

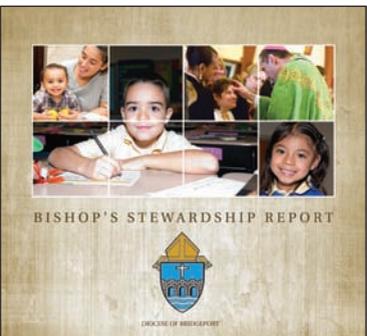
FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

DECEMBER 2013 | VOLUME 30, NUMBER 10 | CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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ON THE COVER

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH—
Aaron Cipriano lights the Advent Wreath while his wife, Patricia Freyler and daughter, Sabryne, look on before Mass at St. Matthew Church in Norwalk. Fr. Sunil Pereira, IMS, celebrated the Mass. The Cipriano-Freyler family joined many other individuals and families who have participated in the wreath ceremony at St. Matthew. The wreath is a symbol of anticipation for the coming Christ.
ABOVE THE FOLD: Members of the St. Matthew Youth Choir, led here by Ali Mills, sing during an Advent Mass marking the beginning of the new Liturgical Year. (Photos by Amy Mortensen)

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Local and State News

Diocese releases financial statements

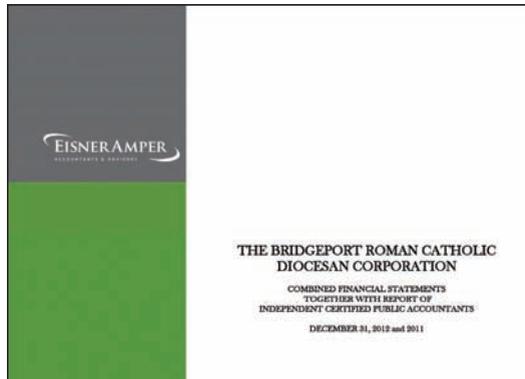
BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport has released an Annual Stewardship Report along with an accompanying financial commentary that outlines the fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

In addition to being available online, a condensed version of the Stewardship Report has been printed in this issue of *Fairfield County Catholic*, which goes out to more than 100,000 homes in Fairfield County.

“One of my first priorities is to provide a clear, transparent and comprehensive account of the finances of the diocese for the 2009-2012 fiscal years,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who was installed as Fifth Bishop of Bridgeport on September 19. “It represents as clear a picture as possible of the present state of our diocese.”

Over the last few years, the diocese has taken a number of steps to strengthen its financial position. Among these steps are:

- Freezing the Lay Pension Plan for all participants as of July



2010, and replacing it with a defined contribution plan for employees;

- Instituting a pension shortfall assessment in 2011, with plans to continue the assessment each year until the liability is fully discharged;
- Close monitoring of the pension fund's asset allocation and investment strategy by the Diocesan Finance Council Investment Committee;
- Ongoing review and reorganization of diocesan operations to generate efficiencies and

Property sales have supported these payments.

In addition to pension liabilities, the primary causes for operating deficits from ongoing activities are the level of uncollectible amounts of reimbursable revenue intended to cover employee benefits and insurance program expenses, primarily from inner-city schools and parishes, and increasing cost of healthcare and benefits.

The report summary said that some of the biggest challenges the diocese will face going forward

include caring for a growing

number of retired priests, determining how best to serve the faithful in parishes and schools in a meaningful and cost effective way, and reaching out to Catholics who are estranged from the Church.

Two additional reports will be forthcoming. A summary of the 2009 fiscal year will be issued separately by December 31, because the diocesan fiscal year was changed in 2009 to begin on January 1. (This necessitated the issuance of an 18 month audit for the 2009 fiscal year. As such, its findings cannot be easily compared to the audit results of subsequent years that cover a 12-month period.) After the release of the 2009 fiscal year reports, a third report will be issued for the Faith in the Future Fund for the 2009-2012 fiscal years. It is hoped that this final report will be available soon after the start of the new year.

Bishop Caggiano said the issuance of the financial stewardship

report is the first of a three-step process towards creating and implementing a long-term strategy “to foster a growing and vibrant local Church.” Step two will require a consultative and collaborative process whereby leaders on every level can work together to articulate a sweeping pastoral vision for the future of the diocese. The third and final step will be development of a strategic plan by the summer of 2014.

The Stewardship Report also provides a summary of the wide range of pastoral, educational, and charitable services provided by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

“We have much to be proud of in the diocese, with many good works being ministered in our schools, our parishes, the social service ministries of Catholic Charities, our communication efforts with the faithful, and our many diocesan pastoral services. This report will help us build on this good work and create a vision for the future,” the bishop said. ■

Fr. Arias to be ordained at St. Mary, Bethel

By PAT HENNESSY

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will ordain Fr. Rolando Arias Galvis as a priest for the Diocese of Bridgeport on December 14 at the 12:30 pm Mass in St. Mary Church in Bethel. Fr. Arias is the first priest the bishop will ordain for this diocese; five more men are looking forward to priestly ordination this coming spring.

Because Fr. Arias is the only priest being ordained at this time, the Sacrament of Ordination is being celebrated in St. Mary's, his home parish.

“Fr. Arias brings many extraordinary abilities, including his intelligence and lively sense of humor, to his priestly ministry,” says Fr. Robert Kinnally, director of vocations for the Diocese of Bridgeport and rector of St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford. “I am so happy that the Lord called him from Colombia to this diocese.”

Rolando Arias Galvis, 31, was born and raised in Colombia, the eleventh in a family of 12

children. His father, Pastor Arias, is deceased. His mother, Maria Galvis de Arias, is a member of San Vicente de Paul Parish in the city of Armenia.

He attended local grammar and high schools in Armenia, Colombia. Deeply devout, he volunteered for mission trips with his parish even while working in Bogotá, Colombia's capitol city. Those experiences led him to consider a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. “Out in the countryside, people appreciated so much that we would spend Holy Week or Christmas with them. It helped me realize that I wanted to serve them more completely,” he says.

As he began to explore that calling, he made contact with members of the Carmelite order and thought God might be calling him to join them. While a candidate with the Carmelitas Descalzos in Bogotá, he attended the Universidad Javeriana, a Catholic University. After three years, it became clear that his vocation was pulling

him in a different direction. A Colombian priest who was serving in the Diocese of Bridgeport

Seminary and spent a year there perfecting his fluency in English. He enrolled in Mount St. Mary's



encouraged him to come to the United States.

He entered St. John Fisher

Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, where he completed his seminary studies this past May. Since his

ordination as a transitional deacon in June he has been serving at St. Mary's.

“It's been a blessing for me having Fr. Cory as my pastor. I've learned so much from him,” he says. “The St. Mary's community has welcomed me, and the staff has been great.”

Over the past months, his service as a deacon has led him to officiate at Baptisms, visit the sick in hospitals, and get to know parishioners more deeply. “I've had the opportunity to preach, and I've discovered that I like that a lot,” he says. “I'm going to continue to focus on that in the future.”

He sees it as a special blessing that his ordination will take place on the feast of St. John of the Cross, one of the great Carmelite saints. “God has been so good. Carmelite spirituality has been special to me, and this is a wonderful gift from God.”

Fr. Arias will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, December 15, at 10 am. Fr. Kinnally will deliver the homily. ■

Local News

Bishop's Christmas Message

A Season of Hope



The Holy Father's Angelus message for the start of Advent teaches us the importance of hope during this liturgical season in which we await the light of Christ.

"For the great human family, it is necessary to renew always the common horizon toward which we are journeying. The horizon of hope! This is the horizon that

makes a good journey," Pope Francis reminds us, "a hope that does not disappoint because it is founded on the Word of God."

During our Advent journey, I pray that the Light of Christ will shine upon you and dispel whatever darkness of fear or anxiety dwell in you. It is the Lord Himself who guides our journey, and by His light we can find hope, mercy and peace in our lives.

In the coming days there are many Advent and Christmas observances around the diocese. May your heart be renewed by these opportunities to dwell in the mystery of Christ's love and renew our sense of gratitude and wonder:

It is a good time to pray for peace

It is a good time to pray for the world's salvation

It is a good time to pray for all those who are in need

It is a good time to mend fences and seek reconciliation

It is a good time to wait in silence and vigilance

It is a good time for lighting a candle in the darkness

As we prepare for the joy of Christmas with our families, please also allow me to express my sincere gratitude for the loving and gracious welcome you have extended to me as Fifth Bishop of Bridgeport. In a very short time, we have become family, and the Diocese of Bridgeport has become my home.

May the peace of God be with you as we celebrate our Savior's birth, and please know that you will be remembered in Masses I celebrate during the Christmas Season.

Wishing you and your family all of the joy, warmth and gladness of Christmas.

Frank Caggiano

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport



Carols of the season



CAROLS OF THE SEASON—Seminarians and priests at St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford joined together recently for "Carols of the Season." The music director of the seminary, David Harvey, collaborated with Thom Marino, music director of St. Aloysius, and Cidalia Alves from the music staff at St. Aloysius to put together an hour-long program of Advent and Christmas carols. The seminarians and audience were graced by the presence of Bishop Frank Caggiano, who gave a blessing to the gathering at the end of the concert. The event took place on the afternoon of December 7 at St. John Fisher Seminary.



Catechetical Congress

“Who do you say that I am?”

By PAT HENNESSY

“It’s all about love,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said in his keynote speech at the Catechetical Congress. “You have to foster, create, allow the Lord in his awesome beauty to touch you, and for you to love him back. There is a big difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus.”

The Catechetical Congress, a symposium on faith, was held November 16 at Sacred Heart University. Sponsored by the Office for Pastoral Services, it is traditionally held every three years.

“It’s a beautiful way to improve the connection between the diocese and the individual parishes,” says Fr. Jose Brito Martins, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Portuguese Parish in Danbury. “It helps to glue us together.”

This year’s Congress, which took as its theme “Who do you say that I am?” drew more than 600 participants. Although it is geared toward people in Church ministry—catechists, youth ministers, RCIA facilitators—the Congress is open to all adults who are interested in deepening and enriching their faith.

“There is no greater joy than



having a personal relationship with Christ,” says Damien O’Connor, director of Pastoral Services.

“This Congress was designed to offer people a number of ways to deepen that relationship and give them the tools to share their love of Christ with others.”

The need for the support and love of God was brought painfully to life in a witness talk by Msgr. Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown. The strength of his faith and his compassion grasped the hearts of listeners as he described the horrific events of

December 14, 2012, in Newtown, “A place where things like this... don’t happen.”

“It was like Good Friday—there were mothers crying for their children, their children who had died. These were parents who I married, children who I baptized. We held tight to the foot of the cross, because that was our only hope.”

“His talk was exceptional because of the emotions involved,” says Susan Moran, who teaches sixth-graders in the religious education program at St. Peter Parish in Danbury. “For

many of us here, the people of Newtown are our neighbors.”

After that intense morning, the theme of the Congress was explored further by nationally known and local speakers who focused on ways to take the experience of faith and pass it on to others. Along with many parish groups, catechists from Immaculate Heart of Mary split up to take in all the workshops. They will be sharing their experiences in the weeks to come.

At St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Riverside, a number of catechists attended a workshop on

teaching with hands-on technology given by Amy Taylor and Jaimee Keogler. “Our catechists were excited to attend a workshop given by such energetic young people,” says Janet Wrabel, assistant DRE at St. Catherine’s.

“They showed the catechists how to use PowerPoint, YouTube and websites like Catholic Toolbox and Life Teen. They even showed us how to save a YouTube video from Facebook to our computers. They’re really up there.”

Participants also had the chance to hear Dr. Peter Kreeft on “Do Catholics Need to be Evangelized;” Dr. Anthony Esolen on “Obedience and Truth;” and Amy Ekeh on “If Today You Hear His Voice” Recognizing the Moments of Your Own Evangelization.”

The Chapel of the Nativity was open throughout the Congress for private prayer and Eucharistic Adoration. The day ended with Mass, the source and summit of each Catholic’s relationship with Jesus.

“Catechesis never ends,” said Bishop Caggiano. “It’s a lifetime conversation. We echo and re-echo the song of Christ.”

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Bishop Caggiano Coat of Arms

“Jesus Christ is Lord”

In Church heraldry, a cleric's personal motto has always been intended to represent his personal spirituality and theologically-based philosophy of life and is most frequently grounded in Sacred Scripture or in a prominent prayer or litany. For Bishop Caggiano, this symbolism is found in four simple yet powerful words: “Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Symbolism and Significance

The principal color in the Caggiano design is red, signifying

the blood of martyrdom, while gold, where it appears, signifies the glory of the Resurrection. Silver represents purity. The secondary color is blue, representing the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The crescent moon is an ancient symbol of the Blessed Virgin Mary because the moon has no light of its own but only reflects the light given to it by the sun. Its application to Mary is that she receives her glory as a reflection of the glory of her son; she is the perfect disciple. In addition to Bishop Caggiano's personal devotion to the Mother of God, the use of the crescent also recalls his education at Cathedral College and Immaculate Conception Seminary, both of which bear this emblem as well.

The Pascal Lamb image shows that Bishop Caggiano's ministry will be to proclaim the work of the Lamb of God; just as he does

when celebrating Mass, raising the Sacred Host with the words: “Behold the Lamb of God.”

The winged sword, a new change in the bishop's design, represents St. Michael the Archangel, a particularly important devotion of Bishop Caggiano. The Bridgeport diocesan arms appear to the left, as one views the coat of arms, and the bishop's personal arms appear to the right. Although this was the custom for all residential bishops of the Church for many centuries, it only remains the custom for residential bishops in America to unite episcopal arms with the diocesan coat of arms.

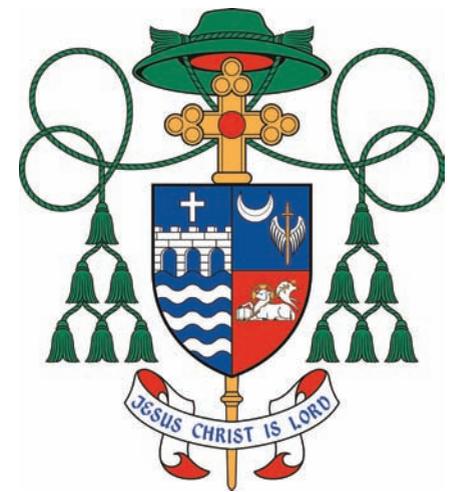
Surmounting the shield of both a residential and an auxiliary bishop is the pilgrim's hat, the heraldic emblem for all prelates and priests of the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church. For the rank of bishop, the pilgrim's

hat is always worked in deep forest green. For this rank and office in the episcopacy there are six tassels suspended on either side of the hat in a pyramidal style.

The episcopal cross found behind and above this coat of arms is worked in gold; it is known as a Cross Botony and has three roundels at each terminus. The Cross is worked in gold with a large cabochon deep red garnet at its center, the common stone adopted by Brooklyn, the bishop's place of birth and the seat of his vocation, and the State of Connecticut, his new home, as well.

About the Heraldic Designers

James-Charles Noonan, Jr. is a well-known Church historian and ecclesiastical protocolist as well as one of the few Vatican trained heraldists at work today. He routinely works with the



Holy See, with members of the College of Cardinals and the episcopacy. He resides in Gwynedd Valley, PA.

Linda Nicholson, who expertly paints the heraldic arms designed by Noonan, completes the partnership of this unique team in Church service. She is a craft painter of the prestigious Society of Heraldic Arts in England. She holds a master's degree in medieval studies from the University of Toronto and resides in Ontario.

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Evangelizing Youth

Bishop is new Episcopal Advisor for NFCYM

WASHINGTON, DC— Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has accepted the invitation to serve a three-year term as Episcopal Advisor to the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). His term started in November of this year. He will serve as a member of the Board of Directors and, among other duties, will serve as liaison between the NFCYM and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.

In late November, Bishop Caggiano led a delegation of youth from St. Philip Parish in Norwalk to the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), where he was a speaker. The conference is a three-day meeting of young Catholics from all around the country that happens

every two years. This year there were 23,000 young Catholics who came together in worship, prayer, song and reflection. The theme for this year's conference was "Signed, Sealed, Delivered."

"On Saturday morning I had the privilege to preach to the entire gathering," the bishop reported on his Facebook page. "It was a humbling experience to see how quiet and reverent 23,000 young people can be when they are set on fire for the Lord. I could feel their enthusiasm and energy and it gives me great hope."

The bishop had met the pilgrims from St. Philip's at La Guardia airport. "We flew together to Indianapolis. We also spent some time together during the festivities. What a dedicated, committed and faith-filled group



of young women and men they are! I was so proud to be with them and I thank them for making the sacrifices needed to come to the NCYC gathering."

He looks forward to traveling with them again in 2015, along with many more young people from parishes across our diocese.

The schedule of the conference

included keynote addresses, workshop sessions addressing a variety of topics, opportunities for liturgy, Reconciliation, prayer and worship, service, and special activities such as concerts, exhibits and an interactive thematic park.

Through its speakers and activities, the Youth Conference demonstrated that all catechesis and all youth ministry must begin with one goal: "To help foster in our young people an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ in the community of the Church. Once they meet the Lord, the road to conversion and commitment is clear," Bishop Caggiano said.

"As we retool our youth ministry efforts in the months ahead, we must never lose sight of the goal: to allow every young person to fall in love with Jesus." ■

"Signed, Sealed, Delivered"

As Bishop Caggiano wrote about the group from St. Philip Parish: "What a dedicated, committed and faith-filled group of young women and men they are! I was so proud to be with them!"

Now St. Philip's youth want to show the world that they are, as the theme of the conference says, "Signed, Sealed, Delivered!"

In one of the call and responses used throughout the National Catholic Youth Convention, MC Jesse Manibusan would call out, "Who is the Church?" and 23,000 young people would respond "We are!" The chants continue:

"And where is the Church?"

"Right here!"

"...And?"

"Everywhere!"

"This weekend I realized that this isn't the end to my NCYC experience but that it is the beginning! I learned that we have to take this to everyone else. The young Church needs to go out and tell the world the good news. We are the Church, we are here, but



the last part is the most important, 'We are everywhere, and all are welcome.'"

Michael Falbo

The music was a particularly potent source of inspiration:

"My favorite part during the conference was when we were in the stadium and there was a speaker named Jackie Angel. She sang this song with everybody in the stadium. We were sitting there praying and singing and it was peaceful and beautiful. For that moment I was so content and at peace that I was able to

get even more in touch with my faith. I was able to go deeper and it was beautiful and amazing."

Kelly Gavigan

"The music at NCYC changed me. Music helps me get so much closer to God. It speaks to me in a different way rather than just reading a Bible. At NCYC I met so many different bands and artists that take God's word to a whole other level. When I got to meet Matt Maher while at NCYC, my whole thought of religious music changed. I learned that music is a different

way of praying to God. Matt told me how he gets his inspiration to write his music from us, the young Catholic Church, and how we have so much energy. He made me think that music could be my new way of praying to God. I will keep celebrating God with music."

Abby Kniffen

Although the weekend was filled with loud and upbeat music, there was time for quiet reflection as well, with Taizé-style meditative prayer on Friday night.

"There were countless moving moments during NCYC, but the one that moved me the most was when we performed Jesse's song, 'Fish with Me,' all in silence. Seeing a stadium of over 23,000 people profess their faith all together in a sort of meditative state of complete silence was breathtaking. You could feel the energy in the room emanating off of everyone. It is an experience I will never forget, and I am forever grateful for that experience."

Tara Carney

The participants all hope to bring back the spirit of the congress and open up their Catholic faith to all those in their lives.

"I'm of Mexican descent. I attended two workshops that were meant to empower Latino teens to work within their communities to spread the faith within the Latino community. It was an amazing experience to be able to meet thousands of other teens who shared the same faith as us, and I want to make a promise to my community. I promise that I will do everything I can to bring as much of this amazing experience back to our parish."

Luis Corona

"In one session I went to there was a boy in a wheelchair. Tara and I started a conversation with him about where he was from, we traded buttons with him and his smile was unforgettable. The session involved a lot of talking. Our discussions would start on topic but venture into talking about him and his life as well as ours. It was nice to know how open everyone was and welcoming. Everyone wanted to tell you their story and wanted to hear yours. I learned so much I can only hope I will be able to carry out the same attitude as every other kid there."

Olivia DiMarco ■

Meeting Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome

Pope Francis, Father and Brother

By FR. MATTHEW MAURIELLO

On August 1, 1959, Blessed Pope John XXIII promulgated the encyclical *Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia* to commemorate the centennial of the passing to eternal glory of St. John Vianney, the patron of parish priests. The opening words of the encyclical are, "When we think of the first days of our priesthood, which were so full of joyous consolations..."

Recently, with the celebration of my Silver Jubilee of Ordination to the Holy Priesthood on January 11, 2013, I, too, have been thinking of those early joyful days of my priesthood. As a seminarian for the Diocese of Ponce, Puerto Rico, I had the opportunity to study in Rome, and was present with Blessed Pope John Paul II for the opening of the Marian Year in June 1987.

One of my classmates from those days in Rome, now serving as a priest in Orvieto, Italy, celebrated his Silver Jubilee on November 13, 2013. He had been with me in my parish for my celebration, so I accepted his invitation to join in his. With this, I planned to arrive a few days early in Rome and make a retreat as a time of prayer and reflection considering the many "good times and bad" of the last quarter century.

As well, I had felt inspired to write to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and asked for the opportunity to meet him when I was in Rome for my Silver Jubilee retreat. It was my desire to receive his blessing to give me a special grace for the future years in the Lord's service. A response arrived from his secretary just a few weeks later and I was invited to concelebrate Holy Mass with the Pope at 7 am on November 21, the Feast of the Presentation of Mary, in the Chapel of the St. Martha Guest House. I was greatly looking forward to meeting our new Vicar of Christ and hoped that we could exchange a few words after the Mass.

When I first arrived at the priests' residence, I had the opportunity to read the Pope's homily at the episcopal ordination of the new Director of the Governance of the Vatican City State. Pope Francis told him to

be both "a father and brother to them, with true love and tenderness" referring to the Vatican City employees who were now entrusted to his care.

These words stayed in my mind.

The day for the Mass with the Holy Father arrived and I was asked by his secretary to be a principal concelebrant by praying aloud a section of the Eucharistic Prayer, helping to distribute Holy Communion and purifying the Pope's chalice. After Mass we had the opportunity to greet the Holy Father in a small audience hall outside the chapel. There is where I sensed that he was truly both "father and brother," embracing me and the others with "love and tenderness." The Pope practiced what he preached!

During our words of exchange, I mentioned that I had celebrated my twenty-fifth anniversary earlier this year and was in Rome for a spiritual retreat, and I asked that he please pray for me to persevere, pray for my



family, especially for my father who has been ill and, especially, pray for my parish. He was warm and kind in responding that he would be happy to do so and asked that we would please pray for him also.

It was a privilege to give the Pope several gifts: a signed copy of my book on the Lord's mercy and a quote from St. Francis of Assisi that I had hand-lettered and framed for him. He gave me

a fraternal embrace in gratitude. The quote was done in Spanish, his native language. The translation is: "We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart and to bring home those who have lost their way."

Concelebrating Holy Mass

with our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and our few minutes of conversation was a great "shot in the arm" for me and the perfect conclusion to my Silver Jubilee retreat. It was more than I ever expected or deserved, but truly a wonderful gift from the dear Lord to one of his unworthy priests. The memory of my encounter with the Pope who is both "paternal and fraternal" will long linger and be a source of both consolation and inspiration as I face the



daily challenges, as well as blessings, that are ahead. ■

Pope Francis is third Pope to win *Time's* Person of the Year honor

By CAROL GLATZ
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Pope Francis is not seeking fame or accolades, but being named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year will make him happy if it helps attract people to the hope of the Gospel, said the Vatican spokesman.

"It's a positive sign that one of the most prestigious recognitions in the international press goes to a person who "proclaims to the world spiritual, religious and moral values and speaks effectively in favor of peace and greater justice," said the spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi.

The choice of Pope Francis "is not surprising, given the wide appeal and huge attention" to his pontificate so far, Father Lombardi said in a written statement December 11, shortly after

Time announced it had named the pope for the annual feature.

"Rarely has a new player on the world stage captured so much attention so quickly—young and old, faithful and cynical—as has Pope Francis," *Time* said on its website. "With a focus on compassion, the leader of the Catholic Church has become a new voice of conscience."

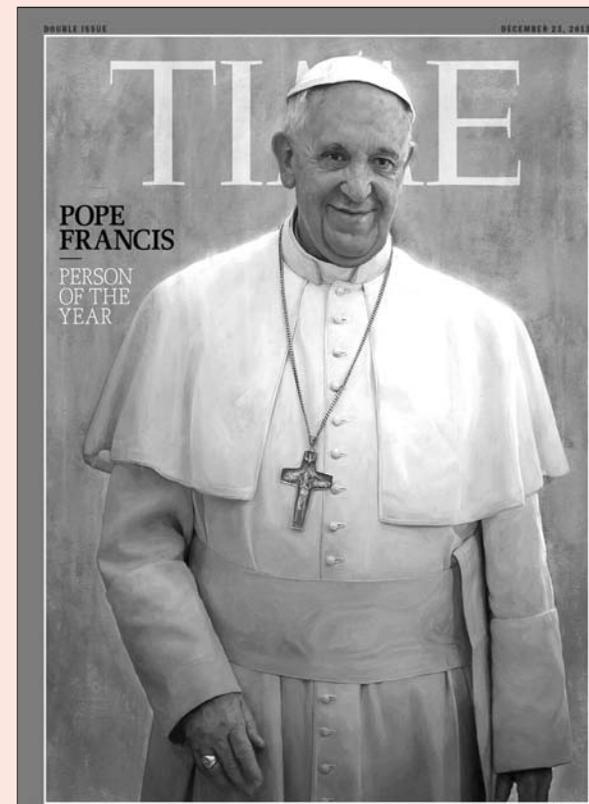
Blessed John Paul II was named Person of the Year in 1994 and Blessed John XXIII in 1962.

Other past honorees include several U.S. presidents, Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin and Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook. The magazine says the title goes to the person or idea that "for better or worse ... has done the most to influence events of the year."

The Pope "does not seek fame and success, because he serves to proclaim the Gospel and God's love for everyone,"

Father Lombardi said. But if the recognition "attracts women and men and gives them hope, the pope is happy."

The spokesman added that Pope Francis would also be pleased if the magazine's decision "means that many have understood, at least implicitly, this message" of hope. ■



A Day in Bethlehem

A special local destination

By **JOSEPH PRONECHEN**

This Christmas season, as part of your family's Twelve Days of Christmas celebration, make Bethlehem a special destination to see and pray before the Nativity.

It doesn't mean a flight to Israel, but, in this case, a pleasant drive to Bethlehem, Connecticut.

This rural town attracts tons of visitors to the local post office to get their Christmas cards postmarked with that spe-



THE SECOND CRÈCHE to visit is just four miles up the road from the Abbey, practically in Bethlehem center, on East Street at the Church of the Nativity.

cial Bethlehem stamp. But few visitors realize that better things await them in Bethlehem. They can visit two magnificent crèches—one on the way to the town center and the other just yards up the road from the post office.

The first stop is at the Regina Laudis Abbey (AbbeyofReginaLaudis.com), a community of cloistered Benedictine nuns that was founded after World War II. On the grounds and set back from Flanders Road, the abbey has an early 18th-century masterpiece displayed in a barn dating back to nearly that same time. The barn was recently restored specifically to house this nativity scene. In fact, just a few years ago the nativity on display got a three-plus year meticulous restoration done by authorities who worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

This crèche is enormous and definitely elaborate. It spans 16 feet from end to end and is six feet in depth.

According to its history, the crèche was a gift to Victor Amadeus II of Sardinia for his coronation in 1720. It was brought to America in 1948.

A year later, the woman who owned it at the time donated it to the abbey and entrusted the nuns to protect and preserve it for posterity. The same donor also gave a similar magnificent Neapolitan crèche to the Metropolitan Museum. It is displayed there annually during Christmas.

As was the custom back then, this Bethlehem crèche places the nativity in a contemporary early 18th century Neapolitan setting in a mountainside village

against a background mural of blue sky and seaside. The heart of the crèche is the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Angels hover above in awe at the sight of our Infant Savior's birth. At the same time, the villagers populating the scene and stretching out of the town react in different ways to this most holy sight. The life-like figures mirror the reactions of people even today. Some are in wonder as they approach the manger to adore the newborn King. Some are too busy with transporting their wares or taking care of mundane duties to notice anything different going on, or they are just plain curious with no reaction to the spiritual scene.

This is a big village. There are 68 figures of carved wood, ceramic, metal and plant fiber. Some are nearly a foot and a half tall. All are dressed in their original 18th century costumes that specialists from the Metropolitan Museum restored to pristine form.

The second crèche to visit is just four miles up the road from the abbey, practically in Bethlehem center, on East Street. It is the Church of the Nativity, and it recalls Jesus' birth all 365 days of the year.

The church was specifically constructed of fieldstone and wood and designed to encompass the nativity scene (churchofthenativity-ct.org). The wondrous scene begins right inside the vestibule, which has walls of glass separating it from the nave. Here there is a permanent, year-round crèche with life-sized figures of wood.

The Virgin Mary stands and cradles Jesus on her shoulder. The Infant Lord is looking over her shoulder to see into the nave. There he gazes at the cross. Joseph kneels reverently by them.

All these figures were carved



THE FIRST STOP is at the Regina Laudis Abbey, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

by an artist in Maine from a single pine tree.

Etched onto the glass wall behind the Holy Family is a panorama of the little town of Bethlehem. Through the wall and visible behind the altar are the words of the hymn inviting us to

see and worship: "O Come All Ye Faithful,"

Whether on your way into or out of the church, you can stop on the lawn in front to see the permanent, very large manger scene with its 20-foot stable filled with the scene of the nativity. ■

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EDITORIAL

Awaiting Christmas

In an ideal world, advent is about preparing for the birth of Jesus, not about hectic holiday shopping. In the real world, you're at the mall on the way home from work. Xbox, iPad or Wii, which will they like best? You pick up, then reject, the violent video game. You're doing the best you can.

You turn on the news to reports about "Black Friday" or "Cyber Monday," the season laced with sales totals, as if our highest destiny as human beings is to be consumers—all the better if we can abandon our actual Thanksgiving and Christmas observances!

You hurry to get to Mass, and wish you didn't shop on Sundays. You squeeze in time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and work to let go of all those resentments you've been collecting—knowing full well the holiday season may put a few more in the basket.

There is no perfect Christmas cookie. There is no perfect Christmas dinner. (Your sister brought her dog last Christmas; your husband hates dogs.) You adapt to the challenges of this year's Christmas season. You're not perfect. But you pray, light a candle, worry about others in your rare quiet moments.

On Christmas night, when the house is finally calm, take ten seconds before you unplug the tree. Take a long, quiet breath. All season long, through a limping, imperfect, well-intentioned Advent and Christmas, you've done the best you could. Now Christmas has a present for you: the chance to be reborn in Christ, to renew your life, and to participate in the fullness of time through the beauty of his light.

An extraordinary year

We are coming to the end of an extraordinary year for the Church and for our own diocese.

In February 2013, Benedict XVI became the first Pope in 600 years to resign, and not long after that, the little-known Jorge Cardinal Bergoglio stepped out onto the Vatican balcony and took the name Francis. Since then, he has captured the love and respect of the entire world with his compassion and humility.

Then at the end of July, when we had become convinced that we would not have a new bishop for months, Pope Francis sent us Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Brooklyn. In his short time in the diocese, he has inspired us with his call "to build spiritual bridges," and his energy and joy in getting to know the diocese.

While we awaited our new leaders, the work of the diocese went on under the leadership of Msgr. Jerald A. Doyle, who served ably as administrator: we ordained seven priests, educated 10,000 children in our schools, served 1.5 million meals to the poor and elderly, and celebrated the sacraments in our 82 parishes. You can read many more details in the Bishop's Stewardship Report included in this issue.

In this season of giving, we thank all those who have given so much throughout the year. May your Advent journey be filled with the hope and the blessings of the season, and may you and your family have a Happy and Holy Christmas.

December 14

Newtown First Selectman, Patricia Llodra, a parishioner of St. Rose of Lima Parish, has called for a day of prayer and silence on December 14. We admire her strong and compassionate leadership and we endorse her call for privacy. It has been a year of turmoil and tension for this town of 28,000 people, struggling to heal amidst the national glare of publicity while also wrestling with tough issues that pit private grief against very real decisions about gun control, a new school, and compensation of families. Yet on December 14, Msgr. Robert Weiss will be where he was last year—saying Mass for a loving and faith-filled community stricken by the loss of their children and those who cared for them. This year Bishop Caggiano will join him on the altar. Only prayer and worship can take us into the presence of God, where we can bring all that is unspeakable in our lives. We ask all those around the diocese to join in the spirit of the day and pray for healing, peace, and reconciliation. ■

YEAR END GIFTS

Now that we are approaching the **end of the year** when many people are generous and think more about their giving, there are advantages of making a donation through appreciated securities and through the IRA Charitable Rollover (while it is still in place).

Donating Appreciated Securities can give donors special tax advantages. Donating assets that have grown in value over a long period of time such as marketable securities allows a donor to receive an income tax deduction for the full market value of the stock on the date of the gift, provided they have owned the securities for more than 12 months. Most donors avoid liability for capital gains tax otherwise due on the sale of securities.

The IRA Charitable Rollover is still available for 2013, but not after 2013. Donors age 70½ or older are still eligible to move up to \$100,000 from their IRAs to qualified charities without being taxed on the distribution. There are additional tax benefits in reducing Adjusted Gross Income, including reducing the limits of itemized deductions and exemptions, and reducing the tax effects of the new Investment Income Tax. This tax benefit expires after December 31, 2013.

Please review the tax provisions of giving appreciated securities or through the IRA Charitable Rollover with your tax advisor. We are not tax experts and this is not intended to provide tax advice. After you have discussed your personal situation with your tax advisor, please call the Development Office at 203.416.1312.



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

JUDICIAL VICAR

MSGR. JERALD A. DOYLE, J.C.D., re-appointed to Judicial Vicar, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

ADJUTANT JUDICIAL VICAR

MSGR. J. JAMES CUNEO, J.C.D., re-appointed to Adjutant Judicial Vicar, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

JUDGE

FATHER MICHAEL A. BOCCACCIO, re-appointed to Judge in the Tribunal, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

MSGR. WILLIAM A. GENUARIO, P.A., J.C.D., re-appointed to Judge in the Tribunal, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

FATHER MICHAEL SKROCKI, J.C.D., re-appointed to Judge in the Tribunal, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

FATHER MICHAEL M. QUINLAN, J.C.L., re-appointed to Judge in the Tribunal, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

FATHER WILLIAM F. VERRILLI, J.C.L., re-appointed to Judge in the Tribunal, Diocese of Bridgeport. A three-year term ending on January 1, 2017.

VICAR

FATHER G. FRANTZ DESRUISSEAU, re-appointed to Vicar for the Haitian Catholic Community. A five-year term ending on January 1, 2019.

FATHER GUSTAVO A. FALLA, re-appointed to Vicar for the Spanish-speaking Catholic Community. A five-year term ending on January 1, 2019.

FATHER REGINALD NORMAN, to Vicar for the African American Catholic Community. A five-year term ending on January 1, 2019.

SABBATICAL

FATHER COLIN J. MCKENNA, Parochial Vicar of Sacred Heart Parish, Georgetown, to Sabbatical. Effective date was November 1.

*Rev. Msgr. Kevin Royal, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy Personnel
December, 2013*

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Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Publisher

Brian D. Wallace

Executive Editor bwallace@ccfc-ct.org

Pat Hennessy

Managing Editor phennessy@diobpt.org

Renée Stamatis

Art Director rstamatis@diobpt.org

Ralph Lazzaro

Advertising Manager rlazzaro@diobpt.org

Brian A. Wallace

Graphic Designer bwallace@diobpt.org

Jill Monroe

Office Manager/Admin jmonroe@diobpt.org

Sonia Burns

Spanish Editor* soniarnburns@yahoo.com

Madeline Ghilardi

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* Consultants

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Editorial



A tale of life renewed

A WOMAN'S VIEW

BY ANTOINETTE BOSCO

Antoinette Bosco is a member of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield.

My house is loaded with books, many of them purchased at used book sales. I intend to read all of them “some-day.” This week I noticed one bought a long while ago with two great names on the dust jacket. It was titled “Charles Dickens, the Last of the Great Men,” by G.K. Chesterton. Thinking of Dickens’ great “Christmas Carole,” I picked up the book curiously. Not surprisingly, I read it in one sitting, so taken was I by the wonderful writing of the

great writer and Catholic convert Chesterton.

In this notable author’s respect for Dickens, I understood even better why I had always been a fan of his forever-enduring Christmas story. As Chesterton explained, for Dickens, “Comradeship and serious joy are not interludes in our travel; but rather, our travels are interludes in comradeship and joy, which through God shall endure forever.”

His words had me reflecting on Dickens’ story, remembering

that he himself had once said he hoped his “Carole” would “pleasantly haunt the lives” of his audiences. It has, generations of them.

As for why, it certainly is because he dealt with the two ultimate themes of existence—life and death—and with human failing. That failing, of course, is greed and the love of money, which so easily carry one to the extreme of crowding out all the really good things in life. When money becomes one’s ‘god,’ then the next logical need is to have power, for without power you cannot protect your money.

Dickens created Scrooge to be the embodiment of greed’s effect—becoming a loveless man. He exercises over his employee, Bob Cratchit, bleeding every ounce of labor from him to protect and increase his own wealth. Mr. Cratchit, a man who values fidelity to his family, accepts this exploitation so as to keep his job and support those who are depen-

dent upon him.

He also bears a cross—knowing that he cannot provide the medical care needed by his son, tiny Tim. The child faces an early death.

As the story progresses, Dickens, who has the gift of being an imaginative story teller, creates an eerie setting that forces Scrooge to face his own evil and the death this will lead him to.

It may seem strange that a Christmas story begins on this note of death, for Christmas is a time of birth—the greatest birth ever, the one that forever brought Love into this world. But that’s the seduction of “A Christmas Carole.” By undergoing his symbolic death, Scrooge realizes how he has lost his life—and he asks forgiveness and another chance. Dickens’ story then becomes a tale of life renewed.

Chesterton points out that, in the rebirth of Scrooge and the saving of Tiny Tim, “A Christmas Carole” proclaims of

the Christmas message of hope and redemption. So it lives on.

I got the sense that I was supposed to write about Charles Dickens this Christmas because when I put down Chesterton’s book, I picked up another small book that had biographies of men of science and literature. There, I found an entirely different set of personal writings of Dickens, a father of nine. In a letter to his son Edward, leaving for Australia, he writes, “I put a New Testament among your books because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world... You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.”

His message is beautifully appropriate as we prepare for Christmas! ■



A Parish Christmas

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

The Knights of Columbus put up the crèche for the living nativity on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Turnout was good, but there’s only enough work for a couple of guys. It’s really more of a social occasion—the unofficial start of Advent.

“Advent is a time of hope,” says Msgr. Scheyd, pastor of St. Aloysius. “It’s a time of preparation.” In our house, preparations take the form of decorations. I was impressed when the kids made an Advent calendar from two pieces of poster board. Less so when I realized we still hadn’t taken down the Halloween scarecrows and put a wreath on the

door. Where did November go?

Last year we didn’t have the time or the energy to do any decorating. Baby Sally had just been born. This will be her first real Christmas. We haven’t discussed it with her in detail, but I sense she doesn’t want much in the way of material things. She’s still working on the basics—walking, talking, feeding herself. We should all be so unattached.

When Sally gets a little older, she can confer with Paddy. His Christmas list starts coming together around Labor Day. A little boy’s wishes are often not bounded by rationality. Five-year-old Paddy is hoping Santa will bring him a career at Pixar

Animation Studios.

At nine, our Clara is an old Christmas pro. I worry that she’s starting to grow suspicious of this Santa business. I wish she would stay nine forever. This is the wish of all fathers.

Monsignor would like it if we could somehow extend the Christmas spirit of hope and caring throughout the year. He should talk to our Magdalena. No one loves Christmas more than she does, but it doesn’t have to be December for her to feel the spirit. She’ll sing “Frosty the Snowman” coming out of the town pool on July 4th.

(Frosty isn’t technically a member of our Church. Then again, James Joyce described Catholicism as “here comes everybody.” Don’t snowmen count?)

For Deacon Steve, Advent is less about Rankin & Bass than it is about prayer and Mass. “It’s a high holy kind of time,” he says. Deacon Steve enjoys reading the Church Fathers as part of the Liturgy of the Hours at this time of year. We’re lucky to have such a fellow in our parish.

Michael is a past grand knight of Father Stapleton Council #2287 and a man of garrulous good cheer all year round. He’s hoping the health of his 12-week-old granddaughter improves during Advent. If you don’t mind, say a prayer for the little angel.

This Christmas, Marie is hoping the young people she works with will stay close to the Church after they are confirmed. She is the director of religious education at St. A’s. “A nice new building for all my students would be nice, too,” she says with a little bit of a twinkle in her eye. Are you listening, Santa?

This is Bishop Caggiano’s first Christmas in Bridgeport. I hope he’s not too homesick for Brooklyn. Come to think of it, this is our first Christmas with Pope Francis as well. What a great and loving example both men are giving us of how to live a Christian life in communion with Church teachings.

There’s no better example of joyful preparation than the Holy Family. According to Luke, when the angel Gabriel visited Mary and Joseph, the news he brought was so awesome and confusing they didn’t know how to process it. They were only a young couple, just starting out. In today’s world we could imagine Mary telling Gabriel that the timing wasn’t so good.

“I’m not ready,” the modern Mary might say. “Joseph isn’t

really established in his career yet, and I’ve still got a few things I want to do before we start a family.” But in her moment of difficulty, Our Lady offered up all her fears to God and gave us an example of trust and faith that we can truly live by. Don’t forget: Christmas is a pro-life story.

If our Church is, indeed, “here comes everybody,” then this Christmas, to paraphrase Tiny Tim, “God bless us, everybody.” ■

“Frosty isn’t technically a member of our Church.”

Cardinal Shehan Center Breakfast

A nurturing community is the right of every child

BRIDGEPORT—Beyond its recreational and education programs, the Cardinal Shehan Center offers young people “something precious and intangible that is their right as children of God,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said at the 26th Annual Celebrity Breakfast of the Cardinal Shehan Center held November 20 at the Downtown Holiday Inn.

“The word is ‘community,’ a place where children are nurtured, accepted and known by their name,” said the bishop at the breakfast, which raised over \$65,000 for the youth center’s after-school and Saturday programs.

For 50 years the Shehan Center has served the recreational, educational, and social needs of moderate and low-income fam-

ilies and young people of lower Fairfield County, particularly inner city Bridgeport. Its mission is “Enriching Lives Through Learning” through After School & Saturday Youth Development programs, a summer day camp, a number of basketball and softball leagues, physical education classes for grammar schools and alternative education programs.

Speaking to a gathering of more than 400 men and women business and civic leaders, Bishop Caggiano said many young people today are deprived of the community support that adults received in their youth.

The bishop said that when he grew up in Gravesend, Brooklyn, he didn’t have a brother, but he had seven friends that formed a band of brothers who played stick



YOUTH SPEAKER: Terry O’Connor, executive director of the Cardinal Shehan Center, and Bishop Frank J. Caggiano congratulate Kolbe Cathedral High School sophomore Marcus Hickey after he spoke to the gathering of over 400 at the celebrity breakfast. Marcus said that he grew up at the Shehan Center and that it has played an important role in his learning and personal development.

belonging and are mentored and challenged.”

The bishop said that true community for children is not simply keeping them busy but “coming together with purpose and embracing nobler values to serve one another for the common good.” He said his vision for the future of the diocese “is one of hope, growth and vitality, and young people are at the center of this vision. The Lord will guide us and places like the Shehan Center will help to make this vision a reality.”

During the breakfast, Kolbe Cathedral High School sophomore Marcus Hickey was honored as the youth speaker. “I grew up at the Shehan Center, and it has played a huge role in my life,” he told the gathering.

Douglas Turnage, a corporate revenue analyst for Unilever, accepted a volunteer award on behalf of the Trumbull company, which provides consumer goods and personal care products. Turnage, who volunteers at the Shehan Center along with other Unilever employees, described the center as “an amazing place that has done so much for so many. If you’re looking to give back to the community, this is the place to do it.”

Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch welcomed Bishop Caggiano as a “bridge builder” in the community and said that the Cardinal Shehan Center has served generations of Bridgeport youth with programs that help them move in a positive direction.

(For more information, call 203.336.4468 or visit www.shehan-center.org.)



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ball in the street and looked out for one another. The eyes and ears of parents and other adults were also constantly watching over them.

“I had one mother, but I also had 50 mothers because everyone on the block knew who I was and I couldn’t escape,” he said to laughter about his description of his boyhood days.

“If you grew up in Brooklyn or in Bridgeport at one time, you had the privilege of having that community,” he said, noting that community life has been replaced for many of the young by neighborhoods that are anonymous and indifferent to their welfare.

He thanked those in attendance for supporting the Cardinal Shehan Center and for working toward a community “where children feel safe and have a sense of

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St. Vincent's Medical Center

2013 Employee of the Year

BRIDGEPORT—Joseph Lavenziana, executive director of Facilities and Security at St. Vincent's Medical Center, was named St. Vincent's 2013 Employee of the Year. Lavenziana is a Shelton resident and a member of St. Jude Parish in Monroe. He has been with St. Vincent's Health Services for 24 years and was recognized not only for his dedication and commitment, but for his extraordinary leadership and reliability during the two major storms "Sandy"

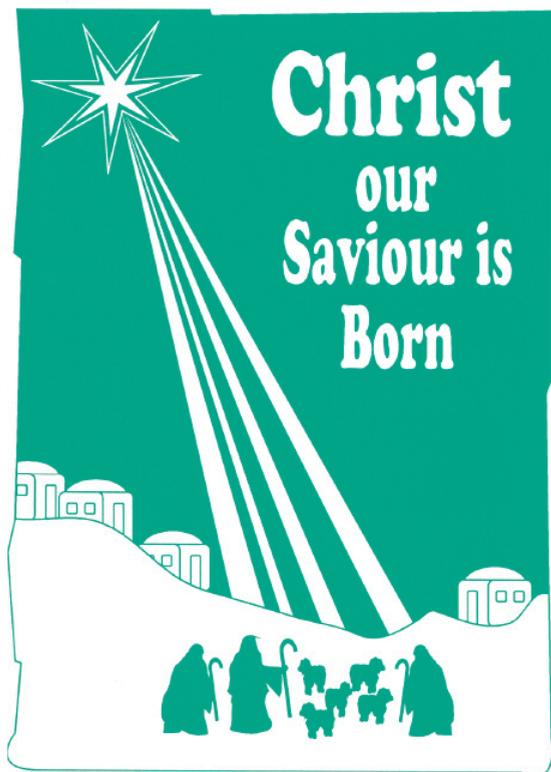
and "Nemo," which put quite a strain on the community at large. Described as a "servant leader" with "impeccable moral character" and "the highest levels of integrity" by his colleagues, Lavenziana is charged with the complex task of keeping patients, visitors and staff safe in an often hectic and demanding environment. He oversees a sizeable safety and security team who must be trained, prepared and primed for any number of security and emergency situations that might arise. He also coordi-

nates campus-wide safety awareness, training and drills in order to keep each and every St. Vincent's employee in step with safety and security protocol. Lavenziana was hired by St. Vincent's in 1989 as the Medical Center's director of Safety and Security. As the Medical Center grew, so did his responsibilities. By 1992, he was chair for the Emergency Preparedness Committee and also assumed responsibility for oversight in regulatory compliance as it relates to



safety and environment of care. Lavenziana was promoted to his current role as executive director of Facilities, Safety and Security in 2012. As if keeping all who visit

or work in the Medical Center safe is not enough pressure for Lavenziana, as Employee of the Year, he alone will be responsible for placing the Angel on top of the St. Vincent's Christmas tree. ■



May the angels from on high be with you this Christmas season and bring you health and prosperity during the coming year.

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Shepherds

Yankee leads Shepherds line-up

DARIEN—Yankees First Baseman Mark Teixeira teamed with Shepherds as the guest speaker at the Fifteenth Anniversary Founder's Dinner on October 10 at the Woodway Country Club. Shepherds' mission is described by co-founders Barnet Philips, IV, and Brendan Fisk as "Helping one kid at a time, getting them through school and on to a productive life."

Teixeira, who has earned five Gold Glove and three Silver Slugger Awards, is a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenwich. He shares Shepherds' belief that education is the key to lifelong success.



Teixeira spent time learning about personal experiences and challenges with Shepherds' seniors at Kolbe-Cathedral High School: (l-r) Herlinda, Jocelyn, Jonathan, Andrew and Sophomore Catherine. He also took time to discuss student successes with alumni and alumni mentors. (l-r) Front row: Dessirett, Bianca, Netfa; back row: Marques, Nancy and Curtis (l-r, second row).



Merry Christmas!

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BISHOP'S STEWARDSHIP REPORT



DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

BISHOP CAGGIANO INTRODUCTORY LETTER

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

COMMENTARY ON DIOCESAN DISAGGREGATED CONDENSED
COMBINED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



BISHOP CAGGIANO INTRODUCTORY LETTER

December, 2013

Dear Friends in Christ,

Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude for the heartfelt welcome you have given me since my arrival as Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport. I am truly humbled to serve the Lord in this strong, diverse and faith-filled community. Further, I am truly blessed to follow the strong and dedicated leadership of my predecessors.

As I begin my ministry in your midst, I commit to you, the priests, deacons, women and men in consecrated life and the lay faithful of the Diocese, my unwavering commitment to serve as your shepherd here in Fairfield County.

My vision for the future of the Diocese of Bridgeport is one of a growing and vibrant Church that welcomes everyone who seeks to deepen their relationship with the Lord Jesus within our Catholic community of faith. Central to this welcome is my desire to invite all of our young people to grow in love of the Lord Jesus and to find their spiritual home in our parishes and schools. My vision is one of hope and growth, of renewed faith and charity towards those most in need.

With your help, support and prayers, I stand ready to collaborate with you to make this vision a reality.

As a necessary first step in building the future of our Diocese in service of the Lord, I wish to begin by sharing the accompanying Stewardship Report that includes a summary of our ministries and a picture of the current financial position

of the Diocese of Bridgeport. To that end, presented in this report are the condensed financial statements and commentary for fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012 for the Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation (the "Diocese"). Also being presented as part of this report are the full audits for fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012, which can be found online at www.bridgeportdiocese.com/Stewardship.html. These audited financial statements received clean, unqualified opinion letters from our outside auditors. By December 31, 2013, we will also issue financial statements with commentary for fiscal year 2009. Since the 2009 audit year reflects an 18 month audit, as the result of a change in the Diocesan fiscal year from June 30th to December 31st, it is not a comparative report to those issued here. By January 31, 2014 a full accounting of the Diocesan endowment fund, Faith in the Future, will be issued.

This stewardship report and accompanying financial statements are the first step in a three step process. With this report I am providing a current assessment of the Diocese, as well as specific information on its recent past. The second step will be to undergo a consultative and collaborative process by which we can articulate together a comprehensive pastoral and strategic vision for the future of our Diocese. Included in that vision will be identifying those areas of pastoral life that need to be revitalized in order to realize a vibrant and growing Church. The third step will be to develop a concrete plan that will allow us to realize this vision over the next few years. To achieve these goals, I will seek the assistance and collaboration of all in Diocesan leadership, as well as all the clergy, religious and lay leaders of our Diocese.

As we know, the past five years have seen great change and presented significant challenges in our country's broader financial markets. The Diocese has also experienced similar change and challenges, as outlined in our financial statements. Like many other non-profit organizations and individuals during 2008, the investment portfolio of the Diocese, particularly the Diocesan Lay Pension Plan, experienced market-related losses. Additionally, the Diocese has struggled over the past several years with an annual operating deficit, primarily due to the inability to collect all of the insurance premiums due from some of our schools and parishes. As a result, the Diocese required both external and internal borrowings to finance ongoing regular operations. You will see in the accompanying reports how the Diocese has chosen to address these challenges. Finally, despite these financial challenges, the Diocese has continued to honor its commitment not to fund any settlements of sexual abuse claims with monies from donors, parishes or Diocesan accounts but has funded these settlements with past and ongoing property sales.

Over the last few years, the Diocese has taken a number of steps to strengthen its financial position. Among these steps are:

- Freezing the Lay Pension Plan for all participants as of July 2010,

and replacing it with a defined contribution plan for employees;

- Instituting a pension shortfall assessment in 2011, with plans to continue the assessment each year until the liability is fully discharged;
- Close monitoring of the pension fund's asset allocation and investment strategy by the Diocesan Finance Council Investment Committee;
- Ongoing review and reorganization of Diocesan operations, to generate efficiencies and reduced expenses.

As I have studied the situation over the last two months, I wish to commend those in past positions of Diocesan leadership who made difficult decisions to address these challenges. I applaud my predecessors and Monsignor Jerald Doyle, whose hard work before my arrival has given us a solid foundation upon which to build.

I am grateful to our Diocesan financial services team, the Diocesan Finance Council, the College of Consultors, and many others for their hard work and dedication to ensure faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to the Church's care.

As we acknowledge the challenges that we face as a Diocese here in Fairfield County, I am delighted to report that our 82 parishes, 34 schools, our social service ministry provided by Catholic Charities, and many other pastoral, spiritual, and educational services offered by the Diocese and outlined in this report have faithfully and generously served the Lord Jesus and His people very well. Whether we look at our spiritual and pastoral life, educational and social service ministries, or the financial stewardship provided by our Diocese, there is great news and much progress to be celebrated.

While we continue to work together to enhance our financial resources, we are all committed to doing the Lord's work in our parishes and communities. It is each of you, our faithful priests, deacons and women and men in consecrated life who have given their lives in dedicated witness to the Church, and the lay faithful who have given their time, talent, and treasure, who make this work possible. We all share this responsibility, through our individual vocations and ministries, and the support we give to our parishes and the Annual Bishop's Appeal.

I ask you to join me to foster a growing and vibrant Church here in the Diocese of Bridgeport, where all are welcome and in which our young people will find their spiritual home.

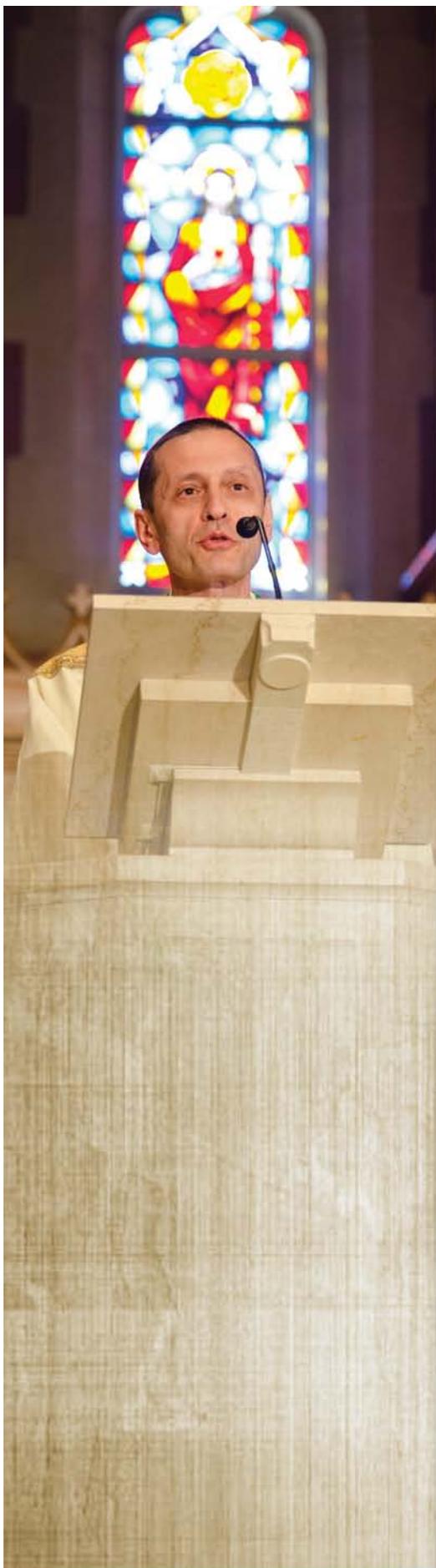
It is in this spirit that I wish to express my sincere thanks to all of you for your generosity and commitment to Christ and His Church. May our work in the years ahead reap great fruit as we strive to serve the Lord through one another.

As we enter the Advent season, please be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones.

Sincerely in Christ,

Frank Caggiano

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport



Stewardship Report

This Stewardship Report is first and foremost a record of faith in our Diocese. Nothing could compel the extraordinary commitment, personal giving, and acts of faithful service outlined here other than the experience of the Risen Lord in our midst. It is a faith that binds generations and celebrates the presence of Jesus in our lives and manifests itself in the good works outlined below.

As Catholics, we must constantly ask, "How authentic are we as a loving community?" The good works described here answer this important question. They speak to a stewardship with its roots in the Gospel mandate to serve the poor, to care for the sick and to bring the merciful love of Jesus to all those who are seeking reconciliation and healing in life.

Stewardship is a gift, not a burden. Stewards are neither masters nor servants, but loving caretakers who treat the resources with which they are entrusted as if they were their own. In a larger sense, this report is not simply about Diocesan stewardship, but the giving of time, talent and treasure by so many people of faith in our parishes, schools, and throughout the Diocese.

St. Augustine reminds us that only those who are truly grateful for their lives and gifts can be generous to others. They use their own talents well, and give their surplus blessings to support those in need.

The following report offers a snapshot of the wide range of ministries, programs, and charisms at work in our local Church. The report also provides a comprehensive and accurate picture of diocesan finances and financial commentary, as well as the summary of good work you make possible through your continued financial support.

Living in the Spirit

We are a diocese of 82 parishes serving 420,000 Catholics in Fairfield County. Our parishes continue to proclaim the Gospel, draw people into the life of the Sacraments, and serve as loving communities that bring the comfort of Jesus to those in need.

In our diverse Diocese, Mass is said in 14 languages and the area's newest immigrants worship alongside those who have been here for generations. There is

a vibrant Vietnamese community worshipping at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport and growing Brazilian communities in Danbury and Bridgeport, as well as a long history of Hispanic and Haitian ministries in our Diocese. Our parishes also serve Polish, Korean, Nigerian, Italian



and Hungarian Catholics, along with others from a variety of European, African and Asian countries.

The following spiritual movements have brought new fervor and adult faith formation to the Diocese: the Neocatechumenal Way, Legion of Mary, Teams of Our Lady, Marriage Encounter, Walking with Purpose, Focolare, Communion and Liberation, Opus Dei, Cursillo, TEC, Knights of St. Gregory, Knights of Malta, Knights of Holy Sepulchre, Knights of Columbus and Columbettes, Emmaus, PII, Regina Christi, TMIY (That Man is You!), Sons of St. Joseph, Third Orders of Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Benedictines.

The Diocese is blessed with 240 priests, 103 deacons, and 343 religious women and men in consecrated life who witness to Christ and serve in loving ministries, and a laity second to none in its generosity and record of faith. Last year we celebrated 4,343 Baptisms, 5,128 First Communions, and 2,614 Marriages that reflect a vibrant, living Catholic faith. Additionally, seven men were ordained to the priesthood, while 37 seminarians are discerning their vocations and preparing for ministry. In

just the last two years, we have welcomed several new permanent deacons to our clergy family. Also in the past few years, we have also welcomed seven new religious communities who bring a deep faith and renewed vitality to the Diocese.

The practice of our faith is a work of

nificantly grown. In addition to providing support for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process, the following ministries/opportunities now exist: Professionally recorded St. Cyril of Jerusalem Program available online, Diocesan partnership with Sacred Heart University entitled S.H.A.R.E, numerous annual pilgrimages, Train the Trainer program for parish leaders, and classes to prepare adults for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Youth Ministry is flourishing in many parishes and schools. Growing numbers of young women and men participate in Convivio (an annual retreat that focuses on their personal relationship with Jesus), World Youth Day (every 2-3 years), an annual Fan the Fire youth rally at St. Rose of Lima Parish, mission trips to Peru, and a highly successful High School Apostles leadership program for the youth.

The Marriage and Family ministry oversees the reinvigorated Marriage Preparation Program (650 couples were served in 2012). This ministry has expanded to offer outreach, catechesis and services to newly married couples, couples already married for a number of years, and those individuals who have experienced a divorce. In addition, our Episcopal Vicar for Hispanics oversees a growing Marriage Preparation Program in Spanish.

The Ministry for People with Disabilities has received national attention for pioneering catechetical programs that catechize people with developmental disabilities: www.liturgy123.com and Sacraments123 (an iPad mobile app).

The Respect Life program has expanded to include an annual Diocesan trip to the Pro-Life March, the annual Respect Life Mass, Project Rachel (that provides numerous confidential services to women and men who have suffered through an abortion), Days of Hope and Healing, and the 40 Days for Life campaign.

The Annual Diocesan Lenten Confessional Campaign has successfully welcomed back thousands of people to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation over the last several years. This past Lent, the U.S. Bishops encouraged all dioceses to offer similar campaigns and highlighted the Diocese of Bridgeport program as a model to follow.

Communications

The Diocese of Bridgeport is committed to bringing the Good News of the Gospel to Fairfield County through the use of print, electronic and social media. Its many publications and online efforts inform, evangelize and educate, while

grace that draws on the gifts and talents of every believer. In the work of the local Church, we continue to discover new ways to love God and serve one another.

Pastoral Services and Christian Formation

The Diocesan Office for Pastoral Services fosters, guides, and supports the endeavor of life-long formation in the teachings of Christ and all aspects of the Catholic Faith on both the parish and Diocesan levels. It evangelizes by providing catechesis for all ages by supporting and building up parish catechetical programs, youth and young adult ministries, adult formation, Christian Initiation, pro-life and family life activities, marriage preparation, and formation programs for teachers, catechists, catechetical leaders, and clergy.

More than 36,000 children participate in the Religious Education programs in the 82 parishes throughout the Diocese. This great collaborative effort between the Diocese and its parishes teaches our young people in the Catholic faith and prepares the next generation of believers.

The Adult Formation ministry has sig-

Stewardship Report



helping to build support and resources for the local Church.

The Diocesan newspaper, *Fairfield County Catholic*, continues to thrive with a circulation of over 100,000, making it the largest newspaper in the state, mailed free of charge every month.

The Diocesan website records almost 20,000 visits each month and offers timely and detailed information. Usage continues to grow, making the website an impressive and effective way to get the message of the Church out, particularly to our young people. We are committed as a Diocese to stay ahead of the changes in communication that mark our modern life in service of the Gospel.

Recently the Diocese has also moved into social media with a lively two Facebook pages, a Youth Page, Twitter and an online newsletter sent to nearly 40,000 registered Catholics who have provided their emails.

Catholic Schools

Our schools continue to model Christ's example in every aspect of our learning environment, focusing on Gospel values and a strong educational foundation with Catholic identity as our priority. Our parishes continue to provide financial support to achieve our goals through an offertory contribution that has translated into an annual contribution of \$100,000 for all 25 not located in Bridgeport. The Bridgeport Catholic Academies receive support from the Bridgeport parishes and other contributions specifically directed to these schools.

Over 50% of our elementary schools have now met the criteria for "Blue Ribbon" status by the U.S. Department of Education, the highest national honor for any school. This puts our schools in the top 10% of public and private schools in the country. Our students in grades 3-8 at our Blue Ribbon schools rank in the top 15% of schools in the country in reading and math.

In our five Diocesan Catholic high schools, average SAT scores in critical reading and writing are above state and national norms. The average percentage of our students scoring 600 or better in SAT Mathematics and Writing was higher than national norms. 99% of all our high school graduates continue on to post secondary education.

Our schools continue to thrive, both academically and spiritually. Overall, our enrollment continues to increase across our schools as a whole, serving over 10,000 students in our 28 elementary schools, our special needs school (St. Catherine Academy) and five high schools. Our commitment to serving inner city students continues to be a priority. This fall, we opened the new consolidated Cathedral Academy on two campuses in Bridgeport. The Catholic Academies of Bridgeport, including Cathedral Academy, St. Ann and St. Andrew, as well as several of our neighboring Catholic elementary schools, are serving over 1200 students from Bridgeport alone, more than half of whom benefit from financial assistance. St. Peter School in Danbury, whose students hail

from diverse cultural backgrounds, continues to serve a growing international population in this city.

Professional development of our teachers remains a priority, with programs in conjunction with Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University.

Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities offers more than 30 programs across Fairfield County serving thousands of needy and vulnerable of all backgrounds and faiths. The core services include nutrition, counseling, housing, family support, immigration

services, and adoption.

A broad range of nutrition activities include six programs in Bridgeport, Stamford, and Danbury serving 1.5 million meals annually in soup kitchens, food pantries, the elderly in their homes and senior centers, as well as more than 200 meals daily to inner city youth. We recently initiated an effort to provide fresh and nutritionally beneficial food in the past year.

Individual and family mental health

schools. Catholic Charities is often the only much needed help available to many of our most fragile clients. This service is and will continue to be available in especially difficult situations such as the Newtown tragedy. These much needed programs will be maintained in spite of shrinking financial support from government and private sources.

Housing needs are one of the biggest challenges we face in Fairfield County but an increased focus on meeting these needs has resulted in the establishment of several facilities in Bridgeport and Stratford currently providing permanent and transitional housing for nearly 200 individuals and families.

Family support services are an inherent part of all Catholic Charities programs but, in particular, our Room to Grow preschool program in Norwalk which serves 83 three to five year old children from families with limited resources. We hope to expand this very successful program in the near term.

Immigration Support Services provides legal and lifestyle counseling to several hundred individuals and families regularly. We are certified by the Department of Justice and expect this welcoming activity will continue to grow as immigration changes evolve with legislation on the horizon in the next few years.

Catholic Charities' oldest service, the Adoption program, has had to be restructured as available placements have decreased significantly. We currently offer pregnancy



support services are available through three clinics that provide 15,000 clinical sessions annually. With a growing focus on children, we provide psychiatrists and psychologists in these clinics and our

counseling and home studies across the County. In addition, we are one of only two Hague accredited agencies in the State enhancing our ability to serve other agencies with, in particular, foreign adoptions.

Financial Issues

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Among the significant issues presented in the accompanying diocesan financial statements, which also warrant discussion here are the following:

Operating Deficits

As reflected in the Disaggregated Statement of Activities, net assets have declined each year for the three years reviewed in these statements. The primary causes for these operating deficits from ongoing activities are:

- The level of uncollectible amounts of reimbursable revenue intended to cover employee benefits and insurance program expenses, primarily from inner city schools.
- Increasing cost of healthcare and benefits.
- Reduction of anticipated Annual Bishop's Appeal contributions.

The causes of the decline in net assets have been and continue to be addressed. Specifically, an inner city school reorganization was implemented to generate the necessary funding to meet current obligations including all employee benefits and insurance programs. Additionally, the Diocese is consistently reviewing benefits, both healthcare and other benefits in order to provide adequate support to our employees, yet maintain a manageable level of expense for the Diocese. Through fostering participation in wellness, we partner with our employees to keep costs low and services reasonable. Finally, although the Annual Bishop's Appeal fell short of its goal this past year, it was not unexpected. Without a Bishop, fundraising efforts were challenging, but the Diocese anticipated this challenge and took measures to cut current payroll and benefit expenses which will be reflected in ongoing future year's savings.

Pension Plans and Retired Priest Healthcare

Aided by the steady recovery of the investment market, the Diocesan Lay Pension Plan continues to recover from the losses it incurred in the 2008-2009 timeframe. However, for purposes of the presentation of the Diocesan financial statements and accompanying commentary found in the report, the long term financial obligations pertaining to the lay pension, priest pension and retired priests' healthcare have been segregated from the results of the Diocese's annual operations. By segregating these long-term obligations, you will see a much clearer financial

picture of the Diocese's operational position. While these long-term pension obligations continue to show a significant deficit, the Diocese fully expects to be able to meet all of its ongoing obligations to all of its former and retired employees under its pension plans. In addition to the condensed, disaggregated financial statements,



the full, audited financial statements for the reporting periods of 2010, 2011 and 2012 are available for download on the Diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com/Stewardship.shtml.

Sexual Abuse Cases

As is presented in the commentary accompanying the financial statements, settlements associated with sexual abuse cases have consistently decreased over the last several years. In the State of Connecticut, the statute of limitations allows cases to be brought up to 30 years beyond the complainant's 18th birthday. Despite this lengthy claims window, the Diocese continues to see a reduction in claims. Further, all of the current claims against the Diocese involve incidents alleged to have occurred before 1985. All payments associated with these claims have been supported in full by the sale of diocesan assets. None of the monies collected by the Diocese from parishes or other fundraising efforts including the Annual Bishop's Appeal is used to pay settlement claims.

Faith in the Future Fund

The Faith in the Future Fund was created in 1995 when Bishop Edward M. Egan authorized a capital campaign to provide a source of endowed support for various

ministries in the Diocese. While investment losses have prevented any income distributions from the Fund for the past several years, gradual recovery has positioned the Fund to resume distributing support to its respective beneficiaries beginning in 2014. At December 2012, Faith in the Future Fund had investments totaling more than

- Structure of Loan: Five years interest-only payments with the remaining balance amortized over the remaining 15 year term
- Security: Certain properties owned by the Diocese, primarily vacant land (no parish or school properties included). If properties are sold,

\$17.3M with an additional \$4.7M in funds due from the Diocese. Advances from Faith in the Future Fund were made to the Diocese in 2011 to support employee benefit insurance programs that a number of schools were unable to fund. Because these schools are now beginning to pay down these debts and other funds became available, a majority of the advanced funds received by the Diocese have already been repaid earlier in 2013. At September 2013, Faith in the Future Fund had over \$21.1M in investments with \$1.7M of additional funds due from the Diocese. The Diocese is committed to return in full as quickly as possible all the advanced sums it received to ensure future distributions out of the Fund. A complete, comprehensive financial report for the Faith in the Future Fund will be issued separately from this presentation by January 31, 2014.

Knights of Columbus

In December 2011, the Diocese issued a promissory note to the Knights of Columbus for \$15M. The proceeds were used to repay in full a loan issued from another financial institution as well as reduce other long and short term payables.

Terms of the note are as follows:

- Term of Loan: 20 years
- Interest Rate: 5% fixed

75% of the net proceeds shall be used to pay the principal balance. During 2013 a portion of the principal balance of the loan, \$2.7M, was repaid from the sale of some of these properties.

In other financial matters, the Diocese continues to strengthen the financial services it provides for both our schools and our parishes. For our Diocesan elementary schools, our School Finance Department provides comprehensive assistance in the budgeting and accounting functions. In our parishes, the continued use of the basic policies and procedures established in the Parish Administration & Finance Manual has created a strong foundation for all parish finance activities. This year alone, our Parish Finance group assisted our parishes in recovering tax refunds of over \$300,000 associated with health care premiums paid by our parishes on behalf of their employees as small business employers.

The summary financial statements that follow were derived from the complete financial statements prepared by EisnerAmperLLC, an independent certified public accounting firm. The complete audited financial statements (with unqualified (clean) opinion) for the same period are available for download on the Diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com/Stewardship.shtml.

Combined Financial Statements

BRIDGEPORT ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESAN CORPORATION

Commentary on Diocesan Disaggregated Condensed Combined Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2012, 2011 and 2010

Overview

The disaggregated financial statements for The Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation (the Diocese) are provided to allow a concentrated analysis of the "ordinary" operations within the Diocese separately from the impact of the Pension Plans and Retired Priests Healthcare obligations.

The Diocese continues to meet all of its ongoing pension and retired priest obligations (defined benefit obligation) and fully anticipates continuing to meet these obligations in the future. Defined benefit obligations are required to be reported in the combined statement of financial position based on the amounts the Diocese would have to pay a third party to assume those obligations. (The Bridgeport Diocesan Pension Plan [lay employees] was frozen effective July 31, 2010, i.e. participants earn no further benefits under the plan after that date. This plan is part of the defined benefit obligation mentioned above. A new plan, called the defined contribution plan replaced the old one and based on certain qualifiers, a set percentage of an employee's salary is contributed for their retirement benefit.) Since the Diocese has no intention of transferring the defined benefit obligations to a third party and these obligations are of a long-term nature, it is appropriate to evaluate the current position of the Diocese with the defined benefit obligation presented separately.

RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES Revenues and Gains

Overall revenue and gains improved in 2012 compared to 2011 by \$1.6M primarily driven by investment income. The investment returns in 2012, \$1.8M were dramatically improved from the volatile market and subsequent loss of \$80K for the Diocese during 2011.

Annual Bishop's Appeal

The Annual Bishop's Appeal, along with other contributions and bequests, has remained steady over the past three years at approximately \$11M, with a one time increase of \$1.1M in 2011 for contributions related to the future expansion of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy retirement home for Diocesan priests.



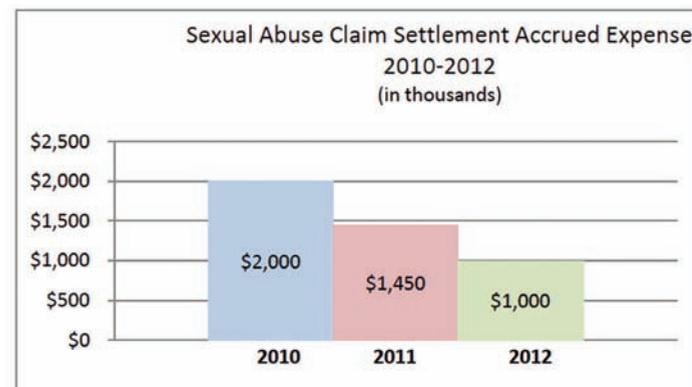
When combined with Appeal contributions that are not included in the Diocesan financial statements, (*that go directly to Catholic Charities and Diocesan schools*), the total for the Appeal and other contributions and bequests was \$12.4M in 2012, \$14.4M in 2011 and \$12.3M in 2010.

Employee Benefit and Insurance Programs

The Diocesan employee benefit and insurance programs is a reimbursable arrangement between the Diocese and most Diocesan entities. It is also the largest source of funds to the Diocese. The

and most Diocesan entities (parishes, schools, Catholic Charities, Cardinal Shehan Center) who work the required minimum hours per week. The insurance program is for property, casualty and liability insurance for Diocesan entities.

The reimbursement revenues from those programs represent amounts billed to the other Diocesan entities to cover their portion of the related expenses with the objective of "breaking even." Unfortunately, those revenues were reduced by approximately \$1.7M in 2012, \$2M in 2011 and \$2.3M in 2010 for uncollectible amounts, primarily parishes and schools unable to pay the amounts due for the good and dedicated people who serve you and your families in parish and school offices and ministries. Through concerted efforts and focus on the underlying prob-



lems that created this situation of uncollected revenue, the Diocese has been able to reduce those amounts each year.

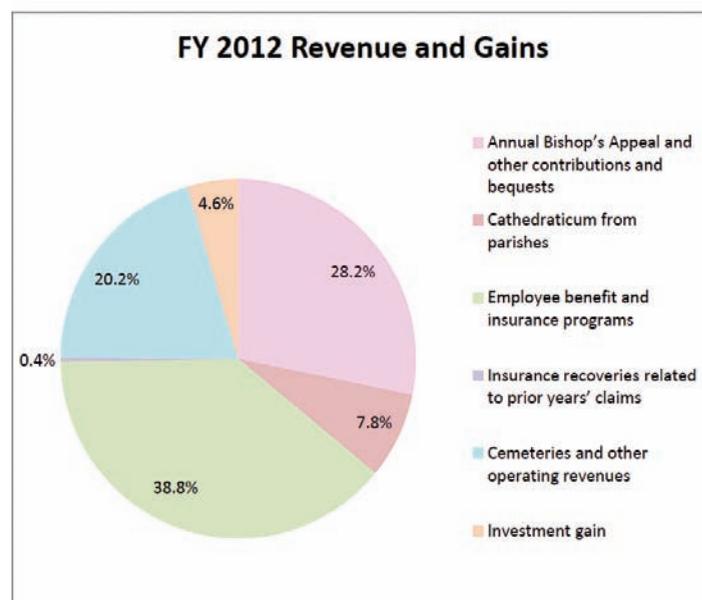
Catholic Cemeteries

Cemeteries and other operating revenues have declined approximately \$1M each year since 2010. New construction of mausoleums in 2010, and the revenue streams created by those projects increased typical sales revenue over a two-year period of time. No new large construction occurred during 2012, which reduced revenue as compared to earlier periods. Evaluations of new opportunities within Diocesan cemeteries are underway, with a focus on creating increased revenue streams for the future.

Expenses

Including expenses related to pensions and retired priest's healthcare, the Diocese has reduced its expenses from \$54.6M in 2010 to \$48.1M in 2012, with almost \$4M in regular operations savings alone. The largest savings, over \$2.5M, comes from

FY 2012 Revenue and Gains



employee benefit programs (health, pensions, and workers compensation) cover all lay and clergy employees of the Diocese

Combined Financial Statements

the employee benefit and insurance programs. During the past three years, the Diocese has recognized savings from:

- Annual review of benefits, both health-care and other, along with fostering employee participation in wellness to keep expenses manageable.
- Sexual abuse claim settlement payments were made as follows: 2010—\$0K, 2011—\$595K and 2012—\$920K. Expense accruals for future payments were reduced from almost \$2M in 2010 to \$1.45M in 2011 to \$1M in 2012. Portions of revenue from property sales, both past and present, have been held in reserve and used to fund settlements.

Other expenses were reduced continuously over the past three years in Administration and General, down over \$700K, and Services and contributions to other Diocesan entities and other parties, down over \$500K. The Diocese has taken measures each year to cut payroll and benefit expenses, along with evaluating each program's administrative costs to operate as efficiently, yet effectively, as possible.

Financial Position Assets

Total assets declined in 2012 by approximately \$4M as compared to 2010 and by approximately \$3M as compared to 2011. There are two main reasons for

this reduction—investments and property and equipment. Investments, principally representing Faith in the Future Fund, declined by approximately \$3.5M in 2011. Advances from Faith in the Future Fund were made to the Diocese to fund excess expenses over revenue largely brought on by the uncollectibility of schools employee benefit insurance programs. As schools are able to pay down their amounts due to the Diocese for these benefits, or other revenue streams increase, the Diocese has in turn, returned the funds to Faith in the Future for the benefit of the schools affected. During FY 2013, the Diocese has been able to return all but \$1.7M to Faith in the Future from property sales completed in the current year. Proceeds from future property sales will assist in repaying the remaining outstanding balance.

The second cause for the decline in assets is depreciation expense related to property and equipment. Approximately \$1.8M in depreciation expense is recognized annually. Typically, about \$800K in new assets, primarily related to construction in cemeteries is added to property and equipment each year, leaving a net reduction in property and equipment of about \$1M each year.

Receivables in 2012 grew approximately \$1.5M over 2011, solely due to workers compensation insurance due from excess carriers to cover claims recognized in Diocesan liabilities (see *Payables, other than*



notes section below).

In 2012, Cash and Cash equivalents, while consistent with 2010 levels, grew about \$4M during 2011 due to proceeds from a financial institution loan, (see *liabilities below*) that were not yet fully utilized.

Liabilities

The largest growth in Diocesan obligations occurred from the following:

- Pension & other Retirement obligations
- Notes payable to Financial institutions
- Payables due to other Diocesan entities

Pension and other Retirement obligations

Pension and other retirement obligations continue to be the largest Diocesan liability. The original decline in pension assets initially arose in the eighteen-month period ended December 31, 2009, primarily from investment losses incurred in the global economic downturn between September 2008 and March 2009.

Compounding those losses, defined benefit obligations are required to be reported in the combined statement of financial position based on the amounts the Diocese would have to pay a third party to assume those obligations, even when there is no intention to transfer them. The interest rate that is used in these calculations is equal to current interest rates for high quality corporate bonds of comparable maturities. As these rates fluctuate, so too does the liability the Diocese has for the retirement plans.

As depicted in the charts below, while the plan assets have not changed dramatically, the benefit obligations, due primarily to the change in interest rates, have increased substantially in 2012.

These declines have no near term

impact on pension payments to retirees.

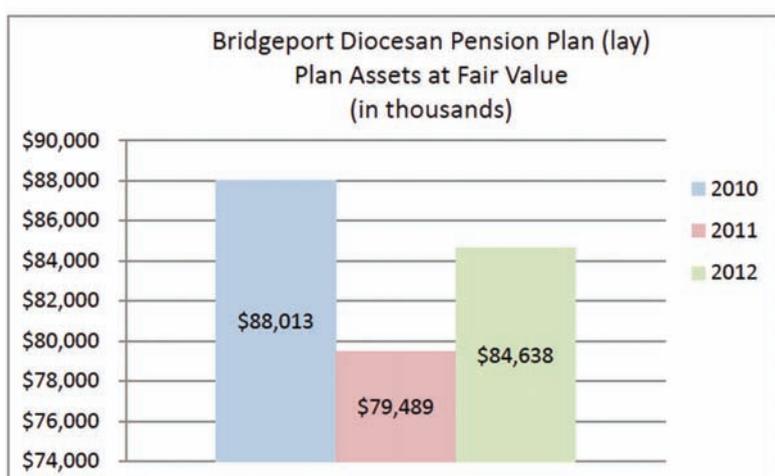
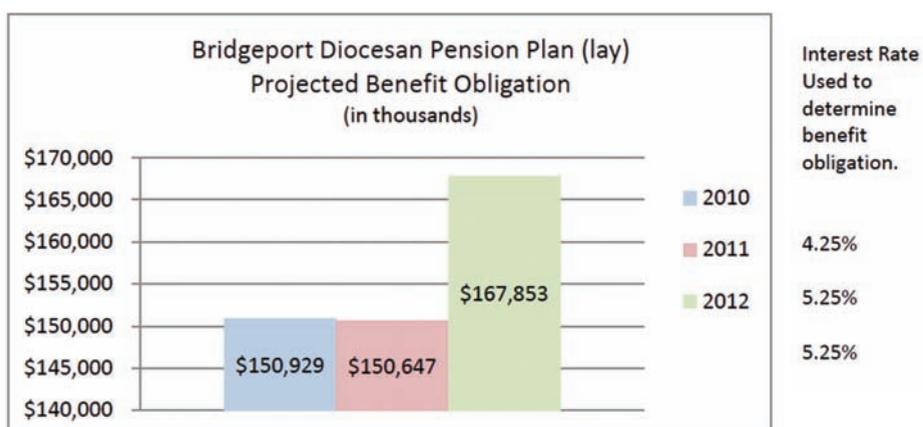
Pension payments are funded out of current investments and shortfall funding. (In July of 2011 a lay pension shortfall funding plan was implemented by the Diocese whereby each existing Diocesan entity contributes a percentage of their prior year's payroll dollars to assist in recovering from this underfunded status.)

Promissory Note

The second largest increase in Diocesan liabilities over the past three years is from notes payable to financial institutions, up \$7M from 2010. The promissory note to the Knights of Columbus was issued in December 2011 and the proceeds were used to repay in full, the loan issued from another financial institution as well as partially reduce other payables. Lastly, 2012 payables, other than notes, were consistent with 2010 figures, but up \$2.6M compared to 2011. The primary increase was a result of workers compensation claims (partially offset with insurance, see Asset receivable section above), and payables due to other Diocesan entities.

Net Assets

Net Assets decreased by \$5.4M in FY 2012, \$6.9M in FY 2011 and \$5.8M in FY 2010 excluding pensions and retired priests health care. The operating deficits, primarily brought on by the uncollectibility of insurance reimbursements have been and continue to be addressed. For example, the Diocese has implemented an inner city school reorganization, an ongoing review of benefits, and a retirement incentive plan at the schools as well as the Catholic Center. The Diocese will continue similar efforts in 2013 and beyond to improve its overall financial position.



*The Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation***Disaggregated Condensed Combined Statement of Financial Position**

(Amounts in Thousands)

	December 31								
	2012			2011			2010		
	Excluding Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Total	Excluding Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Total	Excluding Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Total
Assets									
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,632	\$ 146	\$ 2,778	\$ 6,769	\$ 47	\$ 6,816	\$ 2,598	\$ 7	\$ 2,605
Receivables, net	8,761	3,799	12,560	7,248	3,713	10,961	8,213	3,240	11,453
Investments	24,935	-	24,935	24,292	-	24,292	27,806	-	27,806
Property and equipment, net	45,916	-	45,916	46,987	-	46,987	48,135	-	48,135
Total assets	\$ 82,244	\$ 3,945	\$ 86,189	\$ 85,296	\$ 3,760	\$ 89,056	\$ 86,752	\$ 3,247	\$ 89,999
Liabilities									
Payables, other than notes, accruals and refundable advances	\$ 16,221		\$ 16,221	\$ 13,600		\$ 13,600	\$ 16,190		\$ 16,190
Notes payable to financial institutions	15,895		15,895	16,230		16,230	8,821		8,821
Conditional asset retirement obligations	4,833		4,833	4,587		4,587	4,325		4,325
Pension and other retirement obligations	3,227	95,516	98,743	3,459	81,403	84,862	3,026	72,333	75,359
Total liabilities	40,176	95,516	135,692	37,876	81,403	119,279	32,362	72,333	104,695
Net (Deficit) Assets:									
Unrestricted	16,399	(91,571)	(75,172)	23,277	(77,643)	(54,366)	30,858	(69,086)	(38,228)
Temporarily restricted	3,798	-	3,798	2,338	-	2,338	1,722	-	1,722
Permanently restricted	21,871	-	21,871	21,805	-	21,805	21,810	-	21,810
Total net assets (deficit)	42,068	(91,571)	(49,503)	47,420	(77,643)	(30,223)	54,390	(69,086)	(14,696)
Total liabilities and net assets (deficit)	\$ 82,244	\$ 3,945	\$ 86,189	\$ 85,296	\$ 3,760	\$ 89,056	\$ 86,752	\$ 3,247	\$ 89,999

*The Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation***Disaggregated Condensed Combined Statement of Activities**

(Amounts in Thousands)

	FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31								
	2012			2011			2010		
	Excluding Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Total	Excluding Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Total	Excluding Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Pensions & Retired Priests Healthcare	Total
Changes in									
unrestricted, temporarily and permanently restricted net assets:									
Revenues and gains:									
Annual Bishop's Appeal and other contributions and bequests	\$ 11,098	\$ -	\$ 11,098	\$ 12,287	\$ -	\$ 12,287	\$ 10,904	\$ -	\$ 10,904
Cathedralicum from parishes	3,049	-	3,049	2,857	-	2,857	2,772	-	2,772
Employee benefit and insurance programs									
revenues from other Diocesan entities	11,802	3,453	15,255	10,500	2,796	13,296	12,019	3,599	15,618
Insurance recoveries related to prior years' claims	156	-	156	385	-	385	63	-	63
Cemeteries and other operating revenues	7,957	-	7,957	9,032	-	9,032	10,277	-	10,277
Investment gain (loss)	1,818	-	1,818	(80)	-	(80)	3,005	-	3,005
Total revenues and gains	35,880	3,453	39,333	34,981	2,796	37,777	39,040	3,599	42,639
Expenses:									
Services and contributions to other Diocesan entities and other parties	11,978	-	11,978	12,473	-	12,473	12,530	-	12,530
Operations	6,241	-	6,241	6,257	-	6,257	6,171	-	6,171
Employee benefit and insurance programs	16,152	6,896	23,048	16,087	5,828	21,915	18,677	9,735	28,412
Administration and general	5,633	-	5,633	5,939	-	5,939	6,338	-	6,338
Fundraising	1,228	-	1,228	1,195	-	1,195	1,134	-	1,134
Total expenses	41,232	6,896	48,128	41,951	5,828	47,779	44,850	9,735	54,585
Decrease in net assets before adjustment to recognize funded status of pension and priests' post-retirement healthcare obligations	(5,352)	(3,443)	(8,795)	(6,970)	(3,032)	(10,002)	(5,810)	(6,136)	(11,946)
Adjustment to recognize funded status of pension and priests' post-retirement healthcare obligations	-	(10,485)	(10,485)	-	(5,525)	(5,525)	-	10,312	10,312
Decrease in net assets	(5,352)	(13,928)	(19,280)	(6,970)	(8,557)	(15,527)	(5,810)	4,176	(1,634)
Net assets (deficit) at beginning of year:	47,420	(77,643)	(30,223)	54,390	(69,086)	(14,696)	60,200	(73,262)	(13,062)
Net assets (deficit) at end of year	\$ 42,068	\$ (91,571)	\$ (49,503)	\$ 47,420	\$ (77,643)	\$ (30,223)	\$ 54,390	\$ (69,086)	\$ (14,696)

A Traveler's Notes

Stonehenge: an enduring mystery

By **DON HARRISON**

If you're on the senior side of 50 and would like to see those years shrink to nearly nothing, I have a remedy that works:

Visit Stonehenge.

Patti and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary recently with a trip to England. Among our must-see sights was Stonehenge, the largest prehistoric structure in the world and an enduring symbol of mystery that had its origin about 5,000 years ago.

Especially now, at the darkest time of the year, Stonehenge makes you think about the fears and hopes of the people who built this stone circle. Was it a burial site for honored leaders? A celestial observatory? A healing center?

Stonehenge is carefully aligned on a sight-line that points to the sunset on December 21, the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. Was it designed, as it seems to be, to mark the passing of the sun and the changing seasons? What God or gods did they

implore all those centuries ago as the sun sank to its lowest point?

On the afternoon we explored this remarkable site, there was a brisk wind but the sky was bright. As darkness approached, though, the setting took on an eerie veneer. One could envision ancient peoples gathering among these mighty and mystical stones.

A wonder of ancient achievement, Stonehenge began as a circular ditch and bank during the period known as the Neolithic or New Stone Age about 5,000

years ago. Over the next 1,000 years, huge sarsen stones and smaller blue-

stones were transported to the site and placed in a sophisticated circular alignment. Other massive stones were placed, horseshoe-shaped, inside the circle.

Archaeologists believe that Stonehenge was used for ceremonies, as a place of worship and celebration. Hundreds of burial mounds are clustered on the surrounding hilltops, while remnants



of smaller temples and other ceremonial sites are nearby. Clearly, the entire area was sacred.

Stonehenge and the other ancient structures form an archeological landscape so rich that it was classified as a World

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



SAINT MARY'S CHURCH

"The Mother Church of Norwalk" | 669 West Avenue, Norwalk | Est. 1848 | www.stmarynorwalk.net | 203.866.5546

Pastor: Fr. Greg J. Markey • Parochial Vicar: Fr. Richard G. Cipolla • In Residence: Fr. Paul N. Check, Director of Courage • Deacon Stephan Genovese • Choirmaster: David J. Hughes

Music for the 9:30am Sunday Solemn High Latin Mass

The Midnight Mass of Christmas: *Messe solennelle* (Vierne); *Hodie Christus natus est* (Poulenc); *Quem vidistis pastores* (Rore); *O magnum mysterium* (Victoria); organ music of Messiaen & Widor; a selection of favorite Christmas carols begins at 11:30 p.m.

The Mass of Christmas Day: *Missa O magnum mysterium* (Palestrina); *Viderunt omnes* (Pérotin); *Hodie Christus natus est* (Poulenc); *Verbum caro factum est* (Sheppard); organ music of Bach

December 29: The Sunday within the Christmas Octave: *Missa Praeter rerum seriem* (Rore); *Praeter rerum seriem* (Josquin); organ music of Buxtehude & Bach

January 1: The Octave Day of Christmas: *Missa Tecum principium* (Fayrfax); *Angelus ad pastores ait* (Lassus); *O admirabile commercium* (Palestrina); organ music of Tournemire

January 5: Mass to bless completed renovated church with The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano for the Feast of the Epiphany: *Cantus Missae* for double choir (Rheinberger); *Ecce sacerdos magnus* (Bruckner); *Videntes stellam* (Lassus); *Magi veniunt* (Clemens non Papa); *Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem* (Palestrina); *Laudemus nunc Domnium* (Obrecht); music for trombones by Bruckner; music for organ by Vierne



SAINT MARY'S BOOKSTORE 203.854.9013

Offering a wide selection of books, crucifixes, rosaries, sacramentals from Italy and the Holy Land, First Communion and Confirmation gifts, and more.

HOURS: Saturday 10am-4pm | Sunday 9-9:30am, 11am-2pm | Monday, Wednesday and Friday 12:45-2pm | Tuesday 11-11:30am and 12:45-2pm | Thursday 12:45-2pm and 3:30-5:30pm
Located in Parish Center building behind Saint Mary Church | VISA/MC ACCEPTED

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Posadas, December 15-23, 7:00pm

Christmas Lessons and Carols,
December 13, 7:00pm

SACRAMENT OF

CONFESSION:

Friday, December 20:

11:30am-12:00 Noon

Saturday, December 21: 3:00-4:30pm

Monday, December 23: 11:30-12:00pm

Tuesday, December 24: 3:00-4:30pm

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES:

Tuesday, December 24: 4:00pm

and 7:00pm (Spanish)

11:00pm Rosary by the Creche

11:30pm Christmas Carols

12:00 Midnight Mass

in the Extraordinary Form

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES:

Wednesday, December 25: 8:00am,

9:30am (Latin), 11:30am,

and 1:15pm (Spanish)



HOLY FAMILY AND NEW YEAR'S EVE MASSES:

Tuesday, December 31 -

8:00am and 12:10 Noon,

7:00-12:00 Midnight,

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Benediction at Midnight Reception

SOLEMNITY OF MARY/ NEW YEAR'S DAY MASSES:

Wednesday, January 1:

8:00am, 12:10pm, 5:30pm (Latin),

and 7:30pm (Spanish)



Church of the Holy Spirit

403 Scofieldtown Road, Stamford, Connecticut 06903
203.322.3722

Msgr. Kevin Royal, *Administrator*
Paul J. Jennings, *Permanent Deacon*

2013 Christmas Season Schedule

Penance Service

Monday, December 16—7:30pm

Visiting priests will be available to hear confessions.

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)

Saturday, December 21

4:15pm to 5:00pm

Christmas Mass Schedule

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve—Vigil of Christmas

4:00pm; 6:00pm Mass; Please note: no 12:00 Midnight Mass

Wednesday, December 25—Christmas Day

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

A Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics

7:30am, Christmas Mass at Dawn; 9:30am; 11:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)

Saturday, December 28th

4:15pm to 5:00pm



Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God
Tuesday, December 31, 2013
Vigil Mass 5:15pm

Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God
(New Year's Day)
Wednesday, January 1, 2014
*A Holy Day of Obligation
for Catholics*
7:30am; 9:30am; 11:30am

St. James Church

2110 Main Street, Stratford, Connecticut
203-375-5887 - www.stjamesstratford.com
Rev. Thomas F. Lynch, *Pastor*

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE

Wednesday, December 11 – 7:30pm – Church

Individual confessions will be offered at the end of the service.

BLESSING OF EXPECTANT PARENTS

Saturday and Sunday Masses, December 14 and 15

A blessing will be given to those awaiting the gift of a child.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, December 24 – Vigil Masses: 4:00pm and 6:00pm

A Mass in celebration of the Lord's birth at 11:00pm

Wednesday, December 25 – 7:30am, 9:30am,
and 11:30am



THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Saturday and Sunday Masses
December 28 & 29

Families will have the opportunity to write their name on votive candles as a way of thanking God for His presence in their family in 2013 and asking for a greater openness to Him in 2014.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Tuesday, December 31, Vigil Mass: 4:30pm
Holy Day Masses – Wednesday, January 1,

2014, 7:30am, 9:15am, and 11:00am

SAINT JAMES NEW YEAR'S DAY OF PRAYER

Wednesday, January 1, 2014

1:00pm-3:00pm Eucharistic Adoration in Parish Center Chapel

REMEMBRANCE FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE DIED

Saturday, January 4 – 8:00am Mass

A special candle will be lit in remembrance of the children who have gone before us in faith. All parents who have lost a child are encouraged to attend.

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

God's Word is among us - *A celebration of our commitment to open our hearts to God's word by reading, studying, and praying Sacred Scripture daily*

Saturday, January 5, 2014 – Vigil Mass: 4:30pm

Sunday, January 6, 2014 – 7:30am, 9:15am, 11:00am,
12:45pm, and 6:00pm

Saint Theresa

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Mother Church of Trumbull

Rev. Brian P. Gannon, S.T.D., *Pastor*
Rev. Michael Flynn, *Parochial Vicar*
Rev. Matthew Krankall, *Parochial Vicar*
Deacon Salvatore M. Clarizio
Dr. Carolina Flores, *Director of Music*



5301 Main Street • Trumbull, Connecticut 06611-4195

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE - 2013

Sacrament of Penance

Saturday, December 21

11:00am-12:00; 3:00-4:15pm

Monday, December 23

4:00-5:15pm; 7:00-8:00pm

Tuesday, December 24

10:30am-12:00 noon

Masses

Christmas Vigil

Tuesday, December 24

4:00pm, 6:00pm and 12:00 midnight
*Christmas Concert at 11:30pm
precedes the Midnight Mass*

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25

7:30am, 10:00am and 12:00 noon

New Years Day Feast of Mary, The Mother of God

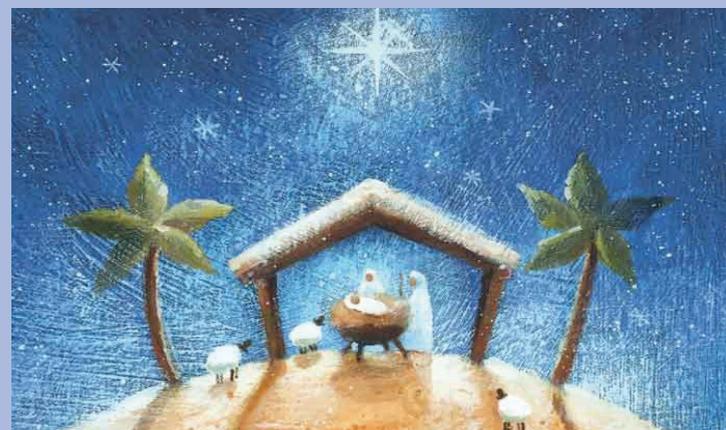
Holy Day of Obligation

Tuesday, December 31

Vigil Mass at 4:30pm

Wednesday, January 1

7:30am, 9:00am and 12:00 noon



Peace on Earth

Impact of *Pacem In Terris* persists

By **MARY TAYLOR, Ph.D.,**
AND **MICHAEL TAYLOR**

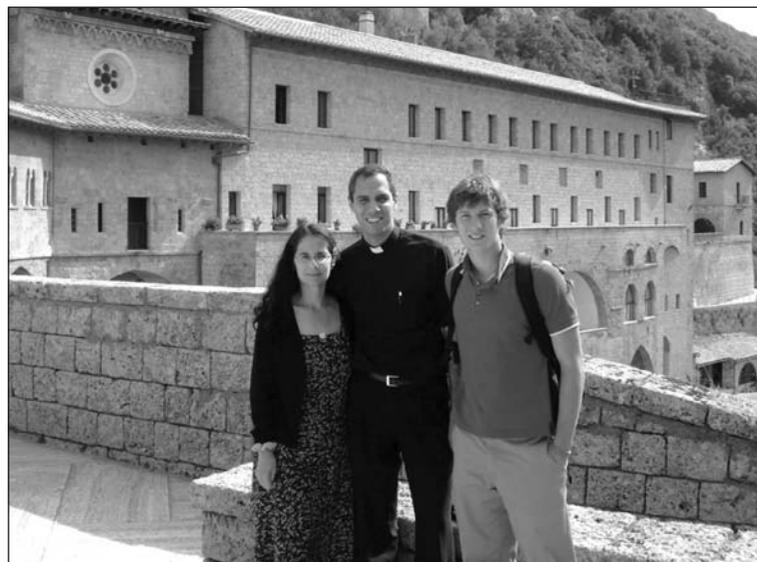
Fifty years ago, the world was on the brink of nuclear war. The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in October 1962, and many credit a message of Pope John XXIII, requested by President Kennedy and published all over the world (including in the Soviet *Pravda*) with giving Nikita Khrushchev a way to save face by being seen as a man of peace rather than a weakling who was bested by the Americans.

On Holy Thursday, 1963, Pope John XXXIII issued his encyclical on peace, *Pacem In Terris*. It had an influence far beyond the Catholic Church.

This October, the Vatican held a combination conference and celebration for the 50th

anniversary of the encyclical's publication, presided over by Cardinal Peter Turkson of the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace and attended by 250 guests from around the world, from Argentina to Zimbabwe. We attended as part of about a dozen participants from the United States. Cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, professors, and directors of various international organizations arrived to share insights on life, family, immigration, economic, education, and justice issues.

The Holy See—the world's oldest continuing international body—is the voice of conscience advocating for those without a voice in almost every international political association around the globe, many of them (the



DURING A BREAK in Vatican Conference, U.S. delegates Mary and Michael Taylor took time to visit their son, Michael, a member of the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae. (l-r) Mary Taylor, Father Jorge Olaeachea, the order's Assistant General for Instruction, and Michael Dominic Taylor. (PHOTO BY MICHAEL TAYLOR, SR.)

United Nations, Organization of American States, and others) represented at the conference. This was especially fitting because the major human rights documents of the world, including the 1948 UN Declaration, were strongly influenced by Catholic social teaching.

Popularly remembered for its call for nuclear disarmament, the encyclical's vision of peace was actually more far-ranging. As Pope John Paul II said, "Peace is not just the absence of war."

In *Pacem In Terris*, John XXIII defended the family as the basis of society; conscience rights; the right to profess one's faith both in private and public; and much more. At a time when rights too often are seen as merely juridical, Pope John rooted them in the

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Saint Thomas Aquinas Church

1719 Post Road • Fairfield, Connecticut 06824 • 203.255.1097

Rev. Victor T. Martin, Pastor

Christmas 2013 Schedule

Advent Penance Service

Tuesday, December 17 – 7:30 pm

Daily Mass on Tuesday, December 24, 7:00 am ONLY

Christmas Eve Masses

Tuesday, December 24

4:00 pm - Children's Mass; 6:00 pm - Children's Mass
8:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass; Adult Choir Concert 11:30 pm;
and 12:00 am - Midnight Mass

Christmas Day Masses

Wednesday, December 25

8:00 am, 10:00 am, and 12:00 noon

No 7:00 am Mass on Thursday, December 26th

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

New Year's Eve - December 31 – 5:00 pm Mass

New Year's Day Masses

Wednesday - January 1, 2014

8:00 am, 10:00 am, and 12:00 noon

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2013-2014

CHRISTMAS MASSES

CHRISTMAS EVE, TUESDAY

VIGILS AT 4:00 AND 5:30PM

MASS IN SPANISH, 7:30PM

CHRISTMAS MASS, 10:00PM

CHRISTMAS DAY, WEDNESDAY

7:00, 9:00, 10:30AM, 12:15, 5:30PM

NEW YEAR'S MASSES

SOLEMNITY OF MARY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2013

VIGIL AT 5:30PM, AND

7:30PM VIGIL MASS IN SPANISH

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2014

7:00, 8:00AM AND 12:05, 5:30PM

*Prayers and Blessings to our Friends and Parishioners
during the Christmas season and for the New Year*

REV. MSGR. FRANK C. WISSEL, PASTOR
REV. RICHARD J. GEMZA, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REV. JHON GOMEZ, PAROCHIAL VICAR
AND THE STAFF OF ST. MARY PARISH

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.
Matthew 2:10

178 GREENWICH AVENUE • GREENWICH, CT 06830 • 203.869.9393 • FAX 203.625.4760

SAINT MARY CHURCH
A Roman Catholic Community in Greenwich, Connecticut

Peace on Earth

PACEM IN TERRIS FROM PAGE 25

God of truth and the human dignity derived from being made in the image of God.

Conference speakers noted that most of the encyclical's concerns are still very much with us, but other crises have arisen that were unimaginable 50 years ago. Dehumanizing violence has taken on new forms. Global terrorism and the drug trade have exploded, and, as the Korean ambassador

to the Holy See reminded the gathering, there are around 30 million abortions every year. Some "rights" groups have even called for laws protecting abortion for gender and race selection. John Paul II's "human ecology" and Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* were often cited as continuations of John XXIII's work, helping us negotiate these new challenges.

Another topic was religious

persecution. Cardinal Jean-Louis Taurin, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, said that Christians are the target of 80% of all persecution. Courageous workers "on the ground" brought some participants to tears: for example, Prisca Ojok Auma, founder of the Saint Bakhita Centre for the Recovery and Reintegration of Victims of Conflicts (Uganda), told harrowing tales of the thousands of children, kidnapped as child soldiers and sex

slaves, that her group has rescued.

The luminous center of the event was a private audience for the participants with Pope Francis. It took place in the Clementine Hall in the papal palace, with its dramatic painting of the martyrdom of Pope Clement I under the Roman Emperor Trajan, fitting because several speakers called Catholics to be witnesses, even martyrs if need be, to the truth of Christ.

Pope Francis has reminded us

many times that the Church cannot be reduced to merely another NGO (non-governmental organization) rooted in the social and political realms, but must remember its divine source; in this audience he reiterated that "the foundation of building peace... consists in the divine origin of man, of society and of authority itself which calls individuals, families, different social groups and States to live out relations of justice and solidarity." ■



The Cathedral Parish

170 Thompson Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
203.368.6777 and 203.335.0106 - Parish Offices • 203.690.1491 - Rectory • 203.368.6386 and 203.335.0107 - Fax

Saint Augustine Cathedral Church
399 Washington Avenue

Saint Patrick Church
851 North Avenue

The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, S.T.D., D.D., Bishop of Bridgeport

Rev. Peter F. Lenox, *Administrator*

Rev. Sean R. Kulacz, *Parochial Vicar*

Rev. Gustavo A. Falla, and Rev. F. John Ringley, *In Residence*

Rev. Mr. William J. Bissenden, Rev. Mr. Santos Garcia, and Rev. Mr. William A. Koniers, *Deacons*

Christmas Season Mass Schedule

Regular Sunday Mass Schedule

Vigil Masses:

4:00pm English Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
4:00pm English Mass:
St. Patrick Nihilil Chapel

Sunday Masses:

7:00am English Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
8:30am English Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
9:00am English Mass:
St. Patrick Church
10:00am English Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
12:10pm English Mass:
St. Patrick Church
12:15pm Spanish Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
2:30pm Vietnamese Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
5:30pm English Mass:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church

Vigil Masses of Christmas

Tuesday, December 24th

4:00pm English Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
5:30pm English Mass with the Living Nativity portrayed by the children of the Parish: *St. Patrick Church*
7:00pm Vietnamese Christmas Pageant:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
7:30pm Spanish Posadas: *St. Patrick Church*
8:00pm Vietnamese Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
8:00pm Spanish Mass: *St. Patrick Church*
11:15pm Christmas Carols and Organ works:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Wednesday, December 25th:

12:00am Solemn Midnight Mass with Organ and Choir:
The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, *principal celebrant*
St. Augustine Cathedral Church

This Mass will be broadcast by radio on WSHU 91.1FM

8:00am English Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
9:00am English Mass: *St. Patrick Church*
10:00am English Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
12:10pm English Mass: *St. Patrick Church*
12:15pm Spanish Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*

Vigil Masses of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Tuesday, December 31st:

5:30pm English Mass: *St. Patrick Church*
8:00pm Vietnamese Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
10:00pm to 11:00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:
St. Augustine Cathedral Church
11:00pm English Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Wednesday, January 1st:

9:00am English Mass: *St. Patrick Church*
12:10pm English Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
6:30pm English Mass: *St. Augustine Cathedral Church*
7:00pm Spanish Mass: *St. Patrick Church*

Merry Christmas
to one
and all!



Youth Service

Humble servants on the streets of NYC

By AUSTIN AMPELOQUIO

Helping out those in need and donating to those who need some support can truly change your whole perspective on life. This year's Youth Group Midnight Run Project did exactly that for me. Before we even hit the road to begin our travel into New York City, I already felt blessed and thankful for the great opportunity I was lucky enough to be offered in helping the homeless. Seeing my peers, advisors, and volunteers pack and sort out toiletries into individual bags showed how this trip not only benefited those we were giving to, but also benefited those who helped. One could really feel the love and unity of us helpers as we came together as one family to assist those who were less fortunate.

That same loving vibe was carried over as we arrived in NYC. Before stopping at our intended locations, we met a former homeless man named Billy. He was a very friendly and dedicated man, who organized us into a smooth efficiency. This being my first experience of helping out the homeless face to face, I did not know what to expect, but the way Billy directed us made things seem less chaotic than expected.

As we reached our first stop, I witnessed a crowd of homeless men race over to the Midnight Run van. At first I was somewhat frightened by the group that surrounded our serving stations, but

as I handed out my first bowl of chili, I realized that these people were thankful for what we were doing. From that point on, I did not want to stop helping out. I was excited to go to the next stops to meet and help more people.

Each individual I encountered

meet in person that night.

All in all, the Midnight Run was one of the best experiences of my life. The event made me feel loved and thankful for all of the time and effort that was put into planning and executing it. I felt like I was not just giving for the



was extremely sociable. It humbled me to know that even in the worst situations, these men and women were able to smile, laugh, and make jokes with people they had never met in their lives before. When we reached our last stop, I was upset because I truly did not want to stop the genuine loving and caring I was partaking in. We donated our extra supplies to a nearby homeless shelter in the city and I was happy to see that we still had more to give to those who we were not able to

YOUTH GROUP MEMBERS of St. Joseph Parish in Danbury put in hours of preparation before hitting the road for the Midnight Run to NYC.

sake of giving, but I gave because I truly wanted to sacrifice my time and some sleep to support my brothers in Christ Jesus who struggle on the streets daily.

The Midnight Run taught me to not take what I have for granted, to cherish all that I have and to be thankful for everything that God has provided me. The Midnight Run also showed me what true care, love and happiness is and I learned that if you can help someone else out in their situation, then do help. You can gain so much in helping, so if you find yourself with an opportunity to work with the poor, I strongly suggest that you do.

I would like to thank the Midnight Run, my St. Joseph Youth Group family (all of the parishioners, my fellow volunteers, and my Youth Minister Mr. David Roman) and everyone who made the run such a humbling blessing for me.

(Austin Ampeloquio, a member of the St. Joseph Parish, Danbury, youth group, is a senior at Danbury High School.)

Notre Dame gets the 'giving' spirit

FAIRFIELD—With Christmas approaching, three Notre Dame High School students pitched in to help the troops, feed the hungry and help those struggling with illness. Tracie Marko, ND's director of advancement, reports that students recently heeded a request from the Columbiettes, the women's auxiliary group of the Knights of Columbus. The organization had put out a call for Christmas cards to be sent to our troops serving overseas. "Thanks to the efforts of our staff and students, over 400 Christmas cards will be turned over to the Columbiettes to accompany packages being sent to the brave men and women protecting our nation and the freedoms of others around the world this holiday season," she said.



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Obituaries

Deacon Paul Tupper, 83

Deacon Paul Tupper died peacefully at home on September 23 at the age of 83.

He was born on March 19, 1930, in Ludlow, MA. He graduated high school at the age of 17 and promptly enlisted in the U.S. Army.

During four years of enlisted service, he rose to the rank of staff sergeant. His unit was transferred to Korea in September 1950, and he was assigned to the Eighth Army. He returned home in February 1952, commissioned a second lieutenant/artillery, and assigned to the 5th Armored Division at Fort Chaffee, AR, as a platoon leader. While there, he participated in an atomic

bomb test in Camp Desert Rock in Nevada. After six years of service, he accepted a discharge from active duty and went into the Army Active Reserve, where he rose to the rank of Major.

Several months after his discharge from active service, Paul met the love of his life, Aurora Belmont, and they were married a year later. Shortly after, he enrolled at Columbia University and earned his bachelor's degree in finance. He spent his entire career in financial management.

One of his proudest accomplishments was the day he was ordained a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport in May of 1985. He served as a deacon

for twenty-seven years at St. Clement Parish in Stamford and St. Mary Parish in Greenwich. He always was thankful to God for calling him to the diaconate and felt honored to officiate at the marriage of two of his children and to baptize his grandchildren.

"He was a calm person, reflective, a good listener. He always had time for you," says his friend Deacon Robert Henrey of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Riverside. The two men had known each other since their days in the diaconate formation program.

"He was one of those men who always saw the good side of people. That's a gift. A lot of peo-



ple will say something good, and then add a 'but.' Paul didn't have a 'Yes, but...' He was simply a kind person. That's a wonderful virtue."

Deacon Tupper is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, four

children and eleven grandchildren. He was predeceased by his firstborn son, Paul Eugene.

Friends describe Deacon Tupper as a man who lived his life with quiet dignity and understated grace. He will be remembered for his love of others, faith, courage, humility and quick wit. In addition to God and family, he enjoyed nature (especially the mountains), music, family dinners, great jokes, spiritual study and spending time with friends.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Mary Church in Greenwich on September 27. Bishop Frank Caggiano was the celebrant, assisted by Deacon Henrey. Fr. Richard Gemza, parochial vicar at St. Mary's, delivered the homily. Burial followed in St. Mary Cemetery, Greenwich.

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Sr. Mary
Schramm, OSU

Sr. Mary Schramm, OSU, died suddenly on September 19 in Bayport, NY. She was 73.

Mary Schramm was born in Richmond Hill, NY, on February 9, 1940. She entered the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk in Blue Point, NY, on September 8, 1958, taking the religious name of Sr. Louis Marie, and professed her final vows in 1964.

She taught in primary parochial schools in Ozone Park, NY, and Seaford, NY, before coming to Connecticut. Sr. Mary taught at Our Lady Star of the Sea School in Stamford from 1965-66 and again from 1980-85. She also taught in West Haven and Meriden.

Sr. Mary was also an instructor in the Alternate High School affiliated with Rossbrook House in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, for three years. In addition to her teaching, she served as Co-Coordinator of PRONTO of Long Island, a community outreach center located in Bay Shore, NY, for three years. Following her teaching career, Sr. Mary created "sacred space" and brought beauty to the gardens at St. Ursula Center at Blue Point. She engaged many volunteers, especially from the local scouting community, in her beautification of the grounds.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sr. Mary on September 28 at the St. Ursula Center Chapel, followed by interment at the Ursuline Cemetery in Blue Point.



Obituaries

Deacon Joseph Filingeri, 70

CUMMING, GA—Deacon Joseph Filingeri died suddenly of a heart attack on the afternoon of October 2, the Feast of the Guardian Angels. He was 70 years old and had been a deacon for 21 years. He and his wife, Patty, had relocated to Georgia this year to be near their children and grandchildren.

Joseph Filingeri was born in New York City on July 10, 1943, and graduated from C.W. Post College of Long Island University. For many years he owned and operated a Carvel Ice Cream shop in Fairfield. It was an occupation that gave full range to his warmhearted personality, one that enjoyed interacting with people of all ages.

“Joe loved people,” says Deacon Frank Masso, who served with him at St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton. “He had a dry wit, and always had something funny to say.” That spirit enlivened the Marriage Preparation sessions at St. Lawrence, where he and Patty



were long-time facilitators.

Deacon Filingeri was ordained a permanent deacon on June 27, 1992, by Bishop Edward M. Egan. He served as deacon at St. Lawrence Parish until moving to Georgia.

Both his wit and his deep faith combined every year at the Christmas Eve Mass. Just before Mass ended, “Santa” would quietly enter the church and make his

way to the Christmas crèche. He would pray there silently before the Baby Jesus for a time and then leave, again without a word.

“Deacon Joe would pray very hard every year for Santa to come,” Fr. Michael Jones, pastor of St. Lawrence, told his young grandchildren at the funeral Mass.

The Knights of Columbus at St. Lawrence have dedicated the parish crèche to Deacon Filingeri.

Fr. Jones and Deacon Masso traveled to Georgia to celebrate a Mass of Christian Burial for Deacon Filingeri on October 7 at Christ the Redeemer Parish in Dawsonville, Georgia. Fr. Brian Higgins, pastor of Christ the Redeemer, concelebrated the Mass. Deacon Filingeri had been completing arrangements to serve as a deacon at the parish.

A memorial Mass was celebrated in St. Lawrence Church on November 2 at 10 am. Fr. Jones was the celebrant and delivered the homily. ■

Sr. Mary Jacinta Guinther, IHM

Sr. Mary Jacinta Guinther, IHM, died on September 19 at Regional Hospital in Scranton, PA.

Elizabeth Ann Guinther was born on September 11, 1926, in Honesdale, PA. She entered the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on February 2, 1946, and made her temporary profession of vows on August 2, 1948, and her final profession of vows on August 2, 1954.

Sr. Jacinta received a bachelor of science and a master of science degree, both in education, from Marywood College in Scranton. She served as an elementary school teacher in Pennsylvania and New York before coming to Connecticut. She taught at St. Ambrose School in Bridgeport, now part of the Cathedral Academy, from 1966-78.

Following her years as an elementary school teacher she worked at a primary school until 2011, and continued to share her expertise as a teacher of reading until the time of her death.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sr. Jacinta on September 24 at St. Rose of Lima Church, Carbondale, PA. Interment followed at St. Catherine Cemetery in Moscow, PA. ■



Sr. Margaret Clarke, IHM

Sr. Margaret Clarke, IHM, died on October 31 at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton, PA.

One of four children, Margaret was born on April 29, 1921, in Providence, RI. One of her brothers, Peter, became a priest. She entered the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation on September 8, 1939, taking the name Sr. Mary Emelia and made her final profession of vows on August 2, 1945.

She received a bachelor of arts degree in education and a master of science degree in

library science from Marywood College in Scranton.

Sr. Margaret served as a teacher in New York State, Washington, DC, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. In Connecticut, she taught at St. Ambrose School in Bridgeport from 1980-86. Following her years in teaching she was an elementary school librarian until her retirement in 2008.

From 2008 until the time of her death, Sr. Margaret was a prayer minister at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sr. Margaret



on November 4 at Our Lady of Peace in Scranton. Interment followed in St. Catherine's Cemetery, Moscow, PA. ■

DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT DECEMBER 15—JANUARY 18

DECEMBER

15	Msgr. Lawrence J. McMahon	2009
17	Rev. Kieran T. Ahearn	1997
19	Rev. Philip Morrissey	2008
26	Rev. Vincent P. Cleary	1965
27	Rev. Ignatius Baraniak, O.F.M. Conv.	1980
29	Msgr. James H. Grady	1967
30	Rev. M. Joseph McCarthy	2006

JANUARY

1	Rev. Michael J. Flynn, C.S.Sa.	1995
2	Rev. Robert J. McDermott	1989
3	Msgr. Pierre A. Botton	2010
4	Msgr. Francis Medynski	2008
6	Msgr. William J. Fox	1962
7	Rev. Walter E. Bozek	1995
8	Rev. Mr. Edward R. Kovacs	1999
	Rev. Joseph P. Biondino	2001
9	Rev. Gerald T. Devore	2011
	Rev. Mr. Hugh Sweeney	1990
	Rev. Robert Nemeth, O.F.M. Conv.	1998
13	Rev. Daniel J. Deehan	1976
14	Rev. M. Joseph Joaquin	2013
	Msgr. Joseph A. Sullivan	2001
15	Msgr. Harry L. Hale	2003
	Msgr. G. Robert Hanover	1992
16	Rev. Thomas B. Gloster	1956
18	Rev. Edward J. Small, SJ	2010

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Sports

St. Joe's in Class M Championship

TRUMBULL—After rebounding from a tough loss to New Canaan High School on November 22, the St. Joseph High School Cadets have rolled toward the state championship title.

On Saturday December 14, 10:05 am, St. Joseph (12-2) will take on Brookfield High (11-3) for the Class M championship at Arute Field on the campus of Central Connecticut State University in New Britain.

The Cadets, who will be eying their first title since 2010, battled their way to the championship game by defeating Joel Barlow of Redding 62-33 in the Class M state semifinals held at Bunnell Fairfield in Stratford.

Shane Miller ran for three touchdowns and hauled in a touchdown pass from quarterback Jordan Vazzano, who threw for 147 yards and two touchdowns in the first half. He also ran for 77 yards.

The Cadet defense, held Barlow (10-3) without a point in the first half, and St. Joseph took a 28-0 lead into the break.

Head coach Joe DellaVecchia praised the Cadet's defense. "Our kids played with patience and



understood their assignments. We preached that at practice and they carried it out. To shut down such a good team for a half... We didn't expect that," he said in a Trumbull Times report.

The St. Joseph High School

Cadets are one of the most highly decorated programs in Connecticut high school football history, having won a total of ten state championships (1980, '81, '82, '83, '84, '88, '89, '90, '09 and '10) since a state playoff system was instituted in 1976. Most recently, in 2010, St. Joseph won the Connecticut Class S State Championship with a 49-28 victory over Ansonia at Rentschler Field in Hartford.

Current Head Coach is Joe DellaVecchia, who took over the program in 1998. DellaVecchia is a graduate of St. Joseph's (1981), a former player under Coach Ed McCarthy, and has earned the unique distinction of winning a state championship as a player, an assistant coach, and a head coach at the same school.

The Cadets were full of hope to grab their first Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference football crown in the program's storied history in a game played against New Canaan on November 22. After a great first half, they got bogged down and fell to the Rams 31-20.

The tough loss to the New Canaan squad no doubt toughened up the Cadets and quarterback Jordan Vazzano, who have since rolled toward the state championship.



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36 - 34 Win

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10/05 Darien High School
28 - 14 Win

10/11 Wilton High School
44 - 20 Win

10/18 Bassick High School
49 - 6 Win

10/26 Trinity Catholic
High School
53 - 7 Win

11/01 New Canaan
High School
62 - 21 Loss

11/08 Andrew Warde
High School
47 - 27 Win

11/15 McMahon
High School
42 - 35 Win

11/22 New Canaan
High School
31 - 20 Loss

11/28 Trumbull High School
61 - 26 Win

12/03 Ledyard High School
84 - 49 Win

12/07 Joel Barlow
High School
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Guest Column



A different kind of Christmas celebration

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

Joe Pisani, a journalist for many years, is principal at The Dilenschneider Group, a strategic communications firm.

A week before Christmas, 2002, my sister called to say that for the first time in a long time, our father was going to set foot in church. Miracle of miracles.

There were those who feared the roof might collapse, namely my mother. Then there were the chronic cynics, who suggested it was unconscionable for a man who didn't keep holy the Sabbath the rest of the year to go to church on Christmas. Actually, that was me.

To my father's thinking, this was an extra-special occasion because his grandson would be in the Christmas pageant, and no grandfather could snub a theatrical debut like that, even if it was only the part of the third shepherd.

Special occasion or not, I refused to attend because I hadn't talked to my father in three months after an argument about my mother's medical treatment for Alzheimer's and cancer. Family life is never easy and

sometimes it can be downright discouraging.

Instead of having Christmas with my parents, we were headed to the White Mountains to spend the holiday by ourselves. Was I being spiteful? Perhaps, but to my thinking I was justified. (We can do some pretty nasty things when we're motivated by self-righteousness.)

My wife, Sandy, made plans for us to exchange gifts at my parents' house before we headed to New Hampshire, and even though she pleaded with me to come to my senses and stop holding a grudge, I intended to wait in the car.

As we drove up the driveway, she said, "It's Christmas Eve. You have to go in there and bury your pride. Enough of this nonsense. How important is it for you to be right?"

"Very important," I grumbled.

Resentment comes easy to a man who's convinced he's right. Nevertheless, I acquiesced and followed them into the house for

what I knew would be a tense visit.

My father was in the living room in his Barcalounger, doing crossword puzzles, and our four daughters went to kiss him while I put the gifts under the tree before escaping to the kitchen.

After a few minutes, my father came out and sat beside me.

"How are you, Son?" he asked.

"Ok," I shrugged, waiting to resume our argument and tell him what I really thought.

He asked me about work, he asked me about the kids, he asked me about anything and everything, and as we talked, I could feel my anger slipping away. I wanted to be free of it, but pride was holding me back.

I'm still not sure who was right and who was wrong. I do know that it was Christmas, and Christmas isn't a time for anger or grudges, and as my late mother-in-law used to say, if you love someone, there's no right and wrong.

As we were leaving, he said, "I love you, Son." And my response came naturally, "I love you, too, Dad." Just then, an enormous

weight was lifted from my heart. It was going to be a great Christmas.

By the time we got to mountains, snow was falling and everyone was excited. We set up the tree and had a wonderful Italian meal of seven fishes (we only had four). When we were done, I went into the bedroom to lie down.

About an hour later, there was frantic knocking on the door, and when I opened it, my daughter Dana was standing there, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Grandpa died!" she said.

My immediate thought was, "Jesus, why did you do this? Why did you ruin Christmas?" I was leaving one resentment behind and heading into another.

Later that night, my sister called and told us what happened. My father and mother had dinner at her home, surrounded by their grandchildren. They opened gifts and went to church, where my nephew put in a critically acclaimed performance as the third shepherd.

While my sister was driving them home, my father said he was tired and put his head on

the seat. When they reached his house, he was unconscious. The EMTs arrived and rushed him to the hospital, but it was too late.

At midnight on Christmas Eve, while my sister was sitting alone in the emergency room, a young minister approached and asked what was wrong, and she answered, "My father died."

All he said was, "What a wonderful gift to celebrate Christmas in heaven."

When I heard that story, I felt peace for the first time in a long time. Jesus always comes to the rescue.

It was a gift to celebrate Christmas in heaven, and I realized that I, too, had been given a gift—the gift of forgiveness.

What would my life have been like if my father died and we never had a chance to reconcile? What would my life have been like if he had died, and I was still consumed by resentment?

Christmas is a time for healing. It's a time to forgive and it's a time to forget old hurts. They say miracles happen at Christmas. It's true. I've seen them. ■

STONEHENGE FROM PAGE 23

Heritage Site.

It was mind-boggling for us to ponder how these ancient people were able to transport the sarsen stones—each 24 feet high and weighing from 25 to 45 tons—across 19 miles from the north of Stonehenge on the Marlborough Downs in Wiltshire. The smaller bluestones, some weighing up to five tons, are believed to have been transported from the Preseli Hills of Wales—about 150 miles west of Stonehenge; also no mean feat. Originally, there were about 80 bluestones at Stonehenge.

Whatever its use, Stonehenge clearly meant something critically important to its builders. Using primitive bronze tools, our prehistoric ancestors carefully trimmed the sarsen stones, and shaped them to produce simple joints that lock the stones tightly together. The uprights and the lintels were sealed by means of a joint commonly used in woodworking—the mortise and tenon.

How were the lintels raised in position? One theory is that a five- or 10-ton stone could be dragged sideways up a sloping ramp of

earth or timber. Another suggests that the lintels might have been raised on a platform of interlocking timbers. Either way, it made for advanced thinking in that distant era and shows its intense importance to its designers.

When the Romans conquered Britain beginning in 43 AD, they left their mark at Stonehenge. Roman finds—coins, brooches, pottery—indicate more than just casual visits to the site. Some historians believe Stonehenge may have become a Roman shrine.

From medieval times to the present day, considerable energy has been expended to determine the date, the builders and the purpose of Stonehenge. The first written description, dating from about 1130, appeared in Henry of Huntington's "History of the English People," where he described "...Stanenges. Where stones of wonderful size have been erected after the manner of doorways ... no one can conceive how such great stones have been so raised aloft, or why they were built there."

In the 12th century, Geoffrey

of Monmouth suggested that the stones had been transported to the Salisbury Plain by the wizard Merlin, a prominent figure in the Arthurian legends. The Saxons and Romans were considered among the potential builders of Stonehenge, and the Danes and Phoenicians soon joined the list.

John Aubrey (1626-97), a Wiltshire-born antiquary, produced the first plan of Stonehenge in 1666, and concluded correctly that it was constructed by the ancient Britons.

Should you choose to join the nearly one million visitors to Stonehenge each year, be sure to stop at the new visitor's site, which has educational facilities and exhibitions on Stonehenge and its surrounding landscape.

Whatever time of year you arrive, try to linger, as we did, until darkness approaches. The centuries melt away with the setting sun. Then the religious spirit that lives in all of us will feel the force these mighty and mystical stones had on the ancient peoples who built them.

Happy exploring. ■



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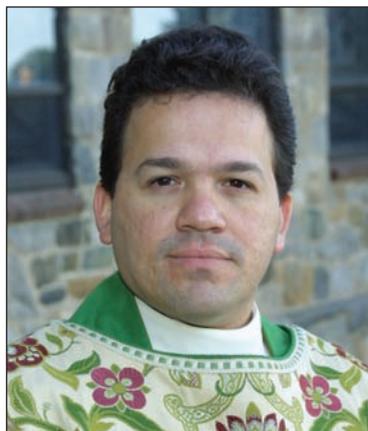
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Column



Celebración de Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe

NUESTRA VOZ

POR PADRE GUSTAVO FALLA

El Padre Falla es Vicario de los Católicos que Hablan Español en la Diócesis de Bridgeport.

Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe resalta la presencia hispana en los Estados Unidos aunque ella pueda ser tan americana como la sequoia gigante: ella es pobre, como lo somos la gran mayoría de los latinoamericanos; ella tiene una fe firme y constante en su hijo, como la fe de nuestros mayores que se esfuerzan por comunicarla a las nuevas generaciones; ella y su hijo gozan junto a San José de una familia unida, como aquellas familias que nos dieron la vida.

María de Guadalupe ofrece la mejor alternativa a una sociedad materialista, preocupada más por el tener que por el ser. Ella defiende la vida, la familia y la fe, cosa que, típicamente, los latinos aún estamos inclinados a hacer aquí y en donde quiera que nos encontremos. Aunque nuestro aporte económico a la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos no haya alcanzado aún los niveles deseados, pues para eso se requiere tanto el acceso a las aulas universitarias como a empleos mejor remunerados, no podemos negar nuestro aporte en la fe y en la oración ya que

nuestras familias han vivido tradicionalmente más de acuerdo al signo de la cruz que al signo de la moneda.

La celebración de la Fiesta de Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe nos ofrece toda una gama de oportunidades que van más allá de lo que uno espera: en lo espiritual, nos conforta al sabernos amados y protegidos por “La Madre”; en lo eclesial, nos confronta con la realidad de una Iglesia que, llamada a evangelizar, no siempre cumple con su tarea pues sufre el dolor de la división interna y de los conflictos externos; en lo pastoral, nos recuerda que nos falta mucho para lograr que los ausen-

tes regresen al redil; en lo social, nos invita a trabajar por el fortalecimiento de la vida desde el momento de la concepción hasta la muerte natural; en lo político, nos revela que en nuestro medio hay víctimas de leyes injustas y legisladores que ponen sus propios intereses antes que los intereses del pueblo al que representan.

Esta fiesta también nos invita a actuar a favor de las víctimas de predadores inescrupulosos que usan a las personas como simples elementos de trabajo, a los que ni siquiera se les paga lo justo, o como elementos sexuales obligados a vivir en la clandestinidad, como es el caso de tantas jovencitas, víctimas de la trata de blancas. Nos recuerda, a la vez, orar por los injustamente encarcelados, retenidos o secuestrados, para que encuentren prontamente su liberación.

Trágicamente, según algunas estadísticas confiables, los hispanos Católicos en Estados Unidos mostramos una tendencia a abandonar la fe a la medida que nos asimilamos a la cultura. De esta forma, hasta un 40% de los hispanos nacidos en los Estados

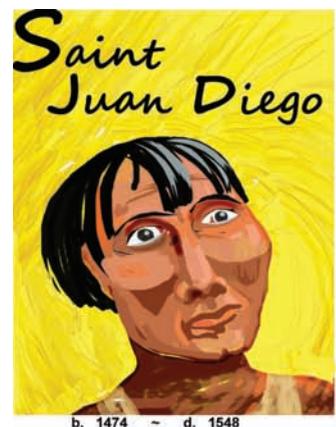
Unidos tiende a abandonar la fe Católica. Aparentemente, a esto contribuyen muchos y variados factores. En muchos casos, no es necesariamente el obvio proselitismo Protestante en medio de nuestras comunidades Católicas lo que causa esta hemorragia. Tristemente, es también el indiferentismo pastoral que se vive en muchas parroquias en las que, en algunos extremos, los hispanos somos rechazados.

Con motivo de esta gran celebración identificamos pues los retos que se nos presentan y las oportunidades que se nos ofrecen desde el punto de vista de la fe. Si Dios quiso que Nuestra Señora se apareciera a San Juan Diego fue para que le comunicara su propósito de evangelizar. Si Dios ha permitido el masivo influjo de hispanos a los Estados Unidos deber ser también para que sirvamos como instrumento evangelizador. Los que carecen de fe podrán entender este fenómeno migratorio como algo exclusivamente económico. De cualquier forma, asumiendo que nuestra presencia en Los Estados Unidos debe ser una presencia

evangelizadora y de fe, nuestra potencial contribución a la Iglesia toma proporciones inimaginables. Es por eso que no nos podemos negar a la tarea de presentar a Cristo Vivo ante una sociedad que necesita ser espiritualmente renovada. Unidos a nuestros pastores, ciñéndonos a las normas locales y creando puentes entre nosotros y nuestros hermanos en la fe podemos dar respuesta positiva a la llamada que Dios nos hace a través de María Santísima.

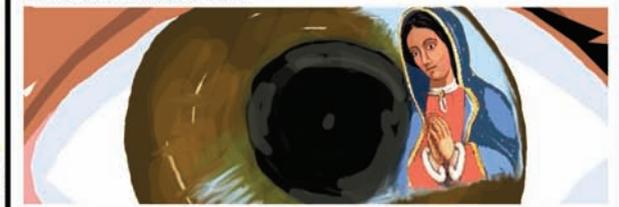
Muy poco beneficio nos trae el conformarnos con cantar unas cuantas canciones a La Virgen, compartir comidas tradicionales o adornar la bella imagen Guadalupana con las más esplendidas rosas, si no estamos dispuestos a trabajar unidos en la tarea que Dios pone en nuestras manos. Aceptando el mensaje de María y viviendo la verdadera fe como hijos de la Iglesia moveremos las montañas que separan a la humanidad del amor de Dios, ofreciendo así lo mejor de nosotros a la sociedad que nos acoge. Que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe interceda por nosotros. ■

SAINTLY LIVES BY ED WALDRON



Saint Juan Diego
b. 1474 - d. 1548

ON DECEMBER 9, 1531, THE BLESSED MOTHER APPEARED TO A HUMBLE NATIVE MEXICAN, JUAN DIEGO, WHILE HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO DAILY MASS. SHE REQUESTED THAT HE ASK THE LOCAL BISHOP TO BUILD A CHURCH AT THAT LOCATION ON TEPAYAC HILL. SHE PROMISED, IN TURN, THAT SHE WOULD DISTRIBUTE GOD'S GRACE TO THOSE WHO INVOKED HER.



BISHOP ZUMARRAGA LISTENED PATIENTLY, BUT DID NOT BELIEVE. HE ASKED JUAN TO REQUEST A MIRACULOUS SIGN FROM THE WOMAN AS PROOF OF HER IDENTITY. BEFORE JUAN COULD MEET WITH HER AGAIN, HE RECEIVED NEWS THAT HIS UNCLE WAS ON HIS DEATHBED. HE SEARCHED FOR A PRIEST TO ADMINISTER LAST RITES AND MISSED HIS MEETING WITH THE BLESSED MOTHER.



SHE APPEARED TO JUAN ON HIS ROUTE AND REPORTED THAT HIS UNCLE HAD BEEN HEALED. THEN SHE TOLD HIM TO CLIMB THE HILL AND GATHER THE FLOWERS AS PROOF TO THE BISHOP.

HE OBEYED AND WAS SHOCKED TO DISCOVER ROSES IN FULL BLOOM GROWING IN THE FROZEN EARTH IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER. HE GATHERED THE FLOWERS AND SHE PLACED THEM IN HIS TILMA.

JUAN IMMEDIATELY RETURNED TO THE BISHOP. HE OPENED HIS TILMA AND THE ROSES FELL TO THE FLOOR. THEY WERE SHOCKED TO SEE A MIRACULOUS IMAGE OF THE BLESSED MOTHER IMPRINTED ON THE CLOAK.

AFTER RECEIVING PERMISSION FROM THE BISHOP, JUAN TOOK UP RESIDENCE CLOSE TO WHERE THE IMAGE WAS DISPLAYED. HE SPENT HIS REMAINING YEARS TELLING THE STORY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE TO PILGRIMS AND TO ANYONE WHO WOULD LISTEN.

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Para más información, llama al Padre Torres: 203.327.7250
o email rolandomalak@gmail.com.

Bits & Pieces

LESSONS & CHRISTMAS CAROLS will take place at St. Ann Parish, Bridgeport on Sun., **Dec. 15**, at 4 pm followed by refreshments. Free-will offering. For more information call 203.368.1607 or go to www.stann-blackrock.com.

ADVENT EVENING CONCERT featuring recording artists ValLamar Jansen and Tom Kendzia will be held at Assumption Parish, Westport, on Sun., **Dec. 15**, from 6-7:30 pm. Dessert reception follows. Free-will offering. For more information call 203.227.5161 or visit www.assumption-westport.org.

LITHUANIAN KUCIOS (CHRISTMAS EVE) The Knights of Lithuania of St. George Parish, Bridgeport will celebrate a traditional Kucios (Christmas Eve) on Sun., **Dec. 15**, with a Mass at 12 noon and a dinner following at 1 pm. For more information and reservations call 203.878.0519.

CONNECTIONS! a ministry for Catholic Singles 40 and over, meets the third Mon. of every month (**Dec. 16**) at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford from 7-9 pm in Msgr. Nagle Hall. Bryan Mercier will speak on being single while God's plan for your life

unfolds. Refreshments and fellowship follow the presentation. Suggested donation: \$10. For more information or to RSVP, contact ConnectionsFairfield@gmail.com.

ADVENT MISSION: "The Pope's Blueprint: Living the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy," with Fr. Dennis Corrado, co, who New York Magazine called "One of the best preachers in New York City," will be presented at St. Paul Parish, Greenwich, Mon.-Wed., **Dec. 16-18**, at 7:30 pm. Mission is free and open to all. Refreshments will be served. For more information call 203.531.8741.

CANDELIGHT SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE sponsored by St. Vincent's "We Care" Perinatal Grief Support Group will be held Wed., **Dec. 18**, at 7 pm in the St. Vincent's Medical Center chapel. During this difficult time, those who have suffered a loss are invited to share memories of their baby or babies with other families experiencing similar losses. No RSVP necessary. For more information, call the Pastoral Care Department: 203.576.5110.

FREE AND LOW-COST MAMMOGRAPHY will be offered through St. Vincent's SWIM Women's Imaging Center for women age 35 and older on Thurs., **Dec. 19**, at the Franklin Apartments, 12 Garden St., Bridgeport, from 9 am-1 pm. Mammograms are free for those who do not have health insurance, have financial limitations and qualify for assistance, and discounted for those who do not have insurance but do not qualify for free services. Appointments are recommended; we suggest that you bring a physician order to the appointment. If you do not have a physician order, call 203.576.5505; for those with an insurance card, please bring it to the screening. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 203.576.5500.

"THE 3½ STORIES OF CHRISTMAS," with actor Frank Runyeon will be performed at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, on Fri., **Dec. 20**, at 7 pm. Adults: \$10; Seniors and students: \$5. For more information, call the parish: 203.268.6217.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT: "A Christmas with Frank Mastrone and Friends" will take place in St. Cecilia Church,

A CHILD IS WAITING

Cradle of Hope Adoption Center is looking for families to host Catholic orphans from Colombia for three weeks this summer. They are seeking families who have strong interest in adopting an older child, between 9-12 years old.

Families must go through an orientation interview and training, and complete home studies. Both single children and sibling groups of two will be available. Adopting parents must travel to Colombia to complete the adoption.

Information sessions: Sat., **Jan. 18**, 1-3 pm, St. Michael Parish, Greenwich, and Sun., **Jan. 19**, 2-4 pm, St. Mary Parish, Bethel.

For more information, contact Bridge of Hope Director Patrice Gancie, 301.587.4400 or pgancie@cradlehope.org; or Kathy Renzulli: 203.888.8615 or kar41west@sbcglobal.net.

Stamford, on Fri., **Dec. 20**. Open seating, 7:30 pm; VIP reception, 6 pm. Cost: VIP reception and reserved seating: \$50; open seating: \$25 adults, \$20 Seniors, \$10 students. For more information, call 203.921.5615. For tickets, go to www.syapchristmas.eventbrite.com.

TRAVELLING ICON of Our Lady of Czestochowa will be visiting St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Bridgeport, on Sat.-Sun., **Dec. 21-22**, on her global pilgrimage. The icon arrives on **Dec. 21**, at 3 pm, followed by Mass at 4 pm and adoration after Mass until 9 pm. On Sun. Father will preach at all Masses about the icon. Join us to ask for her protection of life and family and for personal petitions. For more information, call the parish:

203.334.1822.

BLESSING OF THE NATIVITY with Bishop Caggiano will take place on the Trumbull Town Hall Green, 5866 Main St., on Sun., **Dec. 22**, at 1:30 pm. Light refreshments served. For more information, contact Don Creator: 203.261.3221 or ec4470@yahoo.com.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT featuring the adult, teen and children's choirs of St. Luke Parish, Westport, will be held on Sun., **Dec. 22**, at 3 pm. The concert will include a children's pageant and be followed by a reception. There is no admission charge. For more information, call the parish: 203.227.7245.

TELEVISED MASS for Christmas with special guest lector Jimmy Smits will be



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Bits & Pieces

broadcast on Christmas Eve on Time Warner, Channel 97, and Cablevision, Channel 30, from 7-8 pm; and Christmas Day on WWOR, Channel 9, from 8-9 am and WLNY, Channel 10/55, from 9-10 am.

NOCTURNAL ADORATION before the Blessed Sacrament will be held the first Fri. of every month (**Jan. 3**) at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish from 8 pm-12 midnight, beginning with Benediction. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available after Benediction during the 8 pm hour. For more information, call the parish: 203.324.2910.

MEN'S DISCERNMENT RETREAT DAY will be held at St. John Fisher Seminary, Stamford, on Sat., **Jan. 4**. Young men from high school seniors to age 35 are invited for a day of retreat and discernment time for prayer and reflection, conversation, Mass and conferences by Bishop Caggiano and priests of the diocese. For more information, visit www.bridgeportvocations.org/events/mens-discernment-retreat, email frkachuba@gmail.com or call St. John Fisher: 203.322.5331.

CURSILLO ULTREYAS are held around the diocese: Mon., **Jan. 6**, at St. James Parish, Stratford at 7 pm; and Thurs., **Jan. 16**, at St. Mary Parish,

Bethel, at 7:30 pm. For more information, contact Jeanette at jkovacs@snet.net.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets the second Sat. of the month (**Jan. 11**) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 10 am. after the 9 am Pro-Life Mass. Chris DeSanctis will speak on the Constitution and Pro-Life rights. For more information, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or stmarygols@aol.com.

WOMEN'S CLUB at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet Mon., **Jan. 13**, at 10 am in the parish hall. Featured speaker will be T.R. Rowe, Trumbull Judge of Probate. All are invited. For more information, call 203.261.8020.

MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE sponsored by the Charismatic Renewal Office will be offered on Mon., **Jan. 20**, at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton, with Fr. Charles Allen. For more information, call 203.268.8253.

MARCH FOR LIFE in Washington, DC, will take place on Wed., **Jan. 22**. Diocesan bus will leave the Catholic Center in Bridgeport at 5:30 am, with a stop at 6 am in Stamford at The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist. We will depart from Washington at 4 pm. returning to CT at 11 pm. For more information, email respectlife@diobpt.org.

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 information, call Tom St. Hillaire: 203.556.5480.

RELIGIOUS GOODS STORE is open at St. Matthew Parish, Norwalk, offering a selection of Bibles, crucifixes, rosaries, First Communion sets, medals, cards and much, much more. Store hours: Sat. after the 4 pm Mass and Sun. after the 9 am and 10:30 am Masses. For more information, call the parish: 203.838.3788.

TRIP TO IRELAND will be sponsored by Msgr. Andrew Varga, pastor, and Deacon Brian Kelly of St. Luke Parish, Westport, **May 5-13, 2014**. Cost: \$2,598/person from Newark. For more information, call Deacon Kelly at the parish: 203.227.7245.

50TH REUNION for Notre Dame Catholic High School Class of 1964 will be held Fri.-Sat., **June 20 & 21, 2014**. For more details, go to www.notredame.org (Click on "Alumni & Friends"). To contact the reunion committee email ndhs1964@gmail.com. Please pass this information along to any classmates you are in contact with. ■

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