

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

FEBRUARY 2015 | VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2 | LENT ISSUE

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# SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2015 • 11:00 A.M.

CELEBRATION OF **SYNOD 2014**,  
AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA IN THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT.  
JOIN 9,000 FAITHFUL THROUGHOUT THE DIOCESE  
FOR MASS, MUSIC AND THANKSGIVING.



A DAY OF PRAISE, MUSIC AND WORSHIP



A VISION FORWARD: RESULTS OF SYNOD 2014



BISHOP CAGGIANO TO LEAD PROCESSION FROM  
ST. AUGUSTINE CATHEDRAL TO THE ARENA AT 8:30 A.M.



THE WEBSTER BANK ARENA AS HARBOR YARD, BRIDGEPORT  
For more information visit the Synod 2014 website

[www.2014synod.org](http://www.2014synod.org)

## ON THE COVER

**SYNOD AT HALFWAY POINT**—  
Carlene Deminary was among the delegates  
and observers at the Third General Session  
of Synod 2014 on February 7 at St. Catherine  
of Siena Parish Center in Trumbull. They  
spent a day of discussion, prayer and discern-  
ment before voting on the five global  
challenges of Synod 2014.

**ABOVE THE MAST**—Delegates confer  
during a group discussion of the issues.  
Almost 350 men and women are part  
of the effort for renewal and change  
in the diocese. Photos by Amy Mortensen

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## Local News

## Synod pivots toward solutions

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Nearly 350 delegates to Synod 2014 turned to solutions at the Third General Session on February 7 when they voted to approve the final pastoral and temporal challenges in the ongoing renewal of the Catholic Church in Fairfield County. The delegates met in the Family Center of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

The adoption of the five global challenges followed months of study by synod delegates, consultative meetings held throughout the diocese and listening sessions with the laity that began last spring. In all, the diocese received nearly 4000 comments, ideas and suggestions to help the Church make changes and plan for the future.

Describing the discernment as “divine chaos,” Bishop Caggiano thanked delegates for their humility and willingness to compromise as they reached consensus on the major challenges facing the Church.

“The process was a bit messy, but when we approach things in a way that is too neat, clean and organized, we cut out the divine

chaos which is the power of grace,” he said.

The bishop asked the delegates to think of the final challenges as the prism by which they can see the many themes of the synod.

“It is an idea of where we should begin, but we’re not leaving anything behind,” he said.

While challenges on Catholic Social Teaching, Stewardship, and Building Faith Communities did not make the final cut, the Bishop assured delegates who worked on the issues that they would be incorporated into the five challenges.

Using a digital voting system, the delegates approved the following global challenges for action:

Every Catholic is called to “fully conscious, and active participation” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium 14*) in the worship life of the Church. (Liturgy and Worship)

There is a need to strengthen and support family life and empower and assist parents to be the primary teachers of the Catholic Faith. (Family Life)

We must create concrete plans for evangelization in, with and through our parishes, schools, ecclesial



AT ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH in Trumbull, delegates voted to adopt five pastoral and temporal challenges to be addressed by the synod going forward.

movements, and communities. (Evangelization)

There is a need to continually call, form, and support clergy, religious, and laity in active leadership roles in the life of the Church. (Leadership)

We must renew the ministry of faith formation throughout our diocese, leading each person to a deepening relationship with the Lord Jesus in and through his Church. (Catechesis and Education)

The bishop empowered delegates to now begin researching solutions and best practices to address the many problems such as reaching out to alienated Catholic, inspiring youth, and becoming more welcoming communities of faith.

During the afternoon session, Michael Gecan, national co-director of the Industrial Areas Foundation/CONNECT (Connecticut Affiliate), said

the Church would benefit from using “organizing principles” as it seeks renewal. Noting there is an inherent tension between “bureaucratic and relational” models of institutions, he urged the Church to experiment and take risks in order to revitalize its outreach to people.

“There has to be some disorganizing if you’re going to effectively reorganize,” he said. “We’re all for re-organizing, but disorganizing can be painful, because institutions tend to do things the same way, whether they work or not.”

He said one reason that parishes end up with a few leaders doing all the work is because, “We do things anyway, even if people don’t want to do it. We don’t listen.”

Gecan said vibrant organizations are characterized by strong relationships, a learning environment, and the ability to act effectively on commonly held values.

Mary Ellen O’Driscoll, regional director of the Ignatian Volunteer Corp, said Catholics are called to “act on the common good and to see God’s presence in the midst of

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## New governance model for Cathedral Academies

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has introduced a new governance model for Bridgeport Catholic schools that will lead to greater participation and involvement of the laity in the mission and planning for the four schools.

On January 29, the bishop spoke with teachers, board members and parents in three separate meetings held at St. Raphael Parish to explain the new plan, which is “all about further strengthening the schools and helping them continue to grow in the future.”

The bishop said that Catholic schools are first and foremost a ministry to form children in the faith within a framework that encourages academic excellence.

“Education is the pathway to success in life,” the bishop told teachers and parents as he announced plans for the new governing board, “and we want



SISTER MARY GRACE WALSH, superintendent of schools, consults with parents at a January 29 meeting with the bishop to discuss a new governance model for Bridgeport Catholic schools.

to share the gift of Catholic education with as many children as we can.”

Each Bridgeport Catholic school presently has a school advisory board to advise indi-

vidual principals. In this new model, a single board of directors will oversee all three Bridgeport Catholic schools. The board will provide professional expertise in governance, strategic planning,

marketing, facilities, and financial needs enabling principals to focus on their role as educators and spiritual leaders in their respective schools.

“This is good news. The measures we are taking will help us to spread an excellence in education to many more students,” said the bishop. The board will plan for the long-term growth and vitality of schools, which are expected to increase enrollment. Currently, the enrollment in all four campuses totals 950 students and represents one of the most diverse student bodies in Fairfield County.

Under the new plan all four campuses will legally become one school, sharing the same board of directors and a large number of committees to support its major initiatives. However, this change will not alter the everyday experience of the children who attend the academies.

Bishop Caggiano said that while the board will have much greater responsibility, the schools will remain under diocesan auspices. He and Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, PhD, superintendent of schools, and Msgr. William Scheyd, vicar general, will serve as a three person “Member Board” whose function will be to oversee the board of directors.

When introducing the plan to more than 50 faculty members and administrators, Bishop Caggiano said that transition to the board of directors model will be largely seamless in terms of present operations and leadership. However, he expects the board will bring great expertise to the schools and increase resources in the long term.

The new board of directors will consist of some of those who presently serve on the individual

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

# Annual Catholic Appeal

## Appeal Education Awareness Weekend

BRIDGEPORT—The Annual Catholic Appeal 2015 will begin throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport the weekend of February 21-22. Formerly called the Annual Bishop's Appeal, it has been renamed the Annual Catholic Appeal to emphasize more clearly its vision.

The opening weekend of the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) has been designated as Education Weekend. In this new initiative, designed to help parishioners understand the ministries and services supported by the appeal, pastors will speak about it to parishioners at all Masses and introduce a ministry representative speaker or parish appeal co-chair, or show the 2015 Appeal video.

The appeal theme, "Building Communities of Faith," calls parishioners to look beyond their own parish. It calls them to become sharers in the life and mission of the Church, to come together as a family of faith to support the diocesan-sponsored ministries and services that no



single parish could provide.

"It is their gift to the appeal in response to God's love that will provide the diocese with the financial means to fund a broad range of essential ministries, programs, and agencies that deliver pastoral care and human service where it is most needed," says appeal director Pam Rittman.

Pastors will emphasize the need for 100 percent participation and the critical importance of every gift to the ministry and mission of the diocese.

Contributions to the appeal assist the Church in Fairfield County in many different ways, training new priests, educating young people, serving the needs of the homeless and poor, comforting the infirm and counseling families in crisis.

Parishioners will receive their Annual Catholic Appeal mailing several days afterward.

"Most Catholics in Fairfield County have been especially blessed by God: in health, with family, and very often with

resources. While everyone's financial situation is different, even families who find a donation to the appeal to be a sacrifice can participate with a gift payable over several months," says Rittman.

She urges parishioners to keep in mind that while their local parish is their spiritual home, "We are all part of a much larger Church. If we act together as

members of one family united in Christ, we can do great things."

As a follow-up, the ACA has designated the weekends of March 14-15 or 21-22, depending on the individual parish, as Commitment Weekend, offering the opportunity for those parishioners who have not already returned their 2015 Annual Catholic Appeal gift or pledge by mail, to do so by bringing their completed appeal pledge card and envelope to Mass and placing it in the offertory collection.

Pastors will ask parishioners to contemplate prayerfully the generosity of God in their lives and to decide upon a suitable gift that reflects their appreciation for his gifts.

Parishes will have the option to participate in the "in-pew" process on a weekend after Commitment Weekend.

(For more info, contact the Development Office: 203.416.1470 or [www.2015acabridgeport.com](http://www.2015acabridgeport.com).) ■

### NEW GOVERNANCE FROM PAGE 3

advisory boards, along with new members who will be identified based on their interest and talents in key areas such as finance, building and academics.

"We don't want to lose a single advisory board member," the bishop said. "We really need to put everybody to work," he added, noting that advisory board members will be asked to serve on key committees that will create plans and recommendations for the schools.

During the hour-long meetings, the bishop also distributed the application form for the new Bishop's Scholarship Fund 2015-2016. The fund will make \$1.45 million available in scholarships to families with children attending a diocesan-sponsored Catholic school throughout the diocese.

The Bishop's Scholarship Fund is designed to help families afford a Catholic education. "Through the generosity of donors who believe in the mission and impact of Catholic education, this new fund will bring a Catholic education within their

reach," says Sister Mary Grace, ASCJ, PhD, diocesan superintendent of schools.

This is particularly important for families who enroll multiple children in a Catholic school.

Scholarships will be renewable each year for as long as the student attends a diocesan elementary or high school and remains in good standing. The fund will disburse its scholarship grants beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

The first year of the fund will be reserved for PreK-grade 8 elementary school students. After that, high school students will also be able to apply for scholarship aid. The bishop said he hopes to see the total scholarship amount grow to \$3.5 million in three years.

As part of the application process, families will have to fill out a FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment as well as an application form.

Children who enroll in Bridgeport Catholic schools also benefit from the existing scholarship program set up by the advisory board. This year, a total

of \$1.8 million in scholarship aid was given to 600 students who would not otherwise have been able to afford the cost of enrollment.

Bishop Caggiano fielded questions following the meetings and also encouraged teachers and parents to promote the Catholic schools they love so much. He told parents that they must become the "bishop's ambassadors"—active collaborators in Catholic education. "I want all parents to become ambassadors of Catholic education to the community at large and to share the great treasure that our schools represent."

The bishop also urged teachers and principals to "share the news of the scholarship fund," and to let people know that the diocese is doing everything it can to make Catholic education an affordable choice for families.

(For more info, contact your local school or visit [www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com](http://www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com). The Bishop's Scholarship Fund application form is available at [www.bishopsscholarship.org](http://www.bishopsscholarship.org).) ■

## Ministries assisted by the ACA

Gifts to the Appeal enabled the 35 ministries of Catholic Charities to reach out to help those in need through special initiatives that:

- Served 1.3 million nutritious meals last year to needy persons through food programs in Bridgeport, Danbury and Stamford and lower Fairfield County
- Administered counseling to 15,000 individuals/families in crisis to help with a variety of social issues, medication management, and marriage and family therapy
- Continued to provide mental health counseling to individuals and families affected by the Sandy Hook tragedy in Newtown
- Helped provide disaster recovery assistance to 600 struggling families impacted by Hurricane Sandy
- Opened a second Room to Grow Program location to expand "school readiness services" to the working poor families and their children. The program now serves 129 children in Norwalk

### Gifts to the Appeal also helped make it possible to:

- Award financial scholarships to 65 percent of students in inner-city Catholic Academies
- Ensure that 38,000 children and young adults had the opportunity to participate in religious education programs
- Educate and train 24 men for ordination to priesthood in this diocese
- Care for 59 senior priests in their dignified retirement
- Afford youth with meaningful opportunities to mature as holy and active members of society through a wide range of faith-based programs ■

# Welcome New Chair Couple

## Appeal co-chairs live their faith

By PAT HENNESSY

When she first became interested in the annual appeal of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Julie Taylor was most drawn to the diocesan Respect Life ministry. "As a mother, it was totally the support of life," says Julie, this year's Annual Catholic Appeal co-chair with her husband, Rowan. The couple are the parents of four daughters, now ages 20, 16, 15 and 4 years old, and are members of St. Aloysius Parish.

As their children grew older, in addition to the Respect Life ministry the Taylors found their interest growing in the inner-city schools of Bridgeport, now known as the Cathedral Academies. "We live in New Canaan, where good schools are a given," Rowan points out. "The Cathedral Academies provide excellent educational opportunities in an area where the average family lives below the poverty line."

In keeping with her pro-life commitment, Julie began volunteering for Malta House, a home for women in crisis pregnancy. That led to an invitation to join the Order of Malta and a deepening of faith, devotion and a realization of the many works supported by the diocese. "Now it's hard for me to single one thing out," Julie says.

Rowan and Julie met on the first day of freshman year at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. They quickly discovered a surprising coincidence: they were born on the same day. "I was born earlier in the day, which is why I'm so mature," says Rowan with his trademark grin.

"I married an older man," Julie is quick to counter. Although they had the same



ROWAN AND JULIE TAYLOR

class advisor and knew each other from day one, they didn't immediately start dating. It may have been because, in many ways, they were so different. Rowan was from Portland, Oregon; Julie grew up in Fairfield County. He was an economics major; she took a double major in European history and French. Rowan, who has over 25 years of private equity experience, is the founding partner of Liberty Hall Capital Partners, a private equity firm based in New York City.

For whatever differences, they didn't start dating for months—not until after they came back from the Christmas break their freshman year. "The third Sunday in January, January 18, was the 29th anniversary of our first date," Rowan says, flashing another grin.

Their relaxed enjoyment in each other's company contradicts their strikingly different

backgrounds. The most important: Julie came from a devout Catholic family. "My parents were among the most devout, faith-filled people I ever knew. My parents met at a church bazaar. Two of my mother's brothers were priests."

Rowan had no religion at all. "Religion was not part of my life," he says. "It wasn't important to my parents."

Although Julie's religious practice had been "on and off, like most kids," in her early college years, by the time she graduated it was "mostly on." She doesn't know why her faith deepened even while she was dating a "heathen;" that's just how it happened.

They were married at St. Patrick's, the Catholic Church near Washington and Lee in Virginia. From that time on, Julie was in church every single Sunday. Rowan respected her

devotion, but was not part of it.

"I can remember the moment when the light came on," he says. They were in Italy with Julie's parents, traveling down from Florence to Rome, and stopped in Assisi.

It was Good Friday.

Following a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages, or even earlier, the Taylors joined the crowd of the faithful watching the emotional Processione del Cristo Morto, as the image of the crucified Christ was carried through the streets, along with one of his sorrowing mother.

"The sun begins to set in this Roman town, the lights go out, and the narrow streets are lit by hundreds of torches. They carry out the statue of Christ, and another of Mary, followed by about 40 people in robes, walking barefoot, carrying crosses, with their faces covered to emphasize that in God there is no difference between the mayor of the city and someone who cleans the streets. I heard people praying the Hail Mary in half a dozen languages."

Rowan describes himself as a "0-1 person in all phases of my life. You do a thing well or you don't do it." He came back from that vacation, enrolled in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) at St. Aloysius, and was baptized, confirmed and received First Holy Communion during the Easter Vigil the following year.

Over the years, particularly

after they both joined the Order of Malta, their faith deepened. Julie was on the parish council and taught religious education; Rowan was on the finance committee. More than that, they moved beyond the "little cocoon of our parish." In addition to their other activities, Julie is a delegate to Synod 2014.

As parents, they are particularly interested in the first synod theme: Empower the Young Church. "Studies show that 53 percent of people will leave their childhood faith by adulthood," Julie says, clearly upset by the statistic.

When Bishop Caggiano met the Taylors, he recognized immediately that they would make an ideal lay chair couple for the Annual Catholic Appeal. Among their other activities, they hope to spend time learning more about parish ministries across the diocese, talking to priests about clergy formation, and visiting schools and Catholic Charities sites like the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport.

"It's time, it's treasures, it's talent—that's how we've ingrained Christ's faith into our lives," says Rowan. "This is what we have to do. We want to keep the faith growing and strong for ourselves, for our children, for everyone."

(For more info about the 2015 Annual Catholic Appeal, contact the Development Office: 203/416/1470 or [www.2015acabridgeport.com](http://www.2015acabridgeport.com).) ■

### SYNOD PIVOTS FROM PAGE 3

the poor and suffering.

"We should be asking, who is vulnerable here in this diocese, who is on the margin, and who are the people to whom we are not attending."

When a delegate noted that many Catholics often are uncomfortable with the Church's social teachings, O'Driscoll joked that she learned that during national elections was not the best time to

get agreement. "If we start with political filters then we'll leave Jesus behind. People will always feel challenged by certain issues. We have to constantly ask, what did Jesus tell us to do and where did he say he would be."

In a humorous and insightful presentation Msgr. James P. Lang, episcopal vicar for parishes for the Diocese of Syracuse, spoke about parish planning,

visioning and excellence. "If it's not working, stop doing it," he said with emphasis. "We need to see things in a new way."

Msgr. Lang said that as the Church seeks to change, it's important "not to throw the baby out with the bath water. Engage your tradition and be true to yourself and don't forget the core values that have guided the Church for over 2,000 years." ■

**PLANNING TO BE IN FLORIDA  
THIS WINTER?**

Bishop Caggiano will attend  
a reception in Naples  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2015**

*See you in the Sunshine State!*





Please e-mail Pam Rittman  
at [prittman@diobpt.org](mailto:prittman@diobpt.org) to join the invitation list.

# March for Life 2015

## Witnesses for Life travel to D.C.

*(On January 22, the Catholic faithful from this diocese, including a large number of youth, traveled to Washington, D.C., to join the 2015 March for Life. This year's theme was "Every Life is a Gift.")*

### Kolbe Cathedral, Bridgeport

"This year, I had the opportunity to attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C., which included attending Mass with thousands of other people, learning about Catholic liturgical dance, hearing an official letter from the Pope, and marching for what I firmly believe in. I was able to connect my life and opinions about abortion with many other people who treasure the gift of life as much as I do. Life is precious and valuable, and it is my duty, along with everyone else who shares in this gift of life, to protect it."

—Daniela Trotman, Senior

### St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull

"This year's March for Life was my first and it won't be my last. Father Brian Gannon, our pastor, celebrated a 4 am Mass for our group and then the bus was quickly loaded and we were on the road with 47 Catholic faithful from the Diocese of Bridgeport.

I was filled with great hope and wonder as I witnessed the enormous and respectfully exuberant Pro-Life crowd—all marching for the most vulnerable among us."

—Mary Beth DeSantis

### Immaculate, Danbury

"At the kick-off Mass in the Patriot Center, there was a sense of preparing to do something important together. The March inspired me to do what I can to give witness to the cause."

—AJ Vitiello, Freshman

"Participating showed me how precious life is. It's not just important to prevent abortion but to protect all life."

—Maddie Werdann, Freshman

"People came from so many different places and different religions."

—Claire Koch, Freshman

"The March gave me a strong sense of confidence that as a large group, we



could beat the issue. This feeling of strength threaded throughout the whole March."

—Lona Ludanyi, Freshman

### St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside

"Going to a Catholic school in Argentina, I was well educated on the topic of abortion. When I moved here, I saw how people were accepting of the idea and it scared me. That's why it was crucial for me to go to March for Life. Seeing 650,000 people advocating and believing in the same thing as me was truly encouraging. Now, more than ever, I won't stop fighting for the voiceless until this issue stops."

—Agus Buscaglia

"The experience was amazing because you were fighting for life with 650,000 people. You had something in common with people you didn't even know. I'm definitely doing it next year."

—Pilar Buscaglia

### St. Aloysius Youth Group, New Canaan

"The March for Life gives me the courage and energy each year to go back home and to school and share what I've done to get other people thinking about the right to life. It's amazing to see hundreds of thousands of people who are fighting for life the same way we are, for all different reasons. It's a perfect way to be the hands and feet of Christ and be the voice for the voiceless, as

God calls us to be."

—Grace Wagner, Senior

"Walking into the Verizon Center was amazing. There were so many people, and they all believed in the same ideas about how life is sacred and we should preserve it. The youth rally itself was like a mini retreat. The songs were awesome and the witness talks were astounding and personal. It was amazing that the Papal Nuncio was there delivering a message to us all directly from the Pope!

"Standing up for what I believe in makes me more comfortable to talk about it. When I came back to



school, so many people were interested in what I did, and a few of my teachers congratulated me for knowing what I believe in at such an early age."

—Clare Wagner, Freshman

"The media does not cover the March for Life because they don't want to show the hundreds of thousands of people, many of them youth, who stand up to our country every year in attempts to save innocent lives. Going back to school after the March makes me sad because no one knows what just occurred in the nation's capital. That's where we come in; it is our job as Catholics to spread the word and make known what is right, just, and humane."

—Annelise Butler, Senior

"Attending the Youth Rally got me in the spirit of the pro-life movement. Seeing my fellow marchers and clergy and worshipping along with them was joyful as well as satisfying for me."

—Nolan Fitzpatrick, College



## Local News

## John T. Grosso: New Social Media Leader

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

John T. Grosso of Stamford has been named social media leader of the Diocese of Bridgeport. His appointment was announced by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

Working with the diocesan Office of Communications team, he will be responsible for overseeing strategic social media and digital initiatives to expand communications between the diocese, parishes and the general public. He will also manage the new diocesan mobile app, design online campaigns for youth and other groups, and assist the

bishop's office with social media outreach.

"John represents a new generation that has grown up with social media and instinctively understands the opportunities it provides for communications and evangelization," said Bishop Caggiano. "He is also active in his parish and brings a deep respect and understanding of Catholic teaching and traditions."

Grosso is a member of St. Leo Parish in Stamford.

He comes to the diocese from the DeBicella for Congress Campaign, where he served as urban outreach/digital director,

responsible for research, analysis and development of outreach operations. In his role he created a comprehensive social media marketing strategy and produced and managed all content across Twitter, Facebook, Wordpress, and YouTube.

He also served an internship as correspondence associate in the White House Office of Presidential Correspondence in 2012, where he became versed in online constituent management and communications systems.

He graduated from Boston College in May 2014 with a BA in political science and theolo-



JOHN T. GROSSO

## 84% would ban abortion after three months

NEW HAVEN—The vast majority of Americans are uncomfortable with abortion, according to a new Knights of Columbus-Marist poll. The survey finds support for abortion restrictions among both "pro-life" and "pro-choice" supporters.

Eighty-four percent of

"Four decades after Roe v. Wade, the American people remain unhappy with its legacy," said Knights of Columbus CEO Carl Anderson. "The survey makes clear that the American people understand that abortion is far too common, and causes great harm. And even those who consider themselves 'pro-choice'

By nearly three to one, Americans see abortion as doing a woman more harm than good in the long run (59 percent to 22 percent).

By 20 points (57 percent to 37 percent), Americans support proposed legislation that would permit medical professionals and organizations to refuse to provide abortions or refer patients for abortions.

In light of the ongoing controversy over the HHS contraception, sterilization and abortifacient mandate, it is notable that 70 percent of Americans also support religious liberty rights when religious values conflict with the law.

The survey of 2,079 adults was conducted January 7-13, 2015, by the Marist Poll and sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the continental United States were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Results are statistically significant within  $\pm 2.1$  percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

The Knights of Columbus has worked with the Marist Poll to survey Americans on moral issues since 2008.

(For more details about the survey results and methodology visit [www.kofc.org/polls](http://www.kofc.org/polls).)



Americans want significant restrictions on abortion, and would limit it to, at most, the first three months of pregnancy. This includes almost 7 in 10 (69 percent) who identify themselves as "pro-choice."

The same percentage (84 percent) also says that laws can protect both the well-being of a woman and the life of the unborn.

In addition, by more than 20 points (60 percent to 38 percent), Americans say abortion is morally wrong.

want it reduced significantly. It is time that our lawmakers respond to this public consensus with appropriate legislation."

Other key findings of the survey include:

- 64 percent say the nation's abortion rate is higher than it should be. Only 7 percent think it is too low.
- 78 percent support parental notification before a minor can obtain an abortion.
- 68 percent oppose taxpayer funding of abortion, while only 28 percent support it.

gy. During his time at Boston College, he served in a number of internships and other positions, including the Fedele for Stamford mayoral campaign, the Boston College Law School Admissions Office and the Stamford Town Clerk Office.

Grosso has volunteered at the Stamford Peace Office and served in the "Best Buddies" program back in Boston.

One of his first assignments will be to build the strategy of rolling out the new diocesan mobile app, which provides the latest news, events, Mass times, and videos on Catholic life. The app can now be downloaded from the iTunes App Store for iPhone users or from the Google Play Store for Android phone

users. In both cases, simply search for "Bridgeport Diocese" and you will find immediate and easily accessible information on Mass times, events, news, and other areas of interest.

The social media efforts of the diocese are a function of the Communications Department, which also publishes *Fairfield County Catholic* (the monthly newspaper of the diocese), and an ENewsletter, maintains Facebook, Twitter and You Tube accounts, provides print graphics for diocesan events and manages media relations.

(For more info, visit [www.bridgeportdiocese.com](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com) or visit the app store (search Diocese of Bridgeport). To contact John Grosso, email: [jgrosso@diobpt.org](mailto:jgrosso@diobpt.org).)

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Executive Director

# Connecticut Catholic Conference

## Frequently asked questions about Assisted Suicide

### What is physician-assisted suicide?

Physician-assisted suicide occurs when a doctor writes a prescription for a patient who has a terminal illness and is told they have only six months to live. The patient then must have the prescription filled at a local pharmacy and self-administer the drug, which in most cases occurs at home.

The physician is almost never present at the patient's suicide. The physician or another health care professional cannot administer the drug. The patient must consume the medication, which may number around 100 pills, by oneself. The physician's role basically ends once the prescription is provided to the patient. Physician-assisted suicide is

"The physician is not present at the patient's suicide. The patient must consume the medication."

not related to the withdrawal of feeding tubes, intravenous fluids, breathing tubes, etc. The withdrawal of these devices is already allowed under law and under Catholic medical directives.

### Is there a difference between "aid in dying," "death with dignity" and physician-assisted suicide?

No. "Aid in dying" or "death with dignity" are more socially tolerable terms for physician-assisted suicide. These terms are used by advocates of physician-assisted suicide in order to avoid the use of the word "suicide," which most people find objectionable. Assisted Suicide means nothing more than having a physician provide lethal medication to a patient who wishes to take his or her own life.

### How prevalent are physician-assisted suicide laws?

Currently, only three states, Oregon (1994), Washington (2008) and Vermont (2013), have

statutes providing for physician-assisted suicide. The most recent attempt through a referendum to legalize physician-assisted suicide was in Massachusetts and this effort was defeated on November 6, 2012. The New Hampshire legislature overwhelmingly rejected physician-assisted suicide in March, 2014. Over 100 legislative proposals in various states—and numerous referendums—have consistently failed to enact physician-assisted suicide laws. Two states, Montana and New Mexico, allow physician-assisted suicide through court decisions.

### Is uncontrollable pain the biggest concern of patients who participate in physician-assisted suicide?

Again the answer is "no." Actual pain, combined with concern about possible pain in the future, is only a motivating factor in the minority of cases. Although advocates for physician-assisted suicide would like one to believe that uncontrollable pain is the primary reason that individuals seek to end their lives; this is simply not supported by the facts.

In the words of the Oregon Public Health Division concerning physician-assisted suicides in 2013, "As in previous years, the three most frequently mentioned end-of-life concerns were: loss of autonomy (93%), decreasing ability to participate in activities that made life enjoyable (88.7%), and loss of dignity (73.2%)." Fear of being a burden on family and friends was a concern in 49.3% of the cases, while fear of pain was a concern in only 28.2%.

### Does opposition to physician-assisted suicide laws come primarily from religious groups?

No. Supporters of physician-assisted suicide argue that religious groups are its strongest opponents. This also is not true. Although religious groups, such as the Catholic Church and other denominations, strongly oppose this type of legislation and have been known to actively fund efforts to defeat it, many other groups have spoken out loudly

against physician-assisted suicide in state after state.

Organizations representing the medical, hospice, disability and elderly communities are all strong opponents of this type of legislation. Physician-assisted suicide legislation is also strongly opposed by the American Medical Association. Any effort to call this a religious issue is clearly an attempt to detract from the serious problems relating to the legalization of physician-assisted suicide.

### Is physician-assisted suicide good public policy?

Many proponents of physician-assisted suicide believe that this procedure is a private personal matter and the state should allow individuals to end their lives if they so desire. The only problem with this thought process is that once a legislature enacts a physician-assisted suicide law, it impacts everyone.

It now places the option of suicide on the "table of options" to be considered when a person is facing a serious illness. It presents opportunities for the ill, the elderly and the disabled to be manipulated by those around them who would benefit from their death. The right to die may soon become the responsibility to die for the sick, the elderly and the disabled.

### What is the solution to difficult end-of-life situations?

Most people facing a devastating illness are usually seeking true compassion, loving care, family support and quality pain control. Instead of enacting a law that opens up a Pandora's Box of possible abuses, we as a society should work on refining the existing system of medical care to reflect the 1993 statement of the American Medical Association when it took a position against physician-assisted suicide:

"Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks. Instead of participating in assisted suicide, physicians must aggressively

## An important message from the bishop

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,



A bill in support of Assisted Suicide has now been introduced in the Judiciary Committee of the General Assembly of the State Legislature.

So I am joining with Archbishop Leonard Blair of Hartford and Bishop Michael Cote of the Diocese of Norwich to ask all of the Catholic faithful throughout the state to make your voices heard. The time has come once again for a mobilization of consciences as we address the moral, medical and social issues that are at stake in this proposed legislation. While we must vigorously oppose so-called "right to die" legislation and its potential abuses, we must also do all we can to promote compassionate palliative care, which is increasingly recognized as a medically sound, morally appropriate and effective way of dealing with end-of-life-situations.

In the coming weeks, you will hear more about this issue on our website and in our social media efforts, and you will be given the opportunity to sign an online and print petition circulated by the Connecticut Catholic Conference during the last two weeks of this month.

It is also timely to note that we recently observed the annual "World Day of the Sick." In his message for the occasion Pope Francis says this: "How great a lie... lurks behind certain phrases which so insist on the importance of 'quality of life' that they make people think that lives affected by grave illness are not worth living!"

I ask your active involvement and prayerful solidarity in this effort, and I urge you to read the Q&A below, which provides an excellent overview of the issue and the reason both for our opposition to assisted suicide and for the Church's support of improved palliative care as people struggle with devastating illness.

Let us pray for all those who are ill and embrace them within the faith that represents true compassion, loving care, family support and redemption of their suffering through the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

*Frank J. Caggiano*

Frank J. Caggiano,  
Bishop of Bridgeport

"We must promote compassionate palliative care, a medically sound way of dealing with end-of-life-situations."

respond to the needs of patients at the end of life.

Patients should not be abandoned once it is determined that cure is impossible. Multidisciplinary interventions should be sought, including specialty consultation, hospice care, pastoral support, family counsel-

ing and other modalities. Patients near the end of life must continue to receive emotional support, comfort care, adequate pain control, respect for patient autonomy and good communication."

(For more updates on the current legislation, visit the Connecticut Catholic Conference: [www.ctcatholic.org](http://www.ctcatholic.org).)

# High School News

## Trinity Catholic building sports complex

STAMFORD—The Diocese of Bridgeport; Roger Fox, chair of the School Advisory Board; and Mark W. Karagus, EdD, principal of Trinity Catholic High School, have announced the commencement of construction of a brand-new, multi-million dollar sports complex to be located at its 26-acre Newfield Avenue campus. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for April 23, at 11:30 am.

The announcement follows three years of planning, and is part of the school's multi-year

of alumni, parents, corporations with support by the Diocese of Bridgeport. There will be more opportunities in the future for donors to collaborate in the campaign to renew, rebuild and revitalize Trinity Catholic as the campaign continues.

Phase One, launching this winter, includes a total renovation of the TCHS athletic fields. The athletics program at Trinity Catholic High School has a long legacy of participants and programs, several of which have earned regional and national rec-

The planned improvements, in the planning stages for the past three years, will include a complete refurbishing of the campus field to include a brand new multi-purpose turf field for varsity and JV football, boys' and girls' soccer, lacrosse, and girls' field hockey.

Additionally, the complex will include renovations to the baseball and softball fields, installation of new grandstands, press box, concessions and field lighting.

(For more info on the ENVISION Campaign or Trinity Catholic High School, please contact the school: 203.322.3401.)



ENVISION Campaign to completely upgrade and renovate its facilities and provide the latest educational technology.

The multi-million dollar campaign is the largest in the school's history since its opening in 1958. Phase 1 of the campaign was approved by the zoning board of the City of Stamford last fall. To date, generous donations have been made by dozens of alumni, parents and corporations towards the Phase 1 goal of \$2.3 million. With the support of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Phase 2 of the campaign to renew, rebuild and revitalize Trinity Catholic will commence upon the completion of Phase 1 and will include a new media center and auditorium upgrades, plant improvements, and renovations to the baseball and softball fields.

The \$2.3 million dollar renovation, the largest in the school's history, is being funded by the generous contributions of dozens

of alumni, parents, corporations

with support by the Diocese of Bridgeport. There will be more opportunities in the future for donors to collaborate in the campaign to renew, rebuild and revitalize Trinity Catholic as the campaign continues. "The new sports complex is one part of an overall strategic plan for Trinity Catholic High School. Our goal is to offer the highest level of contemporary educational services in a faith-based environment, as well as accommodate an anticipated growth in students over the next two decades," said Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, Ph.D., superintendent of schools for the diocese. "As the only diocesan high school in this area of Fairfield County, it is important to the diocese that Trinity Catholic have a strong and bright future."

Dr. Karagus describes the effort as helping the school fulfill a critical part of its mission. "We have an outstanding academic program and a growing reputation for educating the whole student—body, mind and spirit. This will only add to the "trinity" of pillars this school offers the area's youth," he said.



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## Finance

## Diocese projects balanced operating budget

BRIDGEPORT—A balanced operating budget and a change in the fiscal year highlight the January 1-June 30, 2015 six-month budget of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Michael Hanlon, chief financial officer of the diocese said the new operating budget projects approximately \$11,132,000 in revenue and \$11,127,000 in expenses.

He said that in January the diocesan finance council for-

produce a balanced operational budget, while at the same time decreasing the Annual Catholic Appeal goal by \$500,000 in order to take some of the burden off parishes.

Hanlon said he has worked with Bishop Caggiano and other Catholic Center leadership to reduce operating expenditures by approximately \$500,000 to achieve this goal.

"We've looked at areas where we can cut costs, particularly

### The Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation Operational Budget January - June 2015

#### Revenue

Annual Catholic Appeal .....	\$5,499,991
Cathedraticum and School Support .....	3,268,172
Cemeteries' Contribution .....	718,500
Contributions and Bequests.....	684,228
Salary Reimbursement .....	496,140
Rental and Other Income.....	212,898
Advertising Income.....	137,502
Program Fee's.....	115,068
Total Revenue .....	<u>\$11,132,499</u>

#### Expenses

Salaries .....	\$3,418,536
Employee Benefits .....	1,579,530
Employer Payroll Taxes.....	212,184
Insurance and Worker's Compensation.....	184,834
Grants and Contributions.....	2,687,514
Occupancy.....	1,053,816
Professional Fee's and Services .....	688,224
Travel, Seminars, Dues, Subscriptions and Other .....	404,339
Other Professional Services .....	349,656
Other Labor and Purchased Services .....	273,726
Interest .....	275,124
Total Expenses .....	<u>\$11,127,483</u>

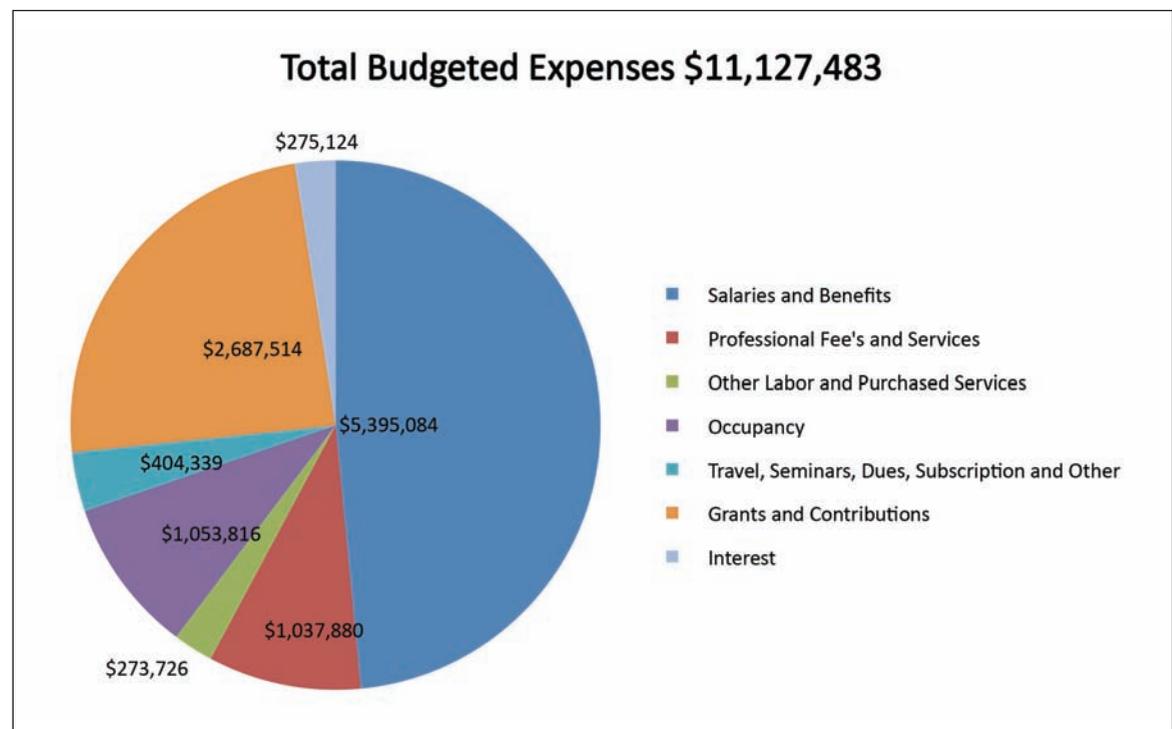
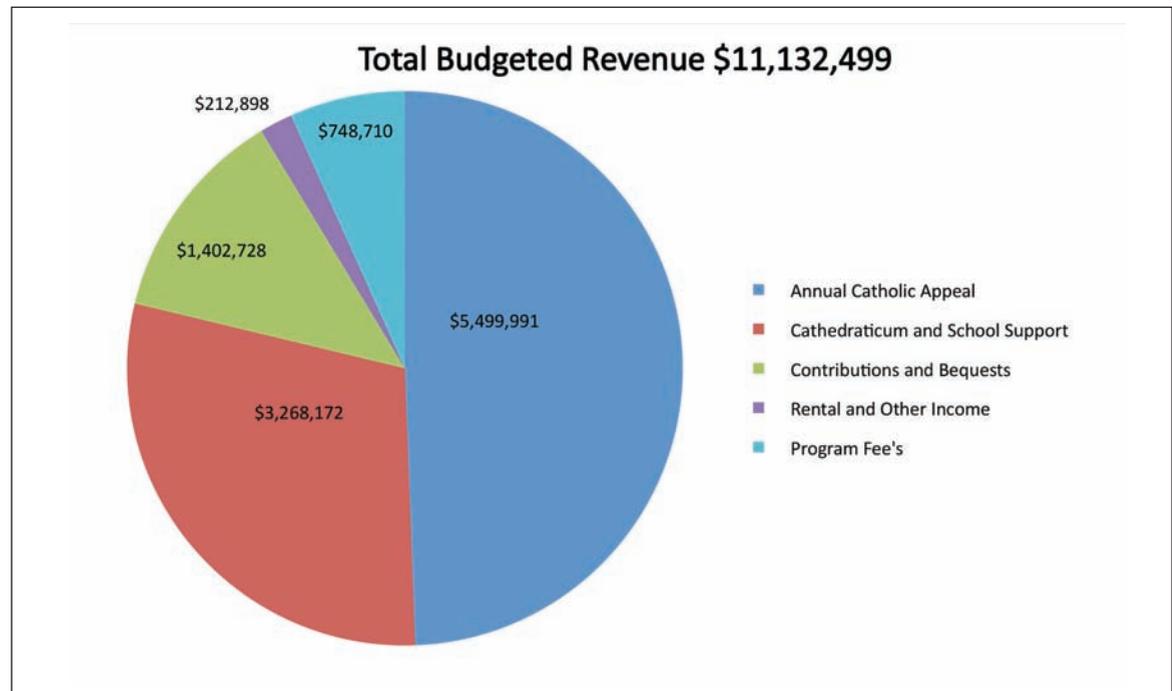
**Income from Operations - Before Depreciation .....** \$5,016

mally approved this budget and the changing of the fiscal year to a June 30 year end from a December 31 year end, which will align the diocese with the fiscal years of our parishes, schools and most other related entities. Due to this change, the next Financial Statement Audit will be for the 18 month period ending June 30, 2016.

In his recent State of the Diocese Address, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said his goal was to

hard costs such as property and casualty, fleet auto and worker's compensation insurance products. In these areas we reviewed costs, sought competitive bids and renegotiated agreements," he said.

Hanlon said that approximately 48 percent of all diocesan operating expenses are related to employees' salaries and benefits. The diocese also expends approximately \$2.7 million in grants and program support



to Catholic schools, Catholic Charities and other program initiatives that reflect the spiritual and service mission of the Church.

"We're continuing to look at all of our expenses to determine how we can gain efficiencies and cost savings, so that we may re-direct more of our resources to support the mission of the diocese," Hanlon said.

Diocesan revenues come from parish assessments, the Annual Catholic Appeal and other contributions, program fees and limited rental income.

The diocese has struggled over

the past several years with an annual operating deficit, primarily due to the inability to collect all of the insurance premiums due from some of its schools and parishes. While these operational shortfalls have been reduced, the diocese has also created a strategic planning process with the main purpose of establishing long-term viability for all our diocesan schools.

Along with revenue enhancement measures and reduction of expenditures, the bishop has also announced a plan to reorganize the Catholic Center to address immediate administrative, finan-

cial and organizational processes with the aim of improving management and accountability, fostering greater effectiveness and efficiency, and empowering employees in the decision making process.

In December of 2013, Bishop Caggiano took a major step toward financial transparency when he released the financial statements for the diocese. The full audits for fiscal years 2010 through 2013, can be found online.

(To learn more, visit the diocesan website: [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialreports](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialreports).)

## Annual White Mass

## White Mass speaker to focus on ethics of genetics

DANBURY—The 22nd annual White Mass and breakfast honoring health care professionals will be held on Sunday, April 12, at 8:30 am at St. Aloysius Church in New Canaan.

The Mass, open to the general public, will be celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. Breakfast will follow at Woodway Country Club in Darien.

Father Kevin FitzGerald, S.J., associate professor of bioethics at Georgetown University's School of Medicine and an expert in ethical issues related to cloning and genetic testing, will be the featured speaker.

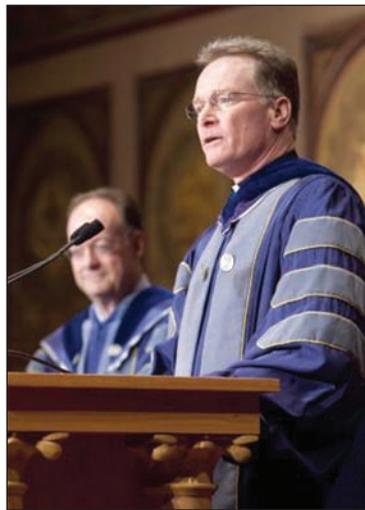
He brings a strong background of experience and expertise to his topic. Father FitzGerald is a research associate professor in the division of biochemistry and pharmacology of the Department of Oncology and the Dr. David P. Laufer chair for Catholic Health Care Ethics. He is also a member of the Center for Clinical Bioethics, the Advisory Board for the Center for Infectious Disease (CID), and the Angiogenesis,

Invasion, Metastasis Program at the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

His research interests have included the investigation of abnormal gene regulation in cancer and ethical issues in human genetics, including the ethical and social ramifications of molecular genetics research. He is also a Jesuit priest and an expert on ethical issues in personalized medicine, pharmacogenomics, human cloning research, stem cell research, and genetic testing.

He earned a second PhD in bioethics in 1999 at Georgetown University, after also achieving a doctorate from Georgetown in 1996 in molecular biology. His undergraduate degree is from Cornell University (1977) in biology. He was awarded his masters in divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology in 1988.

At the breakfast, two area healthcare professionals will be presented the Father Rufin Compassionate Care Award. The recipients are traditionally drawn



FATHER KEVIN FITZGERALD, S.J.

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

This is the seventh year that the Father Rufin Compassionate Care Award will be presented at the White Mass breakfast.

(All healthcare workers and their

guests are invited to attend the White Mass. Breakfast tickets: \$35. For more info and tickets, contact Debbie Charles: 203.416.1352 or [dcharles@diopbt.org](mailto:dcharles@diopbt.org).)



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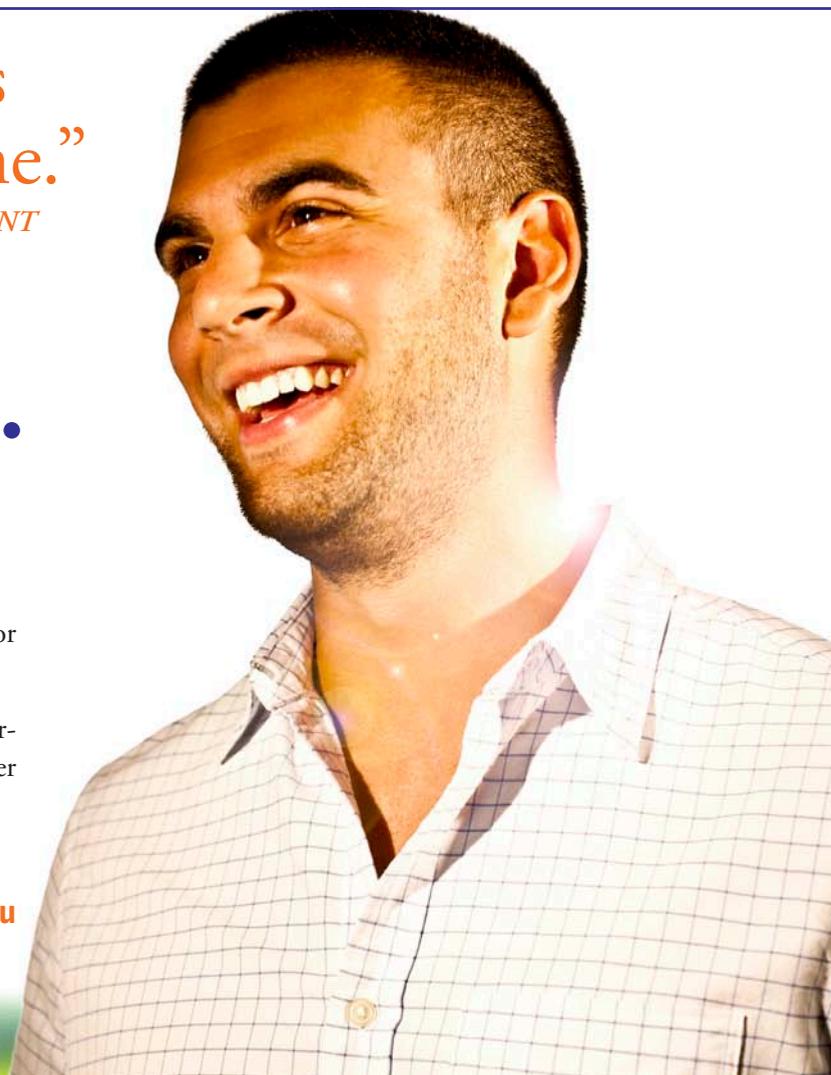


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## EDITORIAL

## Discontent

"Now is the winter of our discontent."

If you're buried to your overflowing gutters in snow, you might agree with that familiar statement. But in the opening lines of his play, *Richard III*, Shakespeare was heading in a different direction.

"Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer..."

The play, like our own lives, has its share of good and evil, disaster and triumph. We are certainly in the middle of discontented winter now, and the world around us is seeing a distressing amount of violence and tragedy. Our personal lives, too, have their share of strain, guilt, and even some of that old-fashioned word—sin.

Winter deepens. Lent starts. Ash Wednesday, February 18, heralds a time of austerity and taking an honest look at the less-than-pretty aspects of our lives. It's important that we know, as we struggle through it, that Lent heralds a glorious summer. Lent leads to the magnificent, unending sunlight of God's love, made manifest in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. After tragedy and suffering beyond measure, Love emerges triumphant.

This winter, with suffering, sin, evil and tragedy all around us, we need to cling to that promise of God's light more than ever. Embrace the austerity of Lent. Accept the season of discontent. Believe in the triumph.

## Synod at halfway mark

The synod hit the halfway mark last Saturday and it has already been a remarkable journey.

At the Third General Session, 350 delegates arrived at the final five "global" challenges that will be the work of the synod and the diocese in coming years. (see story on page 3). Throughout the process, Bishop Caggiano has guided, listened and encouraged with his own many thoughtful insights:

- "Dig deeper, ask more questions and get to the root of the problems," Bishop Caggiano continually urged delegates—and they did. They have spent months studying issues such as the growing number of Catholics who have left the Church, the exodus of young people in their teens, and the sense that many Catholics are "sacramentalized" but not evangelized.
- "Youth aren't the future, they're the present," the bishop has often reminded us. And youth have been much in evidence at the synod. In addition to serving as delegates, young people have met with the bishop in many consultations to celebrate and strengthen their faith.
- "Nothing will be left behind," the bishop reassured the delegates who championed challenges that did not make the final cut. And he also thanked them for their spirit of "humility and compromise" in working toward the greater good.
- "Think of the people who are not here," the bishop has urged throughout the synod. In particular, he has asked delegates to consider the poor, marginalized, newcomers and alienated Catholics. "I must be the custodian of those voices."

Now the synod works to find solutions to the many challenges defined during the discernment process. Delegates will be searching "best practices," exploring successful models of parish and ministry, and bringing forth some innovations of their own. They deserve our gratitude—and most importantly our prayers for the success of the synod and renewal of the diocese.

## First Call!

Bishop Frank Caggiano has invited all Catholics to a day of "praise and worship" at the Thanksgiving Ceremony and Mass for Synod 2014. Mark your calendar now for next September 19, 11 am at the Webster Bank Arena of Harbor Yard in Bridgeport. There's room for thousands and the bishop is hoping that the faithful will come out to affirm and celebrate the diocesan plan for the future and the vitality of the Church in Fairfield County. ■

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Assisted suicide is a slippery slope

I have been very surprised by the number of people defending assisted suicide.

People have been able to commit suicide in astonishing numbers forever; what is new and at issue is the demand that others participate.

The argument always begins with the discovery of a new so-called "right," but as we have seen with abortion, it very quickly morphs into the "duty" of others to provide that "right" to you, even against their own wills. Then comes very strong pressure to abort your child or kill yourself rather than cost the system or your family any more money. You are seen as "selfish" if you don't comply. And as we have seen in Europe, where people, even children, are "assisted" to die for everything from depression to tinnitus, "safeguards" rarely last long.

A letter from Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg says it is wrong to use one's beliefs to force policy on others. This is a straw man. Only the government has the power to impose actions that are consequences of beliefs.

All that religious and other thoughtful, ethical people can do is to try to rationally persuade the electorate or the bench that, however often something is advertised as "the freedom to do what I want with my own body," what is delivered is "the tyranny to be complicit, either indirectly through taxes or directly through coercion of health-care workers, in the taking of innocent life."

Mary Taylor, *Sandy Hook*



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

## RETIREMENT

REVEREND MONSIGNOR MATTHEW BERNELLI, Pastor, Saint Mary Parish, Bridgeport to retirement. Msgr. Bernelli will be remaining at Saint Mary. Effective date is 6/30/15.

REVEREND MONSIGNOR J. PETER CULLEN, Pastor, Saint Michael the Archangel Parish, Greenwich to retirement. Effective date was 12/31/14. Msgr. Cullen will be remaining at Saint Michael the Archangel as Administrator effective 1/1/2015 through 6/30/15.

REVEREND MONSIGNOR PETER DORA, Chaplain, Stamford Hospital, Stamford to retirement. Effective date is 4/30/15.

REVEREND RAYMOND PETRUCCI, Chaplain, Danbury Hospital, Danbury to retirement. Effective date is 2/28/15.

REVEREND ROBERT POST, to retirement, remaining at Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence. Effective date is 2/28/15.

REVEREND GEORGE SANKOORIKAL, Pastor, Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield to retirement. Effective date is 6/30/15.

## RESIDENCE

REVEREND PHILIP BOCHANSKI, Associate Director at Courage International, Inc., Norwalk, new to the diocese, to reside at Saint Catherine of Siena, Trumbull. Effective date was 2/1/15.

## SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

REVEREND DONALD GUGLIELMI, is released from his diocesan assignment as Pastor of Saint Mark Parish, Stratford, in order to be assigned to the Seminary Faculty, Saint Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, NY. Effective date is 6/30/15 7/1/15.

*Reverend Ian Jeremiah, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy  
February, 2015*

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## Editorial



## The hidden curriculum

## CATHOLIC BY GRACE

BY DENISE BOSSERT

*Denise Bossert is a national Catholic writer and columnist.*

**I**t is the key to unleashing the New Evangelization. It is essential to carrying out the Gospel mission. What is the key? It is the confessional.

You might have expected me to say the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. That is true.

But I would posit that priests already carry out this part of their ministry with great faithfulness and devotion. My own parish has four Sunday Masses, daily Mass Monday through Saturday, and

numerous other special Masses throughout the year.

And they come. People show up at every Mass.

But we are sinners. As much as we do not wish to do it, we fall back into sin—often. And so the net result is that many people are approaching the Eucharist while carrying the baggage of sin, perhaps even mortal sin.

That is a problem. Receiving Our Lord while in a state of serious sin only adds mortal sin on top of mortal sin. One cannot

advance in holiness this way. Without holiness, we cannot be a people on mission.

In his papal address on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in March of 2012, Pope Benedict XVI made it clear that, “The New Evangelization draws its lifeblood from the holiness of the children of the Church, from the daily journey of personal and community conversion in order to be ever more closely conformed to Christ.”

Because personal holiness depends upon the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Pope Benedict XVI went on to say that the new evangelization begins in the confessional.

While most parishes are incredibly accommodating in providing opportunities for Mass attendance, many are abysmal—tragically so—when it comes to providing opportunities for the Sacrament of Confession.

Some may say that nobody

shows up for the scheduled opportunity—those fleeting fifteen minutes before Sunday Mass.

But this is what the one with venial sin thinks: I don’t want to bother my priest before Mass because it’s just a venial sin, and he’s so busy right before Mass, and I would guess there are others far more sinful who need these few minutes more than I do.

This is what the one with mortal sin thinks: If I go to Confession right now, then my parents (wife, children, husband, friends) will know that I have mortal sin that I need to deal with. Who wants to open that can of worms? I’ll just go another time.

But there is no other time.

That’s it. Sunday before Mass—if you can find the priest.

And expect a whirlwind Confession because the priest is bound to have his mind on Mass and his eye on his watch.

Every parish should have one night a week set aside for confes-

sions. The parishioners need to know that their shepherd is there, waiting. The people need to be reminded (often) that a merciful Lord is waiting for them. During Advent and Lent, the opportunities for Confession should be even more generous, highlighted by every means of communication.

Here is what will happen in the parish:

People will become holy. People will be on mission. The New Evangelization will come to your parish. The faithful will begin to discern vocations to religious life.

Here is what will happen in individuals:

They will be healed of mortal sin and lose their attachment to it. Then they will begin to address chronic sin. Jealousy. Gossip. Gluttony. Bitterness and unforgiving spirits. Laziness. Then they will become stronger, more accustomed to walking in grace.

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



## Fifty Years a Priest

## A DAD’S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

**T**welve year-old Billy Scheyd of St. Ann Parish in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport got polio. It was 1952, and the country was in the middle of the worst outbreak in its history. Nearly 58,000 people fell ill. More than 3,000 died.

That summer, Jonas Salk administered the first experimental polio vaccine to 30 children in his lab at the University of Pittsburgh. But it would be several years before the vaccine went mainstream. In 1952, all Billy’s family could do was wait to see how bad his case would be, and pray for a speedy recovery.

Billy’s father fretted. As a personnel manager at the Stanley Works factory, Mr. Scheyd did

okay. But doctors were expensive, and polio had the potential to cripple a child for life. Father Walter McCarthy was the pastor of St. Ann’s. He told Billy’s father to find the best care available. Father McCarthy would pay for everything.

Billy got better, but he never forgot the priest’s generosity. “He was a good man,” Scheyd says now. “In those days, the parish priests did a lot of good for people. That was always my impression of them. They were good men.”

Billy’s parents were Catholic, but not “religious fanatics,” he says. They were just decent, ordinary folks. Billy’s mother was a nurse. Mr. Scheyd worked nights at the post office during the war. They were always helping out at

St. Ann’s in one way or another.

“Dinners, dances, basketball games—the parish was the center of our life,” he says. “The Church was at the heart of our community.”

High school for Billy was Fairfield Prep. One day a Jesuit there asked if Billy had ever thought of becoming a priest. Billy said that he had, but he didn’t think he’d make a good Jesuit. “I’m not a real academic guy,” he says. “Once in a while I read a whole book.”

Teenage Billy didn’t really know what he was aiming for. He thought about becoming a policeman, a lawyer, maybe going into business of some kind. He applied and was accepted at Fairfield U. and Boston College.

But during senior year, the principal came on the P.A. and announced that the vocations director of the diocese was in the office and that any boys thinking of becoming priests should come talk to him.

Billy surprised himself by getting up out of his seat. “The Holy Spirit must have been working on me,” he says. First stop was minor seminary at St. Thomas in Hartford. Next stop, major seminary at St. John’s in Boston.

He was in Boston for six years.

And they were intense years.

The Second Vatican Council was happening. The old ways were rapidly changing.

Father Scheyd was ordained by Bishop Walter Curtis on February 10, 1965, and went to work as an associate pastor at St. Mary’s in Norwalk, just around the corner from the hospital. With proximity came responsibility. “It’s one of the few jobs where you’re asked to just about everything on the first day,” he says. The young priest went right in at the deep end—anoointing the sick, comforting the bereaved, praying for lost souls.

As the years rolled on, Father Scheyd realized that his ministry was for people. He loved fellowship. Talking with people, hearing their problems, celebrating their blessings—these were his strengths. “As a priest, you see people at their best, and you see them at their worst. I offer my help, but I try to be humble enough to know that I don’t know everything,” he says.

On July 2, 1982—30 years to the day after Jonas Salk found his polio vaccine—Father Scheyd returned to Bridgeport as pastor of St. Augustine Cathedral. A

decade at the cathedral was followed by a decade as pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle in Norwalk. For the last 13 years, he’s shepherded the flock at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan.

This month, Msgr. William Scheyd celebrates his 50th anniversary as a priest. He has held every position of high responsibility in the diocese you can think of. “He has been vicar general since Columbus arrived,” quipped former Bridgeport bishop, Edward Cardinal Egan.

Yet Msgr. Scheyd has never lost his affinity for people. “I’ve always tried to create an atmosphere where all are welcome,” he says. “And I’ve been lucky to have had the support of wonderful people in wonderful parishes.”

The Bridgeport that Billy Scheyd grew up in is largely gone. Thanks to Jonas Salk, so is the polio virus that killed and crippled so many people in the summer of 1952. But Monsignor William Scheyd of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, isn’t gone. He’s still here and still a priest.

That is to say, he’s a good man. He does a lot of good for a lot of people. ■

# Black History Month

## Reflections on the March on Washington, 1963

By PETER GEORGE

*(Editor's note: Peter George, then president of the Catholic Interracial Council of the Diocese of Bridgeport, joined Dr. Martin Luther King's March on Washington in 1963. Thousands of Americans headed to Washington on Tuesday August 27, 1963. On Wednesday, August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial, delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech in which he called for an end to racism.)*

My best recollection of that day begins with our meeting at the station about 5 am for the train to Washington, D.C. There were about eight of us, who were all on the trip to D.C. to emphasize the necessity for jobs and justice, not only for blacks but for people of all colors, races or religions.

Truly, you could feel its conviction in the air, hot as it was on that day. Everyone was



determined to undergo, withstand and tolerate the heat and humidity, for the gravity of the time demanded no less of us. As

we boarded the train, which had originated in Boston and traveled through Springfield, Hartford and New Haven, we could not help but notice the motley group of whites, blacks and others of various ethnicities. Everybody, although tired, was excited, energetic and happy. We were going to see and hear the "King."

Now this train, a special one, was commissioned for this journey. As it traveled through New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland on our way south, hundreds of people joined us. They carried placards, banners and anything that highlighted the importance of this trip. We were men and women, young and old, and clergy men and women of every denomination.

As the day progressed, it got

hotter and hotter. There was no air conditioning in those days. There were too many of us to count and so crowded that we looked and felt like sardines in a can.

At last we arrived in the Capitol, got off the train, and were surprised to be met by hundreds of buses to take us to the Lincoln Memorial. As the buses traveled through the streets, to my amazement, I saw no one.

The place was a ghost town—except for one, far too obvious, thing. There was a policeman and a soldier in full gear with a fixed bayonet on each corner of every street. Years later, I learned that the legislators of both Houses and a large number of other people had left the city in fear of an impending riot. In fact, President Kennedy had quietly ordered

thousands of soldiers to be on standby for a catastrophe.

Of course, thousands upon thousands marched peacefully. No rough action of any significance took place. Never had the nation seen anything so enormous in the past, and it was completely peaceful.

During the day I, like so many others, sought shade. Many huddled close to trees, while others sat on the grass with their feet in the pool leading up to the stairs of the Lincoln Memorial. Many of the great civil rights leaders spoke of leading issues, while we waited most of all to hear Dr. Martin Luther King speak.

We were all enthralled, mesmerized and hypnotized by what he said. We left feeling energized and determined to try to make things better for the future.

Today, while things are actually better in many ways, a new "Jim Crow" has arisen. For example, voting opportunities, the heart of democracy and the bedrock of representative government, has been denied and eviscerated for many blacks and the poor by curtailing early voting registration, shortening the hours of voting, limiting the voting locations and demanding drivers' licenses or other IDs which many can't get because of their cost.

I think if Dr. King were living today, he would be saddened by what he would hear or see—but he would not be defeated. His determination and activities would be just as strong as ever. The only difference would be that he would expect us to help fulfill the "Dream" by being do-ers and not onlookers. ■

==== CATHOLIC BY GRACE FROM PAGE 13 =====

When I was a teacher, we used to talk about the hidden curriculum. By hidden curriculum, we meant those things students learned that we did not set out to teach. Youngsters figure out what is important and what isn't important. They learn which corners can be cut and what the teacher really cares about. Sometimes, to our dismay, we realize that the students jettisoned things that are really important because we inadvertently fostered problems and created issues we never meant to foster or create.

That is the situation right now. When the scheduled confessions are right before Sunday Mass or at a time when most people are unavailable, we are teaching our parishioners that Confession is a last-minute sacrament, a kind of triage-only sacrament, a rarely-needed sacrament, a practically-unnecessary sacrament.

While we do not believe any of these things, it is the hidden curriculum—the catechesis we did not intend to teach.

Reality check.  
Some of the holiest people

have availed themselves of the Sacrament of Confession weekly. If even two people in every parish decided they wanted to emulate that kind of holiness, the current confessional schedule would not be sufficient.

If evangelization depends on holiness, we need to throw open the doors on every confessional. We need to say, "Come soon; come often." Let them know that Jesus Christ is waiting just for them.

Holiness and Gospel mission. The first opens the door for the second. ■

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# Consecrated Life

## Meet Sister Mary Ann Rossi, CND

As part of the coverage of the Year of Consecrated Life, the Communications Department has developed a survey to highlight the diversity of personalities, interests and ministries of consecrated women and men in this diocese. Readers will find them in *Fairfield County Catholic* over the coming months, and will be able to see more responses on the diocesan website: [www.bridgeport-diocese.com](http://www.bridgeport-diocese.com).



We hope this simple survey will give readers a chance to think of people in consecrated life in a new way.

For our first respondent, meet Sister Mary Ann Rossi in her own words:

**Name:** Sister Mary Ann Rossi, CND

**Hometown:** Waterbury, CT

**Order/Institute/ Congregation:** Congregation of Notre Dame of Montreal

**Years in Vowed Profession:** 50+

**Ministry, now or formerly:** Right now I am one of two vocation ministers. In the past, I have been a pastoral minister in a parish, director of a college volunteer program, campus minister, teacher.

**A favorite image or title for Jesus that resonates with me:** Beloved Friend

**Person who influenced my faith life:** My teachers and an aunt, a spiritual director, my CND Sisters

**A Connecticut place I especially like:** Not Connecticut—my favorite place in RI is “Quonnie, a CND Place by the Sea”

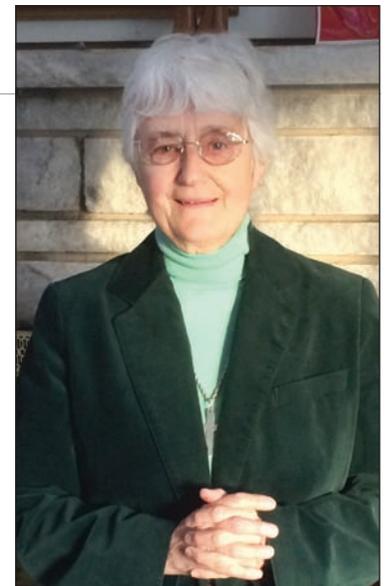
**If I could have lunch with a saint it would be:** Our founder St. Marguerite Bourgeoys or Pope John XXIII

**What “rocks my world” today:** I am moved by the terrible suffering and the violence, especially where children are the victims.

**Something I most appreciate about community life:** It is a “home” for me where we are all on the same page in our total commitment to Christ and Christ’s people. We LIKE to be together.

**An interesting fact about me:** I love teaching and cooking!

**I really like this author:** Fiction, Louise Penny; spirituality, Timothy Radcliffe



SISTER MARY ANN ROSSI, CND

**Slogan that I would give my life:** “Look! God is here!”

**What I would say to someone considering choosing Consecrated life:** It is a life where one can experience the deep love of God with all its adventures, surprises, challenges and compassion for others. And you get to live it with great people. ■



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TCMS serves grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport. We offer a full complement of academic courses, innovative technology, and a wide variety of extracurricular activities in order to provide a well-rounded experience for our students.

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Trinity Catholic Middle School is located on the same campus as Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford, and admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

# Reaching out to Youth

## Ministers share experience

By **KAREN KOVACS  
DYDZUHN**

"When I first started out as a youth minister 16 years ago, we had a lot of training," said Kali DiMarco. "I learned so much, so fast. This is what I would love to see come back to the diocese."

For the past three years, DiMarco has performed two jobs at St. Philip Parish in Norwalk: youth minister and director of religious education. This month she joined her colleagues at a round-table discussion organized by the diocese's director of youth ministry, Julie Rodgers.

This meeting, held at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, was the first of three sessions for youth ministers. The following sessions were held at St. Philip's in Norwalk and the Catholic Center in Bridgeport. The youth ministers gathered for this first session agreed that it was useful to get together frequently to

exchange ideas, mentor each other and talk about upcoming youth events.

"You get invigorated by people who are doing the same ministry as you," DiMarco said.

She presented information about the National Catholic Youth Conference, which has been held for the past four years in Indianapolis, Indiana. Last year's event drew more than 25,000 attendees.

"It's really a class act," DiMarco said. "There's a large opening and closing, and unbelievable music and unbelievable key note speakers."

Workshops on a variety of topics are available throughout the day. "A lot of kids wear hats and they trade buttons," DiMarco said. "They have a lot of fun. I've had very church-ed kids with me and kids that weren't, and it works for everyone."

The cost is \$800 to \$900 per person. However, DiMarco said

the St. Philip Youth Group has paid for the trip in full through fundraisers. She plans to send a list of these successful fundraising programs to Rodgers so she can disseminate the information to youth ministers throughout the diocese.

One of the highlights of last year's conference was listening to Bishop Frank J. Caggiano's closing prayer in the crowded stadium.

"He walked out onto the stage and just rocked it," DiMarco said.

She said he spoke candidly from his heart and even agreed to trade his bishop's hat for a red, hot chili pepper head covering that he enthusiastically put on his head. "And, that's when I knew what good shape we (the diocese) was in," DiMarco said, smiling. "We're really blessed."

Rodgers emphasized Bishop Caggiano's commitment to the diocesan youth, noting that John Grosso was recently hired to coordinate social media, with a special emphasis on targeting youth. Youth groups also now have a room at the Catholic Center where they can film promotional videos for events and programs. Additionally, a new free Bridgeport Diocese telephone app was launched.

Rodgers expects the ongoing Synod to produce "a common vision," one that will benefit all Catholics, young and old.

Rodd Blessey, youth minister at St. Rose, agreed. "There's a unique opportunity in the diocese to work with youth than there's ever been before," he said.

Blessey and Jenna Donovan, also a youth minister at St. Rose's Parish, spoke positively about bringing the parish youth to the Steubenville East Conference, which is located in Lowell, Massachusetts. This year's conference is July 17-19.

"It's a unique opportunity to take your groups away and have a lot of fun and also encounter God a special way," Blessey stated.

His first trip to Steubenville East changed his life and led to his long-term tenure as a youth minister.

Twelve youth attended the first trip to Steubenville that he coordinated, and 68 traveled to



YOUTH MINISTERS GATHERED in a series of sessions around the diocese to exchange ideas, mentor each other and talk about upcoming youth events. The round-table discussions were organized by the Pastoral Services Office and led by Julie Rodgers, MCR, diocesan director of youth ministry.

last year's conference. A non-refundable deposit is required to reserve transportation, housing and conference fees.

Blessey advised the gathered youth ministers, "Pick a secure number that you feel comfortable with and start to recruit kids. All of the other paperwork will get done. If you get more kids, which is really a great problem to have, you can call and try to get more spots."

Father Jeff Couture, chaplain at Immaculate High School, said he encourages high school students to get involved in their parish's youth groups.

For youth ministries to flourish, though, the support of the pastor is the vital element. "Support from your pastor is key," Father Couture told the youth ministers. "A priest can make or break a youth group. When cuts have to be made to the budget, youth ministry always gets cut. You have to let your pastors know that you need their support. And if you ask for help and they say, 'no,' ask again. If they say 'no' again, ask again."

(For more info on the diocesan youth ministry, contact Julie Rodgers: [youthministry@diobpt.org](mailto:youthministry@diobpt.org) or 203.416.1449.)

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# Faith Formation

## Intentional disciples want to serve!

TRUMBULL—Sherry Weddell, nationally acclaimed author, was the main speaker at the January 13 “Forming Intentional Disciples” seminar held at St. Catherine of Siena Parish. The conference was based on Weddell’s popular book of the same name. More than 235 people attended the event.

Conference attendees were stunned to learn that the fastest growing “religious” group in the United States are those who describe themselves as “unaffiliated” with any organized religion. “The goal of evangelization is more than just putting bodies in the pews,” Weddell said. “It is leading them, especially the lay faithful, to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.”

Father Peter Towsley, vicar for evangelization for the Diocese of Bridgeport, stated that “It is easy for people to drift away from their faith if they do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.” He added that “We need to move from merely telling people about Jesus... Encounter is essential for all disciples.”

Weddell said that “People who are disciples want to serve.” She co-founded and serves as co-director of the Catherine of Siena Institute ([www.siena.org](http://www.siena.org)). According to her research, at least 25 percent of American adults are on a spiritual journey, searching for a church, and parishes need to be inviting and ready to receive them.



SHERRY WEDDELL, nationally acclaimed author, was the main speaker at the January 13 “Forming Intentional Disciples” seminar held at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

Statistics also reveal that about 50 percent of fallen-away Catholics eventually participate in the life of Protestant denominations; many others who leave the Catholic Church simply no longer desire to participate in any organized religion.

These statistics carry profound consequences for the life of the Catholic Church going forward, including areas such as stewardship, attendance, apostolic creativity, pastoral governance, evangelization, vocations and religious education for children and adults.

Weddell believes that Catholics who are at the margins of Church life and who are at risk of leaving the faith could be

retained “if they were connected with people who are on fire with their Catholic faith.”

People who are on fire with their faith are “Intentional Disciples,” and parishes cannot

have too many of them.

Weddell described a “Double-in-Five Challenge” in which parishes set out to double their number of intentional disciples in five years. To do so, intentional disciples are given the opportunity to speak openly about the possibilities of a relationship with Jesus. “Parishes that attract and support new disciples in an ongoing way could quadruple their number of intentional disciples in 10 years,” she said.

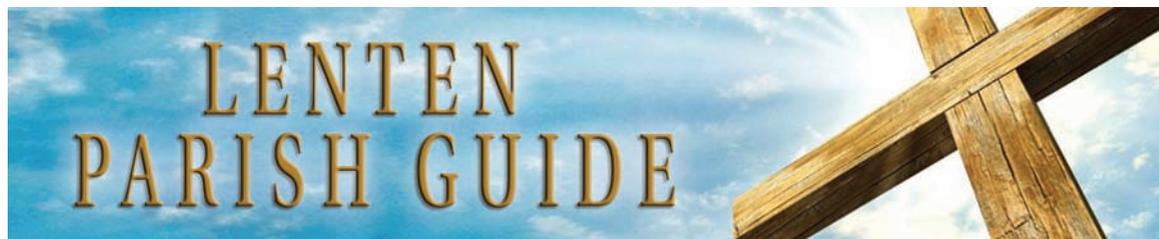
“Some conversions are gradual,” Weddell said, “while others are dramatic.” What is most important is that people begin their journey. She credits Pope Francis with rebuilding trust in the Church, especially among those who have stopped practicing the faith. Her statistics reveal that some 26 percent of lapsed Catholics (14 million Americans) are considering a return to the

Church because of Pope Francis.

Weddell challenged those in attendance to boldly live their faith like the saints. Many disciples, she noted, do not have the impact that they could have because they are suppressed to “fit” into a current parish culture of non-discipleship. They are “underground” disciples who would emerge easily if prompted.

Father Towsley summed up Weddell’s message by stating that “We are called at this moment to understand that we are not only seeking Jesus, but we are also sent by him to be missionary disciples.”

(On April 18, the Diocese of Bridgeport will welcome Dr. Scott Hahn and Kimberly Hahn, and Dr. Allen Hunt for an event offering inspiration, encouragement and creative solutions to the challenges of married life and parenting. For tickets, go to [www.popefrancisandthepromiseoffamily.eventbrite.com](http://www.popefrancisandthepromiseoffamily.eventbrite.com).)



### St. Thomas Aquinas Church

1719 Post Road, Fairfield, Connecticut

#### LENT 2015

“A TIME TO ‘LET GO’ & ‘LET GOD!’”

On the Sunday evenings of Lent – at 7:30pm we will celebrate  
“Evening Prayer of the Church & Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament”  
with a reflection by Father Victor Martin for our Lenten journey.



1st Sunday of Lent – February 22

**OUR COUNTDOWN TO ETERNITY!**

2nd Sunday of Lent – March 1  
**A TIME FOR A NEW “YOU!”**

3rd Sunday of Lent – March 8  
**FORGIVENESS IS THE JOURNEY HOME!**

4th Sunday of Lent – March 15  
**THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS!**

5th Sunday of Lent – March 22  
**WHAT HAVE WE DELETED OR ADDED THIS LENT?**

**PALM SUNDAY – March 29**  
**HOLY WEEK – EVERYTHING CHANGES!**

### Diocese of Norwich Office of Prison Ministry

#### A Restorative Justice Forum

with panel discussion  
led by Award-Winning Director, Leslie Neale  
at Christ the King Church Hall, Old Lyme  
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Screening of Documentary *Unlikely Friends*  
Screening and Panel Discussion  
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Pre-Registration is Required.

For more information on *Unlikely Friends* and to view the trailer,  
please visit [www.unlikelyfriendsforgive.com](http://www.unlikelyfriendsforgive.com)

# Respect Life

## We need to protect all life

By CAITLYN MITCHELL

My name is Caitlyn Mitchell and I AM THE PRO-LIFE GENERATION. I'm twelve years old and I am a seventh-grader at St. Mary's School in Ridgefield.

This was my second time going to the March for Life and personally it was better than the first time I went in 2014. My mom and I drove down to Washington, D.C., on the Wednesday before the March to attend the Youth Conference and Expo. The presenters were both inspiring and informative. Their testimonies made me feel strong and renewed my commitment and passion to one day abolish abortion.

One of the groups that was really inspiring was called "Silent No More." They are a group of people who have had abortions, performed abortions, lost father-

hood due to abortion or lost siblings to abortion and regret it and mourn the loss of the babies. They were very brave to admit their mistakes and carry signs, fighting to make others understand that life begins in the womb.

The next morning we went to the Youth Rally and Mass for Life at the Verizon Center. There was an enthusiastic pro-life DJ that made us get on our feet and dance; after that a band sang and praised God. It was really exciting to see over 28,000 young people who feel the same way as I do. After lots of singing and dancing, we all prayed a Rosary and celebrated the Mass for Life. The Mass was celebrated by the Archbishop of Washington and was concelebrated with Cardinal Dolan, 20+ bishops, and hundreds of priests. The homily was really powerful.

Once the Mass was finished

we all got ready for the March. The March started at 1:00 at the National Mall. Over 600,000



people marched all the way to the Supreme Court. My mom and I followed the group "Silent No More" because we wanted to hear their powerful testimonies.



CAITLYN MITCHELL AND HER MOTHER, Jennifer, spent some quality "mother-daughter time" together during their pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., for the annual March for Life. (l) Caitlyn's T-shirt reads, "Pretend I am a tree and save me."

When we got to the Supreme Court we saw about one hundred angry pro-choice protesters but they were nothing compared to the size of our pro-life group. The "Silent No More" testimonies had so much conviction and emotional power that I hope and pray that pro-choice protesters may realize the truth.

Overall the March for Life was another great success and I hope

that all who read this will be inspired to attend the March for Life with us next year! We need to protect all life from conception to natural death. After all isn't the Fifth Commandment "Thou shall not kill!"

(I made a small video of my trip this year that I invite you to view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odhtBBr3DkQ&feature=youtu.be> Warm.)

## LENTEN PARISH GUIDE

### St. Lawrence Parish

Huntington Center, Shelton

Special Noontime Mass for Lent  
Don't Just Give Up ..... Show up!

Traditional Lenten practices often involve giving up a favorite dessert or drink. And those little sacrifices are good for they remind us of the great sacrifice of the Lord, a gift we remember and celebrate here each day at Mass.

In addition to our regularly scheduled daily 9:00 am Mass, the Parish is offering  
Mass at 12:10 pm

### Lent

#### St. Thomas the Apostle, Norwalk

Something NEW—starting Friday, Feb. 20, Stations of the Cross offered at 7:00 PM - followed by a light dinner of lentil soup with Fr. Mirek in the Rectory.

Starting February 24, 2015 St. Thomas the Apostle will have Confessions each Tuesday evening from 7 to 9 PM in the Church.

Bible Study is offered on the "Book of Exodus" Wednesday's beginning Feb. 25 thru March 25 with a choice at either 10:00 am or 7:00 pm in the Msgr. Toomey Room.

March 26—Philosophy Lecture & Pasta Dinner at 7:00 PM in the Msgr. Toomey Room. Subject: "German Transcendental Idealism vs. Absolute Idealism" Please R.S.V.P. for this event.

Join us for:

- Stations of the Cross
- Reconciliation
- Bible Study
- Philosophy Talk

St. Thomas the Apostle  
203 East Ave  
Norwalk, CT

203.866.3141



# Ecumenical Service

## Bishop prays for Christian unity

By FATHER COLIN  
MCKENNA

BRIDGEPORT—"Amen" and applause greeted Bishop Frank J. Caggiano's homily at the "Unity in Diversity" service at St. John Episcopal Church in downtown Bridgeport.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, celebrated this year from January 18-25, concluded in the Bridgeport area on Sunday afternoon, January 25, with a joyous two-hour worship service in which the bishop and other religious leaders participated.

Nearly 100 members of choirs and praise teams from Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox congregations participated in the ecumenical prayer service, and another 100 people attended the service as congregants.

For most Roman Catholics in the Diocese of Bridgeport, the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, held each January, can come and go with barely a notice. In the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic laypeople and clergy approached ecumenical dialogue and prayer with enthusiasm, but since then, ecumenical activities for many Catholics have fallen to a low level of priority.

Despite serious differences with other Christian churches, Catholics do have a responsibility to try to find common ground with their fellow Christians.

Clergy from the Diocese of Bridgeport and ten Protestant and Orthodox churches and organizations officiated at the ceremony. Bishop Caggiano was the designated homilist.

The prayer service centered around the theme of the Samaritan woman at the well, who met Jesus and to whom Jesus said, "Give me to drink." The theme revolved around baptismal waters, and how baptism into Jesus Christ unites us all as Christian brothers and sisters.

Building on the theme of one common baptism, Bishop Caggiano proclaimed at the outset of his homily that "we gather here as the larger Church of Christ—as the baptized."

He then captivated his listeners by stating that "we come here today divided as brothers and sis-



THE PRAISE TEAM of the Bethel AME Church presented a "Musical and Dance Offering" as part of the ecumenical service at St. John Episcopal Church in Bridgeport. (PHOTOS BY FATHER COLIN MCKENNA)

ters," and that "the division that exists among us is a scandal to the larger world."

Despite the challenging tone of his homily, Bishop Caggiano

expressed hope that one day, all Christians will worship in one Church, professing one faith.

"Jesus Christ is the Lord of us all," he said. "We must fix our

eyes on Jesus Christ."

He concluded by emphasizing that in order to find true unity in diversity, Christians need to pray for the grace of humility in order to be healed. His homily received many heartfelt "Amen's" from the congregation, consisting largely of non-Catholics, and a round of enthusiastic applause.

Three separate red-robed choirs from different churches brought joyous, soulful singing to the event, and two other musical groups and some liturgical dancers made the entire service entertaining and spiritually uplifting.

One of the intercessory prayers summed up the purpose and spirit of the worship service and the weeklong celebration: "God of eternal compassion... grant us wisdom to listen to your voice that calls us to unity in our diversity."

The afternoon's worship service and festivities were sponsored by the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport. After the prayers of sending forth, at the



BISHOP CAGGIANO'S HOMILY at the prayer service produced many heartfelt "Amen's" and enthusiastic applause.

conclusion of the ceremony, participants were dancing in the church to the rhythms of the Latin Band from Bridgeport's St. Charles Borromeo Parish. Many were hugging each other joyfully and praising God. ■

## LENTEN PARISH GUIDE

### Saint James Parish

† LENT 2015 †

"Come back to the Lord with all your heart. Leave the past in ashes and turn to God with tears and fasting, for He is slow to anger and ready to forgive." Joel 2:13

#### ASH WEDNESDAY — FEBRUARY 18

Ashes will be distributed during Eucharist  
8:00 am, 12:10 pm, & 6:30 pm

#### DAILY EUCHARIST

8:00 am Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday  
5:30 pm Tuesday & Thursday

#### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Tuesdays: 7:00-9:00 pm – February 24,  
March 3, 10, 17, 24

Thursday: March 5 before 1st Friday – 4:45 pm

Saturdays: 12:15-1:30 pm

First Reconciliation: February 19, 21, & 23 – 6:30 pm

#### A Day for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesday: March 24 – 9:00 am-10:00 pm  
Fr. Tom and other clergy will be available  
for Confession and healing prayer.

#### COMMUNAL PENCE SERVICE FOR ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Monday, March 30, 7:00 pm in the Church

#### PRAYER AND DEVOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

##### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

All parishioners are invited to participate  
in personal stations at anytime.

##### Stations of the Cross:

Fridays at 7:30 pm in the Church  
on February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20

There will be reserved parking

##### "The Living Stations of the Cross":

with the children of St. James School,  
Friday, March 27, 12:30 and 7:30 pm

##### Eucharistic Adoration in the Parish Center

Practice the art of solitude and silence

Monday-Friday: 8:00 am-8:00 pm (during Lent)

Friday: 3:00 pm – Recitation of the Divine  
Mercy Chaplet

##### Recitation of the Rosary

Monday-Friday: 5:00 pm in Parish Center Chapel

Saturday: 7:30 am in the Church

#### PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

##### FOR MEN—Beloved Sons' Gatherings

Saturday: February 21 and March 31 at 6:15 am  
Thursday: March 5 at 7:30 pm

##### FOR WOMEN

Lenten Retreat – Saturday, March 21 – Parish Center  
Breaking Bread – March 7 – 8:00 am – Parish Center

##### FOR TEENS—Youth/Teen Holy Hour & Fellowship

Gatherings Every Monday from 6:00-8:00 pm  
in the Chapel and Parish Center  
Last Supper Meal March 23 – 6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
"The Passion of the Christ" March 16 – 5:30 pm-9:00 pm  
Teen Stations of the Cross March 30 – 6:00 pm-8:00 pm

##### • Walking the Sacred Path

A six week retreat beginning February 18, based on the writings  
and music of Dan Shutte, a Catholic composer. At-home reading,  
prayer, journaling combined with the group gatherings. There are  
two sessions available: Wednesday – 1:00-2:15 pm or 7:15-8:30 pm

##### • Taize Prayer Services

Spend an hour before the Eucharist in prayer and the contemplative  
chanting of the monastic community of Taize, France. Wednesdays-  
6:00-7:00 pm - Parish Center Chapel - February 25-March 25

## Lent

## Is Sunday the 'Sabbath'?

By FATHER COLIN MCKENNA

Catholics often refer to Sunday as the "Sabbath" rather than the "Lord's Day." *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), published in English in 1994 attempts to correct this terminology. Some day, with the help of proper catechesis, Catholics may unfailingly refer to Sunday as the "Lord's Day" rather than the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is still in effect, but the "Shabbat" begins at sundown on Friday and ends with the appearance of the first three stars in the sky on Saturday night. By the

old way of counting, that's when the first day of the week, Sunday, begins. Jesus himself rested in the tomb from sundown Friday until before sunrise on Sunday. With his Resurrection, Jesus made Sunday his day—the Lord's Day.

For the Jewish people, our brothers and sisters in the Lord who first received God's word and experienced God's real presence, the Sabbath remains a day of rest. In the time of Jesus, there were myriad prescriptions regarding Sabbath rest, and violations of these laws were considered serious infractions. Even today,

Jewish people who observe the Shabbat take great pains to avoid doing any work between Friday evening and Sunday morning.

As Catholics, we are not bound by the laws of the Shabbat, so the Lord's Day is not one necessarily free from all work. Like the Sabbath, however, we should strive to make Sundays a day of rest and renewal.

Do you wait until Sunday to do your grocery shopping? Is Sunday your day to mow the lawn? Do you own a store or a restaurant that remains open on Sundays? These are all areas

where we can honor Jesus by refraining from ordinary activities on the Lord's Day.

The Lord's Day should be a time for spiritual renewal. Like the Sabbath, our Sunday begins at sundown the day before, which we call the "vigil" of the Lord's Day. In the early 1970s, many of our parishes moved their first Sunday Mass to 12 noon on Saturday. These Masses were very popular because one's Sunday obligation could be fulfilled by about 1 pm on Saturday. Eventually, the bishops realized that noon was too early for a vigil



Mass, so most dioceses restricted the celebration of the vigil Mass to 4 pm at the earliest.

Whether it is our custom to attend Mass on Saturday or on Sunday, participation at Mass in our local faith community is the primary way to "make holy" the Lord's Day. In our present economic situa-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

## LENTEN PARISH GUIDE



## SAINT MARY'S CHURCH

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

**February 15: Quinquagesima Sunday:** *Missa In te Domine speravi* (Anerio); *In illo tempore, assumpsit Jesus* (Morales); *Ave Regina caelorum* (Philips); organ music of Bach

**Wednesday, February 18, 5:30pm: Ash Wednesday:** *Missa Inter vestibulum* (Guerrero); *Emendemus in melius* (Byrd); *Inter vestibulum* (Morales); *Ne irascaris Domine* (Byrd)

**February 22: First Sunday of Lent:** *Missa Ego flos campi* for double choir (Padilla); *Ave Regina caelorum* for double choir (Palestrina); *Miserere nostri* (Tallis); *In jejunio et fletu* (Tallis); with the Student Schola

**March 1: Second Sunday of Lent:** *Missa in honorem Sanctae Ceciliae* (Hughes) [première]; *O bone Jesu* (Parsons)

**March 8: Third Sunday of Lent:** *Missa In illo tempore à 6* (Monteverdi); *In illo tempore* (Gombert); *Lamentabatur Jacob* (Morales)



**St. Cecilia Society Concert Series**  
Sunday, February 22, 4:00pm: James Wetzel, organ  
works of Bach, Mendelssohn, and Franck

Sunday, March 15, 4:00pm: Sharon Levin, flute; Gerard Reuter, oboe;  
David Hughes, piano works of works of Telemann, Marcello, and Quantz

## LENT AT SAINT MARY CHURCH 2015

## LENTEN CONFESSIONS

**All 82 parishes in Fairfield County are open! Tuesday Nights — 7pm to 9pm**  
The Lenten season reminds us that in our Christian life we must always aspire to conversion and that when we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently the desire for Gospel perfection is kept alive in believers. Starting date: Tuesday, February 24, 2015, Saint Mary Church, Norwalk.

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Starting Friday, February 20, 2015, the Stations of the Cross will be prayed every Friday in Lent. 8:45am, 5pm and 7:00pm in Spanish.

## LENTEN MISSION

March 8-11 at 7:30pm - Parish Lenten Mission by Fr. Wolfgang Seitz, ORC.  
"THE WORKS OF THE ANGELS"

## LENTEN FESTIVAL OF SAINTS MOVIES

Once again, Saint Monica Sodality of Saint Mary invites all of you to join us in this inspirational way of preparing ourselves for this Lenten Season. Every Sunday during Lent we will have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary and Benediction at 6:00pm and at 6:30pm the movie. As always, our very "unique" popcorn and munchies will be available. Please come and support Saint Monica Sodality!

Starting date: Sunday, February 22, 2015.

## RECITALS

Sunday, February 22, 4:00pm  
James Wetzel, organ

works of Bach, Mendelssohn, and Franck

Sunday, March 15, 4:00pm  
Sharon Levin, flute; Gerard Reuter, oboe; David Hughes, piano  
works of works of Telemann, Marcello, and Quantz

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# Lent

## Ash Wednesday, February 18

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, falls on February 18 this year. Lent originated as a mirroring of Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the desert in preparation for his public ministry.

In fact, there are 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The fasting and abstinence during Lent is intended as a preparation for Easter. Since every Sunday is, in itself, a commemoration of Christ's Resurrection, those days are seen as falling outside the Lenten observance. Fasting on the Lord's Day, a day of joy, is considered inappropriate.

Accordingly, Christians fast from Ash Wednesday to Saturday (four days), and then from Monday to Saturday (six days) during the next six weeks,



thus making 40 days.

The ashes, made from palm branches blessed the previous year on Palm Sunday, are placed on the heads of the faithful, along with a short Scriptural exhortation, either "Remember

that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19), or "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

*(For times of Ash Wednesday observances, contact your local parish.)*

### SABBATH FROM PAGE 20

tion, some Catholics are required to work on Sunday. If one's livelihood demands it, there is no sin incurred in working on Sundays. After all, parish priests technically "work" on Sundays, too!

Sometimes it takes a long time for the Church to adopt newer, correct terminology when referring to its own practices. I have found, through painful experience, that it is usually better not to "correct" someone who calls Sunday the Sabbath. Early one morning someone greeted me by saying, "Happy Sabbath!"

Unfortunately, (and maybe because I am not a morning person) I said, "Technically, it is not the Sabbath." Let's just say it did not go over too well!

If you look at the index of the CCC, you will find many beneficial topics listed under "Sunday." Reviewing these highlighted items helps to deepen our understanding of and appreciation for the Lord's Day. Parents may even find these topics useful for reviewing with their children. Using the Catechism is a great way for parents to be the first and best teach-

ers of the faith for their children!

Paragraphs 2190 and 2191 of the "new" Catechism sum up the Church's teaching on the difference between Sunday and the Sabbath:

2190: The Sabbath, which represented the completion of the first creation, has been replaced by Sunday which recalls the new creation inaugurated by the Resurrection of Christ.

2191: The Church celebrates the day of Christ's Resurrection on the "eighth day," Sunday, which is rightly called the Lord's Day.

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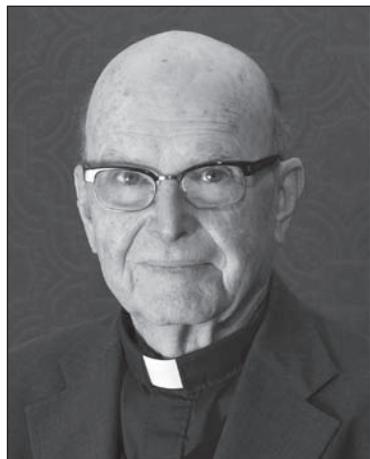
## Obituary

## Msgr. George Birge, 87, educator and pastor

STRATFORD—Msgr. George D. Birge died on January 20 at Golden Hill Health Center in Milford. He had recently been under hospice care.

A Stratford native, he was born on March 22, 1927, the fourth of seven children. He was baptized in St. James Church, and served as an altar boy there throughout his youth. He graduated from Stratford High School, where he was class president, captain of the basketball team, and voted "Most Popular" by his classmates.

His mother accepted his diploma at graduation because he enlisted in the Navy during his senior year during World War II. He served in the South Pacific, and in later years told stories



MSGR. GEORGE D. BIRGE

about his time in China navigating the Yangtze River on the LST #636 transport boat. While in China, he also consulted with

Jesuits he met in Shanghai about becoming a priest.

Upon returning to the States, he attended Fairfield University and graduated in 1951 as a member of the first graduating class, and was the university's first alumnus to be ordained a priest. He attended St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield and completed his studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Md. He was ordained by Bishop (later Cardinal) Lawrence Shehan in St. Augustine Cathedral on May 10, 1956.

Msgr. Birge's first assignment was as a parochial vicar at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield. In 1958 he was appointed to teach at Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield

and in 1959 he became a full-time faculty member and dean of discipline at Stamford Catholic High School (now Trinity Catholic). In 1962 he became spiritual director at the former Christ the King Seminary in Southport.

He was chaplain of Villa Maria Retreat House in Stamford, and was a member of the priests' personnel committee for a five-year term starting in January, 1969.

In addition to St. Thomas, Msgr. Birge was a parochial vicar at St. Augustine Cathedral Parish, Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport, St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, St. Clement Parish in Stamford and St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield. In 1971 he was named pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Georgetown and at the same time took the responsibility as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Redding.

During that time he took a sabbatical to study at Yale Divinity School in New Haven. He also attained a certification from the Westchester Institute for Training in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

Continuing his lifetime love of teaching, in 1977 he joined the faculty of Central Catholic High School (now All Saints School) in Norwalk, and was resident chaplain at the Notre Dame Provincial House in

Ridgefield. He was also a member of the diocesan Matrimonial Tribunal during those years. He served as weekend assistant and resident priest at Assumption Parish in Westport, St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Ridgefield, St. Peter Parish in Bridgeport, St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, and St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bridgeport.

He was temporary administrator of Christ the King Parish in Trumbull before becoming pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown on August 1, 1986. He was appointed Prelate of Honor to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, on December 19, 1996.

During Msgr. Birge's tenure, St. Rose grew to include more than 2,500 families. He was instrumental in the purchase of additional property on Church Hill Rd. as the first step in a long range expansion and renovation program. That program was completed by his successor, Msgr. Robert Weiss.

In 1999, Msgr. Birge was appointed pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Sherman. The appointment was effective July 1 of that year. He remained at Holy Trinity for more than 10 years, until his retirement on August 10, 2002.

He is survived in this diocese  
▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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## DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT: FEBRUARY 15—MARCH 14

### FEBRUARY

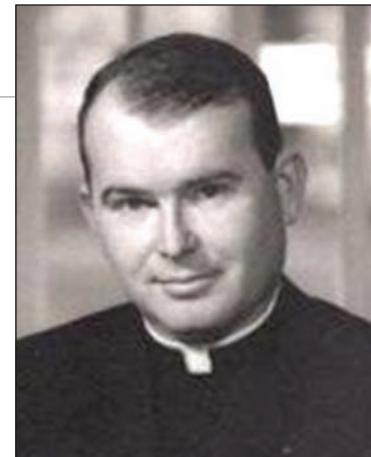
17	Rev. George M. Karcinski	2006
20	Msgr. Andrew J. Hajus	1988
22	Msgr. George B. Curtiss	1982
23	Msgr. Miroslav J. Myschshyn	1980
24	Rev. Joseph E. Russo	1998
	Rev. Walter J. Seekamp	2012
26	Msgr. Henry E. Flanagan	1966

### MARCH

1	Rev. Leonard M. Conlon	1976
5	Msgr. John J. Pitonak	1990
8	Rev. Boleslaus Rarus	2005
10	Rev. Raymond H. Stephenson	1990
12	Rev. Martin Hitchcock	2014
	Rev. Leo Suwinski	2005
13	Deacon Joseph L. Cross	2003
14	Rev. Vincent P. Cleary	1989

# Remembering Father 'Bo' Birge

## Student recalls unforgettable teacher



MSGR. GEORGE D. BIRGE

By **BARRY WALLACE**

When I retired from teaching last June after a 42-year run in the classroom, one of the first things I did was to sit down and write a thank you letter to my high school basketball coach. He was also my theology teacher, but most people knew him as Father (later Msgr.) George D. Birge.

Fellow priests, friends, and family called him "Bo." It was an affectionate nickname that suited him well, a handsome, bright and affable man. His students at Christ The King Prep in the 1960s called him "Smokey." When we piled into his car after games, we would sing to him,

"No you can't get to heaven in Father Birge's car cause the smoke's so thick you can't see where you are."

This was in honor of the stogies he chewed on and occasionally lit to our utter

amazement, a man of the clergy who smoked cigars with gusto. When we drove to away games, he also amazed us by pulling out this strange plastic slingshot, and shooting quarters into the tollbooth baskets along I-95. That was Father Birge, always fun to be with!

Christ the King was a Preparatory Seminary founded by Bishop Curtis in the spirit of Vatican II, and located in Southport. Most of us did not go on to become priests, but we were given the extraordinary good fortune of being formed by three good men, who were totally unlike each other but brought great gifts to our lives: Father Andrew Gilbride, the tough and fair father who served as rector; Father John Giuliani, artist and visionary; and Father "Bo" Birge, an avuncular figure, bright, full of fun, not above flaunting the rules here and there, and always rock solid in his faith and guidance.

Father Birge was a young priest in the 1960s and we all loved him, a genuinely nice man with a self-deprecating sense of humor and a good deal of per-

sonal generosity. He had been captain of the basketball team at Stratford High School, so he was named coach as our new school of 60 boys tried to get a sports program off the ground.

To my relief he picked me for the team and made me his shooting guard. Sometimes at practice, he would show us his moves—a quick dribble through pressure defenses and a sneaky little double delay layup to get under the arms of bigger shot blockers. He had some style, a classy little guard who could fake left and streak right toward the basket in his cassock and street shoes.

Father Birge was the kind of priest who might show up in a

J. F. Powers short story—an unforgettable man with golf clubs in the car and his breviary on the front seat.

We appreciated his easy-going style in class.

An avid reader

and first-rate intellect, he taught us the Old and New Testaments in a way that deepened my faith and also introduced me to some great Bible stories that I still think about.

In our senior year with the '60s veering out of control, Father Birge taught us some of the theories and criticism directed at the Church and religious belief. One chapter in our lesson plan covered the "Death of God Theory," that had gained so much attention in the media in April 1966, when *Time* magazine ran a bold cover line that said, "Is God Dead?"

Father Birge labored through some awkward explanations, tripping over his own words, until he shut the book in front of us and said, "Why are we doing this damn stuff anyways!" The class exploded in laughter.

It was one of the many ways that this amiable priest showed his faith in God to a group of boys. In his own unassuming way he was also telling us something important during a time of change: don't get caught up in ideology and extremes; don't take

yourself too seriously, and don't lose your sense of humor—and common sense.

We knew we were lucky to have him for a friend and mentor. Over the years I would run into classmates and there wasn't one who didn't break into a smile when Father Birge's name came up. Never stuffy or rigid in his teaching, he was a man's man who was always present to people—and that made his priesthood a human, joyous witness.

When I learned of Father

Birge's death, I took in a breath for a moment and I was that young man again at Christ the King. Now I look at the pictures, and realize he was a young man, too. In our youth, we form bonds that last a lifetime, and we're fortunate if men like Father Bo Birge come into our lives.

In his nearly 58 years of ministry, I'm sure Father Birge had his stress, loneliness and disappointments—but he loved the life of a priest and treated all those who crossed his path with affection. His car may have been full of

smoke, but he saw through it all to what was important in life: the need to live joyfully and faithfully. May the living God bless and reward him for all the goodness he brought to our lives. ■

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## Column: Joe Pisani



## Let go and let God—easier said than done

## SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

After decades of boozing, my father finally found Alcoholics Anonymous and spent the last 25 years of his life sober. And he would never let a day pass without sharing some of his AA wisdom with us, like “Let go and let God.” Easier said than done.

Actually, it got a little annoying listening to him, probably because I preferred to complain

about my problems and let them fester rather than turn them over to my “Higher Power.”

He had dozens of sayings and aphorisms he learned in AA about the importance of accepting God’s will. “Get out of the driver’s seat,” he’d advise me when my life seemed to be careening off the cliff because I was driving with my eyes closed and refused to let go of the steering wheel.

Then, he gave me a prayer

card that said, “Jesus, I trust in you.” I, however, could say, “Jesus, I trust in you,” a hundred times a day, but at the end of the day, I was always waiting for the other shoe to drop. You see, I trust Jesus if his will is a close approximation of mine.

I recently realized yet again how miserable I am with “trust” when I had to have a biopsy. I’m ashamed to admit I failed—I didn’t fail the biopsy; I failed the “trust” test.

All my family members, friends and coworkers were praying for me, and several hundred times a day, my personal prayer went something like this, “Thy will be done. Thy will be done. Thy will be done.” Which eventually turned into “My will be done.”

Then, a month later, I had to go to the emergency room when I was stricken with a debilitating pain in my back, which fortunately, or unfortunately, turned out to be a kidney stone.

That night as I was leafing through my prayer book for inspiration, I stumbled upon the “Prayer to Accept Suffering,” along with another one appropriately titled, “Prayer to Suffer in Silence.”

That kidney stone certainly didn’t inspire silence. It inspired loud yelling and, I confess, a bit of cursing. I’d love to have the grace to find acceptance during suffering and sickness, but usually I get into one-sided arguments with God, where I do all the talking, which is pretty predictable and goes something like this:

“Lord, I don’t think this is fair. I didn’t deserve this.”

“Lord, a lot of people depend on me. I can’t get sick.”

“Lord, HEAL ME!”

I told my story to a woman at the rectory when I went to have Masses offered for friends who were sick, and she reached into her purse and pulled out some prayer cards for me. One was titled, “The Divine Mercy Chaplet for the Sick and Dying.” When she gave it to me, she discreetly recommended that I “ignore the ‘dying’ part.”

Another was “A Prayer of the Sick to Our Lady of Lourdes,” who certainly knows a thing or two about miraculous healings. It said, in part, “Lord, help me to see that my illness has an important part to play in bringing me to the fullness of the person you have destined me to be. . . . Though I do not quite understand your way of directing me right now, I wish to let go of any possessiveness over my life. I surrender all the details of my present situation into your loving care.”

That just about summed up everything my father ever said to me about the importance of “sur-

rendering.” Another favorite saying in his vast AA repertoire was “You have to surrender to win.”

The woman also gave me a prayer from Padre Pio’s spiritual adviser, which said, “O, Jesus, I surrender myself to you; take care of everything!” This priest, I thought, must have been in the same AA group as my father. Whoever surrendered his worries, difficulties and problems to Jesus would receive special care, the priest said.

I later learned that the woman who gave me the prayers was suffering from a debilitating illness. You would have never known because she suffered in silence and picked up the cross Christ had given her without complaining.

The amazing thing is that she reminded me of my mother and my father, who both had cancer in their later years and never complained. I’m convinced they were given special graces and a supernatural strength because they knew enough to get out of the driver’s seat and let go and let God.

OBITUARY FROM PAGE 22

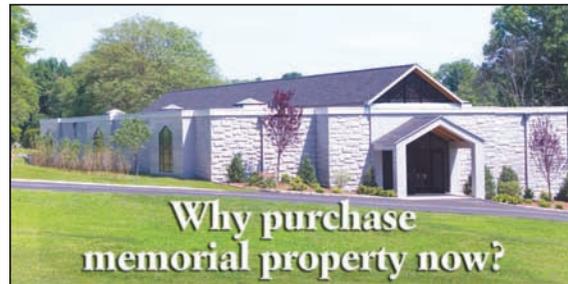
by his brother James and sisters Marie Minahan, Nancy Goodrich and Ellen Stadmueller, all of Stratford; Jane Greenwood of Trumbull; and their spouses and children.

Msgr. Birge had continued to concelebrate Mass at St. James, his home parish, during his retirement. He was received into St. James Church on Friday, January 23, at 4 pm, and a parish vigil Mass was celebrated that evening

at 7:30. Father Thomas Lynch, St. James’ pastor, was the celebrant and homilist.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial on Saturday, January 24, at 10:30 am. Msgr. John Hossan, a good friend of Msgr. Birge, gave the homily.

Burial with full military honors followed on Monday at St. Lawrence Cemetery, West Haven.



### Why purchase memorial property now?

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

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

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## Column: Thomas Hicks



## Isaiah and Willy Loman

## POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

Isaiah prophesied during the eighth century B.C. He is said to be the prophet who brings out the eloquence in God ("For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you" (Isa.54:10)).

A general theme of Isaiah is trust in God instead of in human beings. There are a series of judgments against human perversity and failure. Isaiah consistently counsels king and people to live by faith in God, rather than relying in any ultimate way on human beings or political alliances. The message Isaiah tries to get his compatriots to hear is that God is faithful and humans are not. Humans will fail you, so if you are putting your trust in them, prepare to be disappointed. There is the fickleness of human promises. Isaiah keeps reiterating the message: "Stop trusting in man" (Isa.2:22).

This idea is echoed in other parts of Scripture, for example: Psalm 118:6-8: "The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? . . . It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."

There is the disturbing declaration concerning Jesus in John 2:23-25: "While Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Passover Festival, many believed in him as they saw the miracles he performed. But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew what men were really like. There was no need for anyone to tell him about them."

Ever since it was first performed in 1949, *Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller, has been recognized as a milestone of the American theater. The play is generally interpreted as a depressing but truthful reflection of our society, a criticism of the American Dream where personal

success and self-worth are measured by one's financial prosperity. Many view it as a harsh criticism of American capitalism and its view that it is the career that makes a person successful.

*Death of a Salesman* is about many things. I wonder if the play could also be about what Isaiah says about not trusting human resources.

*Death of a Salesman* is full of betrayal. We learn that the father, Willy, was abandoned by his own father when Willy was still a baby ("I never had a chance to talk to him"). Willy betrays his wife's love by an affair with another woman.

Willy understands his son Biff's failure in business and

inability to hold a job as a betrayal and rejection of himself. Willy's other son, Happy, has a decent job and apparently endless women at his disposal, but he is lonely. Willy perceives his philandering and lack of great success as an act of betrayal.

There are three very poignant scenes in the play. One is when Willy decides to ask his boss, Howard, to give him a local office job at the New York headquarters. Willy thinks that getting the new job is a sure thing. He is certain that Howard likes him and feels happy and confident as he meets with his boss. But rather than giving Willy a transfer to the New York office, Howard fires him ("I don't want you to represent us. I've been meaning to tell you for a long time now.") Willy literally begs Howard for a job. He recalls how he held Howard in his arms when Howard was a newborn. He begs to be allowed to keep his traveling job, offering himself on lower and lower pay rates. Howard refuses and walks out on Willy.

Another poignant scene is when the son, Biff, decides to ask the man he once worked for, Bill

Oliver, for a business loan. Biff thinks he made a good impression and is hopeful Oliver will give him a loan. He recalls Oliver as saying, "Biff, if you ever need anything come to me." Later Biff tells his brother what happened with Oliver. "I waited six hours for him. Finally, he came out. Had no idea who I was. I saw

"I know Isaiah is, and I wonder if Arthur Miller is, telling us not to put ultimate trust in humanity."

him for one minute. He walked away."

The third scene is when Willy and his two sons meet to have dinner together. Willy has looked forward to it all day. He is still shattered by his experience with Howard, and then hears about Biff and Oliver. He becomes delusional and starts talking to himself.

When he goes to the bath-

room, his sons leave him babbling in the toilet and ditch him for two girls they pick up.

One might even say that Willy's death involves a final betrayal. Willy expects his funeral to be "massive." "They'll come from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey—I am known!" Willy's actual funeral is sparsely attended, and his wife, Linda, wonders "why didn't anybody come? Where are all the people he knew?"

I know Isaiah is, and I wonder if Arthur Miller is, telling us not to put ultimate trust in humanity. Don't put too much trust in other people and their institutions. Human beings are not sufficient for themselves, nor sufficient for others. No one is sufficient to be "THE trusted one." Don't trust humanity for what only God can give.

"But those who hope in Yahweh shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and never tire"

(Isaiah 40:31). ■

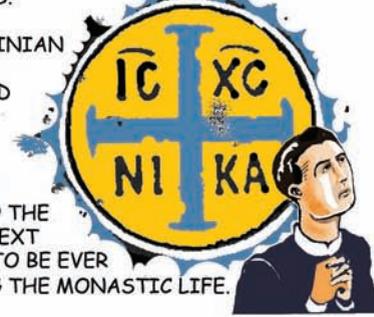
## SAINTLY LIVES

BY ED WALDRON

BLESSED  
IVAN ZIATYK

b. 1899 ~ d. 1952

THE ZIATYK'S WERE UKRAINIAN RITE CATHOLICS WHO LIVED IN ODREKHOVA WHICH IS TODAY LOCATED IN POLAND. IVAN WAS PIOUS AT AN EARLY AGE AND EXCELLED IN HIS STUDIES. HE COMPLETED HIS EDUCATION AT THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC SEMINARY IN PRZEMYSL, WAS ORDAINED IN 1923 AND RETURNED TO THE SAME SEMINARY WHERE HE TAUGHT THEOLOGY AND PROVIDED SPIRITUAL DIRECTION TO THE SEMINARIANS FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS. HE YEARNED TO BE EVER CLOSER TO GOD BY LIVING THE MONASTIC LIFE.



IN 1936, HE MADE HIS FIRST PROFESSION WITH THE MONASTIC CONGREGATION OF REDEMPTORIST FATHERS AND LIVED IN MONASTERIES IN STANISLAVIV AND LVIV. IN 1941, HE WAS ELEVATED TO SUPERIOR OF THE MONASTERY OF DORMITION OF MOTHER OF GOD IN TERNOPIL AND, LATER, SERVED AS SUPERIOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP IN ZBOISKA.



THE END OF WW2 USHERED IN A NEW REIGN OF TERROR AGAINST UKRAINIAN CHRISTIANS BY STALIN'S ATHEISTIC REGIME. AFTER HIS SUPERIORS HAD EITHER BEEN EXILED, IMPRISONED OR EXECUTED, FATHER ZIATYK WAS GIVEN THE DUTIES OF VICAR GENERAL OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH IN 1949.



THE SOVIETS WERE DETERMINED TO CRUSH UKRAINIAN CULTURE AND THE CHURCH WAS ITS BACKBONE. IN 1950, FATHER ZIATYK WAS ARRESTED AND ACCUSED, "... HE PROMOTES THE IDEAS OF THE ROMAN POPE, OF SPREADING THE CATHOLIC FAITH AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE WHOLE WORLD AND OF MAKING ALL CATHOLICS."



IN ALL, FATHER ZIATYK HAD BEEN INTERROGATED 72 TIMES, BUT NEVER GAVE IN TO HIS TORTURERS. HE WAS SENTENCED, EXILED AND IMPRISONED IN IRKHUTSK, RUSSIA. ON GOOD FRIDAY, 1952, HE WAS BEATEN SEVERELY, SOAKED IN WATER AND LEFT UNCONSCIOUS IN THE SIBERIAN ICE. HE DIED IN THE PRISON INFIRMARY ON EASTER SUNDAY.



# Bits & Pieces

**ENCOURAGE** apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions meets monthly on Saturday mornings at 10:30 am and is strictly confidential. For more info, contact the Norwalk Chapter: EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com.

**LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY** sponsored by Knights of Lithuania of St. George Parish, Bridgeport on Sun., **Feb. 15**, at noon and special program at 1 pm. For more info, call 203.878.0519.

**MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE** Mon., **Feb. 16**, at 7:30 pm, Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, with Fr. Larry Carew; Mon., **March 16**, at 7:30 pm, St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton, with Fr. Bob Kwiatkowski; and Thurs., **March 19**, at 7:30 pm, Sacred Heart Parish, Greenwich, with Fr. Larry Carew. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal office: 203.268.8253

**CURSILLO ULTREYAS** are held at locations around

the diocese: Mon., **Feb. 16**, at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Stamford at 7:30 pm; Thurs., **Feb. 19**, at St. Mary Parish, Bethel at 7:30 pm; Thurs., **March 5**, at St. James Parish, Stratford at 7:30 pm. For more info, email jkovacs@snet.net. What is Cursillo? Find out at [www.natl.cursillo.org/bridgeport/](http://www.natl.cursillo.org/bridgeport/).

**MARDI GRAS** International Dinner at St. Leo Parish, Stamford, Tues., **Feb. 17**, from 7:10 pm featuring homemade dinners. Cost: \$20/adults, \$10/children. Reservations needed. Email daesposito1229@gmail.com or call 203.322.1669.

**MOMs+DADs** Down syndrome prayer/support group meets the third Thurs. of the month, (**Feb. 19**) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 7:30 pm. Michelle O'Mara, Director of Pastoral Care and Outreach for St. Catherine's Center for special needs will be speaking. For more info, email Andee at [aschanne@optimum.net](mailto:aschanne@optimum.net).

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of greater Danbury (age 18-35) Adoration chapel & social, Fri., **Feb. 20**, at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, from 7-9 pm. Open to all! Refreshments served. For more info, call Maria: 203.798.6923

**WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT:** "Our Lenten Spiritual Bouquet" at St. Leo Parish, Stamford, on Sat., **Feb. 21**, from 9 am-2 pm. Prayer, Scripture, music, friendship, quiet meditation and inspiration! For more info, or to register, email Rita Logan: [timritaker@yahoo.com](mailto:timritaker@yahoo.com).

**MASS MOB III** Coming to Danbury! Join us on Sun., **Feb. 22**, at 10:30 am at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Danbury, for Mass Mob III! Mass Mob of Fairfield County encourages gathering together in the Church's greatest prayer. It is essentially a flash mob for Mass! For more info, go to: <http://massmobfc.webs.com>.

**LANCER LEGACY GALA** to support Notre Dame Catholic High School held Sat., **Feb. 28**, at Sacred Heart University at 6 pm. Lancer Legacy Awards, ND Hall of Fame and ND Athletes Hall of Fame. Tickets \$125. For more info, register contact Notre Dame's Alumni Office: [tmarzik@notredame.org](mailto:tmarzik@notredame.org) or 203.372.6521.

**"A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC"** at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, will be held Sat., **Feb. 28**, at 8 pm. An intimate selection of chamber works spanning the great romantic and neo-romantic composers. Tickets: \$25 general; \$10 student. They can be purchased online at [www.stcath.org](http://www.stcath.org), or for more info or to charge by phone, call Mark Kaczmarczyk: 203.637.3661 during normal business hours.

**CARDINAL SHEHAN CENTER** Red Ribbon Ball Black Tie event on Sat., **Feb. 28**, at the Trumbull Marriott honoring Ernest & Agnes Kaulbach Foundation. Cost: \$150; \$1,500 table of ten; \$2,500 silver sponsor; \$5,000 gold sponsor. For more info, call 203.336.4468.

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP** at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, a series of ten consecutive weekly meetings, begins Thurs., **March 5**, from 4:30-6 pm. For info, call the parish office: 203.268.6217.

**WOMEN'S LENTEN**



## HELP SR. THERESA TREMBLAY'S PRESCHOOL AND RESCUE MISSION

Recently, the convent, pre-school and rescue mission have been burglarized. Let's help our Sisters in Christ continue their important work! Join us for a fundraiser dinner, with raffles, entertainment and special guests on Thurs., **March 5**, at Vazzano's Four Seasons, Kenyon St., Stratford, from 6:30-9 pm. Sponsored by Knights of Columbus, Bridgeport Police and Fire Unions. Dinner \$40pp with cash bar. We are also taking donations to present to Sr. Tremblay; make checks payable to: Daughters of Charity. For more info, call Fred: 203.257.2176; Vazzano's: 203.377.3067; or Jay: 203.650.8526.

**RETREAT:** "Mary, A Model for the Modern Woman" will be held the weekend of **March 27-29**, at St. Edmund's Retreat Center, Enders Island, Mystic, with

retreat director Fran Fraleigh Karpiej, OFS, of Sharing Christ Ministry. Registration open until Fri., **March 6**. For more info, or to register, call St. Edmund's,

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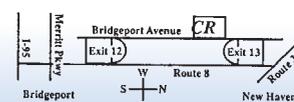
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**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of greater Danbury (age 18-35) game night & social, Fri., **March 6**, at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, from 7-9 pm. Open to all! Refreshments served. For more info, call Maria: 203.798.6923

**CONVIVIO HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH EVENT** set for Sat., **March 7**, from 9 am-9 pm. Bishop Caggiano will be present. For more info, email [youthministry@diobpt.org](mailto:youthministry@diobpt.org).

**ST. PATRICK DAY BINGO** for the women's group at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, on Mon., **March 9**, at 10:30 am. For more info, call 203.261.8020.

**PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE** Information Session Thurs., **March 12**, at St. John the Evangelist, Stamford, from 7-9 pm. Learn the Catholic understanding of physician-assisted suicide, hospice care and current events at the state legislature. For more info, contact the Respect Life Ministry: 203.416.1445 or [respectlife@diobpt.org](mailto:respectlife@diobpt.org).

**SKI & SNOWBOARD** trip for young adults (ages 21-35) to Mount Snow, Vermont, on Sat., **March 14**, leaving from St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull, at 5 am. Even if you don't ski—come along. Lots to do at the resort for non-skiers!

Bring friends! For more info, contact Theresa Raytar: [raytar.theresa@gmail.com](mailto:raytar.theresa@gmail.com), or Dominick Angiolillo: [Dominick.angiolillo.3@hotmail.com](mailto:Dominick.angiolillo.3@hotmail.com).

**"COME & SEE" MASS:** by the Secular Franciscan Holy Spirit Fraternity at St. Emery Church, Fairfield, on Sat., **March 14**, at 9:30 am. Fr. Norman Guilbert will celebrate Mass, followed by a social. "Come and See" if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. For more info, call 203.255.8801.

**GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY** meets the second Sat. of the month (**March 14**) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 10 am after the 9 am Pro-Life Mass. Physician Assisted Suicide will be the topic. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or [stmarygols@aol.com](mailto:stmarygols@aol.com).

**TAIZE PRAYER MEDITATION** at St. Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury, featuring music by the parish choir on Sun., **March 15**, at 2 pm. For more info, email Maynard Robin: [maynardrob@aol.com](mailto:maynardrob@aol.com).

**ST. CASIMIR** celebration & Mass sponsored by Knights of Lithuania of St. George Parish, Bridgeport on Sun., **March 15**, at noon; luncheon at 1 pm. For more info, call 203.878.0519.

**STARRY NIGHT GALA** to

benefit Caroline House will be held Fri., **March 20**, from 6:30-11 pm at The Inn at Longshore, Westport. Tickets: \$165/ person, table of 10/\$1500. There will be great food, libations, music by Voo Doo Carnival and an over-the-top live and silent action. For more info for tickets, contact Christine Paine: 203.605.2728 or visit [www.thecarolinehouse.org](http://www.thecarolinehouse.org).

**CAPP EDUCATORS' COMMUNION BREAKFAST** will be held Sun., **March 22**, in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield. Mother Dolores Hart, O.S.B., from Regina Laudis Abbey, Bethlehem, CT, will be the guest speaker 9 am Mass; 10

am breakfast and talk. An 8:30 am art tour of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit icons is offered. Open to all. For more info, contact Ralph Burke: [ralphburke@optonline.net](mailto:ralphburke@optonline.net). For registration, call 203.396.8201.

**FREE TAX PREPARATION** for individuals and families with annual incomes \$60,000 will be available at Fairfield University's Dolan School of Business. The service is part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The VITA site on the Fairfield campus will be open Fridays, from 9:30-11:30 am, from **Feb. 13-March 13**. This site will

accept clients with incomes up to \$60,000. Appointment needed. For more info and for an appointment, contact Patricia Pivarnik: [ppivarnik@fairfield.edu](mailto:ppivarnik@fairfield.edu) or 203.254.4307. There are also VITA offices in Bridgeport, Stamford, Norwalk. At those locations, the annual income limit to have your taxes prepared is \$54,000 and below. For more info, visit [www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find.a.Location.for.Free.Tax.Preparation](http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find.a.Location.for.Free.Tax.Preparation).

**FREE COUNSELING** for health insurance and Medicare available by appointment at St. Vincent's Medical Center. To schedule an appointment or for more info, call 203.576.5111. ■

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**TIME:** 8:30am-5:00pm  
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**LOCATION:** All Saints School  
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**REGISTRATION:**  
[www.eventbrite.com/e/pope-francis-and-the-promise-of-family-tickets-14136826629](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/pope-francis-and-the-promise-of-family-tickets-14136826629)

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There will be free refreshments and giveaways.

### MEET YOUR NEW NEIGHBORS



**Charles Bruce-Tagoe, MD**  
Stratford Medicine  
203-386-0366



**Rebecca Streeter, MD**  
Cardiology Physicians of Fairfield County  
203-380-3910



**Mark Heiman, MD**  
Cardiology Physicians of Fairfield County  
203-380-3910

AND THE STAFF OF ST. VINCENT'S NEWEST  
**Urgent Care Center – 203-380-3920**

*gentler hands* / SHARPER MINDS