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Listening Sessions Are Under Way

We are listening...

By BISHOP FRANK CAGGIANO

The evening of Monday, May 5, was truly beautiful. After a long wait spring finally arrived and the weather could not have been nicer. When I arrived at Trinity High School in Stamford, the parking lot was almost full and you could see many excited people. That evening was the first of many listening sessions we had put together prior to the Fourth Diocesan Synod. The auditorium in the school was filling nicely, and people seemed friendly and interested in the event. They came mostly from Stamford, though other towns and parishes were represented as well. I did not count all those present, but it looked like we had about two hundred attendees.

A few minutes past 7:30 pm the meeting began. On the stage there was a long table. Next to me were the members of the Synod Commission: Damien O’Connor, Carol Pinard, Deacon John DiTaranto, Martha Missiner and Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka, who ran the meeting. All of us were there to listen to the comments judged. On occasion, spontaneous applause broke out after a comment. Since the purpose of the session was for me and the Synod Commission to listen, there were no comments or answers made, except my final remarks.

What happens next? The input from all listening sessions and the online forms will be processed by the Synod Commission to place all comments into proper categories, i.e. “liturgy,” “youth” or “administration.” Then study committees will examine these comments, many volunteers helping with logistics, the meeting was conducted quite efficiently.

Here are some comments made at that session:

The strengths of the diocese are… (Question #1)
St. Catherine Academy provides an excellent service. The faith of the people We have so many churches available; it’s easy for families to receive the sacraments Many laity serve in any way they can for us Generosity of our parishioners Very impressed by the strength of Catholic education Religious education programs are very good Volunteer service in our parish is exceptional Financial transparency of the bishop

The meeting was divided into three segments, each reflecting on one of the following questions:
1. The strengths of the diocesan ministries are...
2. I would like to see the new diocesan outreach in...
3. The diocese should improve the ministry by...
Each person was allotted about 1-2 minutes to present their points. Thanks to the many volunteers helping with logistics, the meeting was conducted quite efficiently.

Our pastor has made a concerted effort to welcome people back to our parish and it has been very effective
The Eucharist is available every day in most parishes
I would like to see the diocesan outreach to… (Question #2)
Connecting between the suburban parishes and the inter-city parishes Find a way to have young married couples more involved in our parishes Use music that young people can relate to Improve religious education to include much more technology More of a centralized use of religious education textbooks in parishes and exploration of what appeals to young people Facilitate more interfaith dialogue More consolidation for youth outreach: social events, religious education...share our resources Outreach to survivors of sexual abuse More Bible study classes and education for adults More of an outreach in getting Catholics to come back to Church Create more curiosity within adults to encourage them to want to learn more about their faith Engage with our secular culture more constructively
Much more prayer, pilgrimages, study of the saints, etc. A strong voice on social justice issues More use of Christian contemporary music

Things that we already have but need improvement… (Question #3)
Transparency of the diocese The quality of the preaching of our priests. We need catechesis from the pulpit More frequent publication of Fairfield County Catholic More opportunities for young adults to meet together
Use more women theologians to catechize adults Catholic education...more teaching orders of religious to come to our diocese Technology is very important What’s the job of the pastor... needs to communicate more with his parishioners How the chancery communicates with the parishes
We need to find a way to have women have a more obvious role in our parishes
Evangelization of our adults We need more Adoration Chapels, more time together as a community
We need to get families back to prayer again. That is what’s going to bring people back
We need to reach out to people who are very angry (for whatever reason). I’m tired for having to apologize for being a Catholic
Three men ordained to the priesthood

BRIDGEPORT—It has been a year of “firsts” for Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. But he’s been in the Diocese of Bridgeport long enough now to have had the opportunity for his first “second.” On May 17, in St. Augustine Cathedral, he performed one of the most fulfilling duties in the life of a bishop—the ordination of three young men as priests for the Diocese of Bridgeport. This is Bishop Caggiano’s second ordination; last December he ordained Father Rolando Arias to the priesthood.

In addition to their formal theological studies, all three of this May’s new priests have spent time at St. John Fisher Seminary where they had the opportunity to grow in faith as perceptive and well-balanced men. The formation experience at Fisher is designed to leave an imprint on their conscience and character and nourish their growth in faith. “I am honored, humbled, and happy to call these three men my brother priests,” says Father Robert Kinnelly, director of vocations and rector of St. John Fisher Seminary. “Chris, Andy, and Rob have been faithfully and prayerfully engaged in their formation from the very beginning. As priests, they will use the many gifts God has given them to bring people closer to Christ, and the joy that they exude in serving God’s people has—and will continue to be—inspiring and transforming. How blessed is the Church of Bridgeport to have these three new priests.”

Father Christopher J. Perrella

Hampshire where his parents are members of Sainte Marie Parish in Manchester.

An energetic young man with a love of playing ultimate Frisbee and a second degree black belt in Taekwondo, he began to consider a vocation to the priesthood during college at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio. He graduated in 2010 with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy. A visit to St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford led to his entry into the Diocese of Bridgeport. Exploring this diocese, he spent the summer after graduation at St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield before entering Mount St. Mary Seminary in

Father Andrew Vill

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Welcoming back Catholics who have left the Church, inspiring the young to grow in the faith, and pooling resources between parishes to improve religious education for adults and children were among the major concerns at the first listening session of Synod 2014, held at Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford.

In a little over 90 minutes, the more than 200 laity, priests and religious men and women who came out for the first session made 98 comments about the life of faith in Fairfield County.

Taking their turns to speak, Catholics from the Stamford area shared their thoughts with Bishop Caggiano and Synod Commission members on the strengths of current diocesan ministries, the opportunity for new outreach, and the need to improve existing ministries and practices.

The listening session moderated by Msgr. Darius Zielonka, synod director, who moved the evening along in a brisk and cordial way to enable as many speakers as possible to make comments. Volunteers walked through the audience to give a-hand-held microphone to the speakers. All of the comments were also recorded to incorporate them into topics for the synod.

Most speakers took the opportunity to praise their pastors and priests, to offer strong support for Catholic education, and to express their gratitude that the sacraments are readily available to Catholics across the diocese on a daily basis. They were also proud of the Church’s outreach to hospitals, prisons and the poor who are served in diocesan soup kitchens.

Speakers asked for improved catechesis for adults, more Bible Study groups, and the use of contemporary Christian music to engage young people. They also said that parishes should upgrade the level of their communications by improving website and using new social media to reach out to young people and families.

While speakers praised their parishes, they said they would like to see them become more welcoming to young people. They would also like more sharing and fewer boundaries between parishes and their programs. One woman suggested that suburban parishes should “twin” with inner city parishes so that both could learn more from each other and share their lives and faith.

Some who took the microphone said the Church was not doing a good job of capturing the idealism and energy of youth, which is often seen in their commitment to social change. Others seemed baffled that their own children or family members stopped attending Mass, and they wanted to see them back in the Church.

The range of comments also pointed out some of the challenges ahead as the synod seeks to renew the life of faith in the diocese.

One woman who said she did extensive traveling and attended Masses in many different dioceses said she would like to see at least two “general absolution” services a year similar to those held in the dioceses she had visited. Later on in the evening, a man who had converted to Catholicism at the age of 53 said that one of the great gifts of the Church was “one-on-one confession” and that he was not interested in general absolution.

When one speaker said that she would like to see the diocese much more active in interfaith gatherings, another said he would like to see the diocese much more active in winning back Catholics.

TIME FOR LISTENING—Bishop Caggiano (center left) and Msgr. Darius Zielonka (center right), Synod 2014 director, were joined by a panel of Synod Commission members including (l-r) Martha Missimer of St. Patrick Parish in Fairfield; Msgr. Nicholas Ruggieri, vicar for Hispanic Ministry; Msgr. Darius Zielonka, synod director; Msgr. Thomas Mullane, vicar general; Fr. Paul DeSantis, pastor of St. Thomas More Church in Westport; Father Christopher Perrella, 26, is one of three children of Frank and Anne Perrella. He was born in Philadelphia, Pa., and grew up in Amherst, N.H. His family members still live in New Hampshire where his parents are members of Sainte Marie Parish in Manchester.

As priests, they will use the many gifts God has given them to bring people closer to Christ, and the joy that they exude in serving God’s people has—and will continue to be—inspiring and transforming. How blessed is the Church of Bridgeport to have these three new priests.

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Building Bridges in Faith and Charity

‘Equipping the chosen’

There is something extraordinary about knowing you were created for a special purpose and even more extraordinary when that purpose is revealed to you! Recently sharing lunch with a few seminarians at the St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford, we were very moved listening to their inspiring stories of discerning the vocation of the priesthood.

As each story was shared, the simple phrase “God does not choose the equipped; he equips the chosen” must have run through our minds 100 times. We quote that mantra to our children often and, talking with the seminarians, that remark resonated so perfectly and altogether true. We, indeed, were in the company of incredible young men whom God has called, and God is masterfully equipping to serve our diocese.

Spoiler Alert: the Diocese of Bridgeport has some awesome men in formation for the priesthood! We are impressed and excited about what the future is for our diocese, given our prospective priests.

St. John Fisher Seminary is located on Newfield Avenue beside Trinity Catholic High School. Currently there are a total of 20 seminarians in our diocese with eight men living there and 12 men attending major seminaries throughout the United States or at the American Pontifical College in Rome. A small number of those men come directly out of high school (maybe one or two per year) and the rest have worked in various capacities before hearing a call to the priesthood. The men we met came from the work force and are bringing invaluable experience to their priestly formation and to our diocese. They were college administrators, chemists, teachers, engineers, musicians and lay parish ministers. While their previous life experience will certainly be an asset to them in their pastoral lives, what struck us as most inspiring was the devotion and complete surrendering to the Holy Spirit and prayerfulness these men exhibited.

Each seminarian we met with had an incandescent openness to Christ and could not wait to fulfill his vocation. This means two things: first, these men were certainly chosen or called by God to the priesthood and, second, they are receiving excellent formation in preparing them for the priesthood. That formation is thanks to the efforts of many.

Father Bob Kinnally, the rector of St. John Fisher and director of seminarian formation, and Father Sam Kachuba, director of vocations, are two who devote countless hours in preparing our seminarians. Father Bob explained to us that St. John Fisher is a safe place for men to discern and study for the priesthood. Some are finishing up their four-year undergraduate degree or pursuing their graduate degree at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield University or Fordham University.

All of the seminarians are learning what Father Bob calls “The Four Pillars of Formation.”

The first pillar is spiritual: developing a close prayerful, spiritual relationship with God. This is cultivated through daily celebration of the Eucharist, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (which is also open to the public every day of the week from 6 am-11 pm), praying the Liturgy of the Hours and meeting often with a spiritual director.

The second is intellectual: continuing to pursue education on the undergraduate or graduate level as well as completing rigorous studies in theology and philosophy.

The third pillar of formation is human: living in community with their seminarian brothers is an important way for each man to grow, to be respectful of every person, care for his own well-being and become a good leader.

The last is pastoral: actively working in the many ministries of our diocese, the men are engaged with the poor and the sick as well as becoming integrated into parishes and schools. Their experiences prepare them for a life of pastoral ministry.

The formation process can take anywhere between six and eight years.

After spending the afternoon with these fine young men diligently preparing to serve our diocese as priests, it is clear to us that the future is bright for the Diocese of Bridgeport. We are confident, knowing that when we give to the Bishop’s Appeal we are active participants in the formation of our new priests. We are helping to “equip the chosen.” Nothing could give us more satisfaction in Building Bridges in Faith and Charity than to give to those who are in formation to be our bridge to Christ.

STAMFORD—Edward Cardinal Egan, former Bishop of Bridgeport, will be the celebrant and homilist at the 25th Anniversary Mass for St. John Fisher Seminary, to be held on June 20 at 6 pm at Assumption Parish in Westport. A celebration with musical entertainment will follow at The Inn at Longshore in Westport.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will preside at Mass and speak during the anniversary reception.

The evening will celebrate the contributions of the many priests and lay leaders who have supported the growth of St. John Fisher Seminary Residence in Trumbull since it was opened by Bishop Egan in 1989.

Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, first rector of Fisher and current pastor of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford, will also be honored for his contributions as a founder of the seminary.

“We are fortunate as a diocese that Cardinal Egan had the foresight and the faith to open St. John Fisher Seminary Residence over the years through their gifts to the Annual Appeal and numerous voluntary efforts on behalf of seminarians.

The celebration will recognize six people for their support of St. John Fisher over the years: Philip and Judith DeFelice, parishioners of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford; David Harvey of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan; R. James Long, Ph.D., a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield; John J. Pioli, Ph.D. and Liane M. Pioli, Ph.D., of Notre Dame Parish in Easton.

Dr. Liane Pioli and Dr. John Pioli have provided evaluation services for incoming seminarians of the diocese for the past 24 years. This contribution to the assessment of prospective seminarians has been most valuable to the vocation ministry. Their thoughtful, thorough and pastoral approach to their work has been appreciated by their clients and those responsible for the formation of seminarians. They both hold Ph.D. degrees from St. John’s University in Jamaica, NY. The couple have been married for 34 years and have three sons.

R. James Long, Ph.D., has been a faculty member at St. John Fisher Seminary for the past 24 years. A professor of philosophy at Fairfield University, Dr. Long helped shape the philosophy curriculum at St. John Fisher in the very early days of the seminary program.

Dr. Long earned his doctorate from the University of Toronto and holds a licentiate in medieval studies from the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. He has published nine books and more than 60 articles on medieval and more than 60 articles on medieval philosophy and has served as president of the Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy. Dr. Long has received numerous academic awards throughout his distinguished career. He and his wife, Wendy, have three sons.

Judith and Philip DeFelice have been members of the St. John Fisher Seminary family since 1995, when Judy began working for Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, the first rector. As administrative assistant to all subsequent rectors, she has been very helpful to students and supportive of the seminary’s efforts.

A GENEROUS OUTPOURING of holy oil blesses the altar of the chapel of St. John Fisher in Stamford. Bishop Egan’s foresight and faith opened the seminary, which has seen 92 men ordained to the priesthood.

Fisher Seminary Residence during his tenure here,” said Bishop Caggiano. “To date, 92 men who resided there have been ordained to the priesthood. It is a living and enduring legacy that Cardinal Egan has left us and we are blessed to be able to celebrate that with him.”

Bishop Caggiano said he was also profoundly grateful for the lay people who have supported St. John Fisher Seminary Residence over the years through their gifts to the Annual Appeal and numerous voluntary efforts on behalf of seminarians.

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Local News

Lunch honors Sister Magnetti

By SUSAN CECERE

Nearly 300 guests turned out at Greenwich Country Club for the Fourth Annual Ladies Luncheon to benefit the Catholic Academies of Bridgeport.

The event, which honored Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, executive director of Cathedral Academies, for her 50 years in education, raised more than $220,000. The funds will be used to provide scholarships for students attending St. Ann Academy in Black Rock, Cathedral Academy in downtown Bridgeport and St. Andrew Academy in the North End.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano praised Sister Magnetti for her leadership and thanked all those in attendance for their support of Catholic education in the diocese. Diocesan Chancellor Anne McCrory, Superintendent of Schools Sister Mary Grace Walsh, A.S.C.J., PhD, and Dr. Donna Andrade, academic dean of Fairfield Preparatory School, were among the leaders at the event.

The luncheon was underwritten by Paul and Anne-Marie Queally of New Canaan. Marylou Queally Salvati of New Canaan chaired the event.

Many Sisters from Sr. Magnetti’s order travelled from as far as Albany and Missouri to attend the tribute. Barbara Rogers, rscj, headmistress of Stuart Country Day School, shared with guests heartwarming stories about Sister Magnetti’s early years as a cloistered nun and her work in Egypt after Vatican II before being assigned Stateside by her order, which has teaching affiliations in 44 countries.

Sister Magnetti has spent much of the last decade serving as the executive director of the Catholic Academies after a successful career and ministry working in the network of Sacred Heart Schools, first as teacher and headmistress at Stuart Country Day School in Princeton, N.J., and then as headmistress of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich.

The Catholic Academies of Bridgeport serve 1,025 inner-city children in three schools: St. Andrew Academy, St. Ann Academy and Cathedral Academy (upper and lower schools). More than 65 percent of students receive some sort of tuition assistance, with the Catholic Academies awarding more than $2 million in scholarships annually.

The Diocese of Bridgeport educates children in the Catholic Academies at a cost of $6,000 per student, compared to $14,000 in Bridgeport public schools.

FIFTY YEARS IN EDUCATION—Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, executive director of Cathedral Academies, was honored by Bishop Frank Caggiano and 300 guests at the Ladies Luncheon held recently at the Greenwich Country Club. The event raised $220,000 in scholarship funds to help students attend Catholic elementary schools in Bridgeport.

(Photos by Amy Mortensen)

One hundred percent of Catholic Academies’ students graduate high school, while the Bridgeport high school graduation rate is only 55 percent. And of high school graduates, 99 percent pursue post-secondary education.

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Father’s Day is Sunday, June 15, 2014
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St. Mary Parish, Norwalk

Cardinal Burke: “Suffer with Christ for the sake of the least of our brethren”

NORWALK—“There are those who tell us that we must exclude from unconditional Christ-like love those who are very small, those who are not productive and those whose enslavement through manipulation and death could mean both cures for diseases and injuries and economic growth for our nation. They have re-designed the mission of Christ, according to their own liking, excluding the ‘least brethren,’” said Cardinal Raymond Burke, prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature at the Vatican.

Cardinal Burke visited St. Mary Parish to offer the monthly Pro-Life Mass for the Gospel of Life Society on May 10. Cardinal Burke helped St. Mary’s in its fundraising efforts last year for the renovation of the church. His visit was an opportunity to see the newly renovated church and to greet the hundreds who came out for the Mass and reception.

“Our life in Christ, our daily conversion to Christ and witness to his love of all men, elicits misunderstanding and rejection among those who will not accept the truth to which we witness. But we must, with Christ, bear the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, especially the innocent and defenseless. It is only then that we know the freedom of loving God and our neighbor. It is only then that we confess our sins to God,” said Cardinal Burke.

The Mass was celebrated on the Feast Day of St. Antoninus, an exemplary Dominican Friar who was called by Pope Eugene IV in the fifteenth century to be Bishop of Florence. Cardinal Burke noted that this was a time “when sanctity was rare on the earth and a time of schism when the Truth was not proclaimed.”

“The Mass was celebrated on the Feast Day of St. Antoninus, an exemplary Dominican Friar who was called by Pope Eugene IV in the fifteenth century to be Bishop of Florence. Cardinal Burke noted that this was a time “when sanctity was rare on the earth and a time of schism when the Truth was not proclaimed.”

The cardinal told the faithful that in carrying out Christ’s mission, “daily prayer and participation in the sacramental life of the Church” are the source of our inspiration and strength.

“At the present moment of grave crisis in the cause of respect for the inviolable dignity of human life in our nation and in the world, I urge you to continue to pray to almighty God, especially through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, for deliverance from the horrible evils of abortion, euthanasia, the artificial generation of human embryos for scientific research,” Cardinal Burke said.

Speaking directly to Gospel of Life Society members, Cardinal Burke said, “Your membership brings you face-to-face with the suffering of Christ for the sake of his ‘least brethren.’ You are called to share in his suffering, to make up for what is lacking in his suffering in our time and place, that is, to fulfill your call to bring Christ to the ‘least brethren’ of our day.”

ORDINATIONS FROM PAGE 3

Emmitsburg, Md. In 2013, while he was in the seminary, he was in charge of the Mount2000 High School Youth Retreat.

He deepened his friendship with seminarists from Fairfield County at Mount St. Mary’s and found more friends during a summer assignment at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown. St. Rose is now his home parish, and he will celebrate his first Mass there.

“God has done so much in my life to bring me to this point,” he says. “Lots of personal growth, lots of suffering, and an ever-deepening relationship with the Lord. I know God now in ways that I never knew him before and discovering my vocation to be a priest was part of that. As I got to know God more closely, I saw more clearly who he had made me to be, and that was to be my priest.”

Father Perrella will celebrate his first Mass on May 18 at 12 noon at St. Rose of Lima. Father Marc Montminy, his former home parish pastor, will deliver the homily.

Father Andrew A. Vill

Father Andrew Vill, 25, grew up in Ridgefield. The eldest of four siblings, Andrew and Angela Vill, are members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. His brother and two sisters all live in Fairfield County. Another brother, Christopher, is deceased.

He attended Ridgebury Elementary School, East Ridge Middle School and Ridgefield High School, where he graduated in 2006. After a year at the University of Connecticut he followed a call to the priesthood and completed his bachelor of sacred theology degree at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, with residence at the North American College. He plans to return to Rome to complete a degree at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family, graduating in 2015.

An Eagle Scout, Father Vill was named a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouting’s National Honor Society. He is a 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

“My time in seminary has been one of incredible growth and deepening in my relationship with Jesus Christ,” he says. ‘My

MAY 2014

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
Bishop removes Father Stronkowski

SHELTON—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has accepted the resignation of Father John Stronkowski from his pastoral duties at St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish in Shelton. In a letter distributed to all parishioners the second weekend in May, Bishop Caggiano said he removed Father Stronkowski as a result of his “persistent absenteeism from both the rectory and the parish and its ministries, his growing difficulties with both the staff and lay leaders of the parish and other personal and administrative shortcomings.

“Further, I have referred this issue to the Ministerial Misconduct Advisory Board for review and recommendation. The board assists me in reviewing cases of clerical misconduct, either involving adults or that occurs in the exercise of his ministry, and where I must consider action regarding that cleric’s assignment, including temporary or permanent removal or suspension.”

Father Stronkowski had been appointed administrator of the parish in September 2012, and was named as pastor in January 2014. He was scheduled to be formally installed as pastor in June. However, a number of parish leaders came forward recently to express their concern about his frequent absenteeism and leadership problems.

The bishop was also made aware of rumors that Fr. Stronkowski was engaged in an affair with a woman from the area, though he denied the rumor.

Based on that meeting, the bishop met with Father Stronkowski on May 2 and asked for his resignation. All of the concerns and allegations will be brought before the Ministerial Misconduct Advisory Board.

Father Stronkowski agreed to take a leave of absence effective immediately, to seek professional help, spend time in prayer and immediately, to seek professional help, and become administrator of the Cathedral Parish when St. Patrick’s and St. Augustine were combined into one parish in 2012.

In Rome, Father Lenox will be enrolled at the Benedictine University, the Pontifico Ateneo Sant’Anselmo and at Pontifical Institute for Sacred Music. “I have chosen Father Lenox to pursue this important degree because of his intellectual abilities, great skills as an accomplished musician and his unwavering fidelity to the Church and its teachings,” said Bishop Caggiano in a letter to parishioners.

The degree will require two years to complete, during which Father Lenox will be living at the Casa Santa Maria, a residence for American priests.

“I know he will be greatly missed by many of you both at St. Patrick’s and St. Augustine churches,” the bishop said. He asked parishioners to join him “in offering our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for his service to the parish and the community of faithful and for the maintenance and protection of the integrity of the priesthood,” he added.

If a decision is made that a priest or deacon may return to his ministry or receive a new assignment, 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 accepted, it will ordinarily be made on a provisional basis, requiring that the vicar for clergy visit the parish after a six-month period to ascertain the overall assignment. If the report is positive, the assignment will then be made permanent.

Father Lenox to study in Rome

By PAT HENNESSY

Father Peter Lenox, administrator of the Cathedral Parish and rector of St. Augustine Cathedral, has accepted the invitation of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano to pursue his pontifical license in liturgical theology and a master’s degree in liturgical music. His assignment at the Cathedral Parish will end on June 30.

A member of the American Guild of Organists and a talented organist in his own right, Father Lenox has recently completed the first two phases of the renovation of the Cathedral organ and has set the course for the third and final phase.

Father Lenox, 38, was ordained in 2000 in St. Augustine Cathedral by Bishop Edward M. Egan. He served at St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport, St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield, and St. Benedict—Our Lady of Montserrat Parish in Stamford. He was named administrator of St. Patrick Parish in Bridgeport in 2011 and became administrator of the Cathedral Parish when St. Patrick’s and St. Augustine were combined into one parish in 2012.

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Washington, as well as artist-in-residence at Washington National Cathedral and professor of organ at the Catholic University of America.

Richard Hiendlmayr, the major donor for the organ restoration, and his family will be present for both these events. The organ is memorialized in honor of his late wife, Alma Schenk Hiendlmayr. The A. Thompson-Allen firm responsible for the organ’s restoration will be on hand for these events as well.

(Both organ recitals are free and open to the public. For more information, call the parish: 203.368.6777.)
Pope Francis canonizes John XXIII and John Paul II

An estimated 800,000 pilgrims were present in Rome when Pope Francis canonized two of his predecessors, Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II, during a Mass in St. Peter’s Square on April 27, Divine Mercy Sunday. They filled St. Peter’s, the streets around it and the bridges over the Tiber River.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI attended the Mass, along with 150 cardinals, 1,000 bishops, and delegations from over 90 nations. His presence on the altar with them was as remarkable as the historic canonization itself. During the Mass, he sat off to the side of the altar with other cardinals, wearing the same white vestments and white bishops’ mitre as the others. The only difference was he had a white skullcap on rather than red.


Immediately prior to the canonization, which took place at the beginning of the Mass, the faithful were invited to sing hymns and recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. During the ceremony, Pope Francis took a deep breath and paused for a moment before continuing. "For the honor of the Blessed Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Christian life, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and our own, after due deliberation and frequent prayer for divine assistance, and having sought the counsel of many of our brother bishops, we declare and define Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II be saints and we enroll them among the saints, decreeing that they are to be venerated as such by the whole Church. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," said Pope Francis.

As soon as he finished, applause broke out from the crowd in St. Peter’s and beyond. Following the rite, members of St. John XXIII’s family and a woman healed through St. John Paul II’s intercession brought relics of the saints to Pope Francis. The two saints “were not afraid to look upon the wounds of Jesus, to touch his torn hands and his pierced side,” Pope Francis said.

Today 55 percent of America’s 35 million Hispanic adults identify themselves as Catholic, Pew found. As recently as 2010, that figure was 67 percent. Almost one-fourth of all Hispanic adults living in the US today—24 percent—are former Catholics. The tendency to leave the Catholic Church was most pronounced among younger Hispanics, suggesting that the trend could accelerate.

When asked why they had left the Catholic Church, a majority of respondents (55 percent) said that they had merely "drifted away," and 52 percent said they had ceased to believe the teachings of the Church. However, a large number reported that they had found another religious community that was responsive to their needs.

A rising number of Hispanic Americans identify themselves as Protestant, with 16 percent identifying with the Evangelical Protestant tradition. The Pew survey found that among these Evangelical Hispanics, the level of religious practice was higher than among Hispanic Catholics. Because Hispanic immigrants make up an increasing proportion of the U.S. population, Hispanics account for a rising share of the country’s Catholics, in spite of the marked attrition.

In 2013, Pew reported, 33 percent of American Catholics were Hispanic, and that figure was still rising. If Hispanic immigration continues at a similar pace, and the Hispanic flight from the Catholic Church continues, the Pew report observes that "a day could come when a majority of Catholics in the United States will be Hispanic, even though the majority of Hispanics might no longer be Catholic."

The Yearbook of the Church reports. The number of Catholic priests also rose in 2012 (the last year for which final statistics are available), as did the number of deacons. However, the number of women religious continued a long decline, and the number of seminarians, which had risen in recent years, fell off slightly. The Yearbook records a population of 1.228 billion Catholics at the close of 2012. That count is probably low by several million, the book notes, because Church officials were unable to supply an accurate count of Catholics in nations where the Church suffers political repression, such as China and North Korea.

Christianity disappearing in Iraq

BAGDAD, Iraq— The Iraqi Chaldean Patriarch, Louis Raphael Sako, is seriously concerned over the continuing decline of Christian presence in the country. “In 10 years there will only be a few thousand Christians left in Iraq,” he said after visiting communities throughout the country. The Iraqi Christian community had more than a million followers, 600 thousand in Baghdad alone, now they have less than 400 thou-

Great news!

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Android Devices: Open the Google Play Store on your Android device.

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The results should return a single result: Locate and tap install to get the Fairfield County Catholic App.

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• 9-Day Air Inclusive South Africa Package, through May 31st and on the Crystal Serenity, from $4490 per person.

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sand in the whole country. The main causes of this massive migration are poor security, increased death threats against Christians from Islamists and the seizure of their property by armed groups.

The Chaldean Patriarch, Sako I said: “Christians are those who suffer most from the upsurge in violence across Iraq.”

U.S. Supreme Court OKs prayers at public meetings
WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Supreme Court, in a split decision announced on May 5, has ruled that prayers offered at public meetings do not violate the constitutional prohibition on establishment of religion.

“The inclusion of a brief, ceremonial prayer as part of a larger exercise in civic recognition suggests that its purpose and effect are to acknowledge religious leaders and the institutions they represent, rather than to exclude or coerce nonbelievers,” wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy for the majority in a 5-4 decision.

The court upheld the legality of prayer offered at public meetings, but upheld the legality of prayer offered at public meetings.

Sacred Heart University set for 48th Commencement
FAIRFIELD—Sacred Heart University in Fairfield will hold its 48th commencement exercises with graduate commencement set for Saturday, May 17, at 1 pm and undergraduate to follow on Sunday, May 18, 10:30 am. This year’s nominees for both graduate and undergraduate students will take place at the Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport.

During the Graduation Commencement, SHU will present Sister Kathleen Deigan, C.N.D., director of the Iona Spirituality Institute and professor of religious studies, with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Sister Kathleen will also deliver the keynote address to the graduates and their family and friends.

At the undergraduate commencement ceremonies, an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree will be presented to Ernie Anastos, Emmy award-winning news anchor for the Fox flagship station, WNYW-TV, in New York. James Costello, retired comptroller for General Electric and former member of the SHU Board of Trustees, will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

Anastos will deliver the commencement address. The SHU class of 2014 includes 837 undergraduates who will be receiving associate and bachelor’s degrees, and 774 graduate students who have earned master’s degrees, professional certificates and doctorates.

Ascension health executive to speak at St. Vincent’s College 22nd
Robert J. Henkel, FACHE, will be the speaker at St. Vincent’s College 22nd Commencement address.

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Pilgrimage to Fatima

‘Live your faith with courage’

By DAMIEN O’CONNOR

My pilgrimage to Fatima began long before I even knew that I would be going. This is only possible if one understands that a pilgrimage is not a destination but a journey. It’s an encounter with Christ through the intercession of the Blessed Mother accompanied by the saints. It is an awakening to the reality that the entire Communion of Saints exists so that they may intercede for us for one single purpose: that we may know the joy of surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ.

In July of 2013, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and needed to have a radical prostatectomy two months later. The day I was diagnosed was one of the darker days of my life.

After getting the courage to call my wife, I had very few words over the phone but only tears. We decided to meet at our parish (St. Ann, Bridgeport) because we couldn’t think of anywhere else to meet that would be completely private. I don’t remember us praying at all but just talking in the front left pew. As I reflect back, I’m reminded that we were sitting right across from a large statue of the Blessed Mother. Little did I know that within less than 24 hours I would begin to experience what I called “unusual blessings” that I believe were all orchestrated by Our Lady.

In my emptiness and fear, I felt that I had no choice but to completely abandon myself to God. What I discovered was that through my weakness, my eyes were opened to the reality that yes, the Communion of Saints really does exist and that the Blessed Mother and Our Lord are literally with us at all times. I had only to ask and then do my part: open my eyes and believe.

I traveled to Fatima because I needed to give thanks to Our Lady and many saints for interceding for me last year. Having been on other pilgrimages, I knew that Our Lord would bless me far more than my gratitude could express. The experience for me was deeply personal and grace-filled.

While en route to Fatima, just after landing in Portugal, we stopped in Santarem at the Church of the Holy Miracle, where there is a Eucharistic miracle dating back to the 13th century. I was struck by the fact that although I came to Fatima to thank Our Lady, she immediately brought our group to her Son. Bishop Caggiano stressed in his homily at the church that we were sitting at all but just talking in the presence of the Blessed Mother.

The room was as it always had been, and the chair that the Blessed Mother sat in during the apparitions was still there. It was deeply moving for all of us, and Bishop Caggiano led the pilgrims in a Rosary in the room. Jacinta stayed at the orphanage for 13 days. At this point of our pilgrimage, little surprised me anymore regarding the interconnectedness of Our Lady and the events that are associated with Fatima.

This reality was an important reminder to me that my life is no different. If I surrender myself to Our Lord through the intercession of the Blessed Mother (daily), I have discovered that there is a web of constant interconnected blessings in which their presence is palpably clear.

It was both sad and joyful to leave Fatima. Sad to be leaving and joyful to know (more firmly than ever) that she is always with me. The bishop was right. I believe we all received a message from Our Lady. As usual, I do not feel worthy of what I was asked but my message was simply this, “Live your faith with divine courage and bring people back to my Son.”

(Damien O’Connor is director of the Office for Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Bridgeport.)
Larry Kudlow Speaks

Free market puts food on the table of the poor

By FATHER COLIN MCKENNA

Applying free-market economic principles globally and locally can reduce poverty and the number of people suffering from food insecurity, said economist and noted TV and radio personality Larry Kudlow at the New Covenant House of Hospitality celebrity breakfast, held recently at the Woodway Country Club.

More than 200 business, political, religious and non-profit leaders gathered at the early-morning event, which raised over $50,000 for the Stamford-based soup kitchen sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

During the event, Catholic Charities also announced plans for the relocation of New Covenant House to an 8,200 square foot facility just around the corner at 174 Richmond Hill Avenue to allow for expansion of services.

Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities, said that “ten years ago we were serving 200,000 meals a year. Now we are serving 700,000 meals a year at New Covenant House.”

Barber said the increase is probably not due to an increase in the number of poor people in the Stamford area, but rather that people in need of food assistance and other services have come to know that they can rely on the help provided by New Covenant House, and they seek it out.

“Those who find themselves blessed with a second chance,” he said. “We are helping to give people a second chance.”

Both Kudlow and Barber made it clear in their respective messages that helping the poor and feeding the hungry is a crucial responsibility for all people of good faith, especially those who find themselves blessed with material resources.

Kudlow pointed out that many of the poor and homeless who come to New Covenant House suffer from mental illness and/or addictions. He related that he, too, is a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, stating that “I got a second chance. I will be 19 years in recovery this July,” which elicited applause from those gathered. “At New Covenant House,” he added, “we are helping to give people a second chance. When we feed the hungry and care for the least among us, we are feeding and caring for Jesus our Lord.”

On a hopeful note, Kudlow pointed out that overall charitable giving in the United States is once again on the increase. After declining in response to the economic crisis and following recession in 2008, charitable giving across the country has now risen to $316 billion annually. With his trademark patriotic zeal, he said, “No other nation on earth comes close to the generosity of America.”

Coming full-circle to his capitalist creed, Kudlow said that “free-market capitalism is the best system we know for reducing poverty in America and globally.” He cited that due to a global shift toward the free-market, abject worldwide poverty has been greatly reduced.

“The middle-classes in developing economies in Asia, Africa and South America have chosen a market-based free-enterprise approach to their economies,” he said. “It is a rising economic tide that can raise all boats, Kudlow said that “while middle-classes around the world have been expanding, those living on $1 dollar a day or less has dropped by 80% over the last thirty years.”

He urged all who can to give generously to New Covenant House. “Being able to help those in need,” he said, “is a great gift.”

Looking around the room near the end of the event, Barber pointed out that if each attendee contributed $500 to the cause, they could together raise $100,000 that morning for New Covenant House. There were donation envelopes on each table, and they began to circulate in response to his invitation.

New Covenant House is the only soup kitchen serving the greater Stamford area. It serves two hot meals a day—lunch and dinner—365 days a year to anyone in need. In the 34 years since it first opened, a growing number of people have arrived each day seeking services that include the soup kitchen, a breakfast-to-go program, a food pantry and an on-site medical clinic.

(“New Covenant House of Hospitality is currently located at 90 Fairfield Avenue in Stamford. Brian Jenkins is executive director. For information, call 203.964.8228, email nch@ccfc-ct.org or visit www.nchstamford.org.”)
Christianity in Action

Turning Wine into Water

By NICHOLAS TROILO

In early spring of 2013, I was the guest of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) at a luncheon hosted by Cardinal Timothy Dolan at New York’s University Club. At that time, he was chair of the CRS Board of Directors. At the luncheon, Cardinal Dolan introduced the newly-appointed president of CRS, Dr. Carolyn Woo. In the days that followed, I met with representatives of CRS to discuss their activity in the area of developing water resources. Making potable water available to the poor has been the major focus of our not-for-profit arm of Nicholas Roberts Fine Wine merchants. The wine/water connection was the inspiration for our non-profit’s name: “Turning Wine Into Water” (TWIW).

TWIW was started some nine years ago and essentially presented us with a proposal to fund a project in Ethiopia at the cost of $130,000. TWIW agreed to sponsor the project and has, to date, raised $130,000 for it. We are actively working to raise the remaining $20,000 by the end of August 2014. The goal of the project is to provide safe water, hygiene education, and adequate sanitation to communities, students, teachers and health post clients in the Dugda, Bora, Jeldu, Kalu and Kelala woredas (districts) in Ethiopia. The project will provide safe water to about 13,500 individuals and basic sanitation to 1,400 school children and 5,000 health post clients. Capacity building and education are key elements of the project.

This January, I traveled to Ethiopia to visit some of the areas where the project was sponsored in progress. Ethiopia is a country of approximately 100 million people. About 50 percent of the population is Muslim; fifty percent is Christian. The majority of the Christian population is Orthodox Christian; about one percent of the Christian population is Roman Catholic; a smaller percentage is Protestant. Ethiopia is, however, a country where there is very little religious strife. Different religious groups work together and although villages tend to be of one or another religious sect (traced to tribal history), villages of different religious orientation within a district cooperate in many ways. Poverty is a common factor that unites.

I think it is important to note that despite the small Roman Catholic population, Catholic Relief Services is the major humanitarian force in Ethiopia. CRS manages many of the relief programs funded by the U.S. government, including all of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) food distribution to the 17 geographically diverse facilities of the Missionaries of Charity.

My trip was focused on seeing both work in progress and work that had been completed with the funds that TWIW provided. I was the guest of Bishop Abrahma Desta while visiting work being done in the Vicariate of Meki in the East Shewa district of Ethiopia. This area in the south western portion of the country is arid land. The people are subsistence farmers with small plots of land, about half an acre, leased from the central government.

This was my first visit to an underdeveloped country. Although I was well briefed about the conditions, I was still shocked at the level of poverty I witnessed. All the people are poor beyond the imagination of our American way of life. Roads are dirt and rock paths. Homes are one-room mud huts with thatched roofs. Travel is on foot. Some have donkeys and crude carts to carry grain. Few people have more than one set of clothes. If children go to school, they have a uniform, a place to wash and a meal. The diet consists of a variety of grains. Goats provide milk. The slaughter of an animal is reserved for an important celebration.

Family is central to this way of life. However, the absence of safe water in the area has a negative effect on the children, mainly girls. The rate of drop-outs of adolescent girls from schools is very high, in part related to inadequate sanitation facilities at the schools.

Access to sufficient quantities of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene, as well as productive uses, is necessary to improve livelihoods. The major planned activities include expanding the existing water supply systems to new communities and the development of new water sources through spring development, hand-dug wells and shallow boreholes.

There is so much work that needs to be done in bringing water to the poorest regions of the world.

(Nicholas Troilo, a member of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stamford, is founder and president of “Turning Wine into Water.” He is director of the Nicholas Roberts Group, including Nicholas Roberts Fine Wine Merchants, Ltd., in Darien.)

Synod from Page 2

General Sessions.
Your participation is important! If you have not decided yet, please make plans to attend one of the listening sessions. Please use the online forms (www.2014synod.org) to express your idea more freely. Remember that the deadline for Form G and LS is June 15, 2014!

I look forward to seeing you at the next listening session!

Listening Session from Page 3

who have left the faith.

A man who described himself as having been a lifeless Catholic in terms of his faith said there was a need to “give more personal witness” and that the Church could learn something from the “12-steps program” in which people share their own stories. “There’s no place to go when you’re on fire in the Catholic Church. We need to know what it means to be alive in Christ,” he said.

One man noted that his seven-year-old daughter looked up at the altar of her church surrounded by men and altar boys and asked, “Where are the girls?” He said that “We need to find a way for women to have more obvious role in parishes.”

Msgr. Zielonka said that the input from all listening sessions and the online forms will be processed by the Synod Commission to place all comments into proper categories, i.e., “liturgy,” “youth” or “administration.” Then study committees will examine these comments and present them to the General Delegates who will discuss them at the synod’s General Sessions (those who cannot attend a listening session but would like to make a comment are invited to go www.2014synod.org/forms. For more information on upcoming listening sessions throughout the diocese, visit the Synod 2014 website at www.synod2014.org.)

PROVIDING CLEAN WATER—Nicholas Troilo checked out this site in Ethiopia where his foundation, Turning Wine into Water Foundation, has helped to bring clean drinking water to Ethiopian villages. “I was shocked at the level of poverty I witnessed,” he says, but he was encouraged by the deep faith and spirit of cooperation he found among people of all faiths.

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WASHINGTON—The National Organization for Marriage, along with other partner organizations, is organizing the second March for Marriage in Washington on June 19 to support upholding the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Last year’s march coincided with the day the Supreme Court began hearing arguments on two cases related to the Defense of Marriage Act and California’s Proposition 8.

Angela Mantero, diocesan director for Marriage and Family, was there. “The witness of God’s plan for marriage was strong at the rally on the National Mall as thousands turned up to voice their protest of the redefinition of marriage,” she said. “Every age, race and religion was represented, and it was powerful to see such different groups and individuals come together for this common cause which is of great concern to our society. The outcome of these cases was disappointing, and so we continue to speak up for traditional marriage.”

Catholics know that marriage is a sacrament through which God blesses the union of a husband and a wife with his grace. It brings man and woman together to bless and sanctify one another, serve each other mutually in love, and become ever more united in love with openness to new life.

We know also that marriage is the natural way to be in a relationship based in the natural law, which fosters commitment, trust, fidelity, and cooperation between the sexes for the good of all humanity.

In his Wednesday audience on April 2, Pope Francis addressed the importance of marriage. “The image of God is a married couple, man and woman, not only man, not only woman, but rather both,” he told the assembled pilgrims. “This is the image of God: love. God’s alliance with us is represented in the alliance between man and woman. Married life is beautiful, and must be protected.”

(The Diocese of Bridgeport is organizing a one-day bus trip to the March for Marriage. For more information and to make a reservation, contact Angela Mantero: amantero@diobpt.org or 203.416.1627.)

WITNESSING TO GOD’S PLAN for marriage, Angela Mantero, diocesan director for Marriage and Family, attended the first March for Marriage in Washington. The diocese is planning a bus trip for this year’s march, which will take place June 19.

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The Shepherds Program provides disadvantaged inner city Connecticut youth with the opportunity to receive a quality college preparatory education at a non-public high school. Shepherds’ unique one-on-one extended Mentor/Student relationship has a proven track record of helping youth reach their full academic and personal potential.

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As a Sponsor, you will pay all or part of the student’s four-year high tuition. As a Mentor, you will share your talents, experience and time to help guide a student “on the brink of success” with encouragement, direction and support through their four-year high school journey. All contributions to Shepherds are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

HOW YOU CAN SHARE IN SHEPHERDS’ SUCCESS
Shepherds works. Sixteen years ago, there were 5 Shepherds students at one school. Today, 270+ young people’s lives have been impacted. 179 students have graduated from high school, 90%+ of whom have enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Shepherds’ legacy: 5 Alumni have returned to their alma maters as Mentors!

Join Shepherds and share a journey that will change not only a stranger’s life, but your own.

CALL 203.367.4273 TODAY!
EDITORIAL
Off to a good start

“I walked away from this first listening session very hopeful. The challenges are many and ever over-whelming, but over the next 18 months we will learn, grow and discern together. We are poised for true spiritual renewal,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano following the first listening session for Synod 2014 held recently at Trinity High School in Stamford.

In trying to explain the synod, some have referred to it as a kind of “mini-Vatican II,” and that may be a helpful way to look at the process. The bishop has opened the doors of the diocese to new thought and direction. He knows this is a crucial time in Bridgeport and in the entire Church. There is so much at stake.

It’s time to welcome back Catholics who have left the Church; to inspire our youth to lifelong worship; to catechize young and old alike who seek to grow in the faith; and to proclaim the “Good News” of the Gospel in a world deeply in need of witness to the dignity and beauty of life.

During this month and next, Catholics will have the opportunity to make their voices heard in other listening sessions throughout the diocese. Last week in Stamford, the first listening sessions was intense and thoughtful. It’s clear that people have many—even differing—ideas about the future of the Church and changes that need to be made. But one thing is certain: those who came out shared a deep love and reverence for the Church. That’s the best place to start.

Latinos and faith

Last week Boston College released a much-anticipated report on the Catholic Church’s ministry to Hispanics in the United States. The report dramatically underlined the fact that ministry to Hispanics is crucial for the present and future of the Church. The study found a significant gap between the percentage of Catholics in the U.S. who are Hispanic (35%) and the number of Hispanic seminarians (16%) and Hispanic priests (6%). At the same time, the Church has seen a huge increase in the number of Hispanic deacons who work in parishes. Currently about 15 percent of active permanent deacons are Hispanic. And 43 percent of the more than 22,500 lay people in church leadership formation programs are Hispanic. Likewise, there has been an increase in the number of Hispanic bishops in our country. Currently, 28 active bishops are Hispanic.

There are many challenges and opportunities ahead across the U.S. and in our own diocese. Under the leadership of Father Gustavo Falla, director of the Ministry for Spanish-Speaking People, we look forward to initiatives to celebrate, expand and recognize the contributions of Latinos in the life of the local Church—particularly as the synod prepares our diocese for the future. Spanish-speaking Catholics have been invited to a special listening session in Spanish on Sunday June 8, at 5 pm at the Catholic Center. Este es el momento. Queremos escucharle!

Give and receive

Joy. Beauty. Blessing. Wondrous things. Those are the words that our new priests and the members of religious congregations profiled in these pages use to describe their vocation. From the outside their choice seems, at best, one of sacrifice, self-denial and hard work. There’s probably some truth in that image. But the voices of people whom God has chosen resonate with energy and zest. This is as true in the conciliar days of the Second Vatican Council, as it is for the presbyters of today.

The three new priests ordained in May will preside at First Holy Communion and adults seeking the strength of the sacrament. The three new priests ordained in May will preside at First Holy Communion and adults seeking the strength of the sacrament. The three new priests ordained in May will preside at First Holy Communion and adults seeking the strength of the sacrament. The three new priests ordained in May will preside at First Holy Communion and adults seeking the strength of the sacrament.

The ‘Medium & the Message’

By FRANK DEROSA

Twitter meant the chirping of birds, Google was the last name of Barney, a comic strip character, and the term Internet was virtually unknown at the time of the Church’s first World Communications Day in 1967. Oh, how media and vocabulary have changed.

Pope Paul VI launched WCD in May of that year, an initiative minimally recognized and even less observed in the almost half-century since the Yes. It is noted in some places, but if you Google it, reports of commemorative events are few.

World Communications Day grew out of Vatican II’s 1963 Decree on the Media of Social Communications, Inter Mirifica, one of the first of 16 documents that came out of the historic conclave. Media appear to have had the Council Fathers’ attention almost right away.

The decree called for a day each year for the Church to focus on the responsible use of communications. Pope Paul chose the Sunday before Pentecost to celebrate it, June 1 this year.

In the conciliar days of the 1960s, media generally meant the traditional forms: press, film, television and radio. The decree urged that they function “for the good of society, whose fate depends more and more on their proper use.” Pope Paul described them as “noble” services to be used responsibly and with respect for the dignity of others.

If written today, Inter Mirifica would have a more expansive cast, from the Internet to digital media to social networks—emails and blogs, ebooks and video games, Facebook and Twitter, and on into cyberspace. But it would continue to recognize the potential of new and interactive media to connect people for the common good.

In his WCD statement this year, Pope Francis stated that the Internet is “a gift of God” when users understand its “immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity.” He said good communication “helps us grow closer, to know one another better and ultimately to grow in unity.”

The Pope’s worthy and hopeful message is too often honored in the breach. When we travel daily along the digital highway, we sometimes see the Internet and social media galloping into the wild, wild West, with too few sheriffs on patrol providing checks and balances on how people ought to use them.

For young people, the new media platforms can create healthy connections. They are drawn to them with great curiosity. Bishop Frank Caggiano spoke clearly when he said they “are formed” by it and the Church needs to “baptize” the venues.

Parental guidance and oversight are critical to guiding them to use communications vehicles like Facebook and Twitter, and on into interactive media. For many dioceses, like ours, provide a real service.

Whispers in the Wild, Wild West, with too few sheriffs on patrol providing checks and balances on how people ought to use them. Parental guidance and oversight are critical to guiding them to use communications vehicles like Facebook and Twitter, and on into interactive media. For many dioceses, like ours, provide a real service.

Websites and blogs, now part of our media landscape, were unknown terms and entities in 1967. Today, Catholic contributions into these fields are easy-to-find portals into what the Church teaches and what people in the Church world are saying and doing. Many dioceses, like Bridgeport, and a growing number of parishes have developed attractive websites that let you in on life in their faith communities.

Two Catholic bloggers, among others, provide a real service. Early-30-something Rocco Palmo, a faith-filled and wired-in Vaticanologist from Philadelphia, produces the respected and sometimes intriguing “Whispers in the Wild, Wild West.” He provides thoughtful commentary and timely texts.

Brooklyn Deacon Greg Kandra searches the global media world for informative, inspirng and entertaining religious content for his “The Deacon’s Bench.” A bonus is reading the weekly homilies he prepares for his parish.

Reading Catholic blogs is not yet high on the list for weekly Mass-goers, however. Only 13 percent do so, according to a recent survey done by Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. That number ought to grow. Data on the ages of people who read them would likely find that those who do so include many who remember Philco radios, rotary phones and Dumont televisions.

With its 48th incarnation this year, World Communications Day reminds us that in an age of hashtags, “likes” and tweets, all media—the traditional and the new—can enhance relationships and promote the common good when we use them in a responsible way. Comment welcomed. No password needed.
Editorial

You do what?

Catholic by Grace
By Denise Bossert

Denise Bossert is a national Catholic writer and columnist.

Crowning. It’s time to pray the Rosary and present the Blessed Mother with flowers and a crown, she said. Try explaining that to your Protestant family and friends. You do what?

We pray the Rosary... You’ve already lost them, and you haven’t even gotten to the part about the crown.] If you mention May and the Blessed Mother, you have to mention May Crowning. If you mention May Crowning, you have to explain how Mary is the Queen of Heaven & Earth. If you mention that Mary is the Queen of Heaven & Earth, you have to talk about the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, the Ark of the Covenant, the New Eve and why that’s all scriptural. You’ll have to crack open the Bible and look at the Book of Revelation and the “women clothed with the sun” and explain how Mary was prefigured by Hannah, Ruth, Queen Esther, and Judith. And if you make it to Judith, you are going to have to explain why Judith is not in their Protestant Bibles—but they don’t know what they are missing because Judith is the most amazing widow in Salvation History. And if you find yourself back to the Bible, you are going to have to talk about the Rosary again and how those prayers come right out of the Bible because Jesus prayed the Our Father, and the Hail Mary is a combination of the words of Archangel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth.

And if you manage to explain why Catholics pray memorized prayers, you will have to explain that we pray in many different ways and it all comes together in the Mass and the Mass fits into the Liturgical Calendar and the Liturgical Calendar takes us from Advent to Christmas to Ordinary Time, to Lent to Easter to Pentecost, and then to...

May. To the Blessed Mother. And... if you mention the month of May and the Blessed Mother, you’d better put on another pot of coffee because you are about to cover the same ground all over again.

Our faith is organic. It all fits together. It cannot be reduced to one sound bite. It lives and breathes and has a complexity and beauty that is as mysterious and glorious as the Body of Christ.

And the month of May is connected to that living, breathing intricacy.

Let’s face it. The best way to experience Mary’s month is to become a little child. Don’t try to figure it all out at once like someone cramming for a final exam.

Just go cut some flowers and lay them at her feet. Pick up your Rosary and pray the Glorious Mysteries. Or simply plan to learn the Hail Mary if you have never tried to do that.

For you see, it all comes down to this: Sometimes, the best way to find Christ is to let yourself find Mary. Embrace the simple elegance of it and the organic complexity will fall into place.

Mothers, We See You

A Dad’s View
By Matthew Hennessey

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

We see you in the morning, getting breakfast on the table and making everyone’s lunches. There is so much to do, and so little time. You are great under pressure. We see you juggling twenty things at once. Where did you learn to do that? We can’t remember what we had for dinner last night, but you’ve got everyone’s schedules committed to memory. You are impressive. We are impressed.

We see you in the evening, always the last to sit down. Where does the day go? It goes where yesterday went, and where tomorrow will go, too—into the past, into memory, into the future. We see you making a future for our family.

We see you helping the children learn to read. You have such patience. You don’t get frustrated like we do. The kids are learning, but so are we. You are a great teacher.

We see you helping them say their prayers. These are the words. This is what they mean. Hold your hands like this. Say a prayer for Grandma. Say a prayer for Pop Pop. Talk to God. Ask for his help. He wants to hear from you.

We see you giving us faith. Amen.

We see you worrying. Yeah, we see that. You pace. You can’t sleep. You check, double check, triple check. You bite your nails. It’s okay. We know why you worry.

We see you getting tired. You’re not Wonder Woman, after all. You have an exhausting job. It would be weird if it didn’t tire you out. We see you as a human being.

We see you comparing yourself to your own mother. You don’t need to do that. She made her share of mistakes (even she will say so). You are doing just fine. We need you to understand that.

We see you making sure we get to Mass on Sunday. The kids are thinking about cartoons. We are thinking about football. You are thinking about getting us to heaven. We know we’re lucky to have you.

We see you through the children’s eyes. You say you are too quick to anger with them, but they worship you. They crave and require you. They tell us all the time how beautiful you are, how funny, how thoughtful, how comforting. You are everything to them.

We see we are second fiddle, and we don’t care. We get it.

We see you helping us put our best feet forward. We know on some level that grown men shouldn’t wear sweat pants in public, but we are lazy. You are the last line of defense. What would we do without you? We see you getting old. Is it okay to say so? We don’t mean it in a bad way. We are getting old, too. That’s what we signed up for, isn’t it? We want to grow old with you. Think of how many laughs we are going to have together when things slow down. We are looking forward to that.

We see that we are not the same. You have your ways. We have our ways. When one of us falls, the other is there to pick up the slack. We are complementary. That is important. That is as it should be. We see the value in it.

We see you the way God sees you—a life-giver, a builder, a healer, a sustainer, a partner, a leader, a friend. We adore and glorify you. We sing your praises and shower you with hosannas.

You deserve every bit of it.

We see what you can’t see about yourself. You are kind.


“You are forgiving. You pluck splinters. You know about eagles. You dig Harry Potter. You can explain the Luminous Mysteries and the infield fly rule.”
St. Emery Church gains historic designation

FAIRFIELD—The Church of St. Emery, part of Holy Family Parish in Fairfield, has attained the distinctive honor of being officially registered as an Historic Place by the State of Connecticut. St. Emery Parish was founded in 1932 to serve Hungarian Catholics in the Fairfield area.

The designation was made by the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council of the Department of Economic and Cultural Development, consisting of distinguished architects and historians appointed by the Governor of Connecticut.

Qualifications were based on the church’s Romanesque Revival architectural form, with a classic bell tower and an exterior enhanced by facade mosaics, arched corbel table decor, a rose window and belt-course decorative brick motif.

The designation committee recognized the church’s interior, with its arched cannon-dome architecture, intricate wall gold leaf decor, prominent sanctuary frescoes, nave paintings of religious figures, century-old stained glass windows, imported European sculptures, marble altars, handcrafted bronze wall plaques and rare tapestries.

Most importantly, they recognized the place of St. Emery’s in the history of the American-Hungarian Catholic community in Connecticut. The historic designation is a tribute and honor to all the parishioners and the Franciscan clergy who founded and faithfully supported this cherished parish for over 80 years.

Honoring that history, although the recognition was received six months ago, St. Emery’s waited to combine the celebration with that of two priests closely involved with the Hungarian Catholic community in Fairfield County: Father Steven Balint and Father John Long.

A luncheon held at St. Emery’s honored Father Balint’s retirement and celebrated Father Long’s 45th anniversary in the priesthood.

Of Hungarian background but born in Bridgeport, Father Balint attended the parochial school of the former St. Stephen Hungarian Parish from kindergarten through eighth grade. After graduating from Fairfield Prep and St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, he completed his theological studies at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary in Albany, N.Y. He was ordained by Bishop Walter W. Curtis on May 22, 1965.

Following assignments at St. Joseph Parish in Danbury and St. Ambrose Parish in Bridgeport, Father Balint was named resident priest at St. Ladislaus Parish in South Norwalk for 40 years, starting in 1971. While at St. Ladislaus, he celebrated Mass in Hungarian each Sunday. He was then appointed priest in residence at St. Ann Parish in Bridgeport, and has been in charge of the St. Emery’s Hungarian Ministry since 2010. He has been a coordinator of Catholic Boy Scouts CT Yankee Council since 1971.

Although retired, he continues the Hungarian Ministry at St. Emery’s.

Father Long was born in Brockton, Mass., and attended St. Casimir Lithuanian School and St. Anthony High School in Kennebunkport, Maine. Father Long went to Rome to attend the Lithuanian Seminary and the Lateran University in Rome, and was ordained on December 21, 1968, by Pope Paul VI at the Lateran Basilica in Rome.

He later returned to Rome for a degree in canon law.

He moved to the Diocese of Bridgeport in 1966, serving at St. Ambrose Parish while chaplain at Bridgeport Hospital and Bridgeport Health Care, and at Holy Cross Slovenian Parish in Fairfield and St. Ann and Holy Rosary parishes in Bridgeport. He became resident priest at St. Emery’s in 2011, where he is dedicated to supporting the religious needs of the parishioners and parish.

The Cathedral Parish celebrates the renovation of the Alma Schenk Hiendlmayr Memorial Organ at the Cathedral Church of St. Augustine, Bridgeport

with a Dedicatory Recital
given by
Dr. Jeremy Filsell
Director of Music, Church of the Epiphany
Artist-in-Residence, Washington National Cathedral
Professor of Organ, Catholic University of America

Come and celebrate with us!
The Dedicatory Recital is open to the general public and admission is free.
Friday, June 13, 2014—8:00 pm

The Cathedral Church of St. Augustine • 399 Washington Avenue • Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

Reviews
Choir & Organ

‘Jeremy Filsell’s performance was of a world-class standard...’

This could so easily have been an opportunity for Filsell merely to strut the audience with his virtuosity; it is further to his credit that above the huge mental and physical demands a live performance of this work provides, his understanding of the music, and his success in communicating it with integrity and sensitivity, shone through.’

The American Organist

‘Flawless playing of virtuoso works; performances of which the composer would be proud.’

Classic CD

‘Filsell... technically extremely accomplished nonetheless does not attract attention for his virtuosity but for his ability to make the music unfold with irresistible logic and clarity; music-making of the highest calibre.’
When you make a gift to the 2014 Annual Bishop’s Appeal, you are touching the lives of thousands of people across Fairfield County. Your gift supports a variety of programs and ministries in the Diocese of Bridgeport.
CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Catholic Charities provides over 30 social service programs to assist individuals and families of all backgrounds and faiths. The agency offers multiple housing, community support, and outreach programs to help the disabled, the medically fragile, the formerly homeless and the working poor to overcome financial and personal hardship and remain independent.

In 2013 Catholic Charities:
- Served 1.5 million meals to the vulnerable and needy through four major nutrition programs: Morning Glory Breakfast in Danbury, Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport, New Covenant House of Hospitality in Stamford, and Senior Nutrition Program in the Stamford region.
- Provided 15,000 counseling sessions through the Behavioral Health Program, which offers a full range of outpatient mental health services to individuals and families throughout Fairfield County.
- Arranged significant on-going support to the residents of Newtown after the December 14th tragedy.
- With the support of Catholic Charities USA and the State of Connecticut, initiated outreach for those still suffering from the effects of Superstorm Sandy.

PARISH LIFE AND MINISTRIES

Pastoral Services serves as the foundation for spreading the faith in the Diocese of Bridgeport.
- 38,000 children receive religious education.
- Adult education is available through the St. Cyril of Jerusalem Program and S.H.A.R.E, Sacred Heart Adult Religious Education.
- Ministry for People with Disabilities provides sacramental preparation, activities support for families and individuals with special needs.
- Ongoing Marriage Preparation and Jubilee Mass celebration.
- Respect Life Ministry coordinates the Annual March for Life pilgrimage; Mass for Life; Project Rachel Ministry and the 40 Days of Life Campaign.
- Youth Ministry offers countless opportunities through which our youth grow in their faith.

CARE OF RETIRED PRIESTS

After a lifetime of service, sacrifice and devotion as the spiritual leaders of our parish communities, our priests must be cared for in retirement. Funds from the Annual Bishop’s Appeal support 56 retired priests, including 18 in residence at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy Residence in Stamford.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Appeal supports the ministry of administrators and teachers in 30 diocesan elementary and five diocesan high schools and St. Catherine’s Academy for children with special needs.
- More than 50% of diocesan elementary schools received the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Award. This year St. Jude School received the honor.
- Diocesan schools have a rigorous standards–based curriculum designed by teachers and administrators across the diocese. Curriculum development infuses Gospel values and exceeds state and national academic standards.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) courses are integrated throughout the curriculum.
CATHOLIC ACADEMIES

The Catholic Academies of Bridgeport are faith-filled learning communities comprised of three elementary schools: St. Andrew Academy, Cathedral Academy and St. Ann Academy.

- Students in the Academies follow the diocesan curriculum and assessments are above grade level in literacy and math.
- 65% of families receive tuition assistance.
- 100% of students graduate from high school, attend college and engage in rewarding careers.

PRIESTLY FORMATION AND PERMANENT DIACONATE

2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford, where more than 80 men began their spiritual journey and were ordained priests in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

- 20 seminarians are presently in formation and discerning their vocations.
- Four men will be ordained to the priesthood this year.
- 12 men are in formation for the Permanent Diaconate program.
- 92 active deacons assist pastors at the altar and in hospital and nursing home ministry.

CLERGY MINISTRIES

Clergy Ministries provides spiritual and professional development and coordinates special ministries, for Priests, Deacons and Religious men and women including:

- Ongoing study and recollection days.
- Advanced education for the newly-ordained priests.
- Coordination of Haitian, Hispanic and African-American ministries.
- Priests and Sisters assigned to special ministries.
- Religious Sisters who provide pastoral care at St. Joseph, St. Camillus and Pope John Paul Nursing Homes.

ALLOCATION OF THE $11.5 MILLION GOAL:

YOUR GIFT AT WORK

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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.


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 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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT!

YOU May MAKE YOUR GIFT ONLINE AT: 2014ABA.COM

OR CALL 203.416.1470
MATCHING GIFTS PROGRAM – A GREATER IMPACT ON GIVING

Parishioners may double or even triple their donation to the Annual Bishop’s Appeal through their employers matching gift program and credit their parish. Some companies may even match gifts by retirees and/or spouses of deceased employees.

Matching Gifts to the Annual Bishop’s Appeal

Please inquire about a matching gift at your company because it may double your donation and be credited toward the parish goal! While some companies may not donate to religious organizations, some have changed policies over time and may support Catholic Charities or the Catholic Academies of Bridgeport. Matching gift forms can be obtained from the Human Resources Department or Benefits Coordinator of your company. Please fill in the employee’s portion and submit the form or appropriate paperwork with your pledge card or when your pledge is completed.

Step 1: Check with the Human Resources Department, Benefits Coordinator or Payroll Department of your company and inquire if they offer a Matching Gift.

Step 2: Review donation guidelines and/or a list of eligible charities supported.

Step 3: Decide how much you want to donate. Important, some companies will not donate to religious organizations but may donate to Catholic Charities of Fairfield County or Catholic Schools. If your company qualifies, please make your gift payments payable to Catholic Charities or the Catholic Academies of Bridgeport and remit the payments to the Appeal Office. If you need more information, please contact us at 203.416-1312 or aba@diobpt.org.

Step 4: Fill out the employee section on the appropriate form and submit with the pledge card or at the completion of your last payment to ensure that the match is donated.

If you have any questions about this process, please call the Development Office at 203.416.1312 or email us at aba@diobpt.org.

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Follett Matching Gift Program
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Fremont Group
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Gannett Foundation
Gartec, Inc.
General Electric Foundation (GE)
General Reinsurance Matching Gift Program (Gen Re)
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Givaudan
Glasso Smith Kline Foundation
GLOBAL Reinsurance Corporation of America
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Goodrich Foundation
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Guidoestinos Matching Gifts Program
Hartford Financial Services Group
Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection
Harvey Hubbell, Inc.
Hewlett Associates LLC
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Liz Claiborne
Kraft Foods Foundation
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Lowe’s Foundation
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MasterCard Matching Gift Program
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MBIA Foundation, Inc.
McGraw Hill
MeadWestvaco Foundation
Matching Gifts to Education
Merk
Meredith Corporation Foundation
Merrill Lynch Matching Gifts Program
Merz
Midwest Foundation Matching Gift Program
Microsoft Giving Campaign
Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Moores Foundation Matching Gift Program
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Northrop Grumman Linton Foundation
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O'Nebbia America Reinsurance Corporation
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Pension Service, Inc.
Phhp Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Pharmacia Reinsurance Matching Gifts
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Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts Program
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Founding a Seminary
First Rector recalls...

By MSGR. STEPHEN DiGIOVANNI

On the snowy Wednesday of Dec. 14, 1988, Bishop Edward M. Egan was installed as the third Bishop of Bridgeport. I traveled home from Boston to attend the installation ceremonies.

Earlier that year, Bishop Curtis had given me permission to work for five years in Boston at the recently established Cambridge Center for the Study of Faith and Culture. The new Bishop of Bridgeport had other ideas, and phoned me soon after his installation, asking if I would be willing to return home.

What do you say to your bishop, to whom you promised obedience, other than “yes!” After putting down the phone, I mentally kicked myself for not asking him why he wanted me to come home. A few days later, he told me: to begin a seminary house of studies.

At that time, Bridgeport was still a relatively young diocese, only 35 years old. Young men from Fairfield County who were interested in the priesthood, as I was in 1969, were usually enrolled in a local formation program, living in the former Holy Ghost seminary known as Ferndale in Norwalk while studying at Sacred Heart University. Others, like me, were sent to St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, Conn., for the first two years of college studies. To complete college, I was then sent to St. Mary’s Seminary College in Catonsville, Md.

Following college seminary studies, seminarians were assigned to a four-year major seminary in the United States or in Rome to complete their theological graduate studies and prepare spiritually for ordination to the priesthood. Bishop Egan believed—rightly—that having the seminary house of studies within the diocese would encourage more men from Fairfield County to become priests.

For the kitchen and dining room, and reworking of a rudimentary chapel, and we had a seminary. Despite the poor quality of the building, the five years on Daniels Farm Road were great ones.

The rule for the seminary residence was taken from two similar institutions opened at that time: the St. John Neumann Residence in the Archdiocese of New York, and the Maison Notre Dame in the Archdiocese of Paris. A ticklish question was the patronage and name of Bridgeport’s version. I thought our patron should be a diocesan priest who loved the Church and the priesthood. A seminary classmate, Msgr. Edward Petty of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, came up with the perfect patron: St. John Fisher, the 16th century Bishop of Rochester, England, who pre-

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 29
Bishop’s Appeal Nurture Vocations

After 25 years, Saint John Fisher is home

By FATHER COLIN McKENNA

On July 6, 1994, I traveled up the Merritt Parkway toward Trumbull, holding tightly onto the steering wheel. With each approaching exit, I kept telling myself that this was all just a bad idea and that I should turn around and go home.

Perhaps guided by the Holy Spirit, my car made its way to the St. John Fisher Seminary Residence. I pulled into the parking lot and turned off the engine. Seminarian (now Father) Peter Lynch helped me with my bags and led me into Fisher, a former convent that had been converted into the Diocese of Bridgeport’s first pre-seminary residence, as it was called at first.

In September of that year we moved into the current Fisher House on Newfield Avenue in Stamford. It, too, was a former convent, and during my academic year there, I witnessed its transformation into a bustling, functioning house of formation and center for higher learning. When the main chapel was renovated, a 24-hour adoration chapel was also built. It remains accessible to visitors around the clock.

The move to the “new” Fisher Seminary in Stamford was made possible by grants from the Annual Bishop’s Appeal, and its ongoing success is dependent upon the continued generosity of those who donate to the ABA.

After 20 years in Stamford, the Fisher building has become a bit weathered on the outside and in need of upgrades to its physical structure. Spiritually, however, it is as strong as ever and continues its vital mission of forming men for the priesthood here in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

This June, St. John Fisher celebrates its 25th anniversary.

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Fisher House again for dinner with Father Robert Kinnally, Father Sam Kachuba and the resident seminarians. Father Kinnally is the rector of Fisher and director of seminarian formation for the diocese. Father Kachuba is Bridgeport’s vocation director, as well as spiritual director at Stamford’s Trinity Catholic High School. As evidenced by their dual titles, they are both extremely busy men!

Despite the time constraints they experience daily, both Father Kinnally and Father Kachuba are committed to being present to all of the men under their guidance in formation for the priesthood and any who may express an interest in discerning a vocation. One such seminarian is Chris Ford, 24, who is originally from Naugatuck. He had already earned a master’s degree in education when he entered Fisher last fall, but his program of priestly formation requires that he spend two years of academic and spiritual formation at Fisher and then another four years at a major seminary. Thankfully, the cost of his housing and tuition is covered by scholarship grants from the ABA.

“Although I grew up in the Hartford Archdiocese,” Ford said, “I chose to study at Fisher House for Bridgeport because the formation program here is so clearly defined. As difficult as it can be to aspire to the priesthood, Fisher House makes it as easy as possible to focus on one’s prayer life and studies without worrying about a lot of externals.”

During dinner, “Father Sam” and “Father Bob,” as the seminarians call them, carried on a pleasant back and forth conversation with those in formation. As in any organized group, together pursuing a clearly stated mission, there’s some good-natured ribbing and give and take. “As rector, I am trying to show the guys that priesthood should be a joyful experience,” Father Kinnally said.

Presently, there are eight seminarians living at Fisher House, taking college courses accredited by Sacred Heart University and/or Fordham University. The house can hold as many as 18;

ST. JOHN FISHER RESIDENCE—In one of the early photos of the new seminary, Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, (center) first rector of St. John Fisher Residence on Daniels Farm Road in Trumbull, when it first opened its doors. Seminarians pitched in with painting, cleaning and yard work in addition to their studies as they discerned their vocations. Father Colin McKenna (l) in 1994.
By FATHER SAM KACHUBA

Who is responsible for vocations to the priesthood? Over the past few years that I have served as a member of the vocation team, and now as director of vocations for the Diocese of Bridgeport, this question frequently crosses my mind. The temptation is to believe that I alone bear the responsibility for finding, cultivating and fostering vocations (and not only vocations to the priesthood, but any and all vocations!). If I am honest, though, I recognize right away that it is a task of too great a magnitude for me to bear alone.

And so who is responsible? I am. And so are you. Every one of us shares in the duty of cultivating vocations, especially to the priesthood and religious life. The Code of Canon Law (233 § 1) states, “It is the duty of the whole Christian community to foster vocations so that the needs of the sacred ministry are sufficiently met in the entire Church. In particular, this duty binds Christian families, educators, and, in a special way, priests, especially parish priests. Diocesan bishops, who must show the greatest concern to promote vocations, are to instruct the people entrusted to them on the importance of the sacred ministry and the need for ministers in the Church. They are to encourage and support initiatives to promote vocations, especially movements established for this purpose.”

In his homily at the canonization of Pope St. John XXIII and Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Francis used two key phrases to describe each of these great pontiffs. Of the saintly John Paul II, the Holy Father stated that he was the “Pope of the family.” And of Good Pope John, his successor called him the “Pope of docility to the Holy Spirit.”

Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are born in our families, our homes, our parishes. Pope St. John Paul II understood this fact. Raised in a devout home in Poland, it was the faith of his parents that first inspired him. As priest and bishop, he sought out families and encouraged their faith. In his Petrine ministry, St. John Paul II would write at length about the various vocations (see Familiaris Consortio, Mulierris Digestatem, Pastores Dabo Vobis, and Vita Consacrata, to name a few). In family life, John Paul saw the Domestic Church, the first place where children learned the beauty and joy of the Catholic faith, and the building block of a more Christian society.

Pope St. John XXIII, perhaps best known for convening the Second Vatican Council, is the Pope of docility to the Holy Spirit. His vision for Vatican II was to invite the power of the Holy Spirit, in a new way, to come upon the Church and so bring about renewal. He hoped that the Church would be enabled to stand in the modern world as a beacon of the Gospel and a vibrant sign of the presence of Jesus Christ. It is within the Church that each individual Christian is formed in openness to the Holy Spirit. And the life of the Catholic Church universal is mirrored and lived out on a smaller scale in every Christian home, the domestic church.

How can we form our families to be docile to the Holy Spirit and thus promote, foster, and cultivate the gift of vocations? First, pray. I encourage you to pray daily for an outpouring of grace on our diocese, that the Holy Spirit will raise up many more good, holy priests and religious to serve. Second, raise your voice. If you see someone—a young man who serves at the Mass you attend, or a young woman who is active in your parish—ask them if they have ever considered a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Let God speak through you to plant the seed of vocation in their hearts. Third, respond. Have you ever wondered if God is calling you to dedicate your life to him in a profound way through the sacrament of Holy Orders, or through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience? Say yes.

As we, together, share in the responsibility for vocations, let us turn to God confidently, asking him to give us in the Diocese of Bridgeport, more good, holy, faithful priests and religious to serve us for years to come.

The following prayer is recited daily by the seminarians at St. John Fisher Seminary. Please consider saying it as a family:

Father,
In your plan for our salvation
You provide shepherds for your people.
Fill your Church with the spirit of courage and charity.
Raise up worthy priests for your altars,
And ardent, but gentle servants of the Gospel.
We ask this, through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Vocations

Celebration honors consecrated life

By PAT HENNESSY

“Religious life is a special call,” says Father James Vattakunnel, VC, parochial vicar at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton. “If we are prepared to answer that call, God will take care of the rest. That’s the heart of it.”

Father James, as he is popularly called, is a Vincentian priest, serving in this diocese with the approval of his religious order, which is based in India. His community is dedicated to assisting priests and building up the life of the Church wherever they are called.

“There are nine men’s communities, 31 of women, and one society of Apostolic Life in the Diocese of Bridgeport,” notes Sister Nancy Strillacci, ASCJ, the delegate for Religious for the diocese. Religious priests, Sisters, and Brothers provide compassionate care in hospitals and nursing homes, visit the elderly, teach in Catholic schools and religious education and run after-school programs, offer hospitality, work with youth and assist in a variety of ministries at parishes.

A diocesan Celebration of Consecrated Life to be held on May 21 at St. Luke Parish in Westport, will honor their contributions to the life of faith in Fairfield County and recognize the jubilees of women and men religious who have spent their lives in answer to God’s call.

Father James is observing his 25th jubilee this year. He was born and raised in Kerala, India, and ordained to the Vincentian Congregation there. “I was an altar boy in the sixth grade, and from that time on I prayed every day for my vocation,” he recalls.

The Vincentian Community is a missionary order, and he was first sent to a mission in the north of India. A huge country, India has 18 official languages. He had to adjust not only to a new language but to new food, clothes—unfamiliar ways of doing everything. “Part of our formation program is to learn different languages and customs,” he says.

His next posting was to Tanzania, Africa. “The two of us who were sent there were the only Vincentian priests on the entire continent,” he recalls. In his ten years there, he and his brother priests worked with 15 mission centers, building churches and building up a Catholic community. Africa now has 36 Vincentian priests.

It’s quite a leap from building community in a poor rural area of Africa and building up a sense of community in largely affluent Wilton. Yet for Father James, the calling remains the same.

“I visit hospitals and nursing homes. I’m involved with the school and religious education and I enjoy saying the Life Teen Mass on Sunday evenings. We have a men’s ministry, a prayer group, Bible study, Knights of Columbus. We’re encouraging people to get together, to pray together, to share the development of our faith,” he says.

Joy and Faith

God’s call to religious life comes in a surprising mix of circumstances. “When I was little, I’d see the Sisters in their habits walking and praying the Rosary,” says Sister Maria Mater Providencia, SSVM, a member of the Institute of the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Mata ré.

The Sisters’ joy and faith touched her heart, but teenage years and their promise of fun pushed that thought aside. It was rudely brought back to her one day when she was rummaging in a closet. “A book fell out at me—St. Theresa’s ‘Story of a Soul.’ God was hitting me on the head, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus,” she says. She pauses and laughs.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano cordially invites you to attend
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Vocations

Brother Priests

By REV. CANON ALBERT WATTS

We are told “tempus fugit,” that is, “time flies,” and indeed there are times when we all reach a point in life when we stop and say, “Where did time go?” But for my brother, Msgr. Roger Watts, and myself, it is like yesterday that Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan (later Cardinal) laid hands on us during ordination 55 years ago as we lay side by side on the sanctuary floor while our parents in the front pew watched and listened as the choir prayed the Litany of Saints.

There are some families that are blessed with God having called two brothers to the priesthood. But it seems we were especially blessed because we were called and ordained as priests together on the very same day, June 5, 1959, at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport.

Since Bishop Shehan ordained us, we have served our diocese together for some 110 years combined.

This is not the first time brothers were together called by the Lord to follow him. We are told, “And passing along, Jesus saw Peter and his brother Andrew… and Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me… I will make you fishers of men.’ And immediately they followed him” (Mark 1:16-17).

“…And going on a little farther, he saw James and John his brother… and immediately he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with his hired men, and they followed him” (Mark 1:20).

It is remarkable to note that of the twelve Jesus called to follow him, four were brothers. There is no doubt his choice was deliberate because we hear that after he called them, “He immediately left and entered the house of Peter and Andrew, with James and John.” Though both Msgr. Roger and I have retired, we have continued in priestly ministry, working in various ways because we feel that one does not ever really retire from working in Christ’s vineyard of salvation.

We continue because we believe. If we let Jesus bless and break the little we can give after 55 years as priests, and if we think we have something to give, we will never cease to give. Even at our age, we know God will bless whatever we give, and we believe we will then have even more left over to give, even to the next generation of priests to come.

The message we give here to the next generation is that from the first moment of our ordination we have opened ourselves totally to him who was saying, “Follow me.” And we have never lost anything by following. Do not be afraid of what Christ asks; he takes nothing away and he gives everything because the reality is that when we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return.

(Editor’s Note: Natives of Fall River, Mass., Msgr. Roger Watts and Canon Albert Watts served in a variety of posts in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Msgr. Watts is known to many for his work in Catholic Charities and his service as pastor of St. Cecilia Parish in Stamford from 1984 until his retirement in 1999. Canon Watts served as pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Bridgeport and as Defender of the Bond in the Diocesan Tribunal.)

2014 Jubilarians of the Diocese of Bridgeport

Priests

65 Years (1949)
Father Aloysius J. Hribsek

60 Years (1954)
Monsignor Joseph D. Potter

55 Years (1959)
Monsignor Nicholas V. Grieo
Father Albert W. Watts
Monsignor Roger J. Watts

50 Years (1964)
Father Grazioso Artuso
Monsignor Matthew Bernelli
Father Carducci S. D’Amico
Father David Riley
Monsignor John B. Sabia

25 Years (1989)
Father Russell A. Augustine
Father Joseph Cervero
Father Remigius Nwabichie
Father James Vattakunnel, V.C.

Deacons

25 Years (1989)
Deacon John F. Esterheld
Deacon Harold J. Lynch

10 Years (2004)
Deacon Joseph P. DeBiase
Deacon William A. Koniers
Deacon John M. Linsenmeyer
Deacon Robert E. Morris
Deacon Robert A. Salvestrini

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SHU senior Men’s Golf champion

By JOE RYAN

Sacred Heart University’s Peter Ballo capped off his college career with three straight wins as he shot a six-under 66 on May 4 in the final round of the 2014 Northeast Conference Men’s Golf Championship at LGFA International Champions Course, winning individual medalist honors in a playoff against first round leader Ryan Tombs of Bryant.

Ballo has been on an unbelievable roll since the beginning of April. The Stamford native won the Rhody Invitational during the first weekend of the month for his first collegiate win ever. He followed that victory by grabbing the D-I New England International Champions Course, Sacred Heart’s Peter Ballo caps his college career with month-long heroics and a great finish at New England Championships.

His father, Mike, Sr., was a professional golfer and mother, Paige, was an All-American in college. He had followed in his brother Mike’s footsteps with the Trinity’s Crusaders in high school and then to St. John’s. All three were sounding boards while he made his decision.

Rob LaRosa of Sterling Farms Golf Club stepped in to offer his help. He worked with Ballo at the Sterling Farms facilities to keep his skills sharp. “I worked out every day at Sterling Farms with Rob LaRosa and he kind of took me under his wing,” said Ballo. “I was very lucky to have all the support I had.”

Ballo returned to the collegiate circuit with Sacred Heart and has called it the best decision of his life. He had a solid junior campaign and came into his senior year looking to make major strides. In the fall, his play was solid if not yet spectacular. He was scoring well enough, but just outside the top group. The long winter which followed did not help, but he never lost his confidence.

“Fall was okay, I played well. I finished in the top-25 in all the events in the fall, so it was a good solid fall for me,” said Ballo. “I just started slow coming out of the winter. It was a little bit of a struggle but I knew it was going to come around because of all the work I had put in.”

The pay-off came in Rhode Island as Ballo felt the first sensations of his golf game starting to thaw from the long winter at the Rhody Invitational during the first weekend in April. His victory in Rhode Island was the first individual event of his college career. The experience at the Rhody Invitational laid the groundwork for his success in Uncasville a week later.

The New England Men’s Championships took place on April 12-13 with Ballo shooting a nine-under par 135 to win by a stroke. He had a blistering round of 65 on Saturday to go into the clubhouse with a four-stroke lead, and he would need all of that cushion to hold off the charge of Hartford’s Evan Russell. Ballo’s score of 70 on Sunday was enough to hold off the late charge of Russell. The Pioneers team came in third in the ten-team event.

“Rhode Island sort of kick started everything,” said Ballo. “With all the hard work I had put in, I knew I was on the verge of something. It just felt good and everything was going right for me for the first round the next week, it was my lowest first round ever in college. I hit 18 greens which I had only done a handful of times in my life so it really set up the second day.”

The senior called it the best golf of his college career, and he was named the Northeast Conference Men’s Golfer of the Week for the second week in a row.

“Sacred Heart has been a great experience,” said Ballo. “I couldn’t ask for a better school and a better group of kids.”

Now it is back to work. Ballo graduates this spring and intends to compete on the amateur circuit this summer in hopes of qualifying for the Connecticut Golf Association and Metro Golf Association teams in the fall.

“Consecrated Life from page 24

Sister Maria Mater Providencia

"But maybe not as dramatic.”

She was at the university by then, studying to become a lawyer. “By that point, it was a sacrifice for me to avoid thinking about religious life.” After a year and a half at the university she gave in to God’s call and discovered the beauty of community life, a beauty she had first sensed as a child.

Sisters of her community in Bridgeport work with the University of Bridgeport and help in the apostolate for the Spanish-speaking community at St. George Parish. “It’s harder now than when I was a student,” she says. “When we’re with them, they usually don’t want to talk about faith. So we walk the campus and pray, and go to the soccer games, and invite them to stop into the chapel to pray.”

Students seem to feel most at ease with the no-commitment offer to drop into the chapel when they feel stressed. “For them it’s easier to pray in secret,” says Sister Providencia, noting that open discussion of faith is uncomfortable for many young people. Her 15 years of religious life have taken her to a number of different postings. Whether she is stationed in California or Brooklyn, N.Y., watching a game with students at the university or teaching Confirmation class at St. George, those activities are not the center of her calling.

“I’m the spouse of Christ,” she says. “I’m called to be a good religious, a true spouse of Christ, and a good mother to all the souls who are entrusted to me. They are the children God has given me.”

In recognition of their life of devotion, Pope Francis has dedicated 2015 as the “Year of Consecrated Life.” Opening liturgies will be held in November of this year. “We will be planning special initiatives in this diocese to celebrate the distinct charisms of religious communities, all with rich traditions of spirituality and service,” says Sister Nancy.

Father James, looking back on 25 as a Vincentian, captures the essence of his service in just a couple of simple phrases. “Whatever comes, God is always at the center. That’s the beauty of religious life.”
Softball teams get off to fast starts

By JOE RYAN

The Kolbe and Notre Dame of Fairfield girls’ softball teams have already had plenty of reasons to celebrate with the seasons they have put together. Both programs got off to fast starts, which put them right in the mix in the SWC conference.

Notre Dame’s Lancers came into this season with low expectations after two less than stellar campaigns and a very young squad, but they have put together an impressive 9-4 record under new coach Ron Barber. Meanwhile, the Kolbe’s Cougars have continued on their upward assent towards the top of the conference with a 7-3 mark, including an 8-3 win over Notre Dame on May 3.

So it could be the start of a budding rivalry between the two schools.

The game had originally been scheduled for April 30, but rain forced postponement. That set up a scenario where both had to show up a scenario where both had to show up with another run in the third frame. Simone Hopwood led off with a triple and scampered home on a ground out for a 3-0 edge.

The Lancers cut that lead to 3-1 on a run-scoring single by Maddie Letizia but the Cougars struck back for three runs in the bottom of the fifth inning. Infield singles by Kanny Rivera and Alyssa Collazo set the table before Trentini plated Rivera with a base hit. Collazo and Trentini would also score before the end of the inning for a 6-1 advantage.

The Lancers inched closer in the sixth inning as Becky Stefanatos provided the key hit on a long double for two runs but Kolbe added two more runs in the bottom of the frame to put the game out of reach at 8-3.

The result may have been a disappointment, but the outlook from Barber was positive. The junior优势, they have already exceeded expectations but still have room to improve.

“We had had two very bad seasons but we knew we had a good group of sophomores and freshmen coming in,” said Barber. “Kolbe is still ahead of us. We may have qualified for the tournament, we may get double-digit wins but we’re not quite there yet. We’re still a work in progress. They’re a young group. They work hard. They always show up for practice and they are always here on time.”

Notre Dame has put together a nice core with Stefanatos anchoring the infield at third base. The junior brings a powerful bat and good defense in her arsenal and Barber believes that she has the talent to make All-State. Emily Scofield is the shortstop, and the sophomore transfer has teamed with Stefanatos to provide a solid left side of the infield for the Lancers. Letizia is a freshman who has become the ace in the circle and provides and solid bat in the lineup. Center-fielder MacKenzie Dobbs has been the leader in the outfield.

Stefanatos thinks the influx of talent has helped everybody on the team play better. She said that players may have been trying too hard before, but now they trust each other. If they make an error or an out it is not the end of the world.

“We have a team that can support each other,” said Stefanatos. “That’s helped a lot with my game, too.”

Kolbe is a little bit ahead of Notre Dame in terms of development. Their coach, Dave Hennessey, said the team is a veteran unit which has made the tournament before. That means the bar has been raised and his expectation of what they can accomplish has as well.

Seniors Richel Soto, Lehayla Cruz and Grajeda provide a lot of leadership, and young talent like sophomore Rivera at shortstop has been big contributors. Trentini gives the team a solid start to place from as their pitcher. “She is very solid. She has already been pitching for a long time,” said Hennessey. “She’s an honor student and a great athlete.”

The “Original” Italian Feast of St. Anthony

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DJ Brian: Saturday Night, 11

I Luguri: Sunday Night, 6-10

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FISHER IS HOME FROM PAGE 22

several applicants are scheduled to enter this coming fall. In total, there are over 20 men in priestly formation for Bridgeport who are studying either at Fisher House or other major seminaries on the East Coast or in Rome.

After 25 years in operation, more than 92 men ordained for the Diocese of Bridgeport have already exceeded expectations but still have room to improve. That means the bar has been raised and his expectation of what they can accomplish has as well.

Seniors Richel Soto, Lehayla Cruz and Grajeda provide a lot of leadership, and young talent like sophomore Rivera at shortstop has been big contributors. Trentini gives the team a solid start to place from as their pitcher. “She is very solid. She has already been pitching for a long time,” said Hennessey. “She’s an honor student and a great athlete.”
Fairfield University

A contest with Jesuit values

Last year, Fairfield University’s Dolan School of Business launched a major university-wide competition—the Student Business Plan Competition.

Undergraduates were asked to come up with ideas for non-profit businesses or “social enterprises,” where the bottom line and market share are not the primary concerns. This speaks to the business school’s value of the Catholic, Jesuit mission and the importance of teaching liberal arts in the classroom—especially ethics, service and civic-mindedness (or as Dean Donald Gibson calls it, “a liberal education”).

This year’s competition, which has two separate tracks, has just come to a close. Its social track consisted of new organizations that attempt to resolve a pressing social problem that markets have failed to resolve. The venture track consisted of new business ideas with a commercial focus.

The finalists included an industrious and imaginative mix of undergraduate students from Fairfield University’s Dolan School of Business, the School of Engineering and College of Arts & Sciences who pooled their knowledge and skill-sets to develop viable business plans.

The winners of the social track were the students behind “BoneSmart,” a wearable, wireless, non-invasive medical device to measure bone mineral density loss and blood flow. It can be equally beneficial to the many men and women who suffer chronically from osteoporosis, which can lead to brittle and easily fractured bones; those needing to monitor bone healing; and people suffering from Celiac disease.

It can also be a helpful device for astronauts living for extended periods in a weightless condition, a situation that causes bone density loss.

Team members were Robert Garrone of Islip, Long Island, an electrical engineering major; Ralph Belfiore, a Dolan School student; Bernardo Navarro of Bethel, an accounting and economics double major; Stephanie Sutherby of Ipswich, Mass., an engineering major; and Michael Raymond, of Amityville, L.I., also an engineering major.

Second place in the social track was the team behind “UXchange”—a business plan for a website where college students can donate no longer needed textbooks and other school items to students who can’t afford them. Team members are Guadalupe Ramirez of Bridgeport, an information systems major in the Dolan School of Business; Rheem Al Barazi of Morocco, who is studying international business; and John Bica of Shelton.

“The social enterprise track seeks plans that address social problems that the capital markets have failed to resolve,” said Dean Gibson. “This quest—to discover sustainable ways to address pressing problems—exemplifies the Dolan School’s emphasis on business students who benefit from their liberal arts background—a background that expands their thinking beyond the bottom line to consider how to make the world a better place.”

In the venture track for commercial enterprises, the first place winner was “VentureOut,” an app to enable young professionals to gain access to microcosms of platonic, social meet-ups so that they can cultivate new friendships and network in new cities. Second place was “Valet,” a multi-faceted tool to benefit golfers and manage golf courses accessible from any web-enabled device.

The competition has introduced “a whole new style of learning,” in Dean Gibson’s words, to students interested in entrepreneurship, and complements the Dolan School of Business’ popular Entrepreneurship Program offerings. That program has also led to the FAME, a business incubator program that was launched last year with the Town of Fairfield and Kleban Properties.

Faculty from the Dolan School, the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Engineering served as advisors to student teams as did business professionals and alumni. The competition was made possible by generous donations from Mary Lincoln Campbell MA ’72; Joseph Bronson ’70; Hugh Davis ’95; and Chris Stephens, Jr., a member of the Dolan School’s Advisory Council.

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Youth

Raise a ruckus for the Lord

By JULIE ROGERS

“I expect a ruckus!” When I heard these words of the Holy Father Pope Francis, I felt a surge of emotion and excitement well up within me. Pope Francis continued to ask us all: “Will there be a ruckus here in Rio? There will be! I want a ruckus in the diocese!”

Instantly I realized I was not alone as a roar of applause surged from the three million young people on Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana beach. A ruckus is what our own Holy Father expects as a consequence of World Youth Day 2013.

Many times during World Youth Day, I asked the Lord Jesus what part he wanted me to play in our own Diocese of Bridgeport. As always, he responds to my questions, but rarely in the way I expect or imagine. Following the months after World Youth Day, the Lord showed me that the way he wanted me to participate was to take on the job as director of the youth for the diocese.

What exactly did the Holy Father mean by “ruckus” you may ask? He continued, “I want you to make yourselves heard in your dioceses, I want the noise to go out, I want the Church to go out onto the streets, I want us to resist everything worldly, everything static, everything comfortable, everything to do with clericalism, everything that might make us closed in on ourselves!”

Our community, the Marian Community of Reconciliation was founded by a group of young people who really did want to make a “ruckus” of things. In other words, it is in our founding spirit: this deep desire to change the world, to go out and reach the lost and the searching, to go beyond what is comfortable in order that all people may know Christ. It was this spirit which attracted me to give my life to God as a consecrated laywoman. It is this same spirit which I recognize in the youth in our own diocese who have had a real encounter with Jesus Christ.

In his providence, God has prepared me in many ways for my new mission: through my leadership at Convivio, helping with the High School Apostles program, and participating in many events around the diocese. I have seen young people who are willing to stand up for their faith even amidst persecution in their schools and universities. I have seen young people who are willing to step outside of their comfort zones and become apostles to their peers, young people who are willing to open their heart and stand in front of hundreds of kids to share their own story of conversion despite their fears. I’ve seen young people who take the risk to say “yes” to a call to discern the priesthood and consecrated life and others who are willing to commit to a lifelong marriage blessed by God.

I also know that there are many young people who are searching for an answer and have yet to have had an adequate response to the many challenges and obstacles they face in their everyday life. For those of us who are baptized and have found an answer in the Lord Jesus, this is our challenge. I recognize that the Lord has entrusted me a mission to serve the youth of our diocese and all those apostles who work with them.

I am particularly excited about the hundreds of young people who will participate in the youth sessions and the 30 appointed youth delegates to the 2014 Synod. Young people are touched by the way that our own bishop is not afraid to listen to what they actually think and what they have to say. I believe in these young people and I believe this synod will be a chance to make a real “ruckus!”

FERET OR REMEMBERS FROM PAGE 21

Ferred martyrdom rather than deny Christ and the Successor of St. Peter when King Henry VIII broke from Rome and began his own government religion, the Anglican Church.

On June 22, 1989, the Feast of St. John Fisher, Bishop Egan formally established the St. John Fisher Seminary Residence.

The students were to study philosophy and theology at Sacred Heart University. The Fisher Residence would provide them with a structured life of daily Mass and prayer, common meals, and household chores in Latin and Greek, some philosophy courses, and Patristic Theology. The students paid no tuition or charges for room and board. All they were required to do was to enter into the program seriously, live by the rule, and study and pray about their possible vocation to the priesthood.

The next step was to find students, both college undergraduates and graduate students, who would enter into the program of prayer, study and disciplined life to determine if God was calling them to the priesthood. I began advertising in parish bulletins, and put an article in the Fairfield County Catholic and in the Bridgeport Post. To my amazement, young men responded, though many people were uncertain at first that there were enough vocations!

The first student accepted was Richard Murphy—now Father Richard Murphy, pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Stratford—then a member of St. Mary Parish, Stamford. By the time we opened in late August, we had eight men accepted; not everyone accepted those boys? Turn on that heat!

At first I was livid that they were uncertain at first that there were enough vocations!

But after a little while, I simply had to laugh and appreciate their initiative: priests should be obedient to their superiors, but question the dumb decisions those superiors might make on occasion.

After 25 years, the St. John Fisher Seminary Residence is a success. Bishop Egan knew what he was doing, and I am grateful that he appointed me to help found Fisher. They were some of the happiest of my 37 years as a priest. Please pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life in our diocese. Pray that God sends us more men who love Our Lord and his Catholic Church, willing to emulate St. John Fisher in the holiness of his life, the quality of his scholarship, and devotion to the Successor of St. Peter.

(Mgr. Digiavanni is pastor of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stamford.)
Finding compassion—easier said than done

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

Back when my wife and I were going through parent boot camp, we faced some monumental challenges. Our first daughter drove us absolutely crazy—so crazy we wondered whether we were just plain nuts, or maybe nuts and bolts. Our second daughter went through a phase in the annals of child psychology. We love her just the same. I wish I could say we grew as parents from the experience and were more patient, but that was not how it worked out. Naturally, we believed her because she raised three kids, and all that experience had to count for something. Right? Uh, not right.

Looking back over the years, I calculate this particular daughter went through many different phases, and each was more challenging than the previous one. From infancy to toddlerhood to puberty to adolescence, to whatever came after that, and well into adulthood, there was a new and exciting phase every few years, and sometimes every few months. She’s still going through a “phase,” perhaps the longest phase in the annals of child psychology. We love her just the same. I wish I could say we grew as parents from the experience and were more patient, but that would be lying.

Even though Mom’s skills as an armchair psychologist left a lot to be desired, her outlook led me to a new understanding of life. You see, she always thought the best of people—even annoying people. She was tolerant of their shortcomings and idiosyncracies. She never tore down and always tried to build up. She understood the importance of that amazing virtue called “compassion.”

Humorist Erma Bombeck once said, “It is not until you become a mother that your judgment slowly turns to compassion and understanding.”

That’s one of the most profoundly Christian statements I’ve ever heard. Not being a mother, I had to learn the hard way that being compassionate is far more Christ-like than being judgmental. Compassion is central to Christ’s message even though it is often rare among so-called religious people.

It certainly was rare in my life. As a rebellious teenager, I had a barometer in my brain that measured hypocrisy in adults. To my thinking, they talked the talk but didn’t walk the walk, and whenever I went to Sunday Mass with my mother, I would take everybody’s inventory ... except my own.

“My do they even bother to go to church?” I’d grumble. “They’re all hypocrites, they’re phonies.” Her response was always the same: “They go to church because...”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33
Synod 2014

‘Building Bridges to the Future Together’

By DR. JOAN KELLY

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65), a solemn and official assembly of all the bishops of the world, was convoked by Pope St. John XXIII (1958-1963) and charged with renewing the spirit of Catholicism in order to more effectively address the challenges of modern society. Pope St. John XXIII referred to the Council as a “new Pentecost.”

One of the Council’s crowning achievements was the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, promulgated on November 21, 1964. Chapter Four of the Constitution titled “The Laity” assumes great significance as we approach the Council’s 50th anniversary. It was a direct response to the Synod of Trent (1545-63), which will be convened on five delegates to the synod itself, clergy.

The Diocese of Bridgeport includes three stages: the preparatory stage; the Diocesan Synod (Synod 2014) itself; and the implementation stage; the Diocesan Synod (Synod 2014) itself; and the implementation stage. The present Code of Canon Law is convened by a bishop when he deems it necessary (Canon #461). The delegates to a diocesan synod have consultative status. The bishop alone is the legislator.

Let us join in prayer that our diocesan synod will bear much fruit as we journey forward “Building Bridges to the Future Together.”

(Rev. Dr. Joan Kelly, a graduate of the School of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., is on the faculty at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell and teaches at St. John Fisher Seminary in St. John Fisher Seminary in Stanford. She is engaged with the theological formation of the diocesan candidates for the permanent diaconate and is an adjutant professor at Sacred Heart University.)

Adult Formation

Dr. Joan Kelly will offer a course called “Synods and Councils in Ancient and Modern Times” at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield during July.

It will be held every Tuesday and Thursday morning (10 am-12 noon) beginning Tuesday, July 8, and ending on Thursday, July 31.

To register, contact Gina Donnarummo, diocesan director of adult education: gdonnarummo@diobpt.org or 203.416.1446.

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May 2014
Guest Column

Faith calls for climate responsibility

GUEST COLUMNIST
BY EDIE CASSIDY

Edie Cassidy, former diocesan director of Social Concerns, is group leader of the Fairfield County chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby.

A month or so ago our Fairfield County Chapter of the Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL), which is an advocacy group asking policy makers to heed the trend toward global warming, was deliberating the faith community’s role in addressing climate change. At the same time a similar discussion was taking place at a Catholic conference in the Midwest.

One of the CCL members there picked up the phone and called the Vatican. She asked to speak with Pope Francis. The Pope was out at the time, so she found herself speaking with the head of one of the pontifical commissions. She explained CCL’s purpose, which is “to create a political will for a sustainable climate.”

The commission head thought that Pope Francis might be interested, since it aligned with the design of the May workshop he had organized: “Sustainable Humanity, Sustainable Nature: Our Responsibility,” co-sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

During the phone call, the Vatican speaker asked that the caller write a brief summary of CCL’s mission and the legislation we had proposed to reduce carbon emissions. He then asked that the summary be translated into Spanish and sent to the Pope. He could not say if she would or would not receive a phone call. (Imagine answering your cell phone in the local mall and…)

Attendance at the workshop was by invitation only; no more than 86 invitations were issued. We were thrilled when the Vatican issued an invitation to Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s legislative director, Dr. Danny Richter, to attend as an observer.

Although recent popes have voiced their concern about the degradation of the environment, Pope Francis has gone a step farther by drawing attention to this grave situation early in his papacy. He is not alone. Overwhelmingly, climate scientists agree that the climate is warming and attribute it to human influence, and many of the world’s religions feel it is time for people of faith to become involved.

A recent report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has awakened a lot of people to the immediacy of the climate change issue. The IPCC report is personal bad news for the 271 million of us living in coastal areas, including coastal Fairfield County. It is bad news for our oceans, whose increased acidification is a “fundamental challenge to marine organisms and ecosystems” and our food supply.

The report also warns of “extreme weather events leading to breakdown of critical services such as electricity, waste supply and health and emergency services” and the “breakdown of food systems, linked to warming.” Not a pretty picture.

While that can sound extreme, all of us remember the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Social services are back in place, but hundreds of families are still homeless. While economic, health and agricultural planning will mitigate some of the effects of global warming, the more tragic and catastrophic effects can only be ameliorated by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Even companies who are in the fossil fuel business recognize this issue.

Change is possible; it can be done. But change, like charity, begins at home. It requires us to take the initiative and direct our congressional and state legislative officials to take aggressive leadership on this problem. I quote one political sage, “If the political will of the people is asleep at the wheel, then the political will of the government is likely to be asleep at the wheel.”

This is a matter of social responsibility, not politics. Scientists and economists on both ends of the political spectrum support a free-market approach.

On the table is a market-based approach to the reduction of greenhouse gases: the Carbon Fee and Dividend Act. This proposal would charge fossil fuel producers a fee for using the atmosphere for discharging their waste products.

This makes sense. Households—meaning us and our families—have always paid for removal of pollutants such as garbage pickup, sewage disposal and recycling whether through taxes or direct fees. It is time for other producers of waste products to do the same.

On the dividend side, the proposal would have the fee collected by the government returned to all Americans in the form of an annual or bi-annual refund based on the number in the household.

This legislation is of interest to decision makers of various political leanings and it is important for us, as citizens, to educate our legislators. Focusing our Congressional members’ attention on this legislation is one meaningful way we can approach the challenge of climate change.

Pope Francis, in a statement to the Diplomatic Corps this January, phrased the climate imperative sharply. “What is crucial is responsibility on the part of all in pursuing, in a spirit of fraternity, policies respectful of this earth which is our common home. I recall a popular saying: ‘God always forgives, we sometimes forgive, but when nature—creation—is mistreated, she never forgives!’”

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Song of winter fled and summer soon to be

Hail, bounteous May! You inspire mirth, and youth, and warm desire! We welcome you, and wish you long. (Milton, Song: On May Morning)

Violets bloom and dogwoods whiten. The air pulses with the morning song of robins and orioles. Who in our ice-bound January could have believed this time of apple blossoms and lilacs, this time of new leaf. Who in our ice-locked January could believe in the sounds of bird cries in serene, honey-sweet, misty May dawns? But it is here. We ask ourselves, is this the same land that only a few months ago lay in sheets of snow and ice and swept by bitter winds?

The stern reality of our winter’s long siege is over. Now the long, lovely light of May falls on the streets lately so deep in snow. The first act of Die Walküre, an opera by Richard Wagner, has the line, “Thou are the spring for which I sighed in winter’s cold embrace.” These are probably the best hours, the best days, the best time of all our lives. (Interior Castle, Fifth Mansion, ch.28).

In his style, Jesuit philosopher and author Teilhard de Chardin observed that “roughly half the things in life are things we undergo, or which overtake us without warning.” Life is marked with the sign of the Cross. I’ve heard it said that Catholics worship sorrow. That’s not true. But there is Catholicism’s recognition that life is essentially tragic and you cannot live in time without living with sorrow as well. Everywhere the Cross. What accompanies this is the insight that we only really learn from our sufferings. There are essentials we would never have known if we hadn’t gone through the sufferings.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor, theologian, and anti-Nazi martyr wrote, “Pain is the holy angel who shows us treasures that would otherwise remain forever hidden.” In Hinduism the god of tears, Rodra, is at the same time the god of loving joy and prosperity.

The coming of May after a hard winter reminds us of that line in the Book of Job: “you shall forget your misery, or recall it like waters that have ebbed away” (11:16). I love the legend about the lady “Much-Afraid.” When Much-Afraid begins her journey to the High Places she is given two silent companions who will be with her until the end. Their names are Sorrow and Suffering, and Much-Afraid recalls from them. She complains bitterly. But as time passes she grows to love them, and by the end of the journey she realizes that no one but they could have accompanied her to the High Places.

So we sing our song of winter fled and summer soon to be. All that is good and beautiful has come again to us with the sunlight and warmth, savoure we still love and can see no more.
ADULT GROUP (ages 18-39, single or married) is forming at St. Margaret’s, Brookfield, on Fri., May 30 at 7 pm in church hall. Bring friends, open to all! Refreshments served. For more info, call Maria: 203.798.6923 or mhvasmullen@gmail.com.

WINE TASTING will be held at Holy Cross Parish, Fairfield, on Fri., May 30, from 7-10 pm. Appetizers, desserts and 20+ varieties of wine. Bring friends for a great night out! Tickets: $25, only sold in advance. For more info or tickets, call 203.372.4595.

ENCORE CONCERT PERFORMANCE of Immaculate High School’s Les Misérables will take place at The Palace Theatre in Waterbury on Sat., May 31, at 7 pm. Tickets may be purchased at The Palace Theatre: 203.346.2000 or www.palacetheaterct.org. Tickets: $25. The concert performance comes thanks to funding from an anonymous donor.

VINES & VIGNETTES, a garden fantasy tour, will be held Thurs.-Sat., June 28-30, at the Chimneys Mansion in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. Landscape architects, nurseries and garden antique dealers will create over 20 vignettes. Spend a day getting inspired, or listening to gardening experts while enjoying lunch and refreshments. The event will raise funds for St. Ann Academy, Christian Heritage School, and the Black Rock Food Pantry. For more info, visit www.vinesandvignettes.com.

“A NIGHT OF WHITE” for Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish will be held Fri., June 6, from 7:30-11:30 pm at the Stamford Yacht Club, 97 Ocean Drive West, Stamford. Cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, dancing and an auction. For more info, call: 203.348.1155.

NOCTURNAL ADORATION before the Blessed Sacrament is held the first Fri. of every month (June 6) at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish from 8 pm-12 midnight, beginning with Benediction. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available after Benediction during the 8 pm hour. For more info, call the parish: 203.324.2910.

ST. ANTHONY FEAST will be held at St. Margaret Shrine, Bridgeport, the weekend of June 6-8. Fri., June 6, from 6-11 pm; Sat., June 7, from 2-11 pm; and Sun., June 8, from 1-10 pm. Outdoor Mass at 10 am on Sun. will be celebrated by Bishop Caggiano, followed by procession in honor of St. Anthony. For more info, call 203.333.9627 or email saintmargaretsshrine@gmail.com.

SHAKESPEARE & ENGLISH TEA fundraiser will take place at St. Margaret Bourgeys Parish, Brookfield, on Sat., June 7, at 11 am. Cost: $16 Adults; $12 Seniors; $10 Children ages 6-12; Children under 5 admission free. $50 maximum per family. Tickets sold in advance only. For more info or tickets, call 203.521.2390 or email ShakespeareTeaParty@gmail.com.

CLAMBAKE AND AUCTION sponsored by the Home School Association

HONORING ALL VETS, a Memorial Day Mass and ceremony will be hosted by the Knights of Columbus Cabrini Assembly #136 on Sun., May 25, at 11:30 am at St. Andrew Parish, Bridgeport. There will be military color corps and the K of C Honor Guard. State and local dignitaries will attend, along with Vietnam veterans who will be honored with a special presentation. A solemn ceremony on the church’s green will follow the Mass, with a dedication to the veterans. A coffee social follows the event. All are invited to celebrate our veterans past and present. For more info, call the parish: 203.374.6171.
May 2014

Bits & Pieces

at St. Joseph School, Brookfield, will be held at the school on Sat., June 7, starting at 6 pm. For those who do not like seafood, steak and chicken options are available. Cost: $49. For more information, call the school: 203.775.2774. To purchase tickets, go to www.sjbrookfield.org.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE will be sponsored by the Knights of Columbus #107 at St. Margaret Shrine, Bridgeport, on Sun., June 8, with a 10 am Mass with celebrant Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. Couples will be invited to renew their marriage vows during Mass. For more info or to place an ad or photo in the program book, call 203.367.6754 or 203.345.3244.

WINE AND FOOD TASTING FESTIVAL will take place Sun., June 8, from 6-8 pm at St. Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury. All wine and food samples come from local restaurants or stores. Cost: $20 prepaid; $25 at the door. For more info or for tickets, call Diana: 203.792.6750.

WOMEN’S GROUP at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will hold their end of year meeting on Mon., June 9, at 12 noon at Testo’s Ristorante, Bridgeport. For more info, call Pat: 203.261.8020.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets the second Sat. of the month (June 14) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 10 am after the 9 am Pro-Life Mass. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or stmarygols@aol.com.

DOWN SYNDROME Prayer/Support Group meets the second Sat. of the month (June 14) after the 9 am Pro-Life Mass at Saint Mary’s parish center in Norwalk. All are welcome. For more info, call Andee: 302.388.7996.

HOLY SPIRIT FRATERNITY, Secular Franciscan Order will meet at St. Emery Church on Sat., June 14, at 9:30 am. Fr. Norman Guilbert will celebrate Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Afterwards, a social and meeting will be held in the parish hall. All are welcome. For more info, call 203.255.8801.

FAMILY RETREATS will be held at St. Edmund’s Retreat Center, Enders Island, Mystic, CT. Dates: (Sun.-Fri.) weeks of June 29-July 4 or August 3-8. For more info, contact Deacon John & Peggy Scarfi: 845.621.7000, jscarfi@verizon.net or www.endersisland.com.

50TH REUNION for Notre Dame Catholic High School Class of 1964 will hold a Reunion Gala on Sat., June 21, at Vazzy’s Four Season, Stratford. Fri. night and Sun. activities are also planned. For more info or to purchase tickets, email ndhs1964@gmail.com, or go to www.notredame.org and click on “Alumnae & Friends.”

WOMEN SUFFERING from a past abortion are invited to a Day of Prayer and Healing on Sat., June 28, from 9 am-5 pm at the Seton Neumann Center in Danbury. Begin your healing journey and experience God’s mercy. For more info and confidential registration, contact Maureen at Project Rachel: 203.416.1619 or email projectrachel@diobpt.org.

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

SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE to the Holy Land and Italy will take place July 14-25, 2014, with Fr. Marcel Saint-Jean. Walk in the footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles in Israel, then travel to Rome and join pilgrims from all over the world to attend the Beatification of Pope John Paul II. For more info or to make a reservation, contact Fr. Marcel: 203.434.7208 (cell) or ucsmarcel@aol.com.

PILGRIMAGE TO IRELAND by St. James Parish, Stratford, will take place Sept. 10-19, 2014. Daily liturgies, prayer services as well as visits to the sacred sites and landmarks of this beautiful country. For complete itinerary and pricing call 203.375.5887, ext. 102 or email brendgate@stjamesparish.org.

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Program Director: Linda Werner, MD

topics include

• “Why Do I Have To See An Ophthalmologist?”
  Reuven Rudich, MD, Ophthalmologist Vitreo-Retinal Specialist

• “Diabetes: Understanding the Numbers”
  Nancy Dennert, MS, MSN, FNP-BC, CDE, BC/ADM

• “New Management Oportunities in Type 2 Diabetes” Sandi-Jo Galati, MD

• “Healthier Eating One Step at a Time” – Food Labels Get a Facelift
  Karen Novak, RD, MA, CDE,
  Outpatient Nutrition Educator, St. Vincent’s Medical Center

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For more information, please visit stvincents.org/DiabetesEvent