unidad de nuestro pueblo en América; que cese la discriminación y que todos podamos vernos como hermanos sin distinción de lengua, nación, color creencias, o costumbres y así construir un pueblo justo y humano”, dijo.

Entre los otros idiomas, los católicos tenían robusta representación, ya que la Diócesis de Bridgeport ofrece la Santa Misa en 15 lenguas cada semana. El Padre Michael Boccaccio, párroco de la Parroquia de San Philip, en su prédica hecha en italiano, rogó para que la paz, un regalo que Jesús trajo con su venida sea esparcida en todo el mundo y recordó que el país está viviendo momentos muy violentos y difíciles: “¡Basta!, ¡Basta! de tanta violencia. Basta de tantas palabras que no nos traen paz. Que Dios ponga en nosotros la esperanza y sabiduría porque el mundo necesita tener paz”, señaló.

“La paz, es lo que trajo Jesús cuando resucitó”, dijo el Padre Frantz Desruisseaux de la Parroquia de San José, en su mensaje dicho en francés. Recordó al público que el 2016 es el año declarado por el Papa Francisco

como el de “la misericordia”. “Todo el mundo por medio de su fe pide vivir en justicia y paz y nosotros hoy rogamos porque haya paz en nuestra comunidad con nuestra policía”, dijo.

El Padre Tomi Thomas de la Parroquia de San Mateo, se refirió en su lengua nativa, el hindi, y habló sobre el futuro de la nación, y de la comunidad que está amenazada por la violencia. “Haz Señor de mí un instrumento de tu paz”, dijo, evocando el cántico por la paz compuesto por San Francisco de Asís.

Myriam Carvajal, de Costa Rica, que está de vacaciones en Norwalk junto a su familia, manifestó sentirse complacida por haber asistido al evento que estuvo lleno de emociones y de armonía entre los policías y la comunidad.

El servicio fue “increíble y sorprendente”, indicó Susan Zcel, que asiste a la Parroquia de San Mateo.

“Realmente me conmovió hasta las lágrimas”, repuso Gretchen Gould, que va a la Iglesia Black Rock en Stamford.

Parshoton Singh del templo Sij (India) habló de la diversidad y puso como ejemplo que para hacer una buena comida es necesario tener varios ingredientes de diferentes sabores y formas. “Si Dios quería que tuvieran el mismo aspecto habría creado todo con el mismo cortador de galletas. Todo el mundo se vería igual. Pero los humanos somos uno solo en diferentes formas. Él nos ha creado con mentes diferentes para que podamos compartir, podemos apreciar el uno al otro. Podemos estar de acuerdo y aprender a estar en desacuerdo y aun así respetarnos unos a otros”, dijo.

La Rev. Velma Lovelace, capellán de la policía, habló de lo difícil que es llevar una vida de policía y pidió que sean bendecidos y luego empezó a cantar, rimando en honor a la policía.

“Esta es una de las experiencias más hermosas que he tenido en mis 29 años en esta ciudad. Creo que esto es lo más grande que hecho al lograr reunir a todas las religiones y pensamientos. ¡Esto es hermoso! Dios bendiga a nuestra comunidad y nuestro departamento de policía”, señaló el Oficial César Ramírez.

## Programas en español a St. Ann

La Parroquia de St. Ann en el área Black Rock en Bridgeport ya tiene la Santa Misa celebrada en español cada domingo a las 12 de la mediodía. Además, la parroquia ha iniciado los siguientes programas en español.

**GRUPO DE ORACION:** acompañanos a rezar el Santo Rosario bilingüe todos los viernes a las 7 pm.

**TALLERES DE**

**ORACION Y VIDA EN ESPANOL:** Basado en la Biblia, con Cristo como centro, es una presentación más vibrante y activa de Jesús, que posee una mayor adaptación a las necesidades de la sociedad actual. Los sábados, hasta el 3 de diciembre, 4-6 pm en la Parroquia de St. Ann, Bridgeport. Para más información, llama 203.368.1607 o visita [www.tovpil.org](http://www.tovpil.org).

**VENTA DE COMIDA:** El

ultimo domingo de cada mes (el 25 de septiembre) a las 11 am hasta las 4 pm en St. Ann Alumni Hall. Disfrutar de tamales, empanadas, asado de cerdo y pollo, arroz, pasteles y mucho más! Música y rifas también. La entrada es gratuita, la comida es \$5. Los beneficios contribuirán a los gastos de mantenimiento de la iglesia. ■



# Column: Thomas Hicks



## The Gift of Loneliness

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

“The whole conviction of my life now rests upon the belief that loneliness, far from being a rare phenomenon, is the central and inevitable fact of human existence.” (Thomas Wolfe)

Is Wolfe right? Is loneliness a basic condition of life? The Existentialist philosophers view loneliness as a given. They speak of the essential aloneness of all humans. I think the experience

of loneliness can be seen as universal, at least insofar as every human being, at some point, will experience being lonely. And I suppose it's true that no matter how close humans come to knowing one another, we remain individuals, each with his or her hiddenness. And no doubt loneliness is the final condition of us all.

There are some surprising but reliable findings concerning loneliness. For example, it is found that the old are less lonely, on the average, than young adults. One explanation might be that young people are too romantic and idealistic about relationships. The elderly have fewer expectations

regarding relationships. They expect less and are satisfied with less.

Interestingly, studies find greater loneliness among single elderly people living with relatives than among those who live alone. It is interesting how lonesome a person can be in a crowded house. Many married people admit to being lonely.

It is usually a futile hope that togetherness will overcome loneliness. Many find the “companionship” more difficult than the loneliness.

There's a school of thought that holds that over-engagement is a cause of loneliness. People can be alone without being lonely, or, on the other hand, be with people and be lonely.

Success seems to offer scant protection against loneliness. Indeed, it is generally found that the most acute loneliness is in the most successful men, workaholics. Some of the language of today tends to be a rather cold language of connection. We speak of “networking” and “interfacing.”

It can be a difficult thing to live alone. How does one rejoice alone? How can anyone enjoy and appreciate, really appreciate, alone? It can be painful coming back to an empty house, where so much needs doing. A hard thing about living alone is not having anyone to recount a day to. There is a kind of alone where you miss someone, someone in particular.

But a pattern often is that at first one senses that one has to endure being lonely. Then one gets used to it and accepts being lonely. Then one can make friends with one's loneliness. Then like a long love, it deepens with time and one begins to cherish the loneliness.

The loneliness may grow into solitude, which isn't exactly the same as loneliness. Little by little, the lonely/solitude reveals its delights. Not enough has been said of the value of a life lived alone. A character in a Chekhov story remarks on the happiness of being alone.

One learns how to be alone;

one's solitude becomes one's good life's companion. The empty house eventually welcomes one. They are one, the house and the individual. The individual returns with thankfulness to the silence and solitude of the house. One can come to like “the sound of silence.”

An elderly man who lived alone told me that at night when the empty house surrounds him,

**“Little by little, the lonely/solitude reveals its delights.”**

it is greatly loved and often even longed for. He spoke of how so many times he just wants to be

alone. “I don't want to talk or explain or argue or even listen to others. I'm quite at home in my empty house. I never get bored there. I'm not a recluse.”

The aloneness can bring a person deeply in touch with his or her own existence. The individual faces the question of who the self really is.

It seems that aloneness or solitude seeks the individual. He or she did not seek the solitary life. There is usually a life-changing loss or tragedy in their past. There is a sense that it is God who called them into solitude, and it becomes the place of an encounter with God. A solitary elderly lady said to me, “I've been on earth almost seventy-five years, and most of that time I spent seeking salvation by dint of projects and programs of every sort. I realized that I didn't even really know God; I hadn't begun to understand him, to relate to him. I think I am now headed in the opposite direction.”

Living singly will involve real loneliness, and times of fear and insecurity. But little by little the solitude reveals its delights. A fifteenth century writer named Paul Giustiniani wrote: “Truly, until I was alone, I never really lived. Until I was alone, I was not with myself. Until I was alone, I never drew near to my Creator.”

The loneliness becomes the meeting place with God. In loneliness one can turn more and more to God, who teaches one to listen, to lean on him and feel his comfort. As one alone single put it: “I am alone, but never was God so near to me.”

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# Column: Joe Pisani



## Career Possibilities

### SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

I tried to warn my wife. I told her driving to Greenwich on I-95 at rush hour was insanity, regardless of how noble her mission was. After years of commuting, I still have nightmares where I'm imprisoned in gridlock, stretching bumper-to-bumper to New Jersey—or maybe it's Pennsylvania.

But she wouldn't listen. Why wasn't I surprised?

Sandy and her friend Lorraine planned to visit St. Mary's Church to venerate the incorrupt heart of St. John Vianney, patron saint of priests and vocations. The relic, which was touring parishes, is normally on display with his body at the Basilica of Ars in France, where he was parish priest from 1818 until 1859 when he died at 73. Some 20,000 pilgrims a year would go to see the "Cure of Ars," who often spent up to 16 hours a day hearing confessions.

It's said that a lawyer who

visited him was asked what the fascination was, and he responded, "I saw God in a man." Isn't that what priests are supposed to be, a representation of Christ among us?

John Marie Vianney was an unlikely candidate for the priesthood, but God's ways aren't man's ways. At one point, he even left the seminary because he was having troubles with his studies; however, as the story goes, the Blessed Mother encouraged him to return, and he listened to her.

Despite my dire predictions, Sandy got to Greenwich in time for Mass and prayed before the relic. When they were driving home, she told Lorraine, "I prayed that my grandson has a vocation to the priesthood," which was a wonderful petition even though the boy was months from being born.

"I prayed for the same thing,"

Lorraine said.

What a curious intention in 21st century America! I know parents who want their sons to be doctors, lawyers, athletes, TV celebrities and CEOs so they can achieve fame and fortune. But priests? There are countless career possibilities out there, but the priesthood is never among the top choices for young men in our secular society, which is more obsessed with possessions, prestige, power and money than the welfare of immortal souls.

While Sandy was praying to St. John Vianney about my grandson's future, I just hoped his parents also recognized the need for committed priests at a turbulent time in the Church's history.

We need good priests now more than ever because the world no longer knows the difference between right and wrong—and no longer cares. We need men willing to give up everything for Christ and work for him in the vineyard. The challenge is great, but the rewards are eternal. There's no nobler vocation than to save souls wandering in darkness—who don't even know they're lost.

As the well-known author Father Francis Fernandez wrote, "In the sacrament of Holy Orders, the priest is constituted a minister of God and dispenser of his treasures. These treasures

include the divine Word for preaching, the Body and Blood of Christ he dispenses at Mass and in Holy Communion, and the grace of God in the administration of the sacraments. The priest is entrusted with a divine task... no less than the salvation of souls."

The Holy Spirit is always at work inspiring individuals to pursue Christ, but unless they're encouraged, the seed will fall on rocky soil or the weeds will choke it. God plants the seed, and it's our responsibility as parents to cultivate it by instilling a love of Christ and the Church in children.

My daughter Chrissy was due to deliver in late July, but my grandson Mason showed no sign he intended to make his grand

appearance. The due date came and went. Days passed, a week passed. Chrissy went to the hospital twice but they sent her home because the baby wasn't ready.

Finally, during the first week in August, she went into labor, but after 24 hours with no success, the doctor decided to perform a C-section. Mason came into the world on August 4—the feast of St. John Vianney.

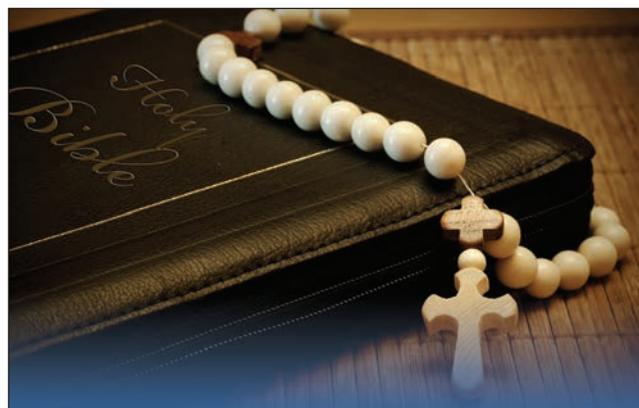
The Cure of Ars heard my wife's prayer, and I'm sure he'll do his best to answer it. I don't know whether my grandson will be a butcher, a baker, a candlestick maker... or a brain surgeon. But I'm pretty sure St. John Vianney is on my wife's side, and with friends like that, how can you go wrong? ■

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### PERMANENT DIACONATE FORMATION PROGRAM

*The Permanent Diaconate Formation Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport will be soon starting a new class of Inquirers for the Diaconate Formation Program.*

*Men who are interested in applying for admission to the Formation Program must be between 31 and 58 years old.*

Inquirers should be men of prayer and faith, and be known in their parish community. They must have the desire to serve their brothers and sisters in the Lord through acts of charity.

A married man must be validly married in the Roman Catholic Church for at least five years and have the approval of his wife to enter the formation process.

If a man feels that the Lord is calling him to the Diaconate, he should also make arrangements to speak with his pastor in order to proceed in the process.

For questions or more information, contact Deacon Anthony P. Cassaneto, Ph.D.  
Director of the Diaconate Office: 203.416.1451

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# Bits and Pieces

**BILINGUAL ROSARY** at St. Ann Parish, Bridgeport, is held every Friday at 7 pm.

**PRAYER AND LIFE WORKSHOP:** a more vibrant and vivid presentation of Jesus is held at St. Ann Parish, Bridgeport, on Thurs. now thru Dec. 1, from 7-9 pm. For more info, call 203.368.1607.

**BIBLE STUDY:** "The Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy," a ten-week program at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, began Fri., Sept. 16, and will continue every Fri. from 9-10:45 am. Workbook cost: \$25, due the first day of the study.

To reserve a workbook and to register, contact Liz in the parish office: 203.268.8695 or [ctkparish@aol.com](mailto:ctkparish@aol.com).

**TAG SALE** will be held at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, on Sat., Sept. 17, from 8:30 am-6 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

**MASS OF HEALING AND**

**HOPE** will be celebrated at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, with Fr. Larry Carew on Mon., Sept. 19, at 7:30 pm. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.268.8253.

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of Greater Danbury, ages 18-35, will meet on Tues., Sept. 20, from 7:30 to 9:30 pm for Game Night and snacks at the Newman Center, WCSU, #7 8th Ave, Danbury. Park at WCSU parking garage across from 8th Ave. For more info, call 203.417.2695 or [catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com](mailto:catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com).

**JACK MACKSEY MEMORIAL** Golf Tournament for St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, will be held Wed., Sept. 21, at the Ridgefield Golf Club. For information on becoming a sponsor or player, contact Greg: 203.733.7209.

**BIBLE STUDY:** Follow Me: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John, a 9-week course, starts Thurs., Sept. 22, at 7:15 pm at

St. Cecilia Parish, Stamford, and is repeated Fri., Sept. 23, at 9:15 am. Workbooks: \$20. For more info or to register, contact Vicki Alton: 203.322.8526 or [VickiA@optonline.net](mailto:VickiA@optonline.net).

**CAPP** Fordham 2016 Conference at Lincoln Center, NYC, will take place Fri.-Sat., Sept. 23-24. Fri.: conference opening: 6:30 pm-cocktails; 7 pm-dinner). Sat.: conference presentations, speakers, panelists from 8:30 am-6:30 pm. The conference is jointly sponsored by Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice (CAPP) and Fordham University Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development. For more info and for registration, go to [www.capp-usa.org](http://www.capp-usa.org), email: [iped@fordham.edu](mailto:iped@fordham.edu) or call 718.817.4064

**MAGNIFICAT** Ministry to Catholic Women will host a prayer breakfast on Sat., Oct. 1, from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at Ethan Allen Inn, Danbury. Susan Brinkman will be the guest speaker. Cost: \$25; pre-register by Sat., Sept. 23. 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).

**THOSE WITH DOWN SYNDROME**, their family and friends are invited to a Mass asking for the intercession of St. Robert Bellarmine with Bishop Frank Caggiano and Fr. Richard Cipolla, Sun., Sept. 25, at 11:30 am in St. Mary Church, Norwalk. Reception follows Mass. Please come and join the MOMs+DADs

prayer/support group the third Thurs. of every month (Oct. 19), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary's Parish Center. For more info, contact [strapostolate@optimum.net](mailto:strapostolate@optimum.net).

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP** will meet at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, for a series of 10 weekly meetings starting Thurs., Sept. 29, from 4-5:30 pm. Advance registration necessary. For more info or to register, call the parish office: 203.268.6217.

**DEADLINE** for donating a veteran's brick to the St. Margaret Shrine Veterans Memorial, is Fri., Sept. 30. Bricks can be donated honoring a veteran of the U.S. Military, or Allies: living, deceased, wartime, peacetime, or currently serving. The Veterans Memorial is located at 2523 Park Ave., Bridgeport. The names of the veterans on newly donated bricks will be published in the program book and read at the Sixth Annual Veterans Mass and Blessing on Sat., Nov. 5, at 12:15 pm. For more info, call 203.345.3244.

**THE MONKS OF NORCIA** will be sharing their life and spirituality on Fri., Sept. 30, at 5 pm at the Darien Community Association, 274 Middlesex Rd., Darien. Cost \$100; includes hors d'oeuvres and Birra Nursia (Nursia beer). Presenters will include Fr. Richard Cipolla, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Norwalk and Fr. Benedict Nivakoff from Nursia, who grew up in St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan. For more info and for reserva-

tions, contact Robert Duncan: [communications@nursia.org](mailto:communications@nursia.org) or 877.271.7640.

**RAINBOWS**, a program for children and teens grieving the loss of a parent or other loved one from death, divorce, or other trauma, will start a new session at Holy Spirit Parish, Stamford, at the end of Sept. The program is confidential and free, and open to all. A Winter/Spring session will be held Jan.-April, 2017. For more info or to register, email [rainbows@holyspiritstamford.org](mailto:rainbows@holyspiritstamford.org) or call 203.322.3722.

**TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS** will be celebrated at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, the first Sunday of each month (Oct. 2) at 4 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

**FAIRFIELD PREP** invites all prospective students and families to attend a Open House on Sun., Oct. 2, from 2-4 pm. Entrance exams will be held on Sat., Oct. 15, and Sat., Nov. 5, at 8:30 am. To create a Prep Admissions Account, visit [www.fairfieldprep.org](http://www.fairfieldprep.org) and choose Admissions.

**ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS** will be held at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish on Mon., Oct. 3 at 7 pm. This special Mass commemorates the lives of deceased children. Parents, relatives, and friends who have suffered the loss of a child are invited to join us as we celebrate their lives before God. Light refreshments follow the Mass. To



**Those with Down Syndrome, their family and friends are invited to**

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass asking for the intercession of St. Robert Bellarmine

Bishop Frank Caggiano celebrant  
Father Richard Cipolla concelebrant

**Sunday, September 25, 2016**

11:30am at St. Mary Church

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Reception following the Mass

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# Bits and Pieces

include your deceased child in our Memorial Book, visit [www.stmarguerite.org](http://www.stmarguerite.org) for the Memorial Mass Registration form.

## ADULT BIBLE STUDY

"Jesus: The Man, the Myth, the Messiah," a seven-week study of the Gospels led by Fr. Joseph Gill, will take place at Trinity Catholic High School, Stamford, every Thurs. in **Oct.** and **Nov.** from 6:30-8:30 pm, starting Thurs., **Oct. 6.** No cost; dinner will be served. For more info contact Fr. Gill: [fjosephgill@gmail.com](mailto:fjosephgill@gmail.com).

## GOSPEL OF LIFE

**SOCIETY** meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second **Sat.** of each month (**Oct. 8**) from 10 am-12 noon, after the 9 am pro-life Mass. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or [stmarygols@aol.com](mailto:stmarygols@aol.com).

**CATHOLIC UNDERGROUND** meets the

second **Sat.** of every month (**Oct. 8**), featuring Ben Walther from 7:30-10 pm at St. Ann Parish in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. It's an evening of Adoration, Reconciliation, prayer, music, and fellowship. For more info, go to **CONNected Catholics:** [www.conncatholics.org](http://www.conncatholics.org).

**REUNION** for alumni and families of the former St. Stephen School, Bridgeport, is planned for Sun., **Oct. 9**, at 12:30 pm at Testo's Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave, Bridgeport. St. Stephen of Hungary Parish and School were closed in 1971. Cost: \$35/person; cash bar. Reservations needed by Sun., **Sept. 25.** For more info or to reserve a spot, call Barbara Chuga: 203.268.4535.

**ENCOURAGE** apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions or gender ID issues, meets the

third **Sat.** of the month (**Oct. 15**) at 10:30 am and is strictly confidential. For more info contact the Norwalk Chapter: [EnCourageNorwalk@gmail.com](mailto:EnCourageNorwalk@gmail.com).

**OCTOBERFEST** Fruit of the Vine Tasting will take place **Sat., Oct. 15**, 6-8 pm at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield. A selection of wines sponsored by Caraluzzi's Wine & Spirits will be presented and hors d'oeuvres by area restaurants will be served. Tickets are \$30 each; \$50/couple. For more info and for reservations, call Priscilla Garamella: 203.313.0819.

**ST. PAUL STREET EVANGELIZATION:** Basic Evangelization Training will be offered at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Danbury, **Sat., Oct. 1**, 9:30 am-4 pm and **Sun., Oct. 2**, from 12:30-5 pm. Participants will gain the courage to be an

enthusiastic and joyful evangelist in their daily lives. No experience needed! Fee: \$45 includes training, lunch and refreshments of both days. For more info call the parish: 203.748.9029.

**FIRST FRIDAY LECTURES** begin again at St. Luke Parish, Westport, on **Fri., Oct. 7**, at 7:30 pm. Paul Lakeland, Ph.D, Aloysius P. Kelley, SJ, founding director for Catholic studies at Fairfield University, will speak on "Catholicism and Citizenship in an Election Year." The lecture will be preceded by a wine and cheese reception at 7 pm. For more info, call 203.227.7245.

**CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS** of the Americas Connecticut State Court will celebrate their 110th anniversary on **Sat., Oct. 8**, at the Courtyard by Marriott, 780 Bridgeport Ave., Shelton. For more info call Amy: 203.543.6808.

**GOLF TOURNAMENT:** **Fri., Oct. 14**, to benefit St. Ann Parish, Bridgeport, and St. Ann Academy. Enjoy 18 holes at the Country Club of Woodbridge. Registration will begin at 11 am; shotgun start at 12 noon. The day will conclude with a dinner featuring raffles and silent auction. Cost: \$150 per golfer; includes lunch, 18 holes of golf, use of locker room, soft spikes only/scramble format, 1-hour open bar

and dinner reception. Single golfers will be paired up with a foursome. Non-golfers are welcome to attend the dinner reception and auction for \$60/person or \$110 for couples. For more info and to register, visit [www.stannblackrock.com](http://www.stannblackrock.com).

**WOMEN'S GROUP** at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet **Mon., Oct. 17**, at 10 am. Rhonda Mercer, representative of the Aquarion Water Company, will speak on "Conservation and the Value of Water." All are invited. For more info, call 203.261.8020.

**"COME AND SEE"** if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. The Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Emery's Church, Fairfield, on **Sat., Oct. 15**, at 9:30 am. Father Norman J. Guilbert will celebrate a Mass, followed by a social and business meeting. For more info, call Pat Heile, OFS: 203.255.8801 or [phle5713@aol.com](mailto:phle5713@aol.com).

**MEN'S CONFERENCE** at Goodwin College, East Hartford, will be held **Sat., Oct. 22.** Tickets: \$40; includes box lunch and free parking. Purchase tickets online at [www.ctcatholicmen.org](http://www.ctcatholicmen.org). For more info, contact Ken Santopietro, director: 860.484.7950 or [www.ctcatholicmen.org](http://www.ctcatholicmen.org). ■

## Walk for Water

By ELLEN MILLER, RN

Water is a basic necessity of life. It can be plentiful here and shouldn't be taken for granted. For the people of Santa Maria de Jesus, Guatemala, families are only allowed to get water for half an hour every other day, and it isn't clean.

That's why I am so proud of my parish, St. Mary's in Ridgefield, and St. Mary School for sponsoring a Walk for Water on Saturday, October 15, from 9 am-12 noon along Main St. in Ridgefield to help me distribute water filters in Santa Maria de Jesus.

I've been serving on medical missions with Helping Hands Medical Missions for several years. As a nurse, I know how important clean water is, because it decreases parasitic infections that cause malnutrition in children. Worldwide, every 20 seconds a child dies of water borne illnesses. Clean filtered water presents a simple, much needed, solution.

According to Dr. Mike Brezinsky, Helping Hands mission director, "Chronic diarrhea is a common problem. Standing water and rain water which people use for drinking is full of parasites. Without adequate heating of water, parasites reproduce and the infections continue

to fester. Everybody drinks coffee because it is hot and perceived as safe, since the water is not. Gastritis from coffee consumption is seen in kids as young as two years of age. They drink only breast milk and coffee, the only liquids that are safe. Water is a basic necessity of life and everyone deserves it!"

This is the second time St. Mary's Parish has risen to help the crisis in this small corner of the world. "In 2015, donations from St. Mary Parish and other communities enabled us to raise \$26,000 to purchase 352 water filters," says Maura O'Connor, a member of the Walk for Water committee at St. Mary's who has been on two missions to Santa Maria de Jesus. "These filters provided 1,850 people with clean water at home. Our goal in 2016 will be to provide filters and to focus on education as the key to improving the lives of the residents of Santa Maria de Jesus."

For this year's Walk for Water, our parish's Catholic Action Committee, under the leadership of Mary Staudt, hopes to organize teams of students and members from many parish ministries, as well as residents of



the broader Ridgefield community, to participate in the walk. Sponsors are asked to pledge money for each lap completed by the walkers. Just \$47 can buy a water filter for a family in need! In addition to the portable water filters, we are investigating a long-term source of clean drinking for these people.

I'm inspired by how God is working through Catholic Action and parishioners who have gone on missions with me and have seen the poorest of the poor and the devastating effects of poverty and malnutrition related to dirty water.

(Join Walk for Water on Saturday, October 15, from 9 am-12 noon on Main St., Ridgefield. For more info, contact St. Mary Parish: [www.smc.org](http://www.smc.org) 203.438.6538 or Maura O'Connor: [Mauratub05@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Mauratub05@sbcglobal.net), or.) ■

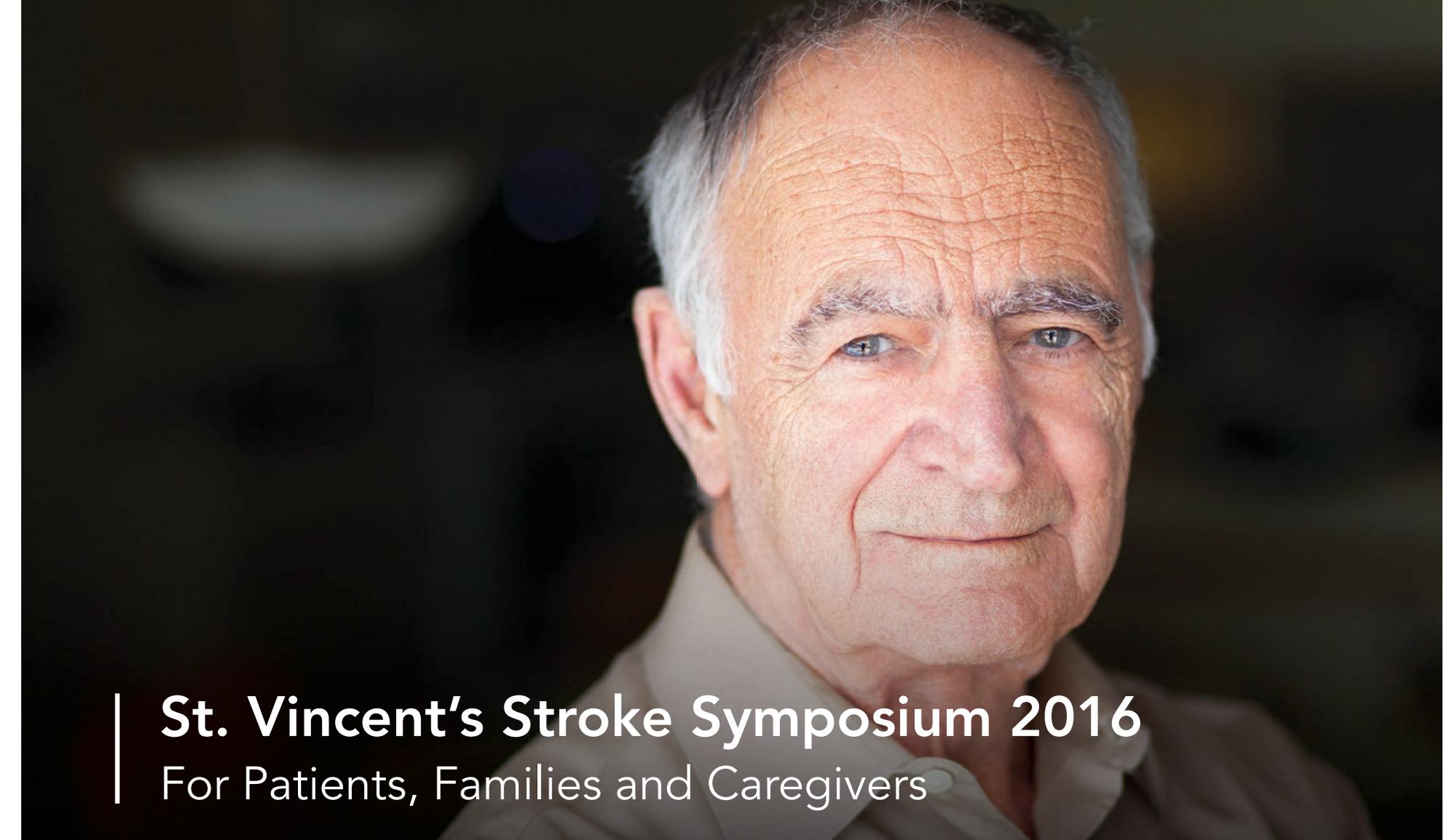
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**Wednesday, September 28**  
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## Symposium Speakers

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*Chairman & Vice President,  
Department of Medicine,  
St. Vincent's Medical Center*

Srinath Kadimi, MD, FRCS  
*Stroke Director,  
St. Vincent's Medical Center*

Corey Jaquez, MD  
*St. Vincent's Medical Center*

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