



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

FEBRUARY 2014 | VOLUME 31, NUMBER 2 | WINTER ISSUE

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# Preparing for a Synod

## A springtime of renewal for the diocese

*Dear Friends in Christ:*

Our recent snowy days make me long for the coming of Spring, with its warm weather and the new life that comes when nature wakes up from its winter slumber. However, they also reminded me about our common desire to foster a Springtime of Renewal for our diocese. At the heart of that renewal will be a rebirth of fervor, joy and commitment to the divine mission that the Lord Jesus has asked us to accomplish in Fairfield County.

Last month, I mentioned to you my desire to convoke a diocesan-wide synod. Since then, many of you hearing about it have expressed your great enthusiasm and desire to participate. Some of you have asked what a diocesan synod is. To answer briefly, it is a year-long process of consultation and planning wherein the clergy, religious and the faithful of the diocese come together to discuss and advise the bishop regarding how to make our Church more responsive to our current needs and to plan our future together.

After consulting the College of Consultors, the Presbyteral Council, as well as many individuals and groups, I believe that the time is ripe for a diocesan synod. This is the time when we must come together united by one task—the task of building a bridge from where we are today to where we wish to be in five years as the Catholic Church in Fairfield County. The time has come to listen to one another, to ponder various questions and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to chart the path for our future. There is so much we can share: our various experiences, talents, and solutions to meet the challenges before us!

Therefore, asking the grace of

our loving God, I have decided to convoke the Fourth Diocesan Synod with a decree that will be published on February 22, 2014—the Solemnity of the Chair of Saint Peter. I entrust this Synod to the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Our Lady of Fatima, whose intercession I humbly invoke. In addition, I ask the intercession of two new saints: Saint John XXIII who convoked the Second Vatican Council and Saint John Paul II who further carried out the implementation of the conciliar decisions. The theme of our Synod is Building a Bridge to the Future Together!

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka as the director of the Synod, whose priestly zeal, competence and service will be of invaluable help to me in guiding the work of the Synod in the months ahead. In the coming week, I also look forward to announcing the members of the Synod Committee who will help Msgr. Dariusz and me to organize the Synod.

The Synod is a diocesan-wide consultation. Therefore, in addition to a local consultation process that every parish and school will be asked to complete, there will be five vicariate listening sessions this Spring where I will be present to listen to your concerns, comments and suggestions. There will also be a number of listening sessions for the youth of the Diocese, as well as for the Spanish-speaking community in our county. These sessions will be open to the public. Please check the diocesan website and parish announcements for more information about them. In addition, you will be able to submit your comments electronically via the diocesan website. Your input will help me and the

committee to carefully choose the main topics that will be discussed during the four general sessions of the Synod.

In the coming weeks I will approve the process of selecting delegates to the general sessions that will take place between September 19, 2014 and September 19, 2015. The fifth, and final session will not only summarize the findings of the Synod, but will also open the

implementation of the five-year plan for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The delegates to the general sessions will come from all parishes and schools of the Diocese and they will represent various groups and organizations present in our Church. More information about the selection process will be coming in the next few weeks.

As you can see, a diocesan synod is a major event in the life of the local church. I hope



that you are as excited about it as I am. Since we all are looking forward to the start of Spring, I invite you also to pray for the coming of a Springtime of Renewal for our Church in Fairfield County!

## Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka named Synod director

BRIDGEPORT—Msgr. Dariusz J. Zielonka, J.C.D., has been named Director of the 2014 Diocesan Synod by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

The diocesan conclave, now in its preparatory phase, will be officially launched on Saturday,



May 3, with a Vespers Service to pray for the success of the Synod at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport.

The bishop first announced

the Synod in January 2014, “so that all God’s people in Fairfield County can seek the Lord’s grace to foster the long-term spiritual and pastoral renewal of our Diocese.”

The opening session of the Synod and all of its delegates is set for Friday, September 19, 2014, while the closing session is scheduled for Saturday, September 19, 2015.

“Msgr. Dariusz brings a deep faith, the skills of a canon lawyer and liturgist, and the experience of having served as Priest Secretary to the Bishop to this important post as Synod director,” said Bishop Caggiano.

“His organizational skills, interest in new media and knowledge of the diocese will help to orchestrate the Synod, which will gather the diocesan family to work together to meet the challenges we face in our own time,” the bishop said.

In the coming months, Msgr. Dariusz will coordinate establishment of the Synod Commission and the development of a consultation period regarding pastoral

topics to be addressed.

His role as Synod director is to assist the Synod with the coordination of all activities, communications, including the transmission and archiving of documentation, and direction of logistical matters.

The Synod is expected to involve the participation of hundreds of Catholics throughout the diocese as delegates and sub-committee members to chart the future of the diocese. The bishop has said that the Synod will draw “leaders on every level of the Church’s life to work together in a true spirit of dialogue and collaboration. Clergy, religious and laity must discern together the pressing issues that we face through prayer and study, seek to understand what each of these challenges mean, identify creative ways by which we can address them and seek the courage to do what the Lord will ask of us.”

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

### ON THE COVER

**BISHOP CAGGIANO TALKS** with teens who recently gathered at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan to meet him and share their faith. About 350 young people attended the afternoon of prayer, adoration and dialogue. The Bishop told the young people they are a gift to the Church and that he’s looking forward to working with them.  
(Photos by Amy Mortensen)

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## Local News

## Annual Appeal provides shelter from the storm

NORWALK—Many people endure the storms of poverty, homelessness and mental illness alone amidst the affluence of Fairfield County, said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano at a special Mass to celebrate the launch of the 2014 Bishop's Appeal.

"Building Bridges in Faith and Charity" is the theme of the campaign that invites Catholics to put faith into action by caring for the poor and afflicted of Fairfield County.

Speaking to more than 350 faithful on February 1, at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk, the bishop thanked donors for their generosity in support of the mission of the Church.

Surrounded on the altar by 50 priests from parishes throughout Fairfield County, the bishop reflected on the account of Jesus calming the storm in the Gospel of Mark.

"I was never surprised that he calmed the storm. What surprised me is that he was able to sleep through it," said the bishop, drawing a laugh when he said he had a hard time sleeping in Trumbull because it was so quiet compared to Brooklyn.

The bishop said that we all

face storms of loss and even despair in our lives, and the parable gives us an answer about

the other side, we must build a bridge for our brothers and sisters. If the Lord has faith in us,



THANK YOU—Bishop Caggiano thanks those who gathered at St. Matthew Church in Norwalk for the special Mass to launch the Annual Bishop's Appeal.

how to face them.

"Perhaps he slept in the boat because he had faith in his disciples and in us. He has faith that we will follow him every step of the way and cross to the other side with him."

He said the poor and needy of Fairfield County are waiting for us to help calm the storm that besets them.

"As part of working to get to

who are we to doubt that we can get this done," he said.

During the homily he took time to praise diocesan ministries and services including schools and Catholic Charities.

At the end of Mass the bishop introduced Cece and Mike Donoghue of Darien who are serving as this year's chair couple. Cece read the First Reading, and Mike led the Prayer of the



Faithful. They are parishioners of St. John Parish.

"We ask for your blessings on our parishioners and donors who give freely from their hearts and respond to God's call of caring for their neighbor," the bishop said in leading the annual appeal prayer.

A reception followed the Mass in the Masterpool Great Room

of St. Matthew Parish. Display tables were set up with information about diocesan ministries.

The Bishop's Appeal supports a wide range of programs including Catholic Charities, diocesan schools, care of retired priests, religious education, St. John Fisher Seminary and clergy ministries. To make a gift online, go to [www.2014ABA.com](http://www.2014ABA.com). ■

## Fr. Ian Jeremiah to lead clergy and religious

BRIDGEPORT—Fr. Ian Jeremiah has been named vicar of clergy and director of the Office of Clergy and Religious of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The appointment, made by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, will be effective May 1, 2014.

The Office of Clergy and Religious serves the more than 300 active and retired priests and deacons of the Diocese of Bridgeport as well as 350 religious. Fr. Jeremiah's responsibilities include overseeing clergy personnel issues including the assignment of all clergy, continuing education and formation, and support services for the personal well being of active and retired priests and deacons.

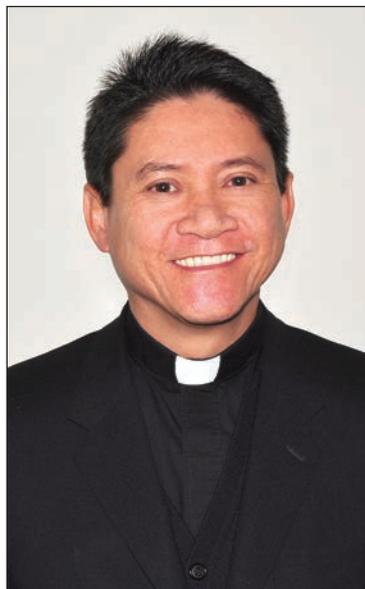
"Fr. Jeremiah is known to his brother priests as a man of integ-

rity and deep spirituality. He will serve as a great source of support for all of our priests including the newly ordained, our pastors and priest retirees.

He succeeds Msgr. Kevin Royal who has held the post since 2006, when he was named director of Clergy and Religious by Bishop William E. Lori. In January of this year, Msgr. Royal was named pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Stamford after serving as administrator since 2012.

A native of Malaysia, Fr. Jeremiah, 50, comes to the Catholic Center from St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, where he has served as parochial vicar since June 2008.

Fr. Jeremiah first came to the U.S. in 1989, working as



an accountant at Daytop, Inc., a not-for-profit organization in

New York City, while pursuing an M.B.A. from Columbia University. He also graduated with a degree in Accounting from The National University of Malaysia.

He was living in Stamford and attending Mass at his home parish of Saint Maurice when he saw a pamphlet on vocations published by the Knights of Columbus. He subsequently entered the Saint John Fisher Seminary Residence, Stamford, in 2002. He completed his seminary studies at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. He was ordained by Bishop Lori at St. Augustine Cathedral on May 17, 2008.

As a deacon, he held summer assignments at St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield; St. Joseph Parish in

Shelton; St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown; and St. Joseph Parish in Danbury.

"To me, the word 'priest' is not just a noun; it's a verb—a call to action. By the grace of God, I want to be that instrument of God who loves and can bring the love of Christ to others," said Fr. Jeremiah in an earlier interview with *Fairfield County Catholic*. "As a priest, I hope to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to the many people who are in search of God, in search of hope, in need of encouragement, direction, truth, and love, and to share this message with them."

The Office for Clergy and Religious is located at the Catholic Center, 238 Jewett Avenue in Bridgeport. For further information call: 203.416.1453. ■

# Building Bridges in Faith and Charity

## Ministry of the Month: Thomas Merton Center

*It is easy enough to tell the poor to accept their poverty as God's will when you yourself have warm clothes and plenty of food and medical care and a roof over your head and no worry about the rent. But if you want them to believe you, try to share some of their poverty and see if you can accept it as God's will yourself!*

Thomas Merton

Outside on the steps an elderly man stands alone, a young husband and wife huddle close together, two men in their twenties try to stand tall while pulling their thin wool jackets up around their necks guarding against the raw February air. The doors of The Thomas Merton House of Hospitality will open at 8:30 am and offer a warm respite for these fragile people, perhaps a shower, a friendly smile, a reassuring look from someone that says "you matter to me," and the most basic of needs, an opportunity to eat a hot, home cooked meal.

The Thomas Merton Center provides breakfast, lunch and day shelter Monday through Saturday to more than 300 people from the greater Bridgeport area. It is one of the many ministries supported by Catholic Charities through the Annual Bishop's Appeal. The Thomas Merton Center is most widely known for its soup kitchen and food pantry. We made a visit to the Center and took a quick

tour with Mark Grasso, vice president of The Merton Center, and were impressed by how much more than a typical soup kitchen is this wonderful ministry.

Along with providing much needed meals for the homeless, other programs provided by the Center include, Support Groups—a safe, non-judgmental place for individuals to address the issues in their lives that may be barriers to self-sufficiency (i.e. abusive relationships, addiction problems, etc.); Case Management—which includes support for guests teaching guests how to budget and save money, pay rent, obtain and manage federal benefits; and Creative groups—which provide Merton guests with the opportunity to express themselves through writing and art. All of these worthwhile programs would not be possible without help from the Annual Bishop's Appeal.

"We can't even open the building and fund our operating costs without the help of the Bishop's Appeal," Mark Grasso informed us on our tour. "Our guests have increased a great deal since the recession, we are seeing twice as many people for the food pantry since the recession hit, and while those numbers have leveled off, they haven't decreased at all. We used to serve 250 families through our food pantry and now we serve 530 families".

We also learned from Mark



Cece and Mike Donoghue  
tour Merton Center

2014 Appeal Chair Couple

that The Merton Center is a great place to put our faith in action. The Center is always looking for volunteers to help serve breakfast and lunch. They often need food pantry donations especially during the cold months of January, February and March when food supplies tend to run low after the Christmas holiday surge. The food pantry is moving locations within the building and they

desperately need volunteers to work in the pantry organizing the food donations or helping guests choose their food while keeping their medical, dietary restrictions in mind and making healthy choices. To volunteer call The Merton Center at 203.367.9036.

Our tour of The Thomas Merton Center was extremely moving and eye opening. We are grateful that The Merton Center

exists and knowing that another winter storm is on the horizon, we are confident that the doors will open at 8:30 am tomorrow morning and people who have nowhere else to go will be welcomed in out of the cold, cared for, loved and fed by the staff and volunteers of The Merton Center. We know that those doors will open in part thanks to the very generous donations made to the Annual Bishop's Appeal and we are grateful for the many people who help sustain the wonderful works of the diocese including The Thomas Merton Center. Please join us in praying for the staff, volunteers and especially the guests of The Merton Center as we work together in Building Bridges in Faith and Charity. ■

### Ways to contribute to the 2014 Annual Bishop's Appeal

**PLEDGES** - A gift to the Appeal may be paid through December 31, 2014.

**GIFTS** - Checks may be made payable to the Annual Bishop's Appeal. Please do not send cash.

**CREDIT CARD** - A credit card gift may be payable online or by pledge card.

**ONLINE GIVING** - [www.2014ABA.com](http://www.2014ABA.com).

**MATCHING GIFTS** - Many organizations will match gifts to Catholic Charities and Catholic Schools. Please contact 203-416-1312 for more information.

**GIFTS OF SECURITIES** - If you own securities that have appreciated in value, they can be given to the Appeal and their full market value becomes a tax deductible gift. Please contact 203-416-1470 for more information.

*If you have questions, please email us at: [2014aba@diobpt.org](mailto:2014aba@diobpt.org) or call us at: 203-416-1470. All gifts to the 2014 Annual Bishop's Appeal will be acknowledged by the Diocese of Bridgeport and are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please consult with your tax advisor on the tax treatment of all gifts, as they may vary from individual to individual.*



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# Events

## White Mass for health professionals set for March 30

BRIDGEPORT—Mental health will be the focus of the 21st annual White Mass honoring health care professionals to be celebrated on March 30, at 9 am at St. Peter Parish, Danbury.

The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. Breakfast will follow at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Danbury.

Sigurd H. Ackerman, M.D., president and CEO of Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan, one of the most highly regarded private psychiatric hospitals in the northeast, will be the featured speaker at the breakfast.

Dr. Ackerman, a psychiatrist and psychopharmacologist with expertise in eating disorders is also a professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. He is a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and The Society of Behavioral Medicine.

Dr. Ackerman has a distinguished background in the mind-body interface, and is the past editor of the prestigious journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*. As the associate director for clinical affairs and research at the Eating

Disorders Institute of New York Hospital, he led a clinical research unit for mood disorders.

He has also conducted a ten-year extensive research project on the effects of early maternal separation. This innovative research was federally funded through the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) research scientist development awards and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) research project awards.

A reviewer for numerous professional journals, Dr. Ackerman has published widely on his



specific research and clinical interests, which include psychopharmacology, depression, eating disorders, sleep disorders and the treatment of dual substance abuse diagnoses.

Dr. Ackerman's experience in biological psychiatry, the medicine-psychiatry interface, and his leadership in psychiatry contribute important expertise in practice standards across a variety of mental health sub-disciplines.

This is the sixth year that the Father Rufin Compassionate Care Award will be presented at the White Mass breakfast. The two recipients of the award, to

be named at the breakfast, are drawn from the ranks of physicians, nurses, dentists, healthcare workers or healthcare volunteers in Fairfield County who exemplify the compassionate and loving care for the sick for which the late Father Rufin Kuveikis, a Capuchin Franciscan, was known as chaplain at Norwalk Hospital for 18 years. He died in 2008 at age 86.

(All healthcare workers and their guests are invited to attend the White Mass. Brunch tickets: \$35. For more information and tickets, contact Jean Talamelli: 203.416.1358 or email [jtalamelli@diobpt.org](mailto:jtalamelli@diobpt.org))

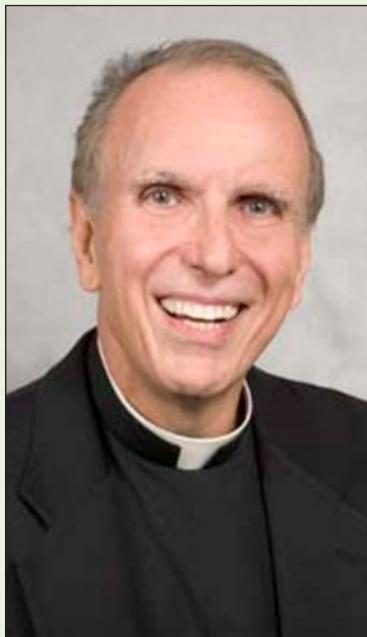
## Fr. Anthony Ciorra to speak at CAPP breakfast

FAIRFIELD—The sixth annual Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice (CAPP) Educators' Communion Breakfast will take place at Sacred Heart University on Sunday, March 9.

This event is sponsored by CAPP and Sacred Heart University's Isabelle Farrington College of Education. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will celebrate Mass at 9 am in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, followed by breakfast in University Commons. A tour of the chapel will be offered at 8:30 am.

The CAPP 2014 Educational Leadership Award will be presented to Frank J. Rice, Ph.D, professor emeritus of biology at Fairfield University.

Keynote speaker Fr. Anthony J. Ciorra, Sacred Heart's assistant vice president for Mission and Catholic Identity will discuss "A Vision for Educators for the Twenty-First Century." Prior to his appointment at Sacred Heart, Fr. Ciorra was dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University, where he received his Ph.D. in the-



FR. ANTHONY J. CIORRA

ology, and professor of theology and director of the Center of Theological and Spiritual Development at the College of St. Elizabeth.

In acknowledgment of his ministry in the Church, he was awarded the pontifical honor Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice by Pope John Paul in 1999. The following year, he was given the Caritas Centennial Award and Spirit of Renew Award for his work in lay ministry and interre-

ligious dialogue and ecumenism respectively.

He is now actively involved in the creation of interreligious programs and retreats among Jews, Christians and Muslims. His most recent book is *Beauty: A Path to God* (Paulist Press, 2013).

CAPP was founded at the Vatican in 1993 to encourage business people, academics and other professionals to study and promote Catholic social teaching. It is named for Pope John Paul's encyclical of the same name that marked the 100th anniversary of the landmark papal document on social responsibility, *Rerum Novarum* ("Of New Things"), otherwise known as "Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor" an encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 addressing the condition of the working classes.

The Diocese of Bridgeport is one of three pioneering dioceses in the United States to establish a CAPP chapter.

(Cost: \$35/person; \$300 table of 10. Spouses and friends welcome. To register or for more information, call Shelia Mosley: 203.396.8097.)

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## Local News

## Faith in the Future financials

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport has released Financial Statements and Commentary on the Current Funds Status of the “Faith in the Future Fund, Inc.” as the final part of its overall “Stewardship Report” issued in December 2012.

The “Faith in the Future Fund” was formed in the spring of 1996, after Bishop Edward M. Egan authorized a capital campaign to provide a source of endowed support for various ministries in the diocese. It was established as a not-for-profit corporation that would receive, invest, manage and disburse funds raised by the 1996 Faith in the Future Endowment Campaign of the diocese.

The major goal of the campaign was to set up endowment support for the five diocesan high schools, Catholic elementary schools, vocations and seminary education,

religious education in parishes, and the priest retirement home.

Although the overall campaign was successful in reaching the \$30 million goal, expenses associated with the fundraising campaign, along with uncollectible pledges and donor gifts that were designated for purposes other than the stated endowment goals, resulted in an endowment shortfall.

“The final endowment reached approximately 90 percent of the original goal, and therefore, the reduced pooled funds were allocated in relation to the originally stated campaign goals,” said Teresa Nunes, Finance Director of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Investment losses experienced in fiscal year 2009 reduced the fair value of endowment investments below the original amount of endowment contributions. As a result, in accordance with the Faith in the Future distribution policy,

no distributions have occurred from common donor endowments and one individual donor endowment since 2008. Although investments slowly increased in value since 2009, the majority of the principal endowment balances did not return to their original amount until June 2012.

“Since the distribution policy requires incorporating a trailing 12-quarter average fair value of endowment assets, although investment income balances alone would support a disbursement, the policy calculation has not. At this writing, it is forecasted that a disbursement will be possible in the spring of 2014 from the common donor endowments,” Nunes said.

Total investments at June 30, 2012, totaled approximately \$16.7 million, with another \$4.9 million owed to Faith in the Future Fund, Inc. from the diocese.

Advances from Faith in the Future Fund, Inc. were made to the diocese in 2011 to support employee benefit insurance programs that a number of schools were unable to fund. An additional \$2 million was advanced during fiscal 2013, but \$5 million was repaid in August of 2013, bringing the balance due to \$1.9 million. It is believed that this amount will be paid in full by fiscal 2015.

“Although the endowment campaign only reached approximately 90 percent of its goal, and has had investment result challenges over the years, the overall objectives continue to be met. It is the hope that in the coming years, disbursements will grow and be able to serve future generations in a way that was envisioned by Bishop Egan in 1995,” Nunes said.

The Stewardship Report, printed in the December issue of



Fairfield County Catholic and made available online, included financial statements and commentary for fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012 for the Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation. The Disaggregated Condensed Combined Financial Statements for the 18 months that ended December 31, 2009 were published in January. All reports including Faith in the Future are available in their entirety online at [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/Stewardship.html](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/Stewardship.html). ■

## Charities receives \$50,000 grant from Walmart

BRIDGEPORT—Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC) announced that it has received a \$50,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to support the organization’s food and nutrition programs.

CCFC is the largest private social service agency in Fairfield County. It serves the most vulnerable members of the community through a comprehensive network of programs aimed at alleviating hunger, helping the elderly and those with physical and mental health challenges, providing safe care for children and resources for the homeless and financially needy, and offering counseling and assistance to immigrants.

“Walmart is honored to support Catholic Charities of Fairfield County,” said Chris Buchanan, Walmart director of public affairs and government relations. “Their work to end hunger in their communities is crucial to many individuals and families across Fairfield County, and we at Walmart are committed to providing the corporate support necessary to back this life-changing work.”

The Walmart State Giving



Program awards grants in two cycles each year to non-profit organizations that work in the areas of hunger relief and nutrition, education, work development and women’s economic empowerment. In Connecticut, in the second giving cycle of 2013, Walmart gave \$387,000 to Connecticut non-profits.

The proceeds of the Walmart Foundation grant will be used to benefit a number of Catholic Charities’ key food and nutrition initiatives. The grant will go towards the purchase of a vehicle for CCFC’s senior nutrition program, which operates at mul-

tiple congregate sites in Fairfield County and has a home-delivery component. It will also assist with the establishment of a food pantry in Danbury to complement its Morning Glory Breakfast program, which serves the homeless and individuals and families with very low incomes.

In addition, part of the proceeds will support operating expenses of The Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport and New Covenant House of Hospitality in Stamford, both of which operate soup kitchens and food pantries along with other programs.

The Merton Center is the larg-

est soup kitchen in the Bridgeport area. It provides breakfast, lunch and day shelter Monday-Saturday to approximately 300 people daily. As the needs of the people they serve have changed The Merton Center has developed programs that address issues such as housing, nutritional needs, healthcare, parenting issues and youth at risk.

New Covenant House of Hospitality serves the greater Stamford area, which includes Stamford, New Canaan, Greenwich and Darien. It is the only soup kitchen in the area open 365 days a year. In addition to providing three meals daily, year-round, it has a food pantry program that distributes bagged groceries—a tremendous help for working families that need a supplement of food to make ends meet. It has an after-school meal program that provides children attending the Yerwood Center after-school program one hot nutritious meal Monday through Friday at 4 pm and collaborates with Inspirica to provide meals for homeless families.

“Catholic Charities is excited about being one of the recipients of the Walmart State Giving

Program,” says Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities. “This grant comes at a particularly important time. Today’s economy continues to challenge the most needy and we have seen demand for our services increase sharply over the past few years. This support will help immeasurably in the operation of these vital programs. We are especially grateful for the Foundation’s confidence in our work as we launch a campaign for New Covenant House to enable it to meet evolving community need in a larger space and provide access to a broader range of services.”

*(Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts, leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than \$1 billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart’s giving, visit [www.foundation.walmart.com](http://www.foundation.walmart.com). To learn more about the services provided by Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, Inc., visit [www.ccfairfield.org](http://www.ccfairfield.org).)* ■

# Safe Environments

## Bishop empowers new Misconduct Board

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has announced the formation of a Ministerial Misconduct Advisory Board to review cases involving clerics accused of misconduct that involves adults or occurs in the exercise of his ministry.

The board will review cases in which the bishop must consider action regarding a priest or deacon's assignment, including temporary or permanent removal or suspension.

The new advisory panel has been created independent of the Diocesan Review Board, mandated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which advises the bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry.

"I'm grateful for all the good and difficult work done in the past few years to address the sexual abuse issue. We have many excellent policies in place for the protection of children, and our Safe Environments programs have been a model of prevention and early detection. However, we have more work to do," said Bishop Caggiano.

The bishop said the goal of the advisory board is to review credible reports of ministerial misconduct involving adults and to assess the plan designed to address the issue. Additionally, it creates a mechanism for parishes, including lay leadership, to be notified and consulted regarding the assignment of a priest or deacon.

"As I begin my ministry, I think it is important to create new structures to make sure I have the tools and resources to give me the assurance that any allegation is properly reviewed, taken to civil authorities if necessary, and that responsible and transparent actions be taken immediately," Bishop Caggiano said.

"These new norms are presented for both the protection of our community of faithful and for the maintenance and protection of the integrity of the priesthood," he added.

The diocese is in the process of assembling the new Ministerial Misconduct Advisory Board. The

board will draw on the expertise of the lay community, including mental health professionals as well as a priest and deacon. A complete list of members will be included in the next issue of *Fairfield County Catholic*.

The proposed new policy states that if the diocese has received a credible report of any allegation of unlawful ministerial misconduct by a priest or deacon not involving a minor, the Vicar for Clergy, after consulting with the Vicar General and

the Chancellor, will immediately refer the matter to the proper civil authorities.

Remaining unchanged in diocesan policy is the established procedure that all reports of ministerial misconduct on the part of a priest or deacon must be made directly to the Vicar of Clergy.

In cases where misconduct is not unlawful, the situation will be investigated and fully reviewed by the Vicar General, Chancellor and Vicar for Clergy to determine a comprehensive response. The

Advisory Board may be asked to review the nature of the offense and help to prepare an appropriate rehabilitation plan.

If the bishop proposes to return a priest or deacon to ministry, before such assignment is made, the Vicar for Clergy will meet with the priests, deacons, staff and parish lay leaders to review the proposed placement. Parish leaders will be briefed with a summary of the original offense and a report on the measures taken.

If the assignment is made, it

will ordinarily be made on a provisional basis, requiring that the Vicar for Clergy visit the parish after a six-month period to review the overall assignment. If the report is positive, the assignment will then be made permanent.

Bishop Caggiano said it was important that the new advisory board and its recommended actions respect the rights of victims, seek a plan of rehabilitation for the offender and is transparent in its communications with parishioners. ■

## Bishop renews Safe Environments

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has reconstituted the Review Board of the Diocese of Bridgeport with the announcement of new board members and the reappointment of long-time members.

The Review Board was formed in 2002 by Bishop William E. Lori to oversee the implementation of the diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy and to function as a consultative body to the bishop. Review Boards are required in all U.S. dioceses as a direct result of The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter), established by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June 2002 and revised in June, 2011. It is a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors, and it includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and the prevention of future acts of abuse.

The Diocese of Bridgeport was found to be in full compliance with the Charter in each independent audit performed since the beginning of this process in 2003.

As part of his commitment to the protection of children and healing for victims, the bishop has also asked the Review Board to begin meeting on a quarterly basis to review overall diocesan policy, make recommendations for areas that need updating and review any cases related to child abuse by priests, deacons, religious or laity.

"We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Review Board for their efforts on behalf of Safe Environments in our diocese. The Review Board has helped us move forward in areas of prevention, early detection and evaluation of all reported cases of abuse," said Bishop Caggiano. "This Board has played an inte-



gral and active role in ensuring that the protection of children remains of greatest importance to the Diocese of Bridgeport and its mission."

The Review Board, which is appointed by the Bishop, is composed of at least five persons with a variety of relevant skills and experience including psychology, social work, children's rights, law enforcement, Canon law, civil law, personnel administration, and pastoral care. The majority of the Review Board members are made up of layper-

sons who are not in the employ of the diocese.

Easton Psychologist Liane Pioli, Ph.D is serving as Review Board Chair. Other members include Kevin C. Kelly, Esq., State Senator, Assistant Senate Minority Leader; Rev. William M. Quinlan, administrator, Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Fairfield; Stewart Levine, M.D., St. Vincent's Department of Psychiatry; Thomas Flynn, M.D., Retired Pediatrician and New Canaan resident; Rev. Lawrence F. Carew, pastor, Christ the King Church in Trumbull; Bill Hoey, LCSW, Vice President of Mission & Ethics, St. Vincent's Health Services; Thomas Ayoub, M.D., Chief of Medical Staff at Norwalk Hospital; Vince Demaio, Captain of Operations for the New Canaan Police Department; Anne McCrory, Chancellor, Diocese of Bridgeport; and Erin Neil, director of Safe Environments and Victims Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese.

Erin Neil, director of Safe Environments for the diocese, said that more than 100,000 adults and children have completed *Virtus* training, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, and *Think First & Stay Safe* for Children and Youth. These programs help prevent abuse by educating adults and children about warning signs and the behaviors of child predators. The diocese has also conducted 30,000 criminal background checks on employees, volunteers and others who work with children.

The Review Board is responsible for advising the bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry after the allegation is first reported to proper authorities. The procedures for reporting suspected abuse of a minor in the Diocese of Bridgeport include a report to the Diocesan Victim's Assistance Coordinator and the CT Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) or the police.

Under diocesan policy, any employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Bridgeport who has actual knowledge of or has reasonable cause to suspect misconduct against a minor by any personnel of the diocese whether the abuse occurred recently or in the past, must report that information immediately to the Diocesan Victim's Assistance reporting line. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will report all allegations involving suspected abuse of a minor allegations to DCF and/or the police.

Likewise, mandated reporters (teachers, social workers, etc.) must also directly report any incident of sexual abuse, or other forms of abuse involving a minor to the State of Connecticut Child Abuse and Neglect Careline. Anyone in the community who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or is in danger of abuse may cause a

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

# World News

## Pope Francis featured on the cover of *Rolling Stone*

NEW YORK, NY—Pope Francis racked up yet another magazine cover with his appear-



ance on the front of iconic rock magazine *Rolling Stone*. He is the first Pope to ever be featured.

According to the Huffington Post, Mark Binelli's extensive, 7,700-word cover story reflects the Pope's unusually wide appeal, which cuts across demographic lines of age, political views, and even religious affiliation.

Binelli's piece, "Pope Francis: The Times They Are A-Changing" goes "Inside the Pope's Gentle Revolution" to investigate why this pontiff is so different from those before him. Alluding to Bob Dylan's anthem, Binelli portrays the Pope as "Cool Pope Francis," a politically-savvy leader, PR expert, and friend of the crowded masses.

This is by no means Pope Francis' first appearance on a magazine cover. He graced the covers of *Time Magazine* and *Vanity Fair Italia* after the publications named him "Person of the Year" and "Man of the Year,"

respectively. The *New Yorker* also put him on the cover less than a week after he became *Time's* "Person of the Year."

The *Rolling Stone* cover shows that the world's fascination with the "People's Pope" is still going strong. It seems the times are a-changing, indeed.

## Coptic bishops pleased with Egypt's new constitution

CAIRO, Egypt—Egypt's Coptic Catholic bishops expressed their support for a new national constitution in interviews with Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

Bishops Kyrillos William Samaan of Assiut, Upper Egypt; Antonios Aziz Mina of Giza; and Joannes Zakaria of Luxor agreed that the new constitution—which was approved in January in a national referendum, with 98 percent of the voters' support—would provide greater protection for religious minorities, as well

the constitutional referendum, observing that participation was much larger than during a previous referendum in 2012. That strong voter turnout was another rebuke to the Muslim Brotherhood, which had called for a boycott of the vote.

Bishop Aziz Mina told ACN that the new constitution "unifies all Egyptians." Bishop Samaan agreed, adding, "We are very, very happy about the constitution result."

## Precious 15th century manuscript recovered in Florida

TAMPA, FL—A 15th-century Italian manuscript illustrated with gold leaf that was stolen from Italy 25 years ago will be returned to that country after it was found in Florida. Officials said the page's journey from Italy to Florida began in 1990, when a husband-and-wife team of professors stole several items from the



as for women, children, and the disabled. Egypt's previous constitution, enacted with heavy support from the Muslim Brotherhood, had stressed the authority of Islam.

The bishops also applauded the heavy voter turnout for

Archdiocese in Turin and sold them to a bookseller. Italian cultural authorities recovered some of the stolen items in London, but for decades other items, including this manuscript page, disappeared.

The manuscript is a richly illustrated page from a 15th-century prayer book describing the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. The calligraphic script is in Latin, and there's a small, colorful portrait of St. Lawrence, offset with gold highlights. Officials said the text and portrait were done by hand by a monk in the Middle Ages.

After passing through several owners, it was purchased by a couple in Florida, who voluntarily turned it over to police when they learned of its background. The manuscript will now be sent back to Turin.

"It is with great joy that I receive this on behalf of my government," Adolfo Barattolo, the Italian consul general, said at a news conference

held January 27 in Tampa.

## Christianity could become extinct in Britain

LONDON, England—A former Archbishop of Canterbury has warned that the Christian faith could be "a generation away from extinction" in England.

Lord Carey, who was leader of the Church of England from 1991 to 2002, was commenting on a report that called attention to a sharp decline in the size of Anglican congregations. The report, submitted to the general synod of the Church of England in November, found that only 1.5 percent of England's people attend Anglican services on a typical Sunday.

Lord Carey said that he saw a "feeling of defeat" among the clergy, and said that unless there is a "dramatic breakthrough" in attracting younger people, the Church of England will cease to be viable as a national institution.

## Syrian prelate hopes refugees will remain in Middle East

DAMASCUS, Syria—Syria's leading Catholic prelate has voiced misgivings about refugee programs that are helping Christian families from Syria resettle in the West, saying that it is better if they remain in the Middle East.

Melkite Catholic Patriarch Gregory III Laham, president of the Syrian bishops' conference, said that the flight of Syrian refugees threatens to aggravate the overall exodus of Christians from the Middle East. While sympathizing with refugees who seek a new life in the West, he urged that aid programs be boosted both within Syria and in neighboring countries and thus enable

Christians to stay in the region.

"The danger is that if they leave the Middle East, they will never go back," he said. The Melkite Patriarch said that he could readily sympathize with the Christians who choose to leave the region. "Of course, we cannot decide for ourselves what response our people should make," he acknowledged, adding that "the suffering is great."

However, Patriarch Gregory suggested that aid programs should concentrate on helping people to remain near their homes. "It is better to help the people within the country or the region, and not invite them to go outside," he said. "There is more that can be done locally."

## End the scandal of division among Christians, Pope pleads

VATICAN CITY—"There is no other word for it: the divisions between Christians are a scandal," Pope Francis told his general audience on January 22.

Breaking from his series of weekly talks on the sacraments to reflect on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Pope reminded his listeners of St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, rebuking them for the divisions within their Christian community. Invoking the name of Christ to foment divisions is intolerable, the Pope said, echoing the thoughts of St. Paul, because "the name of Christ creates communion and unity, not division."

"Divisions, on the other hand, weaken the credibility and effectiveness of our commitment to evangelization," the Pope said. He exhorted the faithful to redouble their prayers for the restoration of the unity that Jesus sought for his disciples. ■

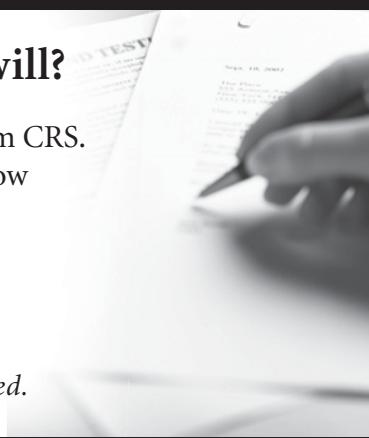


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# Protecting the most vulnerable

## Thousands braved chill to March for Life

By CAROL ZIMMERMANN AND  
KATIE TALALAS, CATHOLIC NEWS

The polar vortex couldn't chill the ardor of thousands of participants who demonstrated their determination to continue speaking out against abortion at the annual March for Life and rally January 22 in Washington, DC. This year marked the 41st anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legal-

ized abortion across the nation.

As temperatures hovered around eight degrees at the rally, speakers highlighted the tenacious determination of the crowd—dressed in coats, scarves, hats and gloves—huddled together on the snow-covered National Mall. They likened the crowd's bravery to the firm resolve they have shown in their efforts to change abortion laws and promote a cul-

ture of life in the U.S.

The rally began at noon, prior to the crowd's march to the U.S. Supreme Court to protest the court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion. Under a blue and sunny sky, Christian singer and songwriter Matt Maher attempted to warm up the crowd while playing a guitar with fingerless gloves. "We're all really cold," he acknowledged, adding that the reason they had gathered was to "demonstrate to the world how much we need God."

Patrick Kelly, chairman of the March for Life, told the crowd filled with young people that they were "freezing for the best cause in the world." Jeanne Monahan, March for Life president, thanked the crowd for braving the extreme elements "No sacrifice is too great for this cause," she added.

Kelly and Monahan stressed a new aspect of this year's march: tweeting about it with the hashtag #marchforlife or #whywemarch. Marchers cheered as Monahan read a tweet from Pope Francis: "I join the March for Life in Washington with my prayers. May God help us respect all life, especially the most vulnerable." She urged the crowd to retweet

his message.

The theme of this year's march was "Adoption: A Noble Decision."

"When a woman makes a choice to be a birth mother, she embraces motherhood in its most heroic sense," said Monahan, who also offered support for women who have not chosen life in the past. "For any woman who has had an abortion, you have to know there is hope and healing."

In his remarks, Kelly noted that the March for Life has a new staff, logo and website and also aims to have a vital social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The goal, he said, is not just for participants to be here once a year but to be in touch with one another "365 days a year to build culture of life in America."

Rep. Vicki Hartzler, R-Mo., encouraged leaders to support alternatives to abortion. "Or society must stop upholding abortion and start encouraging adoption."

That message resonated with Nicole Peck, president of Silent No More. Speaking about her abortion, Peck said, "They took my money, my baby, and my self-respect." She even lost her opportunity to experience child-



birth: "I would never conceive another child."

Peck and her husband later adopted two children. "Their mothers are our heroes, she said.

Monica Stephens, a 17-year-old student from Kansas, came with her parish ministry group. When asked why she came, Stephens told Catholic News Service: "You have to stand up to help the babies. Apparently, it won't happen by itself." ■

## Why I March!

By TYLER LOMNITZER

As a junior English major at The Catholic University of America in Washington DC, I look forward every year to the Vigil Mass for Life and the March for Life because there are few things more striking than witnessing hundreds of thousands of people come to the city of my current residence to join together to protest the Supreme Court Decision of Roe v. Wade made in 1973. Here at CUA, I am a co-chair for Pro-Life Hospitality with another Diocese of Bridgeport



faithful, Chris Huben, a member of St. Mark Parish, Stratford. We are in charge of coordinating hundreds of student volunteers who will help give hospitality to the thousands of people who make the pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for the Vigil Mass for Life, held the night before the March. Even with the snow and the sub-zero temperatures with wind chill, thousands of pilgrims made it to our nation's capital and Mary's House to fight for life. I volunteer and faithfully attend the Vigil and the March because one third of my generation is not with me today. It is truly the biggest social issue of our time. Everyone involved in the pro-life movement ought to attempt to make the Vigil Mass for Life to witness the power of community and the power of prayer that drives Catholics to support life in all of its stages.

The March this year, although extremely cold, was the best one I have been on, and this is my fourth March for Life. Although I was saddened that I could not march with the Diocese of Bridgeport, it was a great experience to march with my fellow students at CUA. Over 400 students and some faculty including our president, Mr. John Garvey, all made the March from the National Mall to the Supreme Court. We hardly felt the cold weather as the spirit of the March consumed all of us. The cheers and prayers and excitement for life drove everyone to the Supreme Court. The Catholic University of America is a pro-life institution and I am blessed with the opportunity to attend this great institution, along with many other members of the diocese. It is my hope, that next year, millions of people, especially the youth, will be able to make it to Washington DC to show the country just how many people, in fact, are pro-life and are yearning for legislative change to the laws that make abortion legal.

(Tyler Lomnitzer is a junior at Catholic University of America. His home parish is St. Catherine of Sienna, Trumbull.) ■

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

**February 16: Septuagesima Sunday:** *Missa super Mon coeur se recommande à vous* (Eccard); *Circumdedereunt me* (Padilla); *Simile est regnum caelorum* (Morales); organ music of Litaize

**February 23: Sexagesima Sunday:** *Missa sine nomine à 6* (Palestrina); *Ave Regina caelorum* (Rore); *Exsurge Domine* (Byrd); organ music of Bach

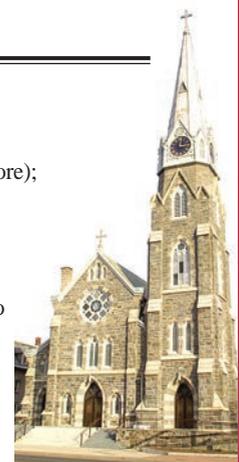
**March 2: Quinquagesima Sunday:** *Missa sine nomine No. 2* (Tinctoris); *In illo tempore, assumpsit Jesus / Ecce ascendimus* (Guerrero); organ music of Howells

#### Sunday, March 2, 4:00 pm: A. J. S. Baccalaureate

A Recital by Mark Rike, violin; Terrence B. Fay, tenor; Alex Zingale, piano  
more information at [stmarynorwalk.net/recitals](http://stmarynorwalk.net/recitals)

**Wednesday, March 5, 5:30 pm: Ash Wednesday:** *Missa super In die tribulationis* (Lassus); *Emendemus in melius* (Morales); *Cum jejunatis* (Vivanco); *Peccantem me quotidie* (Byrd)

**March 9: First Sunday of Lent:** *Missa tertii toni* (Rodrigo de Ceballos); *Ad Dominum cum tribularer* (Palestrina); *Ad preces nostras* (Victoria)



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# Breakfast of Champions

## Learning as a faith community



BRIDGEPORT—"My profound thanks go to all of you. Thank you for rising to the challenge of greatness, and for allowing God to shine through you," Bishop Frank J. Caggiano told students and their families as he blessed them at this year's Breakfast of Champions held at the Catholic Center.

More than 200 students along with their parents and pastors gathered to celebrate National Catholic Schools Week on January 31 and to recognize extraordinary academic and athletic achievement. They filled the Queen of Saints Hall with their energy, faith and optimism.

During the breakfast ceremony, a total of 42 students were presented medals by Bishop Caggiano and Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools.

The St. Thomas Aquinas Medal for academic excellence was presented to 32 students, while ten high school team captains were awarded the St. Sebastian Medal for athletics.

"I am very proud of these students who have already achieved so much in their studies and athletics. I am even more encouraged by their life of faith and virtue. They are a great example to their peers and to all of us," the bishop said.

The children and guests started the morning with a heaping breakfast buffet with pancakes, fresh fruit, bacon and french toast. Each table also held a box of Wheaties, "the Breakfast of Champions."

The 35 Catholic Schools sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport educate nearly 11,000 children from birth and pre-K through grade 12. More than 98 percent of graduates pursue higher education, while 50 percent of the elementary schools have received the National Blue Ribbon of Excellence. Standardized test results show diocesan elementary students consistently exceeding national averages in math and reading.

(For more information: <http://www.catholicschoolsfairfieldcounty.com>.)



### 5TH GRADE RECIPIENTS

Isaiah Alteus  
*Our Lady Star of the Sea School*  
Biyeni Eusebio—*Holy Spirit School*  
Joseph Swezey—*St. Cecilia School*

### 8TH GRADE RECIPIENTS

Kristen Beaumonte  
*All Saints Catholic School*  
Nicoletta Bonsanti  
*St. Aloysius School*  
Matthew Cerino  
*St. Catherine of Siena School*  
Olivia Conway—*St. Ann Academy*  
Kenzie Davis  
*St. Mary School, Bethel*  
Ronan Doherty  
*St. Joseph School, Danbury*  
James Fahey  
*St. Gregory the Great School*  
Grace Foley  
*St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School*  
Cali Francis  
*St. Jude School*  
Jillian Fredette  
*St. Joseph School, Brookfield*  
Matthew Giorgio  
*St. Mary School, Ridgefield*  
Ryan Haack  
*St. Joseph School, Shelton*  
Timothy Hagarty  
*Greenwich Catholic School*  
Katherine Janik  
*Trinity Catholic Middle School*  
Allison Krekoska—*St. Mark School*  
Maria Mione—*St. Lawrence School*

Francesca Montano  
*St. James School*

Carla Pereira—*St. Peter School*

Aaron Pinto  
*Assumption Catholic School*

Maria Rodrigues  
*Cathedral Academy of Bridgeport*

Angelo Rodriguez  
*St. Andrew Academy*

Helena Sabo  
*St. Rose of Lima School*

Sarah Sinise—*St. Theresa School*

Jack Soucy  
*Our Lady of Fatima School*

12TH GRADE RECIPIENTS

Eric Cruz  
*Kolbe Cathedral High School*

Jaelyn Daily  
*Immaculate High School*

Sean Epp  
*Trinity Catholic High School*

John Paul Gschwind  
*St. Joseph High School*

Matthew Lasky  
*Notre Dame High School*

ST. SEBASTIAN AWARD

Carly Schuyler—*Immaculate High School, Cross Country*  
Jessica Wojnicki—*Immaculate High School, Cross Country*

Thomas Adzima  
*St. Joseph High School, Football*  
Mark Hirschbeck  
*St. Joseph High School, Football*  
Darren Jackson  
*St. Joseph High School, Football*  
Michael Schuchmann  
*St. Joseph High School, Football*  
Jordan Vazzano  
*St. Joseph High School, Football*  
Samantha Grasso—*St. Joseph High School, Women's Soccer*  
Corey Scales—*St. Joseph High School, Women's Soccer*  
Sabrina Toole—*St. Joseph High School, Women's Soccer*

PHOTOS BY AMY MORTENSEN

# Youth Conference

## Bishop asks kids to bring their joy to Church

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

NEW CANAAN—The bishop walked into a standing ovation by 350 teens who had set aside a Saturday afternoon, February 1, to meet and share their thoughts and feelings about the Church at St. Aloysius Parish.

The afternoon of prayer, adoration and dialogue, held in the gym of St. Aloysius School, was sponsored by the Pastoral Services ministry of the Diocese of Bridgeport and drew teens from many parishes across the diocese.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano asked the kids what they liked about the Church, what they didn't like, and also left them with a homework assignment: to tell him what they would change about the Church the next time they meet with him.

Conducting the afternoon in "town meeting" style, the bishop fielded questions about gay marriage, the new liturgy, the definition of love—and why older people don't slide further back in the pews to make room for people who come in after them.

With microphone in hand, the bishop worked the center aisles and handed it off to the young people so everyone could hear their questions.

They told him that the Church was a refuge from a lot of what is bad in the world, but it also took courage to go because so many others had no use for religion or prayer.

They worried about the growing number of young people who don't go to Church and what it means for the future of the faith.

"I have no intention to see our Church keep declining in numbers," the bishop reassured the kids. "To be a disciple of Jesus is meant to be joyful. We will do this together."

The teens were surprised to learn that Bishop Caggiano resisted his own vocation for years, even though he had always thought of being a priest.

"I wanted to be a lawyer, and then I thought it would be nice to be mayor of New York... Mayor Caggiano," he said as the kids laughed. "That sounds good to me."

"I had many goals and things I thought I should do," but they didn't make him happy. "Then I



came to the realization that God loved me more than I could ever love myself."

"Is it true you dropped out of Yale," one boy asked?

The bishop answered that he broke his father's heart the year he left Yale to finally enter the seminary.

"My father was a longshoreman with a third-grade education and he thought I ruined my life," the bishop said, adding that his father also wept with joy on the day of his ordination because he knew how happy his son was.

"I've been 26 years a priest and eight years a bishop and that has given me more happiness than I deserve in this life because I was smart enough to let God in," he told the teens. "You should ask him what it is he wants you to do with your life."

During the meeting the bishop confessed to not being a very good stickball player as a young man, but a great Mets fan.

When asked about his favorite saint, the bishop said his favorite saint as a boy was St. Francis of

Assisi because of his humility, honesty and love for the poor.

"Now that I'm older, Mary, the Mother of God is my favorite because every time the Church is in need of reform and revival, our Blessed Lady always opens the door that leads to Jesus," the bishop said.

When the teens expressed enthusiasm for Pope Francis, the bishop said that Francis is one of

his heroes "because of his courage. He is afraid of nothing and speaks the truth. The other lesson the Holy Father taught me is that if I don't live what I preach, then the words don't mean anything."

The bishop ended the meeting by telling the young people that their joy, energy and enthusiasm are

"a great gift to give to the Church."

"There's a big difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus. You're here because you know Jesus. He invites us to break out and put our faith into action," the bishop said. "That's what we're all about." ■

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## EDITORIAL

## Preparing for Lent

Ash Wednesday is just around the corner (March 5) and with it, the beginning of Lent, the season of penance and prayer before Easter.

If there's ever a time when weather plunges us into the spirit of a liturgical season, it is Lent, which straddles the end of winter and the beginning of spring. The days seem to stretch and yawn ever so slowly toward light, but the cold is unyielding, and we feel stalled—at a loss relying on our own resources.

In his first message for Lent, Pope Francis offers us an antidote to self-absorption. He tells us that although Lent is a season for self-denial, it's not merely a time to give something up or to do without. "I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt," he writes, asking us to embrace real sacrifice and the "poverty of Christ" as an act of penance.

People experiencing the spiritual destitution of believing they don't need God and can make it on their own "are headed for a fall," the Pope tells us.

"God alone can truly save and free us... What gives true freedom, true salvation and true happiness is the compassion, tenderness and solidarity of his love, Christ's poverty, which enriches us." He urges us make Lent a time of conversion of conscience and identification with all those who are suffering.

His words offer us the chance to rethink the Lenten season and enter its true spirit as we prepare for Easter.

Getting outside  
our comfort zone

This month marks the formal launch of the 2014 Bishop's Appeal, the first campaign under our new bishop. Because of his great energy and joy in serving us, many Catholics throughout the diocese have had the pleasure of meeting him on his visits to parishes and schools. They are deeply grateful for his prayers, his enthusiasm, and his ability to connect with those he meets.

Bishop Caggiano has many plans for the diocese as a family of faith, but they depend on finding the resources to fulfill the mission of the Church. One way to affirm his vision and leadership is to give early and generously to this year's Appeal. Of course, the bishop is the first to remind us that the Appeal is not about him; it's about creating a local Church that is vibrant in faith, joyful in service, and reflective of a loving community.

Francis, our Holy Father, has challenged all of us to get outside our comfort zone and reach out to those who are poor and suffering—to encounter Christ in the lives of people we would not normally meet.

Recently at a special Mass to launch the Annual Appeal, Bishop Caggiano echoed that same theme when he said that the Appeal provides shelter from the storms of poverty, loneliness and emotional distress in Fairfield County. He asked us to use the Appeal to build a bridge to those who are most vulnerable. Most importantly, he asked us to deepen our faith, which makes all of this possible.

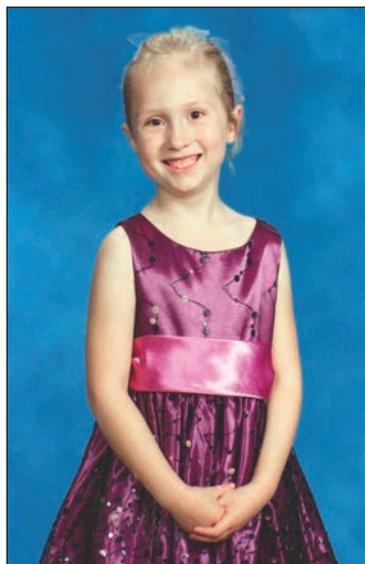
The kids  
love their Church!

This issue of *Fairfield County Catholic* offers some great news about the young people in our Diocese. Whether "Marching for Life" in Washington, DC, collecting food for the poor over "Souper Bowl" weekend, excelling in school and sports, or spending a Saturday afternoon meeting Bishop Caggiano and sharing their thoughts about the future of the Church, the young people in our diocese bring great energy, hope, and spirit to our faith community.

Many of them struggle to find a way forward in a confusing world of mixed messages, bad behavior, and self-destructive lifestyles that are celebrated as celebrity triumph. Bishop Caggiano has made outreach to youth one of the hallmarks of his leadership in our diocese and an issue of great importance to be addressed in the upcoming Synod.

When more than 350 teens met with him recently at St. Aloysius Parish, they told him it was tough to practice their faith in this environment and that they are concerned that so many of their contemporaries no longer go to Church. The bishop told them he would do everything in his power to change that—and we can only be inspired by their faith in him and his determination to bring their joy and witness into the Church. ■

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Littlest  
Angel

By LYDIA BISSENDEN

Once upon a time,  
an angel came down from heaven.

She was a guardian angel,  
and she had a loving heart.  
She watched over children.

She was a little angel  
but she was helpful.  
God was very pleased.

He wanted to reward the little  
angel, but the little angel said,  
"I don't need to be rewarded.

My reward has already come. The  
reward I have is your love."

God was very happy with the little  
angel. So from that day forward  
God and the little angel had the  
happiest hearts in the world.

*Lydia Bissenden, age 7, is the youngest contributor to this issue of Fairfield County Catholic. She is a student at Holy Infants School in Orange, and is the granddaughter of Deacon Bill Bissenden, who ministers to the Cathedral Parish in Bridgeport.*

## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS



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

## DIOCESAN

REVEREND MONSIGNOR DARIUSZ J. ZIELONKA, appointed Director of the Diocesan Synod. Effective date was February 1.

REVEREND IAN JEREMIAH, Parochial Vicar of St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, to Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Director of the Office of Clergy and Religious. Effective date is May 1. (*Reverend Monsignor Kevin T. Royal will remain Episcopal Vicar for Clergy until April 30*).

REVEREND SAMUEL SCOTT, Pastor, Saint Joseph Parish, Danbury, appointed Episcopal Vicar for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Father Scott will remain pastor of Saint Joseph Parish. Effective date was January 23.

Bishop Caggiano has appointed the following men to the newly formed Assignment Board (*formerly the Clergy Personnel Board*). Bishop Caggiano is Chair of the Board.

Reverend Monsignor Kevin T. Royal (*until April 30, 2014*)  
Reverend Ian Jeremiah (*after May 1, 2014*)

Reverend Gustavo A. Falla  
Reverend Leonel S. Medeiros  
Reverend David W. Blanchfield  
Reverend Pawel M. Hrebenko  
Reverend Peter J. Lynch  
Reverend Corey V. Piccinino  
Reverend George F. O'Neill

## PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND SHAWN CUTLER, Parochial Vicar of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield to Parochial Vicar, St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull. Effective date is February 21.

REVEREND MATTHEW KRANKALL, Parochial Vicar of St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull, to Residence at Our Lady of the Assumption, Westport. Effective date is February 21.

REVEREND JAIME MARIN-CARDONA, Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph Parish, South Norwalk, to Parochial Vicar, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Danbury. Effective date is February 21.

REVEREND JUAN GABRIEL ACOSTA, Parochial Vicar, Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Westport, to Parochial Vicar, St. Joseph Parish, South Norwalk. Effective date is February 21.

REVEREND RAYMOND K. PETRUCCI, Assistant, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, remaining Assistant Chaplain at Danbury Hospital. Effective date is February 17.

*Reverend Monsignor. Kevin T. Royal, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy Personnel  
February, 2014*

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## Editorial



## Delivered by an Angel?

## A WOMAN'S VIEW

BY ANTOINETTE BOSCO

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

A fall morning back in 1997 was very beautiful as I began a walk to the beach adjacent to the motel where I was staying in Fort Myers, FL. I had gone there for a much needed one-week vacation, wanting some time to meditate, read and pray as I strolled by the water. Being at a beach had special meaning for me. I could recall how my two sons, Peter and John, now gone from this earth, had loved the water and being on a beach made me feel extraordinarily close to them.

I had arrived at the place I was staying late in the afternoon and immediately went to the vast

beach, with its acres of white sand. As the sun went down, I had been praying and I found myself asking God to give me a sign that my boys were together and happy with their Maker in heaven.

Peter, the youngest of my seven children, had died nearly six years earlier, putting a gun to his head after a long battle with a devastating mental breakdown. He had left us notes and a long tape, expressing his need to “go home” and be with the Lord. We could sense his terminal pain, yet his suicide at age 27 traumatized us.

But then our agony intensified beyond description two and

a half years later when my son John and his wife Nancy were brutally murdered by an intruder as they slept in their new home in Montana, an 18-year-old wielding a nine mm. semi-automatic gun. It was only my faith and my images of my loved ones being in the arms of a good God that kept me from utter despair.

When I left the motel that first morning, I was somewhat awed by the sight of the huge expanse of clean, light sand between the motel and the beach. I started to walk the long stretch of white sand, which I could see had just been machine-cleaned by a beach worker, to get to the edge of the water. As I reached the place where the dry sand gave way to the sand hardened by the water and easier to walk on, my foot hit something. I looked down. It was a small chunk of wood. I thought it was a strange item to be on this newly cleaned sand and stepped over it. But something made me stop, bend over and pick it up. I thought of my son John, a furniture maker who had so loved wood that he would often

reverently hold a piece to show me its beauty, his wonder at the Creator's genius evident.

Thinking of John, I looked at it, smiling at how he would have known just where this wood came from. It was, indeed, an unusual piece. About an inch and a half thick, it fit perfectly in my hand, with my fingers slipping into wave-like ridges on its edges. I held it as I walked, praying as usual, again feeling my boys beside me.

I felt so very comfortable holding that chunk of wood. It was as if I were holding a hand. After walking nearly a mile, I happened to take a closer look at the wood. I hadn't noticed before, but it was shaped like a diamond. Sand was in its ridges, and the sun played on these crystals, making the piece even look like a huge, ethereal diamond. I thought, John would have had something nice to say about this piece of wood, which for the moment had become a jewel.

There's a footnote to this story. When I showed the wood-piece and related the tale of my answered prayer to my sister Jeannette Oppedisano, a down-

to-earth former college professor who taught business courses, she held the wooden diamond up in reverse. “Did you notice the back?” she asked, and continued, “Could this be an angel's wing?” That took me by surprise, for I hadn't really looked at the reverse side. Now I did, and my heart jumped. I could see it clearly—how the wood I held truly bore the appearance of an angel's wing! I knew, absolutely, that a prayer answered so quickly and directly could not be trivialized by calling it coincidence. This was a gift, a sign of such originality and love, that it could only have come from God and my sons. Knowing how much I needed this gift, they had it delivered to me by an angel!

*(This will be the final column from Antoinette Bosco. A prize-winning Catholic journalist, syndicated columnist and popular speaker, she is the author of several books, including her latest, Mother Benedict, Foundress of Regina Laudis Abbey. We thank her for her generous contribution of columns to Fairfield County Catholic.)*



## Hoffman's Death Hits Home

## A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

I must confess: I wasn't too surprised when I learned that Philip Seymour Hoffman had died. In 2013, the Academy Award-winning actor admitted relapsing into drug addiction. News reports at the time noted that the 46-year old had been in recovery since his early twenties.

So I knew—however dimly—that the guy was struggling with demons. But I was sad because I remembered, too, that he was a father. His three small children are, in fact, just about the same ages as my kids.

Hoffman was a Knicks fan.

I'd often seen pictures of him and his son sitting courtside at Madison Square Garden. For some reason my first thought was: How could that poor kid ever watch a basketball game again without thinking of his father, without noticing the hole in his life?

The drug addiction didn't surprise me, but thinking about those kids growing up without their father broke me apart. Here's a guy in his forties, like me, with three small children. And he's gone. Those kids lost their father. Their mother lost her partner. He's not coming back.

I imagined my kids losing their father. My wife losing her partner. Me not coming back. Not a good feeling.

I read somewhere that Philip Seymour Hoffman didn't deserve the tributes he received in the days after his death because he was a heroin addict. I read the opinions of some that he chose drugs over his children. I read that addiction is not a disease, but a choice, so this guy should not be celebrated.

I'm not an addict, thanks be to God, but I've known and been close to quite a few of them. I believe these folks when they tell me that no one—no one—chooses to be a drunk, or an addict, or a junkie. Yeah, we all choose to take that first drink. But most of us don't end up junkies. There's something else going on with addicts.

As the *New York Times* writer David Carr put it recently, addiction is a pirate—no matter how long you've been clean and sober, it lurks, waiting, trying to get you alone, hoping to catch you in a

weak moment so it can whisper in your ear and get you to pick up that drink, or that pipe, or that needle.

It doesn't sound much like something any sane person would choose. In fact, it sounds a lot like Satan. Small wonder that so many get clean only when they accept that “Higher Power.”

My father, who gave up drinking almost 40 years ago, told me once that what kept him sober was knowing that having just one drink would send him right back into the worst part of his alcoholism. When you slip, you don't go back to the beginning and slowly work back up to full-blown addiction. You go right back to where you left off.

Maybe that's what happened to Phil Hoffman. Maybe he thought he could control the pirate. Maybe he only realized when it was too late that he was back in the same desperate place where he'd left off. Scary stuff.

I was deeply affected by the pictures of Hoffman's children at his wake. Two little girls and

a boy clinging bravely to their mother, who herself appeared buoyed by emotional strength of unknown origin. Of course, as a dad, I could only see my kids. And my wife. At my wake.

The Jesuit priest Father James Martin is close to the family and visited with them in the week after Hoffman's death. I hope he was able to give them comfort.

Hoffman was given a Catholic funeral, celebrated by Father Martin. Some questioned whether the actor was truly a believer. But that misses the point. In fact, it seems graceless even to ask the question. Hoffman was a baptized Catholic, like you and me. He was entitled to a Catholic funeral.

We may not all be heroin addicts, but you can be sure we're all sinners. Judgment is not ours—though we do an awful lot of it—it's His. We'd do well to remember that. And we'd do well to remember that this was not just a Hollywood tragedy. Three little kids lost their father. May they come to know God's peace.

# Cursillo Community

## Bishop sees spiritual rebirth and renewal

By DEACON JOHN BUCHHOLZ

More than 200 members of the Cursillo community, including nearly a dozen clergy and religious, welcomed Bishop Frank J. Caggiano at its January meeting at the social hall of St. Mary Parish in Bethel.

Cursillo is a Spanish word for "short course", reflecting the three-day weekend of spiritual renewal that those known as "Cursillistas" have made.

Each Cursillo meeting includes a witness speaker, someone who has been on a Cursillo weekend and talks about his or her contin-

ued journey of piety, study and action with Christ. Bob Glennan, a parishioner from Sacred Heart in Georgetown, spoke on the topic, "How will Jesus appear to me today?"

"Are we looking for the Lord in our everyday lives or are we not recognizing him as the disciples on the way to Emmaus did?" asked Glennan. He called the community to see Jesus in the homeless, the lost and the suffering, and to pray to Jesus to help Cursillistas find them.

"As Pope Francis has stated, the new evangelization must

always start with prayer," said Fr. Ed McAuley, spiritual director for Cursillo of Fairfield County. "God is always in our midst, but if we don't pray we will not be open to recognizing him."

Fr. McAuley presented the group to Bishop Caggiano with the words, "Isn't this a great community?"

"I offer my sincere thanks to be touched by a deeply spiritual movement such as Cursillo," said Bishop Caggiano. "You are part of the Church's rebirth, and I ask you to help others find what you have already found—seeking



greatness in Christ. Together we can realize the dream of Blessed Pope John Paul II of a springtime of evangelization, one I can feel blossoming here in the diocese even in January. I am here to help—and maybe even one day I could find a way to make a Cursillo weekend."

Pat Gorman, a parishioner of St. Rose of Lima in Newtown, said "The bishop has clearly rejuvenated and added a sense of vitality to our movement."

"I am very happy the bishop could join us," said Peter Baumgartner, parishioner of St. Mary's in Bethel. "It gives me great joy to hear him say he is seeing a springtime of renewal in our diocese."

"It was great to hear the bishop validate that our Catholic community is strong," said Ileana Kotulich, a parishioner at St. Jude Parish, Monroe.

Gina Donnarummo, director of adult formation for the diocese and current leader of Cursillo of Fairfield County, said, "I know



FR. ED MCAULEY, spiritual director for Cursillo of Fairfield County.

how busy the bishop is, so I am very grateful that he came to meet with us, to learn who we are as a community. We have many clergy and religious who have made a Cursillo weekend, so we hope we can find a way for the bishop to experience one."

(Deacon Buchholz serves at St. Peter Parish in Danbury. More information on Cursillo can be found at [www.cursillo.org/bridgeport](http://www.cursillo.org/bridgeport).)

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### SYNOD DIRECTOR FROM PAGE 2

Msgr. Dariusz, served as priest secretary to Bishop William E. Lori and vice chancellor of the diocese from 2002 to 2009. In 2008, he was named Chaplain to His Holiness with the title of Monsignor, receiving Papal Honors from Pope Benedict XVI.

In March 2013, he was appointed to the Diocesan Tribunal after completing his graduate studies at Catholic University of America, where he earned a doctorate in canon law.

Msgr. Dariusz, 45, was born in Piotrków Trybunalski, Poland. He entered the archdiocesan seminary in Łódź, Poland, and completed his theological studies at

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, PA.

He was ordained in St. Augustine Cathedral in 1995. Msgr. Dariusz served as parochial vicar at St. James Parish in Stratford and St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan prior to becoming priest secretary. He is also a member of the Diocesan College of Consultors.

In addition to reports in *Fairfield County Catholic*, Synod documents will be available online at [www.bridgeportdiocese.com](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com).

(For further information on *The Fourth Diocesan Synod*, contact: 203.416.1631 or email: [synod@diobpt.org](mailto:synod@diobpt.org).)

# Confession

## “I was invited”

By **DAMIEN O’CONNOR**

I believe deeply in the existence of God. I equally believe in the existence of the Evil One. If I was the Evil One I would do two things:

I would absolutely bury humanity in opportunities to experience instant pleasures so that they would never know true joy and would ultimately find God and his Church irrelevant.

I would also do all that I can to remove an individual’s hope that they are worthy of God’s mercy while simultaneously poisoning the hearts of so-called true believers and convince them that the sins of others are beyond redemption and to pass judgment on them.

It is precisely this reality that I grew up in, and if not for the Sacrament of Reconciliation I

would be (quite possibly) permanently lost in the chaotic, empty reality that I mentioned above.

Approximately 20 years ago I found myself drifting into the abyss of secularism. Along with that came behaviors that systematically separated me from experiencing the joy of knowing our Lord. Thankfully, my faith was not totally lost and I remember going on a retreat that, among other things, opened my eyes to the reality of God in my life.

The Saturday evening session concluded with an opportunity to go to Confession. I felt uncomfortable with that idea because I had committed sins that I thought were unforgiveable. I had also experienced issues within the Church that had hardened my heart.

In retrospect, this is exactly what the Evil One wanted me to feel. Nonetheless, the invitation



from the priest moved me deeply. His words went something like this:

“I know that some of you are hurting deeply. I know that some of you have been struggling with pain and sorrow for a very long time. I want you to know that our Lord loves you more than you could possibly imagine. He wants nothing less than to take away all that pain and sorrow and for you to know a joy that is beyond explanation. I am personally inviting you to come to Confession this evening. If it has been a long time and you don’t remember how to make your Confession, don’t worry about it. I will guide you the whole way. All you need to do is open your

heart to the love and mercy that God wants to share with you.”

I remember that it was the personal invitation from that priest that stimulated my interest and the love of God that got me to get up and go. I remember feeling that my sins were unforgiveable but I could not help myself from experiencing the overwhelming love of God.

Before I could say a word, I began to sob uncontrollably. The priest clearly sensed my sorrow and told me to stand up. I did, and then he embraced me. Not a word was said but it was as if Jesus himself embraced me and my sorrow turned into intense joy and peace. We then continued with Confession and within a few

minutes he absolved me of my sins and I was healed. It changed me forever and Confession became an extremely important part of my life from then on.

This coming Lent, the Diocese of Bridgeport will once again offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation in every parish every Tuesday from 7-9 pm. Please know that Jesus is inviting you not simply because you have committed sins or are struggling with intense pain and sorrow. He wants you to know his complete mercy and a joy that has no bounds. “Nothing can separate us from God’s love” (Romans 8:31-39).

*(Damien O’Connor is senior director of Pastoral Services of the Diocese of Bridgeport.)*

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For more information and to RSVP for either event, please visit [fordham.edu/gre/events](http://fordham.edu/gre/events).

# Praying in Shelton, Feeding in Ethiopia

## God, make me passionate!

By **KIM BARBOSA**

I knew I was capable of more in my life.

I was so passionate in the current role my husband Joel and I had as volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters, but I knew that I was capable of something greater. For years I considered starting a non-profit organization, but did not know who to help or where to begin.

I began praying. Praying to God to make me passionate about something. I prayed for two years not knowing if or how my prayer would be answered.

In 2011, I watched a video of children in Ethiopia. My eyes immediately filled with tears, and I knew that my life was heading in a new direction.

I began researching Ethiopia and was led to a video of an organization that works in a trash dump community in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. Many residents of the community have leprosy or are infected with HIV. To survive, they dig for food in the dump. They also find discarded objects in the dump to sell for income.

We signed up to sponsor a

child through an organization, now known as Out of the Ashes. Our monthly support would provide our 11-year-old sponsored child with an education, one hot meal per day and Bible study.

I knew sponsorship was only the beginning.

After continuing to pray and asking for a sign from God to make sure that he truly put a mission trip on my heart, I received my answer.

One year later, we met with our mission team from Ordinary Hero in Washington, DC, and flew together to Ethiopia for a ten-day mission trip. During the trip we played soccer with children, held children in orphanages and attended a service at a local church. The most rewarding part was meeting our sponsored child.

We waited in her village of 130,000 people while one of the local children ran to find her. As we waited, I wondered if she had received the photos of us we had sent her. She did not know we were coming to Ethiopia, as it was a surprise. Within minutes of meeting her, she held her arm around my back and in the softest voice whispered, "I love you."

After returning from our trip,

I felt guilty as if I had not done enough while in Ethiopia or since returning home. I did not feel that God had called me to start an organization or do anything specific that would change anyone's life. It was a rough year for me knowing that we were returning in the summer of 2013 not having helped or advocated for the people of Ethiopia. Where would I begin when there were so many needs?

My home parish was the answer.

This past April, I realized I needed to share our experience. Joel and I visited the school of our home parish, St. Joseph's in Shelton, and showed the children photos of our trip. We gave the second- through eighth-grade students the opportunity to make cards with messages about Jesus as a way to evangelize to the children of Ethiopia. We later put each card into a Blessing Bag, a gallon-sized bag with an outfit that we would pass out on our upcoming trip.

I decided that if I wasn't called to start an organization, then the greatest thing I could do on my next trip was love.

God had more in store for me.



IN A SURPRISE MEETING, Kim and Joel Barbosa connected to their sponsored child on a visit to Ethiopia. The trip and the meeting encouraged them to work with a ministry for the struggling families of that impoverished country.

Near the end of our trip, and after visiting our sponsored child again, we visited a registered Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) ministry called Endihnew (En-DEE-no) Hope. The ministry was started five years ago by a man named Endihnew. He volunteers on Entoto Mountain, one of the highest mountains in Addis Ababa. Many adults and children on the mountain are infected with HIV and are unable to take the free medication provided by the government due to lack of food.

Endihnew uses donations to run a Saturday feeding program for 160 children. As he passed out small plastic bags of bread and sauce to the children, he ran out before even serving half of the children. Hands began reaching toward him and the looks on the un-served children's faces dropped.

Our team was not expecting to witness a shortage of food at a feeding program.

I knew that God had called me to that mountain. He put me there to witness what these children struggle with every day. He put me there to break my heart and return home to advocate for them.

Since returning home in August, Ordinary Hero, a 503(c) organization, has partnered with Endihnew Hope. I have been in constant communication with Endihnew, through Facebook, assessing his needs and advocat-

ing for his ministry. We have set up an Endihnew Hope Facebook page to raise awareness and advocate for women and child sponsorships.

The women of the mountain, and mothers of the children we saw hungry, work each day to carry 10-foot bundles of firewood, weighing over 100 pounds, down the mountain to sell for less than \$1 per day. Many of them struggle between paying rent for their homes made of sticks and feeding their families.

My teammates and I are currently working to raise \$4,100 to support a pottery program that will provide jobs in clay to eight women. The funds will cover three months of training, materials, eight wheels, rent for a space and salary support for the women while they are in training. As soon as the money is raised, the women will be able to leave their jobs carrying firewood and make pottery immediately. They will then be able to sell pottery to tourists who frequent Entoto Mountain.

This is only the beginning. (For information on Endihnew Hope, visit [Facebook.com/EndihnewHope](http://Facebook.com/EndihnewHope). To make a tax-deductible donation, email [Kimberly@ordinaryhero.org](mailto:Kimberly@ordinaryhero.org) or mail a check to: Ordinary Hero, P.O. Box 1945, Brentwood, TN 37024. Write "Clay Program" on the memo line.)

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# Immaculate High School

## Bishop Caggiano to receive Leadership Award

DANBURY—Immaculate High School has announced that Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will receive the Nancy K. Dolan Leadership Award at the 9th Annual Immaculate High School Gala, which will take place on March 22 at the Amber Room Colonnade in Danbury. The evening will include dinner, dancing, live and silent auctions, as well as the presentation of the award.

The Nancy K. Dolan Leadership Award is given to

individuals who embody a commitment to Catholic education, charity, helping those in need, and a passionate faith. It is named in honor of the late Nancy K. Dolan, who served as Immaculate's first chair of the School Advisory Board. A leader in the banking industry, she volunteered extensively in the greater Danbury community and the Diocese of Bridgeport, and helped dozens of religious and educational groups.

In 1991 Dolan was inducted as

a Lady of the Holy Sepulchre and in 1992 received the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice from Pope John Paul II, one of the highest awards a lay person can receive from the Church.

Past honorees of the Nancy K. Dolan Leadership Award include Kevin Kelleher, Archbishop William E. Lori, John Martocci, G. Ted LaBonne, Anthony Rizzo Sr., Wayne J. Shepperd, Gerard D. Robilotti, and most recently, Msgr. Robert E. Weiss.

"Since his installation last September, Bishop Caggiano has inspired the parishes and schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport and has quickly shown his affinity to the values of the Nancy K. Dolan Award," the school stated in making the announcement. "He celebrated Mass at Immaculate on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and immediately con-



nected with the school's students."

Kathleen Casey, Immaculate's president, commented that the bishop is making a positive difference in the faith lives of Immaculate's students. "Bishop Caggiano was very engaging and friendly when he came to visit, stopping into classrooms, taking time to talk with the

students and truly listening to what they had to say.

"In just a few short months, he has demonstrated his commitment to the schools and enriching the spiritual lives of our students" she added. "He has visited Immaculate on two different occasions to celebrate Mass and meet with Immaculate's students. We are blessed to have such an inspirational and engaging spiritual leader."

Immaculate is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. It serves more than 26 towns in the greater Danbury area, including Putnam and Dutchess Counties in eastern New York. The school's motto, "Respect, Responsibility and Reverence," is encouraged not only in the classrooms but also on the athletic fields, the stage, and in students' daily lives. ■

## Kids star in "Souper" Bowl

FAIRFIELD—Super Bowl Sunday was a super Sunday in more ways than one with the "Souper Bowl of Caring" held at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Fairfield.

The "Pack the Pod Food Drive" linked up with other drives held annually across the nation on the weekend of Super Bowl Sunday. Groups collected non-perishable food and monetary donations on behalf of food banks and other organizations that help feed those in need.

"At Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Fairfield, we like to take it up a notch," says Lara Linsenmeyer, who coordinated the event. "Years ago we used a Partridge Family Van to encourage the community at large to fill the van with cans, which we did and then some. This year's idea for using a moving pod was another fun



FEED THE NEED—Standing in front of the pod (l to r) Margie Wething, Erin Scheller, Julia Eustace, Bishop Caggiano, Lara Linsenmeyer, and Daniel McAleese

attraction to motivate parishioners and the community."

Linsenmeyer said the idea of using a pod was on her mind for some time and she thought it might just draw enough interest to help fill up the empty shelves of local food banks. It was a tall order because the pod was 18 feet by 7 feet.

"We collected a huge amount of food on behalf of St. Stephen's Food Pantry at Merton Center in Bridgeport and Operation Hope Food Pantry in Fairfield. Their needs are great as the demand for assistance grows, serving triple the number of people they typically do," she said.

Linsenmeyer said it was a great food drive and the Confirmation students and adults learned that there is always more that can be done to help brothers and sisters in need. ■

## St. Andrew's is "Souper"

BRIDGEPORT—The St. Andrew Church youth group added service to their celebration of Super Bowl Sunday. They decided to "tackle hunger" by raising \$2,571.25 for The Thomas Merton House and offering to help with the dinners for The St. Margaret Mary Faith Club. "Our group has promised to be a mission youth group and are continuing their mission to prayer, service and stewardship! We're grateful for this awesome group of teens!" said Susan Baldwin, director of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry at St. Andrew Church. ■



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## Bible Studies

## Biblical Roots of the Catechism

This past fall, the Pastoral Council of St. John Parish in Darien expressed a desire to “hear more women’s voices.” Their pastor, Msgr. Frank McGrath, immediately thought of Maryann Knag of St. Thomas More Parish, also in Darien, who has been leading Bible Study Groups at St. John’s and other parishes in the diocese since 2004. He shot off an email to her, inviting her to speak after the homily at Masses on “whatever you and I and the Lord think you should talk about.”

Knag is a former Stratford High School language teacher. She took early retirement to follow a course of studies at Yale Divinity School in Scripture, Hebrew and Greek leading to a Masters in Religion in 2004. A Rhode Island native, Maryann also leads a Bible Study in Narragansett, RI every summer.

“You can imagine my surprise to receive an email like that!”

Knag says. “Still, I have taught at St. John’s and have known Msgr. McGrath for many years. He is a wonderful pastor who really listens to the Holy Spirit and to his parishioners. I trust him.”

When she and Msgr. McGrath sat down to plan last November, Knag shared an experience she had last summer with her Bible students in Rhode Island. In the spring, she had emailed her Rhode Island students a list of possible Bible books or themes for the Summer Bible Series at her summer parish, St. Thomas More in Narragansett.

“At the last minute, I had tacked on, ‘We could also do the Biblical Roots of the Catechism of the Catholic Church’. It was an afterthought. To my surprise, that topic selection came out on top!” Thirty-five students spent eight weeks reading the CCC at home and discussing key selections in class. In addition Knag led her students to find the origin

of Church doctrines in the pages of the Bible. Several students later remarked, “How come I never knew this before now?”

In addition to this experience, Knag shared her conviction that many mature Catholics harbor misgivings about their faith based on inadequate faith formation. Inspired by his own experience of the richness and power of the new Catechism, Msgr. McGrath said that he wanted to offer the same experience to his parishioners.

He asked Knag to talk about Bible Study at Masses in late January. During her talk, she held up a three-legged wooden stool made by her son years ago in industrial arts class. “The stool represents the three elements of Catholic Truth: Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium. Take away any of these elements,” she explained, “and the stool falls. The Catechism is a product of these three elements. Inside is a treasury of excerpts from the Bible, the Doctors of the Church, saints and scholars spanning 20 centuries from Jesus to us. It is a real gift to the Christian world.”

Knag made clear that she would offer the series one caveat: participants must understand that she is not a theologian. She is a cradle Catholic, a graduate of St. Sebastian’s School in Providence, RI, Manhattanville College of



ANNOUNCING A NEW BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM, facilitator Maryann Knag, accompanied by (l) Fr. Peter Towsley, diocesan vicar for evangelization, and Msgr. Frank McGrath, pastor, spoke on Scripture and the Catechism at St. John Parish in Darien.

the Sacred Heart and Harvard University (MAT). She is a trained Catholic Bible scholar, teaching under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. She and her husband, Paul, have four grown children and 12 grandchildren.

Most of all, she thoroughly believes, “There is no theology without Scripture.”

(“The Biblical Roots of the Catechism of the Catholic Church”

will continue through February, March and April. Participants are welcome to join; next session will be February 19-20. Choose one of two sessions, morning or evening, each week: Wednesdays, 7-8:30 pm or Thursdays, 9:40-11:10 am. Bring a Bible and the New Catechism of the Catholic Church, if you have one. For more information, contact St. John Parish: 203.655.1145, stjohndarien.com, or Maryann Knag: 203.213.4809, mmmknag@aol.com.) ■

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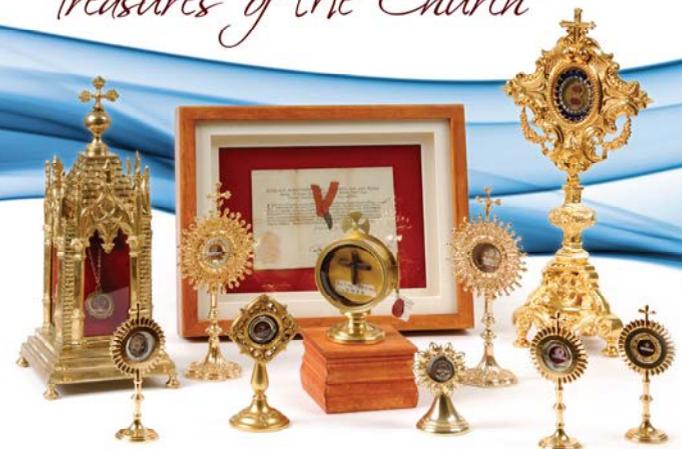
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## Sports

## Coach Hodges opens doors

By JOE RYAN

The outside of the school at 33 Calhoun place was quiet with the parking lot covered in snow, but inside the vestibule there was a bustling of energy as the kids waited for their rides home.

Snow was again in the forecast and maybe another snow day which brought smiles to all but the girl's basketball team, well, to be honest they are always smiling and they should be.

Over the past decade, the Kolbe Cathedral girls' basketball team has been one of the best programs in the state but if people only look at just numbers of wins however, they are seeing only a portion of what makes the Cougars special.

The wins and trophies are nice, but coach Lisa Hodges has turned the program into a steppingstone to a larger world.

Hodges is the school's Business Manager as well, and in her cramped office the wall to the left of her desk carries all the information you need to know about what is important to Hodges. It holds the names of all the colleges she has helped players gain scholarships where they continued their education. She scrambled into her desk to get a notebook to reveal what was the record of last year's team and her lifetime mark because those are just numbers that always changes anyway but off the top of her head she could point to the colleges and the name of the girl who went there. That is what makes her most proud because it was about helping those girls live out their dreams.

Hodges graduated from Kolbe in 1981 but that ended her playing days so this has become her mission to allow her players the

chance to play. Players have received scholarships from the top schools like Quinnipiac and St. Joseph's plus they have seen girls go on to play professionally overseas.

"When I went to college, I just went to college because college basketball was nothing like it is today," said Hodges. "Ultimately, my goal here is to get the girls seen. If they have the ability to play at the college level and we can help them get scholarships, that is what we are looking for and we have gotten 18 girls scholarship money. We have two who play overseas in Dubai, Ashley Prim is there and Erica Beverly has traveled to Australia and Switzerland. That is what I'm looking for."

It is a goal which has reaped other rewards in recognition for the Cougars as well because you can't ignore the numbers in the



KOLBE CATHEDRAL GIRLS—Veteran coach Lisa Hodges puts her team through the paces at a recent half-time talk.

program's record of success however as the Cougars have built an outstanding 219-47 record with Hodges at the Helm.

They have won five state titles and were the runner-up once to go along with two SWC crowns and five regular season championships. Not bad for somebody who never really considered coaching an option.

Hodges initially came back in 1997 just to help as an assistant after having her second child, Leah, who is on this year's team and after six years on the bench as an assistant, she was offered the head coaching job in 2003.

The Cougars presented her with her first state crown in only her second year as head coach by beating Trinity Catholic in the CIAC Class S final 72-64 in 2004 after an outstanding 18-2 regular season. Kolbe would win Class S in 2005 and 2007 sandwiched around a loss to Trinity in 2006. They would add a Class L title in 2008 and a Class M in 2010.

"As an assistant, you are under your head coach but you always wonder about how you would do things different," said Hodges. "I knew the kids so well after having coached them on j.v. and we just sort of took off from there. The recognition comes and goes like for an undefeated season; we've had one of those, but that's not what drives me or the program."

There are multiple reasons why Kolbe has grown in stature over the past decade not the least of which is the fact that they have had the kind of athletes on their team which can compete at the highest level.

Hodges is just as big a reason. First, she was a Cougar and understands the nuances of Kolbe. She works closely in her role within the school's administration with the principal and guidance departments which works with her goal that all her

players be honor students

"I am a Kolbe kid, so I understand how the school works," said Hodges. "We have special days like Harvest Party which is like an indoor field day that only Kolbe does, practice was going to be rocky that day. I could put myself in the place of a student because I was one."

With all the success, the players come to Kolbe now to find the success which has preceded them. Senior guard Kiara Epps is from Norwalk and decided early on that this was the place for her.

"The public schools didn't have anything to offer and I know the history of Kolbe," said Epps. "It's a privilege to play here, actually but sometimes it's a little hard trying to be successful."

Junior center Denisha Gardener transferred in from Norwalk High School and actually had to be convinced that Kolbe was the perfect location for her to attend. Gardener is pleased with the decision now.

"It is a privilege and you want to be like the other teams before," said Gardener. "My confidence level has gone up because of the shoes I have had to fill. We had a lot of seniors last year and now I feel I have to step it up even more."

Hodges believes in adapting to the talent of the girls on her squad and also wants all of them involved. Some coaches only trust a small core of their team to play the most minutes, but Hodges will utilize whatever skill a player has to make them part of the team's success.

"I have one girl who is a dead on shooter and that's what I want from her every game, to come on and make that shot," said Hodges.

Hodges tries to promote a feeling that Kolbe will always be a home for her girls. She invites them back after they graduate to interact and play with current students so the traditions are passed on.

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# Youth

## Once hesitant about Convivio, now a booster

By WILL MERCIER

With societal pressures on youth being stronger than ever, many young people are finding it increasingly difficult to be able to practice their Catholic faith without judgment from their peers. Convivio is a weekend of the year which allows teens, and other youth of the diocese, to freely practice their faith without any judgment from their fellow peers.

Convivio, an annual Catholic youth congress now in its fifth year, will be held on March 7-9 at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield. The theme is, "Love as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Convivio consists of activities designed to strengthen the faith of the participants. Speeches, or talks, are given in small groups, as well as with everyone together in the auditorium. These are used to reinforce the theme. Last year, the theme was friendship, and the discussions and group activities reflected this important topic of discerning what true friendship really is. Sacraments are offered throughout the weekend as well; time is allotted for Reconciliation and Sunday Mass. Eucharistic Adoration is offered perpetually throughout



the weekend.

The theme "Love as I have loved you" will explore God's love for his creation and how we need to carry out this love to our neighbors. As sacrificing his own son Jesus Christ was the greatest act of God's love, the theme reinforces the sacramental activities of the Eucharist and

Reconciliation, both tangible symbols of the outpouring of love God has for us.

Many youth reading this may be hesitant to take part in this great and fun opportunity. To be completely honest, I felt the same hesitation. I thought Convivio would be boring; I would have never guessed that I would be

writing this today. However, as the first night progressed into the second day, I realized that fortunately, these misconceptions of boredom were incorrect. As I was in the small group playing one of the many games over the weekend, I found myself laughing and having fun. And, by the end of the second day, I found myself sad that it was over.

Not only was Convivio fun, but it was an eye-opening to the Catholic faith. While I had previously attended Mass and religious education, it was not until I attended a weekend that the faith became dimensional. Convivio focuses on growing your relationship with God and developing a deeper understanding of why we believe what we believe. These lessons have resonated with me. Convivio was able to humble me; it allowed me to realize that I cannot, nor can anyone, go through life without invoking divine aid. After realizing this, I now find myself asking help in situations that I know are too big for me to handle alone.

Convivio may be a one-weekend-a-year event, however it is merely the start to the oppor-

tunities it offers. Convivio sets up a pilgrimage and volunteering opportunities throughout the year. Also, it introduces the High School Apostles program. All of these activities are designed to continue the goals of Convivio by bringing you closer to God. They allow the fun of Convivio to be prolonged past the one weekend in March.

To anyone who is "on the fence," or is hesitant to attend, I implore you to give it a try, and you yourself may be feeling the elation and closeness to God that I experienced, which is well worth it. The weekend runs March 7 from 4-9 pm, March 8 from 9 am-9 pm, and March 9 from 9 am-4 pm. It costs \$50 to participate and those interested may contact connecticut@convivio.org.

While reflecting on Convivio, I often think not only did it make me a better Catholic, but I truly believe it made me a better person. I urge you to take part in this incredible opportunity and open yourself up to God's love.

(Will Mercier is a sophomore at St. Joseph High School and a member of St. Jude Parish in Monroe.) ■

COACH HODGES  
FROM PAGE 20

Former players are instrumental as mentors for the current squad.

"I'll bring players to come in and practice," said Hodges. "So it is a family, and they all feel a part of it."



If one sentence could sum up the goal of Hodges, it would probably be echoing the phrase from Gardener. The coach wants her players to have the confidence to replicate the success of the past and use that to build their own futures. ■

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# Obituaries

## Sr. Barbara, RSM, loved Latin

Sr. Barbara Bossler, RSM, died December 1 in West Hartford. Born March 23, 1938, she was raised in Hartford, attending St. Joseph Cathedral grade and high schools. Sr. Barbara graduated with a bachelor's degree from St. Joseph College in West Hartford, majoring in Latin, before entering the Sisters of Mercy in 1960. She later earned a M.A. in Latin and a Sixth-Year Certificate in English.

Most of her next 32 years were spent teaching Latin, her first love. She taught first at St. Paul High School in Bristol and then, in a strange twist for the life of a religious Sister, taught Latin at Longfellow School and Central High School, both in Bridgeport, before her retirement in 2010. She had recently celebrated 53 years of religious life.

Sr. Barbara's life was celebrated with a Mass of the Resurrection on December 5 in the chapel of St. Mary Home, West Hartford. Burial took place the following day at St. Mary Cemetery. ■



## Deacon Joseph Rowan

DARIEN—Deacon Joseph Lawrence Rowan, a longtime resident of Darien, died peacefully on November 26. He was 88.

Joseph Rowan was born in Phoenixville, PA, on July 26, 1925. He served with the Merchant Marine in the North Atlantic during World War II. After serving in the military, he joined the American Broadcasting Company, eventually becoming a vice president. He moved his family to Darien in 1972.

After his retirement, he pursued degrees at Charter Oak College and Southern Connecticut University, receiving a bachelor's and a master's degree in philosophy. An avid reader, he particularly loved philosophy, religion and history.

"Joe was what I would call a cheery conservative," says Deacon William Murphy, who serves at St. Joseph Parish in South Norwalk. The two men were in the diaconate program together. "He loved the age of monasticism, and his hero was St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the great spiritual writer and Doctor of the Church. He was surrounded by us Vatican II guys. We drove him crazy—but he was always ready to laugh about it."



Deacon Rowan was ordained by Bishop Edward M. Egan in 1995 and served at St. Thomas More Parish in Darien and St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan.

In addition to his intellectual pursuits, he loved aviation and became a licensed private pilot on his 50th birthday.

Deacon Rowan was predeceased by his wife, Ann, in 2011. He is survived in this diocese by his daughter Ann Dickson and her husband Thomas and their two sons, who are members of St. John Parish in Darien. His son, Paul, lives in New York City.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Deacon Rowan at St. John's on November 30. Msgr. Frank McGrath, St. John's pastor, was the celebrant and homilist. Interment was private. ■

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#### MARCH

1	Rev. Leonard M. Conlon	1976
5	Msgr. John J. Pitonak	1990
8	Rev. Boleslaus Rarus	2005
10	Rev. Raymond H. Stephenson	1990
12	Rev. Leo Suwinski	2005
13	Deacon Joseph L. Cross	2003
14	Rev. Vincent P. Cleary	1989
15	Msgr. Francis J. Sugrue	1977
	Msgr. Edward G. Zibell	1978
	Rev. William J. Galya	1994

# Obituaries

## Sr. Thérèse LaPlante, 88

Sr. Thérèse LaPlante, 88, a member of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit, died on October 18 at the Holy Spirit Health Care Center in Putnam, CT.

Born Marie Thérèse Rita LaPlante in Manchester, NH, on June 6, 1925, she entered religious life in Putnam and made her novitiate at the order's mother-house in St. Briec, France, and made her religious profession there in 1950. She took the religious name of Sr. Marguerite de l'Eucharistie.

Early in her career Sr. Thérèse was a teacher, but in 1953 she began studies at Holy Ghost Hospital in Cambridge, MA, and became a licensed practical nurse. From 1955-2005 she ministered in home nursing in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and

Connecticut. For most of those 50 years, from 1967-71 and again from 1978-2005, she ministered to ill and fragile people in their homes throughout the greater Bridgeport area. She did so under the auspices of the Queen's Daughters in Bridgeport and the United Way of Southwestern Connecticut.

In 2005, Sr. Thérèse began her retirement at the

Holy Spirit Provincial House in Putnam. Following some health issues, she was admitted to Holy Spirit Health Care Center in October, 2013.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sr. Thérèse on October 22 at the Holy Spirit Provincial House. Burial followed at St. Mary Cemetery in Putnam. ■



## Sr. Janice May, RSM, served at Luralton Hall

Sr. Mary Janice May, RSM, died on November 9 in Hartford. She was 88. Helen Catherine May was born in Bridgeport on August 4, 1925. Drawn by the example of the Sisters she had known as a youngster, she entered the Sisters of Mercy following graduation from high school.

She earned a B.S. degree in education from St. Joseph College in West Hartford and a masters' degree in administration from Boston College. Later she did extensive post-graduate studies at both St. Joseph College and Fairfield University.

Sr. Janice taught and served as a principal in elementary schools around Connecticut before coming to Our Lady of Mercy Academy Luralton Hall, in Milford. She spent the past 35 years, her happiest, at Luralton, ministering as a teacher, guidance counselor, and admissions director. In 1990 Sr. Janice was honored by Luralton with the Mother Mary Augustine Claven Award. After her retirement in 2003, she continued to serve there as a volunteer staff assistant until her move to St. Mary Home in West Hartford a few months before her death.

Her life was celebrated with



a Mass of the Resurrection on November 14 in the chapel at St. Mary Home. Burial followed in St. Mary Cemetery. ■

## Sr. Hone, RSCJ

Margaret Mary Hone, RSCJ, died on November 24 at Teresian House in Albany, NY. She was 88.

Born in Rochester, NY, on September 8, 1925, she entered the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1947 at Kenwood in Albany and made her final vows at the Motherhouse in Rome in 1956.



She earned her bachelor of arts degree from Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in New York City in 1947 and her master's from the Manhattanville Graduate Division in Albany in 1952.

She spent almost a decade teaching in New York, Rhode Island and Michigan. When, to her surprise, she was called upon to handle financial administration, she found that she loved the work.

Meticulous by nature, she continued in that ministry, including financial work for the congregation's academies in Darien and Greenwich from 1970-88. In 1988 she was called back to Kenwood, where she managed financial affairs and helped in any way needed until 2005, when she entered prayer ministry.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sr. Hone on December 2 in the Teresian House Chapel in Albany. Burial followed in the Sacred Heart Cemetery at Kenwood. ■



- ▶ *Now, because .....* you and your loved ones make the decisions, not others.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* you are under normal emotional circumstances.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* you can purchase memorial property out of current income.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* cemeteries are not exempt from escalating costs.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* at a time of need, cemetery property must be paid for in full before it may be used.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* you will have a full selection to choose from, including community mausoleums, niches and burial plots.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* purchasing a burial plot in advance offers you the opportunity to pay over one year. We offer two years **interest free**, when you purchase space in our community mausoleum. The above offer is not available for those who purchase at a time of need.
- ▶ *Now, because .....* the purchase of memorial property is an inevitable task.

*You can make the decision now, based on one of the above reasons, or, you can wait until you HAVE to decide. Sometime in the distant future you will be thankful you have taken care of this important matter now. For details call your local cemetery!*

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## Column



## Women of strong faith and values

## SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

After Communion, a loud, piercing roll of thunder echoed through the church like an approaching storm or a rumbling earthquake. It was the familiar sound of several hundred kneelers being kicked up by the congregation.

Clearly, they were never educated in the etiquette of raising and lowering kneelers by such eminent authorities as Sr. Immaculata or Sr. Mary Joseph or any of the Old School nuns who considered it a serious infraction to slam kneelers.

My friend Laura, who attended Catholic schools for 12 years, is convinced we could prevent the collapse of Western Civilization if we brought back the nuns who wore black habits and orthopedic shoes to teach us—adolescents

and adults alike—a few things about good manners and morals.

She can still recall her training period in the school chapel, where the girls learned to raise and lower kneelers properly and why it's verboten to let them slam during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The sisters, bless their hearts, knew that good manners require practice.

They also made the girls kneel every morning to determine whether their skirts were too short. If the hems touched the floor, they were good to go. Back then, it was a different world, and “modesty” was still part of our vocabulary.

The sisters knew something that parents and educators often forget: Imparting values and good manners to young people requires constant work, constant practice

and constant diligence. And it's a lifelong process.

A longtime friend of mine, Sr. Roberta of the Sisters of Mercy, who lived in Rochester, NY, belonged to the Old School and often wrote me about my spiritual development.

Every few weeks, she'd mail me an envelope stuffed with clippings, prayers, poems and cartoons to educate and entertain me. Once she sent a copy of the Daily Offering pasted to an index card and told me in no uncertain terms: “Be sure to pray this every morning.” She also reminded me to pray the rosary every day and to offer up my personal sufferings, large and small, for the poor souls in purgatory and for graces to convert sinners.

My prayer book is still brimming with her clippings—a daily reminder of a woman who understood the importance of prayer and sacrifice.

On what was her last Christmas, I sent her a check, figuring that retired priests and nuns could use a little financial help, but she immediately returned it with a note that said, “Thank you, but this is too much.” I knew enough not to quibble with her, so I wrote another check for

a smaller amount.

Many years ago when I taught English grammar and composition at a Catholic junior high school, I was blessed to work with sisters of strong faith and values, and I'm indebted to one of them for offering some soul-saving advice. At a time when I was overwhelmed with questions about God and life, I told Sister Pauline, “I wish I could believe the way you do.”

“Faith is a gift,” she responded. My heart sank because I figured I wasn't good enough to get the gift.

Then, she added, “All you have to do is ask.” When I finally found the humility and/or courage “to ask,” the Holy Spirit's response was immediate. The Holy Spirit is always at work in the world, making things new and pointing us in the right direction toward the path God wants us to take.

In her book *The Ear of the Heart: An Actress' Journey from Hollywood to Holy Vows*, Dolores Hart, who gave Elvis his first on-screen kiss, talks about her journey of faith as a Benedictine nun and why she left behind the glamour of stardom and pursued God instead of fame.

Hart was in ten movies with stars like Anthony Quinn, Myrna

Loy and Montgomery Clift, and then she walked away from a multimillion dollar career for the contemplative life in a convent. Today, she's prioress at the Regina Laudis Abbey in Bethlehem, CT, and her story was turned into a documentary titled “God Is Bigger than Elvis.”

I've often marveled at vocations like that in our secular society, where the lure of prestige, power, pleasure and success is so strong. Nevertheless, young women are still being called to the religious life.

I recently came upon a story about the new postulants for the Sisters of Life. They were young women from across North America who received the call to the religious life in an era when faith is often looked upon with disfavor. They came from many different backgrounds, and the group included an accountant, a registered nurse, a librarian, an attorney, a chemistry teacher, and a quality-control manager at a solar plant.

Their radiant smiles told the whole story. I guess you could say they were New School nuns with Old School values. The Holy Spirit is still at work. Yes, God is much bigger than Elvis—and with God, all things are possible. ■

By  [www.curtissryan.com](http://www.curtissryan.com)



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# Column



## Go to the land that I will show you

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

**“N**ow the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’”

*Genesis 12:1*

With the appearance of Abraham, the character of the Old Testament narrative changes. God steps in to set into motion a new plan for humanity; a new period begins. A certain people will be formed and set apart from others. From this people will come the Christ.

In the 12th chapter of Genesis, Abraham’s call is dramatically presented. God suddenly calls Abram to leave his country, his clan, and his home, and journey to a land God will reveal to him. Yahweh doesn’t even tell Abram

(later Abraham) where he is supposed to go. He just calls it a place that “I will show you.” God makes a decisive intrusion into Abraham’s life and suddenly inverts his life.

Abraham’s story is continually new and can be understood personally. On the mysterious journey that is life, God often reshuffles the cards. The switch is tripped and a new epoch begins. We all come to know that change is a way of life. “To live is to change,” wrote Cardinal Newman, “and to live well is to have changed often.”

Goethe said, “To live is to adapt.” Life is full of having and letting go, of embracing and parting.

But what I have in mind is a

radical departure, an announcement of a door unlocking and inviting one to enter. We feel the pressure to move away from our compass points. The trajectory is losing its arc. Some inner force is moving us out of a compartment. We feel pushed to change our arrangement with life, to journey to another place, almost to another consciousness.

It may be true that most people are most concerned about safety, security, and a predictable future. We want what is sung by Taylor Swift: “Safe and sound, safe and sound, all around safe and sound.” Change is frightening, trying to fit oneself into a new scheme of things. Can I uproot and re-embed myself? People tend to remain in a place that is familiar rather than to go forward into the unknown.

The Abraham story would advise us to be willing to go, to take the leap of trust into the unknown. When medieval map makers came to the limit of their knowledge of the known world, they often wrote in the empty space, “Here be dragons.” There is something frightening about moving into the unknown

which might harm or devour us. However, we must risk a journey through dragon territory to a new place.

The new place is likely where we can more fully realize our potentials, become more of what we are in God’s eyes. We ought to want to make the most of ourselves, whatever that most may be. That which is possible should become actual; what one can be, one must be.

It is hard to leave deeply rooted routines, but it is tragic to cling to things which have had their day. We trust that the future belongs to God and love.

I think, ultimately, it is God who brings about the future, and God is beyond our predicting. God likes to go off-road. There can be a false confidence in our ability to secure the future by our own efforts and resources. The true future is that which breaks through the most precise calculations of the future. The truth is that life is uncertain.

Things change that we thought would never change. Our experience of life inevitably includes the realization that, for most of us, life is not what we envisioned.

The Abraham story would suggest that the narrative moves to the mystery of God’s ways.

A short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer has stayed with me. The story is titled “A Friend of Kafka,” and is about a man playing a game of chess with an incomparable Chess Master. Singer writes: “We all play chess with a partner. He makes a move, we make a move. He tries to checkmate us, we try to prevent it. We know we can’t win, but we’re driven to give him a good fight.” Singer leads the reader to realize that the Grand Master is God. He writes, “If there isn’t a God, who is playing all the games with us?”

Singer’s story is about the chess game of life. The image of God sitting across the table from us, engaging us in a game of life is intriguing. It is a chess game with a Master who has many tricks up his supernatural sleeve. Thus, Singer suggests I picture God sitting hunched over across the chessboard from me, figuring out his next move. Sometimes I complain about his move, sometimes he complains about mine, and the game goes on. ■

### SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FROM PAGE 7

report to the Careline.

To report suspected abuse contact: Erin Neil, LCSW, Diocesan Director of Safe Environments and Victim Assistance Coordinator: 203.650.3265 or Michael Tintrup, LCSW, Victim Assistance Counselor, 203.241.0987. Mandated reporters must also directly report any incident of sexual abuse of a minor to: The State of Connecticut Child Abuse and Neglect Careline: 1.800.842.2288. To read the complete Safe Environment policies of the diocese and to view additional information visit the diocesan website at <http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/index.php/safeenvironments/policy>

To register to attend VIRTUS, Protecting God’s Children for Adults, please visit [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org). Select registration and select Bridgeport Diocese. ■

## SAINTLY LIVES

BY ED WALDRON

**Bl. Nazaria Ignacia March Mesa**



b. 1889 ~ d. 1943

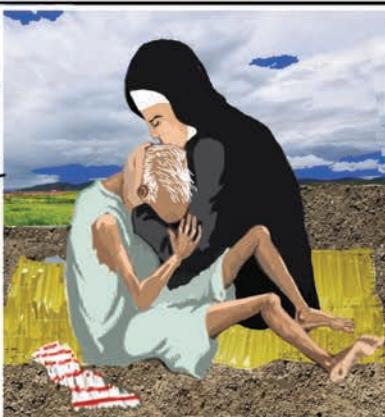
NAZARIA WAS THE 4TH DAUGHTER OF 18 CHILDREN, TO A FAMILY LIVING IN MADRID. SHE PERCEIVED A CALLING TO FOLLOW CHRIST AT THE AGE OF 9 AND TOOK A PRIVATE VOW, AT THE AGE OF 11, TO CONSECRATE HER LIFE TO JESUS.



IN 1906, THE MARCH MESA FAMILY MOVED TO MEXICO. TWO YEARS LATER, NAZARIA JOINED THE LITTLE SISTERS OF ABANDONED ELDERLY. SHE ADMIRERED THEIR HUMILITY AND COMPASSION FOR THE POOR.



NAZARIA DISTINGUISHED HERSELF BY HER APOSTOLIC ZEAL AND SELFLESS DEVOTION TO THE POOR. SHE HAD A GIFT OF EVANGELIZATION. SHE WALKED FROM DOOR TO DOOR, INSPIRING THE FAITHFUL AND GIVING HOPE TO THE DISHEARTENED. IN THE WINTER OF 1911, SHE AND SEVERAL COMPANIONS TRAVELED TO BOLIVIA TO CONTINUE THEIR MISSION.



NAZARIA DEVOTED HERSELF TO THE CHURCH IN BOLIVIA. IN 1925, WITH THE BLESSING OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY FATHER IN BOLIVIA, SHE FOUNDED A NEW CONGREGATION THE MISSIONARY CRUSADERS OF THE CHURCH. THEY SET UP SOUP KITCHENS, EVANGELIZED IN MINING CAMPS AND CONTINUED SERVING THE POOR. BEFORE HER DEATH, THE SISTERS HAD ESTABLISHED NEW HOUSES IN ARGENTINA, URUGUAY AND SPAIN.



# Bits & Pieces

**ALL TEENS WELCOME AT ST. JOSEPH YOUTH GROUP** special youth group meeting on Sun., **Feb. 16**—Zach will be leading the meeting about what it takes to make hard decisions using clips from Lord of the Rings! 6-9 pm at 8 Robinson Ave., Danbury.

**CURSILLO ULTREYAS** held **Feb. 17**, St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford at 7:30 pm; **Feb. 20**, at St. Mary Parish, Bethel at 7:30 pm; **Feb. 22**, Day of Reflection at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford—8 am Mass to 1:30 pm. For more information contact Jeanette at jkovacs@snet.net

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** a ten-session series on Biblical roots starting **Feb. 19**, at St. John Parish, 1986 Post Rd., Darien. For information or to register call Maryann at 203.213.4809 or mmknag@aol.com or parish office at 203.655.1145.

**HIGH SCHOOL TEENS 30 HOUR FAMINE** at St. Philip, 1

Father Conlon Pl., Norwalk—9 am on **Feb. 22** through 12 noon on **Feb. 23**. Our theme is Tell Everyone! Please join, RSVP to and share this event to “tell everyone” that you support our fight against World Hunger.

**4TH ANNUAL CRYSTAL BALL GALA** at St. Rose of Lima, Newtown on **Feb. 22**. A luxurious event of fine food, spirits, dancing and exclusive offerings. \$125pp. RSVP to strosegala2014@gmail.com. Proceeds go to parish and school. For information contact Stephanie or Tracy at strosegala2014@gmail.com.

**SACRED RELICS OF THE SAINTS** an exposition of Sacred Treasures held at St. Theresa Parish, Main St., Trumbull on Sun., **Feb. 23**, at 2 pm. Fr. Carlos Martins of the Companions of the Cross will teach about these holy objects: of St. Maria Goretti, St. Therese of Lisieux (the “Little Flower”), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Faustina Kowalska. Also present will be a portion of the veil of Our Lady, as well as

one of the remaining pieces of the True Cross in the world. Attendees will be able to examine and venerate each relic. You are encouraged to bring your articles of devotion (such as rosaries, holy cards, etc.) and pictures of ill friends/family members which you will be able to touch to the reliquaries as a means of intercession.

**“WHAT’S IN YOUR BAG?”** Tools for the Trade: An Evening Workshop for Parish Catechists on Tues., **Feb. 25**, 6-9 pm with Liza Peters and Janine Cote. Join us as we share tools for the trade in religious education. If you are a sacramental preparation catechist or CCD/Religious Education program catechist, this program is for you! Resources provided. \$40pp, includes dinner, presentation, and discussion. 860.760.9712. www.holyfamilyretreat.org.

**PREMIERE OF THE MOVIE “SON OF GOD” & FUNDRAISER FOR AL’S ANGELS**—Fri., **Feb. 28**, at 7 pm at Showcase Cinemas, Bridgeport. Group sales available—contact Al DiGuido at adiguido@yahoo.com. 100% of proceeds benefit Al’s Angels which provides children and families battling cancer, rare blood diseases and severe financial hardship.

**ALL TEENS GR. 10-12—EMMAUS WEEKEND** **Feb. 28-Mar. 2** at St. Aloysius Church, New Canaan. Sign up early as spots get taken fast! Go to St. Aloysius Youth Group page for information or 203.966.0020.

**MORNING GLORY “EVENING OF CHANCE” FUNDRAISER** on **Feb. 28** from 6:30-9 pm at Anthony’s Lake Club, 10 Christopher Columbus Ave., Danbury. Food, drinks, games and raffles. Fun event for great cause! \$50 pp, \$90 per couple. Tickets at www.ccfairfield.org. RSVP by **Feb. 20** to mconderino@ccfc-ct.org or 203.748.0848, ext. 231.

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING** classes at St. Rose of Lima Parish, 38 Church Hill Rd., Newtown. Fri., **Feb. 28**, **Mar. 28** and **Apr. 25** from 7-9:30 pm. Classes held in the Religious Education building. It takes the full series of 3 classes to learn the method. For more information contact Adrienne and Al Keogler at a.keogler@att.net. To register or for more information about NFP

go to the Couple to Couple League International at www.ccli.org.

**MUSICAL “BARNUM” AT ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA**, 4 Riverside Ave., Riverside by St. Catherine’s Players. Dates: Fri., **Feb. 28**, at 8 pm (opening night reception and “meet & greet”); Sat., **Mar. 1**, at 7:30 pm; Sun., **Mar. 2**, at 2 pm; Fri., **Mar. 7**, at 8 pm; Sat., **Mar. 8**, at 7:30 pm and Sun., **Mar. 9**, at 2 pm. Tickets may be purchased online at www.stcatherinesplayers.com, at St. Catherine of Siena’s rectory, or call 203.637.3661, ext. 327 and leave your name, telephone number, email address, preferred performance date and number of tickets desired. Tickets \$20 if purchased prior to Thursday before performance, otherwise \$21 each. For more information contact Cindy at acbusani@optonline.net or 203.637.3661, ext. 327 or www.stcatherinesplayers.com.

**3RD ANNUAL NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL GALA** held at Sacred Heart University on Sat., **Mar. 1**, from 6-10:30 pm. This is the school’s largest fundraiser of the year and promises to be a wonderful evening celebrating Notre Dame’s past, present, and exciting future. For more information or to make a reservation contact Theresa at marzik@notredame.org or 203.372.6521 or go to www.notredame.org. There are several ways to make a donation to this year’s auction.

**CURSILLO ULTREYA** on **Mar. 3**, at St. James, Stratford at 7 pm. For more information contact Jeanette at jkovacs@snet.net

**BEAREVEMENT MINISTRY** at Our Lady of Peace, Parish Center, 10 Ivy St., Stratford begins **Mar. 5**. For information call 203.377.4863, ext. 10.

**LEARN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES** start-

ing **Mar. 5** for 8 weeks. \$140pp; goes to support the “Deaf & Hard of Hearing Community of the Valley.” Classes held at 142 Main St., Derby. Checks payable to: Fr. Nick Pavia—Deaf Ministry, mail to: 50 Fairmont Pl., Shelton, CT 06484. Contact ASL Teacher Dawn Sorrentino at cdwhitney2010@yahoo.com.

**DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES** “The Creed: Do you believe what you just said?” held at Holy Spirit Church, 403 Scofieldtown Rd., Stamford on Thurs., **Mar. 6**, at 7:30 pm. Theologian, Dr. Joan Kelly, will explore the Nicene Creed. Refreshments; free and open to the public. For more information email: dre@holyspiritstamford.org or call 203.322.3722 or www.holyspiritstamford.org.

**CONVIVIO HIGH SCHOOL CONGRESS** on **Mar. 7, 8 & 9**, at Sacred Heart University. All high school youth welcome! Invite your friends! \$50pp registration fee. Call 203.416.1449, email connecticut@convivio.org or www.convivio-us.org or Facebook: convivioc

**ST. PATRICK DAY CELEBRATION & CONCERT** on Sat., **Mar. 8**, at St. Jude Social Hall, 707 Monroe Turnpike, Monroe at 7:30 pm featuring songs and humor of Keltick Kick Band. Food and drinks available for purchase. BYOB. \$20pp. Sponsored by Monroe Knights of Columbus proceeds go to charitable organizations for the needy and handicapped throughout the area. Seating is reservation only. For information and tickets call Bill 203.445.8857 or Dave 203.268.4072.

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# Bits & Pieces

on Sat., **Mar. 8**, from 10 am-4 pm at St. Ann Parish, Bridgeport. Deepen your relationship with Jesus. \$45pp includes lunch; opportunity for Confession and Mass. For information or to register call 203.368.1607 or [www.stannblackrock.com](http://www.stannblackrock.com)

**LENTEN DEVOTION** "A Franciscan Way of the Cross" lead by Fr. Norman Guilbert on Sat., **Mar. 8**, at 9:30 am at St. Emery Church, 838 Kings Highway, Fairfield. Social meeting and refreshments after service. All welcome! For information call Patricia 203.255.8801.

**6TH ANNUAL EDUCATOR'S COMMUNION BREAKFAST** on Sun., **Mar. 9**, at Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield. Begins with 9 am Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano; breakfast following. Seating limited; all are welcome. Call 203.396.8097 or [www.sacred-heart.edu/CAPP2014](http://www.sacred-heart.edu/CAPP2014) to register.

**BINGO WITH CHRIST THE KING TRUMBULL WOMENS GROUP** on Mon., **Mar. 10**, at 10 am in parish hall. We shall celebrate St. Patrick's Day by playing bingo. All are welcome! For more information call 203.261.8020.

**LENTEN SPIRITUALITY SERIES** based on Fr. Richard Rohr's book "Falling Upward:

Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life" Conducted by James R. Cook, LCSW at St. Luke Church, Westport on **Mar. 11, 18, 25 & Apr. 1**, 7:30-9 pm. Participants should read the book ahead of time. For information contact 203.227.7245

**GIANT INDOOR TAG SALE** at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, 210 Shelton Rd., Trumbull, on Sat., **Mar. 15**, from 8 am-3 pm. Attic treasures, new vendors, breakfast, lunch & snacks for sale from Vazzy's Café. Church raffle. All proceeds to benefit our church. For information call Donna at 203.377.3133, ext. 11 or email [d.bria@att.net](mailto:d.bria@att.net).

**CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE** on Sat., **Mar. 15**, (registration opens **Feb. 1**) at Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Ave., South Orange, NJ 07079. Keynote Speaker, His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, as well as Fr. Larry Richards and the Most Rev. John Joseph Myers. Also features Spanish speaking guest speakers and special talks to young adults. Our theme "Be Not Afraid!" Fear is useless...Be Not Afraid! Conference website: [www.rcanmenscommission.org](http://www.rcanmenscommission.org).

**MAGNIFICAT WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST** (a Ministry to Catholic Women)

on Sat., **Mar. 15**, from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at Roberto's Restaurant in Monroe. Sr. Nancy Kellar from the Sisters of Charity in Scarsdale, NY will be guest speaker. \$25pp. Register by **Mar. 8**, seating is limited. For more information call Fran Hood 203.744.1856 or email [s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net). Invitation available on Bridgeport Diocese Website under Woman's Ministry section.

**MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE** on Mon., **Mar. 17**, at St. Lawrence Church, Huntington at 7:30 pm with Fr. Ed Nadolny.

**LENT TALK/RETREAT** "Unite Your Suffering with the Suffering of Christ" on Sat., **Mar. 22**, at St. Mark Parish, 500 Wigwam Lane, Stratford, beginning with 8 am Mass, refreshments, talk by Deacon Tony Conti, adoration, rosary, Stations of the Cross, witness talk by Damien O'Connor, lunch. \$12pp; \$20/husband & wife. RSVP to Gina Donnarummo, [gdonnarummo@diobpt.org](mailto:gdonnarummo@diobpt.org) or 203.416.1446; mail check made payable to "Office for Pastoral Services" to: 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606

**IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL 9TH ANNUAL GALA DINNER DANCE** on Sat., **Mar. 22**, from 6:30-11:30 pm at the Amber Room Colonnade, 1 Stacey Rd., Danbury. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be honored with the Nancy K. Dolan Leadership Award at this year's Gala. For information contact Debbie Basile at [dbasile@immaculatehs.org](mailto:dbasile@immaculatehs.org) or 203.744.1510, ext. 159.

**BRIDGEPORT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DAY AT YANKEE STADIUM** the NY Yankees vs Boston Red Sox on Sat., **Apr. 12**, at 1 pm. Tickets \$22 and \$55. Deadline to purchase tickets is **Mar. 7**. Contact Susan at 203.416.1466.

**THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: CALLED TO LOVE** held **Mar. 28-29** provides a pro-

foundly beautiful vision of human sexuality—who we are, how God made us, and how we are to live out our sacred sexuality. The truths it contains are rooted in scripture and, while not revolutionary, will inspire you to live your true calling more fully. Held at Our Lady of the Assumption Church, 545 Stratfield Rd., Fairfield. \$20pp (includes refreshments & lunch). To register go to: [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/marriageprep](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/marriageprep). Register by **Mar. 20**. For more information contact Angela Mantero, Director of Marriage and Family at [amantero@diobpt.org](mailto:amantero@diobpt.org).

**21ST ANNUAL WHITE MASS** to be held on **Mar. 30**, at 9 am at St. Peter Church, 121 Main St., Danbury to honor persons in the healthcare field. Breakfast follows immediately after Mass at Crown Plaza Hotel, 18 Old Ridgebury Rd., Danbury. For more information call Jean Talamelli 203.416.1358 or email [jtalamelli@diobpt.org](mailto:jtalamelli@diobpt.org). ■

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