

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

JANUARY 2017 | VOLUME 34, NUMBER 1 | CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ISSUE

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# Parish Planning Teams

## Parishes begin implementing Pastoral Plans

By PATRICK TURNER

As we enter 2017, parishes are moving to implement the goals and action steps articulated in the pastoral plans created over the last year. These plans, created as a result of internal discussions by parish planning teams, pastors and staff, and ultimately approved by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, focus on multiple pastoral concerns as well as issues of financial and physical plant vitality and sustainability.

Parishes were asked to distribute their pastoral plans to the broader parish community in November by means of pulpit announcements, bulletin inserts and website postings. In addition, many parishes held town hall meetings with a broad range of parish leadership and others interested.

So now what? How do our parishes take what is written on

paper and engage in implementing the ideas to affect real change in our faith communities? All of the parish plans submitted to date are currently posted on the Pastoral Planning webpage of the diocesan website: [www.bridgeportdiocese.org/strategic-planning](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/strategic-planning). I would encourage all to take a look at the page, click on your town and parish, and offer your support, energy, enthusiasm and skills to your pastor and parish leadership to help implement the plans.

### Trends Emerge

Catechesis and Education is the theme articulated by the greatest number of parishes, with 47 of them saying this was a priority in their community over the next two years. This falls in line with what was heard during the synod sessions and the pre-synod listening sessions. There is recognition that many Catholics in our diocese have not

been fully formed in their faith and may only have a partial, or incomplete, understanding of the rich history and traditions of the Catholic Church.

On a diocesan level, the newly inaugurated Leadership Institute will help to strengthen the formation opportunities for Catholics. Recommendations from the Catechetical Task Force, which is currently working to identify new models of catechesis, will ultimately help parishes develop new programs and opportunities.

A number of parishes, such as St. Thomas Aquinas in Fairfield, have proposed ideas to include parents in their children's faith formation classes by offering regular opportunities to come together (parents and children) for faith lessons. Other parishes, like St. Joseph in Brookfield, are looking at other means of integrating parents and children, including



using on-line catechetical education programs, as a supplement to regular classes. A parish such as St. Ladislaus in Norwalk is moving to strengthen catechesis in Spanish to address the needs of many of the community who worship at that parish.

Many of our parishes (42 of them) recognize that the time has come to focus on and upgrade their buildings and facilities by addressing years of deferred maintenance issues, making their worship and office space more energy-efficient and welcoming, and creating additional space for the parish family to gather to strengthen the community.

For example, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Danbury seeks to create a more comfortable space for parish activities and to strengthen the sense of community by providing opportunity to socialize after Sunday Mass in a comfortable space. St. Roch parish in Greenwich is focusing on renovating the church hall so that it can be used for the activities envisioned in the rest of its pastoral plan.

Improving heating and cooling systems and repairing leaky roofs are mentioned in a number

of plans. St. Ann in Black Rock, Bridgeport, is upgrading the church heating system and repairing damage to the bell tower. Their plan acknowledges that while "fixing the bell tower and replacing the heating system will not cause an increase in parishioners; poorly maintained facilities may prevent parishioners from attending."

Over the coming months, articles will focus on some of the other priorities being addressed by our parish communities. Liturgy and Worship, Evangelization, and Family Life were addressed by large numbers of our parishes, while activities related to Leadership Formation, Finances, and Community Life were put forward by fewer parishes.

The Office of Strategic and Pastoral Planning, in conjunction with other offices within the diocese, will host workshops this spring designed to respond to the needs of the parishes, and offer resources, ideas, and support as parishes move into implementation. YOUR task is to step up in your parish community by offering your energy, support and enthusiasm to bring these goals and ideas to fruition. ■

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### ON THE COVER

Students at All Saints School in Norwalk are among the 9,000 young people enrolled in Catholic elementary and high schools across the diocese. This issue celebrates National Catholic Schools Week as Bishop Caggiano and education leaders plan for the future and take steps to ensure the growth and vitality of Catholic education.

PHOTOS BY AMY MORTENSEN

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January 2017

# Latest News

## Bishop reviews schools viability

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The Diocese of Bridgeport is nearing completion of a 16-month planning process for the future of its elementary schools in Stamford and the greater Danbury and Shelton area.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and other diocesan leaders have begun to personally meet with parents to listen to feedback on

said Bishop Caggiano. "More specifically, I expect to make important decisions in the coming weeks regarding those schools that continue to face financial difficulties, in the hope of creating a plan to ensure the long-term viability of Catholic education in every region of the diocese."

The bishop and Superintendent Dr. Steven Cheeseman will return to the

ensuring that there is a place for every child who wishes to attend a Catholic school in their area.

The diocesan and school planning groups are also exploring new governance structures, financial and administrative models, and school redesign to make the best use of resources and prepare for future changes.

"In order to retool our schools for the 21st century and to create learning environments focused on innovation and collaboration, we need a student population small enough to form a cohesive and supportive faith community, but large enough to support innovating programming and facilities," said Dr. Cheeseman.

Ensuring the viability and vitality of schools is one of a number of major initiatives launched by Bishop Caggiano, who has made Catholic schools one of his priorities as they continue to face challenges of deficits, shrinking enrollment and the need to plan for the future.

In 2014, the diocese created the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, which has made more than \$2.2 million a year available for students in elementary schools. The fund was



a major breakthrough for families because in addition to serving the poor, it made it possible for middle and upper income families to receive support, particularly when they had more than one child enrolled in Catholic schools.

In 2016, Bishop Caggiano announced the formation of Foundations in Education, an independent philanthropic foundation to support Catholic schools by creating endowments for scholarship aid, professional development and ongoing innovations in curriculum, technology and school design.

The viability studies and planning reviews began with the formation of the Diocese Education Commission in 2014. In June 2015, Sister Mary Grace Walsh, the former Superintendent of Schools, launched a diocesan-wide educational planning process by asking all diocesan elementary schools to complete a viability study for the commission.

The purpose of the study was to identify the areas of challenge that each school faced and to make recommendations that would strengthen their long-term financial viability and educational vitality.

Following that initial study, members of the commission visited each of the 30 diocesan schools for a first-hand understanding of their respective strengths and challenges. Afterwards, they met with representatives of the leadership team for each school.

According to Dr. Cheeseman, some schools were asked to identify specific benchmarks to help strengthen their long-term financial viability as a result of earlier research and meetings.

"After a great deal of work by local school leaders, some of these schools began the current academic year having made significant progress towards achieving greater financial stability and

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

**"Committed to reserving the long-term viability of Catholic education in every region of the diocese, and ensuring that there is a place for every child who wishes to attend a Catholic school."**

working group recommendations.

The local planning and working groups were formed as the final stage in the study of schools, which began in 2014, and they are reviewing findings including diocesan and community data on finances, demographics, facilities, trends and other factors.

"The results of this planning process now bring us to an important moment in shaping the future,"

said Bishop Caggiano. "More specifically, I expect to make important decisions in the coming weeks regarding those schools that continue to face financial difficulties, in the hope of creating a plan to ensure the long-term viability of Catholic education in every region of the diocese."

While it is anticipated that some schools may consolidate, the bishop said he remains committed to preserving the long-term viability of Catholic education in every region of the diocese, and

## Foundations in Education Inauguration

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will host the inauguration of Foundations in Education during a ceremony at Sacred Heart University on February 1 at 11 am.

The mission of Foundations is to promote "Innovation, Transformation and Support of Education" in all diocesan Catholic schools in Fairfield County.

The ceremony, which is a celebration of Catholic Schools Week, will take place in the Forum at the Frank and Marisa Martire Business & Communications Center at Sacred Heart University at 5401 Park Avenue, Bridgeport.

Bishop Caggiano will discuss the role of Foundations in Education in ensuring the vitality and promise of Catholic education for future generations.

Daniel McCarthy, president and CEO of Frontier

Communications, will serve as emcee. McCarthy will introduce Holly Doherty-Lemoine of New Canaan, the first executive director of Foundations in Education, Inc. Her appointment was approved by the Board of Trustees and announced in December.

The program will include student speakers and also feature the St. Theresa School Youth Choir (Trumbull), which will perform under the direction of Reuben Barnes and accompanist Daniel Brownell.

The event will also mark the first screening of the new Foundations in Education video hosted by economist and noted TV commentator Lawrence Kudlow, who interviewed Bishop Caggiano about Catholic education and the purpose of Foundations in Education.

Kudlow, host of "The Larry Kudlow Show" on WABC, is a

board member of Foundations in Education, which was established to manage programs that support Catholic education in the diocese, including the Bishop's Scholarship Fund and endowments to support inner-city Catholic schools, as well as other education initiatives.

"The formation of Foundations in Education is an historic event in the life of the diocese," said Bishop Caggiano. "I am very grateful for our trustee and donors who are now partners in a venture that will enable our schools to remain on the cutting edge of innovation in the 21st century."

The bishop said the goal of the new Foundations "is not simply to raise funds to face financial challenges but for innovation, professional development and transformation of Catholic schools for years ahead."

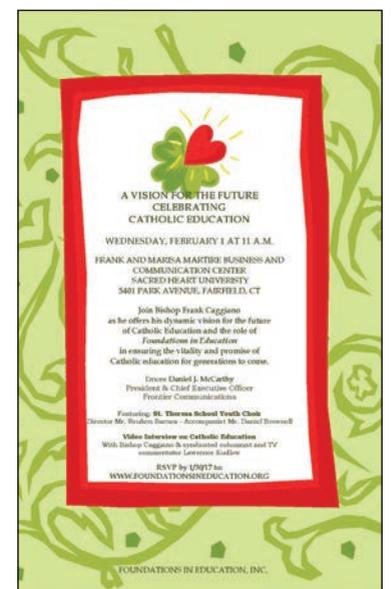
In addition to supporting

students, the new philanthropic Foundations in Education will make resources available to train, form, and support teachers, principals and administrators.

The need for support of Catholic schools has never been greater. The diocese educates more than 9,000 students in its 31 schools (five high schools, 25 elementary, and one school for students with special needs) in grades pre-K to 12 throughout Fairfield County.

More than 60 percent of students in diocesan Catholic schools receive financial assistance and 15 percent of students are non-Catholic.

The Bishop's Scholarship Fund (BSF), which awards more than \$2.2 million yearly in scholarships to Catholic elementary students will be administered by Foundations in Education.



(Seating is limited and registration required at [www.foundationsin-education.org](http://www.foundationsin-education.org). For more information on Foundations in Education, contact Holly Doherty-Lemoine at [HLemoine@diobpt.org](mailto:HLemoine@diobpt.org) or call: 203.416.1405.)

# Around the Diocese

## March for Life preview

By REBECCA VODOLA

The annual March for Life will take place on Friday, January 27, in Washington D.C. This year's theme is "The Power of One." The largest pro-life rally in the world, the March is held on or around the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion in the case of *Roe v. Wade*.

Although the diocese is not organizing buses to the rally, the diocesan high schools and some parish groups are arranging for transportation. The March opens to music on the grounds of the Washington Monument at 11:45 am, with a rally at 12 noon. Marchers step off at 1 pm and head up Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court. There they will hear testimonies from Silent No More and have a chance to visit their Representative or Senator.

### Kolbe Cathedral High School

Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport sends 50 students annually to the March for Life, according to Father Augustine Nguyen, Kolbe's chaplain. This year, they will leave Kolbe at midnight and travel via bus to D.C., where they will attend a youth rally at the Verizon Center followed by the March itself. Students are currently selling candy to raise money for their trip.

### St. Joseph High School

St. Joseph High School in Trumbull sends 40 students and adult chaperones by bus to D.C., leaving around midnight, and in the early morning will attend the Youth Rally for Life at the Verizon Center, which will be attended by thousands of young people from around the country. Then the group will participate in the rally on the National Mall before marching to the Supreme Court to speak out for the unborn.

"We are generating interest and excitement in the March for Life and promoting the pro-life cause throughout the year, including conducting a Pro-Life Baby Shower Collection which was held in October and benefited Hopeline Pregnancy Resource



Center," writes Jessica Nayden, St. Joseph campus minister. "We also hosted a pro-life speaker, Megan Almon from the Life Training Institute, who addressed the student body in December, delivering a powerful argument for the pro-life cause."

### Immaculate High School

Immaculate High School in Danbury is sending 40 students with seven chaperones, including IHS chaplain Deacon Jeff Font, to the March. The group will attend the "Life is Very Good" Evening of Prayer and Morning Rally at George Mason University before meeting up with thousands of others for the March. Font said, "The March

is a way for the students to know that their voices are being heard, even though they are young adults, and that there are others like them, because many teen organizations and youth groups go. They are not alone in their fight for life."

### Trinity Catholic High School

Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford will join with the East Side Catholic Youth Group from St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat/St. Mary's and the youth group from St. John's in Darien to travel by bus to the March. The group of about 35 will spend a day sightseeing before attending the Verizon Center youth rally prior to the March. Trinity's Crusaders for Life club held bake sales throughout the year to fundraise for

the March. Father Joseph Gill, Trinity's chaplain, said that the March "raises awareness among the students of the grave threat that abortion is to human life."

### St. Theresa Parish

St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull will have a Mass at 3:30 am on Friday prior to bus departure at 4 am. The parish's Rally Bus departs from the St. Theresa Church Parking Lot at 5301 Main Street in Trumbull. Tickets are \$75 per person. Registration



and ticket purchase are required in advance at [rallybus.net/march-for-life/from/trumbull-ct](http://rallybus.net/march-for-life/from/trumbull-ct).

### St. Mary Parish

St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield is sponsoring a bus to the March. For more information, contact Pat Postiglione: 203.438.7336. Parishes not mentioned here may be making individual arrangements.

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# Catholic Leadership

## Launching the Institute

WESTPORT—The diocese formally launched its new Diocesan Leadership Institute with evening prayer and brief presentation on Encounter, Formation and Discipleship on January 11, at Assumption Church in Westport.

About 75 people turned out for the ceremony that included readings, music by the Assumption Parish Music Ministry, and a reflection by Chris Padgett, an internationally known ministry leader, shared his powerful story of coming to the faith and the importance of continued formation in his own life.

Padgett, who is the father of nine children, related a moving story about overcoming addiction, and finding strength in Christ's love and forgiveness.

In 1990, Padgett entered the Catholic Church, which he described as "one of the most amazing adventures of my life." He said that the more he searched, the more convinced he became of "what Jesus will do in the lives of His people."

Patrick Donovan, founding director of the Institute, presented the bishop with a stained glass copy of the new Diocesan Leadership Institute logo with a dark orange cross at its center, surrounded by symmetrical shapes and accent colors. "The shapes all point towards the cross, representing that all things lead to Christ," he said.

Bishop Caggiano spoke briefly



PATRICK DONOVAN, founding director of the Diocesan Leadership Institute.

to thank all those in attendance and express his enthusiasm and hopes for the Institute, which emerged as a major mandate of Synod 2014.

"We pray that the Leadership Institute helps us as a diocese to grow in our knowledge of the things we believe, to grow in our spiritual relationship with the Lord, to learn how to pray more deeply and broadly, and to learn about the ministries of the church and the beautiful family we form," the Bishop said.

Patrick Donovan, founding director of the institute, said it is designed to function as a clearinghouse for resources for those in ministry, while at the same time "serving as a virtual library for anyone who wishes to learn more

about the Catholic faith regardless of the role one might choose to play in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ."

"The institute will offer creative opportunities for ministry personnel to grow in faith and discover new ways to shape the next generation of disciples in Fairfield County," said Donovan.

The institute will offer a combination of online learning, face-to-face workshops and independent study for those serving ministry in parishes and schools and for all Catholics throughout the diocese who wish to learn more about their faith.

*(For more information on the Diocesan Leadership Institute, visit the website: [formationreimagined.org](http://formationreimagined.org).)*



CHRIS PADGETT, internationally-known ministry leader.

## The St. Pio Foundation awards

NEW YORK, NY—The St. Pio Foundation has chosen former Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Michael Fedele, his wife Carol, and Dr. Jeffrey Trexler to receive the prestigious St. Pio Award. The St. Pio Foundation presents this award each year to individuals whose selfless and outstanding contributions serve as extraordinary examples of providing relief from suffering to those in need.

This year's recipients have distinguished themselves through long and dedicated service to others. Michael

Fedele, a native of Minturno, Italy, is the founder, CEO, and chair of The Pinnacle Group, a nationwide company that provides comprehensive computer hardware, software, and networking solutions and services to businesses throughout the United States. Fedele's public service, which includes representation of Connecticut's citizens at local and statewide levels, culminated in his election as the 107th Lieutenant Governor of the State of Connecticut from 2007 to 2011. Carol Fedele is a member of the Stamford Hospital Foundation,

whose mission is to secure financial resources necessary to support Stamford Hospital, a not-for-profit hospital providing residents of Fairfield and Westchester counties with access to the latest technology using a compassionate, patient-centered care approach. Michael and Carol Fedele will receive the St. Pio Award jointly.

Dr. Jeffrey Trexler is a physician, churchman, and executive. Dr. Trexler practiced family medicine for 22 years in the Greater Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania and has served on multiple

hospital and university medical ethics committees. Dr. Trexler is an ordained deacon and the executive director of the Order of Malta, USA, a lay religious order dedicated to work with the sick and the poor.

The St. Pio Foundation's St. Pio Award Ceremony will take place at The Hyatt Regency Greenwich, located at 1800 E. Putnam Ave, Old Greenwich, on Saturday, March 25, at 6 pm. The evening will begin with a cocktail reception followed by a gala dinner and the award ceremony.

Special guests of the event will

be Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio to the United Nations; Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, and Franc d'Ambrosio, known for his portrayal of the Phantom in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera" and Anthony Corleone in the film "The Godfather: Part III."

General admission tickets are \$250, and VIP tickets are \$1,000.

*(For more information and reservations, call 203.416.1471, email [office@saintpiofoundation.org](mailto:office@saintpiofoundation.org), or visit our website [www.saintpiofoundation.org](http://www.saintpiofoundation.org).)*

# Thank you for your generosity!

## A spirited start for the 2017 Appeal

BRIDGEPORT— The ACA got off to a spirited start in the Bridgeport area, where at 300 people filled the Queen of Saints Hall at the Catholic Center for the kickoff reception for 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal.

Parishioners from St. Margaret Shrine, St. George, St. Charles Borromeo, the Cathedral Parish, St. Mary, St. Ann, St. Andrew and others made the afternoon both festive and focused on supporting the appeal, which funds the major ministries of the diocese.

Father Frank Gomez, Pastor of St. Charles on the East Side of Bridgeport, translated for the many Spanish-speaking Catholics in attendance. Many came as entire families—grandparents, parents, children, and small babies in carriages.

Bishop Caggiano told the guests that the diocese is truly one family, but he said that many people need help, and he expressed concern that the Church is not “meeting people where they are on their life’s journey.”

When asked if there were other ways to give to the appeal in addition to



giving money, the bishop responded that people with very little to give can also speak to others about the importance of the appeal, and the many individual and families that it helps throughout the diocese.

The diocese held Vespers on January 10 to pray for blessings on this year’s Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA), which kicks off this month.

The theme of the 2017 ACA is “Sharing God’s Gifts, Transforming Lives One Person at a Time.” The diocese has set an \$11 million goal to fund its major ministries, programs and service agencies.

Elena and Steve Schlegel, members of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan, are lay co-chairs of the 2017 ACA. This year’s vice chair couple, Conrad and Carol Calandra, are parishioners at St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton.

This year’s appeal has a new structure, according to Pam Rittman, director of the ACA. In addition to the lay chairs and parish chairs, the appeal will now have chairs for each of the six vicariates in the diocese. These chairs, Rittman said, will be able to support the parishes in their vicariates on a more individual level. “With this new structure in place, the diocese will have a working group to support each community.”

In addition to the new chairs, the 2017 Appeal also includes five categories for giving: Catholic Education, Charity and Justice, Catechesis and Evangelization, Clergy, and Social and Pastoral Service.

Rittman said that the ACA Education Weekend, which kicks off the appeal, is set for January 21 and 22 in all parishes. The 2017 Appeal brochure and video are also available. The brochure, Rittman said, details the newly structured five categories for giving.

The video features lay and clergy from across the diocese, including Father Rolando Torres, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Bridgeport; Julio and Liliana Sanchez, parishioners at St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat Parish in Stamford; Andres Grajales, parishioner at Sacred Heart Parish in Stamford; Onyi, a Bishop’s Scholarship Fund recipient at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport; Henry Rondon, Kolbe Cathedral’s assistant principal; and Kim and Phyllis, participants in Catholic Charities’ New Heights program.

(For more info or to give online, go to [www.2016ACAbidgeport.com](http://www.2016ACAbidgeport.com), or phone 203.416.1470.)

### Individual Parish Results

	Pledged	Goal	%	
<b>VICARIATE 1</b>	Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist, Stamford	\$116,416	\$110,000	106%
	Holy Name of Jesus, Stamford	\$46,105	\$42,000	110%
	Holy Spirit, Stamford	\$148,485	\$106,000	140%
	Our Lady Star of the Sea, Stamford	\$105,323	\$105,000	100%
	Sacred Heart, Greenwich	\$47,461	\$50,000	95%
	Sacred Heart, Stamford	\$39,035	\$45,000	87%
	Saint Agnes, Greenwich	\$52,890	\$55,000	96%
	Saint Benedict-Montserrat, Stamford	\$40,041	\$40,000	100%
	Saint Bridget, Stamford	\$64,738	\$58,000	112%
	Saint Catherine of Siena, Riverside	\$205,715	\$200,000	103%
	Saint Cecilia, Stamford	\$100,173	\$105,000	95%
	Saint Clement, Stamford	\$60,980	\$53,000	115%
	Saint Gabriel, Stamford	\$63,603	\$57,000	112%
	Saint John, Darien	\$345,813	\$250,000	138%
	Saint Leo, Stamford	\$492,011	\$325,000	151%
	Saint Mary, Greenwich	\$395,145	\$400,000	99%
	Saint Mary, Stamford	\$45,402	\$45,000	101%
<b>VICARIATE 2</b>	Saint Maurice, Stamford	\$54,135	\$60,000	90%
	Saint Michael, Greenwich	\$490,584	\$350,000	140%
	Saint Paul, Greenwich	\$132,180	\$116,000	114%
	Saint Roch, Greenwich	\$55,385	\$55,000	101%
	Saint Thomas More, Darien	\$697,290	\$500,000	139%
	Assumption, Westport	\$227,058	\$195,000	116%
	Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton	\$270,472	\$225,000	120%
	Saint Aloysius, New Canaan	\$971,011	\$600,000	162%
	Saint Francis of Assisi, Weston	\$112,815	\$105,000	107%
	Saint Jerome, Norwalk	\$97,070	\$85,000	114%
	Saint Joseph, South Norwalk	\$61,051	\$55,000	111%
	Saint Ladislaus, South Norwalk	\$16,633	\$16,000	104%
	Saint Luke, Westport	\$238,212	\$225,000	106%
	Saint Mary, Norwalk	\$123,623	\$115,000	107%
	Saint Matthew, Norwalk	\$210,253	\$200,000	105%
	Saint Philip, Norwalk	\$89,470	\$78,000	115%
	Saint Thomas the Apostle, East Norwalk	\$104,044	\$115,000	90%
<b>VICARIATE 3</b>	Holy Cross, Fairfield	\$22,865	\$18,000	127%
	Holy Family, Fairfield	\$68,519	\$70,000	98%
	Notre Dame, Easton	\$95,145	\$115,000	83%
	Our Lady of Assumption, Fairfield	\$153,810	\$150,000	103%
	Saint Anthony of Padua, Fairfield	\$149,472	\$140,000	107%
	Saint Emery, Fairfield	\$25,076	\$21,000	119%
	Saint Pius X, Fairfield	\$344,375	\$275,000	125%
	Saint Thomas Aquinas, Fairfield	\$226,201	\$200,000	113%
	<b>VICARIATE 4</b>	Christ the King, Trumbull	\$81,471	\$80,000
Holy Name of Jesus, Stratford		\$53,813	\$60,000	90%
Our Lady of Grace, Stratford		\$94,862	\$88,000	108%
Our Lady of Peace, Stratford		\$66,710	\$65,000	103%
Saint Catherine of Siena, Trumbull		\$199,179	\$190,000	105%
Saint James, Stratford		\$130,495	\$130,000	100%
Saint Joseph, Shelton		\$96,237	\$90,000	107%
Saint Jude, Monroe		\$187,622	\$190,000	99%
Saint Lawrence, Shelton		\$219,096	\$195,000	112%
Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, Shelton		\$63,392	\$51,000	124%
Saint Mark, Stratford		\$153,364	\$137,000	112%
Saint Stephen, Trumbull		\$135,205	\$125,000	108%
Saint Theresa, Trumbull		\$185,370	\$182,000	102%
<b>VICARIATE 5</b>	Holy Trinity Parish, Sherman	\$66,220	\$65,000	102%
	Immaculate Heart of Mary, Danbury	\$19,785	\$21,000	94%
	Our Lady of Guadalupe, Danbury	\$29,969	\$26,000	115%
	Sacred Heart, Danbury	\$52,250	\$42,000	124%
	Sacred Heart, Georgetown	\$90,304	\$90,000	100%
	Saint Edward, New Fairfield	\$203,520	\$200,000	102%
	Saint Elizabeth Seton, Ridgefield	\$126,966	\$105,000	121%
	Saint Gregory the Great, Danbury	\$101,879	\$100,000	102%
	Saint Joseph, Brookfield	\$130,409	\$130,000	100%
	Saint Joseph, Danbury	\$137,421	\$130,000	106%
	Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, Brookfield	\$70,046	\$73,000	96%
	Saint Mary Parish, Bethel	\$177,939	\$160,000	111%
	Saint Mary, Ridgefield	\$500,571	\$305,000	164%
Saint Patrick, Redding Ridge	\$75,795	\$60,000	126%	
Saint Peter, Danbury	\$128,053	\$120,000	107%	
Saint Rose of Lima, Newtown	\$301,138	\$235,000	128%	
<b>VICARIATE 6</b>	Blessed Sacrament, Bridgeport	\$13,855	\$15,000	92%
	Our Lady of Fatima, Bridgeport	\$31,710	\$30,000	106%
	Saint Andrew, Bridgeport	\$81,835	\$75,000	109%
	Saint Ann, Bridgeport	\$42,023	\$51,000	82%
	Saint Charles Borromeo, Bridgeport	\$25,525	\$30,000	85%
	Saint George, Bridgeport	\$17,000	\$17,000	100%
	Saint Mary, Bridgeport	\$28,870	\$28,000	103%
	Saint Michael the Archangel, Bridgeport	\$46,681	\$45,000	104%
	Saint Peter, Bridgeport	\$43,924	\$45,000	98%
	Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish, Bridgeport	\$19,490	\$18,000	108%
	Shrine of Saint Margaret, Bridgeport	\$40,659	\$33,000	123%
The Cathedral Parish, Bridgeport	\$95,623	\$95,000	101%	
Unspecified	\$55,224			
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,827,581</b>	

# 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal

## ACA chair-couples: 'we feel blessed'

By PAT HENNESSY

"It was a calling," say Elena and Steve Schlegel, who have accepted the invitation to be lay co-chairs of the 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA). "When we were vice chairs this past year we learned about so many wonderful ministries supported by the appeal and met so many dedicated people. We feel that we've been blessed to be invited—how could we ever say no?"

The Schlegels both grew up in Fairfield County, although they met while they were working in Boston. A subsequent job move brought them back to the Diocese of Bridgeport. They and their children are now members of St. Aloysius Parish, where the couple were married.

Both credit their parents as examples of dedicated, involved Catholics. Steve, who graduated from St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, remembers the involvement of his parents, Lois and Richard, in the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport. Richard was on the Merton Center board for several years.

Elena credits her mother, Vi Peters, as the most giving person she has ever met. She sees that as key to her own involvement in the ACA. "If parents don't do it, their children will never understand the importance of getting involved."

Elena and the entire family are intensely involved in their faith. She still teaches fifth grade religious education at St. Aloysius, even though their children are in high school and college. Elena and daughter Katherine are Eucharistic Ministers. Steve is considering that ministry as well, and has gone on a mission trip to Puerto Rico with Katherine, which was an "eye-opening experience."

Steve and Elena are already dedicated to service to the homeless and the disabled. "There are families in Fairfield County who won't have food tonight," Elena says. "I don't think people realize that."

As the new year gets underway, they hope to get a chance to visit other ministries supported by the ACA. For their first stop, they hope to visit St. Catherine Center for Special Needs and St. Catherine Academy in Fairfield. This, too, is an interest with family ties. Their older son, Jack, volunteers



DEDICATED TO SERVICE, the 2017 ACA chair couple (l) Steve and Elena Schlegel and vice chairs Carol and Conrad Calandra feel blessed to be asked to assist in this year's Appeal.

in community service at Loyola University in Maryland and Matthew, a senior at New Canaan High School, heads up a program for special needs kids as part of the St. Aloysius youth group.

As the year progresses, Elena and Steve will be both learning about and sharing with others the many ways the ACA assists the mission of the Church, from forming new priests to caring for those who have retired, working with youth, caring for the infirm and training leaders for the future.

This year's vice chair couple, Conrad and Carol Calandra, live in Shelton, where they are members of St. Lawrence Parish. Carol grew up in Shelton and received her sacraments at St. Lawrence. A partner at EY working in Manhattan, she is a parish trustee, on the parish council and the finance council. Conrad hails from Brooklyn. He has retired as a college administrator who worked first at Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y., and then at Southern Connecticut State University.

"I've always loved working with and helping people," says Conrad. "To me the best part of all is giving back. Having my eyes opened to see how we can help is the biggest gift of all."

"We're ordinary people, living in Shelton," adds Carol. "Many people think that, to be of any help, you have to give, give, give. That's not how it is. I'm a big

believer in sharing your time, treasure, and talent. Everyone has something they can share."

Like the Schlegels, the Calandras credit their families as providing good role models. In Carol's case, one of the exemplars of lived faith was her uncle, Father Frank Lynch, a priest for the Diocese of Brooklyn. "I saw my uncle give all of himself every day of his life. Role models like that made such a difference in my life."

Because of that example, the formation of new priests and the care of retired priests—including the recent expansion of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy priests' retirement residence—are high on their list of initiatives supported by the ACA.

With their son, Chris, just graduated from college, the Calandras are encouraged by the diocesan initiatives to encourage youth in their faith. "World Youth Day we filled a plane—two planes! We want to help and be part of that. It's about having fun and living your faith," says Carol.

The Choir for Youth, (C4Y) reminds them of the years when their daughter, Kerry, now a kindergarten teacher, sang in the parish choir. "It brought her such joy and such faith," says Conrad. "Even now when we hear those songs at church, it brings me back. It brings tears to my eyes."

Carol adds, "When you see the teens in the C4Y, and the joy

it brings to them and to others—how can you not want to help?"

As co-chairs for last year's Appeal at St. Lawrence, the Calandras found the video put together by the Development Office to be a great way to get more people engaged in the ministries and programs of the diocese. "It helped tell stories of the people involved. It made them more real."

As they begin their commission as vice chair couple, they hope that their personal witness will also get more people engaged in the ministries and services assisted by the Annual Catholic Appeal.

"It's too easy for people to think, 'Somebody else will take care of it,'" Conrad says. "If we show people the way, and blessings that come from sharing, it might inspire them. This can be their way to tie their faith to their community." ■



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# Maryknoll Lay Missionaries

## Viva! Lay mission in Bolivia

NEW FAIRFIELD—Three long-time friends and parishioners of St. Edward the Confessor parish in New Fairfield found inspiration, faith and fellowship in Cochabamba, Bolivia, thanks to the many opportunities to serve and observe with the Ossining, N.Y.-based Maryknoll Lay Missionaries (MKLM).

For Bob Carlsen, Gerry Hatcher and Mike Cammarota, the two week “spiritual recharge” near the high Andes Mountains was a pilgrimage exploring the global realities of poverty, the struggle for indigenous rights, lack of educational opportunity, and health care challenges in one of Latin America’s poorest countries.

Deriving its mission charism from the well-known Maryknoll Fathers and Sisters globally, MKLM invites lay adults and families to experience the mission of Jesus to live and work in poor communities, responding to basic needs and helping to create a more just and compassionate world.

Mike Cammarota said he values the way MKLM jumps into the “deep end of the pool” when it comes to mission.

“What I like most about the work of the team in Bolivia is their full commitment to ‘smell like the sheep,’ as Pope Francis urges in missionary work. We had the chance to visit inmates trying to turn their lives around through the volunteer efforts of lay missionary Joe Loney, a US and Bolivian trained lawyer offering *pro bono* legal counseling in Cochabamba.”

Cammarota explained to the volunteer missionaries that inmates in most prisons in Bolivia are forced to find their own food, medical care and source of income inside the prison.

“The overcrowding, absence of privacy and lack of anything resembling a right to counsel can create not only chaos in the prison, but despair for prisoners themselves. As a long time corporate lawyer, I was moved by the compassion of Joe and others involved in prison ministry. Here is a lay missionary, someone with my same professional background and age, living the gospel message of ‘to whom much has been given, much will be expected,’” said Cammarota.



Gerry Hatcher was particularly struck by the efforts of several young missionaries only a few years out of college. “What impressed and inspired

me most was the work of some recent college grads who came to Cochabamba with MKLM to offer compassionate service. For example, Caitlin works with

a local charity called *Niños con Valor* (Courageous Children), which is an organization that runs two homes—one for girls and another for boys—for children who have been orphaned, abandoned, or removed from high-risk situations.

Hatcher found that *Niños con Valor* has a unique emphasis on providing loving and inclusive environments for children with HIV/AIDS and other health issues. “HIV/AIDS is highly stigmatized in Bolivia making this work incredibly necessary. Caitlin works at both homes assisting with daily tasks and providing love and care to all the children. Talk about being inspired by example—joy radiated from the face of this young missionary and inspires my own faith in the

future of our Church.”

Bob Carlsen, who is also a board member of MKLM, said that throughout its 40-year history, more than 700 lay people have crossed borders to serve some of the world’s most impoverished and oppressed people with MKLM. On a global basis, MKLM is involved in over a 100 ministries which encompass health care, education, microenterprise, restorative justice and propagation of the faith.

“Mission recruitment is vibrant at MKLM, and the leadership team is constantly innovating to help support discerning lay missionaries in their call to service. For example, interested adults who want to see mission in action can attend any number of outstanding

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

## New diaconate program set

By REBECCA VODOLA

2016 saw the beginning of a new permanent diaconate formation program in the Diocese of Bridgeport. The new four-and-a-half-year program replaced the older five-and-a-half-year program. Candidates under the old program are being grandfathered in.

Despite the fact that the new program is shorter, it aims to “make men more capable to serve others and to be collaborators with priests in the parishes,” said Deacon Anthony Cassaneto, Ph.D., director of the diaconate.

The diocese recently welcomed seven candidates to the program at an Admission to Candidacy Ceremony at St. Luke Parish in Westport. The candidates to the diaconate include Joseph Cann of Danbury, who attends St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield; Stephen Hodson of Trumbull, who attends St. Theresa; Eric Keener of Bethel, who attends St. Mary; Joseph Klimaszewski of Shelton, who attends St. Lawrence; Timothy Lavelle of Bethel, who attends St. Mary; Richard Lawlor of Bethel, who also attends St. Mary; and Michael Ronan of Newtown, who attends St. Rose

of Lima.

According to Deacon Cassaneto, there are four dimensions to diaconate formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. The four are integrated in diaconal duties.

For their intellectual formation, candidates now travel to St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., where they can earn a mas-

ter’s degree in theology or audit classes at the seminary. Inquirer for six months, during which time he applies for the program and completes initial screenings while discerning God’s will for his vocation. Then he is an Aspirant before becoming a Candidate for the diaconate. Candidacy lasts four years, in union with seminary studies and a four-year pastoral formation program.

Pastoral formation consists of



ter’s degree in theology or audit classes at the seminary.

In addition to their theological studies, the candidates spend one weekend per month at Queen of Saints retreat center on the Catholic Center campus in Bridgeport. The men stay overnight from Friday into Saturday, receiving 24 hours of intense formation.

There are three steps to the permanent diaconate program. A newcomer to the program is an

four ministries, one per year: first, comforting the poor; then assisting with catechetical formation, from religious education for children to RCIA and adult faith formation; then hospital ministry for third-year candidates, including training at St. Vincent’s Medical Center in Bridgeport; and, finally, caring for the terminally ill.

During formation, candidates are also encouraged to be a part of parish life, serving in roles

from Eucharistic Ministers to Knights of Columbus. Service, Deacon Cassaneto said, is vital to the vocation of deacon.

The new program has a more structured spiritual dimension, according to Cassaneto. “The program offers more time for *Lectio Divina*, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, common prayer, and the sacraments,” said Deacon Cassaneto. “The bottom line is for the program to help a man become a prayerful, humble, and docile man so that he is able to serve others; to be to others an ‘alter Christus’—another Christ.”

While the official diaconate program includes spiritual formation, it is important for men in the program to set aside time for “informal, personal formation,” Deacon Cassaneto said. This may include daily Mass, Adoration, and prayer with their families.

Deacon Cassaneto and the diaconate office are also working in conjunction with the new diocesan Leadership Institute to provide ordained deacons with ongoing formation, especially in ministerial duties.

(For more information, contact Deacon Anthony Cassaneto: 203.416.1451 or [dnccassaneto@diobpt.org](mailto:dnccassaneto@diobpt.org) or visit [www.bridgeport-diocese.org/diaconate](http://www.bridgeport-diocese.org/diaconate).)

January 2017

## Local News

# St. Vincent's pays tribute to Sister Mary Agnes O'Neil

By LUCINDA AMES

The next time you walk through the main lobby of St. Vincent's Medical Center, take a moment to view a new poster tribute to Sister Mary Agnes O'Neil, DC, the administrator who guided the hospital through the decision making, planning, moving, and opening of the current building in 1976.

The photo collage, which is located along the corridor towards the main elevators, features vintage photos of Sister Mary Agnes, a Daughter of Charity, at work during the planning stages of the structure, and another iconic photo of her with a child taken in the early 60s. A print of this popular photo is permanently on display at St. Vincent's Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida, where it was originally taken and can even be found for sale in the gift shop in the form of note cards.

St. Vincent's in Bridgeport

timed the unveiling of the poster for September on the celebration of the feast day of its patron, St. Vincent de Paul. It was their way of marking the 40th anniversary of the building and also the birthday of this very special Sister who turned 90 on September 12 and personifies the mission of St. Vincent de Paul and the Daughters of Charity, who founded the hospital. The only desire she had when she entered the order back in the late 1940s was to serve the sick and the poor and she did just that through her nursing skills, her administrative and leadership skills, and the inspirational example she set for so many others over the course of her long career.

The idea for a tribute arose from a bond forged between Sister Mary Agnes and St. Vincent's Mission Services/Workplace Spirituality Coordinator Lucinda Ames last year at a hospital event, where Sister spoke.

In chatting afterwards, Ames discovered that this bright and

spirited Sister was a classmate of her mother, Rose Centopani Iannarone, at St. Vincent's School of Nursing, and someone her mother always talked about with admiration and affection. Sister Mary Agnes, along with Rose, had graduated from Central High School in Bridgeport, and enlisted in the US Navy during WWII to become cadet nurses. Although the war ended before they got a chance to serve, both finished their education at St. Vincent's School of Nursing and became RNs.

While Rose served for a short time as a nurse and later married and raised a family, Sister Mary Agnes felt the pull of the religious life and entered the Daughters of Charity seminary shortly after obtaining her RN. Thus began a lifetime of combining two careers to pursue her passion for healing.

When Ames discovered that Sister Mary Agnes served as the administrator/board chair during the planning and construction



BELOVED FORMER administrator of St. Vincent's (l), Sister Mary Agnes O'Neil gets a warm welcome from Workplace Spirituality Coordinator Lucinda Ames.

of the current building, she got permission from Chief Mission Integration Officer Bill Hoey to have the personable Sister speak about the whole experience before a large assembly of staff members back in June to mark the anniversary year. An archival photo slide show depicting the move from the old hospital into the new one over the April Palm Sunday weekend in 1976 gave Sister an opportunity to relate interesting and often humorous anecdotes about the huge undertaking. As Sister remembers the planning, "It would be breakfast in the old hospital and lunch in the Medical Center." (St. Vincent's changed its name at the time of the new hospital opening.)

Sister shared some great stories which demonstrated what an astute negotiator she was. The

hospital had already purchased property in Fairfield from the Diocese of Bridgeport to build the new hospital, but Sister realized for a number of reasons that it wouldn't accommodate a 400-bed hospital, so she received permission from the diocese to sell the property. When the General Electric representatives balked at the \$3 million price tag and told Sister Mary Agnes to "take the decision back to your board, dear," she quickly informed them that she was wearing her other hat—actually a habit—that day, but that she was chair of the Board! She also told the stunned executives that it wasn't the Daughters of Charity who would profit from this but rather the people of Bridgeport. Getting the best price possible would allow them to build a facility to accommodate more patients and better support St. Vincent's mission of serving the poor and vulnerable in the city of Bridgeport. Needless to say, after trying to negotiate with Sister Mary Agnes, GE decided to purchase the property at the full price!

Sister Mary Agnes went on to serve in other capacities in various hospitals, had an illustrious career with many highlights and awards including receiving the first Honorary Doctor of Laws degree awarded by Sacred Heart University. Sister is beloved and like a celebrity at St. Vincent's in Jacksonville, where the photo of her in the Daughters' habit and signature "cornette" or "Flying Nun" headpiece, while holding the hand of a child, symbolizes their service to others over many centuries, and also is emblematic of the affection and caring she is known for and has displayed throughout her career.

But what remains in the minds and hearts of staff are Sister's words about that momentous task of opening a new hospital back in 1976. "God was with us all the way. We should never worry about the future, as God is always there ahead of time and all goes well."

## O'Connor named Ringmaster

BRIDGEPORT—On September 22, Terry O'Connor of Trumbull, executive director of Cardinal Shehan Center and McGivney Community Center, was announced as the 69th Ringmaster of the Barnum Festival. The P.T. Barnum Foundation, Inc., trustees and the Barnum Festival LLC Board of Directors made the announcement at an event held at Aquarion Water Company's offices on Main St. in Bridgeport.

"The Barnum Festival is proud to have Terry O'Connor as the 2017 Ringmaster. I know he will be as big an asset to the Barnum Festival as he has been to the City of Bridgeport. Terry has done great things for Bridgeport, and the Barnum Festival is lucky to have his support. I'm looking forward to watching Terry work his magic on the festival," said



Frank J. Carroll, president of the Barnum Festival Board of Directors.

"It's an honor to be named Ringmaster and follow in the footsteps of 68 other distinguished Ringmasters, especially Herman Steinkraus, creator of the Barnum Festival and the president and board chairman of the Bridgeport Brass Company," said O'Connor, noting that the building the Cardinal Shehan Center has called home for over

50 years was also the home of the Bridgeport Brass Company.

"Being named the 69th Ringmaster is especially exciting for me because five past Shehan Center board members were also Ringmasters: George Santa, Corty Phillips, Paul Miller, Mike Bisceglia and Mike Niedermeier, as well as longtime friend and supporter of the Shehan Center David D'Addario," continued O'Connor.

O'Connor began his professional career in the field of athletics coaching basketball and holding administrative positions on the high school, collegiate and professional levels. In 1992, he was named the executive director of Cardinal Shehan Center. Regarded as a top fundraising professional in the Bridgeport area, O'Connor has raised over \$25 million since arriving at the Shehan Center. In 2012, O'Connor took on the added responsibility of executive director of the McGivney

Community Center on East Main St. In the four years since joining McGivney, O'Connor has overseen the renovation of the gym and numerous other rooms.

Throughout his professional career, O'Connor has served the community by sitting on the boards of many organizations including the New England CYO, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, the Leadership of Greater Bridgeport, United Way of Eastern Fairfield County, and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

O'Connor and his wife Mary Ann raised two sons in Trumbull, where they are members of Christ the King Parish.

O'Connor will make his first appearance as the 69th Ringmaster of the Barnum Festival at the Meet the Ringmaster night; date to be determined.

# Parish News

## Strength for the Journey

RIVERSIDE—In January, St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Riverside launched a four-part monthly symposium on accompanying the sick and dying. The series, entitled “Strength for the Journey,” is meant to bring



knowledge, fortitude, hope and peace to people who accompany those who are suffering.

“I know so well, through my own profession, personal experience with my own family and my Faith Community Nursing (FCN) Ministry work these past few years, that these topics generate fear, dread and avoidance,” said Dr. Lisa Rooney, a Stamford

pediatrician who is serving as one of the coordinators of the Faith Community Nursing (FCN) Ministry at St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

“No one can avoid this journey. If not called upon to personally accompany someone, we will at least be called upon to comfort or advise someone who is suffering or their caregiver,” she said.

“Peace Through Preparation:

Talking About End-of-Life Decisions” will be presented on February 19 by Dr. Donna Coletti, founder and medical director of Palliative Care at Greenwich Hospital.

Upcoming talks also include “Pastoral Care, Stories from a Life of Service” on April 23, a reflection of the St. Catherine pastoral team led

by Msgr. Alan Detscher, pastor; Father William Platt, parochial vicar, and Deacon Robert Henrey; and “Letting Go While Holding On, Living with Loss” on May 7 by Dr. Heather Wright, an ordained minister of PCUSA, licensed professional counselor and executive director of the Greenwich Center for Hope and Renewal.

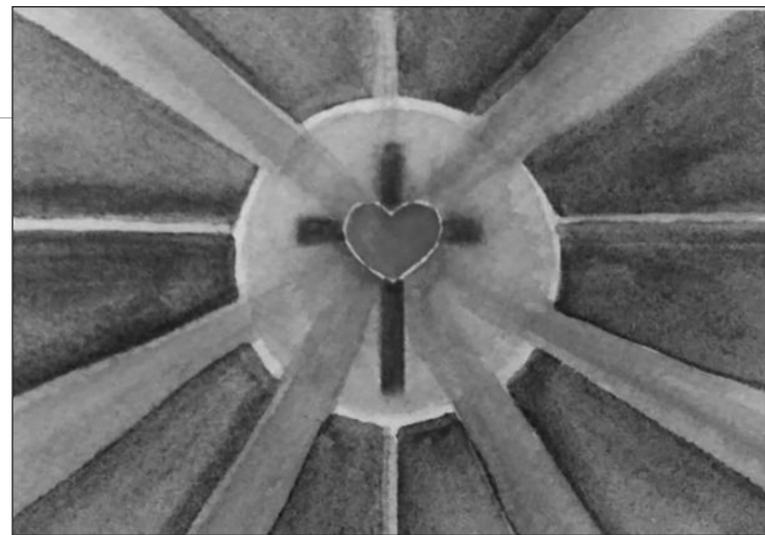
The symposium began in

January with “Works of Mercy, Faith Centered Care” by Dr. Gregory Bottaro, a clinical psychologist with a private practice in Byram and founder and director of the Catholic Psych Institute.

Dr. Rooney said that each of the speakers in the four-part

series “is a pillar of care in our local community, with a reputation for approaching those who are in need of care with dignity,

**“No one can avoid this journey. If not called upon to personally accompany someone, we will at least be called upon to comfort someone who is suffering,”**



love, and charity within their respective vocations.”

She said the lessons and topics of the symposium do not apply to just the elderly or those who care for the aged but for everyone.

“We are called to be joyful people. How can we remain so, while living with or witnessing the sadness of sickness and dying? And how can we live with loss afterwards?” she said.

The Faith Community Nursing (FCN) ministry at St. Catherine’s was started three years ago in response to a need to care for parishioners’ physical, emotional and spiritual well-being through times of sickness, death and other loss, emotional crises, and other hardships. FCN ministry assists the priests and deacons of the parish in ministering to all parishioners in need.

“Our role is to support the work of our dedicated priests and deacons who are also visiting the sick and the dying, bringing them great comfort as well as the Sacraments,” said Dr. Rooney.

The ministry makes bereavement calls, following up on the families of the deceased from the parish, offering comfort, support, and prayers. In addition to acting as a source of prayers, for parishioners and each other, and forming people in ministry to the sick and dying, FCN has made over 1,000 visits in two years.

Those who participate in the program are also invited to attend the 10:30 am Mass at St. Catherine of Siena Church, followed by a light lunch at noon in the school gymnasium. Each talk begins at 12:30. All talks will be held in the parish auditorium. ■

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## Special Book of Prayers

DANBURY—Msgr. Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, led a memorial prayer service on December 14, for students and staff who were presented with the first edition of Immaculate High School Book of Prayers.

“What makes this first edition of prayer books so unique and special is that all of the prayers were submitted or written by Immaculate High School (IHS) students and were meaningful to them,” said Janine Azzi, public relations coordinator at IHS.

The project, which included artwork and photos by IHS students, was coordinated by a small student group.

During the prayer service Msgr. Weiss blessed the prayer books, and students and staff joined in praying for peace in the world.

“We can always turn to



LEADING A PRAYER SERVICE, Msgr. Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish, praised a special book of prayers composed by Immaculate High School students.

God in prayer as we face the challenges the world presents us,” Msgr. Weiss told the students. He said that the words of one stu-

dent prayer submitted by Kyle Danisavage '17, were reflective of his message to the students.

“Remove whatever bitterness may be in my heart, Lord, and fill the empty spaces with your love,” the student wrote.

Printing and production was supported by the Knights of Columbus St. Virgilius Council 185 of Newtown. A second edition of the book is already being planned by the student group.

Immaculate High School is a private Catholic college-preparatory institution serving students from 28 communities in Connecticut and New York. Founded in 1962, Immaculate High School also allows students to focus on their spiritual development, personal moral commitments and service to others.

This Book of Prayers is available for viewing at [www.immaculatehs.org](http://www.immaculatehs.org). ■

# Diocesan Youth Choir

## C4Y inspires in joyous Christmas concert

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

At the end of a weekend that went from a snowstorm to dense fog, the 75-member Diocesan Youth Choir lit up Klein Memorial Auditorium in Bridgeport with its second annual "Arise and Shine" Christmas Concert.

More than 900 turned out on December 18 for a joyous and spirited performance of Christmas songs across cultures and throughout the ages.

A garland of white Christmas lights outlined the length of the stage, while images of large snowflakes were projected on the walls and ceilings. The choir, outfitted in its white robes with blue trim, sang in front of an alpine backdrop of snow and evergreens.

After a nearly ninety-minute concert without intermission, the choir received a standing ovation with many proud parents calling out the names of choir members, who returned the applause from the stage.

"Each of us was given a great gift tonight by these young women and men," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who was the inspiration behind the choir as a way of engaging young people in

the Church and affirming their faith.

"At a time that has become cold and harsh, this is what the world is meant to be," said the bishop, gesturing to the choir. "You've given me great hope and encouragement."

Beginning with "Arise, Arise and Shine" and concluding with the audience joining in "Dark is the Silent Night," the choir, under the direction of Mary Bozzuti Higgins of Wilton, captivated the audience with the beauty of its voices and the richness of the Christmas program.

The choir seemed particularly effective on a "Celtic Christmas Lullaby," "Believe," and a contemporary arrangement of "Amen, Tell It on the Mountain," which inspired the audience.

One of the highlights of the evening was the choir's rendition of "Festival Sanctus," sung with precision and bell-like clarity.

This year's program introduced a few surprises including soloist Adrienne Reedy, a well-known Gospel recording artist, who, backed by the full choir, brought down the house with her version of "Do You Hear What



I Hear?" and "Christmas Glory, Hallelujah."

In between groupings of songs, choir members stepped forward to read passages from the nativity in Vietnamese, Spanish, Ibo (Nigerian), and English, reflecting the diversity of its members.

The choir's performance was supported by a gifted ensemble of local musicians including Clay

Zambo, piano; Jessica Raposo, flute; Dr. Ralph Kirmser, oboe; Nick Loafman, trumpet; and percussionist Tom Foote, who energized the choir and the audi-

ence with solo drumming that led the traditional Zulu hymn, "Siyahamba."

Choir director Higgins was presented a bouquet of red and white roses for her leadership in forming and preparing the choir through the weekly rehearsals held throughout the diocese over the past year. The choir has also sung at diocesan liturgies and special events.

Higgins said she was proud of the entire choir, grateful for the support of parents and for the college freshmen who returned from their first semester to join the concert and serve as mentors to the younger members.

Members of the newly formed Catholic Service Corps served as ushers for the evening.

*(For more information on the Diocesan Youth Choir and the new St. Augustine Guild to support its work, visit [www.bridgeportdiocese.org/c4ysings](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/c4ysings).)*

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## EDITORIAL

## Three Launches

The New Year brings with it the launch of three important initiatives throughout the diocese, the much-anticipated Diocesan Leadership Institute, the 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal, and the new Foundations in Education.

- Throughout the synod discernments, an interest in ongoing education and instruction in the faith was always at the top of the list for delegates. In a challenging and increasingly secular world, people told the bishop that they wanted to grow in their faith and confidently share it with others. The new Diocesan Leadership Institute, formally launched at last week's Vespers Service at Assumption Church in Westport, delivers on the synod mandate. The institute will offer a combination of online learning, face-to-face workshops and independent study for those serving in ministry in parishes and schools, and for all who wish to learn more about their faith. For more information visit: [www.formationreimagined.org](http://www.formationreimagined.org).

- On February 1, at 11 am in the Martire Forum of Sacred Heart University, the bishop will preside over the launch of the new Foundations in Education, an independent philanthropic initiative to build resources for Catholic schools throughout the diocese as they plan for the future. Guided by a Board of Trustees that includes state and national business and institutional leaders, the new Foundations will develop and oversee funds that foster innovation, support professional development, and ensure scholarship assistance for students for years to come.

- Receptions are underway to launch the 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal, inviting people to pray together, socialize and learn more about the good works supported by the Appeal. Through the Annual Catholic Appeal, the bishop asks us to walk in the footsteps of Christ by reaching out to those who are suffering and in need in our own parishes and neighborhoods. The new "Sharing God's Gifts" video celebrates the vitality and diversity of the diocese, while underscoring its unity in faith and charity. This year's goal is \$11 million, and there are many ways to give. Please plan on attending a reception. You can give now online [www.2017ACAbidgeport.com](http://www.2017ACAbidgeport.com).

## Planning for the Next Generation

In the coming weeks, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be meeting with school working groups and parents to review the recommendations of the planning and viability studies that have been undertaken over the past 16 months. While final recommendations have not been made, the bishop and education leaders are moving toward important decisions after extensive study and review.

In the past three years, the bishop has paved the way for change by forming the Education Commission led by top educators in the region to guide the schools and plan for the future; creating the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, which provides more than \$2.2 million in scholarship assistance to families; initiating a Strategic Planning process for schools; and launching Foundations in Education—all initiatives to support and strengthen Catholic schools.

The bishop has been clear in his vision from day one: he wants schools that are profoundly Catholic, innovative—and available to all those who seek a Catholic education. And he wants a plan that helps schools stabilize enrollment and finances while positioning for growth: "Our collective goal is to allow us to say with confidence that, once planning is completed and recommendations adopted, any child who enrolls in a kindergarten class in any Catholic school will be able to graduate the 8th grade from the same Catholic school."

## God walks with us

*This reflection is taken from Bishop Caggiano's Facebook page. You can read his thoughts and reflections daily by visiting Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on Facebook.*

"The New Year gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the blessings that we received in 2016, and to open our hearts to the many surprises of grace that await us. Many of us spend a few moments at the end of each day examining our conscience and reviewing the events of the past day. This is an important tool if we wish to grow in holiness and avoid the temptations to sin that surround us on a daily basis. What a blessing it would be if we could prayerfully recall our personal achievements, tragedies, quiet moments of joy and moments of sadness for an entire year. Since our journeys are so different, my guess is that the lessons we will learn are as different as you and I are different. One lesson, however, we can all learn together. If we prayerfully recall the past year in as much detail as we can, what we will all recognize anew is that God walked with us every step of the way."

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Midnight Mass with Bishop Frank

TRUMBULL—At the invitation of Father Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in the Nichols section of Trumbull, Bishop Frank Caggiano celebrated Midnight Mass. The beautiful liturgy

began at 11:30 with prelude music by the parish choir, soloists and instrumentalists, and ended with a Neopolitan midnight snack for parishioners.

"It was a special joy and honor for our whole parish that

Bishop Caggiano was among us to celebrate the Midnight Mass of Christmas this year!" said Father Marcello. "Whenever a bishop is present, it reminds us of the Apostolic Succession which links us to the very

Apostles of Christ, who received from him the mission and the capacity to make him present in the world, until he comes again in glory. Our bishop is our link to the Successor of Peter, Pope Francis, as well as to the Apostles themselves." ■



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

*The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano,  
Bishop of Bridgeport,*

*has made the following clergy appointments in the Diocese of Bridgeport:*

## PASTOR

REVEREND SUDHIR DSOUZA, Parochial Vicar, Saint Philip Parish, Norwalk, to Pastor, Saint Philip Parish, Norwalk. Effective date is January 31.

## SENIOR ACTIVE PRIEST

REVEREND MICHAEL BOCCACCIO, Pastor, Saint Philip Parish, Norwalk, to Senior Active Priest, Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford. Effective date is January 31. Father Boccaccio will continue to serve as Defender of the Bond and Promoter of Justice

in the Diocesan Tribunal.

## RESIDENCE

REVEREND MONSIGNOR WILLIAM J. SCHEYD, Retired, to Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence, Stamford. Effective date was December 31.

REVEREND WILLIAM G. CAREY, Retired, New Canaan, to Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence, Stamford. Effective date was December 28.

## RETIREMENT

REVEREND GEORGE

MASLAR, O.F.M., Conv., Chaplain at Bridgeport Healthcare Center, Bridgeport, to retirement. Effective date was December 31.

## SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

DEACON RAFAEL REGÚS, to Regional Spiritual Advisor of Region I of the Spanish Cursillo Movement. Effective date was January 6. Deacon Regús will continue to serve as deacon at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Danbury.

*Monsignor Thomas W. Powers,  
Vicar General, January, 2017*

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# Editorial



## Ordinary and disproportionate medical treatments

### A WOMAN'S VOICE

BY SUSAN PIENING, RN

*Susan Piening holds a Master's of Science in Nursing and a Master's in Theology. She is a Nurse Midwife and mother of three.*

"I cannot kill my grandmother, just start the IV," I screamed into the phone. A bit melodramatic perhaps, but I was tired, frustrated and scared. Over the past week or so my grandmother had stopped eating and was not taking in much fluid. According to her physician this was part of the dying process and since, I was told, she had no real "quality of life" it would be best if we just made her "comfortable" (give her large doses of pain medication)

and let nature take its course.

As a nurse, I did not agree with his advice; my experience told me that if she was hydrated she would perk up. As a granddaughter, the idea that I would agree to facilitate my grandmother's death was horrifying.

It's not that I was afraid of her dying. She had a very long and wonderful life. I just believed it was morally wrong to hasten her death. The physician finally agreed to start the intravenous infusion. Within a few days my

grandmother perked up. She began eating and drinking again. Ten months later she passed away peacefully without the aid of pain medication.

Many have or will face similar situations. I was blessed to have family support and the guidance of some wonderful priests, who helped me understand the Church's teachings regarding end of life issues, which are based on objective truth, natural law and the innate dignity of the human person. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states; "Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God."

As Catholics, the knowledge of our innate dignity must be the basis of our moral decisions regarding end of life issues. We have a responsibility to care for and preserve our lives, but this

duty is not absolute. There are times when it is appropriate to forgo certain treatments that may prolong our life or the lives of those under our care. Again, according to the Catechism, "Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of 'over-zealous' treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted..."

But how do we know if a treatment is ordinary/proportionate or extraordinary/disproportionate? Unfortunately there is not a list of procedures or treatments that are "ordinary" and another list that are "extraordinary." In some situations, "Treatments that are unduly burdensome or sorrowful to a particular patient, such as amputation, or beyond the economic means of the person, or which only prolong the suffering of a

dying person, are extraordinary, meaning they are not morally obligatory in a particular case."

The Church does not require or desire a needless prolonging of the dying process. The focus is whether the procedure will bring about the benefit it is designed to accomplish without undue burden for the individual.

For example the assisted delivery of food and water should not be considered extraordinary means. "Nutrition and hydration may only be discontinued when they cannot achieve their natural purposes, such as when the body can no longer process them, or, when during the death process they would only prolong the person's suffering."

Unfortunately, to some people the disease comes to define the person and the "quality" of his life. Someone burdened by infirmity is deemed less valuable because he does not contribute

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



## His talent doesn't come from dad

### A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

Does too much icky-gooey stuff spoil a boy? Some say so, but I don't buy it. My father tells me he loves me and always has. I never thought it was anything other than true, and fathers are supposed to tell their sons the truth.

My boy likes to draw. He does painting and sculpting, too, but drawing is the main preoccupation. He uses pencils. He does things with them—beautiful things—that I've only dreamed about being able to do. I marvel at his gifts, which are evident to me, his father, yes, but I'm not the only one who sees them.

I apologize if I seem boastful. That's not how this is meant to come across. The boy is eight-

years old, still a pup. I harbor no ambitions on his behalf, other than that he finds a way to make the most of his talent. I just want him to draw, draw, draw—then draw some more.

And he does. Morning, noon, or night, whether at the height of summer or in the bleak midwinter, you can find my boy sketching away on loose-leaf paper and in bound notebooks. Much of what he produces is mimicry. He enjoys Pixar movies and Calvin and Hobbes. He copies what he sees. Lately there's been a lot of Harry Potter.

"Who is the youngest person to have created an animated feature film?" the boy once asked his mother. The boy dreams up his own characters, inspired by

the secret lives of stuffed animals. Among them are Moose Guy and Cross, whose adventures are told in comic strips and storyboards for an animated movie studio—Patnix Pictures—that doesn't yet exist.

One character, James, might be the artist's alter ego. James carries a wand, a la certain Hogwarts students, and enjoys the company of a sidekick, Blobby.

Perhaps the boy's vocation for this solitary diversion is borne of necessity. He is the third of five children—the middle man, the fulcrum, the solid center. His parents' attentions are often focused elsewhere. He gets dragged along on shopping trips and to swimming lessons.

His blank pages are a domain solely unto him. They are governed by rules that he alone dreams up and subject to timelines that he alone maintains. He is the master of James's fate. He is the captain of Blobby's soul. We all need to get lost sometimes. We all need a thing we can control.

The boy's mother, my beloved, is a deft artist in her own right. Maybe the boy gets his talent from her. Maybe he gets it from my dad, his grandfather, who tells me he loves me and who knows his



way around a blank page. Either way, it's a blessing.

Recently, the boy, who is homeschooled, attended a co-op lesson on the Feast of the Epiphany. At the break, he bee-lined for the drawing table. There he produced a sketch of Melchior, Balthazar, and Caspar—the famous Magi, the bearers of gifts. I was stunned by his drawing and told him so, both because I am his father and because it was the truth. Life is too short to lie.

Talent is God's gift to us. So is truth. Both can be a burden. Many talented people can't manage their gifts, just as some

people can't handle the truth. We know their stories. Their troubles fill our newspapers and keep us chattering. My boy may never get lucky enough to draw pictures for a living or to found his own animated film studio, but I pray he always finds pleasure and delight from the simple act of putting pencil to paper.

We must not waste or ignore our God-given gifts. If we are parents, we have a special duty to provide stewardship. Of course, we must also set reasonable expectations for success. The odds of making it big as an actor, a singer, a painter, or a basketball player are astronomical.

Then again, some do. ■

# Women's News

## Magnificat holds its first young women's retreat

By REBECCA VODOLA

NEWTOWN—"What does it mean to be an authentic woman in today's world?" was the question posed at the "Heroically Feminine" retreat that brought together women ages 18-25 at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown.

The retreat, hosted by the Triumphant Heart of Mary Immaculate Chapter of Magnificat Ministry to Catholic Women, introduced the young women to speakers and mentors who shared their own struggles on the path to acceptance, reconciliation and faith.

Megan Murphy, a Catholic speaker from Scranton, Pa., kicked off the day by giving her personal conversion story. She noted that, during her childhood, her father, then an alcoholic, twisted her view of God the Father. In college, Murphy turned to boys to fill her "ache for the eternal, for the infinite," she said, but she found only emptiness. A fallen-away

Catholic, Murphy listened to the advice of an older woman and began practicing chastity and attending Mass.

She recalled the moment she told her then-boyfriend that she wanted to remain chaste. Rather than rejecting her, he agreed to remain chaste with Murphy. "I started crying," said Murphy, "We had said 'I love you' a hundred times before, but I knew then that he meant it."

Murphy also gave a talk on the "feminine genius." Pope St. John Paul II coined the phrase "feminine genius" to describe the dignity, beauty, and strength of authentic femininity rooted in Christ.

One such "feminine genius," said Murphy, is St. Joan of Arc, the retreat's patron saint. A fifteenth-century French peasant, Joan of Arc was a teenager when she led French troops against the English and recaptured the cities of Orléans and Troyes during the Hundred Years' War.



EXPLORING the "feminine genius," young women listened to speakers and shared experiences during a Magnificat Ministry to Catholic Women retreat.

Accordingly, she is the patron of soldiers and France.

Monica Ortega, a local wife, mother, and high school sports coach, also shared her testimony. Suffering under the pressure to be a part of "a picture-perfect family," Ortega shared that, as a teenager, she struggled with body image issues and "quite literally, beating myself up," she said.

While on a youth retreat, Ortega began to experience firsthand the love of God and was

encouraged by a friend—now her husband—to seek God's mercy through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Today, Ortega is a youth minister who hopes to share with teens what she failed to recognize as a high school student.

"You must be truly you. God created you purposefully with the intention to further salvation. You are necessary," Ortega said to the women gathered.

The women sat at round tables to facilitate discussion periods

throughout the day that spurred attendees to make personal connections to the speakers' stories. Periods of prayer were also woven between the day's activities to ground attendees, who had the chance to attend Mass at St. Rose immediately prior to the retreat.

Victoria Conaway, a senior at Catholic University, provided music for the day that touched on the day's theme, including "Good, Good Father" by Christian music artist Chris Tomlin.

Despite a snowstorm that cut the event short, Magnificat's Triumphant Heart of Mary Immaculate Chapter considered the day a success. Fran Hood, the Magnificat chapter's assistant coordinator, said that the idea for the event was conceived because of a lack of ministries specifically geared toward young women in the diocese. Hood and her team hope that their retreat will spur similar and ongoing events throughout the diocese.

*(For more information about the local chapter of Magnificat, visit [www.bridgeportdiocese.org/womens-ministries](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/womens-ministries))*

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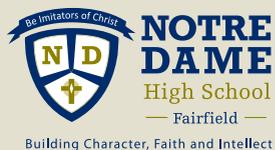
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*All of our Catholic schools are available for prospective family visits year round simply by contacting the school directly. The following schools will be hosting January/February Open Houses.*

## **BETHEL**

St. Mary School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 — 6:00-8:00 pm  
Info: [www.stmarybethelct.org](http://www.stmarybethelct.org)

**BRIDGEPORT** — Catholic Academy of Bridgeport  
St. Raphael Academy (Pre-K-Grade 3)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:00-2:00 pm  
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 — 2:30-8:00 pm  
Info: [straphael.catholicacademybridgeport.org](http://straphael.catholicacademybridgeport.org)

St. Augustine Academy (Grades 4-8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:00-2:00 pm  
Info: [staugustine.catholicacademybridgeport.org](http://staugustine.catholicacademybridgeport.org)

St. Andrew Academy (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:00-2:00 pm  
Info: [standrew.catholicacademybridgeport.org](http://standrew.catholicacademybridgeport.org)

St. Ann Academy (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:00-2:00 pm  
Info: [stann.catholicacademybridgeport.org](http://stann.catholicacademybridgeport.org)

**BROOKFIELD**  
St. Joseph School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, February 12, 2017 — 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
Info: [www.sjsbrookfield.org](http://www.sjsbrookfield.org)

**DANBURY**  
St. Gregory the Great School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, February 12, 2017 — 1:30-3:30 pm  
Info: [www.saintgregoryschool.org](http://www.saintgregoryschool.org)

St. Joseph School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, February 12, 2017 — 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
Info: [www.sjsdanbury.org](http://www.sjsdanbury.org)

St. Peter School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, February 12, 2017 — 12:00-3:00 pm  
Info: [www.stpeterschooldanbury.org](http://www.stpeterschooldanbury.org)

**FAIRFIELD**  
Assumption Catholic School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, February 5, 2017 — 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
Info: [www.assumptionfairfield.org](http://www.assumptionfairfield.org)

St. Catherine Academy,  
The Special Education School of the Diocese  
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Info: [www.stcatherineacademy.org](http://www.stcatherineacademy.org)

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
Info: [www.stasonline.net](http://www.stasonline.net)

**GREENWICH**  
Greenwich Catholic School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:00-1:00 pm  
Tuesday, January 31, 2017 — 9:00-11:00 am  
Info: [www.gcscct.org](http://www.gcscct.org)

**NEW CANAAN**  
St. Aloysius School (K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 11:30 am-1:00 pm  
Info: [www.sasnct.org](http://www.sasnct.org)

**NEWTOWN**  
St. Rose of Lima School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:30-2:30 pm  
Info: [www.stroseschool.com](http://www.stroseschool.com)

**NORWALK**  
All Saints Catholic School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 12:00-2:00 pm  
Monday, January 30, 2017 — 8:30-10:00 am  
Tuesday, January 31, 2017 — 8:30-10:00 am  
Info: [www.allsaintsnorwalk.com](http://www.allsaintsnorwalk.com)

**RIDGEFIELD**  
St. Mary School  
Open House (K-Grade 8): Thursday, February 9, 2017 — 9:00-10:00 am  
(Pre-K): Friday, February 10, 2017 — 9:30-10:30 am  
Info: [www.smsridgefield.org](http://www.smsridgefield.org)

**STRATFORD**  
St. James School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 11:00 am-1:00 pm  
Info: [www.stjamesstratford.org](http://www.stjamesstratford.org)

St. Mark School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 9:00 am-12:00 pm  
Info: [www.stmarkschool.org](http://www.stmarkschool.org)

**TRUMBULL**  
St. Catherine of Siena School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Tuesday, January 31, 2017 — 8:30-10:30 am  
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St. Theresa School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Monday, January 30, 2017 — 9:00 am-2:00 pm  
Info: [www.stesonline.org](http://www.stesonline.org)

**WILTON**  
Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School (Pre-K-Grade 8)  
Open House: Sunday, January 29, 2017 — 10:30 am-2:00 pm  
Info: [www.olfcatholic.org](http://www.olfcatholic.org)

Schools hosting February/March Open Houses will be listed in next month's publication.

# Thoughtful reflections from students

This year, National Catholic Schools week runs from January 29-February 4. Since 1974, National Catholic Schools Week has been the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. The theme for 2017 is “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members.

Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our Church, our communities and our nation. Catholic schools offer academic excellence and faith-filled education for students nationwide. National test scores, high school graduation rates, college attendance and other data show that Catholic schools frequently outperform schools in both the public and private sectors. While some Catholic schools are challenged by declining enrollments and school closures, the good news is that there is a strong demand and enthusiasm for Catholic schools. Nearly thirty percent of Catholic schools have waiting lists for admission and new schools are opening across the country.

**Arabella Day, grade one**

“I like Catholic school because the teachers are nice. I make new friends and I learn to read. We also learn about Jesus.”



**Cate Bell, grade three**

“I love attending Catholic school because I learn about Jesus and my faith. I receive an excellent education. I love subjects like math, reading, and writing. The teachers are kind and supportive and help me get ready to go on the road of life-long learning.”



**Julia Carrozza, grade seven**

“My Catholic school gives me opportunities to grow in faith. At school we say the Rosary every morning. With a scheduled time to pray, we can focus on growing closer to God. Since it is Advent, my class has been going to the Adoration Chapel every day, where we read a section of our prayer books with a Scripture passage and instructions to become closer to God through prayer. In the presence of Jesus, the silence makes it easy to relax and open our hearts to our forgiving Lord, present in the Eucharist. On “Gospel Friday” we read and elaborate on the Scripture readings for Sunday Mass. When the priest reads the Gospel, I can connect my reflections to the Scripture passage. In my school, we have support from everyone in our caring community. Our motto, ‘Work hard, be kind, and smile,’ inspires all of the pupils at my school to be our best selves, and to work to the best of our abilities.”



**Alana Davis, grade four**

“Going to a Catholic school means so much to me. I am so lucky to have the freedom to pray to God. I also love my Catholic school because the children respect the teachers and the teachers respect the children. We are a community, like a family. With all the respect and love, we make my Catholic school . . . AMAZING! We develop independence and responsibility to have a good foundation for high school and college. We have fun learning experiences. I had so much fun making a magnet in my STEM class. I love my Catholic school.”



**Avery Simoneau, grade eight**

“My Catholic education is one of the most important parts of my life. It is a way to learn about God, his works and miracles. I am able to express myself and my faith at my Catholic school, which I have attended for nine years. When we go to the Adoration Chapel, I sit in God’s presence and feel relaxed and peaceful. Every year when I come back after a long summer, unlike many kids, I do not dread the return, but celebrate it. My relationship with God has become strong through my Catholic schooling. Next year when I go to high school, I will be prepared knowing that I have a strong relationship with God.”



**Lyla Wolf, grade one**

“I like Catholic school because we do religion in school and learn about God and Jesus, not like public school where you need to go after school to learn religion.”

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**Angelina Gonzalez, grade seven**

"I feel safe, loved, and successful at my Catholic school. The faculty and students care and help everyone up when they're down, make me feel loved and better if I'm having a bad day, and my amazing friends make me feel included. My school makes you work hard for good grades.

The work can be challenging at times but my teachers make sure we understand what we are doing. I feel I will be successful with all of my hard work, the amazing teachers, and my principal's leadership. My school teaches us to be independent and strong individuals. Thank you to my Catholic school for teaching me to go down the right path."



**Annie Stook, grade seven**

"My Catholic school represents a boat that guides me along the path of Christ. Without a life of prayer I would be lost. My school promotes a sturdy foundation of Christ's forgiveness that I can carry throughout adulthood and pass along confidently to others. My school demonstrates how everyone is equal in God's eyes and that everyone should be treated with love, respect, and dignity. I could never picture going to school where faith is not the first priority. My school helps me recognize the talents God has given me. I am thankful attend a school where I can become closer to God. Saint Catherine of Siena once said, "Be who God meant you to be and you can set the world on fire." That quote is truly what my Catholic school means to me."



**Madison Moore, grade six**

"A Catholic school is a safe, holy, and happy place. But my school is more than that. I want to go to school.

I'm lucky that my parents work and spend the money on Catholic school. My school helps me improve and encourages me. Not all schools have teachers like mine. I will remember them even after I graduate. I make more wonderful memories daily."



**Anna Tutek, grade eight**

"For many, school is a place of anguish. But my Catholic school has given me peace of mind. My faith has blossomed under careful guidance and my education is at its peak due to the smaller class size. During difficult times, I find myself flooded with the comfort of my school and the positivity of teachers and classmates. Indeed one may find good people anywhere, but where can a whole community of good people be found? Our faith always binds us. With Mass, hall prayer, and adoration my faith has soared. The darkest moments in life are lit up with Jesus' light. I intend to bring the love taught to me wherever I go in life."



**Manuel Santos, grade eight**

"Catholic school can provide a safer environment for children, an awesome learning community with teachers that truly care, or a fun place for children to learn life and social skills. All of these factors are why parents send their kids to Catholic school. The staff cares about their students and takes the job of keeping them safe seriously. In Catholic school you don't see people treating one another badly; you see people getting along and learning as a community. You also find teachers that don't see their work as a job, but as a passion. They want students to learn and be successful, not just in school but in life. The amazing teachers want the student to reach and surpass their limits, so that eventually the student succeeds in college and in life. This wonderful determination that a teacher has to teach any student is also a big reason Catholic schools offer an amazing learning environment and a fun environment for the students, which makes the school a place the student is excited to come to everyday."



**Savannah Salicrup, grade eight**

"You may think that Catholic schools aren't worth the money or that Catholic schools are just the same as public schools, but let me tell you, those are not true! I have been in a Catholic school since kindergarten and I am now in the eighth grade. I have made some of the best memories and friends at my Catholic school. I am sad to be leaving but plan to attend a Catholic high school. My Catholic school has taught me to love myself, others, and God! We not only have religion class to learn about God, but we also go to church every Friday to experience God's presence. I am thankful that I can express my faith with my classmates."



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# Catholic Schools

## New principal for Trinity

By PAT HENNESSY

STAMFORD—The Superintendent's Office is pleased to announce the appointment of David Williams as principal of Trinity Catholic High School. The appointment became effective January 1. The search sought a candidate with the heart of an educator and a passion for working with high school students who would work collaboratively with faculty, staff and parents.

"Most importantly, we searched for a person who believes in the mission of Catholic education: To go forth and teach all. We have found such a person in David Williams," said Dr. Steve Cheeseman, superintendent of schools, in making the announcement.

Williams began his career in education as a social studies teacher and has served as a department head as well as a principal. He received his bachelor's degree from Guilford College with a

major in justice and policy studies and a minor in business management. He holds a master's in education from Sacred Heart University and his certification as a teacher and school administrator, also from SHU.

Principal Williams is also certified in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention—a Cornell University model for working with youth. He is committed to providing rigorous academics and a nurturing environment where students and colleagues can face educational challenges.

Williams grew up in Greenwich and currently lives in Stamford. He and his wife, Roxi, and their two young boys are members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Riverside.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to join the Trinity Catholic family and look forward to building long-lasting relationships with the students, staff, parents and alumni," said Williams.

Interim Principal Tony Pavia

will continue to be closely involved with Trinity Catholic High School as a member of the board.

Trinity Catholic High School students hail from 16 communities throughout Fairfield County (Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Westport and Wilton) and Westchester



PRINCIPAL DAVID WILLIAMS

County (Bedford, Hartsdale, Mahopac, New Rochelle, Port Chester, Valhalla, White Plains and Yonkers). Founded in 1958, it has a long tradition of excel-

lence in academics, athletics and community service. Trinity Catholic provides an atmosphere of respect and reverence in which each member is able to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, and physically in order to live as a positive Christian witness and responsible citizen in the service of God and others. ■

## New principal for St. Raphael

By PAT HENNESSY

The St. Raphael Academy Campus of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport was happy to welcome Sister Christine Hoffner, ASCJ, as their new principal. In a sense, this is a "welcome home" for Sister Christine, who taught middle school science and math there in 2006-2007.

Sister Christine's path to St. Raphael's began when she was growing up in Gales Ferry, a small village in the town of Ledyard, along the eastern bank of the Thames River. At Our Lady of Lourdes Parish there, she was drawn to a quiet grotto constructed in honor of Our Lady. She would go there often to pray and grew in devotion to the Blessed Mother, particularly under the title of Our Lady of Lourdes.

At Stonehill College in Massachusetts, she began to consider a vocation to religious life. She was introduced to the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by a priest she knew from Norwich, and got to know the Sisters at the ASCJ community in Hamden. She entered the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on August 25, 2003, and professed her final vows in 2011.

Sister Christine obtained her master's degree in educational technology at Fairfield. She continued her studies at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, and is currently completing a degree in educational leadership at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

In her first assignment, she taught middle school science and math at Santa Maria School in the Bronx. In addition to Connecticut,

Sister Christine has taught in Tallahassee, Fla., and St. Louis, Mo. In this diocese, she taught at St. Joseph School in Shelton, and was assistant principal at St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown.

Students and parents at St. Raphael's are particularly pleased with her appointment, given that their new principal is not new to the school.

Her love of sports, particularly soccer, should also endear her to St. Raphael's students.

"As an educator, I believe that we need to enable each child to reach his or her full potential through setting high standards while also providing the means by which to reach these standards," says Sister Christine. "It is truly a privilege to walk this journey with children, encouraging and inspiring each to be the best person they can be while also



SISTER CHRISTINE HOFFNER

becoming more aware of the people around them so as to strive to make the world a better place. In my short time at St. Raphael's, I have seen the dedication and commitment of the teachers here to this mission of providing an education and truly a formation of the whole child, and I feel blessed to be a part of it!" ■

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# Catholic Schools

## All Saints School reaches out to parishes

By EILEEN D'ANDREA

All Saints Catholic School is in the unique position of being affiliated with not one, but nine parishes in Norwalk and Westport (Church of the Assumption, Westport; St. Luke's, Westport; St. Thomas the Apostle, Norwalk; St. Jerome, Norwalk; St. Philip, Norwalk; St. Mary, Norwalk; St. Joseph, Norwalk; and St. Ladislaus, Norwalk).

"The populations of these parishes vary widely and that is one of the rich and magnificent blessings of our school," said Principal Linda Dunn. "We have a diverse population with many cultural backgrounds represented."

Increasing outreach to the Hispanic population has been one of the school's main goals for the past year. One of the initiatives

put into place has been to hold All Saints Masses at each of the various parishes throughout the school year.

"These Masses have been a way of putting our students in the forefront, from doing the readings, to altar serving, bringing up the gifts and serving as ushers," said Dunn.

Students from the school attend Mass in uniform and are directly involved in the liturgy. "So many of our students and families are very involved in their parish communities. Through these Masses, we can highlight our students and their work in the community."

Last June, the All Saints Mass at St. Ladislaus Parish in South Norwalk was held in conjunction with the parish's very popular Spanish Mass. All Saints students did the readings in Spanish and

Karina Brea, an All Saints alumna, spoke about the school and how her Catholic education prepared her for high school. "This is a great way to showcase our students, our school community and to get the message out to the greater community about the excellent, affordable education students can receive at All Saints Catholic School," said Mrs. Dunn.



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# Catholic Schools

## Assumption students take charge

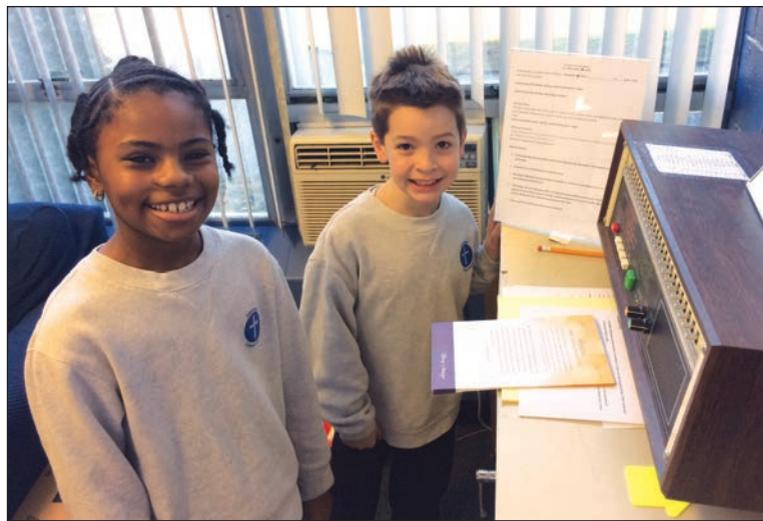
By PAT HENNESSY

Principal Steve Santoli is in his office as the day begins at Assumption Catholic School in Fairfield. But he's not making the announcements or leading the prayer or the Pledge of Allegiance. That's the students' responsibility—and they relish it.

"I never really had much confidence going out in front of people," says eighth grader Rebecca Sousa. "But my experience here has helped bring me out of my shell. I've been on the team that raises and lowers the flag, I've been a Big Sister to a kindergartner, I've set out the parking cones in all kinds of weather, I've acted in the Living Stations of the Cross."

Student responsibility is one of the hallmarks of Assumption, and it pays off big time. "Now I like speaking in front of people," says Rebecca. "I'm happy to do it."

Principal Santoli is always ready to praise the growing stu-



PREPARING FOR RESPONSIBILITY, third graders lead morning prayer and read the day's announcements at Assumption School in Fairfield. From the fourth grade on, every student in every grade takes a turn at being in charge of school activities.

dent population of Assumption, its diversity, the full day Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 programs, the before and after school opportunities, and the excellence of its language arts, STEM curriculum and enrichment programs

ranging from a dance program at the Quick Center at Fairfield University to the seventh-graders weekend at Nature's Classroom.

Most of all, he sees the effect that involving students in responsibility has had on the atmosphere of the school, and on its students. "Starting with the fourth grade, every student in every class takes a turn at leading the morning announcements,"

he says. "We had a fourth grader last year who was very nervous about speaking publically. By the end of the year he couldn't wait to march into my office and lead the prayer."

Assumption has a Buddy Program, matching middle school students with youngsters in Pre-K and kindergarten. "The sixth graders have a Pre-K 3 buddy, seventh graders Pre-K 4, and the oldest students have kindergartners," Santoli explains. "Each student stays with his or her buddy for all three years. They meet every month and every special event, so they get to know each other well. By the time they finish kindergarten, the kids have had the support of the same buddy for three years and they have the confidence to start first grade, ready to take on their own set of responsibilities.

"Every morning I meet the Pre-K 3 kids at the door and walk them down to their classroom," says another eighth-grader, Claire Gardella. "I want them to start the day happy and full of enthusiasm."

Claire, who will be heading to St. Joseph High School in Trumbull this fall, sees the

positive long-term effects of the atmosphere at Assumption. "Doing these experiences taps into a kind of independence," she says, looking to the challenges ahead. "It definitely makes me more prepared for doing things on my own, and doing them with confidence."

"Taking responsibility during school prepares these kids for the future," says Santoli. "If you don't have confidence, how do you present your views at a marketing conference? Our second graders sell lemonade to the Pre-K kids once a month to raise money for children's cancer. They've taken ownership of that task. If our students can challenge themselves in a safe environment, run their own little business at that age, they've been formed for their future."

Parents who chose Catholic schools are trying to get a better formative opportunity for their children. At Assumption they get that in full measure. "We give them the skills: academic knowledge, religious formation, interpersonal and social skills, and we foster responsibility," says Santoli. "We give them a solid foundation for life." ■



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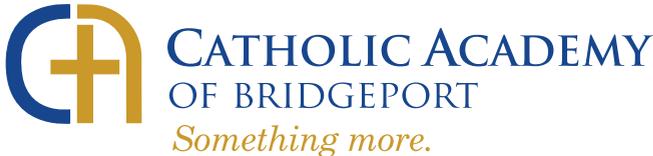
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# Catholic Schools

## Catholic Schools reach out to Latino Community

By **THERESA SCIALLO**

National data shows Latinos to be both the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. Catholic Church and the most underserved by Catholic schools. In 2009, the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame released a report revealing that approximately 70 percent of all practicing Catholics under the age of 35 are Latino, yet only

3 percent of school-aged Latino children are enrolled in Catholic schools.

In response to these statistics, Father Joseph Corpora, C.S.C., director of University-School Partnerships, helped the Alliance develop an initiative to promote the unique value of Catholic schools for Latino communities and help schools respond effectively to the needs of their Latino families. ACE published

a program guide to attracting Latino families to Catholic schools known as “The Madrinás Model.”

Father Corpora was invited to the Diocese of Bridgeport in the fall of 2014 to share the program’s best practices with the Office of the Superintendent.

He explained that many Latino parents do not consider Catholic schools as an option for their children. “The unfortunate



reality is that many immigrant Latino families have too little information, and too much misinformation, when it comes to Catholic schools in the United States. Since Catholic schools in Latin America typically serve only the elite members of society, many low and middle income Latino families in the US consid-

er them inaccessible and do not even consider them an educational option for their children.”

Father Corpora stated that “without appropriate outreach and guidance, the opportunity and benefits of attending Catholic schools will continue to be denied to this population.” A number of

► *CONTINUED ON PAGE 25*

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# St. Theresa School, Trumbull

## Students honor our nation's veterans

TRUMBULL—The middle school students of St. Theresa School honored some of the nation's veterans by creating and sending them Veteran's Day cards. The students wrote to several veterans from both World War II and the Korean War.

This marked the second year that the school's religion classes dedicated the day to learning about the sacrifices made by so many men and women throughout American history. They also learned that, just as Mary brought Jesus into the world at the Nativity, each of them brings Christ to the world through service. In this particular activity, the students learned about the importance of service to the nation.

The veterans that the students wrote to this year included former President George H.W. Bush, former Vice President Walter Mondale, longtime U.S.

Senator Bob Dole, and baseball legends Dr. Bobby Brown and Bobby Doerr. Each student was assigned a veteran to write to, and designed their cards specifically for the assigned veteran.

"The Holy Spirit reminds all of us that while many wars took place years before any of these students were born, these veterans still need our love, support, and encouragement," said John Agostino, middle school religion teacher at St. Theresa. "It's important for the students to recognize the sacrifices made by each veteran every day of the year, but especially on Veteran's Day."

Shortly after sending out their cards, the students were thrilled to receive a response from Walter Mondale, who served for two years at Fort Knox during the Korean War. In his letter, he thanked the students for taking the time to write to him. He also



stated, "One of the joys of my life was to have been involved in public life in our country." Mondale was referring to both his service in the United States Army, his years as United States Senator, and his term as United States Vice President under President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981.

In addition to receiving a letter from Mondale, the students also

received a response from Senator Dole, who fought in World War II, and Dr. Brown, who fought in the Korean War. In his letter, Dr. Brown stated, "The letters thanking me for my service to our nation represent the highest acclaim. It makes all the efforts I expended worthwhile."

Dr. Brown is best remembered as the third baseman for the New York Yankees who postponed his career from 1952 to 1954 in order to serve his nation. Through his example, the students learned how service to his nation was more important to Dr. Brown than any of the four World Series titles he won with the Yankees.

Additionally, the students received a response from World War II veteran and later U.S. President George H.W. Bush. While in World War II from 1942 to 1945, President Bush reached the rank of

Lieutenant, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, three Air Medals, and the Presidential Unit Citation. Aside from his service in service in World War II, he is best remembered as the nation's vice president under President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1989, and as the nation's forty-first president from 1989 to 1993.

In his letter, President Bush commented on the quality of the letters sent by the students. He wrote, "The letters are all so well done, and I thank you for remembering me so thoughtfully."

Similar to Mondale and Dr. Brown, President Bush also commented on the pleasure he had in serving our nation. He said, "Service to country is a high honor, and I count my years in the Navy and later as vice president and president as the most rewarding of my life." ■



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# Sacred Heart University

## The value of a Catholic Education

By **FATHER TONY CIORRA**

*Interim vice president  
for Mission and Catholic Identity  
Sacred Heart University*

Learning happens everywhere, all the time.

Occasionally the lessons are as obvious as math or social studies or history assignments. More often, however, the learning we do is vastly more subtle.

As parents, you know this intuitively. You understand the impact of setting a good example, of building fortitude in your child, of cultivating a sense of value and meaning. Knowing this, you know that choosing the right school for your child may very well be the most challenging and impactful decision you make as a parent.

In that one moment, you are selecting so much more than his or her education alone. You are choosing not only your child's teachers, you are choosing as much as 12 years of their friends and friendships, their mentors and their peers. You want to find a place that reflects the best in your child and inspires them to cultivate it.

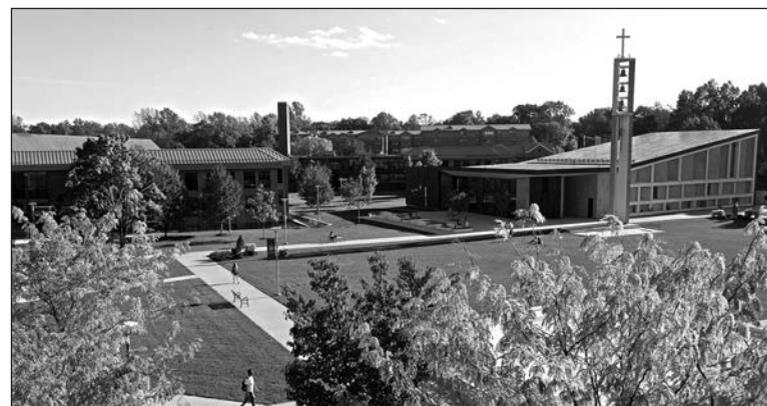
Every school will tell you that excellence in education is fundamental to its mission. In that sense, no school is any different from any other. The question a parent needs to consider is, what is the nature of that education?

Are grades valued more highly than the means to achieve them, or does a school exude character even as it teaches calculus? Is inclusivity a chapter in social studies, or the way we live?

If pragmatism is your benchmark, certainly the local Catholic schools produce amazing results. The average seventh grader across all Bridgeport diocesan schools tests better than 71 percent of national students in math and better than 79 percent of national students in reading. The average SAT score of the 2016 diocesan high schools graduating class was 1527. No question, these kids test well.

However, consider the other challenges facing us today—and our children tomorrow. Our Pontiff, a chemist himself, has called upon Catholics to recognize the importance of science in engineering solutions to the most

daunting challenges facing us today. Catholic schools answer that call with a broad implementation of STEM programs, with college-level courses available at all diocesan high schools, with



nearly 80 percent of faculty holding advanced degrees, and with excellent student/teacher ratios.

In an increasingly polarized world, Catholic schools unite children and give them practice excelling as one. Throughout the diocese, nearly 200 international students from 11 countries bring a world perspective to the classroom. Nearly \$10 million in tuition assistance ensures that students from every background have the opportunity to work together toward a common goal.

That diversity, far from being a burden, proves itself one of Catholic education's enduring strengths. Across the five diocesan high schools, 99 percent of the students who graduated this

past spring have just finished their first semester of higher education; what's more, they've done it having garnered \$72 million in scholarships and grants to help with the costs.

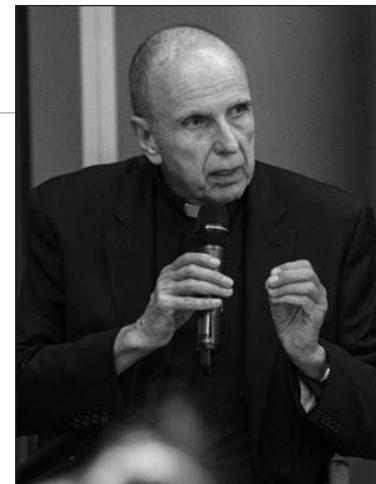
There are no shortages of practical reasons to seriously consider diocesan Catholic schools for your child in the K-12 years, and the same applies when looking at college. The essential difference between a Catholic university and a secular one is that learning takes place in a faith-based envi-

ronment. The Catholic intellectual tradition includes basic morals based on philosophical assumptions that affirm the uniqueness of each individual student. The opportunities available at most Catholic colleges include liturgical prayer, campus ministry and service opportunities—all based in a 2,000-year tradition of social justice.

The breadth and depth of the mission of Catholic colleges will differ among the 261 colleges in the United States. Each college will bring the flavor of its sponsoring community. For example, Fairfield University is one of 28 Jesuit schools in the U.S. and has created a culture based on Ignatian principles of education. Sacred Heart University, was founded in response to the vision of the Second Vatican Council and places a priority on developing lay leaders as agents of transformation.

Whether you are making a decision about K-12 or post-secondary education, the ephemeral matter of character remains the issue to which you should give your deepest consideration.

This is because school is not the end in itself. It is preparation for the rest of life. At the very least, it is preparation for the next chapter.



And while excellent grades and an impressive résumé are certainly influential when it comes to college or job applications, we are also looking for the very thing you, as parents, are working hardest to create: people of character, people driven to become their best selves and in turn to foster the best in those around them.

Unlike public and secular schools, many of which have wonderful records of academic success, Catholic schools are driven by a unique mission: to value living and learning within Christ's teachings of service, of inclusion, and, ultimately, of honoring all his creation. Catholic schools give education a context.

The students who respond to that mission, that context—as nearly all of them do to some level—are something more than just the most sought after candidates by colleges and employers alike.

They're also good people. ■

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# Book Reviews

## AGGIORNAMENTO ON THE HILL OF JANUS: THE AMERICAN COLLEGE IN ROME, 1955-1979

BY MSGR. STEPHEN M. DIGIOVANNI

REVIEWED  
BY ANDREW MCALEER

We are all instructed from an early age not to judge a book by its cover. This is a difficult task when it comes to *Aggiornamento on the Hill of Janus*, Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni's new history of the North American College. The cover features an arresting photo of American seminarians having a snowball fight in St. Peter's Square, circa 1965. Yes, that St. Peter's, in Rome, where it probably snows only once every 50 years. The photo promises an entertaining read. The author, the pastor of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford and a church historian, promises a work of scholarship, which the book delivers. So, in this case, the cover truly tells the story. In the words of Timothy Cardinal Dolan, from the book's forward, it is actually "one whale of a good story."

For those not familiar, the

Pontifical North American College, or "NAC," is a residence for American seminarians in Rome for undergraduate and graduate studies. It was established by Blessed Pope Pius IX in 1859. A history of the institution's first 100 years, *The American College in Rome*, by Father Robert McNamara, was published 60 years ago. Msgr. DiGiovanni's new work is a follow-up, covering the years 1955-1979.

The period detailed by the book begins with the re-opening of the NAC after the Second World War, when its facilities were used by the Italian government for refugees. Led by the dynamic rector, Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor, the subject of Msgr. DiGiovanni's earlier work, *The Second Founder* (2013), the NAC was refurbished on its 10-acre grounds on Janiculum Hill and re-dedicated in 1953 by Pope Pius XII.

The challenge of Msgr. DiGiovanni's seminal work is to recount the history of a densely

active stretch of time. The book begins with the rules-and-regulations era of the 1950s, when seminarians traveled to Rome via transatlantic ocean liner. Once in Rome they were known to each other as Bags, short for Bagarozzi, or cockroaches. This was a nickname foisted on them in the early years of the NAC by the locals, for the way they appeared from upper story windows during their mandatory *camerata* walks. The walks were meant to ingest Roman culture and reverence for places of pilgrimage. As described by Msgr. DiGiovanni: "Led by their prefect, eight Americans walked in the usual double file behind him, each wearing his round Roman clerical hat, dressed in black college house cassock, with black soprana with shoulder ribbons fluttering as they walked." A bygone age, indeed.

The book moves from the discipline and regimens of the 1950s to the period of *Vatican II*, *Humanae Vitae*, Vietnam, student protests, the generation gap, and finally



the 1970s. The NAC was not sheltered from the social upheaval of these times. Seminarians were very much a part of their era. As Msgr. DiGiovanni explains, "Magazines, newspapers, self-help books, television and radio were filled with jargon about life and freedom, and many young men based their vocations on the popular notions of the moment, setting out to become priests with little foundation of any theological substance."

The author succeeds in recounting this complex history in a readable way. The book is anything but dry or dull. It is always real. Student rebellion at the NAC, for instance, initially came not as the result of any high moral principle, but from sub-standard meals. It seems for several years in the early 1960s there was a high incidence rate

of dysentery and appendicitis among students. It became the opinion of doctors and nutritionists that this was likely caused by the nuns who ran the kitchen at the NAC buying third-rate foodstuffs. It took years to wean the nuns from their frugality, in the interest of preserving the health (and morale) of students.

Msgr. DiGiovanni is to be commended for producing a detailed account of these interesting years, warts and all. In the end, the NAC survived a difficult period (as we all did) and thrives as a revered institution to this day, forming priests faithful to the purpose inscribed at its entrance-way: "The young men who have come here from the distant shores of America, looking upon the Vatican Hill, strengthen their faith and their love for the Roman Pontiff." ■

## CHRISTIANITY MATTERS

HOW OVER TWO MILLENNIA THE MEEK AND THE MERCIFUL REVOLUTIONIZED CIVILIZATION—AND WHY IT NEEDS TO HAPPEN AGAIN

BY DAVID T. MALOOF

REVIEWED  
BY RONNIE LAZZARO

Blessed are those who live a life in accordance with the Beatitudes for they are the men and women who change the face of the earth. For over two thousand years, the words spoken by the Lord in his Sermon on the Mount have inspired both small and wondrous thoughts and deeds.

In his perceptive and groundbreaking book, "Christianity Matters, How over two millennia the meek and the merciful revolutionized civilization, and why it needs to happen again," David Maloof delivers a contemporary and challenging reading of the Beatitudes.

He draws a portrait of the Beatitudes as a powerful independent spiritual force that have many times in the past, and can again,

revolutionize and solve major problem areas on the planet. By comparing them to Maslow's hierarchy of psychological needs, he posits that these most sacred exhortations reach into the highest level of human needs—the need for self-transcendence.

A noted international lawyer, teacher and peace activist, Maloof convincingly defines the Beatitudes as the underpinning of Christianity, and at the very heart of what has propelled civilization forward to create, to solve, to improve, to forgive and to love. This gem of a book can be read as an *homage* to Christianity with the Beatitudes identified as the driving force behind the great movements in civilization.

Using the Beatitudes as his framework, he constructs an historical look at how those who live out the Beatitudes shape

the world. *Christianity Matters* offers the reader glimpses into the life and times of these individuals, and Maloof thanks those Christians, and non-Christians, who followed their higher angels and transformed the world.

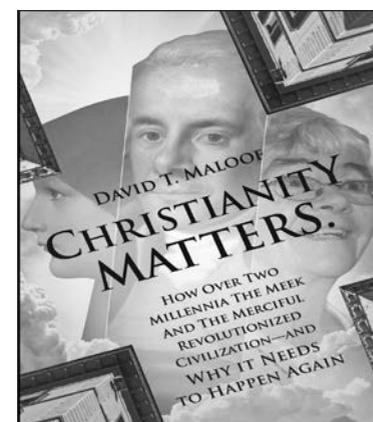
Many of these figures, institutions and movements are quite well known while others less so. However, he reminds us that fame has no bearing on the import of what was accomplished. From St. Vincent De Paul to St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta to William Booth, the British evangelist who founded the Salvation Army, he finds examples of those who were grounded in the Beatitudes as they cared for others in need.

At the heart of the development of the *Magna Carta* and the Declaration of Independence are democratic principles that

find their roots in the Beatitudes: Abraham Lincoln and the end of slavery and Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu fighting apartheid are inextricably tied to the Beatitudes.

Even Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu, was counseled by a Christian minister, Rev. Eli Stanley Jones. Gandhi believed that India would best be served by following a policy based on the Beatitudes and non-violence. It was Stanley's biography of Gandhi that informed Rev. Martin Luther King's belief that the Civil Rights Movement should be non-violent.

The author presents easy to read historical profiles of men and women who were and continue to be what Maloof refers to as "Beatitudinal Christians"—those who simply, but not always easily, follow the teachings of Jesus.



Some of his subjects are familiar while others are more obscure, but all are most interesting.

Maloof, a Darien resident and member of St. John Parish, has written a book that is both profound and accessible; there is much here to engage the general reader while also appealing to theologians and those in ministry.

*Christianity Matters* is an affirmation of the faith. As Maloof so sweetly says, it is a call to "flood the planet with loving service." If you haven't made a New Year's resolution, start by reading this book. The book is available on Amazon. ■

# Catholic Culture

## Cardinal O'Connor's Jewish Roots

By BARRY WALLACE

Bridgeport has a history of diverse faiths within its borders, but quite possibly one of the most remarkable examples is the story of John Cardinal O'Connor and his Jewish mother.

It wasn't until years after the Cardinal's death that the world became aware of this moving family saga in a story first published in the *New York Times* in June 2014. In retrospect, it seemed to fit O'Connor's extraordinary life and celebrated affinity with the Jewish people.

On a recent visit to a Jewish cemetery on the Bridgeport/Fairfield town line, I found myself standing over the simple gravestone of Tina Ruben, mother of Devorah Gompel and thus Cardinal O'Connor's grandmother.

The story comes out of the melting pot of American cultures in the late nineteenth century in industrial cities like Bridgeport and it could be the tale of many American families who, in the shuffle and amnesia of immigration, had lost touch with their roots and perhaps searched an entire life for identity and understanding.

O'Connor's mother, Dorothy, was most likely born Devorah Gompel in Bridgeport in 1887. Her father Gustave was a rabbi of the still-fledgling B'nai Israel in the 1880s. At this point the congregation was meeting in lofts and private homes around



Bridgeport. Little is known of Rabbi Gompel. He might have remained forgotten until Mary O'Connor Ward, the Cardinal's sister, and her daughter, Eileen Ward Christian, decided to do a genealogy search on her mother's family. This is when they made the startling discovery of their Jewish heritage.

What we do know is that Devorah Gompel left her home, converted to Catholicism, migrated to Philadelphia and married Cardinal O'Connor's father, Thomas, a gold leaf decorative painter. The O'Connor family knew their mother was of Eastern European extraction and a convert, but they assumed she was a Lutheran. In his biography of O'Connor, Nat Hentoff relays a story about Devorah Gompel's new religion.

Cardinal O'Connor's mother lost her sight for a year when

he was a young boy. As the Cardinal remembered, after her sight returned, she attributed her cure to St. Rita Cascia, and every year made a novena at her shrine. Between the Jewish mother and the Irish father, the future cardinal was in a home of profound spiritual energy.

His mother was clearly a woman of powerful faith and gentleness. We don't know why she left her home and renounced Judaism. The pressures of immigrant life and the drive toward assimilation were crushing for many American newcomers. There was also the conversion that the Church would've required if Thomas O'Connor's son was to be brought up Catholic. The split in the Gompel family must've been painful. Did the boy intuit something special about his mother's faith, something that drew him towards a life of compassion and service?

Little did she know that her son was destined to rise to be one of the most prominent prelates in American Catholic history. O'Connor was named head of the Archdiocese of New York in 1979 and then later elevated to cardinal in 1985.

John Cardinal O'Connor was an unabashed culture warrior and defender of the faith in the polarized atmosphere of New York City politics. The Cardinal's anti-abortion defense and his stand against gay rights ordinances were often the stuff of headlines in the city tabloids and

exposed him to much criticism. However, his own personal kindness and integrity earned him the respect of many including those who disagreed with him. Though his tone could be sharp, his good works were legendary, including his care for people stricken with AIDS.

In the culture wars of his time (and ours) it is easy to stereotype O'Connor. However, he was a complex man whose experience and ideas transcended both his supporters and detractors views of him. For example, he was a conservative, but also an author of the bishops' groundbreaking letter on nuclear arms. In Korea and Vietnam he risked his life on the muddy fields to say Mass for the troops. He was a Rear Admiral and a proud supporter of the American military, but he

was also troubled by militarism and unjust wars.

Cardinal O'Connor certainly doesn't fit any neat niche. Much to the consternation of some of his colleagues, he was a union advocate who stood with Local 1199 when health care workers picketed against a Catholic hospital. He was a strong advocate for special needs children, and he was a tireless pastoral priest who tried to love the whole world, one person at a time. With two great faiths that propelled him, he was truly a man of God whose voice and witness continue to speak to us.

*(In part II of this story, the writer meets Bridgeport Rabbi James Prosnit at B'nai Israel Cemetery in Bridgeport for a brief visit to the graves of Cardinal O'Connor's Jewish grandparents.)*

### LATINO COMMUNITY FROM PAGE 21

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport have heeded Father Corpora's advice and begun "The Madrinas Model" within their school communities.

Catholic elementary schools in towns with a high Hispanic population have recently increased their school presence in local churches that offer Spanish Masses. The four campuses of Catholic Academy of Bridgeport and All Saints School in Norwalk have engaged student and parent "ambassadors" to attend and participate in these Masses, as well as distribute school brochures translated into Spanish and give testimonials on the value of Catholic education.

Assumption School in Fairfield has even hired an Administrative Assistant for Community Engagement as the first point of contact for all families. Steven Santoli, principal of Assumption, remarked, "Ms. Navarro uses her ability to communicate in English, Spanish, and Portuguese to create a welcoming environment for families. With our growing population of Latino students, it became evident that many of those families were not completely engaged in the school experience due to a language barrier. They now have a resource to communicate with the school and can truly participate in their child's education and growth."

Assumption School in Fairfield has recently been accepted to participate in the Latino Enrollment Institute. School administrators will attend a four-day program at the University of Notre Dame this summer where they will be instructed on how to transform their school to attract and serve Latino students more effectively.

"It is important that we do all that we can to reach into the communities our schools serve to ensure that we are providing opportunities for all young people to experience the gift of a Catholic education," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Cheeseman.



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# Local News

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FROM PAGE 3

improvement in their educational programs," Dr. Cheeseman said. "A few schools continue to face significant financial challenges."

**"Our collective goal is to allow us to say with confidence—any child who enrolls in a kindergarten class in any Catholic school will be able to graduate the 8th grade from the same Catholic school."**

He said the strategic planning entered a new phase this past September when every school was asked to complete a comprehensive financial stress test designed to identify any remaining serious challenges to its long-

term financial health.

In December, Bishop Caggiano authorized the creation of two local school planning committees based on the results of the stress tests, one in Danbury/Brookfield and the other in Shelton/Monroe, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their respective schools, the challenges posed by changing demographics, and most importantly, how to ensure the financial stability for schools in their geographical areas.

The committees are composed of three lay leaders chosen by the principal for their professional expertise, including education, financial planning, facilities and marketing. They have met to study the data for each school and have begun working directly with the bishop and superintendent to identify recommendations regard-

ing how best to structure Catholic education going forward. Local pastors and school principals have also been part of the process.

A third school planning group was created earlier last year to study the Catholic schools in Stamford. That planning group has made its recommendation to the bishop who is currently reviewing the options presented.

"I am committed to complete this process with the help of each respective planning committee," Bishop Caggiano said. "Our collective goal is to allow us to say with confidence that, once planning is completed and recommendations adopted, any child who enrolls in a kindergarten class in any Catholic school will be able to graduate the 8th grade from the same Catholic school."

The Office of the Superintendent has established a hotline for parents and members of the school community to ask questions or offer observations. ■

## BOLIVIA FROM PAGE 8

"Friends Across the Borders" trips to lay mission locations from Bolivia to Kenya! These two-week immersion trips give people a taste of what the lay missionaries are doing "day to day" in the countries they serve, and often start people on a path of reflection and growth in global solidarity.

Anticipating the needs of college grads with student loans, MKLM recently announced the "Student Loan Repayment Program," which pays the missionary's monthly student loan payment, freeing individuals of this financial burden while they minister to the poor and marginalized in Asia, Africa and the



Americas, Carlsen said.

"We even have families with young children in mission! These programs all assist MKLM in attracting and retaining committed, service-minded individuals who want to make a difference in the world. Laity play a crucial role in the Church's commitment to mercy, justice and compassion."

(MKLM currently serves in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and its missionaries span a wide range of age, gender and professional experiences. To find out more about opportunity to serve and observe with Maryknoll Lay Missioners, check out [www.mkmlm.org/who-we-are/](http://www.mkmlm.org/who-we-are/). To arrange for lay missioners to speak at your parish or social concerns meeting, contact Matt Boyle: [mboyle@mkmlm.org](mailto:mboyle@mkmlm.org).) ■

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## DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT: JANUARY 22—FEBRUARY 18

### JANUARY

22	Rev. Felix P. Werpechowski.....	1972
	Rev. John Mitchell.....	2006
23	Rev. James J. McCormick.....	1965
27	Msgr. Francis G. Galla.....	1996
28	Msgr. Joseph R. McCarthy.....	1964
30	Msgr. John F. Cavanaugh.....	1990
	Rev. James F. Desmond.....	1963

### FEBRUARY

2	Rev. Joseph W. Kupec.....	1978
	Deacon Bartholomew J. Mauceri.....	2004
3	Msgr. Martin F. Doran.....	1967
	Rev. Robert F. Albert.....	1995
4	Msgr. William F.X. Casey.....	1978
6	Msgr. Martin J. McDermott.....	1986
8	Rev. James F. McGrath.....	1971
10	Rev. William R. Nagle.....	1979
	Rev. John R. Polinski.....	2001
12	Rev. John J. Filip.....	1984
13	Deacon Matthew Ashe.....	2008
	Deacon Rodney L. Varney.....	1988
17	Rev. George M. Karcinski.....	2006

# Sports

## St. Joe's streak ends, but tradition continues

By **DON HARRISON**

Streaks come and go in sports. Joe DiMaggio was stopped after hitting safely in 56 consecutive games. The UConn women won 90 straight basketball games before a rare loss. (The current Huskies are challenging that record now.)

On the local scholastic front, St. Joseph High School saw its streak of winning state football championships end at 12 this past fall when the Cadets bowed to Hillhouse, 42-21, in the CIAC Class M title game on December 10 at Ken Strong stadium in West Haven.

"We thought we had them. We led at halftime, 21-20," says tri-captain and quarterback Cory Babineau. "But Hillhouse was bigger and faster. They wore us down in the second half."

Indeed, St. Joe's had appeared in—and won—12 consecutive state championship games, the last four (2009, '10, '13, '14) under current head coach Joe Della Vecchia.

Still, Della Vecchia's 2016 Cadets could find considerable solace in their 10-3 season, a season in which no fewer than three players, wide receiver Jared Mallozzi, free safety Nick Osborne and linebacker Brian Harner, were selected to the Coaches Class-M All-State Team. Mallozzi, a springy 5-foot-9 junior who set receiving records,



ST. JOE'S COACH Joe Della Vecchia's 2016 Cadets could find considerable satisfaction in their 10-3 season. Shown here: (l) Quarterback Cory Babineau; (r) Nick Osborne.

was also named to the New Haven Register All-State squad.

Babineau, who became St. Joe's starting quarterback early in his sophomore year, capped a three-year career with an array of impressive numbers and was voted to the All-FCIAC Team. He set school records with six touchdown passes in a game (against Ledyard) and 215 completions in a season, while his 31 TD aerals and 2,860 passing yards this fall rank third in St. Joe's history.

"I owe my whole career to coach Della Vecchia," Babineau says. "He mentally taught us how to win."

Mallozzi offset his lack of size with resolve and skill, establishing season records with 100 receptions, 20 TD catches and 1,514 receiving yards. With four TD receptions in each of the back-to-back victories over Ledyard and Brien McMahon, he surpassed the St. Joe's mark of three shared by five players. He also created single-game records with 12 catches (twice) and 212 receiving yards.

Osborne, who shared the

captaincy with Babineau and Harner, also did exceedingly well despite a 5-10, 150-pound frame. He topped the 2016 Cadets with 52 solo tackles, and he tied the school record with seven interceptions.

"I don't think football is all about size. It's more about heart," he states.

Osborne's spirit was tested during the week of the Staples game. "I spent the week in the

hospital with Lyme disease and didn't practice." But he was cleared to play and was a major contributor to the Cadets' 24-17 road victory over the Wreckers.

Harner also put his name in the St. Joseph record book with 11.5 sacks this season and 19 career sacks (Jared Pierce had the previous highs with 8 and 15, respectively).

An undersized freshman, Jaden Shirden, belied his 5-7, 155-pound physique by developing into a much-needed tailback this season. He led the squad with 1,011 rushing yards and scored 16 touchdowns—four coming in the 48-21 triumph over Wolcott in the state playoff opener and three in the title-game loss to Hillhouse. "An amazing athlete," Osborne says of Shirden.

The most revered football player in St. Joe's annals, Tyler Matakevich, may have contributed to the 2016 team's successes, too. Matakevich, a 2015 All-American at Temple and a rookie linebacker with the Pittsburgh Steelers this season, visited his alma mater on a few occasions.

"He talked to us and helped us out in the pre-season," Babineau says. "He's a role model for all of us." ■

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# Column: Thomas Hicks



## As the deer pants for flowing streams

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

As far as I know, only one place in the Bible states why God created human beings. Paul, speaking on the Areopagus in Athens says that God created humans “so that we might search

for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us” (Acts 17:27).

Three other verses would partner with this verse.

Deuteronomy 6:5: “You shall

love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength” (cf. Lk.10:27).

Psalm 42:1: “As the deer pants for flowing streams, so my soul thirsts for God.”

Psalm 63:1: “O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you, my flesh pines for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

Do I know any people for whom these verses are true? I’m inclined to agree with a writer named J.H. Leuba who stated that “God is not known; he is not understood; he is used.” Therese of Lisieux lamented “Oh, how little God is loved on

this earth, even by priests and religious. No, God isn’t loved very much.”

An aging priest recently wrote this: “I have been on earth almost seventy years, and over two-thirds of that time in his official service, and I don’t even know him. I’ve not begun to begin to understand him, to relate to him. I’ve spent half a lifetime pouring myself out in a frenzied effort to produce, to deliver, to come up with results. The total result of all this seems a zero.”

I think I’ve met a few people who do truly know and love God. It shows in their faces, in their eyes. They radiate a gentleness, patience, kindness. One senses an inner core of peace. I’ve asked a couple of these people how their special relationship with God came about. They both said the same things. One night they heard someone calling them in the silence, and all at once everything they’ve been doing up to that point seemed rather vain and useless. Also, whenever they could, they loved to return to their cherished solitude. They were at a loss to explain things further.

Does God have favorites? At the beginning of *The Story of a Soul*, by way of introduction, Therese of Lisieux asks that question and answers “yes.” “I wondered why God has preferences, why all souls don’t receive an equal amount of grace... He embraces certain privileged souls.” Therese speaks of how they “attract the divine glance.”

As for myself, sometimes it is difficult to believe that the eternal and abiding Reality, the Reality that sustains the universe, wants me to be the object of a relationship with him, that I am in his thoughts and love. Do I attract the divine glance? I grew up in a Catholic world of morbid introspection: an occupation with saving one’s soul; avoiding hell; shortening purgatory. Holiness was bound up with merit and reward. It involved the compliance to laws, which consisted mainly of a list of “don’ts”.

I believed God was looking on approvingly or disapprovingly. God was depicted as one who was prone to take offence, and there was a need to placate him.

I think I viewed God as essentially the Scorekeeper and the Spoilsport.

There was the spirituality of devotions. For instance, there were the Nine First Fridays, the novenas, the prayer cards, etc. It was sort of a quid pro quo piety.

The understanding of spirituality that I had—before I came into contact with the writings of Thomas Merton—was probably typical of most priests, religious, and I would say, most sincerely committed Roman Catholic Christians of my generation. Thomas Merton noted that our images of God tell us more about ourselves than about God. We often construct a God confirming our own prejudices.

Are we meant, at some time, to be afraid of God? Is it a necessary part of each individual’s development toward loving God? Maybe.

With time, some things began taking place, silently, with me. Old things that used to satisfy began to lose their luster. I began to feel an ache for something more. Nothing satisfied as I thought it would. I knew I wanted something besides one another—a different kind of something, a different kind of want.

As time passes I think we get to know God better. Our idea of God becomes more expanded and profound. We get some brief glimpses of a desire for God. Sometimes I think I feel God closing in, and I yearn to call out to him. Perhaps I’m beginning to love God, distractedly. I’ve come to know that God can only really be known through personal experience. Perhaps like any other relationship, the relationship with God must develop from tentative beginnings to something more profound. It feels more like Someone is finding you.

The Second Vatican Council stressed the essential need in the Church for stirring up a hunger for holiness. I think many people today do feel a deep inner emptiness and longing for God. God cannot be replaced by human fellowship. There are the two great commandments.

Jeremiah 29:13: “You will seek me, and when you seek with your whole heart, you will find me.”

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# Column: Joe Pisani



## The Evils of Money

### SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

Just in time for the after-Christmas sales, my coworker gave me a magazine he thought was in keeping with my lifestyle. It was a supplement to the *Financial Times*, a very large supplement titled, "HOW TO SPEND IT"—the "it" being money. We devote our lives to making IT, so it's only common sense to get expert advice for spending IT.

On the cover was the photo of a man with a grizzled beard and a grim countenance, who could have been a one-percenter or even a half-a-percenter. The magazine was filled with opportunities that only a select few could appreciate—Patek Philippe watches, Assael pearls, and a matchmaking service for people who, I suspect, have offshore accounts.

Leafing through the pages, I felt a little envious. (As you know, one of the Commandments is "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's Patek Philippe watch.") Even though I can't afford super-luxury watches and I drive a Toyota, I still love to spend more than I should. And with so many temptations during the sales season, I needed a dose of reality, which I got when I read a story with the headline, "To follow money is to follow the devil, Pope Francis says." That put things in perspective fast.

==== *A WOMAN'S VOICE FROM PAGE 13* =====

to society. In fact, he takes from society; therefore the "quality" of his life holds less value.

As Catholics, we know that each person has a God-given dignity that is not dependent on whether he or she is healthy or ill. Life is a gift and our dignity is based on being a child of God, made in His "image and likeness."

The Church does what is possible to alleviate suffering; offering prayers, spiritual counseling

The Pope warned about the dangers of worshipping money and said it can lead to "the crassest selfishness," often hidden behind "an apparent generosity." He said it's sinful when money, which he has called "the dung of the devil," becomes the center of your life and business.

Guilty as charged, along with much of America. Sad to say, this preoccupation manifests itself in many ways, not just our consumer addictions. We're so conditioned to believe making money is the purpose of life that we often steer young people away from professions that don't promise a hefty compensation—even though professions that don't pay as well are often the ones that benefit humanity the most.

My friend Janet recently returned to her high school for a 50-year reunion with other members of the first graduating class, who reminisced about a time when the world was simpler, and right and wrong were clear—before we started substituting personal preferences for old-fashioned morality.

One of her former classmates was a priest, who said that over the past 30 years, he's officiated at one or more funerals a week and has listened to a few thousand eulogies. The deceased have been praised as good husbands,

and the sacraments. The Church also supports the use of palliative care. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable.

But, the Church also knows that not all suffering can be completely eased. The Church refers

loving mothers, pillars of the church, community leaders, and individuals of compassion, integrity, charity, generosity and honor. But, he noted, "not one eulogy praised the dead person because he or she made a lot of money." Which means to say the words "He made a lot of money" probably won't be etched on your grave stone. Yes, the thing we crave the most is ultimately the least important.

We all know people who live by the creed of "more, more and even more." Sometimes the pursuit of money is so obsessive it erodes their humanity and subordinates values like compassion and honesty. The relentless pursuit of money can dehumanize us in countless insidious ways.

While another friend was touring France recently, he took pictures of marble carvings at the cathedral in St. Pierre Abbey in Moissac, and one of them was titled, "Demons tormenting a miser on his deathbed." It wasn't a pretty sight.

"Miser" is a word you seldom hear nowadays even though there are many people who hoard riches and put them before God and their fellow man. At one time, being a miser was deplorable, but in 21st Century America, it's fashionable.

Do you remember the parable about the rich man who built more barns so he could store his grain and goods for years to come and live in self-contentment with his wealth? His plan was great in theory, but God had other ideas.

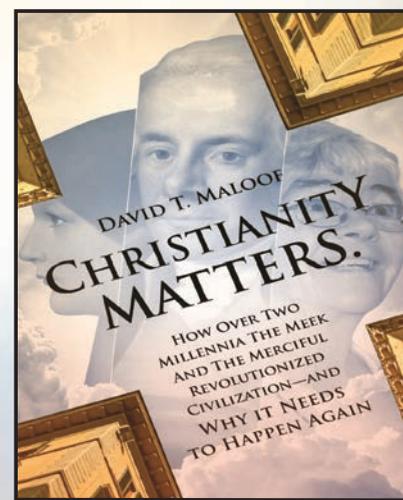
"God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then, who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' So it is for a person who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Now, I know why, despite

years of trying and occasional praying, I never won Powerball. Losing was in my best interests. Thank you, Lord, for looking

out for me. ... OK, where did I put the keys to my Toyota? And I hope my wife doesn't find that credit card bill.

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# Bits and Pieces

**NOTRE DAME** High School (Boys' and Girls') Class of 1966 is planning a 50th Reunion for the spring of 2017. If you are interested in working on the Class of 1966 Reunion committee or would like to receive more information, contact the Alumni Office: [tmarzik@notredame.org](mailto:tmarzik@notredame.org) or 203.372.6521 ext. 242.

**OPEN HOUSE** at Villa Maria School, Stamford, for students with learning disabilities, will be held Sun., **Jan. 22**, from 2-4 pm and Mon., **Jan. 23**, from 6:30-8 pm. For more info or to RSVP, contact Stephen Bennhoff, assistant head of school: 203.322.5886, ext 104 or [sbennhoff@villamariaedu.org](mailto:sbennhoff@villamariaedu.org).

**OPENING THE 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY** year of St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield, the parish will host Emmy award-nominated television actor Frank Runyeon performing his acclaimed two-part show, "The Gospel of Luke," on Mon. and Tues., **Jan. 30 & 31**, at 7 pm each night in the church. Tickets: \$6.50 per person, per night; family maximum of \$30 per night. Purchase tickets online at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) and search for events in Brookfield, CT; or call the parish office: 203.775.1035. Tickets will also be sold at the door.

**TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS** is celebrated at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, the first Sun. of each month (**Feb. 5**), at 4 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

**JOIN IN PRAYING** the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for Persecuted Christians from your home/car/office the first Tues. of every month (**Feb. 7**), at 7 pm with a conference phone number. How? Before 7 pm, call 877.216.5269 and type in the pin number 96869.

**GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY** meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (**Feb. 11**) from 10 am-12 noon, after the 9 am pro-life Mass. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or [stmarygols@aol.com](mailto:stmarygols@aol.com).

**CATHOLIC UNDERGROUND** will meet the second Sat. of every month (**Feb. 11**), from 7:30-10 pm at St. Ann Parish in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. It's an evening of Adoration, Reconciliation, prayer, music, and fellowship. For more info, go to CONNected Catholics: [www.conncatholics.org](http://www.conncatholics.org).

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK** will be offered at two

Masses to celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes and the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. All, especially the sick, the frail, and the disabled, are welcome on Sat., **Feb. 11**, at 3 pm at St. Aloysius Church in New Canaan or Sun., **Feb. 12**, at 3 pm at Blessed Sacrament Church in Bridgeport. Refreshments and fellowship follow. Contact Kelly Weldon: [klweldon@optonline.net](mailto:klweldon@optonline.net) with questions.

**DIVORCED AND SEPARATED** Catholics are invited to join "Hearts Renewed," a support group for divorced or separated men and women. Meetings are held in Fairfield on the first and third Fri. of every month (**Feb. 3; Feb. 18**), at 7:30. For more info and for directions, call Bette: 203.338.0503 or Peggy: 203.834.1287.

**MOMs+DADs** prayer/support group for those with Down Syndrome, their family and friends meets the third Thurs. of every month (**Feb. 16**), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, parish center. For more info, contact: [strapostolate@optimum.net](mailto:strapostolate@optimum.net).

**NIGHT OF UNITY IN CHRIST:** Come for an exciting evening of local Christian and Catholic speakers and musicians, gathering at Trinity High School in celebration of the unity we have in Chris experience great Christian worship and rap music. The concert/revival will be held Thurs., **Feb. 16**, at 7 pm in the auditorium. No charge; all are welcome. For more info, contact Fr. Joseph Gill: [frjosephgill@gmail.com](mailto:frjosephgill@gmail.com).

**ENCOURAGE** apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions or gender ID issues, meets the third Sat. of the month (**Feb. 18**), at 10:30 am and is strict-

ly confidential. For more info contact the Norwalk Chapter: [EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com](mailto:EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com).

**"COME AND SEE"** if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. The Secular Franciscan Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Fairfield, on Sat., **Feb. 18**, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass. Afterwards, there will be a social and meeting held in the parish hall. All are welcome! For more info, call Pat Heile, OFS: 203.255.8801 or [pheile5713@aol.com](mailto:pheile5713@aol.com).

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING** will offer a new series of classes at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown on Fri. nights: **Feb 24, March 24** and **April 28** from 7-9:30 pm. It takes the full series of three classes to learn the method. For more info or to register, visit the Couple to Couple League website: [ccli.org](http://ccli.org). For additional questions, contact Al and Adrienne Keogler: [a.keogler@att.net](mailto:a.keogler@att.net)

**CASINO NIGHT** to benefit the Shehan Center's After School and Saturday program for K-8 children will be held Sat., **Feb. 25**, at The Inn at Long Shore in Westport. For more info, call 203.336.4468.

**THE GREAT SHEHAN TRIVIA CONTEST:** Form a team! Join the fun on Tues., **Feb. 28**, at the Holiday Inn, 1070 Main St., Bridgeport. For more info and to register, call 203.336.4468.

**STAMFORD LENTEN ADULT BIBLE STUDY** entitled "The Scriptural Roots of the Sacraments" will be a six-week study held at Trinity High School every Thurs. in Lent, starting **Mar. 2**, from 7-8:30 pm. The study, led by Fr. Joseph Gill, will

examine how the Sacraments of our Catholic Faith, such as the Mass and Confession, are grounded in the Word of God, both prefigured in the Old Testament and then coming in fullness in the New. All adults who want to grow in their faith are invited to join us! For more info, contact Fr. Gill: [frjosephgill@gmail.com](mailto:frjosephgill@gmail.com).

**NAT'L CONFERENCE OF GREGORIAN CHANT** in Pastoral Ministry and Religious Education will be held **Mar. 10-11**, at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY. Topics include Sacred Music in Spanish-Speaking Communities, Chant Camp for Parishes, Pastoral Care of Musicians, and Liturgical Formation in Catholic Schools. Featuring keynote addresses by Msgr. Robert Skeris, Fr. Christopher Smith, and Mark Langley. Register by **Feb. 1**, at [www.dunwoodiemusic.org/conference](http://www.dunwoodiemusic.org/conference).

**LENTEN PASTA DINNER AND STATIONS**, hosted by Trinity Catholic High School to raise money for a weeklong service trip in Boston, will be held **Mar. 10** and **Mar. 24** from 5:30pm-7:30 pm. Delicious food, donated by Columbus Park Trattoria and cooked by their expert chefs! We will then celebrate the Stations of the Cross in the chapel at 7:30 pm for those who wish to stay. The dinners are open to the public. Cost is \$10/person or maximum \$40 /family.

**MASS CARDS** are available from the diocesan Mission Office for all intentions. The donations support missionaries throughout the world. If you are interested in purchasing a Mass card, call Elaine Bissenden in the Mission Office: 203.416.1447.

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# Holy Hour

## Catholic Underground

On Saturday, February 11, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead the participants of Catholic Underground in a Eucharistic Holy Hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, including praise and worship, prayerful silence, and the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Holy Hour is the first component of Catholic Underground, a monthly event hosted by the Diocese of Bridgeport's Connected Catholics ministry. Catholic Underground takes place at 7:30 pm on the second Saturday of every month at St. Ann Parish in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. Participants of all ages from throughout Connecticut gather in the candle-lit church to encounter Jesus Christ in a personal way, and to join together in prayer and song.

Catholic Underground began in New York City as a cultural apostolate of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and quickly spread throughout the United States as well as England. The Diocese of Bridgeport has hosted Catholic Underground since

October of 2015, and in addition to the powerful Eucharistic Holy Hour, the second component of Catholic Underground is a cultural event showcasing Catholic artists. Over the past year and a half, nationally recognized artists including Josh Blakesley, Danielle Rose and Sarah Kroger have shared their gifts and talents, providing those in attendance with the opportunity to enjoy art and music that is authentically Catholic.

Catholic Underground's February event will feature a concert by Dan Ferrari, a talented singer/songwriter from the New York City area who performed for Pope Francis while in Rome. Dan's original music is catchy and energetic, while conveying his deep Catholic faith.

"Catholic Underground is a great way for young adults to stay connected with our Lord and with each other," shared John Imbimbo, a recent college graduate and a resident of Newtown. "In a world where being a young Catholic is more and more difficult, we need these opportunities to grow in our faith in community. I'm excited for our Catholic

Underground to grow and I would recommend it to all adults (not just Catholics) as an opportunity to encounter Christ."

Catholic Underground is one of several events hosted by Connected Catholics, an outreach for young adults in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Information about upcoming Catholic Undergrounds as well as other events can be found at [www.conncatholics.com](http://www.conncatholics.com). Contact Evan Psencik at 203.416.1649 or [epsencik@diobpt.org](mailto:epsencik@diobpt.org) for additional information.



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## Ministry Formation Day

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH, 2017

8:30 to 2:30 pm

Queen of Saints Hall | 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT

**\$10/per person charge – continental breakfast and lunch are included.**

This day is open to all those serving in ministry. If you serve in youth ministry, religious education, liturgy, or any parish/school ministry, you are invited and encouraged to attend.

There are three presentations, styled after TED talks, during each round. Our focus for each round is as follows:

### ROUND 1

#### Modern Day Prophets

- A. The Church as Prophet
- B. Young People as Prophets
- C. The Prophetic Family

### ROUND 2

#### Prophetic Praxis

- A. Praying with Young People
- B. Pastoral Care in Crisis
- C. Reaching the Margins

### ROUND 3

#### Prophetic Engagement

- A. Engaging Others (*en Espanol*)
- B. Engaging Liturgies
- C. Engaging Technology

During each round, one of the presentations will either be live-streamed from the location of the speaker or presented via pre-recorded video.

Following each round, a panel discussion will take place where our emcee will facilitate a conversation with the attendees and the presenters.

For more information and to register visit: [formationreimagined.org](http://formationreimagined.org)



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