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ON THE COVER
Catherine McClinch, a student at St. Catherine Academy in Fairfield, receives communion at the annual Special Needs Mass held recently at Holy Cross Church in Fairfield. Some students made their First Holy Communion and others were confirmed by new Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. A reception for students and families followed the Mass.

ABOVE THE FOLD—All Saints middle school students in Norwalk enjoy a break from studies with a fun moment on the playground.

ON TURNING FORTY
Columnist Matt Hennessey

NEW DEVELOPMENT CHIEF
For the Diocese

ST. VINCENT’S JOINS MD Anderson Cancer Network

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Diocese of Bridgeport, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606
Bishop Blair to lead Archdiocese of Hartford

BLOOMFIELD—Bishop Leonard Paul Blair, 64, current head of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, will succeed Archbishop Henry J. Mansell as the fifth archbishop and the 13th bishop of Hartford. The appointment was announced during a press conference on October 29 at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary.

“I want to say how very happy and honored I am to be your new archbishop,” Bishop Blair said at the press conference. “I especially look forward to meeting the priests, who are a bishop’s closest and indispensable collaborators. My new home also includes people of many different churches, religions and backgrounds whose collaboration and friendship I look forward to in times to come.”

The Detroit native said that he will have much to learn in the days to come. “I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to say ‘Hartford’ with just the right New England accent,” he quipped, “but I pledge all my love and effort to serve Christ by serving you, as together we seek to walk, and help others to walk, what Christ himself calls ‘the narrow road that leads to life.’”

“As a newcomer myself, it is a pleasure to welcome Bishop Blair to Connecticut, where he will magnificently lead the Archdiocese of 700,000 Catholics,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on learning of his appointment. “The announcement of his appointment is welcome news for Catholics in the state, as the Holy Father has blessed us with a great teacher of the faith and a man who will be a compassionate and vigilant shepherd. He will bring the Good News of Jesus to those who are hurting and suffering and help them to find the merciful love of God.”

Last October, Archbishop Mansell submitted his letter of resignation to Pope Benedict XVI, as required by Canon Law when a bishop attains the age of 75. Archbishop Mansell was 75 on October 10, 2012.

Archbishop Mansell called it “a special joy for me” that Pope Francis had chosen Bishop Blair as his successor. “He comes with an extensive background and a distinguished record of service as a priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit,” Archbishop Mansell said. “We offer him our sincere congratulations, prayers and the promise of support as we go forward.”

He said that, as archbishop-emeritus, he will live at the rectory of St. Augustine Parish in South Glastonbury.

Bishop Blair was born in Detroit on April 12, 1949, and was installed as the seventh Bishop of Toledo on December 4, 2003. He was ordained to the priesthood in June of 1976. Bishop Blair holds a doctorate in theology (STD) from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He served for three years as Secretary to Edmund Cardinal Szoka and as a staff member of the Prefecture for the Economic Affairs of the Holy See.

In addition to parish postings and his appointment as pastor of St. Paul Parish in Groce Point Farms, Bishop Blair served as vicar general and chancellor for the Archdiocese of Detroit. He was dean of studies and assistant professor of theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary College and instructor in Church History and Patristics at St. John’s Provincial Seminary in Plymouth.

“I had the pleasure of serving with Bishop Blair on the Catechism subcommittee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB),” added Bishop Caggiano, “and I saw up close his great love of the faith along with his ability to lead with a quiet strength and integrity.”

Archbishop-designate Blair will be installed in Hartford at a Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph on December 16.

“I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Bishop Blair as I look forward to working with him and serving the faithful of Connecticut,” said Bishop Caggiano. “I ask all Catholics to join me in including Bishop Blair in our prayers as he prepares to lead the Archdiocese and its people.”

Sr. Mary Grace Walsh named superintendent

BRIDGEPORT—Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, PhD, has been confirmed as superintendent of schools by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. The appointment was announced October 28.

“In my brief tenure here as bishop, I have been deeply impressed by the respect and admiration shown to Sr. Mary Grace by many of her colleagues in our elementary school and high schools,” says Bishop Caggiano.

“This admiration has been well earned because she has a long and accomplished career in the work of Catholic education, demonstrating a true love for its mission along with an outstanding professional competency to lead our schools effectively into the future. Her unwavering commitment to strengthen the Catholic identity of our schools is of paramount importance for their further growth and vitality in the years ahead.”

Sr. Mary Grace served as deputy superintendent for the past seven years alongside Dr. Margaret Dames. During that time she also functioned as interim principal at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Fairfield from 2007-08. She has filled the position of interim superintendent since March of this year, when Dr. Dames left to become the superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ.

Sr. Mary Grace is a member of the religious congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A native of New York, St. Louis, MO. She is a graduate of Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in English.

In the past she has served as a principal in the Archdiocese of New York and the dioceses of Metuchen, NJ, and Providence, RI, and as a teacher in grades K-12 in the Archdioceses of New York, St. Louis and the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

She also serves as a member of the Archdiocesan School Board of the Archdiocese of Hartford, and as Professional Development co-chair of the New England CACE (Chief Administrators of Catholic Education). Her areas of interest and research include Catholic school governance, mission effectiveness, institutional leadership, Catholic identity, school change, strategic planning, administrator and teacher formation and curriculum design.

“I am grateful for the opportunity given to me by Bishop Caggiano to continue my ministry of leadership and service to the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport as superintendent of schools. It is a privilege to serve with dedicated administrators and teachers in preparing young people for both life and life eternal as they excel in academics as well as the study and lived practice of our Catholic faith,” says Sr. Mary Grace.

“In my seven years as deputy superintendent, I witnessed our schools flourish with the assistance of parents who, as the primary educators of their children, choose to entrust their children to our schools—often at great sacrifice. I look forward to collaborating with them and with Bishop Caggiano, the clergy, school advisory boards and generous donors who embrace the mission of Catholic education.”

Bishop Caggiano, for his part, looks forward to collaborating closely with Sister Mary Grace as she assumes the permanent position.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11
It all begins with Prayer

Before we can address some new avenues by which we can minister better to the youth of our diocese, our work must begin with prayer.

If our efforts are to succeed, we must be about Our Father’s work and not what you or I decide is best or think is needed. The Lord stands ready to bless and empower our actions, but he must always be in the lead.

We must pray for discernment and courage. We need discernment so that we can know what it is that the Lord is asking us to do in order to effectively introduce our Catholic faith to everyone who is open to it, especially young people. The gift of courage, one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, will provide us the divine power we will need to do what the Lord asks of us, despite the personal cost.

I ask everyone to pray each day for these two great gifts. Then we will be ready to begin in earnest this new adventure of faith.

Reaching out to Youth

As I settle into my new ministry as bishop, my heart and thoughts constantly return to the needs of our young people. I deeply desire to assist them to grow in our Catholic faith.

I am keenly aware that young people who are growing up in our contemporary world face opportunities and challenges that many of us who are older did not face. For example, the evolution of technology, most especially the world-wide Web, has provided us the means by which we can explore our world on a much broader scale than ever before. At the touch of a button, we can easily interact with people of different cultures, religions and viewpoints. On one hand, such interactions can help enrich our appreciation of the diversity and beauty of the human family. On the other hand, such a plurality of viewpoints raises questions that need to be answered to prevent them from causing doubts or confusion.

It is hard enough for adults who are believers and understand their Catholic faith to navigate this new world. It is even more difficult for those who are younger and are still learning the richness and beauty of our faith.

In the days ahead I hope to begin a conversation on how best to respond to these challenges, for our own sake and the sake of our young people.

Follow Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on Facebook:
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Thoughts on giving & faith

Fairfield County Catholic recently spoke with William M. McLean, Jr., the new chief development officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

McLean is a 30-year fund raising veteran with extensive experience in non-profit and faith-based development. In this interview, he shares some of his thoughts on philanthropy, faith and his own family.

**How do you feel as you begin your new assignment here in the diocese?**

I’m excited for a number of reasons, most importantly the opportunity to work with a dynamic new bishop who has a great vision for the future of the diocese.

**You’ve worked for other dioceses across the country as a consultant, but now the challenge is very close to home.**

Bridgeport is my own diocese and I’m active in my parish, St. Mary’s of Ridgefield, and that makes it all the better for me personally. It’s a great opportunity to come to work for the diocese at the same time as a new bishop and to work closely with him on financial development for the benefit of our parishes and ministries.

**How do you plan to move forward in the future?**

I’m eager to create a development plan. I think the bishop shares this with me because he’s a believer in looking at the big picture and having a strategic plan.

**What led you to serve as a volunteer at Dorothy Day House of Hospitality in Danbury?**

My son, Chris, was looking for an opportunity to do something to make a difference in the lives of people, and he and his family began volunteering at the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality in Danbury. I was so impressed with their work and dedication that I joined them.

**While the economy is improving, people are still struggling, and that has an impact on charitable giving.**

Giving dropped dramatically after 2008, but there is a lot of need in our community. We’ve been doing our best to help those in need and we’ve been doing it for about two years. It’s very gratifying to see the difference we’re making.

**What is your goal?**

My goal is to work closely with the pastors of our parishes and make them aware of the needs of the community. I want to help them understand the impact of their charitable giving and how it can make a difference in the lives of those in need.

**What are some of the biggest needs in the community?**

There are many needs in the community, but some of the most pressing are housing, education, and healthcare. We also need to support our local charities and non-profits to help them continue their important work.

**In his Installation Mass homily, Bishop Caggiano said “there can be no one who is left behind, no one left to fend for themselves” in Fairfield County.**

Yes, there are so many needs right in our own backyard and in one of wealthiest counties in the country. It’s important that we work together to meet the needs of our community.

**What can people do to help?**

There are many ways to help, from volunteering your time to making financial donations. We need the support of our parishioners to help us meet the needs of those in need. I encourage everyone to get involved and make a difference in the lives of others.
Catholic Charities

“America’s Mayor” shares thoughts on 9/11

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

No matter how horrible the tragedy that strikes a life or a community, people have to move on out of an obligation to live their own lives and care for others who depend on them, said former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani at the Tenth Annual Celebrity Breakfast of Catholic Charities.

Speaking to a gathering of almost 550 people in the Amber Room in Danbury on October 24, Mayor Giuliani said that every day since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he has lived with images of the death and destruction in his mind. Noting that many Newtown residents will soon be facing the first anniversary of the tragedy that took the lives of 26 children and teachers, he said that it is important to balance images of suffering and loss with positive thoughts of the love and courage people demonstrate after a tragedy.

“You don’t have to stop thinking about it. Almost every day it comes back to me,” he said of his 9/11 memories, “but you should also finish your thoughts by thinking about all those who embrace you and care about you.”

The Mayor offered poignant praise for Fr. Mychal Judge, a friend and FDNY chaplain, who was the first recorded victim of 9/11.

The Mayor, who had asked Fr. Judge to pray for the city just moments before he was struck and killed by falling debris from the towers, said a prayer after learning of his death. “I said, Dear God I’m going to have to make decisions, and I don’t know if they’ll be right or wrong. It’s up to you to make them right.”

He said Fr. Judge taught him that “the only answer to evil is love and the only answer to great sorrow is love and going on to help other people.”

He said after the 9/11 attacks, he knew that he had to exhort New Yorkers to be stronger, but at the time the city’s future looked uncertain.

“I don’t know if it was a prayer, a hope or a boast, but I wanted to tell people, let’s be stronger. But I wasn’t sure we could. Tragedy either crushes you or makes you stronger,” he said. “I wanted them to keep their eyes on Ground Zero but also lift them up toward our future.”

Both Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton and St. Rose of Lima Pastor Msgr. Robert Weiss thanked Mayor Giuliani for coming to Newtown after the December 14 shootings and reaching out to the people.

“We are deeply indebted to him for being there at one of our lowest moments,” said Mayor Boughton.

“The best advice I received on those difficult days following December 14 was from Mayor Giuliani,” Msgr. Weiss said. “He brought comfort and consolation not just because he’s a great leader—he’s really a man with a heart.”

Mayor Giuliani returned the compliment by praising Msgr. Weiss for his pastoral strength and leadership after the Newtown shootings. “You either face tragedy and help other people or you don’t, and he stood up for a whole community under a tremendous situation,” said the Mayor, noting that if he wrote another book on heroes, Fr. Bob would be included.

In his talk, which focused entirely on the response to 9/11, Mayor Giuliani praised the work of Catholic Charities both in New York City and in the great Danbury area. He said that in both communities, Catholic Charities played a leading role in helping others to get needed services and come to terms with the crisis.

Proceeds from the breakfast will benefit the Behavioral Health Clinic of Catholic Charities, which has provided crisis and ongoing clinical services to Newtown families affected by the tragedy.

In brief remarks before leading the closing prayer, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, a lifelong Brooklyn resident, thanked Mayor Giuliani for his service. “When America needed someone to bring people together, when we needed confidence and hope, you rose to the occasion as a leader.”

He praised Catholic Charities for serving the “poorest of the poor, and those the world would like us to forget, but we will not forget them,” and he expressed his admiration for the people of Newtown. “In the face of unspeakable evil you responded with love. That’s what makes us a community of believers.”

This year’s event was co-chaired by Lisa Donovan of Brewster, New York, a parishioner of St. Edward the Confessor Parish in New Fairfield, and Claudia Menezes of Ridgefield, a member of St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Ridgefield. Maureen Knup of Brookfield is serving as president of the Catholic Charities of Danbury Advisory Board.

(Catholic Charities of Greater Danbury offers a wide range of services. For more information, call 203.743.4412.)

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St. Vincent’s launches state’s only affiliation with MD Anderson Cancer Network

BRIDGEPORT—St. Vincent’s Medical Center announced today that it is the first and only hospital in Connecticut to become a member of MD Anderson Cancer Network, a program of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

This affiliation will provide certified physicians at St. Vincent’s, through the Medical Center and its Elizabeth Pfriem SWIM Center for Cancer Care, access to evidence-based guidelines, treatment plans and best practices developed by MD Anderson experts. These are disease-specific guidelines for cancer treatment, cancer prevention, early detection and follow-up care.

This collaboration will bring new hope to local cancer patients by using protocols developed by a national leader in cancer care. For ten of the past 12 years, including 2013, MD Anderson has ranked number one in the nation in cancer care in the “Best Hospitals” survey published by U.S. News & World Report.

“This affiliation represents a tremendous development in our cancer program,” said St. Vincent’s Medical Center President Stuart G. Marcus, MD, FACS. “Now patients throughout the area can obtain comprehensive holistic care in a state-of-the-art, comfortable setting, while also having access to MD Anderson’s cutting-edge advances and clinical expertise. The affiliation will enable us to successfully expand the scope of our services and raise the standard for cancer diagnosis and treatment in collaboration with the nation’s leading cancer center.”

In addition, the affiliation provides the oncology team at St. Vincent’s Elizabeth M. Pfriem SWIM Center for Cancer Care access to:
- Regular video conferences with MD Anderson physicians
- Participation of MD Anderson physicians in St. Vincent’s tumor boards
- Consultative sessions

• Expanded educational opportunities
• Collaborative opportunities with other members of MD Anderson Cancer Network

MD Anderson Cancer Network is a select group of hospitals and health care systems that share a common mission to eliminate cancer.

“We are excited to develop this historic relationship with St. Vincent’s that will only enhance its tradition of delivering exceptional cancer care to patients by adding MD Anderson expertise,” said William A. Murphy, Jr., MD, board chairman, MD Anderson Physicians Network. “Together, we will ensure that patients across the region will have access to the highest quality cancer care available.”
Pilgrimage for Life

Black Madonna icon comes to St. Theresa

By JOSEPH PRONECHEN

Few of us can make a pilgrimage to Poland to pray before the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa where she is enshrined.

But on November 19, everyone has the rare opportunity to venerate and pray before an exceptional replica of the original miraculous icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, also known as the famous “Black Madonna,” when she will stop for several hours at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull.

This icon is on a tremendous pilgrimage called “From Ocean to Ocean.” Our Lady of Czestochowa’s icon began its journey in 2012 on the shore of Vladivostok, Russia, and continued across Eastern and Western Europe through over 23 countries with stops in basilicas, cathedrals, churches and shrines in over 400 cities.

During the 40,000 miles she has traveled so far, millions of Catholic and Orthodox faithful have welcomed and venerated Our Lady in this renowned icon.

One of her final European stops was at the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal, where the icon was placed on the site of the apparitions of Our Blessed Mother. The icon crossed the Atlantic and arrived in America in Maryland in August to continue throughout this country and to the Pacific coast.

The Czestochowa icon is a faithful copy of the miraculous original enshrined at Jasna Góra. It is of the original size, and “written” in the traditional manner of icons.

Before the start of this monumental journey in the defense of life, this icon was placed by the original, which is one of the holiest of relics and believed to have been painted by St. Luke. During that special ceremony in January 2012, this replica was blessed by Archbishop Stanislaw Nowak of Czestochowa and entrusted to the defense of life and family.

“The pilgrimage of the Czestochowa icon ‘From Ocean to Ocean’ through the world is an unprecedented historical event and has enormous significance,” wrote Fr. Roman Majewski, prior of Jasna Góra.

Human Life International, the world’s largest grass-roots pro-life organization, is sponsoring the pilgrimage (FromOceanToOcean.org). “This pilgrimage is intended to awaken the faithful about the urgency of defending life from the moment of conception,” said Fr. Peter West, vice president of HLI and chairman of the pilgrimage committee. He will accompany the icon to St. Theresa Church.

“Hundreds of thousands, in venerating the image, have recommitted to resting a Culture of Life. Truly, our Blessed Mother, as mediatrix of all grace, is interceding on our behalf with her Son, the Lord of Life, and we will see a return to respect for life and family,” Fr. West added.

Indeed, the icon shows Mary as a guide pointing to Christ with her right hand and leading all people to God, the Giver of Life. As our loving mother, she protects life.

Many miracles and miraculous healings both spiritual and physical are credited to the original icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Pope John Paul II visited and prayed before her in Jasna Gora not only during his youth but later through his years as priest, archbishop and cardinal. As Holy Father he also visited the shrine.

“In the Old Testament there was a tradition of bringing the Ark of the Covenant into battle,” Fr. West noted. “At the siege of Jericho the Israelites marched around seven times and the city walls fell down.”

“Fathers of the Church like St. Ambrose compare Mary to the Ark of the New Covenant.”

Fr. West makes clear the connection of asking for miraculous interventions through Our Lady: “Now we are renewing this tradition and bringing the icon into the battle for life. We are calling on Our Lady and bringing the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa into the battle against the culture of death and asking her to help us build a culture of Life. We’ve entrusted the civilization of life and love into the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

This pilgrimage icon has already been welcomed and venerated in the United States at several shrines, churches and basilicas and cathedrals including St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York.

Now Fr. Brian Gannon, pastor of St. Theresa’s, looks forward to the visit of the icon of Our Lady. “We welcome with great joy the icon of Our Blessed Mother,” he said. “As Pope Francis has shown, along with Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI, devotion to the Blessed Mother is absolutely crucial for us and our children in today’s battles against secularism and relativism.”

Our Lady of Czestochowa icon will arrive on November 19 at St. Theresa Church for a welcoming rite at 4:30 pm, and placed in the sanctuary. Mass will be at 5:30 pm. Veneration of and prayer before the icon will take place until the farewell at approximately 8:00 pm.

Note: The highlight of the convention is a High Mass at Boston’s St. Peter’s Church, a beautiful historic church founded by Lithuanians that continues to be a vibrant active parish serving not only Lithuanians but many different aspects of the Boston Catholic community. The main celebrant for the 100th anniversary Mass was His Excellency Gintaras Grusas, Archbishop of Vilnius, Lithuania. Members of Council 141 from St. George participating in the centennial activities included Barbara Wilcinskas-Schmidt, president, and her husband Paul; and many more. ranging from $3,599—$4,699 for 2014.

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Local Knights of Lithuania honored at centennial

By BARBARA WILCINSKAS-SCHMIDT

Members from Council 141 of the Knights of Lithuania, which meets at St. George Parish in Bridgeport, were honored recently in Boston at the organization’s 100th anniversary convention. The Knights of Lithuania is a nationwide organization of Roman Catholic men and women of Lithuanian ancestry and their spouses.

The members adhere to the motto “For God and Country” and aim to keep alive an appreciation of the Lithuanian language, customs and culture, while stressing the importance of Roman Catholic beliefs. Since it is a family organization, St. Casimir, patron of Lithuania’s youth, is honored as the group’s patron.

The highlight of the convention was a High Mass at Boston’s St. Peter’s Church, a beautiful historic church founded by...
FAIRFIELD—Bernadette Liston was sitting at her computer in County Limerick, Ireland, when she opened an email that had proved pivotal.

The twenty-three-year-old learned in May that she had been awarded the Rev. John M. Conlisk Irish Scholarship to attend Fairfield University’s Dolan School of Business, worth about $55,000. It is given annually to a graduate student from Ireland to help their career prospects, and it covers all tuition, housing and medical insurance expenses for the time it takes to earn a master’s degree.

With Ireland’s unemployment rate hovering around 13 percent, the opportunity came just as Liston found herself at a crossroads. “Massive decisions would have faced me if I hadn’t come to Fairfield—find a job in Ireland’s unsteady economy, apply for graduate programs in Ireland or immigrate to find work in countries like Australia or Dubai like so many other Irish young people,” said Liston.

She got the great news after finishing her eight-hour shift at a supermarket. “After work that night, I sat around the kitchen table with my family conversing about our day,” said Liston, who goes by the nickname ‘Bernie.’ “I read the email from Fairfield University, and I could not believe my eyes. It felt like I had won the lottery. It was a feeling of complete excitement. I knew my hard work had paid off.”

The Rev. John M. Conlisk Irish Scholarship at Fairfield was founded 22 years ago when the Irish economy was struggling. A group of Irish Americans led by Fairfield University trustee Kevin M. Conlisk ‘66 believed a scholarship would give an Irish student an opportunity to make business contacts. The scholarship is named for Conlisk’s late brother, a 1954 Fairfield Prep graduate who served the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Liston is happy diving into the opportunity the faculty has presented her: she’s a member of the Student Monetary Investment Fund and is taking part in the upcoming PwC Accounting Competition and the Deloitte FanTAXtic Competition. Liston has volunteered for Campus Ministry and plans to learn some new moves by way of the Latin Dancing and Ballroom Dancing clubs. Moreover, she’s already found a second home at Fairfield. “My housemates are both Chinese—one is a graduate student and the other a teaching assistant,” Liston noted. “I love learning about their culture and language. They are like family to me.”

The Conlisk family has also extended a big welcome to Liston, providing her with “an invaluable opportunity. I feel blessed to be here,” she says.

BERNADETTE LISTON of Limerick, Ireland, has been awarded the Rev. John M. Conlisk Irish Scholarship to attend Fairfield University’s Dolan School of Business. “This is an invaluable opportunity. I feel blessed to be here,” she says.

“I know I have someone looking down from above.”

Perhaps the greatest joy in retiring is knowing you can live life to its fullest.
Targeting a National Crisis

Catholic Therapist: Pornography targets youth

TRUMBULL—Young people are increasingly being targeted by the pornography industry and they need to be protected by parents and society, said Catholic therapist and author Dr. Peter Kleponis.

Speaking to a gathering of 175 teachers, religious educators, youth ministers and priests in St. Catherine of Siena Parish Family Center in Nichols, Dr. Kleponis said that parents of children under age 11 should do everything in their power to safeguard their children from the harms of Internet pornography.

Likewise, parents of teens should fully expect that they have been exposed to pornography and prepare them to resist it and understand the harm it can do to them. He said the average age when a child first encounters hard-core pornography is 11, and that the largest single population of Internet pornography users is 12-17 year olds.

“Believe me, pornography will find them on the Internet after the age of 11, even if they’re not looking. They have to learn how to say no to it,” he said.

Dr. Kleponis, who counsels individuals struggling with pornography addiction, said the best way to protect children is to monitor and limit cell phone and Internet use, and lock all of the video games and social media devices up at night, so they don’t have access in their rooms.

He said that giving kids unrestricted Internet access is like “inviting a perfect stranger into their bedrooms,” and he added that a recent study found that 29% of 7-17 year olds would freely give out their addresses online.

Under current internet freedom laws, children can access pornography in a public library, and even at home “parents have to stand right behind children when they’re on the Internet.”

He said that Internet pornography has led to the sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography is now a $3 billion dollar a year industry around the world.

It has a destructive effect on children who view it. “Early exposure to pornography robs children of their innocence and exposes them to a world they are not prepared to understand.”

Dr. Kleponis is particularly concerned about the impact of pornography on young women who are constantly bombarded with images of women as playthings, and who sometimes feel “they must look and act like porn stars” in order to be liked or valued.

He said the music industry often celebrates pornographic styles, and that many mothers have a difficult time finding modest clothes for young girls. Likewise, many young women can be unwittingly drawn in to “sexting” without realizing its consequences.

He said there is a danger because young people come to think of “pornographic sex as normal and healthy when it is not. Pornography is violence against women and it keeps young women in their place as sex objects.”

Dr. Kleponis said studies have shown that pornography, like any addictive substance, can provide temporary euphoria and escape but often leaves the person feeling worthless and more dependent. He said that serious cases of addiction threaten marriages and employment and require professional counseling along with a “12-step” approach like Alcoholics Anonymous.

The practice of faith can also play an important role in recovery.

“You need God. Faith is crucial to recovery, letting go of the shame and reclaiming your personal dignity,” he said, adding that daily prayer, regular confession, and finding a spiritual director can help a person grow in virtue and achieve wholeness.

He urged those in attendance to study Blessed John Paul II, “Theology of the Body,” which offers an integrated view of body, mind and spirit. Paraphrasing John Paul, he said that the great lie of pornography is that it removes the sexual act from human intimacy. “Its problem is not that it reveals too much of the body but too little of the person, who is reduced to sexual parts,” Dr. Kleponis said.

A native of the Philadelphia area with an MA in clinical-counseling psychology and a PhD in general psychology, Dr. Kleponis is a noted therapist and speaker who has integrated Catholic spirituality. He offered therapeutic process in his more than fifteen years of private practice.

In a question and answer session, he encouraged parents to subscribe to CovenantEyes.com or other Internet monitoring and blocking services for computers and cell phones; to keep computers in public areas rather than bedrooms and to never leave a child alone with the Internet.

His talk was sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Dr. Kleponis said that 29% of 7-17 year olds would freely give out their addresses online.

Dr. Kleponis said that parents of children under age 11 should do everything in their power to safeguard their children from the harms of Internet pornography.
Advent: Magical Time of the Year

Sing-Along becomes community favorite

By PAT HENNESSY

That magical time of year is almost upon us. Advent follows close on the heels of Thanksgiving, and Christmas preparations soon start in earnest. Familiar carols, children shaking jingle bells, a visit from Santa—Christmas memories are made of these. More than just memories, these become reality every year at the Christmas Carol Community Sing-Along at St. Margaret’s Shrine in Bridgeport. This year the free, hour-long event will take place at 3 pm on December 15, the third Sunday of Advent. It is held rain or shine, thanks to the availability of the Circolo Sportivo building across the street in case of inclement weather. The Circolo Sportivo also hosts the free reception after the sing-along.

The great lawn at St. Margaret’s has been the setting for the Sing-Along for half a dozen years now, and the event is solidly established as part of the area’s holiday festivities.

“The uniqueness of this setting is what makes this different,” says Len Paoletta, sweeping his hand to indicate the hills and grottos beyond the Shrine’s great lawn. Paoletta was Mayor of Bridgeport from 1981-85. “We’re outdoors. It’s an interesting outdoor environment.”

Mayor Paoletta, the organizer’s founder. A parishioner of St. Margaret’s Shrine, he was encouraged to establish the annual sing-along after attending a similar event at Mystic Seaport. The Sing-Along opens every year with “Star Spangled Banner.” “It’s our national anthem, and it emphasizes that all are welcome here,” says Proccacini. “It’s a Christmas Sing-Along, but we don’t care if you’re Buddhist or vegetarian or from whatever ethnic background. Music is music. We’re all Americans singing in the Christmas season.”

A brass quartet leads the Sing-Along every year, and the chorus is made up of volunteers from parishes and towns throughout the area. “I’m constantly getting out the word that we welcome new voices. We don’t usually have a rehearsal, but we have a ‘call time’ to go over the program an hour ahead of the Sing-Along,” says Proccacini.

“If I have Italian singers or others in the chorus who know the melody, they’ll come forward to sing ‘Tu Scendi Dall’Stella,’ accompanied by the brass players. It’s the quintessential Italian Christmas carol, the equivalent of ‘Silent Night’ for English-speakers. The literal translation of the title is ‘You Come Down from the Stars.’”

Not only are the songs and carols familiar, both the chorus and the audience have songbooks. Santa, of course, will pay a visit, appearing about midway through the concert. Mayors and dignitaries from area towns usually join in the event, and Bishop Caggiano has been invited as well.

The donations to Operation Hope food pantry in Fairfield, a new element in the Sing-Along, reinforce the spirit of the season. “Especially at this time of year, when we all remember how lucky we are, there is something special about people helping those who aren’t so lucky,” says Carla Milkos, executive director of Operation Hope.

Operation Hope provides food to more than 200 families, including 100 children, each month. “We’re seeing more and more families,” Milkos says. “This concert will raise awareness that people are hungry in our community.”

In addition, Operation Hope offers a shelter for men, women, and families; supportive affordable housing; and lunch and dinner served every day at their Community Kitchen.

“A lot of times, people want to help but don’t know how,” says Milkos. “At the Sing-Along, they have the opportunity to put their faith in action, and in return they get to join in some great music.”

Lending a helping hand to others is one of the traditions of the Christmas season,” agrees Paoletta. “We’re all connected, and we feel that more strongly than ever at Christmas.”

(Anyone interested in joining the chorus should contact Tony Proccacini by Sunday, December 8. 718.873.7421 or aproccacini@juno.com.)
Remembering Bishop Curtis

A Vatican II bishop with a passion for education

FAIRFIELD—“He was a pragmatist, a builder and a pastor who saw in the still embryonic college a response to a changing Church and changing society,” said Dr. Michael W. Higgins of Bishop Walter W. Curtis in a recent talk commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of Sacred Heart University.

For the many who still remember Bishop Curtis, second Bishop of Bridgeport, as a quiet, unassum- ming man, the talk by Dr. Higgins drew a picture of a dynamic and visionary bishop who was inspired by the Second Vatican Council and brought significant change and growth to the diocese.

Named Bishop of Bridgeport in 1961, Bishop Curtis went on to lead the diocese for 27 years, making him the longest serving bishop in its history. His tenure represents the remarkable building years when the young diocese, formed in 1953, added 19 new suburban parishes, a network of senior living residences, four high schools and numerous elementary schools.

Those who worked alongside Bishop Curtis say he was profoundly changed by the Second Vatican Council and returned from the historic enclave with an enthusiasm to implement the reforms and take advantage of new opportunities.

His founding of Sacred Heart University in 1963 was a national achievement as well as a local one because it became the first lay-staffed and operated diocesan college in the United States.

In his talk, attended by 100 faculty, students and invited guests in the Schine Auditorium, Dr. Higgins, president for Mission and Catholic Identity at SHU, celebrated Bishop Curtis and the uniqueness and singularity of Sacred Heart University’s genesis as a lay Catholic institution.

“Bishop Curtis suggested its most innovative feature: a completely lay character. The concept was hardly a new one but the Second Vatican council affirmed the vision he had,” said Higgins. “He saw the future needs and changing role of laity. It was the right time. His decision to establish a lay operated diocesan college was in many ways a pioneering venture—cutting edge, nervy, and rooted in a careful discernment of what the Vatican Council called ‘the sign of the times.’ ”

In a brief history of Sacred Heart presented by Dr. Higgins, Bishop Curtis emerges as a seminal figure who moved swiftly to realize his vision of a Catholic college reflecting the spirit of Vatican II.

Bishop Curtis had mulled over the idea of a university in 1961, convened a small group of leaders in the summer of 1962, and opened its doors to the first class as a commuter school of 167 men and women in September of 1963.

In retrospect, the Bishop relied on a very small group of advisors: Msgr. John McGough, superintendent of diocesan schools; Msgr. James P. Devine, chancellor; James R. Kerr, president of AVCO Corporation; and Donald H. McGannon, president of Westinghouse Broadcasting Corporation.

While energized by Vatican II, the bishop’s vision for a lay-staffed Catholic university actually preceded the council and was based on his own education at Fordham and Seton Hall universities and his sense of the needs of huge generation of Catholic young people graduating from high schools.

Noting that the Catholic Church “is profoundly egalitarian despite its hierarchical structure,” Higgins said Bishop Curtis was aware that many first generation college students would not find opportunities out of state and did not have the financial means to cover the costs. The creation of a “commuter” college expanded the continuum of Catholic education available and put college within reach of working-class families that made up much of the diocese.

Not only was the bishop attuned to the optimism of the time, but he had a shrewd sense that federal loan and scholarship monies for post-secondary education would be available through the Kennedy administration.

Once he made the decision to move ahead, Bishop Curtis assembled the new university’s leadership “triumvirate.” William H. Conley, the first president, was a well-known educator and theorist who came from Marquette University in Milwaukee and had previously served as director of the Carnegie Study of Catholic Education.

Soon after founding Sacred Heart University, Bishop Curtis was true to his word and passionately supported the lay character of the institution. “He deliberately removed himself from a hand-on approach and left things for the Board of Directors and the university leadership,” Higgins said.

In a question and answer session following his talk, Dr. Higgins said that despite the steep decline in the number of teaching priests, brothers and sisters and the competition for students and faculty in an increasingly multi-faith society, “surprisingly, the demands for a Catholic presence in higher education has not diminished.”

“And Sacred Heart precisely meets this need,” he said. “Within lay-founded universities in particular, none have been as energetic and none have been as visionary as Sacred Heart.”

Sacred Heart University recently admitted the largest freshman class in its history with 1,300 students. Overall the university numbers 6,400 full and part-time students from the U.S. and 30 foreign countries.

Professor Higgins said Sacred Heart University was founded at a time of innovation and has a bright future as a Catholic university integrating change and new ideas into the Catholic tradition.

“The university is not visti- gially Catholic,” he told the gathering. “It is a credible witness to those perduing virtues of social justice, inclusivity and enlighten- ed tolerance that speak to the strength of a Catholic education.”

(“Dr. Higgins’ talk “1963, Year one of the Sacred Heart experience,” is available in a pamphlet version or online at www.sacredheart.edu.)
November 22, 1963: A Fateful Day
Deacon Bill Bissenden’s brush with history

By DEACON WILLIAM BISSENDEN

On November 22, 1963, I was a Specialist 4th Class (topographic surveyor) in the 72nd Engineering Detachment (Survey), 30th Engineering Battalion U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stationed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. I was driving a 2½ ton truck in a convoy of about ten trucks. We were transporting the trucks from Ft. Belvoir to the Baltimore Army Terminal shipping facility in Maryland.

Our convoy had passed through the Washington area without incident and had just pulled to the side of the road for a restroom stop and refueling. Suddenly, the guy riding "shotgun" in the truck following ours came running up with a small transistor radio in his hand shouting something about President Kennedy being shot.

We were shocked, saddened and full of questions. "Where did it happen?" "When did it happen?" "Was it an accident?" "No! Then did they get the shooter?" And, since we were in the Army and away from our base, "What is our status?" "Do we continue on?"

Much of the ride after that included our trading reflections on what President Kennedy meant to each of us. I recalled the time candidate Jack Kennedy visited Bridgeport on a whistle-stop tour. What struck me were the actions of the crowd. As the convertible moved through the city, the crowd moved from block to block following the car like a human wave, each person trying to get just one more glimpse of JFK. Watching this mass of people, I was impressed with their adulation for Kennedy. Awe and concern stirred within me at the same time that one man should possess so much charisma.

During the time it took us to get to our destination and unload our vehicles, President Kennedy's body was put on to Air Force One and was headed for Andrews Air Base. Reports we received indicated that we would drive through Washington at just about the same time that the Air force One was landing at Andrews Air Base.

That Sunday afternoon one of our NCOs, Sergeant Patrick Bishop, came to the day room of our NCOs, Sergeant Patrick Bishop, came to the day room looking for volunteers for a very special surveying assignment.

After we volunteered, he explained that our assignment was to prepare a detailed topographical survey of the President’s burial site and surrounding area located at Arlington Cemetery. We would have just three days to complete the project.

The area we were going to survey was not large, only about an acre, while the actual burial site was about 20ft. x 30ft. However, even to a crew used to surveying whole countries, this was a challenging assignment because we had to survey the grave site in tight one-foot increments of elevation and do it at night.

The site is on the foot of the hill in front of General Lee’s Mansion and was selected for several reasons. It overlooks the Potomac River and the city of Washington. It is a beautiful spot. The other reason it was selected is that the area in general was not considered acceptable for regular graves because of the severity of the incline. Thus the site does not deny others from burial in Arlington Cemetery.

Our instructions, to carry out most of the survey at night, were due to the number of people who would file past the grave site during the daylight hours to pay their respects to a fallen hero.

Even during the night, we did have some interruptions. On several occasions, near midnight, word was passed to us to stop our work and back into the shadows. The first time this happened we were surprised, but we soon understood when three large black limousines drove across the lawn and stopped just in front of the gravesite. In a few moments several men emerged from the front and rear car and stood silently peering into the darkness apparently searching the area.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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EDITORIAL

Not just kids

We think education is for kids. And when it comes to religious education—that’s for little kids. Confirmation comes and we’re resigned. An awful lot of adults go through life with no more religious education than they got by age 13.

In real life, though, education is never done. You couldn’t get a job with an eighth-grade education, and you can’t go through life with the skills you learned before you were old enough to vote. Faith is real life, too, and adults need it way more than kids. Everyone faces challenges: Family members fight, and can cut off communication for years.

Some drink; holidays can be a nightmare. Friends desert us. Bosses or co-workers make life difficult. Cute little kids morph into teenagers. Parents grow fragile, and can be stubborn or angry. We will not even mention fights over finances. Warm fuzzy feelings about Jesus are not going to help.

There’s a path to deeper faith to fit every temperament. Daily Mass is an excellent option, especially with Advent close at hand. This issue lists Bible studies around the diocese (page 26). There’s sure to be one nearby. Join a group at your parish. Subscribe to a Catholic magazine. Read a chapter of the Bible at night (they’re short). Read your pastor’s letter in the parish bulletin (NOT during Mass). Keep learning. Life is too tough to face with a kid’s faith.

A “Field Hospital” of Faith

News of the devastating storm in the Philippines shocks us with the massive loss of life and social upheaval.

Reports indicate that there may be more than 2,500 dead and 600,000 homeless in this latest catastrophe that follows natural disasters in Haiti, Japan, New Orleans, and along our own eastern coast this time last year.

When life is snuffed out on such a large scale, we may find ourselves questioning the purpose and meaning of existence. How could this happen?

Beyond our concern and compassion for those facing unthinkable sorrow and loss, we are unsettled in the knowledge that our own lives can be uprooted in an instant. In the ghastly images of destruction, we see the vanity of our dreams and wants floating in a sea of debris and strewn into an immense scrap heap: our homes, cars, appliances and aspirations tossed with naked fury.

In a culture where our skills are more attuned to getting on a plane or train and surviving office politics, could we endure the suffering of those in the Philippines who had so little to begin with?

Recently Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome, has spoken compassionately about the flow of refugees around globe: the permanently uprooted and violated who face the disaster of homelessness and ruin each day. He and our bishops have asked us to reach out to these dispossessed and help safeguard their welfare.

More than that, Francis has challenged us by the simplicity of his life, his embrace of the poor and suffering, and his insistence on the healing power of the Church. In a society where so many are wounded, he teaches us that the Church must be a “field hospital” where we become “ministers of mercy above all.” In the light of so many personal and social disasters, his words bring hope and meaning to a world of suffering.

Clearing the Season

The bright yellow leaves swirling in the night poke the windshield like Halloween goblins. In the headlights they lie strewn on the wet pavement—cancelled tickets after the commotion of a spent season. The wind and frost clear the season. We wake to bare trees and instinctively know that from here on in our consolations must be found in a letter in the parish bulletin (NOT during Mass).

Keep learning. Life is too tough to face with a kid’s faith.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tips for participation in the Mass

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and its Constitution on Sacred Liturgy invited the faithful to full, conscious, active participation in the Mass. Prior to Vatican II the faithful observed Mass being celebrated, so the Council’s invitation to full, conscious, active participation in Mass was a dramatic change for the laity and priests. As the Church nears the end of the Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and continues its celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, its invitation to the laity for full, conscious, active participation in the Mass still stands.

In practical terms, what does this mean?

First, an attitude of full participation means that Sunday Mass isn’t just one more thing on your “to do” list. It means taking ten or fifteen minutes during the week, or before Mass begins, to read the Scripture passages for the Mass and to let them start to sink in and penetrate your mind and heart. There might be a word or phrase which gets your attention and helps you to relate a reading to something joyful or something challenging going on in your life. You’ll be amazed at how much more you’ll be nourished by the Scripture readings at Mass by putting in this brief “prep time.” Give it a try!

Full participation also means joining in the prayers, responses, and the singing with the gathered worshiping community, not leaving it to “the other guy.” It means limiting trips to the rest room to true emergencies (a little advance planning might especially help with our precious youngest parishioners.) Lastly, full participation means remaining after Communion to thank Jesus for the gift of himself in the Eucharist, and remaining for the Final Blessing and Closing Hymn.

Conscious participation means opening every part of ourselves—body, mind and spirit—to what we do at Mass. We gather, not as isolated individuals, “doing our own thing,” but as a worshiping community. In the words of Pope Saint Pius X: “People should not pray at Mass but should pray the Mass,” making the Mass itself your prayer. So when Mass is being celebrated it’s not the time for private prayers and devotions, such as the Rosary, or to be catching up on personal spiritual reading, the bulletin, “messaging,” conversing or daydreaming. It’s the time to connect consciously with the gathered worshiping community in praying the Mass together.

Finally, the invitation to active participation is a reminder that we’re baptized people gathered with other baptized people. We’re the Body of Christ united in praying the Mass. Our active participation needs to extend into our lives during the week. It means taking with us the nourishment we receive at Mass from hearing God’s Word proclaimed, receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, and the nourishment which we give to one another, and sharing that nourishment in a way which makes a positive difference in how we live our lives during the week. It means taking to heart the words in the Dismissal Rite: “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives!”

Fr. Edward McAuley
Administrator
St. Bridget of Ireland, Stamford
Recognizing the volunteers, the mentors and the prayerful servants in our diocese

Bishop Caggiano honors faith and service of Medal recipients

Making God’s love and mercy real

“Pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on you,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said, quoting the words of St. Augustine in his homily honoring the 159 recipients of this year’s Saint Augustine Medal Service, held on October 26 at the Cathedral.

The medals are conferred to men and women in parishes and ministries throughout the diocese who have given generously of themselves in service of the Church.

Speaking to the almost 900 people who filled St. Augustine Cathedral in downtown Bridgeport, Bishop Caggiano said it was fitting that the medals of service are named for St. Augustine because “he wrote one of the most beautiful sermons ever written about generosity.”

“St. Augustine said, ‘Take what you need and leave the rest for others,’” said Bishop Caggiano, who praised the recipients for being the “leaven in the life of our diocese, leading others to greater holiness.”

The bishop said that true generosity comes from those who are “grateful for their lives and who faithfully use the gifts God has given them.” Praising the recipients as “mentors, guides and prophets” in the diocese, he said that their love and service reaches out to the sick, poor and lonely and makes their parishes and communities more loving.

This year’s ceremony was distinguished by the prolonged standing ovation given to the 23 members of St. Rose of Lima Parish who received recognition for the extraordinary services they performed after the loss of 26 children and teachers in the Newtown slayings last December 14. The entire ministry team, along with parish staff and volunteers, came forward to receive their medals and have a group picture taken with the bishop.

During the prayer service, which included readings from St. Paul and St. Luke, Bishop Caggiano blessed the bronze medals, which have an engraving of St. Augustine on the front and the seal of the Diocese of Bridgeport on the reverse side.

“Every day we pray for you that God gives protection and the power of his spirit for you to continue to live hopeful and generous lives,” Bishop Caggiano said in his closing remarks. “At a time when so many people wonder where God is, you make his compassion, mercy and presence real.”

A reception for recipients and guests followed the service at Kolbe-Cathedral High School on the Cathedral grounds.
2013 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

Saint Ann Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Lee – Barbara ensures the parish is beautifully decorated during Christmas and Easter by managing the floral decorations. Bernie is the Chair of our Parish Council. Together, they inspire Saint Ann’s.” – Father Peter Lynch, Administrator

Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Bridgeport: Mrs. Georgina Nieves – “Georgina has been a loyal, generous and willing member of our Parish whose devotion, love, charity and humility have showed us the face of God among us for almost 25 years.” – Father Edicson Orozco, Administrator

Saint George Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. Ubaldo Aciutt and Mrs. Leonela Cruz – “Both are dedicated, generous and devout parishioners who have given much of themselves to serve Saint George Parish. They also have helped parish outreach to young families.” – Father Elia Sosa, Administrator

Saint Mary Parish, Bethel: Mr. Joseph Jackson – “Joe gives of his time, talent and treasure to every aspect of parish life. From teaching religious education to working with youth group and mission trips, he is always the first to volunteer.” – Father Cary Faccini, Pastor

The Church of the Blessed Sacrament Parish, Bridgeport: Mrs. Michelle Moore – “Michelle is a tireless, selfless and talented volunteer in our parish community. She represents what is best and blessed in our parish by being faith-filled, charitable and welcoming.” – Father Joseph Karciwski, Administrator

Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Bala – “Benjamin and Ines are Lectors, active in the Charismatic group, collaborators and always ready to help the parish with their deep faith and love.” – Father Jose de Brito Alves, Pastor

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Danbury: Mr. and Mrs. Angelico Oliveira – “Mr. Oliveira plays guitar and sings, leading the young people’s choir every Sunday. Mrs. Oliveira has been a dedicated catechist for many years.” – Father Jose Brito-Martins, Administrator

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Danbury: Ms. Gwen Davidson – “Gwen is always available to serve by sharing her time and talents humbly. She is very compassionate and shows loyalty for our community, particularly in her work with youth.” – Father John Peers, Administrator

The Cathedral Parish: Mr. Jack Dwyer – “A gentle soul and generous volunteer, Jack touches everyone he meets with his Christian demeanor and enlists admiration from our parish family for his lifelong, continued and dedicated service to every aspect of parish life.” – Father Peter Lenox, Pastor

Saint Andrew Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. and Mrs. Ronaldo Benavides – “Standing at the entrance to the church on Sunday mornings, Ron can be seen with a big smile on his face as he welcomes worshipers with the parish bulletin. Sue is a Eucharistic Minister.” – Father Eugene Stacy, Pastor

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Danbury: Mr. and Mrs. Angelico Oliveira – “Mr. Oliveira plays guitar and sings, leading the young people’s choir every Sunday. Mrs. Oliveira has been a dedicated catechist for many years.” – Father Jose Brito-Martins, Administrator

Saint Margaret Shrine, Bridgeport: Mr. and Mrs. Sebastiano Badalato – “The Badalatos, Sebastiano (88) and Rosa (87) have been long-time parishioners helping with parish events. A couple of deep faith, on October 25 they will be celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary.” – Father Affifino Pionne, Rector

Saint Peter Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. and Mrs. Juan Rodriguez – “Juan and Lucy are Lectors and perform volunteer work in computer services and Natural Family Planning. They also have been involved in the Marriage Preparation for the last 25 years.” – Monsignor Aniceto Villamide, Pastor

Saint Joseph Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. Carl Monti – “Carl is a model of selflessness to the parish, family and friends. He is a Lector, a Facilitator in our RCIA process, Chair of the Men of Saint Joseph faith-sharing group, and volunteer at Morning Glory breakfast program in Danbury.” – Father George O’Neill, Pastor

Saint Michael the Archangel Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. and Mrs. Slawek Rosa – “Marzena and Slawek are active in organizing retreats for married couples. They are always ready to share their time and talent.” – Father Stefan Motwski, O.F.M. Cap., Pastor

Saint Marie Goretti Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. Marcus Vas – “Marcus is very much interested in evangelizing non-active parishioners. By his word and example he inspired many and brought them back to church.” – Father George Sandweisselk, Pastor

Saint Margaret Schroff Parish, Bridgeport: Mr. Jack Dwyer – “A gentle soul and generous volunteer, Jack touches everyone he meets with his Christian demeanor and enlists admiration from our parish family for his life-long, continued and dedicated service to every aspect of parish life.” – Father Peter Lenox, Pastor

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2013 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Danbury: Mrs. Joan Dufford
– Joan coordinates our Parish Ministry to the Homebound. By her example as a Minister of the Eucharist and her direction of others, our sick find comfort in the presence of the Lord. 
  – Father Dennis Mason, O.F.M. Conv., Pastor

Saint Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury: Mr. Joseph Michael Smith
– "It is a rare person who can inspire on a regular basis. Joey attends the 4:30 pm Mass every Saturday and acts as a greeter, usher and Eucharistic Minister. His warmth and smile make everyone feel special.” 
  – Father Angelo Aranda, Pastor

Saint Joseph Parish, Danbury: Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Macaulay
– Dennis made a substantial contribution in his service on the Facilities Committee and the School Advisory Board. Sheila has served with distinction on the Council of Catholic Women.” 
  – Father Samuel Scott, Pastor

Saint Peter Parish, Darien: Ms. Lourna Damgan
– "A faithful, life-long parishioner, Lourna currently schedules the Liturgical Ministers, catechises as a member of the RCIA team, Lectors, assists with the preparation for Mass, and weekly works bingo.” 
  – Father Greg Mecca, Pastor

Saint John Parish, Darien: Mr. Douglas McKay
– “Doug, a devoted husband and father, brings an enthusiasm and a ‘ready to serve in every way possible’ attitude to all parish events. Doug has served as Parish Council Chair and leader of the Men’s Group.”
  – Monsignor Frank McGrath, Pastor

Saint Thomas More Parish, Darien: Mr. Walter Donovan
– “Walter has served in many roles including Parish Council Chair. He is a kind and generous man who is always available to lend an ear to any parishioner in need or to volunteer.”
  – Father Paul Murphy, Pastor

Notre Dame Parish, Easton: Dr. and Mrs. Robert Biggins
– “Dr. Biggins, who attends Mass daily, is a member of the Men’s Association while Mary is on the Notre Dame Ladies Council. Their love and enthusiasm for their faith is exemplary.”
  – Monsignor Thomas Driscoll, P.A., Pastor

Holy Cross Parish, Fairfield: Mrs. Dorothy Fejes
– “Dorothy has given a lifetime of service to Holy Cross Parish, both at the former location on Pine Street in Bridgeport and at our “new” home in Fairfield. She continues to serve as a DRE and volunteer.”
  – Father Alfred Pecaric, Pastor

Holy Family Parish, Fairfield: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fischer
– “The Fishers have served as Lectors, and Eucharistic Ministers and have been key leaders of our Emmaus Community. They inspire all with their Christian witness.”
  – Father Guido Montanaro, Pastor

Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Fairfield: Mr. Thomas Lanese
– "Tom is a stalwart of the parish, and one of its earliest members. First in the church every day, he sets up for Mass and leads the Rosary.”
  – Father William Quinlan, Administrator

Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, Fairfield: Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Kirwan
– “Barbara and Jeff exemplify faith in action in the parish and in the greater community. Jeff is very active in the Merton Society, and a Special Minister. Barbara is a Lector and a Spiritual Director.”
  – Father John Banas, Pastor

Saint Emery Parish, Fairfield: Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Fencil
– “This couple is inspiration to all. Carroll has been head of the finance committee and he has coordinated the successful effort to have Saint Emery’s Church designated as an historic site.”
  – Father Guido Montanaro, Administrator

Saint Pius X Parish, Fairfield: Mr. Arthur Hedge, Jr.
– “Art’s Ministry of Hospitality helps to welcome all parishioners and visitors to Saint Pius X each and every week. He is generous with his time and talents and always just a phone call away.”
  – Father Michael Dogali, Pastor

Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish, Fairfield: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Eck
– “Their enthusiasm for the Catholic faith and participation in many parish ministries and functions is truly a blessing to our parish. Bob and Carroll are true advocates of Catholic education.”
  – Father Victor Marrin, Pastor
2013 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

Sacred Heart Parish, Georigtown: Ms. Una Callahan — “A member of our RCIA team, a Catechist, and an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. Una also helps in the ‘behind the scenes’ tasks so vital in each parish. Her presence is a blessing.” — Father David Leopold, Pastor

Saint Michael the Archangel Parish and Saint Timothy Chapel, Greenwich: Mr. and Mrs. Cary May — “A couple most deserving of honor, Cary and Misa have been very active and devoted parish leaders for 50 years.” — Monsignor P. Peter Callen, P.A., Pastor

Saint Paul Parish, Greenwich: Mr. and Mrs. Chris Licursi — “Every year they collect, organize and distribute 100 complete Thanksgiving Dinner baskets. Chris is a ‘go to’ guy for help with Special Liturgies and Lorraine has served as a volunteer in Religious Education.” — Father Frank Wies, Pastor

Saint Agnes Parish, Greenwich: Ms. Kate Glaser — “Kate’s work with children has been invaluable to our parish. She has run both the Confirmation and First Communion programs. Her energy and personal warmth have added greatly to our community.” — Father James McDwitz, Pastor

Saint Roch Parish, Greenwich: Mr. and Mrs. Aurelio Pio — “Aurelio and Maria are very dedicated workers and always serve at head of the ‘Pizza Fritta’ booth at the parish feast. They bring joy to many by their warmth and generosity as well as by Aurelio’s tenor singing.” — Father Matthew Mauvelle, Pastor

Saint Jude Parish, Monroe: Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Cambra — “Emanuel is a Catechist and Eucharistic Minister, and leads Saturday morning Bible Study. Frances is on the Hospitality Committee, runs our gift shop and photographs parish events.” — Monsignor John Sahia, Pastor

Saint Adolphe Parish, New Canaan: Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Lock — “Jerry and Sue are active in many parish organizations and frequently take on the leadership of various activities. They bring out the best in many others who carry out our parish programs.” — Monsignor William Scheyd, P.A., Pastor

Saint Edward the Confessor Parish, New Fairfield: Mr. and Mrs. Otto Sletoyn — “Otis is a humble and devoted soul, dedicated to the service of God and Saint Edward the Confessor Parish, actively participating in the Knights of Columbus and Men’s Ministry Program.” — Father Nicholas Civille, Pastor

Saint Jerome Parish, Norwalk: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Edney — “Robert is a lifetime parish member, Parish Council member, Finance Committee member, Usher and Greeter. He is also a representative on various parish committees.” — Father Michael Bachman, Pastor

Saint Joseph Parish, Norwalk: Mrs. Amelia Morales — “Service with a smile and a song in heart’ just begins to describe the unique place Amelia has in the liturgical and social life of Saint Joseph’s. Blessed with a beautiful voice, Amelia has led the Spanish-speaking choir for years.” — Father Gilbert D’Souza, Pastor

Saint Mary Parish, Norwalk: Mrs. Jane Rechle — “With tremendous organizational skills along with a generous spirit of service, Jane has had a quiet but influential role in the life of Saint Mary Parish for over 30 years. Most importantly, Jane is a woman of prayer.” — Father Greg Markey, Pastor

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Saint Mary Parish, Greenwich: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Havranek — “Barbara has been involved in leadership positions with the Ladies Guild, Social Concerns and Parish Council. Joe, a retired police man, serves as security for our high profile activities and ceremonies.” — Monsignor Francis Wissel, Pastor

Saint Mary Parish, Norwalk: Mrs. Jane Rechle — “With tremendous organizational skills along with a generous spirit of service, Jane has had a quiet but influential role in the life of Saint Mary Parish for over 30 years. Most importantly, Jane is a woman of prayer.” — Father Greg Markey, Pastor

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Saint Jerome Parish, Norwalk: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Edney — “Robert is a lifetime parish member, Parish Council member, Finance Committee member, Usher and Greeter. He is also a representative on various parish committees.” — Father Michael Bachman, Pastor
2013 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

Saint Matthew Parish, Norwalk: Mr. and Mrs. Al DiGregorio – “For the past 19 years, Saint Matthew Parish has been blessed with the presence of two earthy angels. Al and Chris are an extraordinary couple and a blessing in the life of the parish.” – Monsignor Walter Orłowski, Pastor

Saint Philip Parish, Norwalk: Mr. Daniel Krenicki and Mrs. Kathleen Krenicki (Posthumously) – “Dan and Kathy are an incredible example of living the Sacrament of Marriage, while dealing with Kathy’s illness. Their acceptance has inspired many to find courage and hope.” – Father Michael Boccaccio, Pastor

Saint Matthew Parish, Norwalk: Mr. and Mrs. Jack Grey – “Both Jack and Linda give endless hours to our Annual Tag Sale. Their hard work and generous spirit inspire many. Jack is also an Adult Altar Server and a member of our Collection Team.” – Father Samuel Pereira, Parish Vicar

Saint Joseph Parish, Shelton: Mr. and Mrs. Jack Grey – “Mark was a strong voice as the parish built our new worship space. For the last three years he has lead our parish Golf and Tennis Tournament and with the help of his committee has made it the largest fundraiser.” – Father Joseph Kereven, Pastor

Saint Elizabeth Seton Parish, Ridgefield: Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Lenn – “Dan and Marie have been long-time parishioners involved in Pre Cana, Bible Study, and Dorothy Day House. They are also the key benefactors of the building project with their generous support.” – Father Joseph Principe, Pastor

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish, Norwalk: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Krauß – “Both Jack and Linda give endless hours to our Annual Tag Sale. Their hard work and generous spirit inspire many. Jack is also an Adult Altar Server and a member of our Collection Team.” – Father Samuel Pereira, Parish Vicar

Saint Mary Parish, Ridgefield: Mr. and Mrs. John Smith – “Eleonore is a Lector, a member of the Altar Committee and Co-Chair of the Women’s Guild. She is always more than willing to lend a hand. After the recent vandalism, Joe stepped up and helped whenever and wherever he was needed.” – Father John Stronkoski, Administrator

Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside: Mr. James Blake – “Jim recently used his executive skills to oversee the major renovation of the parish church. He is a member of the parish Finance Council and is the Chair of our Building Committee.” – Monsignor Alan Detischer, Pastor

Saint Joseph Parish, Ridgefield: Mr. and Mrs. John Smith – “Eleonore is a Lector, a member of the Altar Committee and Co-Chair of the Women’s Guild. She is always more than willing to lend a hand. After the recent vandalism, Joe stepped up and helped whenever and wherever he was needed.” – Father John Stronkoski, Administrator

Saint Patrick Parish, Redding Ridge: Mr. Mark Castello – “Mark was a strong voice as the parish built our new worship space. For the last three years he has lead our parish Golf and Tennis Tournament and with the help of his committee has made it the largest fundraiser.” – Father Joseph Kereven, Pastor

Saint Elizabet Seton Parish, Ridgefield: Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Lenn – “Dan and Marie have been long-time parishioners involved in Pre Cana, Bible Study, and Dorothy Day House. They are also the key benefactors of the building project with their generous support.” – Father Joseph Principe, Pastor

Saint Lawrence Parish, Shelton: Ms. Rosemarie Cerreta – “For years Rose has come from Monroe every morning to open the Basilica by 6 am, so people going to work could stop, light a candle and offer a prayer.” – Monsignor Stephen DiGiovanni, Pastor

Saint Lawrence Parish, Shelton: Mrs. Barbara Pekar – “For nearly 40 years of faithful service as a Catechist and Director of Religious Education, Barbara’s wisdom, joy and kindness enriched our parish and she continues to share those gifts in her new role as volunteer and mentor.” – Father Michael Jones, Pastor

Holy Trinity Parish, Sherman: Ms. and Mrs. Frank Krauß – “Their years of service have been marked by the generous giving of their time, talent and treasure in support of the Holy Trinity Parish as Blood Drive volunteers and Eucharistic Ministers.” – Father Alfred Reindeau, Jr., Pastor

Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Stamford: Ms. Rosemarie Cerreta – “For years Rose has come from Monroe every morning to open the Basilica by 6 am, so people going to work could stop, light a candle and offer a prayer.” – Monsignor Stephen DiGiovanni, Pastor

Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. Stanislaw Gibek – “Steadfast, a Parish Council member, helps with our Harvest Festival and gives generously his time and talent. Krystyna is always a great help with our Hospitality Ministry and church grounds.” – Father Pavel Herbenko, Administrator

Holy Spirit Parish, Stamford: Mrs. Eleonore Smith – “Eleonore is a Lector, a member of the Altar Committee and Co-Chair of the Women’s Guild. She is always more than willing to contribute her time, energy, talents and true Christian spirit.” – Monsignor Kevin Ryzal, Administrator

Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish, Shelton: Mr. Joseph Tantillo – “A selfless force at Saint Margaret Mary for many years, he is always willing to lend a hand. After the recent vandalism, Joe stepped up and helped whenever and wherever he was needed.” – Father John Stronkoski, Administrator

Saint Patrick Parish, Ridgefield: Ms. Eleonore Smith – “Eleonore is a Lector, a member of the Altar Committee and Co-Chair of the Women’s Guild. She is always more than willing to contribute her time, energy, talents and true Christian spirit.” – Monsignor Kevin Ryzal, Administrator

Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish, Shelton: Mr. Joseph Tantillo – “A selfless force at Saint Margaret Mary for many years, he is always willing to lend a hand. After the recent vandalism, Joe stepped up and helped whenever and wherever he was needed.” – Father John Stronkoski, Administrator

Saint Peter Parish, Ridgefield: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tantillo – “A selfless force at Saint Margaret Mary for many years, he is always willing to lend a hand. After the recent vandalism, Joe stepped up and helped whenever and wherever he was needed.” – Father John Stronkoski, Administrator
2013 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, Stamford: Ms. and Mrs. Joseph DiRenzo – “Nurse and Joe have consistently supported the liturgical, social, outreach, and development activities of our parish and school, thereby exemplifying family-based faith in action.”

– Monsignor Edward Sarwile, Pastor

Sacred Heart Parish, Stamford: Mrs. Antonietta D’Agostino – “Tom is a lifelong member of Sacred Heart Church, a ‘go-to’ person, an active member of the Rosary Altar Society for her entire adult life, and a Religious Education teacher.”

– Father Martin deMayo, Parish Vicar

Saint Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. Julio Pazmino – “Julo and Lida have been lifetime members of Our Lady of Montserrat. They have participated in numerous church ministries, and donated countless hours in service of others.”

– Father Arthur Mollenhauser, Administrator

Saint Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Jeffers – “Ernie and Magdalene always come to serve, not to be served. Ernie, is a Permanent Deacon candidate. Magdalene serves as a Catechist and lends quiet, selfless service.”

– Father Edward McCrady, Administrator

Saint Cecilia Parish, Stamford: Mrs. Mary Somma – “Joe is one of the founding members of the parish and President of the Men’s Club. Through the years he has been involved in countless other activities in the parish.”

– Father Cyprian LaPatina, Pastor

Saint Clement of Rome Parish, Stamford: Mrs. Bette Calarco – “Bette is totally dedicated to her faith and parish as Coordinator of the weekly Novena and Monthly Adoration. She also handles floral decorations for the parish chapel and church and serves on the Ladies Guild.”

– Father Joseph Malley, Pastor

Saint Gabriel Parish, Stamford: Mr. Joseph D’agostino – “Toni is a lifelong member of Sacred Heart Church, a ‘go-to’ person, an active member of the Rosary Altar Society for her entire adult life, and a Religious Education teacher.”

– Father Martin deMayo, Parish Vicar

Saint Leo Parish, Stamford: Mr. Frank Donato – “Frank can always be counted on to support every spiritual and social activity that takes place at Saint Leo. He has served as a Lector, RCIA team member, and Soup Kitchen volunteer.”

– Father James Green, Pastor

Saint Monica Parish, Stamford: Mr. Michael Boyd – “Mike, of Greenwich, has been a member of the New Covenant House of Hospitality Advisory Board for eight years. He serves as Chair of the Relocation and Capital Campaign Committee.”

– Mr. Al Barber, President

Catholic Charities: Mrs. Deborah Peetza – “Debbie has welcomed five newborns as a Foster Mother for Catholic Charities since 2003, while also caring for her own four children. Her wonderful, caring family is a gift to children.”

– Mr. Al Barber, President

Catholic Charities: Mr. Jon Vaccarella – “Jon, a member of the Advisory Board since 2007, was instrumental in helping the Merton Center receive the Bank of America Neighborhood Builder’s Award. He has a great heart for helping people, especially children.”

– Mr. Al Barber, President

Catholic Charities: Mr. Joseph DiRenzo – “Joe has shown extraordinary service and generosity to the Saint Jude School Community through his Christian witness as president of the Home School Association and a member of the Advisory Board.”

– Sister Mary Grace Walsh, Superintendent of Schools

Catholic Charities: Mr. Frank Donato – “Frank can always be counted on to support every spiritual and social activity that takes place at Saint Leo. He has served as a Lector, RCIA team member, and Soup Kitchen volunteer.”

– Mr. Al Barber, President

Catholic Charities: Mr. Mark Daly – “Mark has partnered with CCFC senior management to rejuvenate and redefine the role of the Board and reengineer the agency. He also accepted the job of Lead Director to assist with Board interface.”

– Mr. Al Barber, President

Catholic Charities: Mrs. Nancy Murphy – “As vice president of the Danbury Board and Chair of the Spring Gala, Nancy has been a very active and dedicated friend of Catholic Charities. She is also a caring Foster Mother who donates her fee back to the agency.”

– Mr. Al Barber, President

Catholic Education: Mr. Thomas Gillepsie – “Marty has served as Director of School Finance and more recently as Assistant to the Superintendent. His generous service as well as his faithfulness to the Church make him truly outstanding.”

– Sister Mary Grace Walsh, Superintendent of Schools

Catholic Education: Mr. Marty Testin – “Fred is a committed volunteer who has brought his financial expertise in planning and fundraising as a Development Office volunteer. He is always willing to share his time and talent.”

– Ms. Pamela Rittman, Director of ABA

Development Office: Mr. Ford Smith – “Fred is a committed volunteer who has brought his financial expertise in planning and fundraising as a Development Office volunteer. He is always willing to share his time and talent.”

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Cardinal Dolan is a close friend of the parish and a “go-to” person for volunteer opportunities.”

– Deacon Albert Quirion, Pastor
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Saint Mary Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. Lucius Romero – “Maria and Lucius have served Saint Mary for many years as Catechists, Directors of the Children’s Choir, Directors of Saint Mary Couples Outreach and as volunteers for a hour of parish events.” – Father Arthur Mollenhauer, Pastor

Saint Monica Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. James Farley – “Both Jim and Mary have served this community in a variety of ways ranging from Eucharistic Minister to Greeter/Usher. ‘Fiscal Engineer’ to linen launderers. They are both valuable resources!” – Father Albert Pinciarelli, Pastor

Holly Name of Jesus Parish, Stratford: Mr. and Mrs. Armand Major – “Tom is president of the Ladies Guild, and both she and Armand have served as Catechists, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and Soup Kitchen volunteers.” – Father Andrew Marus, Pastor

Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford: Mr. Francis Hewitt – “For many years Bud has been quietly serving our Lord on the Parish Council, in Eucharistic Ministry, in scheduling ministers, arranging altar flowers and other things. He is always happy to lend a hand.” – Father Richard Murphy, Pastor

Our Lady of Grace Parish, Stratford: Mrs. Tony Alusik – “Tony gives generously to the parish. He is a Funeral Altar-Server, Choir member, Eucharistic Minister, and Lector. He volunteers at the Stratford Lord’s Kitchen as a cook. He gives of his time and talent for the Lord!” – Monsignor Martin Ryan, Administrator

Catholic marriage.” – Father Andrew Marus, Pastor

Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Westport: Mrs. Laura Cody – “Laura is a very spiritual person who thinks of the rights of others before her own. She is involved in Bible Study, the Rosary Group, Eucharistic Minister, homebound and elderly and helped with the Fatima Day Celebrations.” – Father Reginald Norman, Pastor

Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilton: Mrs. Mary Attanasio – “Mary is an extraordinarily multi-talented woman who gives of her time and giftedness in music, adult formation, interfaith endeavors, and gardening—just to name a few!” – Monsignor Andrew Varga, Pastor

Saint James Parish, Stratford: Mr. Alphonse DeJesus – “We have to empty ourselves in order to fill ourselves with God’s love so that we can pour out that love to others. The best example of that is Alphonse. He is truly available 24/7 for anyone who needs him.” – Father Thomas Lynch, Pastor

Saint Teresa Parish, Stratford: Mr. and Mrs. Armando Majewski – “They have been extremely generous with incredible time and talent. They demonstrate the beauty and generosity of Catholic marriage.” – Father Brian Gannon, Pastor

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Weston: Mrs. Mary Latessa – “Mary has taken to heart the words of Christ, ‘be mindful of the poor.’ Her outreach to those less fortunate has been tremendous by leading parish drives for necessities. She brings smiles and God’s love.” – Father Michael Dunn, Pastor

Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull: Dr. Anthony Marziale – “Dr. Tony has worked tirelessly and selflessly to support the Daily Bread Ministry and Saint Catherine’s for many years. He collects the left-over baked goods from retail stores and delivers them to the Mertron Center.” – Monsignor Richard Shea, Pastor

Saint Stephen Parish, Trumbull: Mrs. Jacqueline Nobile – “Jackie has contributed her time, talents, and treasures for many years at Saint Stephen, serving as a Parish Trustee, Eucharistic Minister, and Lector.” – Father Christopher Samele, Administrator

Saint Mark Parish, Stratford: Mr. Frank Bevacqua – “Like his father, John, a former Saint Augustine recipient, Frank has generously and tirelessly served his parish in a variety of ways including Trustee and Building and Grounds expertise. Frank is a model Catholic.” – Father Donald Guglielmi, Pastor

Saint Luke Parish, Westport: Mr. Francis Shea – “Mr. Shea is President and Treasurer of the Home School Association, Chair of the Parish and Finance Council, Lector and Parish Webmaster.” – Father Tim Thorne, Pastor

Saint Mary Parish, Stratford: Mr. and Mrs. Alphonse Shea – “For many years Bud has been quietly serving our Lord on the Parish Council, in Eucharistic Ministry, in scheduling ministers, arranging altar flowers and other things. He is always happy to lend a hand.” – Father Richard Murphy, Pastor

Saint MARY Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. Lucius Romero – “Maria and Lucius have served Saint Mary for many years as Catechists, Directors of the Children’s Choir, Directors of Saint Mary Couples Outreach and as volunteers for a hour of parish events.” – Father Arthur Mollenhauer, Pastor

Saint Monica Parish, Stamford: Mr. and Mrs. James Farley – “Both Jim and Mary have served this community in a variety of ways ranging from Eucharistic Minister to Greeter/Usher. ‘Fiscal Engineer’ to linen launderers. They are both valuable resources!” – Father Albert Pinciarelli, Pastor

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In an extraordinary moment at this year’s Saint Augustine Medal ceremony, the entire parish team of Saint Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown was called forward to receive their medals from Bishop Caggiano.

Priests, religious, lay ministers and educators received a standing ovation for their deeply human and dedicated assistance following the Sandy Hook tragedy.

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport:
Mrs. Meg Arena, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mrs. Pamela Arsenault, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mrs. Sharon Bicho, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

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Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mr. Joseph DeMaida, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mrs. Frances Gargano, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Sister Mary Ellen Genova, CSFN, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mr. Joseph Jacovino, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Miss Kate Kunze, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mrs. Mary Maloney, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Mrs. Doreen Morrisey, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Deacon Daniel O’Connor, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Father Jose Ignacio Ortigas, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Diocese of Bridgeport, Bridgeport: Monsignor Robert E. Weiss, Nominated by: Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

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When the Sandy Hook School tragedy took place on December 14, 2012, many stepped forward to help in any way possible. There were three individuals who went far beyond expectations in assisting our parish community to organize and mobilize the many events that surrounded those initial days.

Lorraine Santore used her professional expertise to organize everything from meals to phone calls to media coverage to coordination of the staff and volunteers in our efforts to deal with the many funerals that took place in our church.

Stephanie DeBartolomeo and Jane Brady and their families sacrificed their Christmas holiday as well as the weeks following to help us deal with the overwhelming amount of mail and packages that we received by sorting them and delivering items to the appropriate places.

These three women demonstrated the Gospel in their care, concern and compassion to a community that was broken and pained.

Monsignor Robert E. Weiss, Pastor
Editorial

We Need Traditions

A WOMAN’S VIEW

By ANTOINETTE BOSCO

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

As Advent approaches, and I am getting older, I find myself each year thinking back to the way I and my children used to meet with other families to make our Advent wreaths. It was another time and another place, but the memories of this joyful camaraderie have remained with me. We did a lot of laughing as we wrestled with wire, evergreens and candles.

Never for a minute did we ever question why we made Advent wreaths. We all knew that the circular wreath symbolizes eternity and that the candles represent the coming of the Christ Child who is the Light of the World.

But why did we make them together was something else. We knew we were carrying on a tradition with a lot of meaning, and we felt that by getting together we were emphasizing the importance of this tradition.

I always remember the Broadway musical that put “Tradition” in lights, “Fiddler on the Roof.” When the “poppa,” Teyve, sings about the customs that characterize his people, he does this with humor, but no one misses the message: These traditions are the force that holds a people together.

The same is true for us who are Christians. And it is especially at Christmas time that we are drawn to revivify the traditions that link us so solidly with the miracle event of the birth of Jesus.

A teacher told me once that a tradition begins with an experience or expression of a truth that happened once, but deeply touched the basic human values and needs to be shared by people.

So important is this experience that it “transcends” the moment and continues to live — played out again and again by generations that follow.

We continue the action so as to keep us linked to that original, valid experience, and thus, a tradition is born. In time, it might take on different colors from the original, but, in essence, it does not differ.

It’s not hard to see why tradition is needed. In a word, for rootedness. Tradition gives us roots with the past and our ancestors, a sense of not being alone, but being part of a people. They make us remember there is a larger picture and that gives us a certain security.

The Advent season puts a focus on those traditions that have made us all part of the family of the Lord. Now I am in a new cycle, where I still gather wire, evergreens and candles to make an Advent wreath, but for grandchildren. It is something both tangible and mystical that is being passed on to them.

Then, when we complete the Advent journey, arriving at Christmas Eve, that’s when tradition really gets underscored. We’ll be delighted by the Christmas tree and the Nativity scene we all look forward to seeing again each year. We’ll eat the traditional foods I make, handed down to me by my Italian grandmother. And then with my daughter Mary, playing the piano, and son, Frank, on guitar, we’ll all sing traditional Christmas carols. We’ll be conscious of our joy, our humanness and of the miracle of one birth that led to the rebirthing of the world.

And we’ll be grateful for our traditions, which ever remind us that we are never alone, that we belong to the One who came at Christmas.

Here’s to Forty

A DAD’S VIEW

By MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

Back in olden times, before I ever heard of the Internet, or owned a minivan, or shared a house with four crazy kids, I was one of the youngest members of my high school class. With a birthday in late October, right before the “cutoff” for public school enrollment, I was always the last to do everything. I was last to get my driver’s license, last to register to vote, and last to have a legal beer. It also made me one of the last to turn forty.

All year long I’ve watched as one by one my Facebook friends from the class of 1991 hit the Big Four-0. Frankly, I’m astonished that I made it. Certainly I did some stupid stuff along the way. All of that’s behind me now, thank God. I have those four crazy kids to look after. I have a wife I love dearly. So you won’t catch me out after dark. Nothing good happens after midnight anyway.

My twenties were a lonesome period. I was lost. I turned my back on a lot of things — family, tradition, common sense. I gave up on salvation. I didn’t think I deserved heaven. Sometimes I didn’t think it existed at all.

If salvation did exist, I thought, access to it came through grace. A divine lottery. That was the most my mind could handle. And if it was all up to chance, then what was the point in being good? Mine was a very amateur theology. I thought I had actually discovered something new all on my own.

Living intensely, loving romantically, feeding hungrily at the banquet of life — this was how I imagined transcendence was attained. Expression was then the only need of my soul. I made bold pronouncements about subjects of which I was thoroughly ignorant. I was needlessly cruel — often for no reason.

Like I said, I was lost. A little boy acting the part of the big man. Thank goodness there was no Facebook in olden times. How I would have embarrassed myself.

These days I keep myself busy putting away childish things — literally. The house is overflowing with stuffed animals, board games, unfinished sketches of Buzz Lightyear, framed portraits of Lightning McQueen. It’s full of noise, shoes, laundry, laughter, and love. Staying one step ahead of the clutter keeps me out of trouble. Who has time for any of the nonsense that used to seem so urgent?

Who has time, period? Forty years — sounds like a lot of time. Not really, though. We live across the street from a cemetery. It’s a beautiful place for a walk, but I see the dates on the tombstones. I can do the math. The luckiest get seventy-five years, maybe a little more. I’ve probably already passed the mid-point.

My mother died in 2010. Leukemia. A bolt from the blue. She would have been seventy last month. I used to send her a card every October on my birthday. Pretty clever, don’t you think? I’d write, “You are the one who should really celebrate today. After all, you were the one who did all the work.”

She loved it. Wouldn’t you? I think I’ll start my kids doing the same thing soon. My oldest will be ten in March. I was ten when my mother was the age I am now. The circle turns. Everything old is young again. Nothing new under the sun. I think I saw that on one of the tombstones. Our little cemetery is full of stories. Love stories, some — a long-married couple buried side-by-side. Tragedies, too — babies who died in infancy. But mostly they are mysteries. Who were these people buried here? How did they live? What did they regret? Did they think they deserved heaven?

Some stories the cemetery doesn’t tell. I used to argue with my mother about politics. What good did that do? What good comes from a mother and child bickering like that? Everyone in the graveyard votes the same.

For a guy used to being the youngest person in the room, turning forty feels like a major milestone. You can tell it’s got me thinking about mortality. I sure am glad God didn’t see fit to take me back in olden times, when I was young, dumb, and running wild. I wasn’t ready to go. I guess I’m still not — I’ve got these crazy kids to raise. But I think my soul might be in slightly better condition than it was.

I still believe in grace, by the way. I’m counting on it, in fact.

Here’s to the next forty.
Youth groups are open to all, no matter what parish you belong to!

(To add or make changes to the list, email jmonroe@diobpt.org)

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<th>PARISH</th>
<th>TOWN</th>
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<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>2x per month, Sundays 6:30-8:30pm</td>
<td>Fr. Joseph Gill</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jagill@email.mary.edu">jagill@email.mary.edu</a></td>
<td>203.744.5777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Andrew</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Sundays, 9:30am Mass then meet</td>
<td>Susan Baldwin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sbaldwin143@yahoo.com">sbaldwin143@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.374.8118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Ann</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Sundays, 6-8pm</td>
<td>Paul Brunner</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paulbrunner@yahoo.com">paulbrunner@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.365.1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Sundays, 12-30-2:30pm</td>
<td>Nancy Alvarez-Torez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alvarezn@optonline.net">alvarezn@optonline.net</a></td>
<td>203.260.9572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick (Cathedral Parish)</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Mondays, 6-30-8pm</td>
<td>Fr. Sean R. Kulacz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:YouthMtnCathPar@optimum.net">YouthMtnCathPar@optimum.net</a></td>
<td>203.368.6777, x22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peter</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Sundays, 4-6:30pm</td>
<td>Jonathan Torres</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bpsaintp@gmail.com">bpsaintp@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.513.9449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>Brookfield</td>
<td>Thursdays, 7-8:30pm</td>
<td>Jaimee Koegler</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jameek@parishmail.com">jameek@parishmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.775.1035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Gregory the Great</td>
<td>Danbury</td>
<td>Sundays, 11:30am</td>
<td>Rene Hellmann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:renaissancebb@sbcglobal.net">renaissancebb@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
<td>203.797.1641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>Danbury</td>
<td>Sundays, 5-8pm</td>
<td>David Roman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:saintjosephy@gmail.com">saintjosephy@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.606.1786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John</td>
<td>Darien</td>
<td>Sundays 5pm Mass, 6-8pm meet</td>
<td>Fr. Frank Gomez and Kristen LeCompte</td>
<td>kristenlecompte@<a href="mailto:johnYG@gmail.com">johnYG@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.655.1145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas More</td>
<td>Darien</td>
<td>Sundays after 5:15pm Mass until 8:00pm</td>
<td>Mike Belford</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stmdarienyg@aol.com">stmdarienyg@aol.com</a></td>
<td>203.655.6295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pius</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Bi-weekly Wednesdays 7-8:30pm</td>
<td>Daniel Guido</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stpiusyouthgroup@gmail.com">stpiusyouthgroup@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.253.6134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas Aquinas</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Sundays, 7-9pm</td>
<td>Jess Harris</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stthoag@aol.com">stthoag@aol.com</a></td>
<td>740.424.4581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence</td>
<td>Huntington</td>
<td>Every other Sunday, 6-8pm</td>
<td>Courtney Pastor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stlawrenceyg@gmail.com">stlawrenceyg@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.929.8421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Edward the Confessor</td>
<td>New Fairfield</td>
<td>Sundays, 5:15pm Mass followed by dinner &amp; activities 6:30-8:30pm</td>
<td>Renzo Ortega and Monica Mueller</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rortega@saintedwardchurch.org">rortega@saintedwardchurch.org</a></td>
<td>203.746.2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Rose of Lima</td>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>(Call for days/times)</td>
<td>Rodd Blessey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:blessme6@att.net">blessme6@att.net</a></td>
<td>203.426.1014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jerome</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Sunday 6pm Mass followed by meeting</td>
<td>Joe &amp; Daniella O'Callaghan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:norwalkstjerome@cs.com">norwalkstjerome@cs.com</a></td>
<td>203.847.5349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Wednesdays 5:30-7:30pm during school year</td>
<td>Steve Genovese</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stevieg3@optonline.net">stevieg3@optonline.net</a></td>
<td>203.943.1352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Matthew</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>Kathy Defino</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nieoclockers@yahoo.com">nieoclockers@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.838.3788, x101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Philip</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Wednesdays 7-9pm</td>
<td>Kali DiMarco</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kall1@optonline.net">kall1@optonline.net</a></td>
<td>203.847.4286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas the Apostle</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Sunday after 5pm Mass</td>
<td>Lisa Castorina</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stthomas_lisa@sbcglobal.net">stthomas_lisa@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
<td>203.866.1189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick</td>
<td>Redding Ridge</td>
<td>Sundays, 5-7pm September-June</td>
<td>Sue Siburn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:smshuretkep@sbcglobal.net">smshuretkep@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
<td>203.938.2703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Elizabeth Seton</td>
<td>Ridgefield</td>
<td>Sundays after 5pm Mass, twice per month</td>
<td>Mia Belanger</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stetsonparish@comcast.net">stetsonparish@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>203.438.7292</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Ridgefield</td>
<td>Sundays, 6-9pm</td>
<td>Laura Danner</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ldanner@smcr.org">ldanner@smcr.org</a></td>
<td>203.438.6538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Catherine of Sienna</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>Thursdays, 6-8pm, Teen Mass 1st Sunday of month 11am</td>
<td>Janet Wrabel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wrabel@stcath.org">wrabel@stcath.org</a></td>
<td>203.913.4393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>Sundays, 6-8:30pm</td>
<td>Linda Goret</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlgoret@sbcglobal.net">jlgoret@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
<td>203.924.8611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Margaret Mary</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>Sundays, 6:30-9pm</td>
<td>Stacey Oddo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stmmoodo@gmail.com">stmmoodo@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.929.3022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Name of Jesus</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>Last Sunday of month at 6:30pm</td>
<td>Fr. Damien Pielesz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stmfrdamien@gmail.com">stmfrdamien@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.323.4967</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Leo</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>Sundays, 6-8, September-May</td>
<td>Holly Connolly</td>
<td>stleoys@yahoocom</td>
<td>203.322.1669</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>Saturdays, 6-30-8pm, ages 13-18</td>
<td>Fr. Rolando Torres</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stmarygolds@aol.com">stmarygolds@aol.com</a></td>
<td>203.324.7321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Cecilia</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>Sundays, 4pm, every other week</td>
<td>Diane McNamara</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmcac276@sbcglobal.net">mmcac276@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
<td>203.322.1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. James</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>Mondays, 6-8pm</td>
<td>Fr. Bruce Roby</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frroby@diobpt.org">frroby@diobpt.org</a></td>
<td>203.375.5877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mark</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>Grades 9-12 meet Sundays, 7-8-30pm</td>
<td>Jared Forcier</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jared@stmaryyouthgroup.org">jared@stmaryyouthgroup.org</a></td>
<td>203.876.1621</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Stephen</td>
<td>Trumbull</td>
<td>Every other Sunday, 6-15:59pm</td>
<td>Janet Wrabel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlwrrabel@gmail.com">jlwrrabel@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.913.4393</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church of the Assumption</td>
<td>Westport</td>
<td>Sundays, 6pm, 2a month, September-June</td>
<td>Michele Modugno</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sryouth@assumption-westport.org">sryouth@assumption-westport.org</a></td>
<td>203.222.8486</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Luke</td>
<td>Westport</td>
<td>Teen Mass, last Sunday of month 5:30pm, followed by dinner &amp; meeting, September-June</td>
<td>Deb Toner</td>
<td><a href="mailto:slygroup@optonline.net">slygroup@optonline.net</a></td>
<td>203.222.0205</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Francis of Assisi</td>
<td>Weston</td>
<td>Sundays following 5pm Teen Mass</td>
<td>Brenda DeMatteo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bdemattio@stfrancisweston.org">bdemattio@stfrancisweston.org</a></td>
<td>203.227.8353</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Fatima</td>
<td>Wilton</td>
<td>B.L.A.S.T. (Big Loud Awesome Spiritual Thing) Once per month on Sunday, 7-30-8:45pm.</td>
<td>Melanie Deluca and Georgette Martellini</td>
<td><a href="mailto:oifyouthgroup2@aol.com">oifyouthgroup2@aol.com</a></td>
<td>203.762.3928</td>
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Religious Education

New app brings creates interactive catechism

BRIDGEPORT—“Sacraments123,” the new free, downloadable app for iPads, makes learning the Holy Sacraments as easy as 1, 2, and 3. The interactive program was created by Michelle O’Mara, director of the Ministry for People with Disabilities and Carol Pinard, former director of Religious Education Programs. It was designed initially to teach the sacraments to students with learning disabilities using a series of matching games, including awards for the correct match. With its audio, videos, sound effects and memory games, Sacraments123 proved popular with parents, teachers and students of all ages.

“We began it to fill a need for kids who no longer needed a remedial curriculum but who would still benefit from something transitional,” O’Mara says. “We discovered that it’s popular across grade levels, from third grade up. Parents have found it useful in homeschooling religious education, and it works well in small groups or even in a whole classroom equipped with a SmartBoard.”

Students, and their parents, enjoy playing the memory games. The app includes three distinct and engaging memory games, one for each of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. After each correct match an audio description pops up to explain the match. Once all the matches are completed, the correct order of each sacrament is revealed, along with a certificate of completion. Students have the option to type in their name and email it to their religious education teacher.

Since studies have shown that children learn through repetition, the games reset and can be played through as often as the student wants. Lesson plans and tips on how to incorporate the program into the regular curriculum are included in the app, and religious educators are encouraged to use Sacraments123 to reinforce and enrich their lessons.

“Due to Michelle O’Mara’s facilitation, Sacraments123 became an integral part of our special needs sacramental program,” says Liz Harakal, the director of religious education at St. Stephen Parish in Trumbull. “Additionally, Sacraments123 brings Jesus to life, and the hands-on program is effective in encouraging a meaningful understanding of Our Lord Jesus in the sacraments. When we implemented it in our curriculum, we found that it is helpful for all children.”

“Kids’ learning patterns are different, and the program allows each one to learn at their own pace,” agrees O’Mara.

In addition, she adds, “It was important in developing of this app that we kept in mind the needs of all users, not just young children but adults as well. Parents are the first educators of their children. They’re the ones who provide support for their child’s growth in the faith. When parents play the memory games with their children, they learn more about the sacraments, too.”

Included as part of the app are links to a video tour of the Mass. The Mass, recorded live, is broken into short, clearly explained segments. A section of all the symbols used in the liturgy adds to the understanding of the sacraments.

The app has already proved its worth. “I’ve had a number of children with disabilities who could not sit through a regular lesson,” says O’Mara. “This October, with the assistance of Sacraments123, several of them received First Holy Communion at the Special Needs Mass. It’s exciting to know that this software is helping more and more people learn about their faith.”

(For more information, contact Michelle O’Mara: 203.416.1502 or momara@diobpt.org.)
Celebrating Life

Adoption completes this family

By AMY ZAJAC

Nick Iacono and Angela Piscitiello always wanted to have a family. After coming to terms with the prognosis of their infertility, they were still determined to be parents. They embarked on their personal adoption journey with the help of Catholic Charities’ Family Directions Program. In 2010, fate presented Nick and Angela the opportunity to adopt their first child. A birth mother planning to place her child for adoption chose Nick and Angela to be her parents. Kathryn became the center of their world; however, Nick and Angela felt it was important for Kathryn to have a sibling.

This year, Nick started a new job that would allow him to spend more time with his family and the couple decided to move from their two-bedroom condominium into a single residence home. Just as they were moving into this new home, fate intervened a second time. A young couple planning to place their son in an adoptive home chose Nick and Angela as the boy’s new mom and dad. Mathis was born this fall and placed with Nick and Angela less than one month later. Nick and Angela were able to meet Mathis’ birth parents. While their story is personal and cannot be shared, they truly felt that Nick and Angela could provide their son the type of life they wanted, but were unable, to provide.

Mathis’ adoption was finalized this November, which is National Adoption Month. The family was greeted by Bishop Frank Caggiano, who blessed baby Mathis and praised all those who were involved in helping him reach his forever family.

Nick and Angela have ended their adoption journey. Their family is complete. Although they were both adopted by the same family, Kathryn and Mathis’ adoptions were both unique. Kathryn was placed with Nick and Angela directly from the hospital where she was born. When Mathis was discharged from the hospital into the care of Catholic Charities, he was placed in an agency-approved foster home on a temporary basis to allow his birthparents some time to reaffirm their adoption plan and select an adoptive family. Mathis was placed in the home of Deborah Fluta of Greenwich, who has been an active resource to Catholic Charities since 2003. She has cared for and nurtured five new-born infants, including Mathis, in her home anticipating their permanent placement either back with their biological families or in an adoptive home. She and her husband Richard donate the foster care payment back to Catholic Charities, which makes her service truly voluntary.

(For more information on Family Directions pregnancy counseling and adoption services, contact Amy Zajac, program director: 203.416.1336 or azajac@ccfc-ct.org.)

Bible Studies in Fairfield County Catholic Parishes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Amt</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Youth Bible Study 1) Thursdays 9:40-11:10am; 2) Wednesdays 7-8:30pm</td>
<td>Nancy Alvarez-Torres</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nalcruz@optonline.net">nalcruz@optonline.net</a></td>
<td>203.260.9572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Men’s Fellowship &amp; Bible Study, Saturdays 9-11am</td>
<td>Mary Donovan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marydonovan3@yahoo.com">marydonovan3@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.952.4218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John</td>
<td>Darien</td>
<td>1) Thursdays 9:40-11:10am 2) Wednesdays 7-8:30pm</td>
<td>Marianne Knaug</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmknag@aol.com">mmknag@aol.com</a></td>
<td>203.213.4809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas</td>
<td>Darien</td>
<td>Sundays 8-10am 2) Wednesdays 7-8:30pm</td>
<td>Maurice Magnatta</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mauricemagnatta@aol.com">mauricemagnatta@aol.com</a></td>
<td>203.366.6707</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Family</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Men’s Bible Study, Saturdays 9-10am</td>
<td>Lisa Linsenmeyer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lisa@linsenmeyer.com">lisa@linsenmeyer.com</a></td>
<td>203.536.0949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Thursday Nights 9-11pm</td>
<td>Lisa Linsenmeyer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lisa@linsenmeyer.com">lisa@linsenmeyer.com</a></td>
<td>203.536.0949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Greenwich</td>
<td>Sunday Mornings 9-10am</td>
<td>Mary Donovan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marydonovan@yahoo.com">marydonovan@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.952.4218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jude</td>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>Adult Bible Study 1) Thursdays 6:30-8:30pm</td>
<td>Kathy Clark</td>
<td><a href="mailto:loonsovergranby@gmail.com">loonsovergranby@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>203.261.0707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Aloysius</td>
<td>New Canaan</td>
<td>Bible Study 1) Thursdays 9-10am</td>
<td>Bob Mantilla</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robertmantilla@yahoo.com">robertmantilla@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.414.1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Edward the Confessor</td>
<td>New Fairfield</td>
<td>Men’s Fellowship &amp; Bible Study, Saturdays 9-10am</td>
<td>Carol Zinser</td>
<td><a href="mailto:czinser@stedwardchurch.org">czinser@stedwardchurch.org</a></td>
<td>203.746.2200, x30</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Rose of Lima</td>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>Sunday Mornings 9-10am</td>
<td>Bianca Sheehan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bjamshel@aol.com">bjamshel@aol.com</a></td>
<td>203.426.3253</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Philip</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Men’s Fellowship &amp; Bible Study, Saturdays 10am</td>
<td>Ellen Mahon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elenmahon2008@yahoo.com">elenmahon2008@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.322.5349</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Matthew</td>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Thursdays 7:30-9pm (except third Thursday)</td>
<td>Carol Cosgrove</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stmartparish@hotmail.com">stmartparish@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Seton</td>
<td>Ridgefield</td>
<td>Wednesday nights 7-9pm</td>
<td>Debbie Vaninrin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dvaninrin@comcast.net">dvaninrin@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>203.438.7922</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Catherine of Siena</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>Monday evenings September 30-November 18 from 7-9:00, or Tuesday evenings 10-11am</td>
<td>Debra May</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dmay@comcast.net">dmay@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>203.637.3661</td>
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<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>High School Teen Bible Study: Friday Adoration and Bible Study 6-8:30pm</td>
<td>Bob Mantilla</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robertmantilla@yahoo.com">robertmantilla@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.414.1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Margaret Mary Alacoque</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>Tuesdays 7:30-9pm</td>
<td>St. John the Evangelist</td>
<td>Sundays 7-9am</td>
<td>Vicki Alton</td>
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<td>St. Cecilia</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>Sundays 7:30-9am 2) Wednesdays 7:30pm</td>
<td>Vicki Alton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vickialton@yahoo.com">vickialton@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.375.8992</td>
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<td>Our Lady of Peace</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>Sundays 7:30-9am 2) Wednesdays 7:30pm</td>
<td>Vicki Alton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vickialton@yahoo.com">vickialton@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.375.8992</td>
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<td>St. James</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>Monday evenings September 30-November 18 from 7-9:00, or Tuesday evenings 10-11am</td>
<td>Bob Mantilla</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robertmantilla@yahoo.com">robertmantilla@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.414.1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mark</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>Monday evenings September 30-November 18 from 7-9:00, or Tuesday evenings 10-11am</td>
<td>Bob Mantilla</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robertmantilla@yahoo.com">robertmantilla@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>203.414.1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Fatima</td>
<td>Wilton</td>
<td>Tuesdays 9am-11:30am</td>
<td>Marian</td>
<td>Marian</td>
<td>203.367.5887</td>
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<td>St. Theresa</td>
<td>Trumbull</td>
<td>Tuesdays 8-10pm 2) Wednesdays 7-9:00am</td>
<td>Maryann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maryann@mainstream.com">maryann@mainstream.com</a></td>
<td>203.767.9566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph Manor</td>
<td>Trumbull</td>
<td>Tuesdays 9-10am 2) Wednesdays 7-9:00am</td>
<td>Maryann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Maryann@mainstream.com">Maryann@mainstream.com</a></td>
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Youth Service

Hard work and prayer on mission trip

FAIRFIELD—“What an incredible week in Pittsburgh for the St. Pius Youth Group! We learned about sacrifice through our service, grew closer to one another and grew in our faith,” says 16-year-old Kelly Walsh of her recent mission trip to help the poor in Pennsylvania.

It was the second mission trip for the Fairfield-Ludlow High School junior, who served in last year’s work camp in Groton, MA. She says that working in the intense heat and roughing it in a local high school was a rewarding experience that deepened her faith.

The Fairfield team included 12 young people from St. Pius X Parish along with one student from St. Thomas Parish. Jess Harris, the St. Thomas youth minister, volunteered to lead the trip, and recruited three chaperones.

“We’re grateful to all of the parishioners who helped to sponsor the mission trip and to the chaperones who stepped up to guide the effort,” says Fr. Michael Dogali, pastor of St. Pius. “I’m really proud of our young people for growing in faith and charity through this challenging experience.”

“The trip would not have been possible without the amazing chaperones that stepped up, especially at the last minute, and made the trip such a great experience for all of us,” Kelly adds.

The young parishioners made the trip this summer as part of the Catholic HEART Workcamp program, a Florida-based effort founded to engage Catholic youth through faithful work, prayer and the sacraments, while serving the poor, elderly and disabled.

They were among 207 participants from various states, who were divided into about 30 groups. Each was assigned a different worksite such as a home in need of repair, a community project or a food bank.

“The most interesting project I encountered was an empty project or a food bank. in need of repair, a community different worksite such as a home groups. Each was assigned a different worksite such as a home in need of repair, a community project or a food bank.”

“It was cool because we could tell that they were motivated by the large group from Catholic HEART,” she says, noting that on the last day of work, the camp staff asked if anyone would like to share their experience with the group.

It was touching to hear the residents share how we helped them, and more importantly inspired them. Some of them were so visibly touched by us, but I personally think we gained even more out of the experience.”

Although the work was tough, she looked forward to spending time with the youth group every night and to the opportunity for spiritual growth.

“Thank you and everyone in your group for helping us. It is sincerely appreciated,” said one homeowner.

One thing which made our group unique was that we would all attend daily Mass, even though it was optional for other campers. By participating in Mass and the Rosary whenever it was offered, I was able to grow in my faith and witness other members of the group grow closer to God.”

She says that after living in a high school for a week, she returned home with a greater sense of appreciation for everything she has. She is also grateful to the parishioners who helped with fund raising and prayed for a successful trip.

“Working hard, especially in the heat, taught us to make small sacrifices for others and helped me appreciate sacrifices people make for me, and most importantly, Jesus’ sacrifice for us on the cross.”

“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!”

Catholic Cemeteries Diocese of Bridgeport
238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606 • (203) 372-4301
By DON HARRISON

Earl Lavery and Paschal Chukwu have very little in common, but they share a bond that will endure forever: Fairfield Prep.

Lavery played and coached football with distinction at the Jesuit preparatory school, while the 7-foot-1 Chukwu, a work-in-progress 18-year-old center from Nigeria, is about to enter his senior basketball season at Prep. Each has been in the news recently.

The much-honored Lavery, whose Fairfield Prep teams won 230 games and three state titles across 28 seasons (1965-92), was inducted into the Fairfield County Sports Hall of Fame on October 21 at the Hyatt Regency in Old Greenwich.

Chukwu, meanwhile, who was selected to the New Haven County Sports Hall of Fame on October 21 at the Hyatt Regency in Old Greenwich.

Chukwu has very little in common with our parish children.

The three words that coaching produces are frustration, satisfaction and exhilaration. That’s what keeps an old coach coming back for more. “The three words that coaching produces are frustration, satisfaction and exhilaration. That’s what keeps an old coach coming back for more.” The Bridgeport-Gazette

One can presume Lavery was in a position to embrace the latter two selections on the majority of occasions. When this celebrated high school coach retired following the 1992 season, his 230 career victories constituted a state record; he still ranks seventh. His .804 winning percentage (230-53-8) stands eighth all-time.

It is still about team,” says Lavery, who was elected to the Connecticut High School Coaches Hall of Fame in 1991 and was awarded the prestigious Gold Key by the Connecticut Sports Writers’ Alliance in 1996. “Good relationships with the kids remain the key. Success was always a team thing, not just about me.”

He played tackle on the Jesuits’ 1949 squad that won its first seven games before settling for a 6-6 tie with Stanford in the season finale. Awarded a football scholarship to Holy Cross, he played three varsity seasons—primarily as a defensive tackle—for the Crusaders before earning a bachelor’s degree in political science.

After graduation, Lavery sold cars and worked at Sikorsky while “waiting to be drafted” by Uncle Sam. Instead, he returned to Fairfield Prep as a math teacher and assistant football coach under Joe Brosley. After nine years as an assistant, Lavery succeeded Brosley as head coach and proceeded to elevate Prep football to new heights. Four of his teams (1967, ’69, ’73 and ’77) were undefeated and untied, while a tie was the only blotch on the 1975 Jesuits’ (11-0-1) record. The CIAC state championships came in 1977, ’82 and ’88. And he never experienced a losing season.

No fewer than 12 of his players were elected to the Register All-State teams, including Chris Zingo (1989), who went on to become a two-time All-American linebacker at Cornell and was voted into the university’s Athletic Hall of Fame.

Lavery was inducted into the J. Walter Kennedy Community Service Wing at the dinner along with Don Cook, who retired as athletic director in 1992; Zingo (1989), who went on to become a two-time All-American linebacker at Cornell and was voted into the university’s Athletic Hall of Fame.

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At least one scouting service has compared Chukwu with a young Dikembe Mutombo, the 7-1 native of the Democratic Republic of Congo who set shot-blocking records at Georgetown and was a four-time NBA Defensive Player of the Year. Paschal’s offensive skills are raw, but he’s already a dominant force at the defensive end of the court.

Averaging 7.0 blocks, 12.0 rebounds and 12.8 points per game, Chukwu powered Fairfield Prep to a 24-3 record and a runner-up finish to Hillhouse in the Class LL championship game last March.

Opposing coaches were impressed enough to select him to the Register’s 12-player All-State team.

Several Division-I institutions—UCONN among them—took notice and attempted to woo Chukwu, but Providence had an advantage: Coach Ed Cooley.

“Those three words that coaching produces are frustration, satisfaction and exhilaration. That’s what keeps an old coach coming back for more.”

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Chukwu, but Providence had an advantage: Coach Ed Cooley.

“I thought Providence was a good fit for me,” Chukwu said in a Twitter message to ESPN. “I love how Coach Cooley relates to his players.”

Chukwu will be joining another state player of note at PC: Kris Dunn, a 2012 McDonald’s All-American guard from New London High.

Rev. Victor T. Martin
Pastor
&
the Parish Family
of
St. Thomas Aquinas

Greatly appreciate the dedication of
D.R.E., Sr. Monica Leonard, C.N.D.

all the catechists and volunteers
who share their faith
with our parish children

Thank you
to our entire Religious Education Team
for sharing your faith with our children.

Holy Family Parish, Fairfield

THANK YOU
Saint Elizabeth Seton
Parish
Ridgefield
wishes to thank

Marie Trebing
Gigi Pekala
Coordinators
and all our Catechists, Aides, and Volunteers
in our Religious Education Program
for their continued commitment
to teach and share the Faith
and lead our children toward
a life-long relationship
with Jesus the Lord

Saint Matthew Parish
Mgr. Walter C. Orlovsky
KCHS, Pastor
216 Sellebrus Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06854
203-838-3788

www.stmatthewnorwalk.com

Thank you
to our Coordinators and Catechists
for your Dedication to our
Religious Formation Program
and for Sharing your Faith
with our Children
especially

Mrs. Michelle Scholl, Coordinator
M rs. Lori Paladin, Assistant
Mrs. Joan DesRochers, Confirmation
Sports: Trinity Catholic Student

Riding the wave of success

By JOE RYAN

Stamford-Trinity Catholic freshman Shannon Daine has been riding a wave of success over the past few weeks that few high school athletes ever get to experience in their first year.

On October 29, Daine finished third in the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference Diving Championships and she did even better by placing second in her first attempt at a state crown in the CIAC Class S Division meet. The accomplishments stand alone as great feats, but you have to realize that at this time last year Trinity Catholic did not have a swimming or diving team. In fact, they had never had a swimmer or diver competing in their entire illustrious athletic history. Even they had never had a swimmer to realize that at this time last year alone as great feats, but you have to realize that at this time last year Trinity Catholic did not have a swimming or diving team. In fact, they had never had a swimmer or diver competing in their entire illustrious athletic history. Even they had never had a swimmer

Shannon has both a veteran’s maturity and a youthful exuberance. When she talks about her sport which she should have been a competitive diver for almost seven years. As a year round USA Diving competitor, Shannon been in plenty of competitions, but she admitted to a few butterflies in her stomach before her performance in the state tournament. “I had really low expectations because I am a freshman and I’m a lot younger than a lot of the people competing there,” said Shannon. “So I went in there not knowing what place I could come in. I decided to just do my dives and try to stay consistent.”

She has been that throughout the year and is currently ranked as the number six high school diver in the state before the Open Championships scheduled for November 16. Pretty good when you take into consideration the steps it took to get her to this point. In the summer as high school approached, Shannon sent an email to Trinity Catholic Athletic Director Tracy Nichols asking if there was any way they could represent The Crusaders even though they did not have a team.

Then, they searched for a school in the conference which would let Shannon share their schedule and train with them. After being rejected by a few schools, Wilton coach Joe Somma agreed to have Shannon utilize his team’s schedule and travel with them. Shannon said that the Warrior team was very supportive of her although some of the other teams were trying to figure out why one diver was wearing a green swimsuit and the rest were all dressed in blue. Somma became her coach during competition as well. Another person who made her feel comfortable is one of her biggest rivals in Rachel Burston. A sophomore at Westhill High School in Stamford, she and Shannon have trained together and shared a long friendship. “It’s a new world getting ready on the diving board, herself breathing while she was experiencing before at an event. “We’ve been best friends,” said Shannon. “We were sending things back and forth like the leader board and if I had a bad dive she would tell me not to worry it would be okay. So, it was like she was there.”

It was a little different a week earlier at the FCIAC Championships where she was more familiar with the other competitors and the venue, but still she was very nervous on her way to the event. Her mom, Kim, gave her a pep talk in the car on the way to the Westhill High School where the meet was held. “I told her it would be great if she came in tenth,” said Kim. “Top 10 at the FCIAC’s is really great because they have more year round divers at the competition than the state meet.”

As her father, Jim, pointed out the world of diving is like an extended family. In fact, the Daine family has a different way of cheering Shannon on in competition. Kim drives her to the meet and helps her prepare but will not go in because she feels bad rooting against the other kids, so Jim will go in and watch. Shannon gives them plenty of reason to be proud both with her athletics and in the classroom where she is a 4.0 student. She plays lacrosse in the spring for Chelsea Pier because at this time Trinity does not have a girl’s team, although Shannon would be interested if one was started.

She enjoys being with friends and hanging out when she is not training or competing and doing all the things a normal teenager does.

Shannon hopes to find a diving program in college, preferably in the Northeast—and if the college doesn’t have one she will be more than willing to help to start one.

The Church of the Holy Spirit thanks our DRE, Tricia LaValle, all our Catechists and Religious Ed Staff for applying your talents and devotion to the formation of our children.

May the Holy Spirit continue to inspire all your efforts.

The Mother Church of Norwalk

Saint Mary Church

Saint Mary Church would like to thank Jacqueline Juhasz, Sue Genovese and all the dedicated teachers who give so much of themselves to our parish.

“And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

(John 17:3)
Trumbull—Fr. Martin J. Dennehy died at St. Joseph Manor in Trumbull on September 16. He was 88 years old and had been ordained for 62 years.

Martin Dennehy was born in New York, NY, on February 28, 1925. He was one of five children. His sister, Eileen, joined the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary; his brother John is a deacon with the Diocese of Brooklyn. His other surviving brother, James, lives in Trumbull.

He graduated from Cathedral Prep and College in Brooklyn, NY, and continued his studies at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, NY. In 1951, he graduated from Mt. St. Mary’s University and Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, and was ordained into the priesthood on June 9, 1951 in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

He came to this diocese first as parochial vicar at St. Roch Parish in Greenwich in 1956. Following assignments in St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown and St. Peter Parish in Danbury, he was incardinated into the Diocese of Bridgeport on March 17, 1961. During that time he was director of the Danbury District Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and chaplain of the Daughters of Isabella Danbury Circle.

While residing at St. Peter’s, he became a part-time chaplain at the Danbury State Jail. Fr. Martin later taught at Immaculate High School in Danbury and served as parochial vicar at St. Augustine Cathedral Parish in Bridgeport.

In 1969, Fr. Martin was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Bridgeport, and served on the diocesan Priests’ Council from 1977-79. He headed the parish until 1980, when he left for graduate studies while serving as parochial vicar at St. James Parish in Stratford and St. Mary Parish in Bethel.

In 1981, Fr. Dennehy was appointed chaplain at Bridgeport Hospital while residing at Holy Rosary Parish in Bridgeport. He became a parochial vicar at Holy Rosary, and was named administrator of the parish in 1992. He held that position until he had to retire in 1994 for health reasons.

Fr. Dennehy had resided at St. Joseph’s Manor since 2000. “He was a quiet man, but he really gave parishioners his all,” says Fr. Martin Nikodem, chaplain of St. Joseph’s. Fr. Nikodem had also served as a pastor of Good Counsel.

“When I came here, he was already sick,” Fr. Nikodem says. “For as long as he could, he had his brother put him in a wheelchair and take him to daily Mass. When he couldn’t do that, he read his breviary every day, and when he could no longer concentrate on reading he just prayed the Rosary. In everything he did, in prayer and with his people, he gave it his best.”

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Fr. Dennehy at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull on September 20. Bishop Frank Caggiano was the principal celebrant; Fr. Nikodem delivered the homily. Interment followed in the Priest Circle at St. Michael’s Cemetery in Stratford.

Obituaries

Fr. Martin Dennehy, pastor and chaplain, 88

Deceased Clergy of the Diocese of Bridgeport

November 17—December 14

November

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<td>1978</td>
<td>Rev. Rocco D. Nadile</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>Rev. Francis J. Fulop</td>
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<td>Rev. Stephen J. Panik</td>
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<td>Rev. Robert Pohley</td>
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<td>Rev. Myron V. Miller</td>
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<td>Deacon Wayne E. Malloy</td>
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December

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<td>1996</td>
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Msgr. Schultz, former pastor of Our Lady of Grace, died on October 14

STRATFORD—Msgr. William F. Schultz died on October 14 in Hamden after a long illness. He was 75.


Always involved in the Bridgeport and Stratford communities over the years, Msgr. Schultz served in the Bridgeport Lions Club, was chaplain of the Bridgeport Police Department and the Stratford Fire Department, and served as chair of St. Vincent Medical Center Advisory Council. Msgr. Schultz was a 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Msgr. Schultz at the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Wayne, NJ, the home parish of his sister, Frances Iczkowski, on October 19. Burial followed in Christ the King Cemetery, Franklin Lakes, NJ.

A Memorial Mass for Msgr. Schultz was celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano at Our Lady of Grace Church on October 22.

Msgr. Jerald Doyle, episcopal vicar for administration for the diocese, delivered the homily at the Mass. He had been a priest in the Bridgeport Diocese for 43 years, including those of his final illness.

“Msgr. Schultz was a good priest who never let his personal frailty interfere with his preaching of the Gospel,” Msgr. Doyle told the congregation.

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Act in God’s eye what in God’s eye we are

POTPOURRI
By Thomas H. Hicks

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

There is a fascinating poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins titled “As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Draw Flame.” The kingfish is one of the most colorful birds in England. It “catches fire” as the sunlight brings its plumage to a bright radiance. Similarly, the iridescent wings of the dragonfly glint with a flame-like beauty. The poem hymns the uniqueness of each created thing. Each thing finds its own voice, making up the great choir of creation. In fulfilling its distinctive nature every object gives glory to God.

Hopkins then extends this concept to humans. Here the self-expression or self-assertion takes on a different character, inasmuch as humans have freedom of choice. The enacting of the self does not happen automatically. There must be a deliberate self-expression. According to Hopkins, it is our task to “self,” to become completely ourselves; to cry “What I do is me: for that I came.” We are meant to desire our highest self, act to the highest of our capacity. One is to fully realize “what in God’s eye he is.”

What Hopkins writes implies that the Spirit bestows on each one a special charism (gift). Romans 12:6-8: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.” There are acts that come naturally to certain people; they perform certain actions with astonishing ease. They are informed with a magic for which we give the word “talent.” How mysterious talents are. Where do they come from?

We all recognize there is something mysterious about Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Luciano Pavarotti, and others. We wonder, where does this music come from? It seems to give God a way of coming to expression. The famous violinist, Fritz Kreisler, stated: “I was born with music in my system. I knew musical scores instinctively before I knew the alphabet. It was a gift of God.” We may not have the gift of the great artists, but we are to recognize that we have been given certain gifts, gifts that are greater than ourselves. Different things come naturally to different people. The talent comes from somewhere. We do not create it.

Teresa of Avila pointed out: “Some think it humility not to believe that God bestowed his gifts upon them. He did, and let us be grateful to God for them.” Each of us discovers activities for which we have natural talent. As Jesus’ Parable of the Talents indicates, the Lord has given talents to each of us and expects us to develop and increase them. Each of us discovers activities to which we are naturally drawn. We are called to find the self-expression which best gives glory to God. As Hopkins says, “Crying what I do is me; for this I came,” which echoes Jesus statement in Jn.18:37: “This is what I was born for, what I came into the world for.” One is to “act in God’s eye what in God’s eye he is.” In fulfilling one’s distinctive nature, one gives glory to God. The implication is that if one does not do this he or she is not fully a human being.

Every role performed at excellence or mastery requires talent accompanied by hard work. Excellence or mastery involves a gift with discipline attached, involves determination, self-denial and fortitude.

The sin of sloth can allow talents to dry up and blow away. I see it all the time; the betrayal of some beautiful gifts. We are answerable for being less than we could be. Someone said that “what is not used is but a load to bear.” In other words, to have a gift and not exercise it weighs someone down. Carl Jung warned that unused gifts turn into “pure poison.”

The actor Will Smith said: “There is no pain worse than not achieving a dream when it is your fault. If God did not want you to have it, that is one thing. But if you do not get what you desire because you are lazy, there is no pain worse than that.”

And you’ll be amazed to know who said “I have offended God and humankind in not having worked at my art as I ought to have done.” Leonardo da Vinci said that.

So Hopkins’ poem calls us to realize our identity, our unique self. We do, in fact, have something to contribute and have the responsibility to do so. Each of us has knowledge and skills that help us live responsible and productive lives. We need fidelity to our own gifts. We are accountable for the talent God bestows on us; responsible to act in God’s eye what in God’s eye we are.
Praying for your marriage

SWIMMING UPSTREAM
By Joe Pisani

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

My friend Denise, who is a therapist in Manhattan, called me recently to ask what kind of dog I own. “A Lhatese,” I said. “A combination of a Lhasa Apso and a Maltese, which means she’s a very yappy, excitable dog.”

“She would fit under an airplane seat?”

I wasn’t sure where this discussion was going.

“Are you planning to abduct her? What kind of question is that?”

The long and the short of it was that she was looking for a dog for her parents, who travel a lot, and it had to be small enough to stay in the passenger section and sit quietly. No yapping allowed.

She wanted to give her parents a dog to save their marriage. I suppose this is how therapists think. Their ideas are totally innovative or totally insane and sometimes both. She’s convinced a dog will put an end to the constant bickering.

Marriage is never easy, with or without dogs, cats or hamsters. The crazy thing is that since my wife, Sandy, and I got Bella, we yell as much as before—we both grew up in Italian families so yelling is a perfectly acceptable form of communication—but now Bella joins my wife and barks at me. Little traitor. (And I’m the one who’s always sneaking her dog treats when Sandy isn’t looking.)

Of course, there’s a far more effective tactic than dog ownership to help your marriage. It’s called prayer.

Years ago, Fr. Patrick Peyton, the famed Rosary priest and founder of the Holy Cross Family Ministries, coined the phrase, “The family that prays together stays together.” His insights are especially relevant during the Internet age when cyberporn and online adultery are destroying marriages daily, and an increasing number of people over 50 are getting divorced, leading pop psychologists to suggest lifelong marriage is an anachronism. Jesus, I’m sure, has an entirely different view.

A dog may help your marriage ... but not as much as prayer. Here’s advice you won’t hear from a therapist: Pray for your spouse. Even better, go to Eucharistic Adoration together and turn your marriage, problems and all, over to Christ.

I’m convinced some of the finest thinkers on the Sacrament of Marriage can be found on that reality TV show “Duck Dynasty,” about a bunch of long-bearded rednecks who love to hunt and fish and expostulate on the meaning of life. Jase Robertson, the second of four sons, says unabashedly the most important things to him are, in order of importance, God, family and ducks.

He and his wife, Missy, were virgins when they got married and committed themselves to Christ. They made a pact to get each other into heaven and always pray together as a family. Crazy and wonderful things happen when you pray for and pray with your spouse. Let me tell you a story about my experiences.

To my wife’s thinking, if I did more yard work, there would be fewer domestic disputes. To my thinking, I’d be a happier husband if she let me pile books on the nightstand up to the ceiling and didn’t hassle me about a clean house.

Yes, we get on each other’s nerves and sometimes wonder whether we were right for each other when it comes to compatibility. During the last blowup we had—I can’t remember what caused it—Sandy was yelling, I was yelling and the dog was barking ... at me again.

I was so convinced I was right that I vowed I wasn’t going to be the one to give in. I’m tired of giving in when I KNOW I’m right, about whatever it was.

As the argument escalated, I became more entrenched in my self-righteousness, but an unusual thing happened. All I could think about was the autumn afternoon at the country fair when we went on the Ferris wheel and laughed at the top like two teenagers.

“Lord, whoever is putting that thought in my head, please take it away because I want to be mad,” I said.

Then, in my mind I saw my wife taking care of my mother for the last nine months of her life when she was dying of cancer and Alzheimer’s. And then I remembered her in the delivery room, crying tears of joy when our first daughter was born.

In my anger, I tried to repress those loving thoughts, but they persisted, and I realized the Holy Spirit was taking control of the situation. I couldn’t stay angry—although I snarled at the little yapper and said, “Bella, if you don’t stop barking at me, I’m never giving you another dog treat in this life or the next.” That shut her up.

Yes, prayer can have surprising results, especially if you do it together. Now, even the dog joins us when we pray—but no yap.
MISSION BOUTIQUE/BAKE SALE continues at St. Mary Parish, Ridgefield, Sat.-Sun., Nov. 16-17, from 10 am-2 pm. For more information, call 203.438.8281.

HOLIDAY FAIR AND BOUTIQUE at St. Leo Parish, Stamford, will take place Sat., Nov. 16, from 10 am-6 pm and Sun., Nov. 17, from 9 am-1 pm. More than 55 vendors. For more information, call the parish: 203.322.1669.

MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE sponsored by the Charismatic Renewal Office will be offered on Mon., Nov. 18, at 7:30 pm at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, with Fr. Larry Carew, and Mon., Dec. 8, at Christ the King with Fr. Carew. For more information, call 203.268.8253.

CURSILLO ULTREYAS are held around the diocese: Mon., Nov. 18, at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford, at 7:30 pm; Thurs., Nov. 21, at St. Mary Parish, Bethel at 7:30 pm; and Tues., Dec. 3, at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilton, at 7:30 pm. For more information, contact Jeanette at jkovacs@snet.net.

CONNECTIONS! Ministry for Catholic Singles 40 and over, meets the third Mon. of every month (Nov. 18, Dec. 16) at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford from 7-9 pm. Donation: $10. For more information or to RSVP, contact ConnectionsFairfield@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA for children with special needs will be presented on Sun., Dec. 15, from 12 noon-3 pm at the Catholic Center, Bridgeport. RSVP by Fri., Nov. 22. For more information and for reservations, call Michelle O’Mara: 203.416.1502 or momara@diocpt.org.

ANOINTING MASS will be celebrated on Fri., Nov. 22, at 11 am at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull. For more information, call the parish: 203.268.8695.

TURKEY BINGO will be held at St. Mary School, Bethel, on Fri., Nov. 22. Doors open at 6 pm. Admission: $3. For more information, contact Theresa Battaluzzo at 203.448.0548 or btzeeve@aol.com.

HARVEST FAIR FOR CHARITY will be held at St. Luke Parish, Westport, Sat.-Sun., Nov. 23-24, from 10 am-4 pm. For more information, call 203.227.7245 or go to www.stlukewestport.com.

CHRISTMAS FAIR at St. Andrew Parish, Bridgeport, will be held Sat., Nov. 30, from 9:30 am-5:30 pm. For more information or for vendor prices, call 203.374.8118.

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS will be presented at St. Augustine Cathedral, Bridgeport, on Sun., Dec. 1, at 7:30 pm. Free and open to all. For more information, call the office: 203.368.6777.

CHRISTMAS BASKET AUCTION will be hosted by the Women of St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, on Sun., Dec. 1, at all Masses. For more information, call the parish: 203.268.6217.

AUDITIONS for St. Catherine’s Players 2014 production of BARNUM! will be held Mon.-Wed., Dec. 2, 3 & 4, at 7:30 pm at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside. For more information, visit www.stcatherinesplayers.com or email stcatherine-splaters@gmail.com.

LOOK GOOD FEEL BETTER Program for women undergoing radiation and/or chemotherapy treatment will be held at St. Vincent’s Medical Center, Bridgeport, on Thurs., Dec. 5, from 1-3 pm. Reservations required; lunch provided. For more information or to RSVP, call 203.268.6217.

LADIES SHOPPING NIGHT at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, will be held Fri., Dec. 6, at 6 pm. Cost: $20 in advance; $25 at the door. For more information and for reservations, contact Pati Capozzi: 203.371.5371 or pat813@yahoo.com.

“SINGING FOR CHRISTMAS” with the CantiamoCHOIR will take place Fri., Dec. 6, at 7:30 pm in the Westport Town Hall Auditorium, 110 Myrtle Ave., Westport. Suggested Donation: $15. For more information, contact Marlane Tubridy: 203.454.9023 or marlanet@optonline.net.

HOLLY FAIR will be held at St. Margaret Mary Parish, Shelton, on Sat., Dec. 7, from 9 am-4 pm. For more information, call 203.924.2327 or 203.209.2441.

ADVENT PROGRAM, “A Coming Christ in Advent,” will be held at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, on Sat., Dec. 7, starting with 9 am Mass. To register, call the parish office: 203.268.6217.

CHRISTMAS FAIR at St. Jude Parish, Monroe, is seeking crafters. The fair will take place Sat., Dec. 7 (snow date Sun., Dec. 8). For more information, call the parish: 203.261.6404 or email eju-dechristmasfair@gmail.com.

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MARY OF NAZARETH, the award-winning movie, will be presented by St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at the Royale Theater, 142 Westport Ave. Norwalk, on Sat., Dec. 7, at 11:30 am. For more information, call 203.866.546.

HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE will be held at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford, on Sat., Dec. 7, from 9 am-4:30 pm. For more information, call 203.324.2910 or visit www.stbridgetofireland.org.

CHRISTMAS GALA will be held at St. Luke Parish, Westport, on Sat., Dec. 7. Cost: $35. Proceeds go to parish outreach endeavors. For more information or for reservations, call 203.222.0478.

HOLLY FAIR will be held Sat., Dec. 7, at St. Margaret Mary Parish, Shelton, from 9 am-4 pm. For more information, call 203.924.2327 or 203.209.2441.

ANNUAL COOKIE SHOPPE will be held at St. Luke Parish, Westport, on Sun., Dec. 8, from 8:30 am-12 noon. Santa will be here as well! For more information, go to 203.227.7245 or visit www.stlukewestport.com.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS PRAYER SERVICE: “Behold the Light of Christ” with Fran Karpiak of Sharing Christ Ministry will be held at St. Emery Parish, Fairfield, on Sat., Dec. 14, at 9 am. All are invited. For more information, call 203.255.8801.

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

LITHUANIAN KUCIOS Christmas Eve celebration will be held at St. George Parish, Bridgeport, on Sun., Dec. 15. Noon Mass, followed by dinner. For more information and for reservations, call 203.878.0519.

ADVENT MISSION: “The Pope’s Blueprint: Living the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy,” will be presented at St. Paul Parish, Greenwich, Mon.-Wed., Dec. 16-18, at 7:30 pm. For more information call 203.531.8741.

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St. Vincent’s is now collaborating with MD Anderson Cancer Network™. This new affiliation allows us to raise the bar for cancer care in the Bridgeport area by following treatment guidelines and best practices developed by The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston—one of the country’s premier cancer hospitals.

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Our exclusive local affiliation means that we have access to the pioneering evidence-based guidelines, treatment plans and best practices developed by the experts at MD Anderson. These are disease-specific guidelines for cancer treatment, prevention, detection and follow-up care. In addition, St. Vincent’s can call on leading cancer experts to advise on cases through physician-to-physician consultations.

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In order to better protect our local community, it was only natural for us to seek out an affiliation with one of the nation’s most respected cancer networks. In turn, MD Anderson conducted a thorough review of our program to make sure that we met their high standards for cancer care. And although we provide best practices and evidence-based medicine now, our collaboration with MD Anderson Cancer Network means we have access to the latest in cancer practice guidelines.

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>> To learn more about how we’re changing cancer care for the better, visit stvincents.org.