



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

NOVEMBER 2014 | VOLUME 31, NUMBER 10 | RELIGIOUS ED ISSUE

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St. Augustine Medal of Service 2014



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A Time for Collaboration and Humility

*My Dear Sisters
and Brothers in Christ –*

The Second General Session of the Synod is taking place this Saturday, November 15, at St. Catherine Parish in Trumbull. Over 380 delegates will be rolling up their sleeves to continue our efforts to discern the pastoral challenges that we face as a diocesan Church. This is an essential



moment for the synod, for we need to distinguish between the challenges that are obvious from those that are far more fundamental and serve as the underlying cause to many of the difficulties we are experiencing in our daily lives of faith.

Throughout the session, the delegates will receive reports from each of the four study committees: Empower the Young Church, Build up Communities of Faith, Foster Evangelical Outreach, and Promote Works of Charity and Justice. Since our last session of the synod in mid-September, the study committees have been meeting to discuss and discern the feedback from the first session by listening carefully to what was presented by the delegates and by utilizing their insights, understanding and experience. At this Second General Session, the general delegates will have the opportunity to respond to these proposed challenges; to accept them, to request

to modify them, or to reject them.

This is a singular opportunity for us, as a diocese, to ask very deep, honest, and probing questions, so that we can transform the challenges we face into opportunities for growth and renewal. But perhaps most importantly, this is a graced time for you and me to accept the invitation of the Lord, in a very personal way, to grow in faith and holiness.

My grandmother used to say, "You cannot give what you do not have." I would like to remind each of us that if we are looking to the synod to renew the Church, such a renewal will begin when we take a look in the mirror: it has to begin with you and me. The truth of the matter is that the renewal of the Church can grow in strength and vigor to the extent that you and I grow in our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

A synod is a sacred journeying together of God's people to discern God's will. Synods are consultative in nature, they are not legislative. They seek to discern what God is asking of the Church and identify ways in which to respond in faith. As bishop, I convoke the synod, but I do not animate the synod. The Holy Spirit is the animator of the synod.

If the synod is to achieve its work, it is important that we make the important distinction between discernment and decision-making.

The synod will recommend decisions which I hope to ratify, but to make correct decisions we need first to discern. Discerning is a deeper and more profound process than decision-making. Discernment seeks to understand the experience and challenges of our lives through the prism of faith, following the promptings of the Holy Spirit who will help guide us to the truth. Discernment is an essential prerequisite to ensure that the decisions to be made will be for the good of the Church. When we reach a high level of discernment, then we can make decisions that are right, just, and fruitful for the life of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

There are two other important spiritual qualities that must animate the synod process. They are a spirit of collaboration and humility. Collaboration is deeper and richer than simple cooperation. Cooperation often means that we work together towards achieving a common task. Collaboration is founded upon the communion and unity that we share as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. Collaboration asks us to share our gifts and talents in an appropriate way towards building up the Body of Christ that is the Church. Such a spirit of collaboration should animate not only the work of the synod, but every aspect of our lives in Christ.

In addition, a spirit of humility is possible in those who are not afraid to face the truth of their own lives and our common life in Christ. It requires each and every one of us to take a step back, let go of those things that we may be clinging to, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide and inform us. Only humility will allow us to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit with courage and confidence.

Our synodal journey has begun. I am both excited and hopeful of what lies ahead. Let us be on our way!



Buon Natale Crèches of Italy

DEC 1
to
FEB 1



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MUSEUM

Christmas Tree Festival Opening Celebration

Saturday Dec. 6, 1-4pm

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ON THE COVER

PRIDE AND JOY—St. Augustine Medal recipients Haviland and Arlene Tweedy of St. Jude Parish in Monroe are surrounded by Bishop Caggiano, Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka and joyous family members after receiving their medals at the St. Augustine Cathedral on October 25.

ABOVE THE MAST: More than 700 friends and family turned out to pay tribute to 130 men and women honored for their service to the Church. (Photos by Michelle Babyak)

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Local News

Diocese releases improved financial picture

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport has released its Combined Statements of Financial Position for December 31, 2013 and 2012. The full audited report is available online at www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialstatements.

The latest statement outlines an improving financial picture of the diocese, which has been working to address its two major financial challenges, related operational deficits and accumulation of debt.

“One of my first priorities has been to provide a clear, transparent and comprehensive account of the finances of the diocese,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who recently delivered a State of the Diocese speech in which he outlined his plans to address the pastoral and administrative challenges facing the diocese.

“We have already begun to chart a course that will lead us to renewal, growth and vitality,” the bishop said. “Our latest financial report shows that we are moving in the right direction and we expect continued improvement.”

Michael Hanlon, chief finan-

cial officer of the diocese, said one of the key indicators in the report is the reduction of the net diocesan deficit by 73 percent, to just over \$36 million—a \$13 million drop from last year.

The audit shows that diocesan pension and other retirement obligations decreased by \$20 million due to favorable investment returns and changes in interest rates. The diocese also reduced a note payable to the Knights of Columbus by \$3.2 million.

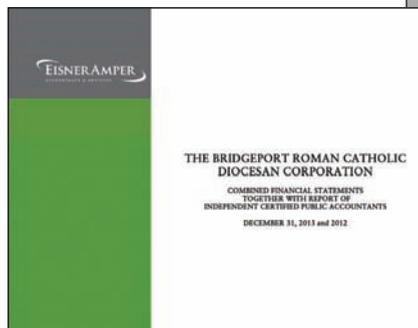
Likewise, diocesan investment assets for the year increased by \$5.6 million, or 22 percent, related to investment gains and additional contributions.

In his State of the Diocese talk, which anticipated the newly published financials, Bishop Caggiano said that he has been working to ensure long-term financial sustainability of the diocese:

- As a result of cost-cutting and other changes, the diocese is on track to eliminate its operational deficit by the end of this fiscal year.
- The bishop has committed to lowering operational costs

in the Catholic Center by an additional \$500,000 for the 2015 fiscal year.

- A task force has been empowered to explore the possibility of a new home for the Catholic Center, which will lead to further cost cuts and a more contemporary environment.



- The bishop also announced a plan to create new sources of revenue by leveraging the diocese’s real estate assets to generate income that will help fund operations.
- Bishop Caggiano has re-energized diocesan endowments by appointing a new Board of Directors for the “Faith in the Future” fund and establishing



MICHAEL HANLON

additional foundations to provide support for Catholic schools and charitable programs.

The diocese has struggled over the past several years with an annual operating deficit, primarily due to the inability to collect all of the insurance premiums due from some of its schools and parishes.

While operational shortfalls have been reduced, the accumulated debts for schools total \$22,723,000, which is owed to

the diocese. However, the “Faith in the Future” endowment, which had not made a distribution since 2008, has authorized a payment of \$925,000 for the 2014 fiscal year. The diocese has also created a Strategic Planning process for schools with the main purpose of establishing long-term viability.

Along with cost cutting and revenue enhancement measures, the bishop has also announced a plan to reorganize the Catholic Center to address immediate administrative, financial and organizational needs with the aim of improving management and accountability, fostering greater effectiveness and efficiency, and empowering people to get their work done.

In December 2013, Bishop Caggiano took a major step toward financial transparency when he released the condensed financial statements and commentary for fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012, along with full audits for fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012, which can be found online.

(To read the full audited report, visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialreports.) ■

Bishop announces “secretariat” plan for ministries

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has released plans for the reorganization of the administrative and management offices of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The bishop first announced the reorganization at his recent State of the Diocese address at All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk as part of an overall turnaround plan to better use diocesan resources and create a new model of service to parishes.

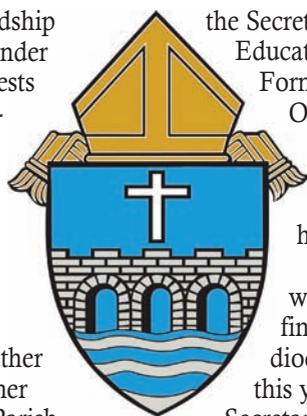
The new organizational chart, issued on October 24, formally reorganizes the major diocesan functions into “Secretariats” that oversee the administration of diocesan ministries and agencies.

The plan calls for six Secretariats: Catholic Education and Faith Formation, Temporalities and Administration, Pastoral and Human Services, Communications and Social Media, Strategic and Pastoral

Planning and Stewardship and Development. Under the new plan two priests join the new secretariat structure, with Father Michael Jones, pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton, named Secretary for Stewardship and Development and Father Michael Dogali, former pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, taking on the new role of Secretary for Strategic and Pastoral Planning.

Father Jones will work with William McLean, chief development officer of the diocese, while continuing to serve as pastor of St. Lawrence. Father Dogali will oversee the diocesan strategic planning function for parishes, schools and other institutions.

Rounding out the secretariat structure will be Sister Mary Grace Walsh, superintendent of schools, who will serve as



the Secretary for Catholic Education and Faith Formation. Damien O’Connor, who heads the Faith Formation Office, will work within her organization.

Michael Hanlon, who was named chief financial officer of the diocese in March of this year, will serve as Secretary for Temporalities and Administration; Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities, will oversee Pastoral and Human Services; and Brian Wallace will serve as Secretary for Communications, including *Fairfield County Catholic*, Information Technology and Social Media.

“The new structure allows for a more global vision and better planning both within the offices and across the leadership team,” said Deacon John DiTaranto, special assistant to the bishop,

who is overseeing the change process in the diocese.

Deacon DiTaranto said that, while Synod 2014 plans for the pastoral needs of the diocese, the reorganization plan addresses the immediate administrative, financial and organizational challenges necessary to make the diocese more efficient and improve services.

“The bishop wants to lead the change process across the diocese by starting with the Catholic Center first as it redesigns its organization, processes and procedures to reflect best practices,” Deacon DiTaranto said.

During the State of the Diocese talk, Bishop Caggiano announced that he is committed to lowering operational costs in the Catholic Center by at least \$500,000 for the 2015 fiscal year. He has also empowered a task force to explore a new home for the Catholic Center, which will lead to further cost cuts and a more contemporary environment.

The new organizational chart also features the Office of the Vicar General, Msgr. William J. Scheyd, and the Council of Episcopal Vicars: Vicar for Canonical Affairs, Msgr. Gerald A. Doyle; Vicar for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Father Samuel Scott; Vicar for Hispanic Catholics, Father Gustavo Falla; Vicar for African American Catholics, Father Reginald Norman; Vicar for Haitian Catholics, Father G. Frantz Desruisseaux; Vicar for Vietnamese Catholics, Father Augustine Nyguen; Vicar for Evangelization/Ecclesial Movements, Father Peter Towsley; and Vicar for Clergy, Father Ian Jeremiah.

Father Robert Kinnally serves as Chancellor; Msgr. Gerald A. Doyle leads the Tribunal as Judicial Vicar; Anne McCrory as Chief Legal Counsel; and Erin Neil as Director of the Office of Safe Environments.

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Bishop Thanks Donors

2014 Appeal exceeds goal!

BRIDGEPORT—The 2014 Annual Bishop's Appeal, "Building Bridges in Faith and Charity," has exceeded its \$11,500,000 goal, raising \$11,503,551 in total commitments as of October 31. The announcement was made by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

"I would like to thank our parishioners who so generously provide for the needs of God's people in Fairfield County. During my first full year as your bishop I have met people across every economic level who are recipients of the programs that so deeply touch and change lives. Because of you, we continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus. I am grateful for your support," said Bishop Caggiano.

To date, nearly 25,000 donors have participated in the campaign, with 29 percent increasing their gift over last year's pledge. Likewise, 73 of the 82 parishes in the diocese, and St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport, have exceeded their annual appeal goals to date.

William McLean, chief development officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport, said that although the appeal has reached its mini-

mum goal, gifts and pledges will continue to be accepted through December 31.

"Foremost, I want to thank Bishop Caggiano for his leadership and hard work on behalf of the appeal, along with all of the parishioners and faithful throughout the diocese who have responded to his leadership and vision for our local Church," said McLean. "In particular, I want to thank our parishioners for their generosity and the clergy for their hard work and support."

Mike and Cece Donoghue of St. John Parish in Darien served as this year's chair couple and helped to inspire giving by visiting many ministries funded by the appeal throughout the diocese, McLean said. "The chair couple visited soup kitchens, met the seminarians, visited St. Catherine Academy and highlighted other ministries. In their monthly column, they provided a first-hand account of the good work they witnessed."

McLean also thanked the Pastors' Advisory Committee (PAC), especially their chair, Msgr. Laurence Bronkiewicz and vice chair, Father Reginald Norman, for their leadership

and commitment to making the appeal a success.

"We know that people give because of their pastors and their experience of the Church at the parish level, and we're very grateful that the pastors have stepped up to the challenges and opportunities presented by this year's campaign," McLean said.

Pam Rittman, director of the annual appeal, said that many donors responded generously to the bishop's letter and to their pastor's letter. Donors also gave generously through envelopes included inside *Fairfield County Catholic*, and many made their gift online. More than 93 percent of giving was made in cash, with the remainder in pledges, she said.

Rittman believes the appeal was a success because people have been inspired by the bishop's



leadership. "Many people met the bishop at receptions and also were introduced to him through the annual appeal video. His message resonated with the importance of our various ministries and their impact on the entire community," she said.

"Those who watched the video learned that donors don't just give money, but they're also actively involved in our ministries, giving their time, talent and treasure to help others," she said.

Rittman was also grateful for the many speakers who volunteered their time, such as Al

Barber, president of Catholic Charities, and board members, along with ministry representatives who visited parishes during the appeal and spoke about the good works supported by the Diocese of Bridgeport. The appeal assists a wide range of programs, including Catholic Charities, diocesan schools, care of retired priests, religious education, St. John Fisher Seminary and clergy ministries.

(To make a gift to the annual appeal, phone 203.416.1470 or visit www.2014ABA.com.)

St. Augustine Legacy Society

TRUMBULL—The first members of the St. Augustine Legacy Society were inducted at a special Mass and reception at Bishop Frank J. Caggiano's residence on Thursday evening, October 16.

Inductees personally received a special induction certificate and membership lapel pin from the bishop. In addition to the group of lay and clergy inductees, diocesan development officials and planned giving advisory committee members also attended the event.

One theme of the evening was the expressed hope that the Legacy Society would grow in size over time and become an important part of funding for the diocese.

The Legacy Society seeks to honor, memorialize and recognize donors who provide a planned gift through a bequest, life insurance or other means in their will. It also offers a way to celebrate the generosity of benefactors during their lifetimes.

Bishop Caggiano said, "I am deeply grateful to all of those generous donors who have made planned gifts to provide for the future of the

Church. Their generosity will help to inspire faith, educate children and adults, care for those in need and much more. Their gifts will live on as their legacy, capable of touching many lives."

Legacy giving is not only for the rich. Anyone can create a will and leave detailed instructions for the distribution of one's estate. Planned gifts to the diocese can be unrestricted or can be designated for use in particular ways.

Planned giving enables donors to give to the Church in a manner that may not have been possible during their lifetimes.

Susan Barrett, one of the newly inducted members, said, "I have provided for the Diocese of Bridgeport in my estate. It comforts me to know that the ministries that mean so much to me now will receive additional support from me in the future."

Not surprisingly, St. Augustine Legacy Society members also support the Annual Bishop's Appeal. Bishop Caggiano is hopeful that in coming years, the diocese will become less reliant on the annual appeal and weekly parish collections. Toward that end, he is in the process of developing a comprehensive approach to discovering new sources of income for the diocese (including

planned giving) so that future fundraising can be easier for both parishioners and pastors alike.

Donors who inform the diocesan development office of their plans to remember the Church in their estate will be invited to become members of the St. Augustine Legacy Society. Membership benefits include an annual Mass and reception with the bishop and a special remembrance by the bishop at his Masses.

To help guide the creation and growth of the Legacy Society, the diocese has enlisted the help of volunteers with professional experience in the field of wealth management and estate planning. The planned giving advisory committee presently consists of Thomas Kolenberg, KM; Brian Donovan, Esq.; Deacon Thomas McManus, Esq., CPA; Carolyn Reers, Esq.; and Mike Hanlon, CPA and CFO of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

(For information on planned giving options and the steps required to make a planned gift, click on "Ways to Give" at www.bridgeport-diocese.com or call Pam Rittman in the Development Office: 203.416.1479.)

St. Augustine Legacy Society

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Include the **Diocese of Bridgeport** in your **will** or **trust** and provide for the people and causes you cherish most.

When you make a planned gift, you play a role in supporting the ministries and programs of the Church in Fairfield County.

To learn more about how you can support the Gospel in action, call the Development Office at 203-416-1479

Safe Environment

Bishop to re-promulgate diocesan policies

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will re-promulgate the diocesan Safe Environments policies and practices for the protection of children and young people when he issues a formal decree on November 30, the first Sunday of Advent.

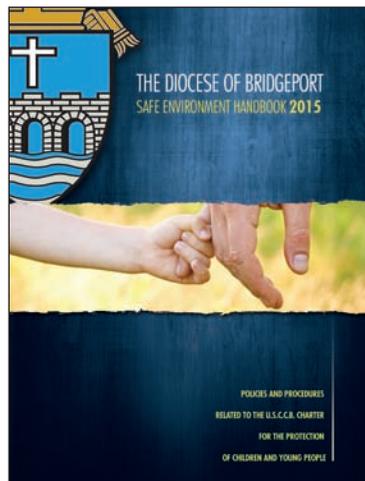
The policies and procedures, in accordance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, have been brought together in the Safe Environment Handbook, 2015. The handbook will also be available online through the diocesan website.

More than 20,000 copies of the handbook will be printed and

after months of planning, review and research, include detailed information on topics including the complaint procedure for the investigation and reporting of incidents, actions to address incidents, pastoral care for victims, the role of the Sexual Misconduct Review Board, compliance with civil laws, and outreach to affected parishes.

The booklet also contains the diocesan Code of Conduct, Sexual Harassment Policy, Background Check Policy and extensive guidelines for the supervision and protection of children related to all parishes, schools and other activities sponsored by the diocese.

Erin Neil, director of the diocesan Safe Environment Office, said that the new handbook answers many questions that are frequently asked by people across the diocese when they are sponsoring or participating in activities involving children, whether it be a parish



THE 2015 SAFE ENVIRONMENT HANDBOOK will be available in print form and online in December.

years based on the specific category of personnel and their contact with children.

- Development of a Safe Environment Handbook, which serves as an implementation guide with updates to the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Introduction of new guidelines on the safe use of technology and mandated reporting of suspected child pornography, including executive summaries that are specific to a person's role and must be reviewed and signed by all adults who work or volunteer in any capacity in the Diocese of Bridgeport. The handbook must be re-signed whenever a person changes role, assignment or location within the diocese.
- Distribution of new Safe Environment brochures that will be made available in parishes on warning signs of abuse and reporting procedures.
- Reconstitution of the diocesan Sexual Misconduct Review Board to include regular meetings, revised term limits and frequent policy review.

Neil said the diocese will begin the process of renewing background checks for all diocesan employees, volunteers and clergy. The periodic renewal process will be phased in over time.

The primary focus of the background check is to identify anyone who has been arrested for crimes against children, sex crimes, or violent crimes. In 2015 the diocese will work to central-

ize this process by recording the dates of all background checks into the VIRTUS database.

Neil said the Training Renewal Program will include both online and group presentations to keep employees, clergy and volunteers current and explore issues related to bullying, Department of Children and Families (DCF) mandated reporting, human trafficking, and other issues.

"The ongoing training is critical because many employees and volunteers still ask questions regarding what they are expected to do in certain situations to safeguard children or report any concerns," she said.

The diocese will also continue to verify that all of its independent contractors, vendors and tenants clear a criminal background check through their company. In cases where they do not have a process, the diocese will assist them in establishing a background check process.

Earlier this year, Bishop Caggiano reconstituted the Sexual Misconduct Review Board, which oversees compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, advises on the implementation of the diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy and functions as a consultative body to the bishop.

The diocese uses the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children program to educate adults about the

warning signs of sexual abuse and safe boundaries that all adults must adhere to when working with minors and vulnerable adults. The program was recently updated to include technology and social networking safety.

All children enrolled in the Catholic schools receive annual Safe Environment training through the Child Lures Prevention, Think First & Stay Safe (K-8). High school students receive personal safety training through the Think First and the Netsmartz program on technology safety. Likewise, parents with children enrolled in religious education are encouraged to attend Safe Environment training to supplement the Healthy and Balanced Living curriculum available in public schools.

To report suspected abuse involving a minor, recently or in the past, contact: Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., diocesan director of Safe Environments: 203.650.3265; or Michael Tintrup, L.C.S.W., victim assistance counselor: 203.241.0987. Mandated reporters must also directly report any incident of sexual abuse of a minor to the State of Connecticut Child Abuse and Neglect care line: 800.842.2288.

(To register to attend VIRTUS, Protecting God's Children for Adults, visit www.virtusonline.org. Select "Registration" and select "Bridgeport Diocese.")

"Our goal is to reinforce the Diocese of Bridgeport's efforts to ensure the safest possible environment for children and young people through comprehensive policies."

distributed to Catholic Center and school employees, parish staff, priests and religious and volunteers throughout the diocese during the month of December.

"It has been ten years since the diocese rolled out its initial policies, and much has happened since then, not only in our understanding of how to protect children but also in the development of social media outlets that put them at great risk. Building on our successful policies and continuously updating them is consistent with the USCCB Charter and it's the right thing to do," said Bishop Caggiano.

"If anything, Safe Environment efforts are even more integral to our work and mission as an organization," said the bishop. "Our new policies improve on the good work done over the past decade by refocusing everything we've learned about the protection of children and incorporating best practices from across the country."

The new policies, developed

retreat or a school trip.

"Our goal is to reinforce the Diocese of Bridgeport's efforts to ensure the safest possible environment for children and young people through comprehensive policies, so that adults and minors have important information on how to identify warning signs of abuse and how to properly report suspected abuse to the diocese and to civil authorities," said Neil, who will now report directly to Bishop Caggiano as part of the recent diocesan restructuring.

The new policies include the following initiatives:

- Expansion of Safe Environment procedures through a re-training and awareness series to be offered in person or online on a variety of topics including the safe use of technology. A renewal schedule of 5 or 10 years will be based on the category of personnel.
- Renewal of criminal background checks every 5 or 10

PLANNING TO BE IN FLORIDA THIS WINTER?

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

See you in the Sunshine State!

Please e-mail Pam Rittman
at prittman@diobpt.org to join the invitation list.

www.BlessedGifts.org

'Blessed Gifts' enrich lives

BRIDGEPORT—With the Christmas season approaching, the "Blessed Gifts" program—created by the development office of the Diocese of Bridgeport—is extending an invitation to take part in its mission of connecting donors with individuals served by diocesan ministries.

"From a family sitting down for a healthy dinner to educational supplies for a Catholic school student, from a young seminarian studying intently at his desk to a retired priest preparing to say Mass in a neighboring parish, Blessed Gifts enriches the lives of people young and old throughout the diocese," Pam Rittman of the development office said.

Although Blessed Gifts offers a meaningful way to celebrate any occasion throughout the year, such as First Holy Communion or a special anniversary, they are especially appropriate during the

Christmas season. "The gifts are easy to choose, either through the development office or online. Simply donate a gift to the ministry you choose and name the friend or family member you want to receive your donation card," Rittman said.

Noting that there are giving options for every budget, Rittman said that "the wish to give a Blessed Gift gives added significance to Christmas, when Jesus came into the world as a poor baby. Blessed Gifts reflects the meaning of his coming, changing lives and giving the gift of hope."

Last year, the most popular gift was a donation to the Morning Glory Breakfast Program, which serves a hot and healthy meal to the hungry and homeless of the Danbury area. The program also works with other agencies to provide referrals to help individuals and families



"BLESSED GIFTS" HELP to feed the poor and hungry in our diocese.

escape the trap of homelessness.

Donations to the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport and New Covenant House in Stamford were also high on the list of Blessed Gifts. "It's not surprising that, over all, gifts of food in one form or another are cho-

sen most often," Rittman said.

"This is the season when families sit down to enjoy meals together. The gift of a home-style meal invites one more person to share in the banquet of love."

Other gift categories include aid to Catholic school children,

seminarians and retired priests. An unrestricted gifts category allows assistance to go wherever it is most needed. "Tuition assistance for a seminarian or a Catholic school youngster will make an attractive gift to those who can afford it," Rittman said. "But a seminarian will also certainly appreciate a gas card to get him back and forth to classes. Retired priests are thankful to receive candle oil for their chapel at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy residence, and school children are happy to get new pencils and notebooks."

Blessed Gifts is a way to share love between donor, receiver and those who most need to feel the message of God's love during this most cherished season of the year.

(To choose a Blessed Gift, go to www.blessedgifts.org or call Pam Rittman: 203.416.1479.)



Blessed Gifts
Diocese of Bridgeport

1. Visit www.BlessedGifts.org to select gifts.
2. Dedicate a gift to a friend or loved one.
3. The Diocese will send a card to your gift recipient or you may print one on your computer or send an e-card.
4. The Diocese will direct your gift to the selected ministry.

Questions: 203-416-1479
www.BlessedGifts.org

\$100



Provide meals for four families

\$75



Wednesday Morning Breakfast for our retired priests after Mass

\$50



Reading or math textbook Inner-city Catholic School

\$25



Provide warm breakfast for 25 people through Morning Glory, Danbury



Simply complete the envelope that is inserted in the *Fairfield County Catholic* with your gift selections.

Blessed Gifts supports your faith in action through ministries across the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Diocese of Bridgeport, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606

Diocesan Priests Gather

Convocation 2014: Study, Prayer and Fraternity

NEWPORT, R.I.—On Sunday afternoon, October 12, I-95 was filled with Catholic priests from the Diocese of Bridgeport as they made their way by bus and car to Rhode Island.

More than 160 priests from the diocese attended Convocation 2014. The last one was held in 2010 in the same Newport location, a large hotel/convention center with a chapel adjoining the grounds.

When they arrived on Sunday evening, the priests were treated to an opening dinner and then invited to pray together with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Vespers, a Holy Hour and Benediction.

Monday was the first full day of the convocation, and it began, fittingly, after breakfast with Mass and morning prayer.

The first presenter of the conference was Robert Wicks,

Psy.D., who is on the faculty at Loyola University Maryland and is the author of over 50 books. His presentation was entitled, “Remaining Calm within the Storm: Strengthening the Inner Life of Priests.”

By discussing psychological and classical spiritual approaches to maintaining a healthy perspective and inner strength, Dr. Hicks offered insights into how priests can maintain their equilibrium under stress. In his lively, engaging style, he encouraged the priests to “have an attitude of gratitude.” He concluded that maintaining a healthy perspective can allow priests to find peace in their ministry, a peace and warmth that they can then share with others.

The second presenter was Father Alfred McBride, O. Praem., who focused on the recent apostolic exhortation by

Pope Francis, “The Joy of the Gospel.” Father McBride is an expert in catechesis, and in addition to writing many books during his priesthood, he has worked in seminary formation, most notably at Pope Saint John XXIII Seminary near Boston, where a number of Bridgeport priests enjoyed his work as priest



PRIEST CONVOCATION—More than 160 priests from the Diocese of Bridgeport joined Bishop Caggiano in Newport, Rhode Island, recently for three days of renewal to strengthen their priesthood and joy in the Gospel.

THE PRIESTS PRAYED TOGETHER, gathered for talks in the morning and afternoon, and explored ways to deal with the many stresses and challenges of ministry.



and professor.

Father McBride began his presentation by stating that “we all need wisdom,” especially priests who minister in these turbulent times. He encouraged priests to be evangelists not so much by what they say but rather by their witness to Jesus. He encouraged them to focus especially on evangelizing the family.

In addition to the presentations by Father McBride and Dr. Wicks, the priests also participated in a lengthy synod discussion facilitated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who said, “This is the first of a number of synod sessions we will have together.”

Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka, director of the synod, encouraged the priests to “bring the synod

to your parishes.” And deputy synod director, Patrick Turner, hoped that the priests would “engage synod delegates with their fellow parishioners.”

On the final evening of the session, the priests gathered for a festive dinner before carrying the fruits of the convocation back to their home parishes and ministries.

REORGANIZATION FROM PAGE 3

Deacon DiTaranto said the change process is being guided in part by a strategic analysis of the Catholic Center by the National Executive Service Corp (NESC), commissioned by the bishop in February. The goal is to create a 21st-century model of an organization that takes advantages of exciting opportunities and helps the diocese respond more effectively to challenges faced by the Church.

About 100 people work in the Catholic Center, also referred to as the Curia, in the North End of Bridgeport. It houses the bishop’s office, the vicar general, the tribunal, and the chancellor, along with other services and ministries including diocesan schools, pastoral services, Catholic Charities, development, finance, clergy personnel, communications, Catholic Cemeteries, and human resources.

Another 30 Catholic Center employees work off-site at St John Fisher Seminary, the cemeteries, Queen of Clergy Residence, and in the pastoral care teams of local convalescent facilities.

The Diocese of Bridgeport includes more than 460,000 registered Catholics in Fairfield County. In addition to its 82 parishes, the diocese sponsors 30 regional elementary schools and 5 diocesan high schools, educating more than 9,000 youth, the St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford, the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy Residence for retired priests in Stamford and a wide range of social services through Catholic Charities and other institutions.

The diocese also sponsors seven Bishop Curtis Homes for the elderly in Bethel, Danbury, Greenwich, Stamford, Fairfield, and Bridgeport; and a multitude of charitable institutions, including the Cardinal Shehan Center and the McGivney Center in Bridgeport for inner-city children, the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport and New Covenant House of Hospitality in Stamford.

The Catholic Center is located at 238 Jewett Avenue in the North End of Bridgeport.

(To view the new organizational chart online, visit the diocesan website at: www.bridgeportdiocese.com. For more info and phone listings, visit www.bridgeportdiocese.com.)

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” — Luke 18:16

Saint Joseph Church of Brookfield proudly recognizes and truly appreciates the tremendous efforts and sacrifices of Andrea Woronick, Maryanne Gradt, Roseann D’Aureli and the wonderful catechists, aides and staff of the E.D.J.E. (Every Day Jesus Education) and Cross Over to Jesus Children’s Religious Education Programs.

Your response to offering our future Disciples of Christ the very best we can offer in faith is evident in our program’s success. We are most proud of you.



We also thank our parents who sacrifice so much to allow their children to participate in our program. Your sacrifices today will assist them to become truly committed Catholic Christians in the future.

Keep planting those seeds!

God bless you all!

Women and the Church

Women explore their role

By KAREN KOVACS
DYDZUHN

"It's a very hopeful day to see this many women gathered to discuss the role of women in the Church," said Janice DeMayo, a parishioner at St. Jude Parish in Monroe. DeMayo was one of 416 women attending the Diocese of Bridgeport's first annual Women's Conference, called "Handmaids of the Lord."

The conference opened with Mass celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. During his homily, he emphasized the important role of women in the Church.

In a letter written to the women from the bishop, he expressed his gratitude for the many different roles that women fill in the Church. He expressed his appreciation for the roles of women as evangelizers and witnesses to the faith, as leaders in their communities. The bishop noted that many women today answer the call to serve Jesus Christ by teaching in schools and religious education programs, committing to pro-life and social action efforts, serving to the best of their abilities as wives and mothers, and remaining mindful of charitable outreach to the poor and disadvantaged.

Keynote speakers in the morning and afternoon reflected on how to unveil Christ's love as Mary did. Other topics included reconciliation and the vocation of women. There were also opportunities throughout the day for Adoration of the Eucharist, veneration of relics of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Dr. Dianne Traflet, associate dean and assistant professor of pastoral theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University, called women into action as they "unveiled Christ in the heart of another."

"It's time for us to step up to the world stage," Dr. Traflet said.

For Nancy Caldwell, a parishioner at St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton, the women's conference was a way "to reconnect with my faith."

Although she had once been actively involved in parish ministries, Caldwell admitted to taking a hiatus from the Church. "There



WOMEN AS EVANGELIZERS—Women are key to passing on the gift of faith to their children and their communities. A total of 416 women from the diocese attended the Women's Conference at the Trumbull Marriott.

(PHOTO BY MADELEINE VEITH)

was no real reason why this happened," she admitted. "Life got in the way."

However, when her hairdresser, a parishioner at St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, told Caldwell about the upcoming conference, she was intrigued.

With her friend, Caldwell attended the spiritual retreat and "received so many blessings." She was especially moved by Sr. Clare Matthiass' discussion about Dignity and Vocation as Women. "She helped me to realize that God's essence, God's body, is composed just entirely of love," Caldwell said. "And as a body of women created in God's image, we are called to love the way he loved his Son, Jesus."

Caldwell also appreciated the beautiful music provided during the conference by Katie Keogler.

Karen Soares-Robinson, director of religious education at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport, said the conference was special because it allowed her to be with other women who were seeking to follow and serve Jesus Christ.

Soares-Robinson, 37, a mother of four, said, "I'm young and I'm trying to live my life like Jesus.

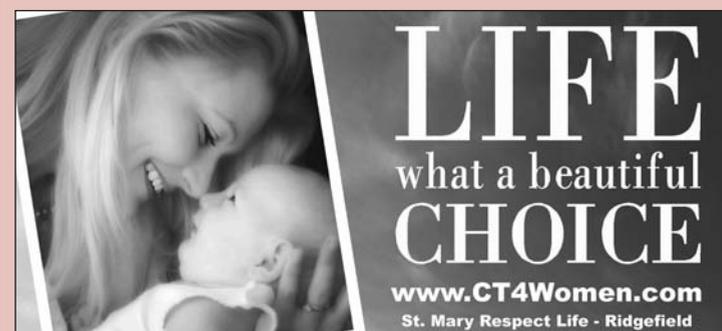
It's good to be here and listen to other people's influences as they share how they lead a spiritual life. The speakers are wonderful."

She was especially inspired by a talk about forgiveness.

"The speaker said we have to learn how to forgive and she really broke it down for us," Soares-Robinson stated. "She made it very real."

Pleased by the large attendance and positive feedback from

its participants, conference coordinator Gina Donnarummo said a date has already been set for next year's conference, which will be held on November 7, 2015. Based upon this year's success, the committee has already begun to look for a bigger venue. ■



BRIDGEPORT—Two billboards with a "Respect Life" message were up from October 20 through November 1 at the corner Fairfield Avenue and Ellsworth Street in Bridgeport and on Elm Street in Danbury. The billboards were sponsored by St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield to encourage women with unplanned pregnancies to seek compassionate, professional assistance.

Ct4women is a "one stop shopping" website with all of the essential information in one place to help women who may be in distress about their pregnancy. It was designed to put women in touch with helpful resources throughout the state. The website provides information on free pregnancy tests, pregnancy counseling, referrals to doctors, financial aid, housing, abuse centers, baby supplies, adoption centers and more. The information is also available in Spanish.

"Because of these billboards, we get over 100,000 visits per year to the site," say the creators of ct4women.

The Gospel of Life Society in Norwalk notes that it only takes about \$1,200 to sponsor a billboard near a college, university or abortion clinic, where women can be directed to seek assistance. Pastors and parishes are encouraged to consider sponsoring a billboard as a Respect Life project.

(For assistance with unplanned pregnancies, go to www.ct4women.com. For more info on sponsoring a billboard, contact the Gospel of Life Society: Stmarygols@aol.com.) ■

Amazing Parish Conference

By MARIE PELLETTIER

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. —Pope Francis

Members of five parishes from the Diocese of Bridgeport were among the more than 500 people from 140 parishes in the U.S. and Canada who gathered in Denver on August 27-28 for the first-ever Amazing Parish Conference.

Led by Father Peter Towsley, vicar for evangelization, the parishes represented at the conference included St. Joseph in Shelton, St. Joseph in Brookfield, Our Lady of Fatima in Wilton, St. Aloysius in New Canaan, and St. John in Darien. Pastors, parochial vicars, directors of religious education, deacons and other parish staff members were invited to participate.

The conference was put on by the Amazing Parish Movement, a group of com-

mitted Catholics from around the United States who want to help parishes by connecting them to great resources.

Catholic leaders in the country to speak on the seven traits of an "amazing parish:" a reliance on prayer, a real leadership



THE AMAZING PARISH CONFERENCE in Denver was an instrument for evaluating and renewing parish life. Participants from this diocese included (l-r) Andrea Woronik, Father Peter Towsley, Roseann D'Aureli (partially hidden); Pete and Claudia Roux, Father Reggie Norman, Marie Pelletier, Father Rolando Torres, Msgr. Chris Walsh, Father Cyrus Bartolome, Deacon Brad Smythe and his wife, Marianne.

"We cannot any longer have pastor-driven parishes," explains Father Towsley. "The gift that the Amazing Parish Conference brings is that it helps us analyze all aspects of a parish—its unique needs, strengths, weaknesses and history."

The conference gathered

team, a clear vision, the Sunday experience, compelling formation, small group discipleship and missionary zeal.

"The conference was a wonderful instrument in examining, evaluating and renewing the many aspects of parish life,"

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

Local Open House with Religious

Pope calls for Year of Consecrated Life

STAMFORD—On November 30, the first Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis will celebrate the opening Mass for the Year of Consecrated Life. The year will close on the World Day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2016.

Echoing the Pope's Mass at St. Peter's, women and men from religious institutes in this diocese will hold a Mass and reception at 2:30 pm at St. Cecilia Parish in Stamford. All religious from the diocese are invited, along with their families, friends, and co-workers. More than 40 congregations, institutes and societies serve in this diocese. There are over 300 Religious men and women living and serving in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

To celebrate the Year of consecrated Life in the United States, the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life

and Vocations collaborated with religious leadership conferences to create three "Days With Religious."

The first, a Day of Open House with Religious, is suggested for February 8, 2015. The second is a Day of Service with Religious in the summer of 2015. In early fall, September 13 will be a Day of Prayer with Religious. These are meant to be educational, collaborative and spiritual opportunities for Religious to share their mission and charism with the broader parish and diocesan community.

In another initiative, Catholic schools will be paired with Religious communities as "prayer partners" during the year.

"Each community will decide how these observances will be kept," says Sister Nancy Strillacci, A.S.C.J., the delegate for religious for the Diocese of Bridgeport. "The Pope himself



comes out of the Society of Jesus (Jesuit) tradition. He has given the challenge for the year, 'Wake Up the World!' Those living the Consecrated Life have always been visible signs of the Gospel message of mercy and reconciliation. Founding saints, like Francis, Benedict, Dominic,

Mother Seton—and modern examples, such as Mother Teresa—were prophetic, proclaiming countercultural values and the need to hope in Christ. We follow in the steps of spiritual giants."

The Year of Consecrated Life will take place in the context of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, coinciding with the anniversary of the promulgation of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council's Constitution on the Church, which has a specific chapter dealing with consecrated life. Cardinal João Braz de Aviz,

the prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, said, "We believe that the council has been the breath of the Spirit not only for the whole Church but, perhaps especially, for the consecrated life." Convinced that in these 50 years consecrated life has undertaken a journey of renewal, "we want to embrace the future with hope," he said. In this regard, he said, the Year of Consecrated Life will have an evangelical focus, helping people to realize "the beauty of following Christ" in the various types of religious vocations.

Pope Francis will close the year on World Day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2016. In this diocese, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will observe the close of the year with a Vespers Service in St. Augustine Cathedral.

(NOTE: People with wonderful memories of women and men Religious are asked to send a short description of them (500 words or less) to the Catholic Center, 238 Jewett Ave. Bridgeport, CT 06606 or srstrillacci@diobpt.org. These may be used in the coming editions of the *Fairfield County Catholic* or in celebratory events.)

CAPP breakfast on Sunday

FAIRFIELD—Kerry Robinson, executive director of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, will be the featured speaker at the eighth annual CAPP Communion Breakfast for Business Leaders on November 16 at Fairfield University.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Father Rick Ryscavage, S.J., director of the Center for Faith and Public Life at Fairfield University, will celebrate Mass in Egan Chapel at 9 a.m. The breakfast and Robinson's talk will follow in the Oak Room of the Barone Campus Center

CAPP's Business Leadership Award will be presented to digital marketing industry innovator and philanthropist Al DiGuido of Westport, founder of Al's Angels, which supports children affected by financial hardships and those struggling with cancer. He is a member of

St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk. The breakfast is sponsored by Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice (CAPP) of Fairfield County and by the Center for Faith & Public

and subsidiarity," said Bishop Caggiano.

The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management is an organization of laity, religious, and clergy working together to promote excellence and best practices in the management, finances and human resource development of the Catholic Church in the U.S. through the greater incorporation of the expertise of the laity.

Robinson is a writer and speaker on philanthropy, development and faith. In addition to her work with the National Leadership Roundtable, she is a trustee of the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities in Wilmington, Del., and FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities) in Washington.

Founding editor of *The Catholic Funding Guide: A*
▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



KERRY ROBINSON

AL DIGUIDO

Life of Fairfield University.

"As the diocese moves forward with its own reorganization plan and with Synod 2014 to plan for the future, we welcome the thoughts of Kerry Robinson on best practices and the most efficient use of resources. Her work directly addresses the Catholic social teaching principles of human dignity, solidarity



**To all Relatives, Friends and Co-Workers
of Consecrated Men and Women
in the Diocese of Bridgeport**

*You are cordially invited
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The Mass and Reception will be on
Sunday, November 30, 2014, 2:30-4:30 pm

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Catholic Academies

Scholarships on the menu

GREENWICH—More than 50 guests turned out for the fifth annual Fall Dinner for Catholic Academies of Bridgeport held at Polpo Restaurant in Greenwich.

Sister Joan A. Magnetti, rscj, executive director of Catholic Academies, welcomed guests to the \$1,500 a plate dinner, which raised more than \$85,000 to create scholarships and financial assistance for children in the four Catholic Schools in Bridgeport, the Cathedral Academy upper and lower campuses, St. Ann Academy and St. Andrew Academy.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano thanked donors for their continued generosity to the schools and discussed measures the diocese is taking to build further support and resources for Catholic education.

The evening was hosted by the Catholic Academies Advisory Board under the leadership of James L. Bailey, with the entire dinner generously underwritten by Ron Rosa, proprietor of Polpo. On the menu of the three-course dinner were such delights as ear-shaped pasta with broccoli rabe and fresh homemade sau-



PROOF'S IN THE PUDDING!—(l-r) Donors met Tom Gaudett (first on left), an alumnus of the Cathedral Academy who recently graduated from Harvard and now teaches in Bridgeport with "Teach for America." Pictured with him are Polpo owner Ron Rosa, Bishop Caggiano, Sister Joan Magnetti, and Annamarie Rosa.

sage; swordfish oreganata, chicken in mushrooms, shallot white wine sauce, veal medallions with baby artichokes gratinée and a sampling of the restaurant's decadent homemade desserts.

The Catholic Academies of Bridgeport give hope to children in Catholic elementary schools in the city of Bridgeport. Almost 1,000 children of all faiths are enrolled and more than 65 per-

cent receive financial assistance. All Catholic Academies of Bridgeport are accredited by the State of CT and NEASC. One hundred percent of graduating eighth-graders attend high school and nearly 100 percent attend college.



SUPPORT FOR THE KIDS!—Bishop Caggiano meets with (l-r) John Barker of New Canaan and Paul Queally of New Canaan to thank them for their ongoing support and commitment to Bridgeport youth.



THANK YOU!—Sr. Joan Magnetti chats with Judy Higgins of Greenwich and thanks her for all of her help.

(For more information Catholic Academies of Bridgeport, call

203.416.1376 or www.catholicacademiesbridgeport.org.)

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NCH receives \$500,000 grant

STAMFORD—Paul Harinstein, chair of the New Covenant House Advisory Board, and Laure Aubuchon, New Covenant House Capital Campaign chair, have announced the receipt of a grant of \$500,000 from the Herbert and Nell Singer Foundation, also located in Stamford.

"This transformative grant from the Singer Foundation, reflecting its commitment to Stamford, will assure that we meet our construction schedule and permit the new facility to be up and running in the first quarter of 2015," said Harinstein.

Including the Singer Foundation grant, New Covenant House is at 70 percent of its goal of \$1.5 million needed to renovate and move into a larger and more efficient facility across the street from its current location.

New Covenant House is the largest soup kitchen in Lower Fairfield County.



LOCAL DIGNITARIES join NCH board chair Paul Harinstein to kick off the construction of the home for New Covenant House of Hospitality on October 13. (PHOTO BY MARTIN B. CASSIDY)

Singer Foundation Board Chair Jay Sandak, commenting on the Foundation's gift, said, "Stamford has always been about community, its citizens and organizations helping one another. The foundation supports the mission of New Covenant House and we are very pleased to have been able to contribute to the realization of their new facility."

The "new" New Covenant House will encompass 8,000 sq. ft. at 174 Richmond Hill, a major expansion from its current 2,000 sq. ft. location. New

Covenant House serves hot meals twice a day, 365 days a year. Including the breakfast program and food pantry, it provides over 700,000 meals a year. The need for this humanitarian service has doubled in the past six years. The new facility will include an efficient and

modern kitchen, a welcoming dining area, expanded food storage area and refrigeration, a spacious food pantry area and additional space for other services.

Founded over 36 years ago, New Covenant House is an inter-faith project of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, serving the homeless, elderly, disabled, working poor, and children. No one is turned away. There are no requirements to enter the NCH doors, except a mutual exchange of respect and dignity.

Bishop at Fairfield University

Synod offers 'singular moment of grace'

FAIRFIELD—"You and I are living a singular moment of grace, in this unique and particular time in the life of our diocese. It is a moment of grace as we walk this

dent of Fairfield University. Dr. Paul Lakeland, director of the University's Center for Catholic Studies, moderated the evening. The bishop explained that

and found it to be a transformative experience for that diocese.

"The Diocese of Brooklyn is the most ethnically diverse diocese in the country," he said. "On any given Sunday, Mass can be celebrated there in 35 languages. Geographically, it is the smallest diocese in the nation, and in 1996, it was facing severe financial distress."

Bishop Caggiano said the Brooklyn synod achieved far-reaching changes to the diocese's ecclesial life by creating an innovative lay leadership program that trained thousands of men and women to "take on the tasks of ministry, fully formed, fully prepared."

The synod also created a program of ongoing formation for clergy to help them in their pastoral ministry, and "to provide the spiritual and theological support they needed to be pastors and shepherds of their people," he said.

"My friends, I saw then that a synod can lead to miraculous renewal, and I stand before you as your shepherd to tell you that the exact same thing and more is in store for you and me in the Diocese of Bridgeport!"

The bishop said that the Holy Spirit will inspire the Synod 2014 delegates because "Jesus has promised to be in our midst when we gather in his name. We are always more than just an assembly of human beings when we gather in Christ's name, for we form a mysterious unity that has a human and a divine dimension. We humans are members of a divine community that is greater than the sum total of its parts."

The bishop concluded his

address with a prayer that the diocese becoming a welcoming Church that changes lives. "What is it that the Lord wants for us and from us?" he asked. "On a personal note, I pray for a Church that will find new ways to effectively invite all the baptized to fall in love with Jesus Christ in a deeply personal way. I long and pray for a welcoming Church that will never be afraid to teach and preach the truth, who is Jesus Christ himself in our midst."

(For more info on the Center for Catholic Studies and the event, call 203.254.4000, ext. 3415, or visit www.fairfield.edu/catholicstudies. To hear the bishop's full address, go to the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com.)



ON CALLING THE DIOCESAN SYNOD—Bishop Caggiano is flanked by Dr. Paul Lakeland, Director of Fairfield University's Center for Catholic Studies, and Fr. Jeffrey von Arx, President of Fairfield University before delivering the 21st Annual Christopher F. Mooney, S. J. Lecture in Theology, Religion and Society.

synodal journey together," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on November 4 before a gathering of more than 250 in the Quick Center of Fairfield University.

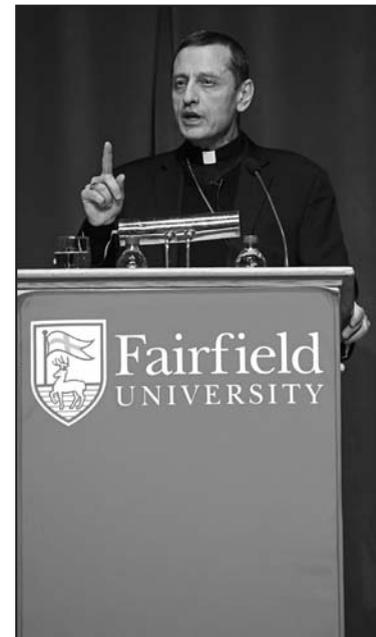
"First and foremost, this is a journey that allows all of us in leadership—lay, religious and clergy—shoulder-to-shoulder, in prayer and reflection, to strengthen the mortar that holds us together as the living Temple of Christ," he said during his 45-minute talk "On Calling a Diocesan Synod: Hopes and Dreams."

The bishop's address, followed by a question and answer session, was delivered as the 21st Annual Christopher F. Mooney, S.J. Lecture in Theology, Religion & Society. He was introduced by Fr. Jeffrey von Arx, S.J., presi-

synods are consultative in nature, not legislative. "They do not pass laws. They seek to discern what God is asking of the Church. A diocesan synod is a sacred gathering of Church leaders to discern God's will," he said.

He also made the distinction between discernment and decision-making. "The synod will make decisions that I hope to ratify, but to make correct decisions we need first to discern. Discerning is deeper and more profound than decision-making. Discernment is an essential prerequisite to ensure that decisions that are made are for the good of the Church," he said.

The Brooklyn native said he worked on the Diocese of Brooklyn Synod in 1996 with Bishop Daley



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Inner City Foundation

Bridgeport teacher wins 'Tim Russert' Award

GREENWICH—Every year the Inner City Foundation for Charity & Education presents the "Tim Russert Making A Difference Award" at its gala dinner, held this year on October 18 at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich.

In collaboration with Sister Mary Grace Walsh, Superintendent of Schools, this year's "Tim Russert Making A Difference Award" was presented to Anna Marie Altieri, a fifth grade homeroom and math teacher in the Cathedral Academy Upper School on the St. Augustine Campus in Bridgeport.

"Mrs. Altieri has a genuine enthusiasm and commitment to urban Catholic education. She embraces the Gospel values of our faith and imparts those values daily to our school community by her words and actions," said Sister Mary Grace.

"Over the years Anna Marie has demonstrated outstanding leadership and excellence in teaching; has modeled best practices of 21st-Century teaching; and has translated her Catholic faith into

action by her determination to make each child in her class feel the love, peace, and joy of Jesus," says Larry DiPalma, the Upper School principal, who was on hand for the presentation. "When students are assigned to her classroom, their religious, academic, social, and emotional needs are met and immediately each parent is actively engaged in the education of their child. She is respected and held in high regard by her peers, the students, and parents of the Cathedral Academy. She is truly a blessing to the Cathedral Academy family."

The Inner City Foundation for Charity & Education annual black-tie event raised \$830 thousand to support agencies, institutions and programs throughout Fairfield County at the Foundation's 23rd Annual Benefit Dinner. Marc B. Lautenbach, president and CEO of Pitney Bowes Inc., was the chair of the Corporate Committee for the event. Valisia LeKae, the 2014 Grammy Award nominee for Best Musical Theater Album and the 2013 Tony Award nom-

inee for Best Lead Actress in a Musical, was this year's master of ceremonies.

The event featured a concert performance by The Doo Wop Project featuring five cast members from Broadway's hit shows *Hairspray*, *Jersey Boys*, *Sister Act* and *Motown: The Musical*—including Tony nominee Charl Brown. They were accompanied by a band of Broadway veterans including musical director Sonny Paladino.

Individuals who have participated in programs supported by the Inner City Foundation addressed the audience and expressed their gratitude for the help they have received and for the opportunities that have been made available to them. Janie and Dean Gestal of Greenwich were the Benefit Committee chairs, assisted by co-chairs Audrey and Daniel Dornier of Greenwich, Helen and



ACTIVELY ENGAGING STUDENTS, Cathedral Academy math teacher Anna Marie Altieri was recognized for her dedication to excellence at the Inner City Foundation dinner.

Dan FitzPatrick of Greenwich, Vilma and Dick Matteis of Greenwich and Bill Mitchell of Westport.

Since 1992, the foundation has awarded more than \$26 million in grants to organizations that provide assistance, including food, clothing, shelter, counseling and education to at-risk and needy children and adults in Fairfield County. In addition to providing scholarship funds to diocesan schools in Bridgeport, other organizations receiving grants include the Boys and Girls Club of Stamford, Cardinal Shehan Center, Caroline House, Carver

Center, Child Guidance Center, Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Emerge Inc., Family & Children's Aid, Inspirica Inc., Kids in Crisis, Liberation Programs, Mercy Learning Center, Morning Glory Kitchen, New Covenant House of Hospitality, Regional YMCA of Western Connecticut, Stamford Shelter for the Homeless, the Thomas Merton House of Hospitality and Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers.

(For more info about *The Inner City Foundation For Charity & Education* or to make a donation, visit www.innercityfoundation.org, or call 203.416.1496.)

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Pechin joins Schools

BRIDGEPORT—BriAna Pechin has joined the Office of the Superintendent of Schools as director of academic services. In her newly-created role, Pechin will lead the design, development and assessment of curriculum and faculty professional development serving all 35 Catholic schools in the diocese.

The academic program at the elementary schools is widely recognized, with more than half of the diocesan elementary schools achieving U.S. Department of Education national recognition for academic excellence. The five high schools share an exceptional academic record with strong graduation rates, prestigious college acceptances and millions of dollars in college and university scholarships.

"Driving this caliber of academic program necessitates a continuously improving curriculum and teaching practices," said Superintendent of Schools Sister Mary Grace Walsh



BRIANA PECHIN

ASCJ, Ph.D. "BriAna's knowledge and skills will ensure our students and teachers remain at the forefront of learning."

Pechin comes to the diocese with extensive academic and administrative experience in Catholic schools, most recently

in the Archdiocese of New York. As the regional business manager/corporate officer for the Catholic Schools Region of the Northwest/South Bronx, Pechin had oversight and responsibility for the business operations of the largest Pilot Catholic School Region in the Archdiocese. Prior to her executive role, Pechin served as principal at the School of the Incarnation in Washington Heights, N.Y. She began her career in the archdiocese as a teacher and administrator at Sacred Heart private school in the Bronx.

Pechin holds two masters degrees in education and educational administration from Manhattan College and the University of Bridgeport as well as a Professional Diploma in School Building Leadership from Manhattan College. Pechin and her husband Robert live in Yonkers, N.Y., with their three children. They are members of the Church of Eugene Parish in Yonkers.

Blessed Sacrament Parish

Urban garden helps to grow faith

By **KAREN KOVACS
DYDZUHN**

“The earth brought forth vegetation; plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good” (Genesis: 1.2).

“From the beginning, the kids were enthusiastic and committed to the project,” said Karen Soares-Robinson, director of religious education at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport. “They had limited experience with planting gardens but as soon as Father Skip and I described our plan, they were excited and ready to go.”

Last spring, Soares-Robinson and parish administrator Father Joseph Karcinski, called “Father Skip” by everyone, led the youngsters in tending to an urban garden. Located in the back of the church’s paved parking lot, the garden was originally developed several years ago by Pax Et Terra, a Newtown-based apostolate organization. Its members continue to support Blessed Sacrament by providing plants and supplies.

This is the first season, though, that the congregation’s youngest members were recruited to plant,



URBAN GARDEN—Faith took root along with the plants this summer at the Urban Garden at Blessed Sacrament Parish in East Bridgeport.

hydrate, weed and harvest a variety of vegetables. All of their tasks were directly tied to Scripture teachings, said Soares-Robinson. “The garden helped them to make important connections,” she explained.

For example, difficult liturgical concepts—such as our Lord’s Resurrection—was easier to understand when the children helped to plant several different kinds of beans on Lazarus Sunday during Lent and then witnessed sprouts rise up through the soil a few weeks later.

“Just as Lazarus went into the tomb, we put the peapods into

the ground,” said Father Skip. “We told the children, ‘Now watch and see what happens.’”

Soares Robinson said they were “amazed” by how quickly the sprouts appeared. By early summer parishioners were encouraged to venture into the garden after Sunday Mass to pick

some of the abundant crop.

This was only the beginning, though. During the summer, 40 students and staff of Blessed Sacrament’s Bible Camp planted tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers and several types of peppers—chili, green, Italian and hot cherry tomato—in 16 raised beds. Some plants, such as okra, mustard greens and lettuce, grow in four additional beds which are located in the garden’s winter house.

Father Skip said, “Our goal has been to involve our entire parish in the garden and we tapped into the young people’s natural interest in plants.”

Through grant money donated by the Knights of Columbus St. Pope John XXIII Council 5987 of St. Jude Parish in Monroe, Father Skip was able to purchase a much-needed water hydrant in July.

He and Soares-Robinson were

also intent upon contributing in a positive way to the Bridgeport parish’s neighborhood. In addition to offering fresh produce to the local community, Blessed Sacrament’s congregants sought to beautify its surroundings by decorating the garden’s landscape with colorful wooden panels. The children not only painted the panels but were challenged by Soares-Robinson to inscribe the side of the panel that faced the garden with a spiritual message.

“I asked them to come up with ideas about what this summer camp has meant to them,” she said. Kenny wrote, “Think. Dream. Believe.”

Another young parishioner summed up her experience through poetry. She wrote, “God sleeps in minerals/Awakens in plants/Walks in animals and thinks in Man./Blossom into someone beautiful.”



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EDITORIAL

They ARE the Church

Young people want to make a difference. In case anyone missed that, they have said so repeatedly at synod meetings, youth consultation sessions, and at smaller meetings with Bishop Caggiano.

They are already making a difference. They raise funds for breast cancer research in Stamford and Stratford, rake leaves for the elderly in Danbury and Brookfield, plant urban gardens in Bridgeport. At St. Philip Parish in Norwalk, the youth group has raised so much awareness, and so much money, to fight world hunger that parish representatives were invited to World Vision's headquarters to explain how they became so successful.

Unless you have a youngster in religious education, Catholic school or a parish youth group, you may not be aware of all the good they do. That's unfortunate. We should be trumpeting it from the rooftops—and through the media. At very least, we should invite them to speak at weekend Masses, post their photos on the bulletin board, and print their activities in the parish bulletin.

We do our best here in the Communications Office. Youth activities appear regularly in *Fairfield County Catholic*. Every day, we post new items on the web at www.bridgeportdiocese.com, www.facebook.com/FairfieldCountyCatholics, www.DOB-youth.com and www.twitter.com/DOBYouth.

While at World Vision headquarters, Father Michael Boccaccio, St. Philip's pastor, became the latest "poster child" in the fight against World Hunger. Father Mike's message, proclaimed forcefully from their website: "Never refer to youth as the *future* of the Church. They ARE the Church."

In Thanksgiving

At a time when the national mood is said to be grim and downbeat, we all have much to be thankful for. In fact, as our Holy Father, Francis, has taught us, we have never had more reason to be thankful because the great gift of faith is the ability to live each day in joy and gratitude.

We also have much to be grateful for in our own diocese, where we are blessed by the leadership of Bishop Caggiano, the generosity of the faithful, the energy and passion of our youth, and the many good things underway:

- Earlier this year, the bishop gave the diocese the gift of the synod, and it is already bearing fruit in its spirit of faith and openness. This weekend, 350 delegates will gather in Trumbull for the Second General Session of Synod 2014 to plan for the pastoral needs the local Church.
- Through the generosity of almost 25,000 donors, the Annual Bishop's Appeal has exceeded its goal of \$11.5 million in support of diocesan ministries and services that transform lives.
- The diocese remains unequalled in its level of service to the community: 1.5 million meals to the poor and hungry served by Catholic Charities; almost 10,000 children and young people educated in our schools; another 38,000 children in religious education; 15,000 counseling sessions to help troubled individuals and families, and thousands of elderly served through senior nutrition and Bishop Curtis Homes.
- We're also grateful for this year's St. Augustine Medal recipients who have given a lifetime of service to the diocese, and truly serve as "missionaries of hope" in our midst.

Last but not least we are approaching the Advent season with its opportunity to find new joy and hope as we await the Light of Christ in our lives. So as we sit down on November 27 to celebrate the great national holiday of Thanksgiving, we also look forward to the First Sunday of Advent just three days later on November 30. It's fitting the two come together; they are reminders that faith and the life of our nation are intertwined—and that's something to be thankful for.

Day Light Savings

Why does it seem like we lose daylight rather than save it when we turn the clocks back? Overnight, a whole section of afternoon disappears and we're not prepared for it. For a brief moment we have the fiery compensation of red, orange and yellow leaves, swirling in a kind of giddy revelation. Then the first cold drumbeats of November usher in another season, and we must learn the language of spare winter trees. Just when we need it, Advent comes and teaches us to accept our fallowness, to wait in prayer, and to light a candle in expectation. ■

LETTER

Joy spreads faith

To the Editor:

Bishop Caggiano ardently hopes that the many Catholics who do not attend weekly Mass, or ever go to Confession will return to the faith. This can come about if those who do practice the faith display such infectious happiness in their ordinary lives that the disaffected Catholics will question how people can be so happy. Then practicing Catholics can simply tell them that it is the practice of the faith, especially frequent Confession and weekly Holy Mass, that gives them the graces to be optimistic and always hopeful in life so that their crosses are overcome and accepted as God the Father's heavenly plan of salvation for them.

Daily happiness in practicing Catholics is a must to return countless Catholics to the Church and the sacraments. But if the example they receive is of sullen, morose and unhappy practicing Catholics, their return will be all but impossible.

Robert Severine
Stamford

FAIRFIELD COUNTY
CATHOLICOffice of
Communications
Diocese of Bridgeport

238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606-2892
telephone | 203.416.1461
fax | 203.374.2044
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CLERGY APPOINTMENTS



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

EPISCOPAL CHAPLAIN

REVEREND JEFFREY COUTURE, Spiritual Director, Immaculate High School, Danbury, to Episcopal Chaplain, Immaculate High School, Danbury. Effective date was 10/24/14.

REVEREND MICHAEL NOVAJOSKY, Spiritual Director, St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, to Episcopal Chaplain, St. Joseph High School, Trumbull. Effective date was 10/24/14.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND JUSTIN RAJ, IMS, Summer Assistant, Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, to Parochial Vicar, Christ the King Parish, Trumbull. Effective date was 11/6/14.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

REVEREND AMOBI ATUEGBU, returning to the Diocese from Nigeria, to Assistant Chaplain at Stamford Hospital. Effective date was 10/29/14. Father Atuegbu will reside at St. Mary Parish, Stamford; from Assistant Chaplain at Stamford Hospital, to Chaplain, Danbury Hospital. Effective date is 12/1/14. Father Atuegbu will reside at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Danbury.

REVEREND BERNARDO RODRIGUEZ, Prison Chaplain and Seaport Ministry, Bridgeport Correctional Facility and Garner Prison, to Assistant Chaplain at Danbury Hospital and Part-time Parochial Vicar, St Peter Parish, Danbury. Effective date was 10/29/14.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

REVEREND AUGUSTINE NGUYEN, to Episcopal Vicar for Vietnamese Catholics. Effective date was 10/28/14. Father Nguyen will remain Episcopal Chaplain to Kolbe Cathedral High School.

THE FOLLOWING MEN HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO SERVE
AS ASSISTANT VOCATION DIRECTORS

REVEREND JOHN CONNAUGHTON (Vicariate I), effective date was 10/16/14

REVEREND MICHAEL DUNN (Vicariate II), effective date was 10/16/14

REVEREND JOHN RINGLEY (Vicariate III), effective date was 10/16/14

REVEREND JOSEPH MARCELLO (Vicariate IV), effective date is 4/1/15

REVEREND ROLANDO ARIAS-GALVIS (Vicariate V), effective date was 10/16/14

OTHER

REVEREND FRANCIS NAMPIAPARAMBIL LUKE, Chaplain at Bridgeport Hospital, to home diocese of Kothamangalam, India. Effective date was 11/10/14.

Reverend Ian Jeremiah, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy
November, 2014

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Publisher

Brian D. Wallace
Executive Editor bwallace@ccfc-ct.org

Pat Hennessy
Managing Editor phennessy@diobpt.org

Renée Stamatis
Art Director rstamatis@diobpt.org

Ralph Lazzaro
Advertising Manager rlazzaro@diobpt.org

Fr. Colin McKenna
Staff Writer frmckenna@diobpt.org

Brian A. Wallace
Graphic Designer bwallace@diobpt.org

Jill Monroe
Office Manager/Admin jmonroe@diobpt.org

Madeline Ghilardi
Copy Editor (Consultant)

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2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service

Recognizing *the* volunteers, *the* mentors *and the* prayerful servants *of our* diocese



(PHOTO BY SHARON MACKNIGHT)

St. Augustine Medal Service

Recipients honored as ‘missionaries of hope’

After praising more than 130 St. Augustine Medal recipients for their “generous and loving service to the Church,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano also issued a challenge to them during the St. Augustine Medal of Service ceremony on October 25.

“I commission you to go out to be my missionaries of hope to the rest of our Church, and to invite them to follow in your footsteps,” the bishop said in a brief homily. “And in this year of the synod, let us pray that they rise to the challenge because we need every single one of them.”

More than 700 friends and family members filled St. Augustine Cathedral in downtown Bridgeport to offer prayer and praise for the recipients.

In the early afternoon ceremony on a day sparkling with sunshine, the bishop began his remarks by thanking medal recipients for their long-time service to parishes and the diocese. “I am very grateful for your service, your generosity, your witness and your faith,” he said. “Today is a celebration of that service as love made concrete in your witness. Often in your silent way, you become the presence and face of God to those who need it the most.”

During the prayer service and program, one by one the honorees came forward with their pastors to receive their medals from the bishop. Many couples were also among the recipients.

The names of the medal winners were read from the altar by Sister Mary Grace Walsh, superintendent of schools, and Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities. William McLean, chief development officer of the diocese, presented the medals to the bishop for distribution.

After the prayer service, which included singing of

Psalms and a reading from Jeremiah (*More tortuous than all else is the human heart, beyond remedy; who can understand it? The Lord alone...*), the bishop blessed the bronze medals, which carry an engraving of St. Augustine on the front and the seal of the Diocese of Bridgeport on the reverse side.

“Wear your medal often,” the bishop urged the men and women, “so people ask ‘what is it?’ Then you can invite them to receive it as well by following your example of generous and loving service. May the medal you wear outside always reflect the goodness of your heart on the inside.”

At the end of the service, recipients were given a standing ovation and invited to a reception at Kolbe Cathedral High School.

(To see a slideshow of the ceremony, visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com. To view photos of individual recipients, go to www.shutterstock.com/pro/MichelleBabyak/FFCC and scroll down to 2014 St. Augustine Awards.)

2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



(Editor's note: The recognition of award recipients below has been edited to fit the print edition. Full submissions can be found online at www.bridgeportdiocese.com)
Photos by Michelle Babyak



SAINT MARY PARISH, BETHEL: MRS. MAUREEN ULLAH — "Maureen is totally dedicated to our parish and school. Her support, hard work, caring and faith are without measure."
— *Father Corey Piccinino, Pastor*



BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. JOHN AND BEATRICE TORRES — "John and Beatrice have chaired our major fundraising event for the past two years. They and their family help to keep our parish doors open."
— *Father Skip Karcinski, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNCIL CHAPEL, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. FRANCIS AND MONICA GACHETTE — "They freely give their time and talent for the good of the church."
— *Father Eugene R. Szantyr, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNCIL CHAPEL, BRIDGEPORT: MS. JOHANNA SUSIE CINOTTI — "If anything needs to be done, just ask."
— *Father Eugene R. Szantyr, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. ANTONIO AND ISILDA RAMOS — "Antonia and Isilda have been dedicated and devoted volunteers in our church and social activities for many years."
— *Father Jose de Brito Alves, Pastor*



SAINT ANDREW PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. RUSS AND DONNA CURL — "They have been in music ministry for many years. They help us lift up our hearts to God."
— *Father Eugene R. Szantyr, Pastor*



SAINT ANN PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MS. SALLY JACKO — "Sally has gone above and beyond as parish nurse coordinator. St. Ann Parish is very blessed to have her."
— *Father Peter J. Lynch, Pastor*



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MS. LORETTA BLASDELL AND MS. FLORIDA ALLARD — "They have been volunteers in our parish since the 1950s. They are talented women of great faith and devotion."
— *Father Edison Orozco, Pastor*



SAINT GEORGE PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MS. ENEREIDA CRUZ — "She is a lector and a wonderful person. She is a daily Communicant who shows much love for our parish."
— *Father Elio Sosa, Administrator*



SAINT MARGARET SHRINE PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MS. NANCY TEIXEIRA — "Nancy works tirelessly to raise funds for our Shrine. She is always available to help in any capacity where she is needed."
— *Deacon Donald Foust, Administrator*



SAINT MARY PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MS. SANDRA HERNANDEZ — "Sandra has given loving and dedicated service to the parish for many years in religious education, youth ministry, music ministry, Charismatic Renewal and other parish activities."
— *Monsignor Matthew Bernelli, Pastor*



SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. EWA ZEGAREK — "Ewa is a long time parishioner and a leading catechist of children. She is active in the preparation of the liturgical life of the parish and in the New Evangelization."
— *Father Stefan Morawski, O.F.M. Conv., Pastor*



SAINT PETER PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. WILLIAM ANGEL, MR. ROBERTO QUINTANILLA, AND MR. DAVID SANCHEZ — "They perform all kinds of services for the parish, from decorating, cleaning, running errands to repairs."
— *Monsignor Aniceto Villamide, Pastor*



THE CATHEDRAL PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH AND THAI HUONG — "Joseph helped lead parishioners to complete a number of important projects. His wife and he and their children comprise a model Catholic family."
— *Father F. John Ringley, Rector*



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, BROOKFIELD: MR. RAYMOND SACK AND MR. RICHARD SANISLO — "Ray serves as the caretaker of our parish grotto. Richard fabricates displays and provides artwork for holy days, parish events and religious education programs."
— *Father George F. O'Neill, Pastor*



SAINT MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS, BROOKFIELD: MR. DAVID SLUTI — "Dave is always willing to help set up and clean up for our parish events. He is a very dedicated parishioner who gives witness to the faith by both word and action."
— *Father George Sankoorikal, Pastor*

2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PARISH, DANBURY: MRS. HELENA ALBUQUERQUE ANDRADE — “Helena has been a dedicated volunteer since the founding of our parish. She has been the DRE since 2002 and volunteers at many parish events.”
— *Father Jose Brito Martins, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH, DANBURY: MRS. MINERVA ESPINAL — “Mary is a caring and loyal person who gives of her time and talents to the community. She is a lector and catechist and is in charge of flower decorations.”
— *Father John J. Perez, Administrator*



SACRED HEART OF JESUS PARISH, DANBURY: MR. GERALD LEBLANC — “Gerald has been the person who opens the parish every day for more than 15 years. His humble and faithful service to the parish is greatly appreciated!”
— *Father S. Leonel Medeiros, Pastor*



SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH, DANBURY: MR. AND MRS. BRUCE AND PATTY BARROWS — “Bruce and Patty lead our R.C.I.A. team. They are exemplary ministers, welcoming and witnessing to God, faith and parish.”
— *Father Angelo S. Arrando, Pastor*



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, DANBURY: MR. GERALD PALANZO, JR. — “Jerry’s love for God is manifest in his many years of service to our parish and school. As chairman of the Parish Finance Council, he truly leads by example.”
— *Father Samuel V. Scott, Pastor*



SAINT PETER PARISH, DANBURY: MR. AND MRS. SANDRO DOBLINS AND ANA ALICE DA SILVA DOBLINS — “They have been serving the Brazilian Catholic Community for many years and are always available to help in whatever way they can.”
— *Father S. Leonel Medeiros, Episcopal Vicar for Brazilians*



SAINT JOHN PARISH, DARIEN: MR. AND MRS. JOHN AND TERESA SKROLY — “John worked hard to reestablish our parish Knights of Columbus council. Teresa has worked tirelessly chairing our annual car raffle.”
— *Father Frank Hoffmann, Pastor*



SAINT THOMAS MORE PARISH, DARIEN: MRS. ERMA MOORE — “Erma has generously served the parish for many years. She provides important assistance to numerous ministries, including religious formation, parish administration and liturgy.”
— *Father Paul G. Murphy, Pastor*



NOTRE DAME PARISH, EASTON: MRS. HELEN “JACKIE” RECK — “Jackie is a daily Communicant who has a strong devotion to Eucharistic Adoration and the Rosary. She has taught religious education, is a member of the Ladies Council and is a Eucharistic Minister.”
— *Father Michael P. Lyons, Pastor*



HOLY CROSS PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MRS. AUDREY PROKALY — “Audrey has been a dedicated volunteer in many ways. She has enhanced the parish grounds, been an active member of the Altar Society and has helped with the annual parish picnic.”
— *Father Alfred F. Pecaric, Pastor*



HOLY FAMILY PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MRS. KATHERINE O’SHEA — “Kathy is a faithful coordinator of our Family Life Committee and serves as Eucharistic Minister. She is always ready to help anyone in time of need.”
— *Father Guido Montanaro, Pastor*



OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, FAIRFIELD: DR. AND MRS. DALE AND FRAN LICHTENBERG — “Dale and Fran have been devout and active parishioners for many years. Dale is active in K. of C. and Fran is a lector and Eucharistic Minister.”
— *Father Peter A. Cipriani, Pastor*



SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. KEITH AND MAUREEN REYNOLDS — “Maureen and Keith help with many parish endeavors. They are both catechists and Eucharistic Ministers, and model commitment to God, family and Church.”
— *Father John P. Baran, Pastor*



SAINT EMERY PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. CHRIS AND WENDY BLEGGI — “Chris and Wendy are always available to be of service to the parish. Both help to decorate at Christmas and Easter. Theirs is an exemplary Catholic family.”
— *Father Guido Montanaro, Administrator*



2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



SAINT PIUS X PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. RUBEN AND GRACE RODRIGUEZ — “Ruben and Grace are enthusiastic and faithful parishioners and volunteers. They embody the spirit of St. Pius X.”
— *Father Robert Crofut, Parochial Vicar*



SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. EDWARD AND JANICE DAYTON — “Ed and Janice are active members of our parish. Ed chairs our Parish Finance Board and Janice directs our home school religious education program.”
— *Father Victor T. Martin, Pastor*



SACRED HEART PARISH, GEORGETOWN: MR. AND MRS. THOMAS AND ANITA URWIN — “Tom and Anita are very generous in serving the parish in many ways. Their willingness to help sets a good example for us all.”
— *Father David Leopold, Pastor*



SACRED HEART PARISH, GREENWICH: MR. AND MRS. ARMANDO AND RAFAELA OLAES — “Rafaela and Armando are very devoted Catholic parents. They express their deep faith through selfless service to various ministries in the parish.”
— *Father Bose Raja Selvaraj, Pastor*



SAINT AGNES PARISH, GREENWICH: MR. THOMAS DEVANEY — “Tom has served as president of the Parish Council and was instrumental in creating new and innovative programs at the parish.”
— *Father James A. McDevitt, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, GREENWICH: MR. AND MRS. HUGO AND ELSA CONDORI — “Hugo and Elsa have been active members of St. Mary Parish for many years. They are involved in many aspects of parish life.”
— *Father Cyprian LaPastina, Pastor*



SAINT MICHAEL PARISH, GREENWICH: MS. VERONICA ‘RONI’ SCHMITZ — “Roni has been a member of St. Michael’s Parish for many years. She was a founding member of St. Michael Women’s Association and currently serves as its president.”
— *Monsignor J. Peter Cullen, Pastor*



SAINT PAUL PARISH, GREENWICH: MR. AND MRS. ED AND THERESE MALONE — “Therese and Ed Malone are long time parishioners. They share their time, talents and organizational skills to help in projects small and large.”
— *Father Frank Winn, Pastor*



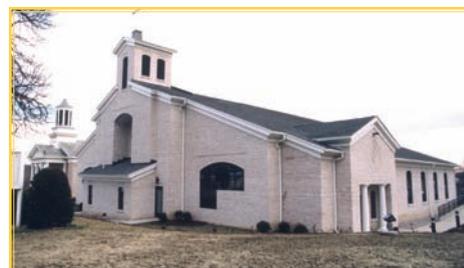
SAINT ROCH PARISH, GREENWICH: MRS. MARIE FRATTALONE (POSTHUMOUSLY) — “A lifelong member of the parish, she worked tirelessly for the Parish Council, the annual feast and coordinating rentals for the parish hall.”
— *Father Matthew R. Mauriello, Pastor*



SAINT JUDE PARISH, MONROE: MR. AND MRS. HAVILAN AND ARLENE TWEEDY — “Havilan and Arlene have been volunteering in the parish for many years. They are always ready to share their time and talents with the parish.”
— *Monsignor Dariusz J. Zielonka, Pastor*



SAINT ALOYSIUS PARISH, NEW CANAAN: DR. THOMAS AND MRS. CHRISTINE AYOUB — “Thomas and Christine are very active in the parish. They can always be counted on to support the parish, and they also frequently take part in diocese-wide efforts.”
— *Monsignor William J. Scheyd, Pastor*



SAINT EDWARD THE CONFESSOR PARISH, NEW FAIRFIELD: MS. CHRISTINE MEJIA — “Christine is a dedicated lector, Eucharistic Minister, catechist and RCIA instructor. She attends Mass daily and is devoted to pro-life issues and the Rosary.”
— *Father Nick Cirillo, Pastor*



ST. ROSE OF LIMA PARISH, NEWTOWN: MR. CHRISTOPHER LOCKE AND MR. FRANCISCO MIDDLETON — “They are the ‘go to’ men when we have technology, communication or utility issues. They provide invaluable expertise, guidance and assistance.”
— *Monsignor Robert Weiss, Pastor*



SAINT JEROME PARISH, NORWALK: MR. LEN MECCA — “Len has been a long time Eucharistic Minister, head usher and coordinator for the 8 am Sunday Mass. He is ready to help wherever and whenever needed.”
— *Father David Blanchfield, Pastor*

2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, NORWALK: MR. CÉSAR RENDÓN — “César serves our parish in a remarkable number of areas. He is a first class organizer and manager of people and events, and he and his family give wonderful Christian witness.”
— *Father Guilbert D’Souza, Pastor*



SAINT LADISLAUS PARISH, NORWALK: MR. RONALD P. MELONI — “Ron performs all sacristan duties including opening and closing the church for daily Mass. He also serves as lector and Eucharistic Minister.”
— *Father Michael J. Bachman, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, NORWALK: MS. ESTHER FLYNN — “Esther has been a long time parishioner and is a great organizer. She is dedicated to the elderly, calling them regularly and finding them rides.”
— *Father Greg Markey, Pastor*



ST. MATTHEW PARISH, NORWALK: MR. AND MRS. EDWARD AND CATHY MCGETTIGAN — “Ed and Cathy are faithful and faith-filled parishioners who are involved in numerous ministries and events. They believe that in serving others they are serving Jesus.”
— *Monsignor Walter Orlowski, Pastor*



ST. PHILIP PARISH, NORWALK: MS. MARYANNE TRIPODI — “MaryAnne lives liturgy in a full, active and conscious way. She is involved in many ministries, and her positive demeanor is always a grace and a blessing.”
— *Father Michael A. Boccaccio, Pastor*



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH, NORWALK: DR. WILLIAM F. STEPHANAK, D.D.S. — “Bill has been a lector and a Eucharistic Minister for many years, and often visits the sick. His commitment to serving the poor gives great witness to the faith.”
— *Father Mirek Staturski, Pastor*



SAINT PATRICK PARISH, REDDING RIDGE: MR. RONALD GELINEAU — “Ron bakes wonderful items for our Sunday coffee and helps maintain our parish grounds. His love of parish and family gives glory to God.”
— *Father Joseph Cervero, Pastor*



SAINT ELIZABETH SETON PARISH, RIDGEBFIELD: MR. AND MRS. RONALD AND KATHLEEN COCOCCIA — “Ron and Kathy are faith-filled, generous, and devoted to building up the parish community. They are involved with all aspects of parish life.”
— *Father Joseph A. Prince, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, RIDGEBFIELD: MRS. MARY STAUDI — “Mary has been an active parishioner for many years, dedicated to and conscientious about the ministries she serves, including religious education and Eucharistic Adoration.”
— *Monsignor Laurence R. Bronkiewicz, Pastor*



SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, RIVERSIDE: MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM AND JEANNEMARIE BAKER — “Jeannemarie and William are very active parishioners, establishing a parish nursing program and hosting a book discussion group in their home.”
— *Monsignor Alan F. Detscher, Pastor*



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, SHELTON: MR. AND MRS. JACQUES AND SARAH CAYER — “Jacques and Sarah volunteer their services weekly to bring a blind parishioner to Sunday Mass. They serve the parish in various ministries, particularly those involving youth.”
— *Monsignor Christopher J. Walsh, Pastor*



SAINT LAWRENCE PARISH, SHELTON: MR. JAMES J. LINDEN — “James is a lector, Eucharistic Minister, bereavement counselor, and representative to the synod. A true Christian gentleman, he has also served as a missionary in Tanzania.”
— *Father Michael K. Jones, Pastor*



SAINT MARGARET MARY ALAOCQUE PARISH, SHELTON: MRS. CAROL GUILLETTE — “Carol has been a member of the parish for many years. She helps with religious education and is always willing to help in other ministries with spirituality and grace.”
— *Father Ciprian Bejan, Pastor*



HOLY TRINITY PARISH, SHERMAN: MRS. ANNE MARIE KUEHLING-KASTILAHN — “Anne Marie has revived, organized, and managed an annual Appalachian Craft Fair at the parish. She also runs a clothing drive for the needy of Appalachia.”
— *Father Richard Gemza, Pastor*

2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



BASILICA OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. ALVINA AND LILIAN RAMOS — “Lilian and Alvina are founding members of the Legion of Mary chapter in our parish. Lilian is the president and Alvina is the secretary.”
— *Father Terry Walsh, Administrator*



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. ARKADIUSZ AND TERESA TARGONSKI — “Arkadiusz has been involved in many parish construction projects. He and his wife, Teresa, have a great love for the parish and offer many volunteer hours.”
— *Father Pawel Hrebenko, Pastor*



HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. DIANE AND JOE MEEHAN — “Diane and Joe are committed in faith and action. Everyone in our parish is grateful for their generous spirit and liturgical support over the course of many years.”
— *Monsignor Kevin T. Royal, Pastor*



OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. GARY AND JAMIE SHANNON — “Jamie and Gary serve our parish with generous hearts. Their zeal, dedication, and warm personalities are welcomed by all.”
— *Father Peter Smolik, Pastor*



SACRED HEART PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. FRANCES BIANCO — “Fran inspires with great spirit! She works tirelessly with enthusiasm and humility as our Parish Council President to assure parish unity and charity.”
— *Father Alfonso Picone, Pastor*



SAINTE BENEDICT-OUR LADY OF MONTSERRAT PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. ROBERT AND CAROL QUELL — “Bob and Carol have been faithful members of our parish for many years. They are very active volunteers.”
— *Father Gustavo Falla, Pastor*



SAINTE BRIDGET OF IRELAND PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH AND KATHLEEN RINALDI — “Joe and Kathy have served as catechists, co-Presidents of our Parish Council, and coordinators of our recent Volunteer Fair.”
— *Father Edward McAuley, Administrator*



SAINTE CECILIA PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. MARGE BURNS — “Marge is a catechist, lector and Eucharistic Minister. She also visits local nursing homes.”
— *Father Bert Pinciario, Pastor*



CATHOLIC CHARITIES, BRIDGEPORT: MR. DON HICKEY — “Don has been an active member of the Merton House family for more than 15 years. As a member of the advisory board, he has truly championed our cause.”
— *Mr. Al Barber, President*



CATHOLIC CHARITIES, BRIDGEPORT: MR. WILLIAM TOMMINS — “Bill is a member of the Catholic Charities Board and has been a big supporter of Catholic Charities programs for many years. He has co-chaired events with great success.”
— *Mr. Al Barber, President*



CATHOLIC CHARITIES, STAMFORD: MR. PAUL HARINSTEIN — “Paul has served on the New Covenant House board for a number of years and now serves as its president. He spearheaded a \$1.5 million capital campaign to move and expand the facility.”
— *Mr. Al Barber, President*



SAINTE CLEMENT PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH AND JULIA TRUGLIO — “Joe and Julia are dedicated parishioners. Daily Communicants, Joe is a Eucharistic Minister, altar server, and parish handyman. Julia bakes for parish events.”
— *Father Joseph J. Malloy, Pastor*



CATHOLIC EDUCATION, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. STEPHEN AND CAROL McLAUGHLIN — “Steve and Carol met as teachers at St. Augustine School and have been married for 37 years! They devote countless volunteer hours.”
— *Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, Superintendent of Schools*



DIocese OF BRIDGEPORT, DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. MICHAEL AND CECE DONOGHUE — “Cece and Mike chaired the 2014 ABA. Their dedication, hard work and generosity helped us go over goal!”
— *Mr. William McLean, Chief Development Officer*



HAITIAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC CENTER, STAMFORD: MS. MAGDA LECKY — “Magda is a woman of great faith and is a valued, loved, and respected member of the Haitian American Catholic Center.”
— *Father Jean-Rony Phillippe, Director of the Haitian-American Catholic Center*



SAINTE GABRIEL PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. ROCCO LONGO — “Rocco is a stalwart of the parish. He helps in myriad ways, especially at liturgies and in the upkeep of the physical plant.”
— *Father William M. Quinlan, Pastor*

2014 Saint Augustine Medal of Service



SAINT LEO PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. JEROME BOBINSKI — “Jerry is a long time, and faithful member of our parish. He has served as an usher for many years, and is a volunteer for our annual parish fair.”
— *Father James D. Grosso, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. GEORGE W. AND TERRY SCHIFF JR. — “Through the Parish Finance Council or the Rosary Society, George and Teresa offer us an extraordinary example of true apostleship.”
— *Father Gustavo Falla, Pastor*



SAINT MAURICE PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. MATTHEW AND MIRIAM ANDERSON — “Matthew and Miriam host and direct the pre-Baptism program. As parents of two young boys, they share the faith in a vibrant and enthusiastic way.”
— *Father Alfred Riendeau, Pastor*



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH, STRATFORD: MRS. CAROL KASCAK — “Carol has served as a catechist in our religious education program and has been a valuable part of our Christmas Pageant for many years.”
— *Father Andrew G. Marus, Pastor*



OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, STRATFORD: MR. LEONARD POPLASKI — “Leonard is an active member of our Building and Grounds Committee. He has spent many hours in service to our parish, giving time, talent and treasure.”
— *Monsignor Martin P. Ryan, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF PEACE PARISH, STRATFORD: MRS. COLLEEN SIMON — “Colleen has served our parish for many years, including teaching religious education and leading outreach to the poor and hungry.”
— *Father Nicholas Pavia, Pastor*



SAINT JAMES PARISH, STRATFORD: MR. AND MRS. JIM AND ANDREA HODSKA — “Jim and Andrea truly show our community how to live the Gospel. They have a deep spirit of compassion with which they lead outreach to the poor and needy.”
— *Father Thomas F. Lynch, Pastor*



SAINT MARK PARISH, STRATFORD: MR. MARK NETTLETON — “Mark has served the parish as Eucharistic Minister, lector, annual bazaar worker and religious education teacher. He also volunteers his expertise as an electrician.”
— *Father Donald A. Guglielmi, Pastor*



CHRIST THE KING PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. JOHN KAROLUS — “John Karolus serves our parish in material and spiritual ways. He heads our building and grounds committee and assists in our parish weekly Bible study.”
— *Father Lawrence F. Carew, Pastor*



SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, TRUMBULL: MRS. MARGARET LYNCH — “For over thirty years, Margaret (Peggy) Lynch has been an active member of our parish. She is always willing to lend a hand and is a cherished member of our community.”
— *Monsignor Richard J. Shea, Pastor*



SAINT STEPHEN PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. ROBERT A. PANZA — “Bob is an active parishioner who has served St. Stephen in a number of ways, including Parish Trustee, lector and Eucharistic Minister. He is always ready to offer his help and expertise.”
— *Father Christopher J. Samele, Administrator*



SAINT THERESA PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. AND MRS. LEONARD AND AGNES FARKAS — “Leonard and Agnes have been very active parishioners for many years. They are always willing to give of their time and talents with incredible generosity.”
— *Father Brian Gannon, Pastor*



SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH, WESTON: MRS. GINA FLEMING — “Gina has poured her heart and soul into our parish for many years. She gives generously of her time specializing in Confirmation preparation.”
— *Father Michael Dunn, Pastor*



ASSUMPTION PARISH, WESTPORT: MRS. HELEN CLARK THIEMANN — “Helen serves our parish with extraordinary compassion and joy. A daily Communicant, she also serves as altar server, sacristan and Eucharistic Minister.”
— *Father Lawrence Larson, Parochial Vicar*



SAINT LUKE PARISH, WESTPORT: MR. AND MRS. HENRY AND WINIFRED SHAY — “Winnie and Henry exemplify the faithful ‘behind-the-scenes’ folks who contribute greatly to the life of a parish in quiet, unassuming ways.”
— *Monsignor Andrew Varga, Pastor*



OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH, WILTON: MR. ANTHONY RUGGI — “Tony is extremely hard-working and humble. In addition to serving as Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus, he is an usher, lector and Eucharistic Minister.”
— *Father Reginald Norman, Pastor*



World Youth Day

'WYD Krakow 2016' preparations begin

BRIDEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano invites everyone interested in learning more about World Youth Day Krakow

informational meeting, attendees will join the bishop at St. Augustine Cathedral for a Mass in honor of the Feast of Our Lady

of Bridgeport. "We will have the opportunity to connect and grow deeper in faith, as we celebrate Our Lord's Great Divine Mercy."

ly while planning the pilgrimage, will make the presentation at the December 12 meeting. "Dube Travel will get you really excited to go," Rodgers said.

The events of World Youth Day, including catechesis, prayer and cultural events, will culminate with the Stations of the Cross led by Pope Francis and the closing Mass with the Holy Father as principal celebrant on July 31. One more day with Bishop Caggiano and a visit to the home town of Edith Stein will complete the pilgrimage. They head home on August 2, 2016.

"The diocese and Dube Travel have partnered together for this encounter with the universal Church and Our Lord," says Rodgers. "We have already launched the registration site. Registration is open! We're headed for World Youth Day!"

(For more info, come to the meeting on Friday, December 12, starting at 5 pm, or contact Julie Rodgers: youthministry@diobpt.org or 203.416.1449)



2016 to attend an informational meeting on Friday, December 12, from 5-6:45 pm at Kolbe Cathedral High School. The Diocese of Bridgeport will be making pilgrimage to WYD 2016 from July 22-August 2, 2016. Although 2016 seems like a long way away, planning is already well under way.

Following the December 12

of Guadalupe. The meeting is for parents, youth group leaders, teens—anyone who is interested in WYD 2016.

"This pilgrimage will be an amazing adventure to see Pope Francis and be with over one-million other young Catholics from all around the world," said Julie Rodgers, MCR, director of youth ministry for the Diocese

"Dube travel has reserved the best youth hostel in Krakow for our diocese," Rodgers said. "The diocese has 300 spots in a location central to World Youth Day activities."

Chris Dube, who has been back and forth to Poland regular-



**Join Bishop Caggiano
on the Diocese of Bridgeport
Pilgrimage to World Youth
Day in Poland
July 22-August 1, 2016**

Bishop Frank Caggiano invites the youth and young adults (ages 16-35) of the Diocese of Bridgeport to join him on a pilgrimage of a lifetime... we have already reserved 300 spots!

Don't miss this amazing adventure to meet Pope Francis and millions of other young Catholics from around the world.

To view the itinerary, FAQs or to register, go to: www.signup4.net/public/ap.aspx?EID=WYD-K22E&OID=50

Scholarships available. For more info email Julie Rodgers at: youthministry@diobpt.org or call 203.416.1449

Ernie Anastos: Positive on faith and community

DANBURY—"Whatever you enjoy doing every day will be the avenue to your success," WNYW Fox 5 News Anchor Ernie Anastos said October 30, at the Annual Catholic Charities of Danbury Celebrity Breakfast.

Noting that most people want "more, better or different," Anastos said that a life in pursuit of success can leave people feeling empty if they live without a higher purpose. "Don't just strive for success, strive for significance."

The event, with its Greek themed breakfast in honor of Anastos, raised \$60,000 to support the work of Catholic Charities in the greater Danbury area. It was recorded and some of it will be used on the 6 pm broadcast of "Positively Ernie" on WNYW-TV.

The Emmy Award winning news anchor said the advice came from his grammar school teacher and he often shares it with young people as he encourages them to "follow their passion" in life.

Speaking to a gathering of more than 300 friends of Catholic Charities of Danbury in the

Amber Room, the Hall of Fame broadcaster said that his Greek Orthodox faith has always been an important part of his life.

"God is number one in my life. I can't imagine living a life without faith," said Anastos in a talk that mixed humor and wisdom. He was introduced by Danbury Mayor, Mark Boughton, who proclaimed October 30 as "Positively Ernie Anastos Day" in the city.

Anastos has ties to Danbury through his late grandfather who was a priest at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church on Clapboard Ridge Road in the city.

Mayor Boughton also praised the work of Catholic Charities for helping to serve "the 580,000 people who live in the ten towns of the greater Danbury region."

Anastos, who grew up in Nashua New Hampshire, fell in love with radio as a boy and practiced being an announcer in a pretend studio. He got his first break hosting a Saturday show for teens on WOTW, a station that he later bought.

His first real job was at WRKO, Boston's biggest radio



station, where he was asked to change his name to Ernie Andrews. "Anastos" was a bit too ethnic, so Ernie reluctantly changed his on-air name with his father's blessing. But when he landed his big break in TV on Channel 12 in Providence, he restored his real name, which has since become a household name in the northeast.

Anastos clearly enjoyed working the audience and asking questions of those in attendance.

"I love being with live people," he quipped, noting that millions watch Fox News or get it through digital sites but he

never really knows who's watching. "I focus on my Aunt Eva who lives on Park Avenue in



DANBURY MAYOR Mark Boughton proclaimed October 30 as "Positively Ernie Anastos Day."

Bridgeport, because I know she's watching every night."

Anastos said he was excited

about the opportunity to design and host "Positively Ernie," an upbeat newscast that focuses on positive stories. He urged those in attendance not to be overwhelmed by negative news but to try to make a difference in their own communities.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano delivered the invocation and Fr. Samuel V. Scott, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Danbury, offered the welcome. The Reverend Peter Karloutsos of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church gave the final blessing.

Amber Room Chef Chris Hatzsis paid tribute to Anastos with a Greek themed breakfast including miniature parfaits of Greek yogurt, Galaktoboureki (Green pastry filled with cream) and a toasted baguette with grilled tomato, feta cheese and a Loukaniko (sausage) garnish.

The Fall Celebrity Breakfast was co-chaired by Catholic Charities Advisory Board members Lisa Donovan, of Saint Edward the Confessor Parish, New Fairfield, Claudia Menezes and Sally Savoia, both of St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield.

Editorial



True and false compassion

GUEST COLUMNIST

BY ARCHBISHOP LEONARD BLAIR

Archbishop Leonard Blair is the archbishop for the Archdiocese of Hartford. His column on Assisted Suicide is being run in all three dioceses this month.

Before you know it, 2015 will be here. Of great concern at the start of the new year will undoubtedly be a renewed attempt to introduce assisted suicide legislation in Connecticut. The bishops and our Connecticut Catholic Conference, together with many other groups, will be striving to defeat this measure because we believe that it is based on false arguments, it is unnecessary and it is destructive of human life and dignity. As an offense against God, the Author of life, assisted suicide can only lead to our diminishment as

human beings and to a bad outcome for our society.

I will be asking all of you to stand up and be counted in resisting the efforts to pass this legislation.

An argument will be made by the proponents of assisted suicide that this is a compassionate thing to do, but the reality is far different. In the words of the U.S. bishops: "True compassion alleviates suffering while maintaining solidarity with those who suffer. It does not put lethal drugs into their hands and abandon them to their suicidal impulses or to the self-serving motives of others who

may want them dead."

It is argued that physically, people should not have to endure the excruciating pain and suffering that may accompany a terminal illness. The fact is that modern pain management, more and more widely acknowledged and practiced, is very effective in meeting this challenge. What we need to do, and can do, is to kill the pain, not the patient.

I should add that opposition to suicide does not mean that a person is obliged to undergo medical procedures that, in the words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, are "over-zealous," that is to say, "burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome" (no. 2278). There is a great moral difference, however, between refusing such treatments and committing suicide.

It is also argued that mentally and emotionally, people should not have to be plagued by fears of losing control or being a burden. But that is why a truly compassionate society, medical

profession, family and Church community are present: to rise to the challenge of palliative care that includes hospice and specialty consultation, spiritual support, family counseling and other assistance. Again, to quote the U.S. bishops: "People who request death are vulnerable. They need care and protection. To offer them lethal drugs is a victory not for freedom, but for the worst form of neglect. Such abandonment is especially irresponsible when society is increasingly aware of elder abuse and other forms of mistreatment and exploitation of vulnerable persons."

Legalizing suicide has proven to be a slippery slope to euthanasia and to broader application than terminal illness. In Holland, what began as suicide for those in "unbearable suffering" who voluntarily requested it now extends to patients without their knowledge or consent, and to those who are said to have "psychic suffering," or "potential disfigurement of personality." Among

this group is a disproportionate number of the most vulnerable – the poor, the elderly, the mentally ill and the disabled. The Royal Dutch Medical Association eventually concluded that doctors should be allowed to perform euthanasia on patients who are not ill but are "suffering through living." In Switzerland, "suicide because of old age" is now permitted. In our own country, there are those who want to broaden the agenda to include chronic illness and disability.

And it is sobering to note that in Oregon, a decade after its law allowing physician-assisted suicide took effect, suicide had become "the leading cause of injury death" and "the second leading cause of death among Oregonians ages 15-34." The suicide rate in Oregon in 2010 was 41 percent higher than the national average—without counting physician-assisted suicides of seriously ill patients, which Oregon law does not allow to be counted as suicides.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



No Way to Overdose on the Best Medicine

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

My wife thinks I'm funny. That's lucky for me, since the wisest advice I ever got about marriage was to keep her laughing. So far, so good.

She wishes I would use this space more often to make you laugh. That's easier said than done, but here are a few things lately that have tickled my funny bone. Maybe you'll get a kick out of them, too.

On Election Day, I took Patrick, who's six, into the polling place to show him how our great democracy works.

"These are the people running for the various important offices," I said. "We'll fill in the bubbles next to the names of the ones we want to vote for, put the paper in the machine, and whoever gets the most votes wins."

He looked the ballot over thoughtfully. "Where's Broko Bomo?" he asked.

"I'm sorry, who?"

"Broko Bomo. You know, the president."

"Wow. Very good. Aren't you smart? Ba-rack O-ba-ma doesn't have to run this time around, though. This is just for

Connecticut."

"Oh. Sooooo . . . where's your name?"

The boy has faith in my ability to run the state. That alone should get you giggling. On the way home he told me he liked the smell of my "oderant"—which makes a fair amount of sense if you think about it. He also volunteered that he likes how my hair looks after I get out of the shower but before I put "ghel" in it—his preferred pronunciation is with a hard "g". After my famous locks are styled, he says, they look too "pinecorny."

It's called the wet look, but whatever, bud.

All Sally wants to do is drive. At two, she has become a toddler of action. She rages against the five-point harness of her car seat, hollering "I want dwife! I want dwife!" That's Sally-speak for, "Move over pal, I got this."

"Sally, you're too little to drive," I say. "Besides, who's the boss?"

"Daddy bosssss," she announces, smiling with evident

pride. It's good to know someone around here understands who's really steering the ship.

Eight year-old Magdalena told me over dinner one night that she likes school, where she gets to learn about the "soup."

"I'm sorry. Didn't hear you. Did you say soup?"

"Yeah, Daddy, you know—the Soup Indians?"

Clara is now officially a "tween," so laughing at her expense is off limits for the time being. We have entered a new era with new rules. Rule #1: If Dad's not confused, then he's not paying attention. On a good day, though, my insane-and-off-the-chain Solid Gold dance moves can still crack that little lady's code.

Speaking of code—my father, who likes a good laugh himself, is flummoxed by the Internet. Social networking is especially vexing. He knows about Facebook and Twitter, only he calls them Facepage and Twixt. Don't let him catch you looking at your phone. "You came all this

way to visit me and now you're twixting about it?"

Laughter is the ballast of love. It keeps you upright when the wind is trying hard to push you over. It keeps you afloat when the seas change without warning. It keeps you on course when the current is dragging you into the deep, dark ocean.

Let it do its job.

I try to laugh every day, even if I have to look in the mirror—or at my bank balance—to do it. With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come. I hope I die laughing.

There is no sound more pleasing to my heart than the sound of my wife's laughter. When a giggle sneaks up and grabs her without warning . . . well, I wish I could bottle it. I wish, too, I could remember just what had us laughing so hard that once when we could both barely breathe.

Maybe it was something I said. Maybe you had to be there.

(Follow Matt on Twitter @matthennessey.)

Religious Education

When Jesus comes to your house

RIVERSIDE—At St. Catherine of Siena Parish, during the religious education year 2013-14, every child in grades one through five had the opportunity to enjoy a one-on-one visit from Jesus during the school year. On each class day, one child from each grade was given a framed picture of Jesus to take home until their next scheduled class.

“Each grade from one through five had a different image of Jesus,” explained Director of Religious Education Janis Pataky, who got the images from Google and from pictures in the parish office and had them framed.

After a brief “visit,” to their home, each child brought Jesus back to class and Jesus went to another classmate’s home.

Jesus put in a lot of travel time and saw a lot of families during the school year.

Ashton in grade four took Jesus to Miami on a fishing trip. He said they caught lots of fish and they attributed their large catch to Jesus being with them in the boat... just like Jesus helped the Apostles fill their nets with fish!

Sean in grade two put Jesus on his mom’s night table to help her have a comfortable, restful night’s sleep. Mom had just come home from the hospital where she had a restless, uncomfortable night.

This religious education year, Mary is going home with a student each week. Just as with Jesus, each grade has a different image of Mary.

October 8 was first-grader Nicole Santana’s birthday and she had the honor of taking Mary home for a whole week. The first grade image shows Mary lovingly cuddling her newborn baby. Nicole and her family took Mary and baby Jesus out to dinner with them. Nicole also knew her grade one prayers and she was awarded a Lamb of God stuffed animal.

Stay tuned for more on Mary’s journeys for the upcoming year.

Jesus was very busy

Jesus was very busy last year. In addition to his visits with Ashton and Sean, he coved a lot of events:

- With a grade three student, Jesus attended a soccer game.
- Jesus had supper at many family tables, just like we have supper

at Jesus’ table when we receive the Eucharist at weekly Mass.

- Most popular location for Jesus and Mary is watching over sleeping children.
- Jesus went out to trick or treat on Halloween. I wonder if he got candy too!
- Drew, grade 4, prayed with Jesus before his football game



ISAAC DCRUZ, GRADE TWO, kept Jesus on the dining table during lunch. “It reminded me of Indian hospitality, where a guest is invited to partake in any meal,” said his mother, grade one catechist Jacintha Dacruz. After lunch Isaac placed Jesus on the piano and played him the song “You Are My Sunshine.”

ON HER BIRTHDAY, first-grader Nicole Santana (l) had the honor of taking Mary home for a whole week.



and his team won the game.

- Brothers Chris, grade two and Mike in grade five, take Tae Kwan Do. They brought Jesus to watch; Jesus sat on the wall during their class.
- A grade five student said that

having Jesus at his house made him feel good!

- Julia, grade two, made a bed for Jesus and covered him up with a blanket to keep him warm through the night.
- In grade five, Jesus attended

Sunday Mass then went to Grandmother’s house for breakfast.

- Karenna, grade five, invited Jesus to celebrate her mother’s birthday. They lit candles and sang Happy Birthday. ■

“I landed a great internship.” -Arushi Vashishta, '15
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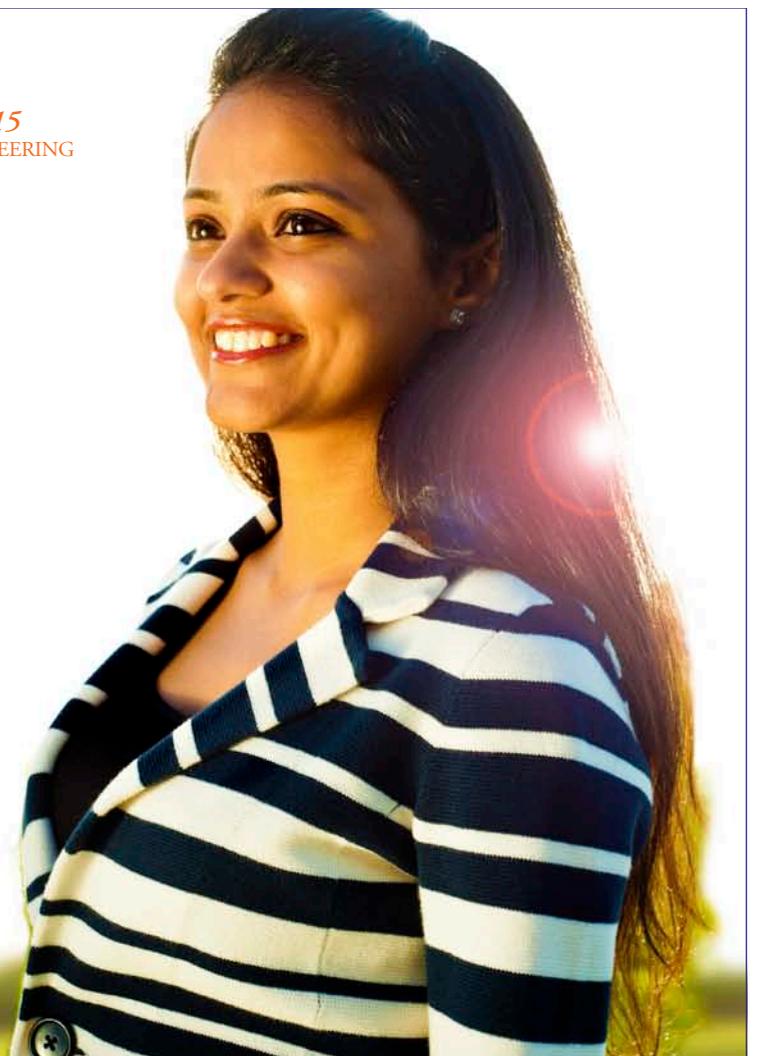
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Religious Education

30-Hour Famine gains national attention

By PAT HENNESSY

"Never refer to youth as the future of the Church. They ARE the Church," proclaims a quote from World Vision's 30-Hour Famine Facebook page. The quote—and accompanying photo—belong to Father Michael Boccaccio, pastor of St. Philip Parish in Norwalk.

"The incredible folks from St. Philip's Parish have raised over \$200,000 for the #30HF!" says the site, adding that World Vision is "inspired by the way their entire community rallies around its youth for the Famine."

In October, Father Boccaccio, youth minister Kali DeMarco, and Michael Pappas, a "graduate" of St. Philip's 30-Hour Famine (now a religion teacher at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull), were invited as guests to visit World Vision's U.S. headquarters in Seattle, Wash. "It was a huge, huge honor," says DeMarco. "They flew us out there to work with World Vision on making the 30-Hour Famine better known to Catholic parishes."

Currently, only nine parishes in Connecticut take part in the Famine.

World Vision is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organization. Its approach to development is

focused on improving the well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable. A commitment to sustainability is at the heart of all its projects, helping poor communities to take charge of their future through small business loans and training.

"They're invited to an area and they talk to local elders," explains DeMarco. "The villagers may need access to water, better farming or a school. World Vision works with them to construct the infrastructure."

As an example, she points to a 2007 project where five students, including a young Michael Pappas, went to Malawi, Africa, to work on a fish-farming project with World Vision. The farms now provide both food and income to villagers.

The 30-Hour Famine began at St. Philip in 2004 with an idea, a small bunch of kids, and heaps of enthusiasm. In 2014, the 30-Hour Famine drew 128 teens and 90 volunteers from Norwalk and beyond. The teens come from all denominations and some with no religious faith at all. The Famine has proved so popular that middle-school students asked to be included in a Mini-Famine, and younger students now take part in a Micro-Mini Famine during the weekend.

In 2014, 26 middle school

and 12 Micro-Mini youngsters joined in shortened versions of the Famine.

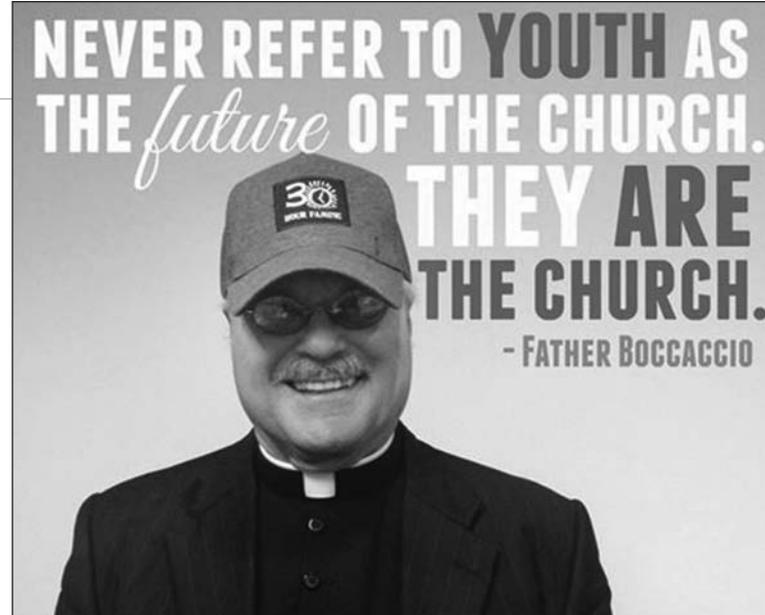
Seven teens were in charge of planning and running the 30-Hour Famine. As they do every year, the teens met on Norwalk Green at 9 am and began "The Walk" to St. Philip's in honor of the "Night Walkers"—orphaned children, escaping war—in Uganda. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the keynote speaker at the opening event. The teens then broke into small group for games, learning activities, and local service projects. Midday prayer and evening prayer kept them motivated.

"We are moving every second of the day," says DeMarco. "That's the only way they can keep from thinking about how hungry they are."

"Lights Out" comes at 1 am after a strenuous day. The teens continue their fast the next morning, closing the 30-Hour Famine at a 10 am Mass.

"They break their fast with the Eucharist. That's beyond powerful," says DeMarco. Non-Catholic teens come up for a blessing at Communion. "We had two Jewish teens this year. I explained the Mass and the symbolism, and they found it extremely moving."

Because these are teenagers,



FATHER MICHAEL BOCCACCIO

after all, the weekend ends with a huge breakfast in the mansion on St. Philip's grounds.

This year, the teens and supporters raised \$32,741 for World Vision, \$5,000 for Catholic Relief Services and \$2,550 for Hope for Ariang, an elementary school in war-torn Sudan. Hunger doesn't only exist halfway across the

world. Realizing that hunger also exists in their own backyard, they also donated \$7,962 for Manna House, a shelter and soup kitchen in Norwalk.

"Taking part in the 30-Hour Famine changes teens," says DeMarco. "It makes them agents of change forever, not just for a weekend." ■



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TRUE AND FALSE FROM PAGE 23

Clearly, the morality of Western civilization that has governed health care is now at a crossroads. I say "Western civilization" because it is not just a matter of Judeo-Christian religious beliefs. It was the pagan Greek world that gave us the so-called "Oath of Hippocrates," which, according to the American Medical Association (AMA), "has remained in Western civilization as an expression of ideal conduct for the physician." One of the tenets of the original oath from ancient Greece reads: "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody who asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect."

The AMA's Code of Ethics, and that of the American Nurses

Association (ANA) both prohibit participation in physician-assisted suicide.

In 1995, Pope St. John Paul the Great warned that "a new cultural climate is developing and taking hold, which gives crimes against life a new and—if possible—even more sinister character, giving rise to further grave concern: broad sectors of public opinion justify certain crimes against life in the name of the rights of individual freedom, and on this basis they claim not only exemption from punishment but even authorization by the State, so that these things can be done with total freedom and indeed with the free assistance of health-care systems" (*Evangelium vitae*, 4).

What is emerging is a militant secularism that affirms man's absolute autonomy, cut off from any relationship with a transcendent authority. This represents nothing less than an attempt to redefine the human person without reference to any God-given law or even to human nature as traditionally understood.

It has often been said that the Roman Catholic Church is the last great moral institution in the Western world to resist these forces in a principled, coherent and forceful manner. Let us work and pray that with God's help our efforts will succeed.

(For more data on assisted suicide, go to the U.S. bishops' website at www.USCCB.org.) ■

Nuestra Voz

El Sínodo y los Hispanos Católicos

POR PADRE GUSTAVO FALLA

En septiembre 28 de este año, el Señor Obispo Frank J. Caggiano sostuvo la primera de cuatro Consultas Sinodales con la comunidad Católica de habla hispana, ofreciendo así una valiosa oportunidad para que laicos y clero expresen sus opiniones y compartan sus ideas acerca de su realidad pastoral actual. Una oportunidad como esta no se presenta muy a menudo en la vida de una diócesis, por tanto, lo que se comparte en dichas audiencias muy seguramente tendrá un gran efecto en la pastoral del futuro.

Los siguientes son algunos de los temas prevalentes hasta ahora:

Unidad de Criterio en la Pastoral Parroquial: Se ha expresado una preocupación por lo que aparenta ser una falta de unidad de criterios pastorales entre parroquias que sirven a los hispanos, expresada a menudo a través de una implícita competencia negativa, entre otras cosas. Es necesario fortalecer la unidad y trabajar en la coordinación de la pastoral hispana.

Escuelas Católicas y Educación en la Fe: A pesar de que es grande el deseo de educar

a los hijos en la fe, los padres de familia encuentran que sus hijos tienen muy poco chance de



estudiar en las escuelas Católicas debido a su alto costo. Los fieles contribuyen a las finanzas de las escuelas Católicas a través de sus parroquias pero sus hijos reciben poco o ningún beneficio.

Evangelización y Formación en la Fe: Haciendo eco al llamado del Papa Francisco, se ha manifestado una preocupación por la nueva evangelización. Se entiende que dicha evangelización debe brotar del esfuerzo entre fieles laicos y clero pero se necesita una mejor formación. Repetidamente, se ha identificado a movimientos como el Cursillo de Cristiandad como un valor de

mayor importancia que necesita fortalecerse a nivel de parroquias. De otra parte, en algunos casos,

se hace evidente el rechazo a la religiosidad popular que tanto ayuda a despertar la fe entre la gente sencilla.

Familia y Juventud: La familia es vista como blanco principal de los ataques que la cultura hace a los católicos. La superficialidad en la preparación prematrimonial, la práctica de la contracepción, la dualidad en la práctica de la moral, la violencia doméstica, la unión libre, el divorcio, el aborto, la manipulación de la información llevada a cabo por los medios de comunicación y la cultura secular, en general, hacen cada día más difícil la unidad de la familia y su

impacto positivo en la juventud. Los jóvenes católicos son arrastrados por las corrientes de hoy y encuentran poco apoyo en sus comunidades de fe, sobretodo en las parroquias.

Crecimiento Espiritual: Se hace

do, en varias ocasiones, que no podemos quedarnos en la simple identificación de los problemas que nos aquejan sino que, como fruto de la oración, debemos esforzarnos por mejorar al proponer soluciones y construir



evidente la necesidad de una renovación en la pastoral parroquial que debe proveer oportunidades para el crecimiento espiritual de los creyentes. Se pide mejorar en el campo de la homilética, la cercanía del clero hacia los fieles y la promoción de la unidad entre grupos parroquiales.

El Señor Obispo ha repeti-

puentes entre quienes trabajan para el Señor y la sociedad en la que vivimos.

(La Segunda Consulta Sinodal en español se llevará a cabo en enero 11 de 2015, de 2-4 pm. El lugar para esta reunión será anunciado próximamente. La Tercera y Cuarta Consultas serán en febrero 28 y mayo 16, respectivamente.)

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11:30am Ordinary Form High Mass, 1:15pm in Spanish

November 16: Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost: *Missa L'homme armé* (Ockeghem); *De profundis* (Palestrina); *Ave Maria* (Guerrero)

November 23: Twenty-Fourth & Last Sunday after Pentecost: *Missa La sol fa re mi* (Josquin); *De profundis/A custodia matutina* (Lassus); *Prelude on Deo Gratias* (Willan); *Introduction, Passacaglia & Fugue* (Willan)

November 30: First Sunday of Advent: *Missa sine nomine à 6* (Palestrina); *Ad te levavi animam meam* (Gesualdo); *Erunt signa in sole* (Guerrero)

December 7: Second Sunday of Advent: *Missa Gaude Barbara* (Morales); *Alleluia. Laetatus sum* (Isaac); *Conditor alme siderum* (Lassus); *Ecce Dominus veniet* (Victoria)

Monday, December 8, 5:30 p.m.: The Feast of the Immaculate Conception: *Missa Ave sanctissima Maria* (La Rue); *Ave cujus conceptio/Ave vera virginitas* (Ludford); *Fantaisie-Improvisation sur l'Ave maris stella* (Tournemire)



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Nuestra Voz

¿Qué instrumento tocas tú?

POR DANIELA NEUENSCHWANDER, MCR

Convocados por nuestro obispo, Monseñor Frank Caggiano, el domingo 7 de septiembre nos reunimos en la catedral de Bridgeport miembros de movimientos eclesiales, sociedades de vida apostólica y comunidades. El encuentro se inició con la exposición del Santísimo Sacramento, seguidamente rezamos el santo rosario en distintas lenguas, cada misterio fue dirigido por representantes de los diversos grupos presentes. Fue muy especial saber que todos estábamos unidos por el lenguaje común y universal de nuestra fe en un mismo Señor presente en la Eucaristía.

Durante su homilía, Monseñor Caggiano presentó una analogía entre la belleza de una orquesta en la cual cada músico tocando un instrumento diferente se deja guiar por el director de la orquesta para poder generar una armonía. Los músicos somos cada uno de nosotros, quienes convocados a vivir un carisma particular debemos dejarnos guiar por el Espíritu Santo quien unirá todos estos hermosos dones inspi-

rados por él para el beneficio de nuestra Iglesia.

Pude reconocer entre los presentes muchos rostros y al saludarlos tener la oportunidad de preguntarles, ¿qué instrumento tocas tú? ¿A qué espiritualidad te ha llamado el Señor? ¿Portador de qué carisma eres tú? Fue una oportunidad muy especial de encontrar la inmensa riqueza que la Iglesia guarda. Un palpar en primera persona el misterio de la unidad en la diversidad.

Si bien la vida cristiana en términos generales podría ser igual para todas las personas, Dios en su amor nos invita a tener una relación personal e íntima con él. Dios conociendo a cada uno de nosotros nos invita a relacionarnos con él desde quienes somos, desde quien él ha creado en cada uno de nosotros. Así el llamado universal a la santidad se hace personal, cada uno de nosotros está invitado a recorrerlo por un camino específico y poniendo al servicio los dones que el Señor nos ha regalado.

Me llene de esperanza al confirmar como Dios sale al encuentro de las necesidades de cada Iglesia local, al encontrar alrededor de



300 personas alegres y agradecidas por el don propio y el ajeno y dispuestas a servir en lo que se necesite. Monseñor Caggiano nos alentó mucho a vivir la unidad entre nosotros para poder generar la armonía necesaria. Para poder lograr esto recientemente el Padre Peter Towsley fue nombrado Vicario para Evangelización y Delegado Episcopal para movimientos eclesiales, acompañémoslo en su misión con el testimonio de nuestras oraciones y nuestro servicio generoso.

(Daniela Neuenschwander, MCR is the local superior of the Marian Community of Reconciliation, also known as the Fraternas. In 2011, the Community celebrated its 20th anniversary and received approval from the Vatican.)

Project from the heart



FAIRFIELD—In November, the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Human Relations Committee collected supplies for Project from the Heart to donate to our troops. The care package materials, which consisted of toiletries, writing material, sunscreen and some favorite snacks, were presented to the Project from the Heart administrators during the school's Veteran's Day Assembly on November 11.

The students reached their goal of providing at least 50 care packages for soldiers in various locations. The Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Human Relations Committee is dedicated to helping their school community acknowledge our troops and veterans.

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Youth

Eagle Scouts recognized



Daniel Colucci
NEWTOWN—Boy Scout Troop 370 at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown held an Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Daniel Colucci on August 30.

Daniel has been involved with scouting since joining as a Cub Scout in the first grade. Throughout his many years of

Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America. Requirements include earning at least 21 merit badges and demonstrating Scout Spirit through the Boy Scout Oath and Law, service, and leadership. This includes an extensive service project that the Scout plans, organizes, leads, and manages.

Fairfield County Catholic recognizes three young men who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout this year.

Kevin Garber

TRUMBULL--Boy Scout Troop 68 honored 17-year-old Kevin Garber at his Eagle Court of Honor this summer.

Ceremonies were held at St. Stephen Parish in Trumbull.

Kevin is the son of Patrick and Sharon Garber. His brother, Life Scout, Stephen Garber, served as master of ceremonies. Kevin is the 95th member of Troop 68 to rise to the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. Troop 68 is sponsored by Saint Theresa Parish.

He is currently the Troop Guide for Troop 68 and is beginning his senior year at Fairfield Prep, where he is actively involved in the Ski Club, having taken trips to Austria and Canada. He also races for the ski race team, where he earned the "Most Improved" award in 2013.



involvement with the Boy Scouts he has held various leadership positions, most recently as Senior Patrol Leader. His Eagle Scout service project involved overseeing the remodeling and building of a stone memorial shrine at Saint Rose Church in Newtown, in honor of two young children who died tragically many years ago. The project entailed over 200 hours of work. Daniel is also a senior at Fairfield Prep. ■

Scout project concludes with Blessing Ceremony



NEW FAIRFIELD—On October 12, a public blessing ceremony of urns was held during a Mass at St. Edward the Confessor Church as part of Lone Boy Scout Matthew A. Penza's Eagle Scout Service Project. The Mass was honored by the attendance of

Knights of Columbus from St. Edward Council No. 12968.

While researching potential projects, Matthew found the website of Garden of Innocence, a charity that provides burials to abandoned or unidentified children and stillborns and assists families unable to provide a proper burial for their young children. His project involved the planning, building, and finishing of thirty-three wooden urns, coordinating a team of volunteer woodworkers, clergy and staff from St. Edward's, the Knights and local businesses.

The successful completion of this service project involved coordinating a team of volunteer woodworkers, clergy and staff from St. Edward the Confessor Parish, the Knights of Columbus, Garden of Innocence National, BSA Connecticut Yankee Council, multiple local businesses, various media outlets, and local dignitaries. Penza extends his sincerest gratitude to all who helped with the project. ■



MATTHEW A. PENZA

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!

Sr. Monica Leonard, C.N.D.
all the catechists and volunteers
who share their faith
with our parish children

We greatly appreciate your dedication!

Rev. Victor T. Martin
Pastor



the Parish Family
of St. Thomas Aquinas Church
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especially

Mrs. Michele Scholl, Coordinator
Mrs. Lori Paladino, Assistant
Mrs. Jean DesRochers, Confirmation

Local News

AMAZING PARISHES FROM PAGE 8

said Father Cyrus Bartolome, a participant from St. Aloysius. "It is a way to look within the very fabric of parish ministry—what are the things that need to stop, to start, to rebuild, to refocus our vision in order to build up the body of Christ."

The Amazing Parish Conference was headed by Pat Lencioni, a best-selling author and national leadership consultant. Speakers included Jeff Cavins, creator of The Great Adventure Bible Timeline and other Scripture studies used in many parishes in this diocese; Curtis Martin, founder of Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS); and Lisa Brenninkmeyer, founder of Walking With Purpose.

"They brought in the best people in the country, covering topics from youth ministry and young adults to Hispanic ministry, Scripture, and music," says Father Towsley. "The conference was non-stop, from seven in the morning till 9:30 at night."

Two of the parishes represented at the conference have already begun to implement the "Amazing Parish." St. Joseph's in Shelton and Our Lady of Fatima in Wilton. Plans are already underway to attend the 2015 conference, and perhaps plan for an Amazing Parish Conference for the Northeast region in the future.

One key element at the conference came up time after time, whether talking about parish mission statements or building leadership teams. "Our parishes need to be hubs of prayer," says Father Towsley. "Prayer must saturate everything. The personal relationship with the Lord will come before everything else."

(Marie Pelletier is parish secretary at St. Aloysius in New Canaan and member of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton. Parishes wishing to learn more about the Amazing Parish Conference can visit www.amazingparish.org.)



CAPP BREAKFAST FROM PAGE 9

Directory of Resources for Catholic Activities, first published by FADICA in 1998 and soon to be in its eighth edition, she has been an advisor to grant-making foundations, charitable nonprofits and family philanthropies since 1990.

Robinson served as the director of development for St. Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University and led a successful \$75 million fundraising drive to expand and endow the chapel's intellectual and spiritual ministry and to construct a Catholic student center on Yale's campus.

She has served as a trustee on the national boards of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps; Education for Parish Service Foundation; the Gregorian University Foundation; the National Catholic AIDS Network; the Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College; the Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA); the Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova University; Busted Halo: Paulist Young Adult Ministries; America Magazine; and the National Pastoral Life Center.

From 1995 to 2010 Robinson

served on the national committee for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development. She currently serves on the Core Group of the Initiative of Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University and is a trustee of Yale's St. Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center.

She received a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University in 1988 and a master's degree from Yale Divinity School, concentrating on ethics, in 1994.

She and her husband, Dr. Michael Cappello, professor of medicine and director of the World Fellows Program at Yale, have two children.

Al DiGuido, former CEO of Zeta Interactive, has long been recognized as one of the digital marketing industry's premier innovators and a pioneer in email communications.

He has over 20 years of marketing sales, management and operations expertise. He has also served as CEO of Epsilon Interactive and Bigfoot Interactive, a leading email marketing firm. He is a thought lead-

er in interactive advertising and marketing.

A frequent guest on Fox Business News, MSNBC and CNN, he has been quoted in US News & World Report, the New York Times and Business Week as a leading voice on marketplace changes as a result of new technology.

In addition to his business success, DiGuido raises millions of dollars for Tomorrow's Children's Fund in Hackensack, N.J., to help children fighting cancer and rare blood diseases.

Locally, he is known as the founder of Al's Angels. This year the organization will provide holiday meals and gifts to over 2,500 families and 6,000 children in the tri-state area.

Centesium Annus Pro Pontifice (CAPP) is a lay-led, Vatican-based organization founded by Pope John Paul II in 1993. Their mission is to implement Catholic social teaching—the Church's social doctrine—through lay Catholic business, academic and professional leaders. For more information, visit www.capp-usa.com.

(For more information on the event, contact Fairfield University: 203.254.4000, ext. 3415.)

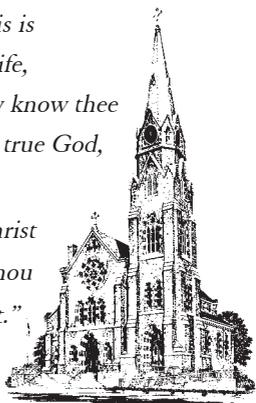
Saint Mary Church

"The Mother Church of Norwalk"

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)



St. Mary Parish and St. Benedict/Our Lady of Montserrat Parish
Stamford

wish to thank **Miryam Calle** and all our Catechist for their continued commitment to teach and share the faith and lead our children toward a relationship with Jesus the Lord

With thanks and blessings to Ms. Kathleen Rooney and our entire religious education team



Our Lady of Fatima
Wilton

God Bless You and Thank You to our entire Religious Formation Team



for your continued commitment to teach our children.

St. Thomas the Apostle
Norwalk

Thanks and blessings



to our entire Religious Education team!

St. Aloysius Parish
New Canaan

Book Review

'Prisoner of War Number 2378'

By PAT HENNESSY

"I thought I left the war behind," says Deacon Ken Stroud. "The war was back in England, and I was put on a ship and didn't know where we were going."

Deacon Stroud, now 92 years old and a deacon emeritus at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, was a young Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force in February of 1942. World War II was already raging full-force in Europe. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had not yet occurred, but the British were keeping a close eye on Japanese expansion in Asia. His position in a special radar division tracking low flying aircraft led him directly into harm's way.

The account of the young

airman's experiences in the relatively peaceful luxury of Singapore, his capture by the Japanese during the fall of that city and the nightmare of his three and a half years as a prisoner of war has been published by his son, Adrian. "Prisoner of War Number 2378" includes a diary Stroud secretly wrote in his final days in the prison camp.

Growing up, his son Adrian, a veteran police officer, had no knowledge of his father's wartime ordeal. His mother, Pat, had endured the bombing in England; she would allow no mention of the war in her house. Pat Stroud died in 2004, but it was not until 2011 that Adrian would read the entries in his father's diary and feel impelled to share them.

The first half of the book describes events as Adrian learned of them from his father. The second part contains Ken's diary entries. Even though it was written at the official end of the war, he would have been killed had the camp officials found it.

In an interview following the book's publication, Deacon Stroud spoke a little about the hardship of those times, and the importance faith held for him and his fellow prisoners.

"We were 21 years old, and we suffered from beriberi, dysentery and starvation. I even learned to eat grass. You can do that, you know."

His faith grew under these harsh conditions. "The Japanese did not want us to practice any

faith, but we would get together in small groups and sing hymns. We knew that faith was one thing that would keep us alive."

The Strouds had moved to the U.S. after the war. They were living in New Jersey when Pope Paul VI restored the permanent diaconate after the Second Vatican Council. Ken Stroud was one of the first to sign up. When he moved to this diocese, Bishop Walter W. Curtis had started the diaconate program, but the first class had not yet been ordained. Deacon Ken Stroud thus became the first permanent deacon to serve in the Diocese of Bridgeport. He is now the oldest and longest-ordained deacon in the diocese.

Surprisingly, Deacon Stroud is not bitter about the war and has no animosity in his heart toward his former captors.

Adrian Stroud ends his book with a heartfelt reflection. "I am grateful for such men whose brave acts have allowed me a life that I now enjoy. May God



DEACON KEN STROUD as a young RAF Airman in 1942

watch over these men, and may he give rest to those who lie in graves unknown in those islands. Pax Britannica."

(Prisoner of War Number 2378 is available in paperback and digital download editions through Tate Publishing: tatepublishing.com or at Amazon.com)

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DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
OF BRIDGEPORT: NOVEMBER 16—DECEMBER 13

NOVEMBER

19	Rev. Rocco D. Nadile	1978
20	Rev. Francis J. Fulop	1957
	Rev. John F. Culliton	1967
20	Rev. Hugh A. Coffey	1975
21	Msgr. Edwin F. Burke	2004
22	Rev. Stephen J. Panik	1953
	Msgr. Joseph N. Murphy	1988
23	Rev. Robert G. Pohley	2006
26	Deacon Joseph Lawrence Rowan	2013
27	Deacon John Barton	2012
	Rev. Myron V. Miller	1961
28	Deacon Wayne E. Malloy	2011

DECEMBER

1	Rev. Michael E. Kearney	1956
	Msgr. Alfred J. Sienkiewicz	1996
	Deacon Robert W. Becker	2000
3	Msgr. John E. Gilmartin	2011
	Rev. Thomas Gwozdz, OFM Conv.	2007
	Rev. Joseph A. Pisarcik	1956
4	Msgr. Joseph M. Fitzgerald	2005
5	Rev. Vincent J. O'Connor	1985
7	Deacon George Saulnier	1997
8	Rev. Rufin Kuveikas, OFM Conv.	2008
10	Msgr. Bartholomew J. Skelly	1967
	Rev. Ambrose Walas, OFM Conv.	1967
	Rev. Paul M. Spodnik	1976
13	Rev. Alfred E. Russo	2009

St. Pio Foundation

Bishop joins National Board

Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (now St. Pio, proclaimed a saint on June 16, 2002) is one of the most venerated contemporary saints of the Catholic Church. He was a friar of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, born in the little town of Pietrelcina in southern Italy. He later moved to the town of San Giovanni Rotondo, in Puglia, where he lived until his death on September 23, 1968.

St. Pio was a friar of many spiritual gifts. Countless people were attracted to his confessional where he frequently spent 18 hours a day, and many received his saintly counsel and spiritual guidance through correspondence.

However, Padre Pio considered the founding of the hospital, "Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza," his greatest "work" on earth. Today his "Casa" is an international referral hospital with over 1,000 inpatient beds, renown both in Italy and abroad.

In the U.S., several thousand devotees belong to a network of over 100 Padre Pio prayer groups, part of an international network of groups formed by Padre Pio in his lifetime to provide continuous prayers and sup-

port for the mission and vision of the Casa hospital.

The Saint Pio Foundation was founded in April 2014 by Jere Palazzolo, president of Catholic Healthcare International, and Maestro Luciano Lamonarca, (acclaimed Italian tenor recently established in New York) to expand and promote the work of the great saint. This new foundation is a national Catholic charity dedicated to evangelization through the promotion of the spiritual charism of St. Pio.

The founders invited Bishop Frank J. Caggiano to serve on the Episcopal Advisory Board, which is made up of American cardinals and bishops.

Calling St. Pio "a saint of our time, a man dedicated to penance, to the forgiveness of sins, to preaching fearlessly the truth about who Jesus Christ the Lord really is," Bishop Caggiano explained that the heart of the foundation is to "advance the charism of Padre Pio through cultural, religious and educational programs" and providing medical assistance to the poor as Padre Pio did.

In announcing his invitation to the foundation, Maestro Lamonarca welcomed Bishop Caggiano as an

"eloquent and inspiring" advocate for the foundation.

The funds raised by the Saint Pio Foundation will be used primarily to establish Catholic medical facilities, medical schools and shrines in the United States. These will be "clinics for the body and the soul," to serve the "twice Jesus in the poor and wretched," and for those in need of "relief of suffering" according to the charism of St. Pio. Another important goal of the foundation is to commit part of the funds as donations to support the Casa



MAESTRO LUCIANO LAMONARCA, co-founder and CEO of the St. Pio Foundation, brings a banner with the saint's image to Bishop Caggiano.

Sollievo della Sofferenza.

(For more information about the Saint Pio Foundation, visit

www.saintpiofoundation.org, call 636.220.6550 or email info@saintpiofoundation.org.)

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Guest Column



Students increase faith through Adoration

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

BY KATHY BACKUS

Kathy Backus is a religion teacher at St. Mary School in Ridgefield.

As one of the General Delegates of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport and a Catholic School religion teacher for fourteen years, I found the presentation by Deacon John DiTaranto on youth enlightening. One of the more striking statistics presented by Deacon DiTaranto was the early exodus of youth from the Church and parish life. "Catholics who leave, leave

early," he said, pointing out that 48 percent of those who leave the Church do so by the age of 18. That number jumps to 79 percent by the age of 23. In the past, carefully nurtured religious identity acquired in childhood endured throughout life, but that is not so in the 21st Century!

Studies show that today strong faith, more than education, is a predictor of remaining in the Catholic faith. In fact, 50 percent

of young adults whose education focus was on religious attendance vs. creating a strong Catholic faith have left the Church. These are ominous statistics to be sure.

In Bishop Caggiano's reaction to the presentation, he defined faith as relationship with Christ. As a teacher, I immediately was trying to connect the dots. If faith more than education is a predictor of remaining in the Catholic faith, and if faith is relationship with Christ, then how do we get relationship with Christ? We meet him in the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels. We meet him in the sacraments, particularly in the Sacrament of the Eucharist as well as Reconciliation. We meet him in prayer and can also encounter him through other people.

I know the most powerful of all these methods is the personal encounter with Christ in the Eucharist. Then I remembered that last year my seventh-grade class visited the Adoration Chapel every day during Lent for 15 minutes. This was their choice, unanimously, in addition to reading the daily Lenten readings before the visit.

After hearing Deacon DiTaranto's presentation and the bishop's comments, I was curious. If faith more than education is what makes a difference, did this class's daily visits to the Adoration Chapel make a difference in their lives?

So I had this, now eighth grade, class answer the question: "Did our visits to the Adoration Chapel during Lent last year strengthen your relationship with Christ?" The assignment was to be typed so I could not recognize their handwriting and they were not to put their name on the paper. I implored them to be honest and candid in their responses, rather than give me what they thought I wanted to hear. I braced myself for some disappointing replies.

The unanimous short answer was "yes" and I would like to note that three of the students are not Catholic. All of the students said yes, it strengthened their relationship with Christ. All of the students asked to go again soon or regularly and most mentioned the calming, relaxing peacefulness they experienced there.

Here are a few excerpts:

"...it made me feel more comfortable praying to God and telling him about my feelings and emotions..."

"...He gave me strength and answers to lots and made me feel better. I was able to pray about things bothering me."

"...Every day when we would

"I am a passionate convert and have made teaching the faith my life's ambition and work."

go, I would get this feeling of purity and freeness in my stomach that would release me from all of the stress or troubles that I was facing outside of the chapel." "...it changed me as a person. I became more thoughtful and caring."

"...I was really able to find my wrong doings and ask for God's help. It became easier and easier to open up to God and ask for his help.

...It made me realize that this

life we are given is really for God and from God because he died on the cross."

"...I sat really feeling, God is with me."

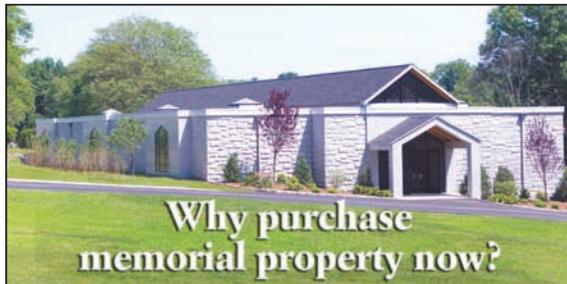
"...I felt I was actually talking to him face to face."

"...I noticed that I've been coming to him more often with not only my problems, but those of others."

I was overwhelmed. I was not expecting the depth and unanimity that I received. Shame on me for my lack of faith in the power of Our Lord in the Eucharist.

With all my heart I do not want my students to become a statistic. I made an immediate change for all the classes I teach. Every Friday, regardless of what work we may not have finished, we now go to the Adoration Chapel. I know Jesus can do more for the faith of these youth in those fifteen minutes than I can do teaching all week long. And thanks to the synod, I know "strong faith, more than education, is a predictor of remaining in the Catholic faith."

The synod has only just begun and is already bearing fruit. I cannot wait to see the fruits the Spirit has in store for all of us. ■



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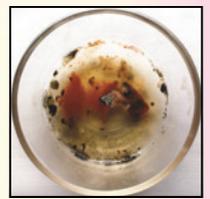
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Column



Some saints I've known

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

November—the evening of the year, the bedtime of the year, when the land begins to tuck itself in for the winter ahead. At the doorway of the month stands All Saints Day—the day when, in addition to the officially recognized saints, we remember the unrecognized holy, the saints among us.

I've known a few such saints.

One was a woman named Ida who lived in Brooklyn. Ida had befriended a profoundly mentally and emotionally handicapped woman who was living alone after her parents died. Ida “kept her eye on her.” Eventually, Ida’s handicapped friend had to be institutionalized in an asylum in Staten Island. Every Sunday, Ida made the trip by subway, ferry and bus to her friend’s Staten Island asylum—every Sunday, every Sunday, rain, snow, or shine, lugging her shopping bag full of the cakes she had baked. She went all the way to that asylum just to sit for a few hours with her friend. Then home every Sunday, bus, bus, ferry, subway. She went, Sunday after Sunday. She persisted, she baked her cakes, she hauled herself on and

off the ferry, and she sat holding her friend’s hand, proving to anyone with eyes to see that love could be a beautiful, relentless thing.

Another woman I knew had a profoundly mentally handicapped son who could hardly talk and attended a facility for the severely handicapped. His mother was determined that her son would look as normal as she could make him look. Over the course of many years she dressed her son in a neat suit, pressed shirt, and polished shoes, day after day. I often thought of the effort it must have taken to deliver her son to the facility every morning in his pressed shirt, his brushed suit and polished shoes. Again, proving to anyone with eyes to see that a mother’s love was a beautiful and relentless thing.

Then there was Lucille. She was a crippled woman, a small thin woman whose misshapened body suffered both from arthritis and meningitis. Her arms and legs were like twisted matchsticks. She was bent over from the waist, and there was a hunch on her back. Her forehead was etched with furrows of pain, and upon her face, patted with broken

veins, lines of inexpressible suffering had frozen. Pain was her life. But her soul was steeped in prayer.

There was an old man who lived near Lucille who became very close to her. He was a very old man from whom time had taken everything; his old age was an absence. The ebb tide of time had swept over his life and left him upon the sand alone, having washed away all relatives and friends. His life was an absence and a silence, an absence and a silence which was filled by Lucille.

Her holy peace gave strength and comfort to the old man. He would go to her in his sick and lonely moments, and from contact with her pain, her calm gray eyes, her silent sympathy, he found, like so many others who knew her, a sense of peace and courage.

I think we can all find saints among the loving, faithful parents, grandparents, spouses, sisters, brothers, or other relatives and friends who entered our lives and shared our deliberations and designs. I realize that among these people I met faith, hope and love, kindness and pardon, great courage and fidelity. They did their best in doing good.

For me the Communion of Saints is not an illusion. I’m certain that my particular saints do not forget me. I sometimes feel their gentle presence, feel that they are still concerned for me, still guide and guard me, extend their protection and care, and they would not steer me wrong.

Let me end with some words from a sermon from St. Cyprian:

“We can look upon Paradise as a place where a crowd of our loved ones awaits us, a throng of parents, spouses, brothers and sisters,

children, friends who long for us to join them. What joy both for them and for us to see one another again and to embrace.” ■

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Bits & Pieces

“WHAT REALLY HAPPENED at the Synod on the Family in Rome?” with guest speaker Dr. Robert Royal, Sun., **Nov. 16**, at 4 pm Holy Spirit Parish, Stamford. Admission free and open to the public; wine & cheese reception to follow. For info call 203.322.3722.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP meeting, open to all, at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, Mon., **Nov. 17**, from 7-8:30 pm. Topic will be “No Act of Kindness too Small.” Pizza, prayer and fun. For info go to: www.stanthonyfild.org.

“FOOD FOR LIFE: Kickstart your Health” live cooking classes sponsored by St. Vincent’s Medical Center, a cancer survivorship program through nutrition education, research and live cooking demo Mon., **Nov. 17**, from 6-7:30 pm. Free parking; registration required. Call 203.576.6158 to register.

MASS OF HEALING & HOPE: Mon., **Nov. 17**, at 7:30 pm at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, with Fr. Larry Carew. For info call 203.268.8253.

CONVIVIO CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA: Youth Serving Children With Special Needs and their families, Sun., **Dec. 7**, beginning with Mass with Bishop Caggiano at 10

am followed by pizza, pageant, crafts and recreation, held at the Catholic Center, Bridgeport. RSVP by Wed., **Nov. 19**, to Michelle O’Mara: momara@diobpt.org or 203.540.5381 ext. 2012.

DINNER & PHILOSOPHY LECTURE SERIES: “Jesus Meets Aristotle” with Fr. Mirek Stachurski, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Thurs., **Nov. 20**, from 7-8:30 pm. Dinner and lecture/discussion on ancient and contemporary philosophy. St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, East Norwalk. RSVP 203.866.3141 or email stthomasnorwalk@optonline.net.

“WHO’S GOT YOUR BACK?” a free talk at St. Vincent’s Medical Center, Bridgeport, Thurs., **Nov. 20** at 6:30 pm, featuring orthopedic surgeon John Awad, MD. Light refreshments served. Registration required; call 203.576.5256 or online at: www.stvincents.org/listenandlearn.

LADIES NIGHT OUT VENDOR FAIR at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Stratford, Fri., **Nov. 21**, from 7-10 pm. Fun shopping night out featuring jewelry, beauty, and home décor vendors! Cost: \$5/p in advance. For info call 203.375.6133. No one under 21 admitted.

“A NIGHT IN LAS

VEGAS” fundraiser featuring Steve D’Agostino singing songs from Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Dean Martin, Elvis, Johnny Cash at Gaetano’s Italian Steakhouse, 1573 Boston Post Rd., Milford, Fri., **Nov. 21**. Two dinner seatings: 6 pm and 8:15 pm. A percent of proceeds go to Notre Dame High School, Fairfield. For info and reservations call 203.783.1766.

SHAKESPEARE’S “THE TEMPEST” by Immaculate High School, Danbury, Thurs., **Nov. 20**, Fri., **Nov. 21**, and Sat., **Nov. 22**, at 7 pm. Tickets: \$10 adults; \$5 students and seniors. For info or tickets go to: www.immaculatehs.org or call 203.744.1510.

TEEN EMMAUS RETREAT the weekend of **Nov. 21-23** for ages 14-18 at the Seton Newman Center in Danbury. Open to all! Deepen your relationship with God while you make friendships that will last a lifetime! For info or to register call Caryn or Roger Kutzy: 203.746.2959 or www.danburyemmaus.org.

MEN’S NIGHT OUT dinner by Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Stratford, Men’s Society, Sat., **Nov. 22**, from 6:30-11 pm. Cost: \$15; buy two tickets—get one free. Open to all men age 21 and over. For info call 203.375.2836 or

email lawman56@optonline.net
VENDORS NEEDED for the Holiday Crafts Fair for Sacred Heart Parish, Stamford, Sat., **Nov. 22**, from 9:30am-5:30pm, Sun. **Nov. 23**, from 9 am-1 pm. For info contact Rose Coscarelli-Curtis at 203.968.1234 after 5 pm.

MERTON CENTER 40th ANNIVERSARY GALA at The Patterson Club, 1118 Cross Highway, Fairfield, Sat., **Nov. 22**, at 6:30 pm as they celebrate 40 years of service to the Bridgeport community with Bishop Caggiano. Cocktail attire; cocktails, dinner, dancing and auction. Email jbarker@ccfc-ct.org or 203.367.9036 ext. 15 or www.themertoncenter.org.

THANKSGIVING DAY MESSAGE from Bishop Caggiano on Fr. Mark Connolly’s radio show “Thoughts for the Week,” Sun., **Nov. 23** at: WVOX 1460 AM 600 AM; WJMJ 88.9 FM (Hartford) 930 AM; WJMJ 93.1 FM (Hamden) 930 AM; WJMJ 107.1 FM (New Haven) 930 AM. ABC Radio (check local listings) and www.spirituality.org.

FREE ICE SKATING Party & Toy Drive Fundraiser by Al’s Angels, Fri., **Nov. 28**, at WPAL Rink at Longshore, 260 Compo Rd., Westport, from 6-8 pm. For a free lesson, bring an unwrapped toy for a child under 10 years old.

For info or to donate go to www.alsangels.org.

FESTIVAL OF CAROLS concert at St. Augustine Cathedral, Bridgeport, Sun., **Nov. 30**, at 7 pm. Concert is free and open to the public. For info call 203.335.0106.

“FAIR TRADE” CRAFTS SALE to benefit Catholic Relief Services at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Fairfield, after all Masses Sun., **Nov. 30**. For info call 203.259.0358 or www.stanthonyfild.org.

“RESTORING SIMPLICITY” inspirational talk speaker & author Lisa Breninkmeyer at St. Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown, Wed., **Dec. 3**, from 10 am-12 noon. Open to all. Register online at www.StRoseChurch.com; follow the link to Walking with Purpose. For info call 203.270.0012.

WINTER OPEN HOUSE at St. Joseph High School, Trumbull: Wed., **Dec. 3**, from 7-8:30 pm. For info email Jessica Morales: jmorales@sjcadets.org or 203.378.9378 ext. 452, or www.sjcadets.org/admissions.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL at Burr Mansion, 739 Old Post Rd., Fairfield, to benefit Center for Family Justice (formerly Center for Women and Families) Fri.-Sun., **Dec. 5-7**, Fri., **Dec. 5**: 10 am- 7pm; Sat., **Dec. 6**,

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Bits & Pieces

& Sun., **Dec. 7**, 10 am-4 pm. Trees, wreaths, holiday decorations, gifts, food, music, and more! For info and tickets to go: www.FairfieldChristmasTreeFestival.org.

LADIES CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE by Trinity Catholic High School Association to be held Thurs., **Dec. 4**, at the Italian Center, 1620 Newfield Ave., Stamford, from 6-10 pm. Cost: \$50; buffet dinner with open wine, beer & soda bar. VIP seating: \$100 for a table of 10. Tickets at www.trinitycatholic.org or email: aliciatchs@gmail.com

CANTIAMO CHRISTMAS BENEFIT CONCERT: "Christmas in Song," Fri., **Dec. 5**, at 7:30 pm in Westport Town Hall Auditorium, Myrtle Ave., Westport. Tickets: \$15. For tickets, go to www.artsforthecommunity.org.

"A WINTER PORTRAIT" concert at St. Catherine of Siena Church, Riverside, Sat., **Dec. 6**, at 7:30 pm. Chorus and orchestra featuring carols, selections from the Messiah and more. Tickets \$25; \$10 students. For info call 203.637.3661 or online at www.stcath.org.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS SOCIAL: St. Theresa Parish Young Adult Group social at Two Roads Brewery, Stratford, 1 pm Sat., **Dec. 6**, for age 21-35. Cost: \$5 for the tour and extra cash for food. For info email ray-

tar.theresa@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE will be held at St. Cecilia Parish, Stamford, Sat., **Dec. 6**, from 11 am-7 pm & Sun., **Dec. 7**, from 8 am-3 pm. All proceeds will benefit Buy-A-Smile in Bolivia. For info email: chathamgram1@aol.com.

HOLLY FAIR at St. Margaret Mary Parish, Shelton, Sat., **Dec. 6**, from 9 am-4 pm. Crafts, vendors, bake sales, food and cookie walk. For info call 203.924.2327 or 203.209.2441.

CHRISTMAS FAIR at St. Jude Parish, Monroe, Sat., **Dec. 6**, from 10 am-4 pm. Craft vendors, religious articles, food, raffles and good family fun for people of all ages. And St. Jude Cookbooks! For info email rltmat@sbcglobal.net

"COME & SEE" if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order at a Mass Sat., **Dec. 6**, at 9:30 am at St. Emery Church, Fairfield, followed by a Christmas social in the church hall. For info call 203.255.8801.

BUS DAY-TRIP TO RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR by St. Roch Parish, Greenwich, Tues., **Dec. 9**, for the 11 am performance. A sit-down lunch follows at Restaurant Brazil. Bus departs St. Roch's at 8:30 am; return 4:30 pm. Cost: \$130pp including

gratuities. For info or reservations call 203.869.4176

AL'S ANGELS Christmas/Hanukkah Meal Assembly & Toy Drive Sat., **Dec. 13**, at 315 Seaview Ave., Bridgeport. Work shifts: 6-9 am, 9-11 am, 11 am-2 pm. We are asking each volunteer bring one unwrapped toy for a child under 10 years old. To volunteer, register by emailing Al DiGuido: adiguiddo@yahoo.com, with first & last names of volunteers.

FROZEN "LET IT GO" Sing Along Benefit at St. Joseph High School, Trumbull, Sun., **Dec. 14**, from 1-3 pm. Great family day! Tickets: \$12; order at www.sjadets.org/frozen.

MASS OF HEALING & HOPE: Mon., **Dec. 15**, at 7:30 pm at Christ the King Parish, Madison Ave., Trumbull with Fr. Larry Carew. For more info call 203.268.8253.

(For more listings, see the calendar on the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com.) ■



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POSITION AVAILABLE

Social Media Manager - Diocese of Bridgeport

Work as part of the diocese Communications team to create and oversee strategic social media and digital initiatives that expand communications between the diocese, parishes and the general public; develop strategies to work with different organizations (donors, parish leaders, etc.); building online communities; assisting with Bishop's social media outreach; assist parishes with social media competence.

Maintain and update new diocesan App and information platform; develop Bishop's social media strategy with Special Assistant to the Bishop. Also responsible for creating social mediacampaigns for youth, young adults and other groups within the Church.

Requirements: active, practicing Catholic who understands Church issues; previous social media/marketing experience in Church, non-profit, educational or business setting; writing experience for news outlets, blogs or institutional publications; Firm understanding of electronic media; ability to work with both Mac and PC software.

Strong communications and language skills. Bachelors degree in Communications, Journalism, English or related field preferred.

To view the full job description please visit <http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/humanresources>

Please send resume and letter of interest to: hrdept@diobpt.org

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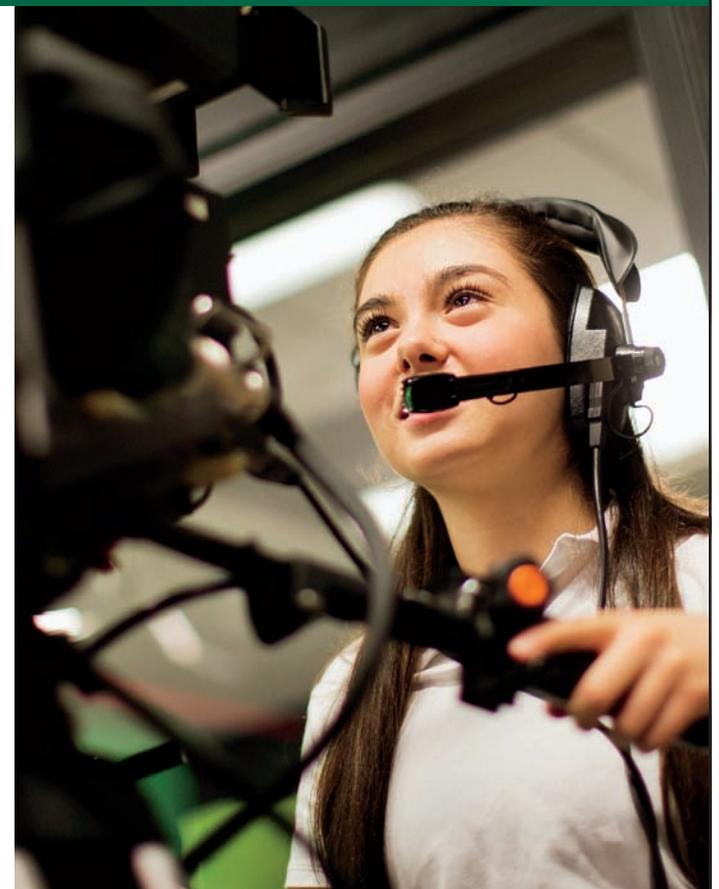
Wed., Dec. 10 and
Wed., Jan. 14 at 9:00 am

Early Childhood Open House

Fri., Jan. 23 at 1:30 pm



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