



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

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Synod 2014

Building communities of Faith

By BISHOP FRANK CAGGIANO

(Homily given at Solemn Vespers Service for the success of the Fourth Diocesan Synod, June 29, 2014, the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, in St. Augustine Cathedral.)

My Sisters and brothers in the Lord,

Each was a formidable figure; perhaps a towering figure. Each was unique in his own gifts, talents, faults and failures, and yet each was chosen by the Lord for a particular task: to bring forth the work of the Gospel and to help found the Church of which you and I are now members.

First there was the fisherman, in whose roughness the Lord discerned a great love; a man who—when fully converted—could be trusted to the end. To him were given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and to him was given the task to be the leader of the Apostles, and a symbol and sign of unity for all believers.

His counterpart was as different from him as night is from day: a well-educated, eloquent rabbi who was convicted with all of his heart and soul in the covenant given to Moses; a man whom we know from Sacred Scripture devoted his life—at least after the rising of the Lord—to stamp out what he saw as heresy and an abomination of that which his ancestors had passed on to him. He became the Apostle to the Gentiles and a fearless disciple of Christ.

My friends, as we gather this evening on the Solemnity of Peter and Paul—the two great Princes of the Church—we are invited to reflect upon a very basic question. Each of these saints has more than one feast day on the



SOLEMN VESPERS LAUNCHES SYNOD 2014—Bishop Caggiano announces the four major themes of the synod at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport. More than 700 attended the prayer service. (PHOTO BY AMY MORTENSEN)

Church's annual calendar; each is honored with dignity and respect: why is it, then, that on this day, the Church asks us to honor them, to ask for their intercession and to be inspired by their examples, side by side?

It seems to me—as Mom used to say—the more things change the more they stay the same. Because, my friends, these two remarkably different men were literally placed side by side, because the Lord asked them to do in their age what the Lord is asking us to do in our own time. For they were asked to listen carefully to one another and to listen carefully to the discernment of the Holy Spirit that was—and is—alive in both of their hearts.

They were challenged to

overcome not only the natural differences that existed between them but even, one could say, the theological differences that existed between them as they struggled in the Council of Jerusalem to discern whether the Mosaic Law needed to be applied to the converts to the faith.

Because they listened carefully, prayed deeply; discerned wholeheartedly, and were open to the power of the Holy Spirit, they were able to build a bridge between the two of them

“The time has come
for the world to know
the good that
happens in the
Catholic Church!”

in Christ; a bridge that was not made by their hands or efforts, but a bridge that was constructed by the very life and grace of the

Risen Spirit. And because they were servants to the Truth, and servants to the Lord, and not servants to themselves, we honor them as the greatest of

the Apostles, and the foundation upon which you and I and generations before us and generations to come will stand on their mighty shoulders. And as they

did, you and I must do.

That is why we are here tonight. For we have begun, my friends, an extraordinary journey of faith: listening, prayer and discernment. I have had the privilege to sit at seven different listening sessions but, my friends, the listening is not over; it is only beginning. I have the privilege to join you and lead you on this extraordinary synodal journey, so that you and I together could listen carefully to each other; begin this great discernment with the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit who is alive in every single one of us; to be able to build more mighty and formidable bridges between ourselves and those we long to join us in worship and prayer, so we might live the Apostolic spirit of Peter and Paul; and so that we might, in our own age and time, as they did, rise to the challenges before us.

My friends, I am grateful for your honesty. I am grateful for your great love for one another and the Church. I am grateful for your willingness to walk this journey, and I ask that in the months ahead, as the synod unfolds, that you and I together, as sisters and brothers, will have the same humility that Peter and Paul had, and the same commitment to Christ, so we will work not for “my agenda” or “your agenda,” but with humility witness to the Truth who is Jesus Christ the Lord, present in the credible witness of the Church which is here in our midst. For the challenges are many, but every single one of those challenges is an opportunity for growth; it's an opportunity for conversion; it's an opportunity for you and me to allow the Holy Spirit to change the face of

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

ON THE COVER

SIX-YEAR-OLD DREW GUTOWSKI enjoys Vacation Bible Camp at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk. Bible Camps have been springing up in parishes throughout the diocese this summer. Through songs, skits, activities and prayer, children learn Bible stories and the love of God.
ABOVE THE FOLD—Learning the Bible is fun and a lifetime lesson for kids! (Photos by Basil Karpiak and Marina Christakos)

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Local News

Msgr. DiGiovanni to write history of the NAC

Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Basilica Parish, has been asked to write the history of the North American College (NAC) by the college's trustees. In order to do this, he will be going to Rome in September for the coming academic year and living at the Casa Santa Maria until next summer.

"This is a great honor not just for him but for the whole diocese," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in making the announcement.

Msgr. James Checcio, rector of the Pontifical North American College, had spoken to Bishop Caggiano about releasing Msgr. DiGiovanni for the project during a meeting in Rome this past winter. His request was based on the warm reception given Msgr. DiGiovanni's latest book *The Second Founder, Bishop Martin J. O'Connor and the Pontifical North American College*, which was published in 2013.

Msgr. DiGiovanni is the author of six books and numerous historical articles, many of them focused on the life of the

Church in Fairfield County. *Ignatius, the Life of Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei* was also published in 2013; *The Catholic Church in Fairfield County 1666-1961* and *Bridgeport's Peru* were among his earlier books.

Aside from his research for *The Second Founder*, Msgr. DiGiovanni has a long connection with the NAC. After growing up in Fairfield and attending St. Mary Seminary Baltimore, Md., he completed his theology studies at the North American College in 1977. He went on to achieve his licentiate and his doctorate degrees there, both in ecclesiastical history.

Bishop O'Connor, the subject of his previous book, served as rector of the Pontifical North American College from 1946-64.



THE PHOTO ABOVE WAS TAKEN IN THE LOBBY of the Pontifical North American College (Seminary) in Rome, which was founded by Blessed Pius IX 150 years ago.

The current book will begin in 1955, during what many consider a "golden age for the Church," and follow through the Second Vatican Council and its aftershocks as the Church moved into the modern age.

"Those years were pretty turbulent for America," Msgr.

DiGiovanni notes. "In addition to Vatican II and the introduction of the Mass in English, we were dealing with the sexual revolution and protest against the war in Vietnam."

How did the NAC fare in this tumultuous era? How well did it succeed in the counter-cultural task of preparing young American men to become Roman

Catholic priests?

"It was an absolutely wild period of time," says Msgr. DiGiovanni, who remembers those years well. "In a period when most seminaries in this country lost their identity, we had the Successor of St. Peter down the street. It was something that kept us grounded."

With concrete reminders of the martyrs and saints close at hand, and a program of rigorous theology, American seminarians had a unique opportunity to examine the nature of God and the value of the Church in a time of massive, rapid change.

"The real stories are about the men—the faculty and students," he says. "How did the NAC prepare you to deal with the situation you come home to in an upside down American culture?"

Msgr. DiGiovanni looks forward to exploring that question as he heads to Rome on September 7. Bishop Caggiano will appoint a temporary administrator for St. John's during his absence. ■

Fan the Fire 2014

NEWTOWN—"Fan the Fire is a boost of hope," says Julie Rodgers, MCR. "It's an opportunity for kids to regenerate their faith in a welcoming environment."

Fan the Fire youth rally, held each August (August 16 this year) at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, is a one-day event designed to help teens deepen their relationship with Christ through a mix of fun and high-energy music, coupled with profoundly reverent prayer, dynamic speakers, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Mass with their bishop. The theme of this year's youth rally is "Made for More."

The aims of Fan the Fire go back to 1999 in York, Pa., when a youth minister named Scott Anthony noticed that teens came back from a youth conference and summer mission trips on fire with their faith, but weren't sure where to go next. "We wanted to show teens who had experienced Jesus 'out there' that the same



THIS YEAR'S YOUTH RALLY is set for August 16 at St. Rose of Lima Parish.

Jesus, with all the same power, could be found in their home parish or diocese as well," he said. He also wanted to evangelize teens who had not been on a trip to see the personal love that God had for them.

"I thought, maybe we should just have us a little one day thing where we do some singing and praising, talk about Jesus and

give the young folks some much needed fuel for the fire."

The idea took off. Rodd Blessey, the youth minister at St. Rose, brought Fan the Fire to this diocese in 2006. About 350 teens attended that first year.

"Our teens had been going on various trips, and they would come back home on fire wanting to experience more of God and

learn more about our Catholic faith," Blessey says. "Similarly they had friends who saw how excited they were about their faith and wanted to find out why, and wanted to share in that joy."

While the annual rallies in York and Newtown draw teens from throughout their respective areas, Fan the Fire youth rallies have been held in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Camden, N.J. In addition, FTF has inspired other dioceses and parishes to imitate this model.

This one day event allows youth ministers the opportunity to follow up from a summer trip, and allows a day for all our teens to meet others who are excited about their faith. Fan the Fire has grown to a yearly attendance of 600 teens, chaperones and volunteers.

In addition to keynote speaker Paul Kim, workshop sessions will enrich the "Made for More" theme: "Made for Each Other," focusing on boy and girl relationships; "Made for a Father's Love," focused on a relationship

with God the Father; "Made for a Greater Plan," on holiness, using examples of saints who relate to a teen's life; and "Made for Real Connection," relationships with family, friends and the greater world.

All of the talks, the lively skits, and a wonderful mix of new praise and worship music with familiar hymns prepare and point to Adoration followed by the Sacred Liturgy.

"All credit to the growth over the years has been due to the support of our diocese and of all the youth ministers and priests who put forth the effort to organize groups from their parish to attend," says Blessey. "This year we are so very excited that Bishop Caggiano will be with us for the day. We have a great group of speakers, musicians and entertainers who will be there to engage the teens as we explore how we are all 'Made for More.'"

(For more info or to register, contact Julie Rodgers: youthministry@diobpt.org or 203.416.1449) ■

Synod 2014

SYNOD FROM PAGE 2

our diocese, and the face of the world.

I have prayed long and hard over what I have heard, and after much reflection, I am going to ask the synodal delegates to devote themselves to four over-arching themes. A principal goal is to design a pastoral plan that will allow us to strengthen the bridges of faith and charity that exist at the heart of the Catholic community.

The first theme is this: I will ask the synodal delegates to devote their time and study to help empower the young Church. And I use that word “empower” deliberately. For you and I have heard that our young people—who are not just the future of our Church, here and now—that they are eager to take up the challenges of our time and to make a positive difference in the Church and in our world. We saw that

they remain idealistic and generous and open to listening to the Truth. They desire to have a challenge in which they can believe and devote themselves to, and give their all in response.

To empower the young Church, my friends, means to give young people the faith in ways that they can understand; to allow catechesis to evolve so that they can hear and act on the salvific message that comes through Jesus Christ. It means to give them an opportunity to discover their gifts and talents and give them the venues by which they can use those gifts and talents not for themselves but for others. It also means, my friends, that we as a community must re-dedicate ourselves to the basic, core commitment that we have made to keep all our young people safe, so that they may grow in holiness, wisdom, and faith.

Young people told us in those

listening sessions that too many of their friends do not believe what they believe. Too many do not share their conviction and desire to be members of our community of faith. So I will ask the synodal delegates to dig deep,

“Families are the first and primary community of faith. They are the domestic Church. If families are healthy, the Church will be healthy.”

and hard, and learn from our young people some of the ways by which we may reach out to their fellow sisters and brothers. For the young are not spectators in this process. They are full participants in the synodal process. The young may have the answers that we have been looking for. We must empower the young Church.

The second over-arching theme, my friends, is even broader

than the first. You and I in this synodal journey must build up all communities of faith that make up our diocesan Church, and those communities are many. Let us begin with our families, for our families are the first and primary

community of faith. They are the domestic Church. We heard in the listening sessions that many families are struggling mightily to be faithful to the Lord, under enormous challenges and difficulties.

In this moment of grace, we must commit ourselves in spirit and resource to help mothers and fathers to do what the Lord has asked them to do. We must reach out to all those who are caretakers of the young and families of

all different shapes and sizes. Families must become places where the Spirit is alive and basic human needs are met and where families know that they are not alone in their struggles. For if families are healthy, the Church will be healthy. We must, my friends, build those communities of faith above all others.

There are other communities that also look for renewal. We heard that in the communities of faith that are our parishes—places of worship, study and fraternity—many people long for more opportunities for catechesis and faith formation, and to learn how to pray, and to pray with all of their hearts. Many do not solely wish to know about Jesus but, rather, they seek to know Jesus as a living, saving redeemer.

Many long for parishes where everyone is welcomed, and everyone is known by name. That attitude, my friends, is not solely the work of parish leaders, pastors,

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



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Parish News

Retired pastors recall happy years

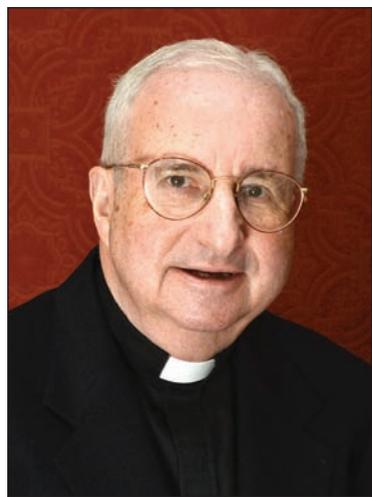
By PAT HENNESSY

“Working with people is the best part of being a pastor,” says Msgr. Thomas Driscoll, who retired as pastor of Notre Dame Parish in Easton this May. “In every parish, working with people, bringing them the sacraments, preparing youngsters for First Holy Communion and Confirmation—that’s what brings happiness.”

Msgr. Driscoll, who retired on May 19, is one of three pastors to retire this year. Msgr. John Sabia of St. Jude Parish in Monroe celebrated his last Mass at that parish on June 29, and Father David Riley, pastor of St. Cecilia Parish in Stamford, officially retired on June 30.

In addition to these three, Msgr. Edward Surwillo, pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Stamford, has become spiritual director of St. John Fisher Seminary. Msgr. Surwillo will continue to reside at Star of the Sea.

Msgr. Frank Wissel, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Greenwich, died four days after he retired in June.

**Msgr. Thomas Driscoll**

Msgr. Driscoll, 77, was born and raised in Danbury. He attended Morris Street School and graduated from Danbury High School before entering St. Thomas Seminary College in Bloomfield. He went to St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore, Md., and finished his theological studies at the North American College in Rome. He later completed advanced studies in moral theology at the Accademia Alfonsiana in Rome. He was ordained on December 20, 1961, in St. Peter’s Basilica.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at St. James Parish in Stratford. Over the following years of his distinguished service to the diocese, he was spiritual director of Cathedral Girls’ High School, now Kolbe Cathedral, in Bridgeport; was appointed vice chancellor; became priest-secretary to Bishop Walter W. Curtis; was a member of the Priests’ Council and later the College of Consultors; and served as director of the Ministry of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs.

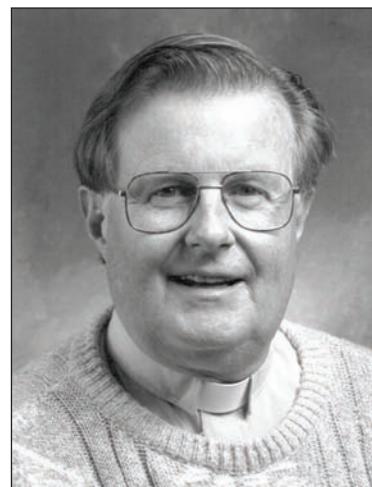
In 1974 he was named pastor of St. Luke Parish in Westport. In 1990 he was appointed chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport by Bishop Edward M. Egan, residing at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Stratford. He held that position until 1999.

He was named a Prelate of Honor to His Holiness, with the title of Monsignor, by Pope John Paul II in 1991.

Msgr. Driscoll was named vicar general in 1996 and became pastor of Notre Dame in 1999.

“I’ve been honored to have been part of the diocesan structure for 14 years,” Msgr. Driscoll says. But from St. Luke’s to Notre Dame, his heart always remained in parish ministry. “A priest’s life is all about involvement with people.”

Msgr. Driscoll retired to the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy retired priests’ residence in Stamford. “I’m happy to be here with my brother priests, and I’m slowly getting used to the idea of retirement,” he says.

**Father David Riley**

There were still a number of working farms in Sherman, the northernmost town in Fairfield

County, when Father David Riley first began to serve the little mission congregation there. “Catholics were a very small presence,” he recalls of those days.

A devout Catholic named Margaret O’Neil donated land for a contemporary all-purpose building, the perfect Mass setting for the little congregation. At the beginning of the 1980s Father Riley, then parochial vicar at St. Edward the Confessor Parish in New Fairfield, took responsibility for the new mission, called Holy Trinity, eventually becoming its first pastor.

Father Riley, 76, was born in Pearl River, N.Y., and earned his bachelor’s degree from Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Mo. He also holds an M.A. degree from Fairfield University.

He studied at St. Augustine Monastery in Kansas City and was ordained to the priesthood in Kansas in 1964 as a member of the Augustinian Recollect Order.

He arrived in the Diocese of Bridgeport in 1966 to become a teacher at Stamford Catholic High School, now Trinity Catholic, in Stamford. In 1972 he was assigned to teach at the former St. Mary High School in Greenwich, and in 1979 he was appointed campus minister at Western Connecticut State University (WESTCONN) in Danbury.

While he was teaching in Stamford, Father Riley resided at St. Leo Parish. He also became priest-minister for the Emmaus Community in Stamford. After being incardinated into this diocese in 1977, he served as parochial vicar at St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield and was at St. Patrick Parish in Bridgeport before being assigned to St. Edward the Confessor in 1982. From his first days there he ministered primarily to the people of Holy Trinity.

In 1999, at the request of Bishop Egan, Father Riley became pastor of St. Cecilia’s. “St. Cecilia’s is bigger, but that’s the only real difference,” he says. “Wherever I’ve been, the people have been good.”

Although he is no longer a pastor, Father Riley has no plans to actually retire. Instead, he will be ministering to the people

of St. Mary’s in Ridgefield. “I compare it to being an adjunct professor at a university,” he says. “The full professor has to attend committee meetings and have office hours. The adjunct just teaches. Here at St. Mary’s, I’m doing what I like to do as a priest. I celebrated my 50th anniversary at St. Cecilia’s; maybe I’ll celebrate my 60th here.”



MSGR. JOHN SABIA at his recent retirement party.

Msgr. John Sabia

“I was only a priest 14 years when I went to St. Jude’s,” says Msgr. John Sabia, who retired as pastor of St. Jude Parish at the end of June. “I loved being a pastor, and I loved being there.”

Msgr. Sabia, 80, is a native of Stamford. He went to Steven’s Elementary School and Cloonan Jr. High, and graduated from Stamford High School. He attended Pace University in New York before entering St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield and completed his theological studies at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary at Niagara University in Niagara Falls, N.Y., graduating with a degree in classical languages.

He was ordained by Bishop Walter W. Curtis in St. Augustine Cathedral on May 16, 1964.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at Holy Rosary Parish in Bridgeport. He later served at St. Joseph Parish in Norwalk, St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield, and St. James Parish in Stratford before coming to St. Jude’s as pastor on September 8, 1978.

St. Jude’s had been established only five years earlier. Msgr. Sabia guided the fledgling parish into the cornerstone for the community it has become today.

Among his many initiatives was the Vacation Bible School, now going for over 30 years, and the ever-popular Italian Festival, to be held August 20-21 this year.

His signature achievement was the construction of a church, a new rectory and a parish office. The modern church, with its stone and cedar façade, was a labor of love involving the entire

community. “A lot of those stones are from people’s homes in Monroe,” he says, “and families would bring stones home from wherever they went on vacation. We had ‘rock parties’ to gather enough rocks for the exterior. Then we planted hundreds of trees around the property. It was a joy. The Lord gave me the honor and privilege of building that church.”

Msgr. Sabia has moved back to Stamford—actually to the very house where he grew up. He’s enjoying the chance to spend more time with his large family, many of whom still live in the area, and to celebrate daily Mass with the priests at nearby Queen of the Clergy.

Although life is at a slightly slower pace, he’ll still be busy. He will be helping out with Masses at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk, and plans to lead several pilgrimages, beginning with a pilgrimage tour to Lourdes and Fatima in September.

At the parish celebration marking both his retirement and his 80th birthday, Msgr. Sabia had one request of his parishioners. “Give me a special gift,” he asked them. “Welcome, support and pray for Msgr. Dariusz. He’s your pastor now, and he’s happy to be here with you.”

Bible Camp

Weird animals speak of God's love

Like brilliant summer flowers, Vacation Bible Camps are springing up in parishes during the summer months. They carry a lively message of faith through song, skits, activities, laughter and friendship.

"Welcome to Weird Animals," the VBC at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk, helps kids see that "Jesus' Love is one of a Kind." Even if you think you're like Shred the Tenrec, a pointy-quilled bug eater (yes, there is such an animal), Jesus will find a way to hug you—quills and all.

During the week at St. Matthew's, a set of extremely weird animals like Shred become Bible Buddies, teaching kids that: even though you're left out, even though you're different, even though you're naughty, even though you don't understand, Jesus says, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

The lesson for the day is introduced during morning prayer with Msgr. Walter Orlowski, St.

Matthew's pastor, and brought home through a variety of activities. Campers from about three and a half years old through fifth grade enjoy the activities, guided by counselors in training from sixth grade up, Confirmation candidates, teens and young adults home from college. There are almost as many volunteers as campers, and they have every bit as much fun.

"Jesus will love you no matter what you do," says fourth-grader Catie Gutowski, describing the purpose of the "Untamed Games." At one game, the kids had a large bucket of water at one end of the lawn and an equally large, empty bucket at the other. "We had different tools—a sponge, cups, spoons, a bean-bag," Catie explains. "It doesn't matter what tool you use. All that matters is that you do the best you can with the tools you have."

In the end, she points out, "Working together, you can fill a whole bucket."

Other stations throughout the morning include Bible skits, KidVid Cinema time with the day's weird Bible Buddy, and project time where the kids make bright happy turtles for home-bound parishioners and cross necklaces for children in Haiti. A

box in the "Jungle," the imaginatively decorated parish great room, invites donations for the parish's food pantry.

"We always incorporate social outreach into our themes," says Joanne Obst, co-coordinator of the VBC along with Janet Mitchell and Concetta Maffei.

In the fascinating Imagination Station, strange scientific objects invite puzzled amazement while opening up a new window on the day's theme. After a morning spent following the misbehavior of Shred, kids in the Imagination Station try spinning an odd, roughly banana-shaped, piece of plastic. Even when it is spun in the wrong direction, the object will eventually stop, hesitate, and spin properly.

"No matter how much you sin, Jesus can always help you turn out right," says volunteer



LEARNING VALUABLE LESSONS—Four year old Anna Spence enjoys Vacation Bible Camp at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk. Campers from three and a half years old through fifth grade enjoy fun and friends "Jesus will love you no matter what you do," says fourth-grader Catie Gutowski. (PHOTO BY MARINA CHRISTAKOS)

Imagination Coordinator Albert Aguilar, a junior at Quinnipiac College.

After a morning following the behavior of the naughty Shred, kids take time to think about their own sins and shortcomings and write them on pieces of paper. They stuff their sins (it's amazing how many these young kids can come up with) into garbage bags and tie them to a cross. At

the end of the session, a young volunteer dressed as Jesus carries away the loaded cross. The kids see firsthand that, no matter what they do, Jesus will always take away their sins—but only by bearing the weight of his cross.

"This way, and through the skits, they see the Bible come to life. That's so important," says Janet Mitchell. "It stays with them forever." ■

Schools office names finance director

BRIDGEPORT—Patricia Zaccone of Flushing, New York, has been named director of Catholic School Finances of the Diocese of Bridgeport. She will report to Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, PhD, superintendent of schools.

"I am looking forward to working in the Diocese of Bridgeport to continue the mission of Catholic Education in our schools," she said.

As director, Zaccone will prepare and provide financial information to school principals and advisory boards. Her responsibilities include overseeing general ledgers and budgeting, tuition management, purchasing, accounts payable and payroll activities. The diocesan school system throughout Fairfield County includes 28 elementary schools, five high schools, one middle school and a pre-school, in addition to St. Catherine Academy for children with special needs.

Zaccone comes to Bridgeport from the Diocese of



PATRICIA ZACCONE

Brooklyn, where she has served in a number of financial capacities since 1999. She served as director of School/Academy Finances of the Diocese of Brooklyn from 2009 until 2013, where she was responsible for the overall financial operation of academies including monthly financial reports to the board of directors and budgeting. Prior to that, she served as a compliance auditor for parishes and schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

Most recently she has served as a financial manager of Divine

Wisdom Catholic Academy and as an accountant for the Accounting firm, Baglivi and Cook.

In the past she worked as an accountant and financial manager for medical, business and accounting firms. She is a 1982 graduate of Barnard M. Baruch College, where she earned a bachelor of business administration with a major in accounting.

She and her family are members of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bayside, Queens. ■

Young Adults
of the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

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Mass Mob of Fairfield County CT
4 days ago

First Mass Mob in Fairfield County CT at St. Peter Church, 695 Colorado Ave., Bridgeport on Aug. 10 at 11:30am. Visit us regularly for updates on upcoming Mass Mobs, events, photos, videos and blogs! FOLLOW US ON Twitter @MassMobFCT, Instagram @MassMob_FairfieldCounty, Website: www.massmobfct.com, Email: massmobfct@gmail.com

Lunchtime confessions and Mass Mon-
Fri at St. Augustine Cathedral, Bridgeport
4 days ago

LUNCHTIME CONFESSION AND MASS at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport, CT Mon-Fri, 11:30am Confession, 12:30pm Mass

Young Adult Group (age 18+) Meet
July 25, 2014
7-9pm

YOUNG ADULT GROUP (age 18+) at St. Marguerite's in Brookfield will meet July 25 from 7-9pm in the church hall. Open to all. Join us for prayer, discussion, fun, fellowship and refreshments. For info or to be included on the email list for activities apart from group meetings, call Maria M. (203) 798-6923, Maria V. | . |

Pub Theology, Conversation, Food & Fun
July 30, 2014
6-9pm

PUB THEOLOGY, CONVERSATION, FOOD & FUN - Please join Fr. Lynch and other guests for discussions on theology in an informal setting while enjoying the good food and drinks at Walrus & Carpenter, 2895 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport from 6-9pm on July 30. Held last Wednesday of each month. For more info call Parish Office at | . |

Visit the new Young Adult page at:
www.dob-ya.com

Local News

Walk spreads message of peace: NY to Boston

STAMFORD—The Pray-for-Peace Network, a Fairfield County-based peace organization, was founded by Al Forte, a member of St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk. On September 1, Forte will begin his fifth long-distance Pray-For-Peace Walk, starting at the World Trade Center Memorial in Manhattan.

After walking from there to Yankee Stadium for a Red Sox/Yankee game on September 2, Forte will walk through Connecticut and Massachusetts, to Fenway Park in Boston in time for the Yankee/Red Sox game on September 28. The walk will end at The Old North Church the following day.

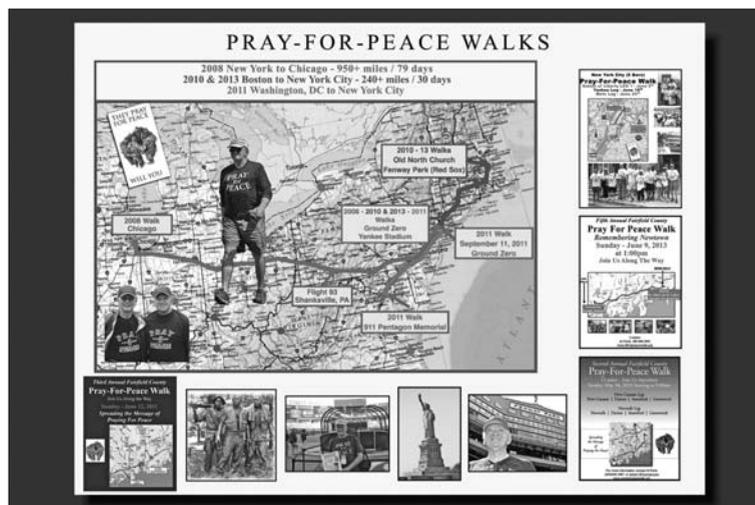
For the most part the walk will follow Route 1, the original Boston Post Road. Forte, who is 71, plans

to cover about 10 miles each day.

“The purpose of the walk is to spread the message of praying for peace,” says Forte. People are encouraged to join along the route. “They can walk for 15 minutes, or a mile or two—or more if they want. Its good exercise and will help spread the message of praying for peace. The more who participate, the more others will see what we are doing and the message will be spread.”

Although exact dates and starting locations have to be approximate to adjust for the weather and other variables, Forte plans to arrive in Stamford the evening of September 4, and leave from there the following morning.

“These are estimates,” he cautions. “I’ll constantly update



WALKING FOR PEACE—Al Forte, a member of St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk puts on the miles.

my location and progress during the walk.” He usually starts out around 7:30 am and walks for three hours or so, then takes a break. He starts again about 3:30 pm and walks until dark.

If all goes according to schedule, Forte will walk from Stamford to Westport on the 5th, from there to Bridgeport the following day, then from Bridgeport to Milford. Following the Post Road through Connecticut he’ll continue to Providence, R.I.

From there, his path will take him to Fenway Park. The last day of the walk includes stops at the Boston bombing site before ending at Old North Church.

Forte’s peace walks began in 2008, when, at age 66, he walked from New York City to Chicago. In 2010 and again in 2013, he did a Boston to New York City Pray-For-Peace Walk. The 2013 walk was to remember 9/11, the Newtown shooting and the Boston bombing. In

2011, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11, he walked from the Pentagon Memorial in Washington, D.C., to New York, ending at Ground Zero on September 11, 2011.

Forte has organized six Annual Fairfield County Pray-For-Peace Walks. He and those who joined him have handed out more than 40,000 Pray-For-Peace cards. “There is a reason we call these peace ‘walks’ and not marches. There is nothing strident or confrontational about a walk. The group’s sole purpose is to communicate its message that praying for peace will mean there will be more peace.” Forte says.

“Picture a world at peace. How would that look to you and what would that mean for our children and grandchildren? Peace in ourselves and in our families. Peace in our towns and cities. Peace in our country and in our world. We cannot change the past, but we can change the future. People can help spread the message of praying for peace by joining us along the walk.”

(For more info on Walk for Peace, contact Al Forte: 203.940.3651 or ajfortejr@hotmail.com.)

Aetna Golf scores for charity

NORWALK—This year’s Catholic Charities/AETNA Golf Classic, held at Shorehaven Golf Club, raised more than \$135,000 for the many behavioral health services throughout the diocese.

Catholic Charities is a leading provider of food, housing, mental health, adoption, immigrations and family support ser-



vices to people in need in Fairfield County.

“It was an extraordinarily positive event. We have so many people to thank including all our marvelous sponsors, the terrific volunteers from Catholic Charities, AETNA and other friends of CCFC, all the players and guests who joined us for the post golf activities, all those who bought the terrific auction items, the wonderful staff at Shorehaven, and, I’m sure, many others,” said Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities.

“We were also blessed with a glorious sunny day. I am very pleased to report that AETNA and the terrific co-chairs of the tournament, Bill Tommins and Jon Vaccarella, have committed to leading next year’s event,” Barber said.

(Catholic Charities is celebrating its 96th year of providing services to the poor and vulnerable of Fairfield County. For information on services and giving opportunities, visit www.ccfairfield.org.)

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July 27: Seventh Sunday after Pentecost: Missa L’homme armé à 5 (Morales)

August 3: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: Missa Dormendo un giorno (Guerrero)

August 10: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost: Missa Magnae Deus potentiae (Mass V)

Friday, August 15, 5:30pm: The Feast of the Assumption:

Missa Assumpta est Maria (Palestrina)

August 17: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost: Missa Puisque j’ay perdu (Lassus)

August 24: External Solemnity of St. Augustine, patron

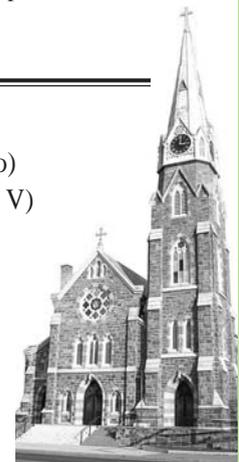
of the Diocese of Bridgeport: Missa Iste confessor (Palestrina)

August 31: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost: Missa Carminum (Isaac)

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World News

Christians in Mosul told: leave, convert, or die

MOSUL, Iraq—Christians in Mosul have been told that they must leave, convert to Islam or die.

A communiqué from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) told Christians that if they do not leave or accept Islamic rule, “their destiny is the sword.” The Aleteia web site, citing local sources, said that this message was being broadcast on loudspeakers by mosques in Mosul.

Bishop Saad Sirop, an auxiliary of the Chaldean Catholic patriarchate in Baghdad, told Aid to the Church in Need: “In the last hours, the jihadists of ISIL have forced the few remaining Christians in Iraq’s second city to leave their homes.”

Those who do leave the city have been stopped at checkpoints, where jihadists have confiscated some of their possessions and even their vehicles. In Mosul, homes belonging to Christians are being marked by jihadists to be taken over and looted. ISIL has ordered

that Christians may not be given food from relief shipments.

Christian history in Mosul goes back to the earliest years of Christianity. “Our worst fears are coming true, and we do not know how to react,” the bishop said. He pleaded with the international community to exert pressure on the Iraqi government to find practical solutions. A request from the United States Department of State for comment has not yet been answered. A spokesman for Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), who helped establish the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in 1998, said his office was “very concerned and very engaged,” but would not comment further.

This may be the end Christians have feared for some time, especially since ISIS took over Mosul in early June. Since then, things have gotten progressively worse for Christians. The Associated Press has also reported that the Islamic State has begun seizing the houses of Christian and Shiite families who fled Mosul. “They

mark these houses with signs reading Islamic State Properties,” AP reported.

Supreme Court rules in favor of religious liberty

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Supreme Court granted a landmark victory for religious liberty on June 30 in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* ruling that individuals do not lose their religious freedom when they open a family business.

The Court upheld a ruling by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals protecting Hobby Lobby and the Green family from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate, which would have required Hobby Lobby and co-founders David and Barbara Green to provide and facilitate, against their religious convictions, four potentially life-terminating drugs and devices in the company’s health insurance plan. The Greens argued that the mandate substantially burdened their religious beliefs in violation of a fed-

eral law, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

The Supreme Court ruled that individuals do not lose their religious freedom when they open a family business. The court ruled 5-4 in favor of David and Barbara Green and their family business, ruling they do not have to violate their faith or pay severe fines.

“This is a landmark decision for religious freedom. The Supreme Court recognized that Americans do not lose their religious freedom when they run a family business,” said Lori Windham, senior counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and counsel for Hobby Lobby. “This ruling will protect people of all faiths.”

The decision also has important implications for over 50 pending lawsuits brought by non-profit religious organizations, such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, which are also challenging the mandate.

In an opinion by Justice Alito, the Court stated: “The plain terms of RFRA make it perfectly clear that Congress did not discriminate

... against men and women who wish to run their businesses as for-profit corporations in the manner required by their religious beliefs. Our responsibility is to enforce RFRA as written, and under the standard that RFRA prescribes, the HHS contraceptive mandate is unlawful.”

Justice Kennedy’s concurrence added: “Among the reasons the United States is so open, so tolerant, and so free is that no person may be restricted or demeaned by government in exercising his or her religion.”

“Our family is overjoyed by the Supreme Court’s decision. Today the nation’s highest court has re-affirmed the vital importance of religious liberty as one of our country’s founding principles,” said Barbara Green, co-founder of Hobby Lobby. “The Court’s decision is a victory, not just for our family business, but for all who seek to live out their faith. We are grateful to God and to those who have supported us on this difficult journey.”

The USCCB called the decision “A great day for the religious freedom of family businesses.” In a statement released June 30, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, president of the USCCB, and Archbishop William E. Lori, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, noted,

“The Court clearly did not decide whether the so-called ‘accommodation’ violates RFRA when applied to our charities, hospitals and schools, so many of which have challenged it as a burden on their religious exercise.”

First woman rector named for a pontifical university

ROME—In a historic “first,” a woman has been nominated as rector of one of Rome’s pontifical universities. Sister Mary Melone, who was the first woman to be a tenured professor at the Pontifical University Antonianum and the first woman to serve there as dean, has been named by the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education to be the first female rector of the institution, which is run by the Franciscan order.

An Italian native who was born in 1964 and became a Franciscan in 1986, she earned her doctorate in theology at the Antonianum and has been dean of the college of theology since 2011; she is the current president of the Italian society for theological research.

In an interview published by *L’Osservatore Romano* when she was appointed dean, Sister Melone said that women may have a distinctive approach to theological reflection, but she rejected the use of the term “female theology,” saying that “all that exists is theology.” She said that the Church should make more room for women, but added, “It doesn’t need quotas, it needs collaboration.”

Argentine soccer team presents Pope with signed jersey

VATICAN CITY—The Argentine national soccer team, which finished second in the World Cup, has sent Pope Francis a jersey signed by all of the team’s members. Although Argentina fell at the final hurdle during the final of the World Cup 2014 in Brazil, losing 1:0 to Germany in extra time, the team said they were confident the Pope thought of them throughout the tournament.

During their stay in Brazil for the World Cup competition, the Argentine team installed a large-scale wall photo of the national team with Pope Francis at their training center. The photo was taken when the team visited Pope Francis in the Vatican, on the occasion of the friendly match against Italy in his honor.

Prep celebrates groundbreaking of Student Center

Fairfield Prep celebrated the groundbreaking and blessing of a new Student Life Center on June 18 in Pelletier Quad. Guests included Fairfield University President Father Von Arx, S.J., members of Prep’s Board of Governors, administrators and staff, and members of the Fairfield Jesuit Community. Prep President Father John Hanwell, S.J., announced, “Today is a great moment in the history of Fairfield Prep. The Prep community breaks ground together for our new Student Life Center as we believe so heartily in our great mission that our students are our future and that their future is our responsibility.”

The center will serve as a crossroads for important campus activities. This state-of-the-art, technology-enriched, multi-purpose facility will feature a number of specialized, but functionally related, spaces. The center will foster a synergy between the academic and co-curricular lives of the school by providing students the opportunity to meet, to interact, to explore and to cultivate their interests outside of the classroom. The facility will include an enhanced dining area to accommodate 500 students and other school sponsored functions; an assembly area for formal and informal meetings; and office space to support various student-based programs.



(l-r) FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT Father Jeffrey Von Arx, S.J.; Fairfield Prep President Father John Hanwell, S.J.; and Board Chairman Dr. Bob Russo ‘65.

World News

Pope recognizes three saints for the Americas

QUEBEC, Canada—During a special ceremony in May, Pope Francis recognized three saints in the Americas, two of whom served in Canada and one in Brazil. Marie Guyart, who joined the Ursuline Order as Sister Marie of the Incarnation, became known as the Mother of the Canadian Church. Bishop François de Laval de Montmorency, also originally from France, was the first bishop of Quebec (New France). José de Anchieta, born in the Canary Islands, was an influential Jesuit missionary to Brazil.

Sister Jane Quinlan, OSU, from St. Gregory the Great Parish in Danbury represented the Ursulines of Tildonk at the solemn festivities surrounding the canonization. She was accompanied by Sister Mary Ellen Theriault, OSU, who previously taught at St. Cecilia School in Stamford, then part of the Stamford Catholic Regional System, and lived in the convent in St. Maurice Parish.

They were hosted by the Ursuline Sisters of the Canadian Union in their historic monastery.

"I was very moved by the experience of being in Quebec City for the canonization of Marie of the Incarnation," said Sister Jane.

She recounts with pride the accomplishments of Sister Marie of the Incarnation, who led the first group of women religious to North America in 1639. Marie's



THIS MURAL of St. Marie of the Incarnation with the children of her school in Quebec can be found at the Basilica of St. Anne de Beaupre.

holiness unfolded in her life, first in Tours, France, as wife, mother, young widow and businesswoman and then as a mystic, nun, teacher, writer, foundress of a convent and school to educate girls in Quebec. Her countless letters to her son and others attest to her practicality and spirituality.

Her canonization coincides with the 375th anniversary of her arrival in Canada.

"Ursulines around the world rejoice at this news," said Sister Jane. "Marie is a great role model. She had an openness and desire to make the message of Christ relevant to the Native Americans and French settlers."

In declaring the three saints, the pope used a procedure known as "equivalent canonizations,"

which required a thorough study of the candidates' life and writings, fame of holiness and reports of favors granted through their intercession. Unlike a regular sainthood process, though, it did not require the verification of a miracle through their intercession, nor further studies by historians and theologians working for the Congregation for Saints' Causes. There will be no other canonization ceremony outside of the Mass in the Cathedral in Quebec City.

Cardinal Gerald Lacroix, Archbishop of Québec and Primate of Canada, said the canonizations "give us models of sanctity to encourage us." Pope Francis has given the Church "great examples of the new evangelization." ■



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Youth Ministry

Farewell, 'Sister Flo'

"Perhaps the greatest challenge that faces young people today is a misconception about love and happiness," says Florencia Silva, MCR, who recently stepped down as diocesan director of youth ministry. "Through the media and society at large, young people are presented daily with a distorted idea of what life is about."

Given the distortions they encounter, she says, it is easy for young people to feel empty and lonely. "Finding Jesus brings them true joy."

Florencia is a member of

the Marian Community of Reconciliation (Fraternidad Mariana de la Reconciliación), a worldwide community of consecrated lay women. Founded in Peru in 1991, they opened an apostolic community in Trumbull in 2005. The Fraternas are committed to helping young people find Jesus, and joy, in their daily lives.

"Sister Flo," as the youth irrepressibly call her, was one of the four founding members of the community in this diocese. She has been reassigned by her order to Texas, where she has become the local superior in San Antonio. Although in a sense this is a promotion, it is also a loss. Her time in this diocese will always remain special to her heart because it was her first mission after entering the order and completing formation.

Born and raised in Peru, she came to this diocese with no working experience in English. Her first assignment, as director of campus ministry at St. Joseph

High School in Trumbull, was a crash course in "American," with the students as her teachers. A critical and demanding bunch, they polished her colloquial style, gave her an up-front introduction into American culture—and in the process formed lasting friendships that will continue in years to come.

The Marian Community has as its mission the evangelization of the culture, in whatever way a particular area needs most. In this country the Fraternas focus most of their time and energy helping to evangelize youth. When Florencia left St. Joe's in 2011 to work in youth ministry for the Office for Pastoral Services, another Fraterna, Gabriela Davila, MCR, took her place in campus ministry.

The Fraternas introduced the first Convivio youth congress to be held in the United States in 2010. The congress, run by teens for teens, brings high school students from throughout the diocese to discuss issues facing society and the Church. Throughout a weekend of group discussions, talks, videos, games and skits, teens learn how to bring the



"YOUNG PEOPLE ALWAYS RESPOND generously when someone invites them to greatness," says Florencia Silva, MCR, (l), shown here enjoying a visit with a young friend from Peru, where her motherhouse is located. The former diocesan director of youth ministry, she has been reassigned to Texas, where she will be the local superior in San Antonio.

message of the Gospel into their daily lives.

"After working with so many young people at St. Joe's, with Convivio and through the youth ministry, I'm hopeful for the future of the Church," Florencia says.

The Fraternas have been helping to organize the Synod, and thus far, the response of the young people to getting involved in the Synod has been encouraging. "Bishop Caggiano really believes in the youth," Florencia says. "I've learned that young people always respond generously when someone invites them to greatness. When presented with the truth—when they encour-

ter the Lord—young people respond."

Although Florencia has taken her gifts, talents and apostolic zeal to Texas, another Fraterna, Julie Rogers, MCR, has already assumed the responsibilities of director of youth ministry here in the diocese.

Florencia says that, although her new assignment will claim most of her attention, the Diocese of Bridgeport will always remain close to her heart. "I'll be back for Convivio," she promises, and the youth she knows so well are always just a text or an email away. Meantime, she says with a wide smile, "everyone is welcome to visit me in Texas." ■

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First Saturdays

Devotions invite repentance

By **JOSEPH PRONECHEN**

What would you do if you were promised the grace to obtain heaven if you did something quite simple on the five First Saturdays over five months? And what you did would also be a major key to bringing real heaven-sent peace to the world?

What a promise: heaven for you and peace to so many others in the world. What if the person making the promises tied to her request for the Five First Saturdays was our Blessed Mother? Would you not believe?

But how many know what the Five First Saturdays are, even though this request and promise comes directly from our Blessed Mother when she appeared at Fatima?

Summer is a perfect time to realize this. In May, 1917, our Blessed Mother first appeared to three shepherd children in Portugal, and in July she spoke about the first Saturdays devotion. Remember, she appeared for all of us, and the Church fully endorses Fatima and its messages and requests.

In every one of her six apparitions at Fatima she told us to

pray the Rosary daily. In July, she also said: "If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace... if people do not cease offending God, a worse war will break out (she was referring to World War II)... To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays."

In 1925 she appeared to one Fatima child, who had become Sister Lucia, and said: "Look, my daughter, at my heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Say that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on the 15

mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me."

That's important. The Five First Saturdays are in reparation for the five kinds of offenses and blasphemies against the

Immaculate Heart of Mary.

They were explained by our Lord to Sister Lucia.

They are blasphemies

against her Immaculate Conception, her perpetual virginity, her divine and spiritual maternity, rejecting and dishonoring her images, and keeping young children from knowledge of and love for her.

In her June 1917 apparition, our Lady said Jesus "wishes also for you to establish devotion in the world to my Immaculate Heart."

Newly canonized St. John Paul II was greatly devoted to our Blessed Mother. In 1982, speaking about her messages while he was in Fatima, he said in his homily, "It is still more relevant than it was sixty-five years ago.

"The message of Our Lady of Fatima is a motherly one."

It is still more urgent." The Holy Father was specific that "people and societies—how many Christians—have gone in the opposite direction to the one indicated in the message of Fatima. Sin has thus made itself firmly at home in the world, and denial of God has become widespread in the ideologies, ideas and plans of human beings."

He also said that "while the message of Our Lady of Fatima is a motherly one, it is also strong and decisive... It invites to repentance. It gives a warning. It calls to prayer. It recommends the Rosary... She not only calls us to be converted, she calls us to accept her motherly help to return to the source of Redemption.

St. John Paul II's solution? "Mary's appeal... must be unceasingly returned to. It must ever be taken up anew."

Remember that Pope Francis specifically had his papacy consecrated to Our Lady of Fatima at Fatima in May 2013, then in October entrusted the world to Our Lady of Fatima.

So let's listen to our Mother and gain her promise, fulfill the Five First Saturdays with these steps:

- **Go to Confession and receive Holy Communion.** (*As long as you receive Communion in the state of grace, Confession within eight days before or after the first Saturday is acceptable.*)
- **Pray the Rosary.** (*Five decades.*)
- **Keep Our Lady company for 15 minutes by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary.** (*This is in addition to praying the Rosary.*)

Do all with the specific intention to make reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the blasphemies and offences against her.

Fatima authority and national preacher, Father Andrew Apostoli of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, strongly reminds in his book *Fatima for Today*: "As a mother, Our Lady wants none of her children to be lost, but all to be saved. So let us faithfully and generously carry out her wishes in this great devotion of the Five First Saturdays. The First Saturdays devotion, with its unique combination of Confession, Communion and the Rosary, holds a special place in Our Lady's plan."

Let's listen to our mother, fulfill her request, and gain her promise for heaven too. ■

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EDITORIAL

All for people

“Working with people is the best part of being a pastor,” says Msgr. Thomas Driscoll, who retired as pastor of Notre Dame Parish in Easton this May. The reflections of every priest, either retiring or looking back from their silver or golden jubilee, contain the same two words: “happy,” and “people.”

Priests are happy being with people—and in their love of God, their devotion to the faith, their relationships with the members of their parish. They have baptized and confirmed children, and in many cases officiated at their marriages. They have conferred the Sacrament of the Sick, struggled helplessly to console families in times of tragedy, and offered the consolation of the Resurrection at funeral Masses.

Everything a priest does, from his first parish Mass to the end of his ministry, is involved with people. Pastors retire, but their connections to the family of faith never end. Msgr. John Sabia, another retiring pastor, will help out at St. Matthew’s in Norwalk. Father David Riley is back where he began as a young priest, in St. Mary’s Parish in Ridgefield. “Wherever I’ve been, the people have been good,” he says, echoing the refrain of all parish priests.

Young or old, retired or just starting out, the secret of a happy priesthood remains the same. Msgr. Driscoll sums it up. “A priest’s life is all about involvement with people.”

A call for renewal

Sunday, June 29, was a remarkable day in our diocese when Bishop Frank Caggiano stepped up to the pulpit at St. Augustine Cathedral and delivered his long-awaited Vespers homily (printed in full on page 2). More than 700 Catholics throughout the diocese filled the cathedral for the prayer service and the announcement of the major themes of Synod 2014.

In his clarion call to a new generation, the bishop said that young people are not just the future of our Church, but they are the “here and now eager to take up the challenges of our time. They may have the answers that we’ve been looking for.”

He also notably reached out to our Catholic brothers and sisters who feel unwelcome, as if no one misses them. “But we do miss them and want them present with us,” he said, calling for evangelical outreach and building up communities of faith.

In the spirit of Pope Francis, Bishop Caggiano challenged local Catholics “to become missionary disciples reaching out to those who are away from the Church, one person at a time.”

In urging us to look anew at charity and justice issues, the bishop also asked us to look closer to home because, “In a county like ours, there should be no one who is homeless; no one who is hungry; no one who is alone. That may be a lifetime of work but that lifetime will begin in the synod.”

Bishop Caggiano said there are many challenges ahead, but reminded us that saints Peter and Paul built a bridge that has stood for 2000 years and will remain firm until the end of time. “Imagine what we can do, guided by the Holy Spirit, for generations yet to come in this great diocesan Church of Bridgeport.”

It’s clear that we have our work cut out for us, but it’s also clear from the responses at the many listening sessions throughout the diocese that Catholics love their Church. They are eager to work with their new Bishop and to move forward in love and faith.

Vacation

It’s often noted that American have the shortest vacations in the western world—and we’re just as likely to fill up our free time with a home improvement project or some other frenzied activity. Yet at the root of vacation is the word “vacate,” or emptying out. It could be that we whittle vacations into a narrow time slot because in a culture in which we define ourselves by work and keeping busy, “doing nothing” goes against the grain. But the Church may have an answer for us in the importance of emptying ourselves in order to experience life to its fullest. So whether you seek out a pool of shade under a backyard tree or you cool your bare feet walking across a summer beach, take a moment to slow down and listen to God’s presence in your life. It’s a good way to start a vacation! ■

EDITOR’S CHOICE

Bishop Caggiano to appear on EWTN interview

Father Andrew Apostoli, host of EWTN “Sunday Night Prime,” recently welcomed Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport, to his program.

The one-hour interview entitled “So Enormously Blessed” will air Sunday, August 10, at 8 pm. There will also be an encore presentation Monday, August 11, at 9 am.

During the interview, Bishop Caggiano makes the point that joy is the divine gift essential for Catholics to radiate in their daily life experiences. Witnessing joy in the faithful, nourished through the sacraments and prayer, creates “holy curiosity” for the non-believer, the bishop says.

He adds that “holy curiosity” is a necessary step for a fruitful conversion to the faith. Non-believers soon realize it is not about “what” a joyful Catholic has, but rather “who” they have.



SUNDAY NIGHT PRIME—EWTN host Fr. Andrew Apsotoli recently interviewed Bishop Caggiano on the topic of blessings and joy. The program will air on EWTN Sunday, August 10, at 8 pm. There will also be an encore presentation on Monday, August 11, at 9 am.

During the broadcast Bishop Caggiano suggests we can all follow the humble example of St.

Francis when he said “Proclaim the Gospel. If necessary, use words.” ■



CATHOLIC SCOUTING—Bishop Caggiano presided over his first Catholic Scouting Awards Ceremony in June at St. Augustine Cathedral. He presented over 150 awards to Boy and Girl Scouts, including recognition of St. Rose of Lima, which earned the Quality Catholic Charter Organization Award. The Scouts also recognized the Diocese of Bridgeport. Congratulations to all the young scouts for their dedication and achievement! (PHOTO BY MICHELLE BABYAK)

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Editorial



Not left behind

CATHOLIC BY GRACE

BY DENISE BOSSERT

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

Mary was assumed into heaven. It's one of the more difficult teachings for converts to grasp. But there are ways to approach the Assumption so that non-Catholics may come to believe.

In 1995, I wrote an article for Protestant newspapers called "Trends in Christian Fiction" that considered the possibility that a Christian fiction book might hit the *New York Times* Bestseller List. I traveled to key Protestant publishers—Tyndale, Crossway, Moody, Victor and Bethany House—to interview editors. The

publishers handed me galleys, and they all believed their books had that crossover appeal. Only one actually did. *Left Behind* was on the publishing turnpike back then, and it was among the galleys I brought home with me after that Chicago-Minneapolis trip. Tyndale released the book within six months of my visit, and the book (and subsequent series) was a huge success.

Nicholas Cage and Lea Thompson will now star in a screen adaptation of that book. The movie opens October 3, 2014. So the *Left Behind* craze continues.

I have one question. And it isn't about whether or not the idea of "Rapture" is biblical. My question has nothing to do with Christians disappearing when Christ returns. I'm not going to take the time to explain why Catholic teaching on eschatological things is solid and *Left Behind* theology is Hollywood science fiction.

No. I'm pondering something else.

Why is it so easy for people to believe that Jesus Christ will return and "rapture" those who love him, leaving behind the rest of the world, but those same people find it impossible to believe that Jesus Christ came for his mother and assumed her, body and soul, into heaven?

Why is that harder to believe?

When I ponder the glorious Assumption of Mary into heaven, I have to smile. It fits. It makes sense. A perfect and loving son would do that if he could. A divine son did do it because he could.

Jesus Christ looked upon his

mother, and Love broke through the veil.

Jesus, the perfect Son of God, would not let his mother's body know corruption. Not this mother who was so carefully created—so immaculately formed.

In May, I traveled to the Holy Land. We visited many places, but one place that stands out in my mind is Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion.

Let me take you there for just a moment. Step with me into the Tomb of King David. Let's pray there, together. Let's think of David's descendent, the Christ, who was given an eternal throne.

Now, let me lead you just a few steps from the place where David is buried. There, you will find the doors to Dormition Abbey. According to tradition, Mary fell asleep and was assumed into heaven from this spot.

There is a place in Ephesus that also makes this claim, but many Catholic sources say Mount Zion is more likely. And I agree.

It is so fitting that the one who is called "Daughter Zion" and

mother of David's eternal heir should end her earthly life here—and be visited by the Lord who lovingly laid claim to his mother.

Come to me, my beloved mother. Come and see the place I have prepared.

With angelic shouts and trumpet blast, she was raised and crowned Queen. Earth was silent. But heaven erupted with great jubilation.

Why is it so easy to imagine a silly story about Jesus coming to earth and Christians across the world disappearing? Airplanes crashing as pilots disappear into thin air. Cars crashing as drivers disappear. Students leaving behind open books and laptops? Why is that easier to imagine, but Mary's Assumption seems far-fetched?

I stood in the crypt of Dormition Abbey. I thought of King David's bones, which were just a few steps away. And yet, in this crypt, there are no bones. Mary's body is not here. And nobody has claimed to have

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



Prayers of the (Mostly) Faithful

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

I never prayed at bedtime when I was little. I'd see kids doing it in movies and on television, but it just wasn't a part of our routine. Now I get to make the routine. So, in our house, we pray.

My kids are still very young (most of them). They don't stay up too late. It's not that they aren't willing; they just can't keep their eyes open. Often, I arrive home from work through the front door as they are heading up the wooden hills to Bedfordshire.

I shuck my shoes and look longingly at dinner. But up we go together, telling stories about

our day or humming a tune from *Annie*. Some nights I'm so hungry I'm tempted to simply tuck them in and make my escape.

But the temptation always passes, and I'm always glad it does. Daddy needs to pray, too.

My soon-to-be six year-old, Paddy, is a good one for saying his prayers. He takes it seriously, even if he does have to be reminded to make the sign of the cross with his right hand, not his left, and to stop jittering.

Having been a boy myself once, I know how hard it is for a fidgety fellow to keep still. I admire Paddy's devotion, which

belies his age.

Magdalena, who shares his room, is less pious. She delights in dropping silly words into our Hail Marys and Glory Bes. "Hail Mary, full of . . . pomegranates," she'll say with a giggle. Or, "Glory be to the Father and to the son and to the . . . beans." We tighten our lips, Paddy and I, and try to ignore.

Is it sacrilege? Perhaps. But people don't get punished at bedtime in our house. Not while we're asking forgiveness for our trespasses. Not while we're forgiving those who trespass against us.

Our petitions to the saints can get complicated. I enjoy asking for the prayers of our namesake saints. "Saint Patrick," I'll say. "Pray for us," the children will reply. "Saint Matthew," my son will say. "Pray for us," we'll say together.

This is Magdalena's cue: "Saints Kiki and Marina, pray for us."

I'll spare you trying to find your copy of *Butler's Lives of the Saints*. Kiki and Marina are not

obscure holy women canonized by the Church in a bygone era. They are one half—the female half—of the Fresh Beat Band. (If you don't know what that is, I truly envy you.)

"Magdalena, please take the prayers seriously," I'll say, lowering my eyes with rehearsed disapproval, for I know what's coming. "Twist and Shout, pray for us," she says with a full throated laugh. She looks about, thoroughly pleased with herself.

(If you haven't guessed, Twist and Shout are the noms-de-theatre of the male half of the aforementioned Fresh Beat Band, which is, come to think of it, less a band than it is a television show and less a television show than an instrument of torture for parents, music lovers, and innocents everywhere.)

All you can do with a child who asks for the prayers of a Nickelodeon character is tickle her until she cries for mercy. Then tuck her in, hit the lights, and get busy eating your dinner.

I don't want to do a disservice to Magdalena's public reputa-

tion. While she occasionally lacks focus at bedtime, she does have moments of extreme clarity. Especially when giving thanks for the many blessings that make an eight-year-old's life worth living.

"Thank you God for spaghetti and meatballs," she said in one of her more serious moods. "And for no carrots."

When Paddy finally downshifts his motor, he, too, is capable of serious reflection. "If I went to heaven," he mused once, "it wouldn't be all happy because you guys wouldn't be there."

Hmmm. Serious theological question: Is paradise less heavenly for the absence of your still living loved ones? Sometimes there's not much you can do except shrug your shoulders, mumble something about "mysterries" and say goodnight.

"Sleep tight Fresh Beats. It's been a great day. Don't let the pomegranates bite."

Now what are the chances dinner's still hot?

(You can follow Matt on Twitter @matthenmessey.)

Health Care

**U.S. News & World Report names
St. Vincent's best in Fairfield County**

BRIDGEPORT—St. Vincent's Medical Center has been ranked for the second consecutive year as the Best Hospital in Fairfield County and in all of Western Connecticut by *U.S. News & World Report* in its 2014-2015 "Best Hospitals" survey.

St. Vincent's is also ranked third highest in the state, moving up a notch from fourth place last year, and was recognized as "High-Performing" in 10 specialties, two more than last year: cancer; cardiology & heart surgery; diabetes & endocrinology; gastroenterology & GI surgery; geriatrics; gynecology; nephrology; neurology and neurosurgery; pulmonology; and urology. The annual *U.S. News Best Hospitals* rankings, now in their 25th year,

recognize hospitals that excel in treating the most challenging patients.

"The dedication to quality and patient safety demonstrated by our staff and physicians in today's challenging healthcare world is borne out by this most recent performance in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual ranking," said St. Vincent's Health Services president & CEO Stuart Marcus, MD, FACS. "It affirms all the work we have done to create a safe and highly reliable organization, and it is very gratifying to see that the outstanding patient experience and compassionate care provided by our staff are being recognized by this objective national ranking tool. It just spotlights what our patients, staff and

community already know about St. Vincent's."

For 2014-2015, *U.S. News* evaluated hospitals in 16 adult specialties. In most specialties, it ranks the nation's top 50 hospitals and recognizes other high-performing hospitals that provide care at nearly the level of their nationally ranked peers and represent valuable regional sources of quality care.

"The data tell the story—a hospital that emerged from our analysis as one of the best has much to be proud of," says *U.S. News Health Rankings* Editor Avery Comarow. "A Best Hospital has demonstrated its expertise in treating the most challenging patients."

U.S. News publishes Best

Hospitals to help guide patients who need a high level of care because they face particularly difficult surgery, a challenging condition, or added risk because of other multiple health problems or age. Objective measures such as patient survival and safety data, the adequacy of nurse staffing levels and other data determined the rankings in most specialties.

The specialty rankings and data were produced for *U.S. News* by RTI International, a leading research organization based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Using the same data, *U.S. News* produced the state and metro rankings.



THE RATING by *U.S. News & World Report* recognizes the compassionate care provided by St. Vincent's staff.

(The rankings have been published at www.health.usnews.com/best-hospitals and will appear in print in the *U.S. News Best Hospitals 2014* guidebook, available in August.)




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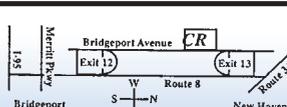
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St. Joseph, Brookfield Happy Saint Baldrick's Day!

By FATHER COLIN MCKENNA

Everyone has heard of St. Patrick's Day, but St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield celebrates St. Baldrick's Day! Sponsored by St. Joseph School and spearheaded by parents Mike and Dianna Sobutka, St. Joseph's aimed to raise nearly \$25,000 this year for St. Baldrick's Foundation, which seeks to conquer childhood cancers.

Father Chip O'Neill, pastor of St. Joseph's, thanked God on a recent Sunday for the beautiful weather for the outdoor event. Father Chip used the loudspeaker to encourage those to be shaved, and the shavers, to do all for the glory of God. He and Msgr. Edward Scull were also among those who had volunteered to have their heads shaved to support childhood cancer research. The two priests had purposely let their hair grow longer than usual so that their buzz-cuts would look even more dramatic.

Those who were to have their heads shaved could raise money beforehand by asking for pledges for their soon-to-be baldness. Others could make a donation at the event before having their heads shaved in solidarity with children fighting cancer. Walk-up "shavees" were asked to make a minimum donation of \$20 in order to have their hair professionally coiffed. The volunteer shavers were all professional hairstylists.

This is the third year that

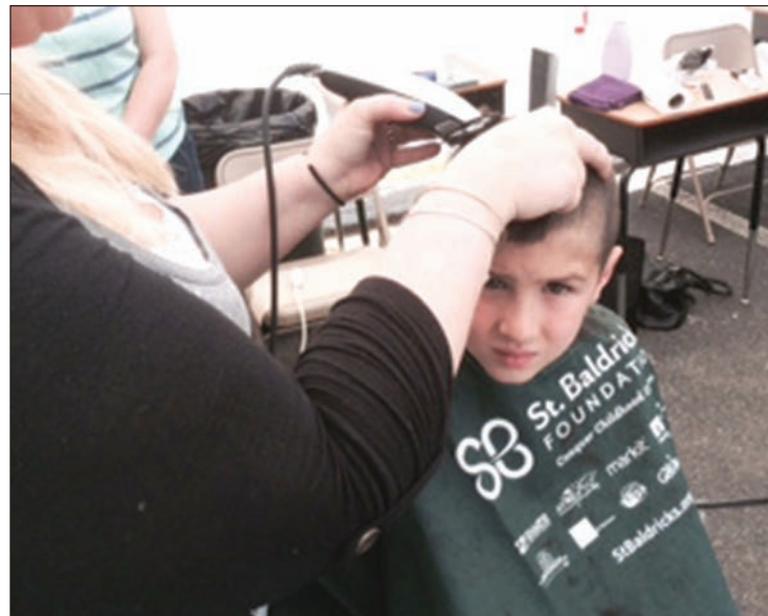
St. Joseph's has sponsored the St. Baldrick's fundraising event. The previous two events yielded a total of \$47,000 for childhood cancer research, and it is hoped that this year's total will approach or surpass \$25,000. While money for this year's event is still being collected, Fr. Chip confirmed that the three-year total raised has now passed \$60,000.

The St. Baldrick's fundraising formula is proving popular and effective. Shaving heads can also be practical. One woman

watched admiringly as both her husband and her son received maintenance-free buzz-cuts for the warm summer weather.

As would be expected, most of those having their heads shaved were males. Girls and women seemed to be reluctant to embrace the shaved-head look. In any case, females who want to donate their hair for a cause (without having their heads shaved) have another outlet in the "Locks of Love" program that helps provide wigs for cancer patients.

One group of girls at the event helped to raise funds for cancer



OLD AND YOUNG enjoy a shave for cancer research.

research by selling popcorn. At first, they were having trouble making the popcorn machine function properly, but then they let out a cheer as mounds of popcorn started to rise in the glass enclosure. Asked how they got the machine to work after their earlier troubles, one of the girls said, "It wasn't plugged in!"

(Anyone interested in sponsoring an event, volunteering time, making a donation, or having his or her head shaved in solidarity with cancer patients can find more information at www.StBaldricks.org. A video of the event at St. Joseph's can be viewed online below the St. Baldrick's article at www.bridgeport-diocese.com/fcc.)

==== DENISE BOSSERT FROM PAGE 13 =====

Mary's remains. Why? Because there are no remains.

In fact, the disagreement about a possible site for the Assumption exists because there are no bones to settle the matter. The dueling claim underscores the reality of the Assumption. She is not here—or there!

Yes, Jesus Christ will return again. And he will raise the living and the dead. It won't follow the plotline of a Hollywood thriller. But there is precedent for our rising to meet the Lord. Although Mary's Assumption is unique, the one who assumed his own mother will return—for us. The dead in Christ will be raised to new life. But the unfaithful won't

be "left behind"—although they probably will wish they had been left. Earth is preferable to eternal separation from God. The Bible tells us we will be divided—the faithful going one way, the unfaithful another.

Leave the *Left Behind* hoopla in Hollywood.

Turn your eyes to the Holy Land, or Ephesus, or even toward heaven. And celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. What Jesus did for Mary—in a unique and special way—gives us hope that one day Christ will return. So let's model our lives after the Blessed Mother, remaining faithful until the end. ■

Where do our girls

PLAY?

Anywhere they want.

Alum Tory Bensen recently was named Division I All Ivy Tournament Team Lacrosse at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Summer Travel

Traveling with an eye for things religious

By FRANK DeROSA

When an Italian-born former Fairfield County corporate executive, now retired in his homeland, invited our traveling party of three to lunch with him in Florence, not only did we savor every morsel of multi-course Tuscan fare in a difficult to find hillside trattoria, but I developed an appetite for researching a bit about Galileo. Yes, that Galileo.

The controversial astronomer, wrongly-condemned by the Church in 1633, was not part of our conversation as we dined and sipped. Instead, we talked about World Cup soccer (then in progress but without Italy's eliminated entry after the questionable officiating in the "biting" episode), Pecorino cheese (Anthony, my boyhood friend, gave a wheel to Paolo, our host and his onetime business associate) and the spectacular view of Florence from on high (Liliane mentions it often), and recalled times past.

Galileo's name didn't come up until after lunch, as we stood at the doorway of Trattoria Omero. A co-proprietor, a warm, gracious and delightful dark-haired lady who spoke excellent English,



Fresco from the Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, in Chiusura

told us before saying "ciao" that "he lived across the street" from where the restaurant now stands on Via Pian Giullari.

Though I'm sure Galileo would have loved a meal at Omero had it existed in his time, the lady explained that he had a paternal reason for keeping a residence in the community. It was to live close to his daughter Virginia, or Suor Maria Celeste, a cloistered nun who followed the Rule of St.

Clare of Assisi. The Convent of St. Matteo was nearby.

History tells us that although a faithful and prayerful Catholic, Galileo fell in disfavor with Pope Urban VIII for maintaining that the earth revolved around the sun—the Copernican theory—and was condemned by the Holy Office as a heretic.

Throughout her father's ordeal, Suor Maria Celeste remained loyal to him, convinced

of his "innocence of any heretical depravity," as Dava Sobel wrote in her book, *Galileo's Daughter*. It wasn't until 1992 that a commission established by Pope John Paul II "rehabilitated" him. The Church moves slowly.

As an occasional traveler with a practiced eye for things religious, I found this unexpected encounter with a bit of history a gem for the memory bank. The cobblestoned streets of old Europe can be full of surprises.

Surprises can come in a modern way, too. That became apparent at Sunday Mass in the Jesuits' St. Michael's Church on bustling Maxburgstrasse in Munich.

Moments before the time for sung responses and hymns, the digital age blended with the ancient rite. Two unobtrusive small screens mounted on the walls adjacent to the sanctuary suddenly flashed luminous numbers telling congregants where to find the words and music in the hymnal. For the recessionist, you were told not only the page but also to sing verses one and four. It was a Teutonic attention-getter. I'd never seen it before. If it led only to somewhat livelier singing, it nevertheless said that the priestly sons of Loyola are

never at a creative loss.

On a trip that took us to Austria, as well as to Italy and Germany, the eye also caught the roadside St. Christopher Shrine outside a Landzeit service area on the Autobahn in Austria, a reminder to drivers that bad things can happen to good people if you drive too fast.

There was the church on the property of a resort hotel in Italy which offered Sunday evening Masses three times a month for vacationers. Not to mention the hotel near Kitzbuhel in the Tyrolean Alps where the Freedom from Religion Foundation is not likely to hold a convention. Why? Inscribed on a dining room ceiling beam were the letters IHS, the symbolic monogram of Christ, beneath a Cross, with the year it was placed alongside. That's why.

Most fascinating was finding the Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, in Chiusura, after a drive on hilly and winding Tuscan roads with breathtaking vistas on all sides. Amidst cypress trees on grounds awash with serenity stood the redbrick abbey, the monastery home to 30 white-robed Benedictine Olivetan

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Catholic Work Camp

'A Beautiful Mess'

By **KELLY WALSH**

The St. Pius X and St. Thomas Aquinas youth groups in Fairfield recently returned from an amazing week at Catholic Heart Work Camp in the Boston area.

The theme of this year's Catholic Heart Work Camp was "A Beautiful Mess." It was an opportunity to create, through total chaos, better home life for impoverished families with clean-ups, painting and other projects. The Work Camp ran from June 29 to July 4.

Blessed Mother Teresa said, "Do small things with great love," a quote that the youth groups took to heart. Through acts of service such as painting houses, preparing meals at a soup kitchen, or helping at a Vacation Bible School, we were able to put our faith into action. More importantly, we began to make a "beautiful mess" in the Boston community as people were surprised by the faith and service of young people.

It was truly a remarkable trip where we were able to grow in our relationships with each other, with teenagers from other parishes, and with our residents. I also grew in my relationship with God and witnessed other members of our youth group truly encounter Christ through Adoration, daily Mass, and Confession.

Although we all are sinners with

TRAVELING

FROM PAGE 16

monks. Regrettably, we were not there to hear their Gregorian Chant at Mass.

But we did view 36 brilliant frescoes in glorious and vivid colors depicting the life of St. Benedict, produced around 1500 by artists Luca Signorelli and Giovanni Bazzi. They adorn the walls of the Great Cloister, an indoor rectangular space that surrounds an open courtyard in whose center sits a statue of Benedict, the patron saint of Europe.

When asked if Pope Benedict XVI had ever visited the monastery, a monk told us that he had, but as a cardinal, not as pontiff.

After our stop there, impressed with what we had seen, we headed out in search of a different kind of treasure, another satisfying trattoria. ■

our own "messes," the theme of CHWC reassured us that we can bring our imperfections to God and allow him to use us to make a beautiful mess in our everyday lives.

What was your best experience from this trip and why? What did you get out of it or learn from it?

"My best experience was getting to work with all the little kids in the daycare." —*Jenny Schneider*

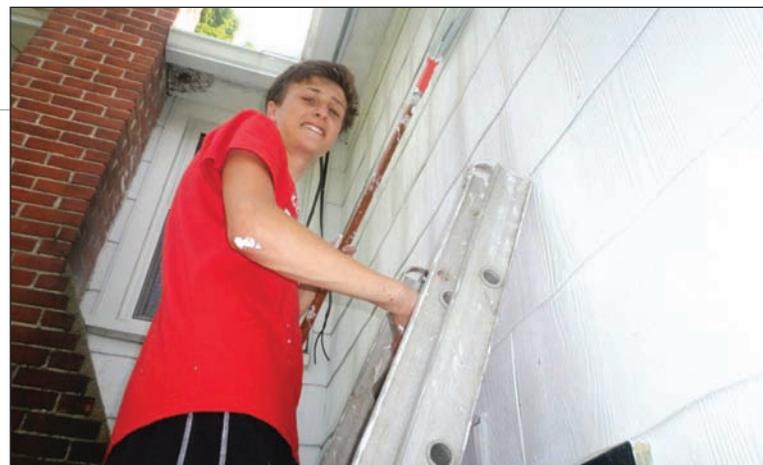
"The most significant moments of the trip were cen-

tered around the time spent with my residents, Min and Khoi Dwang. These two amazing individuals were by far the most grateful, caring, and faithful people I have come across thus far in my life."

—*Thomas O'Brien*

"One of my residents was blind. She said, "Even though I am blind and unable to see the garden you made for me, the most important thing is that I know God and your beauty are with me."

—*Jen O'Neil*



PAINTING HOUSES can be fun when done "with great love!"

"My best experience from this mission trip was helping the elders at their picnic. I loved hearing all their stories." —*Caroline Grosso*

"You look at our faith in a different light and see God in new

ways. When we had Adoration the environment was a grass field and a guitar in the background." —*Catherine Regan*

(*Kelly Walsh is a member of the St. Pius X youth group in Fairfield*) ■

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Synod 2014

SYNOD FROM PAGE 4

deacons and parish staff; it is the work of every single parishioner.

We must ask a very hard question: How will it be that every baptized member of this diocesan family of faith will help our parishes to realize what the Lord wants them to be: living, vibrant places where the Lord is known, worshipped and served.

We also seek to build up our communities of faith which we call our schools. For our schools are places of academic excellence, and they are extolled for that.

They are also lauded because they are Catholic schools, not “private” schools. Many schools long for more children to have the opportunity to receive the great gift of Catholic education. My friends, I will ask the synodal delegates, in collaboration with our school leaders, to seek ways to strengthen our schools so that they retain academic excellence and grow in their Catholic identi-

ty. May the day come when every Catholic child who wants to go to a Catholic school will have the opportunity to do so regardless of their economic status.

All communities of faith that we have formed, my friends, that wish to be strengthened, that need to grow, cannot do so without the leaders who serve those communities also being given the opportunity to grow. Many of you are those leaders, and what I heard in our listening sessions is that the people of God are grateful for all that you do, and so am I.

But we must allow all women and men in leadership the time and opportunity to grow in knowledge and faith. They must be given—our priests, deacons, and lay leaders—an opportunity to grow in knowledge of the faith and to grow in love of one another. We must strengthen them in their sacrifice and help them to become ever more joyful in their

ministry. Our leaders need the opportunity to grow in faith and love—and that includes me.

The third synodal theme is to foster evangelical outreach. Too many of our Catholic brothers and sisters no longer feel the need to be part of our worshipping family. They feel unwelcome. They feel as if they do not belong. And they feel that no one misses them. But we do miss them and want them present with us. The synod will be an opportunity for us to find new and creative ways to do an outreach that is evangelical—meaning that it will bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to them. We will find new ways to bring to them the good news that they are welcomed, they are missed, they are invited, and I will challenge the delegates not simply to come up with programs, but to find a way to do what Pope Francis has asked us to do: to become missionary disciples, reaching out to those who are away from the Church one person at a time.

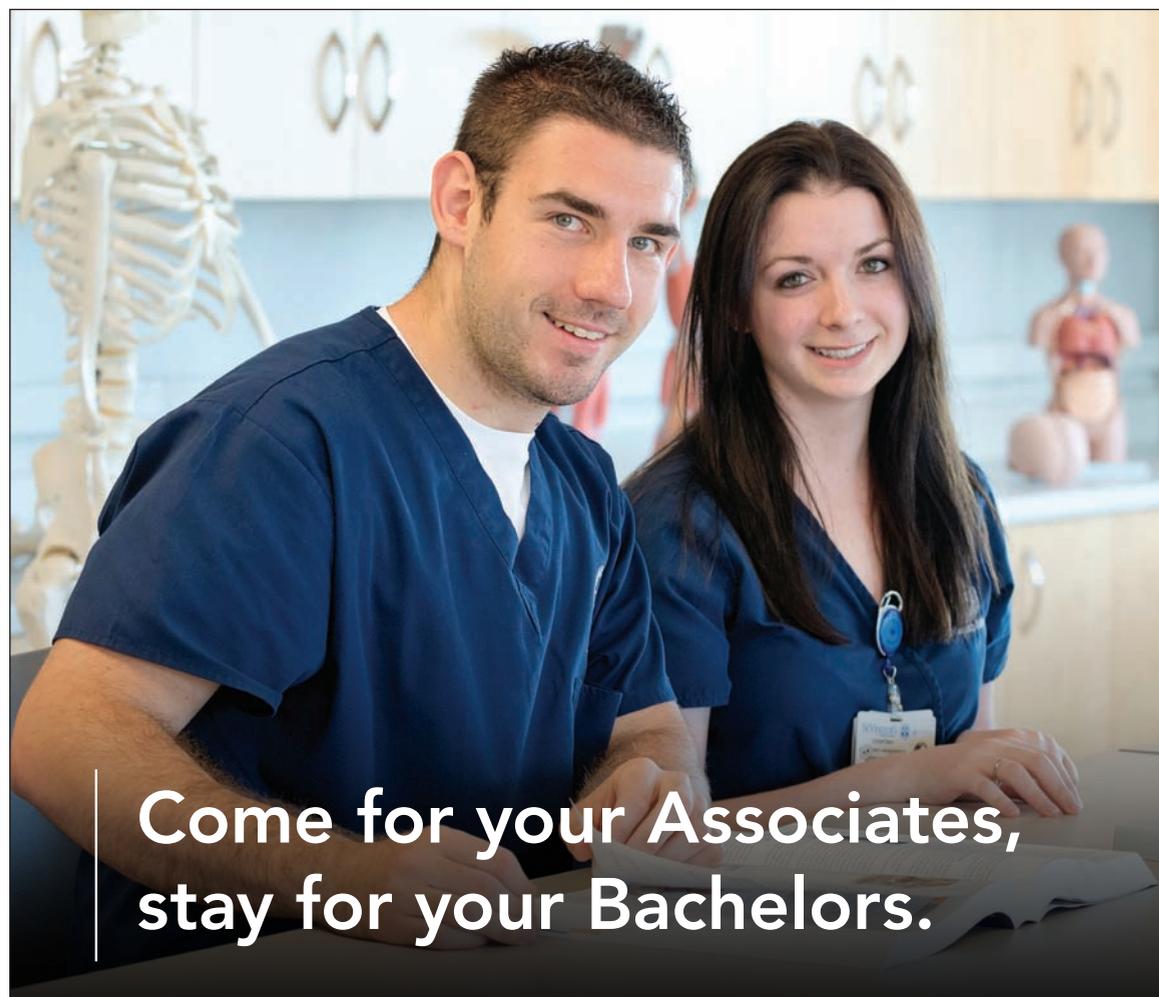
Let us pray that the day will come when our churches will be bursting once again with all of the baptized side by side, in worship of the One True God, who is Jesus the Lord. Much good is going on already in our Church, and we need to celebrate all that is being done. Let us build on the good that is already there.

The fourth synodal theme concerns the works of charity that are done so quietly in every corner of our diocese. Let us find new ways to promote works of charity and justice, to allow us to get the good news out of what is already underway: the good works of Catholic Charities and all of the parish-based programs that many of you serve in quietly. The time

has come for the world to know the good that happens in the Catholic Church. But more than that, we need to discover new ways to respond to the needs of all people. In a county like ours, there should be no one who is homeless; no one who is hungry; no one who is alone. That may be a lifetime of work, but that lifetime will begin in the synod. Works of charity make the community more credible, and by making the community credible, we will bring many to great faith in God who is love Himself

So there is much to do. I hope you are excited, because I am. The synod is not going to be the end of the journey, it is only the beginning.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



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Synod 2014 Themes

Empower the Young Church

Give young people the faith in ways that they can understand
Provide young people with the opportunity to discover their gifts and talents

Keep all young people safe, so they may grow in holiness, wisdom and faith

Build Up Communities of Faith

Strengthen mothers and fathers, and families of all different shapes and sizes that exist in Fairfield County, as the first and primary community of faith

Provide additional opportunities and resources for catechesis and faith formation in our parishes

Make our parishes more welcoming to all who wish to know Jesus as a living, saving, Redeemer.

Assist all women and men in parish leadership (priests, deacons and lay leaders) to grow in knowledge of the faith, and love of one another.

Foster Evangelical Outreach

Help our brothers and sisters who no longer participate in the faith on a regular basis to become part of our worshipping family again.

Find new and creative ways to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all.

Become, as Pope Francis has asked us to be, missionary disciples.

Promote Works of Charity and Justice

Broadcast the good works that are already occurring through Catholic Charities programs and in all of our parishes to assist those in need

Discover new ways to respond to the needs of the homeless, the hungry and the lonely

Reminder to all General Delegates: You are asked to attend one of the delegate formation programs prior to the start of the Synod. The last of those programs will be held Saturday, August 16, from 9 am to 2 pm at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull. Please go to www.2014synod.org/gd for more information and to register.

Reminder to the General Public: You are cordially invited to attend the Solemn Vespers Service for the opening of the Fourth Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport on Friday, September 19 at 7:30 pm in St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport. More detailed information will be provided in the next issue of *Fairfield County Catholic*.

Sports

Lessons in golf and life

By **JOE RYAN**

According to former Fairfield Prep golf coach Roger Ratchford, it is the growth of those under his tutelage, both on the golf course and in the classroom, that gives him satisfaction.

Ratchford is still called “coach” even though it has been almost a decade since he retired as the Jesuit head coach. His focus on getting a person to be his best rather than worrying about wins and losses gives him a revered legacy.

“It’s the people I worked with over the years,” said Ratchford, “a lot of them have turned into terrific people who are still involved with golf in one way or another.”

Ratchford may not believe in talking about numbers, but with 690 wins and 26 conference championships, he made Fairfield Prep one of the most successful teams in the state. The Jesuits won five state championships and came in second five times during his time at the helm, but he is just as proud of his accomplishments in the classroom and in the community.

Ratchford has the look of a man who has enjoyed his life as he sits on his porch on a beautiful summer afternoon. He is wearing his Fairfield Prep hat and golf shirt, with the chipping area that he forged in his backyard as a backdrop. Through the trees, Silvermine Country Club is a stone’s throw away. Some days, Ratchford climbs over the wall to play a few holes on the course for fun.

Golf is a game that, unlike many other sports, can stay with athletes for the rest of their lives. Ratchford’s lessons seem to have taken a strong hold in his players’ lives—people like club professional Mike Laganza of Shorehaven, Dave Renzulli of the Country Club of Fairfield and Tom Rosati of Great River. John Kennedy, the director of golf at Westchester Country Club, is one of the leading advocates for youth golf in the United States. These are just

Boston College. He started teaching in Woburn, Mass., where he became the assistant golf coach to Bill Flaherty, whom Ratchford credits for teaching him a lot about coaching golf.

Ratchford returned to Fairfield Prep as a teacher in 1958. At the time, Father Francis Deevy was the golf coach. Ratchford approached him to see if he needed help, and then became his assistant. He soon found that the team was in need of help

regarding technical aspects of the game.

“I like to think of it as the nugget of my coaching because I have familiarized myself with all the theories and realities of the body in motion when swinging at a golf ball,” said Ratchford. “In high school athletics you had the big

guys with brute strength who usually won out, but that is not the case in golf.”

Ratchford became the head coach in 1966. He brought a new way of thinking to coaching at the time. He had his players do some cross-training of sorts, running stairs inside the school building to build stamina for the back nine. He had captains lead the players in off-season practices focused on building fitness.

Ratchford searched for the toughest opponents to play throughout his coaching career.

His belief was that the only way to keep improving is to play teams on the level of your team or better. It prepared his teams to play anyone, anywhere, at any time.

The results speak for themselves.

“I would get the best courses to play on, the toughest type of schedule,” said Ratchford. “I prepared them at Fairfield Prep so that when they graduated they would be able to play at the college level.” He officially retired from coaching in 2005. He may be retired, but he volunteers and helps with the Wilton High School golf team.



ROGER RATCHFORD AND HIS WIFE GAYLE

Ratchford was a teacher of Latin, French and Greek at Fairfield Prep. He felt it was important for the students to learn languages in a functional way. As early as the mid-1960s he was looking for ways to

➤ *CONTINUED ON PAGE 24*

“Ratchford searched for the toughest opponents to play throughout his coaching career. His belief was that the only way to keep improving is to play teams on the level of your team or better.”

some of the former players who have gone on to become teaching professionals throughout the Northeastern United States.

Ratchford was born and grew up in Norwalk. His family belonged to St. Joseph’s Parish and he went to grammar school at the parish school. He was a valedictorian at Fairfield Prep. Ratchford spent most of his time playing baseball growing up, but he was also caddy at Shorehaven Country Club. He went to college at Holy Cross College and then obtained a masters in English at

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Teen Reflection

We're looking for more...

By **REBECCA VODOLA**

As the beloved Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI once said, "The world promises you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness."

This year, I'll be reaching for the promise of his words as I and hundreds of teens will learn of the greatness we were made for at the one-day Fan the Fire retreat. This year's theme, "Made for More," seeks to explore the happiness found only in Christ. Through the Eucharist, Reconciliation,

and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, teens will pursue a relationship with Christ.

The liveliness of Fan the Fire is enough to get any teen's blood rushing with excitement. I remember being there for the first time four years ago, feeling alive with the electric pulse of the music. This was no rock concert, however; it was a Catholic retreat. Who knew that the Church could be so vibrant, so young?

I had been seeking an experience like this for the past month after my first Steubenville East

retreat. That's why Fan the Fire was created in the first place—to fan the fire of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of teens who had been away on mission trips and retreats over the summer. It is the next step in a lifelong faith journey. It is held just prior to the start of school in order to give participants a faith foundation with which to begin the school year. It is the perfect setup for an encounter with the living Christ.

Fan the Fire is unique. There is nothing quite like being surrounded by young Catholics

sharing a love for the Church. Of course, with hundreds of teenaged Catholics around, there's bound to be some fun! From the outdoor games to dancing along to worship music, there's something for everyone. There are amazing speakers who relate to the attendees, like returnee-slash-vocations-director Father Sam Kachuba.

Last year, I remember how Julie Rodgers, another returning speaker, brought up Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati in one of her talks. He was a young, ordinary Catholic who strove to bring the love of Jesus to all he met. He was no different than I am—no different from the hundreds of other teens attending Fan the Fire this August. Yet he is now on his way to becoming a canonized saint. That's the kind of "more" we are made for. The retreat can inspire young Catholics to endeavor toward sainthood. That's what we're looking for at



A GRADUATE OF IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL in Danbury, Rebecca Vodola is a freshman at the Franciscan University of Steubenville this year.

the youth rally this August.

This year will be my fourth and final Fan the Fire as a participant. It is fortuitously being held the weekend before I go away to school. I hope that I, along with all the teens attending, will be able to experience a renewed faith at Fan the Fire this year. I pray that this year, beginning with the Fan the Fire retreat, we as teens may discover that we were not made for the world, but for something—someone—much greater. ■

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SYNOD FROM PAGE 18

My friends, if Peter and Paul, in the hour of the Church's greatest need, could overcome whatever differences they had, and were able with the grace of God to build a bridge, a bridge upon which you and I stand two thousand years later, a bridge that I can assure you will stand firm until the end of time, imagine what we can do (guided by the Holy Spirit) for generations yet to come in this great diocesan Church of Bridgeport.

We have much to do. So my friends, I commend us all to the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, who turned to children when she needed her work done. Tonight, Our Lady turns to us—her children—to do her Son's business. Let us roll up our sleeves. Let us take a deep breath, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, let us turn to each other for inspiration and encouragement and commit ourselves to do our Father's business.

To our Lord—to Jesus the Christ—who will guide us in this synod; to Him be glory and honor, now and forever. Amen. ■

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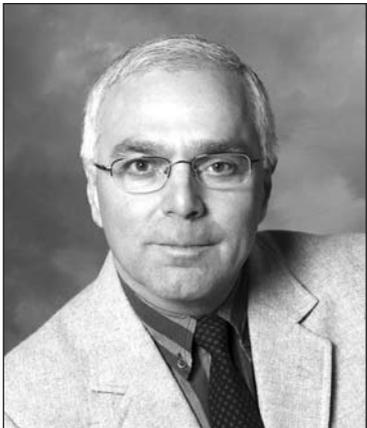
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Column



Unaccompanied migrant children need our help

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BY TONY MAGLIANO

Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated social justice and peace columnist.

Tens of thousands of children fleeing desperate conditions have entered the United States asking for help. And many more are coming. What kind of welcome is being offered to them? The answer to that question is still largely undetermined.

According to Human Rights Watch, the U.S. government predicts that 90,000 unaccompanied migrant children will cross the US-Mexico border in fiscal year 2014, more than 10 times the number who crossed in 2011. And thousands of other children have crossed with a parent, also an increase from previous years.

Reportedly, more than 90 percent of these children are from

Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, where pervasive drug/gang violence and poverty have made their lives dangerous and miserable.

It is said that drugs go north and guns and money go south. Therefore, it is essential in the U.S. that adequate treatment for addiction replace jail time for non-violent drug users, that all loopholes in gun export laws—such as a total ban on all assault weapons—be passed, and that greatly increased U.S. aid to these Central American nations for schools, job creation through clean industry and agricultural development, infrastructure and fair trade practices become realities.

Injustices resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) are contributing factors towards the flow of unaccompanied migrant children.

According to Barbara Briggs, associate director of the Institute for Global Labor and Human Rights (www.globallabourrights.org), these “free trade” agreements in many cases greatly boost American corporate profits, while undercutting poor workers, domestic industries, and agriculture south of the U.S. border.

Under NAFTA and CAFTA, U.S. companies are often building factories where they are permitted to pay the cheapest wages and lowest benefits to poor workers. These U.S. corporate injustices are in many cases contributing factors driving Latin Americans—adults and children—to seek fairer working and living conditions in the U.S., said Briggs.

The “Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act” would greatly correct many American corporate injustices abroad. Please ask your congressional delegation to reintroduce

this legislation.

While addressing the root-causes of unaccompanied migrant children is essential, we need to also kindly address the immediate needs of these young brothers and sisters.

Instead of viewing these children as criminals who are illegally entering the U.S., a totally

“Pope Francis recently wrote, ‘This humanitarian emergency requires that these children be welcomed and protected.’”

humanitarian Christ-like response is needed.

A coalition of immigration and faith-based organizations, including the Catholic Legal Immigration Network and Catholic Charities, sponsored by Human Rights First recently sent President Barack Obama a letter opposing plans to expedite depor-

tation of migrant children.

They wrote, “The administration’s recent statements have placed far greater emphasis on deterrence of migration than on the importance of protection of children seeking safety.”

Please urge President Obama and your congressional delegation to insure that these children get all the help they need.

You can sign up to receive legislative alerts from the bishops’ campaign for immigrants by going to www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Responding to unaccompanied migrant children seeking asylum in the U.S., Pope Francis recently wrote, “This humanitarian emergency requires that these children be welcomed and protected, and that policies be adopted to promote development in their countries of origin.

“A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed ... moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization—all typical of a throwaway culture—towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world.”

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Obituaries

Sister Elizabeth McGlynn, SSND, dies at 83

Sister Elizabeth McGlynn (formerly Sister Bernard Marie), a longtime school educator and pastoral associate, died on May 3 at Lourdes Health Care Center in Wilton. She was 83 years old and was marking her 60th jubilee as a professed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Elizabeth Helen McGlynn was born in Rochester, N.Y., on November 15, 1930. She entered St. Boniface School, as all of her siblings had done before her, and was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. After graduating from Nazareth Academy in 1952, she entered the order and was given the religious name Bernard Marie. She professed her first vows in 1954 and her final vows in 1960.

Sister Beth, as she was usually called, is a 1964 graduate of Notre Dame University of Maryland, where she earned a bachelor's degree in education. She earned a master's degree in education and reading from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1971.

She taught elementary school in Maryland and Massachusetts. Sister Beth then returned to her native city, Rochester, for the next 14 years, teaching and directing religious education. In 1975 she became retreat director for Better World Movement in Silver Spring, Md., and later ministered in pastoral care with the Interprovincial Cherokee Project in Tahlequah, Okla.

In 1992 Sister Beth moved to



SISTER ELIZABETH MCGLYNN

Connecticut, where she served for the remainder of her life. She became director of religious education at St. Stephen Parish

in Trumbull from 1993-2001 and later directed parish outreach at St. Luke in Westport. In 2002, she moved to Villa Notre Dame,

home to retired SSNDs in Wilton. From there she continued to offer pastoral outreach to St. Luke's while also serving her community as a volunteer and driver. Sister Beth moved to Lourdes Health Care Center, adjacent to Villa Notre Dame, in 2010.

One of her siblings, Sister Virginia McGlynn, SSND, had also joined the School Sisters of Notre Dame and lived out her retirement years in Wilton. Sister Virginia died at Lourdes Health Care Center on April 16 of this year.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated for Sister Beth on May 7 in the chapel at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton. Burial followed at St. Mary Cemetery in Bethel.

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JULY

- 28 Rev. William G. Mahoney1973
29 Deacon Ian Black2006

AUGUST

- 1 Msgr. Daniel J. Foley1999
Msgr. John J. Toomey, P.A.1992
2 Rev. Patrick V. Lavery1976
Msgr. James J. McLaughlin1985
3 Rev. Francis E. Fention1995
4 Msgr. Michael J. Guerin1981
Msgr. James F. Leary1994
7 Rev. Thomas G. Keeney1990
9 Msgr. John J. Kennedy, P.A.1955
Msgr. Frank C. Dellolio1983
Msgr. Richard T. Scully1988
10 Deacon William Rowe2013
14 Deacon Gerardo Ramos2007
15 Msgr. Edward J. Duffy1977
16 Rev. Victor E. Piaskowski1961
18 Rev. Alexander Z. Seregely1971
21 Rev. John J. Dillon1959
Msgr. Thomas P. Guinan1998
22 Rev. Michael Fay2009
23 Msgr. Emilio C. Iasiello, P.A.1969
25 Rev. Richard Futie2013
26 Lawrence Cardinal Shehan1984
28 Rev. Vincent E. Finn1958
Rev. Edmund C. O'Connell1973
29 Deacon Ramon Isidro2006
Rev. Joseph Linck2008

SEPTEMBER

- 2 Rev. Msgr. Francis J. Prancus2000
3 Rev. Msgr. John F. X. Walsh1967
Rev. Msgr. Thomas F. Henahan1998
4 Deacon Matthew Skurat2013
5 Rev. John E. Fay1954
6 Rev. Laurence F. Flanagan1985

Obituaries

Sister Marie Frances

On May 3, Sister Marie Frances Kling, OP, died peacefully, as she had lived, at Saint Catherine of Siena Convent and Healthcare Facility in Caldwell, N.J. At the time of her death Sister had attained the rich age of 98 and was the eldest member of the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell's Congregation.

At a special Mass of Thanksgiving held at St. Catherine's Convent on February 2, Sister Marie Frances Kling observed her 80th anniversary of entrance into the congregation. The recognition continued at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on February 5, when the jubilarians of the Archdiocese of Newark were recognized at the liturgy for the World Day for Consecrated Life. As the only 80th year honoree in attendance, Sister Marie Frances received a standing ovation.

Born in Newark, she joined the Dominican Sisters



of Caldwell on February 2, 1932, and professed vows on August 7, 1933. She earned her B.A. degree in education from Caldwell College and was an elementary school teacher in New Jersey, Connecticut and Alabama. Her longest assignment was teaching at the former Blessed Sacrament School in Bridgeport from 1933-55 and again from 1985-91.

Sister Marie Frances also served as superior of Blessed Sacrament Convent in Bridgeport.

She moved to part time work in 1999 and retired to St. Catherine of Siena Convent in 2001. In retirement, she retained a warm sense of humor. On her ninety-eighth birthday she expressed the wish to ride in her cousin's convertible—and she did!

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Marie Francis on May 9 in St. Catherine's convent chapel. ■

Sister Rita Collins, SSND

Sister Rita Collins, who was a Catholic educator for 52 years, died on May 22, at Lourdes Health Care Center in Wilton. She was 86 years old and had been a professed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 63 years.

Jeannette Rita Collins was born in Watertown, Conn., on April 25, 1928. She graduated from Watertown High School in 1946 and entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame. As a novice she was given the religious name Sister Mary Conrad and professed her first vows as an SSND in 1950. She professed her final vows in 1956.

Sister Rita spent the first years of her ministry in

Philadelphia, Pa., and Westbury, N.Y. before moving to Bridgeport to teach at the former St. John Nepomucene School from 1958-68.

From 1968-70 she served as a teacher and junior high administrator at St. Gregory the Great in Danbury.

After a few years teaching on Long Island, Sister Rita returned to Connecticut in 1973, where she spent the remainder of her life. She taught at St. Lawrence School in Huntington from 1973-79, and she ministered in pastoral care at St. Mary Parish in Norwalk from 2000 to

2007. In 2007 she moved to Villa Notre Dame in Wilton, where she retired to prayer and presence.



Sister Rita earned a bachelor's degree in education from Seton Hall University in New Jersey, and a master's degree in elementary education, also from

Seton Hall.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated for Sister Rita on May 28, in the chapel at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton. Burial followed at St. Mary Cemetery in Bethel. ■

Caregiver honored

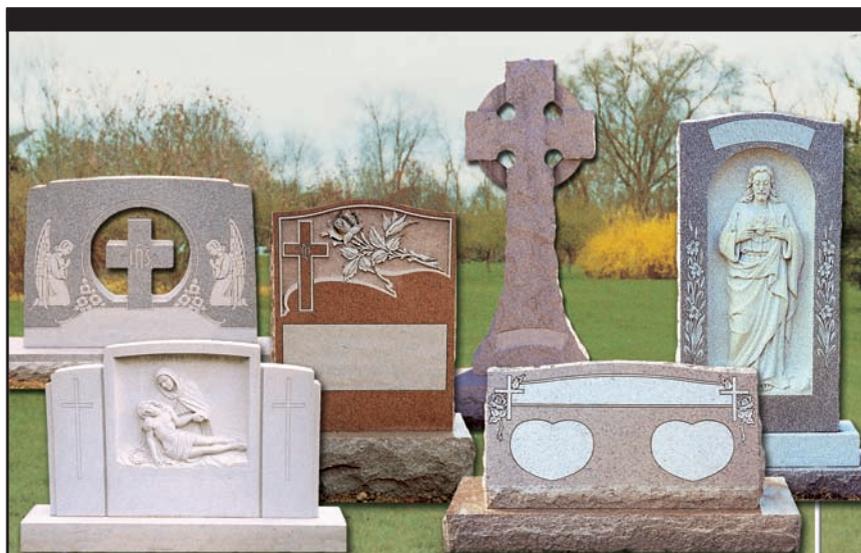


(l-r) DULCE TAYLOR, director of Nursing Services; Raquel Lopez, CAN, Care Giver awardee; Darline Gaspard, RN, unit manager; and Marian Gaudio, administrator.

TRUMBULL—St. Joseph's celebrates the "Caregiver of the Quarter." Residents, families and staff nominate a St Joseph's staff member who they feel represents the mission and values of being a "Caregiver."

St. Joseph's is pleased to announce this quarter's winner, Raquel Lopez, who has dedicated over 18 years of service to the residents of St. Joseph's Manor.

One of the residents who nominated her explained, "Raquel anticipates my needs and always has a smile on her face. I always know that when she is here it is going to be a good day." ■



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Column



Good news for the ordinary people

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

As I was making my evening dash for the train, down the elevator and onto the escalator that takes you into Grand Central, I ran into a brigade of cleaning ladies dressed in light blue smocks, who were entering the building for their shift just as the rest of us were racing out.

They were smiling and joking, unlike the escaping corporate hordes who were exhausted after another day in the salt mines. And as I hurried through the foyer of my office building, I noticed that a very senior executive of a very large corporation was also leaving and, for a brief moment, he crossed paths with the cleaning ladies.

He was a prominent figure in

the business world with a salary and bonus potential in the millions, and seeing them together, I thought of Pope Francis and his message about the world's inequitable distribution of wealth—85 of the richest people have as much as 3.5 billion people in the bottom half of the population.

God, however, is never unfair when it comes to "compensation." He gives grace freely to all and is infinitely just with our eternal reward. I smiled to think the cleaning lady is as important to Christ as the CEO with a multi-million-dollar bonus, or the Oscar-winning actress or the president of a world super-power.

When we go face to face with Jesus for our personal judgment, the women making little more

than minimum wage will be judged the same as the rich and powerful, who instead of dusting desks, oversee corporations and countries. In fact, the cleaning lady might have an advantage. After all, it was Jesus who said the first will be last and the last will be first.

Author Anthony J. Paone, S.J., once wrote: "You may feel that your life is too small or unimportant to deserve much appreciation or respect. Little as you may see in yourself worthy of admiration, you are a reflection of the spiritual nature of God. . . . It does not depend on your achievements, limitations or failures. This personal worth was bestowed on you by God's own creative hand."

God's ways are not man's, and I'm often reminded of the Old Testament story in which the prophet Samuel goes to the house of Jesse to anoint a king for Israel, and as the patriarch brings out his seven sons, God rejects them all.

Samuel is perplexed until God tells him, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Samuel asks Jesse if he has any other sons, and then he meets David, a ruddy youth tending sheep, who hardly seemed like "kingly" material. God, however, had different plans.

Thank goodness God doesn't judge as the world does because that means all of us low achievers by society's standards won't have to worry about not having

enough academic honors, community awards, sports trophies, employee of the month citations or stock options when we go before Jesus.

Jesus levels the playing field. In the end, all the world's praise and the length of our obituaries won't get us any brownie points with the Eternal Judge. The lowly and humble will be judged the same as the high and the mighty . . . by how much they loved. There will be a lot of surprises and disappointments on that day.

We'll want something to show in exchange for our eternal reward. If our hands are empty, how disappointing it will be to have wasted a lifetime with nothing to offer God for the gift of

our life.

Raising our children to love Christ, enduring suffering and offering it up, showing compassion and sympathy to the despondent—these are the things that have meaning in the end, not elective office or a profitable bottom line or the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Everything we view as important in the world will be turned on its head.

The most wonderful thing is that God judges us fairly because "He looks at the heart" . . . of the rich, the poor, the executive, the janitor, the prime minister and the doorman. Yes, the first will be last and the last will be first. For my part, I'm staying close to the cleaning ladies. ■

SPORTS FROM PAGE 19

expand learning outside the classroom.

During his time in the French program he established exchange programs whereby students lived in France with French families. He ran the program in conjunction with Fordham Prep. It extended to Spain and Germany as well and included teachers like Bob Perrotta—the current principal at Fairfield Prep.

"But those trips were not so my students could get a look-see or do some sightseeing," said Ratchford. "No such thing. You went there to build into the language and really learn how to handle yourself with the language."

His career touched the community in many ways. He recalled having Monsignors Andy Varga and William Millea

as students. He is proud of their accomplishments as priests in the Diocese of Bridgeport. He spoke in particular about a trip to the Vatican where Msgr. Millea gave him a tour of the Sistine and Pauline Chapels. Ratchford and his wife Gayle are Eucharistic Ministers at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton.

Ratchford has three children, Brendan, Michael, and Moira. Brendan is a pilot for Hawaiian Airlines, and his daughter Moira is a former interpreter for the State Department and now designs web sites and works as an artist. Michael's diagnosis with cerebral palsy became a life-changing event for Ratchford.

He became an advocate for the rights of children with special needs and had a hand in changing laws in the State of Connecticut.

Through his work in combination with the efforts of others, people with disabilities are now provided dignified living arrangements within communities where they can live and work.

Ratchford spent two terms as president of STAR (Society to Aid Retarded Citizens) in Norwalk and spent 23 years on the state board. Being named the "Volunteer of the Year" by STAR in 1988 is the award he is most proud of ever having received. "It is one of my valued accomplishments," said Ratchford. "What I did has enduring value." ■

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Column



The Pattern

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

There are times when I recite Edna St. Vincent Millay's words, "Oh, world, I cannot hold thee close enough." I have a sense of the beauty and majesty of things, see life as a great gift, a great good, a joyous thing—the sun and rain, nesting birds, morning light, romance, taking naps, standing barefoot in the sand watching the waves roll in. The world is charged with goodness and love.

However, I cannot agree with Thoreau's triumphant assertion that "surely joy is the condition of life."

When I go among people, the pain of so many lays me low. Friend after friend has a sad tale to tell. Typical faces are lined deep with worry. Frankly, pain seems more the rule than the exception. "Nobody lives in Happyland," as the actor Jon Hamm said in a recent *People* magazine article.

There are Tennyson's words: "Never morning wore to evening but some heart did break" ("In Memoriam").

The first of Buddha's "four noble truths" is that existence is suffering. Was Buddha right? Of course he was. The suffering he speaks of courses through the world and always has. Everyone is suffering. It seems everyone can say with the Psalmist "they caught me, sorrow and distress" (Psalm 116).

Christianity uses the language of the Cross. The tree of the Cross blossoms eternally, bearing ever new fruit. There is the Carthusian motto: *Orbs Revolvitur, Crux Stat* (The Cross remains constant while the world turns).

Crucifixion is part of all our stories; we, too, are men and women of sorrow and acquainted with grief. God seems to treat his people so badly.

"Why did she have to suffer? She was such a good person."

How often we've heard that, as if goodness were a hedge against suffering. God's mercy falls on the just and the unjust (Mt.5:45), so does suffering.

I don't understand why the world should be run by so much torment. Could God not have arranged things better? So many people with terminal cancer, so many handicapped children, all the killers that run from multiple sclerosis to Parkinson disease to Alzheimer's disease and diabetes. There's all the anguish that we all have to inevitably negotiate. How do we assess a God who invented both breathtaking sunrises and emphysema?

The author Oscar Wilde once said that there is enough suffering

in any London lane to show that God's love is fancy, not fact. How is this enormous tide of evil possible? What is the point of it all?

One cannot help asking—is the God who allows all this still truly Love? It is the ageless question. The answer is as remote as ever. There is no simple convincing answer. We're put off by those who give pat and glib answers—who demonstrate a faith that doesn't know how to shut up when the only decent response is silence. How annoying is the shallow optimism of those who tell us "Whatever you do, don't look sad. Don't say gloomy things. Don't refer to suffering and tragedy. We are happy, happy, happy. Come brethren, joy, victory, Halleluiah!"

Ideas about suffering as a punishment for sin or divine discipline or testing are unsatisfying. What lesson learned or character forged could be worth the anguish? Would you as a loving parent inflict your child with terminal cancer for any reason? Would you make someone sick in order to test their loyalty?

Talk of how suffering and evil are the result of nature acting nat-

urally and human beings acting freely also does not satisfy. We err in attempting to say wise and universal things about suffering.

The famous Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, in his *Theological Investigations* (Vol.19, 1983) calls suffering a true mystery beyond human intelligence. It is part of the hidden side of God that we are to accept along with God's manifest goodness. Rahner writes that even in the Beatific Vision, that side of God will remain a mystery.

Why did God create a world so structured as to be productive of so much pain? There is one insight I've come across that helps me. It has to do with the idea that Jesus' death and resurrection is the pattern—the pattern for everything. Everything can be and is transformed, no matter how horrible, how painful. It can experience a resurrection. The mystery of death turning into resurrection is the work of God. That's part of God's job description.

It is the Paschal Mystery—through death to life. It is the pattern of reality. It is possibly the mystery of faith. Life consists of a series of dyings followed by a res-

urrection. We will not stay with the dying. New life comes out of the broken places.

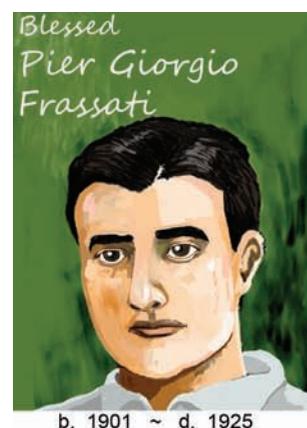
I know a woman whose son has cerebral palsy and has required her constant care, "My son can't walk or talk or feed himself. But God has been really good to me."

The same God who can bring Easter out of Good Friday will bring each of us a surprise second act. God does send us roses. Death and resurrection plays out in our lives over and over again. Dying and rising are always going on in our lives. Everywhere Easter emerges from Good Friday. It is the way life is. It is the pattern of the world. We will not stay with the dying; it is the prelude to a resurrection. Chaos resolves into harmony. The night will give way to a crimson-crested east.

*And though the last light off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and
With ah! bright wings.
(G.M. Hopkins, "God's Grandeur")* ■

SAINTLY LIVES

BY ED WALDRON



b. 1901 ~ d. 1925

PIER WAS BORN INTO A WEALTHY, HIGHLY RESPECTED FAMILY IN TURIN, ITALY. HIS FATHER OWNED THE ANTI-FASCIST NEWSPAPER "LA STAMPA" AND LATER SERVED AS ITALY'S AMBASSADOR TO GERMANY. HIS PARENTS WERE BOTH AGNOSTIC AND, AT TIMES, HARBORED AND EXPRESSED IRRELIGIOUS BELIEFS. AT AN EARLY AGE, PIER, HOWEVER, WAS FASCINATED BY CATHOLICISM AND YEARNED TO SEEK AND FOLLOW CHRIST.



AS HE MATURED, HIS PRAYER LIFE GREW. HE WAS OVERJOYED WHEN HE OBTAINED SPECIAL PERMISSION TO RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST DAILY. DURING HIS SHORT LIFE, HE BECAME ACTIVE IN SEVERAL CATHOLIC GROUPS, SOME POLITICAL, OTHERS MINISTERED TO THE POOR WHILE OTHERS PROMOTED EUCHARISTIC ADORATION. NOTABLY, HE WAS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY AND A DOMINICAN TERTIARY. HE PRAYED THE ROSARY DAILY AND SPENT HOURS IN ADORATION.



PIER WAS POPULAR AMONG HIS PEERS. HE ENJOYED HORSEBACK RIDING, SKIING AND HIKING, BUT HIS LOVE FOR THE MOUNTAINS SEEMED ALMOST SPIRITUALLY RELATED TO HIS LOVE FOR GOD. "WITH EVERY PASSING DAY, I FALL MADLY IN LOVE WITH THE MOUNTAINS: THEIR FASCINATION ATTRACTS ME." AS A MEMBER OF THE ITALIAN ALPINE CLUB, HE REACHED NUMEROUS PEAKS -- SOME WHICH WERE ITALY'S HIGHEST. HE EXPERIENCED MANY CLOSE CALLS, USING SIMPLY AN ICE PICK AND DOUBLE ROPES. ON THE BACK OF A PHOTOGRAPH OF HIMSELF CLIMBING A STEEP OUTCROP, HE WROTE SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, "VERSO L'ALTO" WHICH IN ENGLISH, TRANSLATES, "TO THE TOP!"



"JESUS COMES TO ME EVERY MORNING IN HOLY COMMUNION: I REPAY HIM IN MY VERY SMALL WAY BY VISITING THE POOR." PIER COMFORTED THE SICK AND GAVE TO THE POOR AT AN EXHAUSTIVE PACE AND AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY. HE GAVE HIS OWN CLOTHES AWAY TO THOSE IN NEED AND GAVE THE MAJORITY OF HIS ALLOWANCE TO THE POOR. HE WAS ALWAYS CONCERNED WITH THE WELFARE OF THE POOR AND HUMBLYP SERVED THEM ALMOST IN SECRET. HE PASSED AWAY MERELY WEEKS AFTER CONTRACTING POLIO WHILE MINISTERING TO THE ABANDONED DYING. HIS FAMILY WAS NOT AWARE OF THE EXTENT OF HIS CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES UNTIL THEY SAW THE THOUSANDS OF UNKNOWN SICK AND POOR THAT ATTENDED HIS FUNERAL.



Bits & Pieces

BIBLE/BOOK STUDY on Catholic author Frank Sheed's classic, *To Know Christ Jesus* has begun at Saint Marguerite Parish, Brookfield. Classes run weekly on Thurs. from 7-9 pm. While many have read the Bible, Sheed's detailed commentary studies individual events, detailing the times, places, and people in the Gospels. A volunteer leader will lead the discussions each week. For more info, call the parish office: 203.775.5117, ext.1 or parishoffice@stmarguerite.org.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES is held at St. Ann Field, 481 Brewster St., Black Rock, Bridgeport, Tues. nights from 6-8 pm through August 19. If it rains Tues., concert will be on Wed. at the same time. Bring a picnic! Bring a Frisbee! Bring some wine! Bring your family and friends!

Minimum donation: \$5/person; children under 12 are free. Please "Like" our Facebook page to see the list of bands. For more info, call 203.368.1607.

NOCTURNAL ADORATION before the Blessed Sacrament is held the first Fri. of every month (**August 8**) at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish from 8 pm-12 midnight, beginning with Benediction. For more info, call the parish: 203.324.2910.

CURSILLO ULTREYAS are held around the diocese: Mon., **August 4**, at St. James Parish, Stratford, at 7 pm; Mon., **August 18**, at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford at 7:30 pm; and Thurs., **August 21**, at St. Mary Parish, Bethel, at 7:30 pm. On Sun., **August 10**, they will gather for a Bridgeport Bluefish game at Harbor Yard. For more info, con-

tact Jeanette: jkovacs@snet.net.

NIGHT GAME AT YANKEE STADIUM (7:05 pm) against the Cleveland Indians Fri., **August 8**, will benefit St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull. Ticket value is \$55; your cost: \$45. Price includes ticket only; transportation is on your own. Tickets limited; act quickly. Full payment needed to reserve seats. For more info, call the parish: 203.268.6217 or Rich LaVelle: 203.459.1021.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets the second Sat. of the month (**August 9**) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 10 am after the 9 am Pro-Life Mass. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or stmarygols@aol.com.

MASS MOB of Fairfield County will join the 10 am Mass at St. Peter Parish in Bridgeport

on Sun., **August 10**. Mass Mob encourages Catholics to widen their appreciation of the diocesan community, get to see other parishes and how they celebrate the liturgy, and grow together in faith. For more info, contact www.massmobfc.webs.com/calendar.

CARNIVAL OF FUN will be held at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, Tues.-Sat., **August 12-16**. Tues & Wed, 6-10 pm; Fri.-Sat., 6-11 pm. Food, music and fun for all. This year's car raffle is a 2015 BMW XI SUV in Midnight Blue Metallic. Tickets \$25 each; drawing is Sat., **August 16**. No need to be present to win. For more info or for raffle tickets, call 203.637.3661.

MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE sponsored by the Charismatic Renewal Office will be offered on Thurs., **August 14**, at 7 pm at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish with Fr. George Sankoorikal. For more info, call 203.268.8253.

POLISH HARVEST FESTIVAL (Dozynki) will be held at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Stamford, the weekend of



August 16-17. Sat.: 6 pm-2 am, tickets \$15; Sun. 11:30 am-10 pm; tickets \$5 adults, kids free. For more info, call the parish: 203.323.4967.

ITALIAN FESTIVAL will be held at St. Jude Parish, Monroe, **August 20-23**. Music, games, rides, prizes, great food and fun for the whole family! For more info call the parish office: 203.261.6404.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES will be offered at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford. Sign up for a Tues. or Thurs. class, starting Tues., **Sept. 2** and Thurs., **Sept. 4**. Classes are held each week, from 7-9 pm, for 10 weeks. Cost: \$200 plus class book (purchased

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Bits & Pieces

separately thru Amazon.com). Proceeds support the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community of the Valley. For more info, contact Dawn Sorrentino: seawall96@optonline.net.

PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES AND FATIMA with Msgr. John Sabia will take place **Sept. 4-16**. See Lisbon, Fatima, Salamanca, Burgos, Lourdes, and Paris. Cost: \$5,299; includes airfare, hotels, transportation and guides, breakfast and dinner. For more info and for reservations, go to www.206tours.com/tour40/.

SACRED SITES, IRISH NIGHTS: A St. James Pilgrimage to Ireland **Sept. 10-19** will combine liturgy and daily prayer services with visits to sacred shrines and popular sites. For a brochure with complete itinerary and cost, call St. James Parish, Stratford: 203.375.5887

SECULAR FRANCISCAN Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Emery Church, Fairfield, on Sat., **Sept. 13**. Fr. Norman Guilbert will celebrate a 9:30 am Mass, followed with a social and meeting in the Church Hall. "Come and See" if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. All are welcome! For more info, call 203.255.8801.

STUDY ON MARY: "A Biblical Walk with the Blessed

Mother" will be offered at St. Mary Parish, Ridgefield, for eight weeks with one Sun. session and two offered on Mon. Beginning the week of **Sept. 14**. Session times are Sun.: 9-10:25 am; Mon.: 9:30-11:30 am or 7-9 pm. Cost: \$30. For more info and to register, call Kristin McSpedon: 203.438.0495 or kmscpedon@comcast.net.

STAMFORD CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, Class of 1964, will be holding its 50th reunion on Sat., **Sept. 20**, at the Italian Center, Stamford, and are seeking classmates. For more info, visit www.schsclof1964.com. On this website you can update your contact information. Or contact Lucille D'Acunto Limone: 203.322.2058, Joan Alves Olson: 203.921.5548 or Mike Sabia: 203.322.0082.

BINGO is held every Thurs., at St. Emery Parish, Fairfield. Doors open at 4 pm; games start at 6:30 pm. Game sheets and tickets: \$30. Additional tickets sold separately. Food (hot dogs, sandwiches, etc.) will be served. For more info, call Tom St. Hillaire: 203.556.5480.

COOKBOOKS have been published by St. Jude Parish, Monroe, in honor of their retiring pastor, Msgr. John Sabia. For more info and to order books, call Marge: 203.268.5048. ■



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The Diocesan Blue Mass is co-sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport, and Fairfield County Councils and Assemblies of the Knights of Columbus. For more information, contact Debbie Charles, 203-416-1352.



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