



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

MARCH 2017 | VOLUME 34, NUMBER 3 | LENTEN ISSUE

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Leadership and Pastoral Ministry

A New Perspective: The Call to Renewal

By **PATRICK TURNER**
AND **PATRICK DONOVAN**

How are we Church? How are we community?

These are the types of questions that animate what Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has been trying to do in the Diocese of Bridgeport over these last three and a half years. His aim is less about unveiling a series of new programs and initiatives and more about encouraging a radical transformation of who we are as Church and community. This move from programs to people, from transmitting the faith to faith as a transformative experience is a worthy adventure which will affect us all.

If we are to be instruments of change in this world and in the lives of those around us, we must rethink everything. Not our core Catholic beliefs, of course, but how we live and share those beliefs. This goes far beyond the hour many of us spend at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and asks how faith informs our head and motivates our heart. To do this, we have to challenge the culture of the status quo that exists in many of our faith communities.

Phrases like, "We've always done it this way!" and "Why do we have to change?" have no place in this new reality. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "Pastoral ministry in a missionary key that seeks to abandon this complacent attitude." Indeed, the Holy Father invites "everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities." (EG, 33)

The truth is, everything is on the table.

That truth worries peo-

ple. Stability is comforting. Knowledge is a powerful tranquilizer. But the call to shift the paradigm and refocus our efforts on new and exciting ways to engage others in the faith is required if we have any hope of passing the faith on to the next generation.

In 1976, John Westerhoff asked, "Will our children have faith?" It remains an important question. In 1983, however, Walter Brueggemann changed the question and asked, "Will our faith have children?" That simple play on words changed the conversation. Suddenly, the conversation became less about the concrete and more about the abstract. Conversation about transmission became conversations about transformation. It is a conversation that has lasted forty plus years with a variety of answers and mixed success. We believe the answer to Brueggemann's question lies, in part at least, in the exciting possibilities ahead. As we re-imagine our efforts in leadership formation, faith formation at every stage of development and pastoral planning, we are faced with a future that excites, motivates, and yes, challenges us.

Even the most routine things in the lives of our parish are up for discussion. We can face that call to renewal with hesitancy and caution or joy and optimism. Neither reaction will keep the changes at bay, but how we respond as leaders will certainly affect our faith communities.

So much to do

To many, it may appear that the diocesan officials at the Catholic Center are asking our parishes and faith communities to work harder. The truth is there are many new initiatives, workshops, proposals and pro-

grams—and all of it can seem overwhelming.

Perhaps it will be easier to remember that the key here is conversion. No one program or initiative can bring the faithful back to church. No one program or initiative can heal a heart broken by abuse or divorce. But one-on-one, two-by-two, we can offer a hand to those who are hurt, lost, or have simply drifted away. We can share our faith experience with our children or with other adults. We can remember that, though we are one body, there are many members (1 Cor. 12). We can share our stories, smile at the stranger, welcome the guest, and invite another to share the Eucharistic feast. We can see the challenge of renewal as opportunities for our family to grow. We can stop whining about our unread emails and our busy calendar, and share in the excitement of an invitation to grow, change and improve our faith communities.

Of the many exciting things happening in our diocese, allow us to share a few:

Our parishes have come up with plans to look at opportunities to strengthen what is being done well and to respond to those areas of challenge. All those plans are posted online.

Our schools have gone through an intensive assessment process to ascertain viability and sustainability for the long-term.

New academies in Stamford and the Shelton/Monroe area are forward-looking models where our young will be formed in academic excellence and as missionary disciples.

The Catechetical Task Force's report, due out in April, will offer support, guidance and new models of catechesis to help all re-imagine

faith formation—from baptismal preparation through adulthood.

The Leadership Institute will help form our lay leaders, and all Catholics, through new models of learning.

In the coming months, you will learn of new opportunities for faith formation, leadership formation and pastoral formation. These opportunities are the work of dozens of people who have given many hours to help re-imagine a diocese that is alive in the Holy Spirit. These opportunities will require many to step outside their comfort zone and rethink how formation happens. It will be a process, to be sure, and it will take time. Renewal never happens over night. But renewal hindered by an unwillingness to grow or change never even gets started. The key, we believe, is to echo the words of Teilhard de Chardin: "Above all, trust in the slow work of God."

What's next?

We invite you to join us on this adventure. We invite you to think about ways to strengthen your faith, deepen your understanding of how you are Church and community, and what you can do to help facilitate the spiritual renewal of the diocese. We offer five suggestions:

- Watch Bishop Caggiano's State of the Diocese address on the diocesan website. This will give you an overview of our current realities and a sense of the passion with which our bishop leads.
- Read *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel). This exhortation by Pope Francis to all the faithful is the Pope's instruction manual on how to transmit the faith. It is filled with practical tips and thoughtful challenges. Be sure to have a highlighter handy.

- Participate in leadership responsibilities within your parish community. We invite you to step up to serve on the parish council, raise your hand to become a catechist, go out of your way to welcome the stranger on Sunday at Mass. It is hard to be in relationships staring only at the back of someone's head, so turn around, smile, and shake a hand.
- Look for opportunities to grow in your faith. Check out the modules as they become available on the Institute's site (formationreimagined.org). Check out the diocesan calendar online to see the many wonderful workshops offered at parishes across Fairfield County.
- Have an honest conversation with a loved one about your own faith journey, and invite him or her to share their story. We can learn a lot by listening to one another.

A new day

There is a new day dawning in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is a day of hope and promise. This new day will require all of us to give a little more of ourselves. It will require a new way of thinking, a new way of sharing the faith. It will require us to think less of ourselves and how we once functioned and more about how we can engage one another as fellow pilgrims. As Catholic Christians, we are blessed with truth that does not change. Still, each generation must find ways of passing on those truths. That is the challenge we face. Indeed, "Will our faith have children?"

How will you answer the question? (Patrick Turner is the director of the Office of Strategic and Pastoral Planning, Patrick Donovan is the executive director of The Leadership Institute.)

ON THE COVER

ASH WEDNESDAY—
A youngster from St. Peter School in Danbury receives ashes. Thousands throughout Fairfield County attended Ash Wednesday services to mark the beginning of Lent, the Church's penitential season.
PHOTOS BY MICHELLE BABYAK

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Latest News

Preparing to enter the Catholic Church

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

“The true meaning of election is there is only one vote: you say ‘Yes’ to God,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said to the nearly 400 candidates and catechumens preparing to enter the Catholic Church at the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion on March 5. More than 1,200 people, including sponsors, godparents and family members filled St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Fairfield for the rite held each year at the beginning of Lent. It was an afternoon of joy and excitement as the candidates, many of them young adults, took a final step toward being accepted into the Church.

“You have been chosen by God for a great gift. Every single one is being called to holiness,” he told the men and women, repeating his words in Spanish and English. “The Church promises to walk with you, one person at a time, so that you may realize the destiny God has given you.”



“There is much work left to be done,” the bishop told the men and women during his homily. “For these are the days of Lent. Your preparation and purification involves going into the desert with Jesus. You must open your heart to Christ, become an open book and walk with him to find everlasting life.”

During the service, every catechumen (non-baptized person), and candidate (those who were baptized but did not receive further sacraments) came forward to the altar to be personally greeted

by the bishop.

The names of the elect were individually called from the pulpit by Rose Talbot Babey, coordinator of Elementary Formation. They came from nearly every parish of the diocese, and the majority were Spanish-speaking Catholics from both inner-city and suburban parishes. Many came forward as a single individual, while others were husband and wife or brothers and sisters preparing to enter the Church together.

First came the catechumens, accompanied by their godpar-

ents, to meet the bishop and to sign the “Book of Election,” to signify their interest in joining the Church. “And so, godparents, I ask you: have they faithfully listened to God’s word proclaimed by the Church?” the bishop asked.

“They have,” the godparents answered in unison.

The Presentation of Candidates followed the welcoming of Catechumens. They were accompanied by their priests and pastors as well as sponsors, who were asked to affirm them in unison. The Church also erupted in applause after the rite.

Many were bundled in winter coats as they processed forward on one of the coldest weekends of the year, but the new-found pre-spring light bathed them in gold as it came through the west facing windows of the Church.

The liturgical rite, known as Election and the Enrollment of Names, closes the period of formation and marks the beginning of the period of final preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation

at Easter.

The bishop thanked the priests, sponsors, directors of religious education and others who helped to prepare the men and women to enter the Church and asked them to continue to serve as role models in the faith. “They’ll look to us for examples of Christian renewal,” he said.

“Have the courage to walk with the Lord. Allow him to convert the world through you,” the bishop said in his final blessing parting words before the recessional hymn, “We are Called.”

The music during the two-hour program was provided by the Diocesan Youth Choir under the direction of Mary Bozutti Higgins. Traditionally held on the first Sunday of Lent, the Rite of Election is one of the final steps in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process.

(For more information regarding RCIA and adult formation within the diocese, contact Kim Quatela, coordinator of Family Faith Formation: 203.416.1334 or kquatela@diobpt.org.) ■

Pope’s vision: one of ‘encounter and openness’

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The vision of Pope Francis for the 21st century Catholic Church is one of “openness, encounter, and engagement with the world,” Archbishop and Apostolic Nuncio Christophe Pierre said on February 22 at Sacred Heart University in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

More than 300 students, faculty and the general public turned out to hear the nuncio’s address. Earlier in the day he received an honorary degree. It was his first college campus visit and honorary degree since being appointed Papal Nuncio to the U.S. in 2016. The nuncio said the Pope believes that Church “can’t be self-referential and wait for the world to come to it.” Rather, it must reach out to people where they are and help them to encounter Christ both in their person life and the community of the Church.

He noted that Pope Francis often uses the images of the Church as a “field hospital, light house, and torch in the night to

rescue those in distress” by bringing God’s mercy and love.

“The Church is a place for urgent care and a sign of hope in the midst of a present day storm,” he said.

“The Pope believes that we are not so much living in an era of change, but a change of era,” he said, an era requiring “missionary discipleship” and seeing the concrete reality of peoples’ lives and challenges.

Throughout his nearly one-hour address, the nuncio returned to terms such as solidarity, dialogue, inclusion, and mercy to describe the Pope’s vision. “Pastoral care is nothing other than exercise of the Church’s motherhood. Without mercy, the Church can’t be part of a world of wounded persons in need of love.”

Throughout his talk, the nuncio emphasized that being Christian is not simply a matter of accepting ideas or ideology. “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or lofty ideas, but the encounter with an

event, the person of Christ who gives us life.”

Several times the nuncio, who has traveled with the Pope, described him as “man of discernment who doesn’t see the world in black and white.”

He drew laughter from the audience when he said they should remember that, like other Jesuits, the Pope is “a man of evolving thoughts” who continues to explore the Church’s response to the modern world.

The nuncio said that the Pope’s thought is in “continuous development” and that he is not “locked into one rigid plan” to bring the Church’s mercy and teachings to the world. He said the Holy Father continually challenges the flock to get out of their comfort zone and identify with those who are suffering and vulnerable throughout the world. “Pope Francis has traveled to areas of conflict and places on the periphery all over the world to dramatize the plight of those whose lives have been overturned by hunger, political upheaval and



NUNCIO’S VISIT—Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport; Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Papal Nuncio to the United States; Father Bruce Roby, chaplain of Sacred Heart University; and Father Anthony Ciorra, vice president for mission and Catholic identity at Sacred Heart University. (PHOTO CREDIT: SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY)

religious persecution. He brings the mercy of Christ to those at the margins,” the nuncio said, adding that the Pope sets a personal example as a “witness of peace.”

The nuncio said that much of the focus of the Francis papacy has been on the Christian challenge to respond to the immense migration of people all over the

globe. “Pope Francis tells us that these are not people in search of a better future—they are simply seeking a future in the face of certain death,” if they don’t leave their home countries. “To keep others out is an affront to human dignity. Where there is a wall, there is a closed heart. We need to build bridges, not walls,”

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Annual Catholic Appeal

‘Lights will go on all over Fairfield County’

By PAT HENNESSY

“People of faith want to reach out to other people,” says Father Gustavo Falla, pastor of St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat Parish in Stamford and nearby St. Mary Parish.

“I have seen faith in action, people whose personal testimony of faith is touching hearts, touching lives. Faith teaches us that we are not alone—we are all together. Giving is not limited to things financial, but where there are people of faith, funds will always be available. People of faith will always be generous.”

Father Falla, who is also episcopal vicar for Hispanics in the Diocese of Bridgeport, notes that the deep faith of Hispanic

Catholics is making an impact on the life of the Church in Fairfield County. Of the 400 candidates and catechumens preparing to enter the Catholic Church at the Rite of Election the first Sunday in Lent, the majority were Spanish-speaking Catholics from both inner city and suburban parishes, many of them young adults.

St. Mary’s and St. Benedict-Montserrat presented an overwhelming number of candidates and catechumens, followed by other traditionally Hispanic parishes such as St. Peter and St. Charles Borromeo in Bridgeport and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Danbury. The devotion to the faith among Spanish-speaking Catholics includes support, both

financially and with their time and talents, to their parish and to the wider diocese.

Andres and Judy Grajales are parishioners at Sacred Heart Parish in Stamford. “About four years ago our pastor, Father Alfonso Picone, did a community survey and recognized how many Spanish-speaking people lived in the neighborhood. He got permission from Bishop Caggiano to start offering Mass in Spanish,” recalls Andres, who spoke on the ACA video this year.

As more and more Hispanic Catholics began attending Mass at Sacred Heart, Andres and Judy realized that, while the parish had an active social life, little was offered in Spanish. With the encouragement of Father Picone,



“GOD GIVES YOU EVERYTHING. Even if all you can give back is a little bit, a person who doesn’t have food is eating right now because of you,” says Liliana Sanchez, shown here with her husband, Julio, and their two daughters. The family are active members of St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat Parish in Stamford. (Para leer este artículo en español, véase la página 27)

they began an RCIA process in Spanish.

“We believe strongly that faith leads to outreach,” says Judy. “The Holy Spirit pushes you to action.”

Listening to the comments of candidates in RCIA, and to Spanish-speaking parishioners hungry for more knowledge of their faith, Andres and Judy realized that more was needed. They organized Life in the Spirit Seminars designed to help parishioners develop a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Life in the Spirit Seminars offer a chance for Christians to explore a fuller life in the Holy Spirit. By this point, the Grajales’ have seen nearly 800 people complete the seven-week courses. This past year, they began offering a Friday night prayer group in Spanish. “If you hear the Word of God in your native language, it has a bigger impact on your heart,” says Judy, explaining the need for these programs.

In looking at the wider Church, Andres draws a practical parallel all families can understand. “At home, the lights cannot turn on if you aren’t financially responsible. The Church is God’s home and our home. That’s true of the parish, and of the programs helping so many people all over the diocese. We have to do our part. If we are responsible, the lights will go on for people all over Fairfield County.”

At the largely Hispanic parish of St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat, Julio and Liliana Sanchez express the same sentiment. They, too, are shown on the appeal video. They lead a weekend-long retreat every

month, based on the John Paul II School of Evangelization. The goal of the program is the formation of parishioners to become lay leaders who will go out in service to the parish and the diocese wherever they are needed.

“The energy of people of faith is the Holy Spirit,” says Julio. “It brings us the energy to go out and help others. The Mass and the Scriptures aren’t something to be heard and forgotten. If people open their heart, they will get involved more often. In their parishes they may become readers or eucharistic ministers. From there they’ll want to reach out into the community and help everybody.”

“The appeal is one way people can do that,” adds Liliana. “It’s an important way to help people in the community.” As a parent with young daughters, she points in particular to the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund to assist families in affording a Catholic education for their children. Helping the poor through soup kitchens in the diocese is another service that touches her heart. “If I had more time, I’d like to be doing that every week.”

Liliana feels that the ACA video, with its emphasis on personal witness, speaks powerfully to Catholics who see it. “When people see a familiar face, they are more likely to respond. Now, when people come up to me after Mass, I tell them that we can do great things together. God gives you everything. Even if all you can give back is a little bit, a person who doesn’t have food is eating right now because of you.”

(For more information or to donate to the Annual Catholic Appeal, contact Pam Rittman: prittman@diobpt.org or 203.416.1479.)

Diocese launches online youth survey

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport has launched an online youth survey, www.TellBishopFrank.org, to better understand and meet the spiritual needs of young people and engage them in the Church.

The survey and other youth initiatives were announced in early March at the Catholic Center during a meeting of about 150 youth ministers, directors of religious education, pastors, and educators.

The 13-question survey seeks information from young people aged 12 through 29 on their prayer life, family faith practices and their relationship with Jesus Christ. All are invited to participate in the survey, which will be up on line through April 15.

“This information will help shape how our diocesan and parish communities continue to find ways to meet the needs of our youth,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “The information we receive will help us to re-tool our programs.”

The bishop said he was con-

If you are between ages 12 and 29,
you are invited to share your thoughts on
prayer, faith, and your relationship with Christ

www.TellBishopFrank.org

Now through April 15, 2017

cerned by the growing number of young people who identify as “spiritual but not religious,” and he wants to make sure that every young person finds a home and place in the Church.

Patrick Donovan, director of the Diocesan Leadership Institute, which is coordinating the survey, said the multiple choice questionnaire is designed to be filled out quickly. It can be taken on a smart phone and is designed to be “mobile friendly.”

A three-page summary will be sent to the Vatican in preparation for the October 2018 Synod

of Bishops: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.”

“The survey is a valuable resource as we seek to re-imagine religious education and faith formation in our diocese,” said Donovan.

Evan Psencik, coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Formation, said “the renewal of the Church must start with our young people.”

(For more information about youth ministry in the diocese of Bridgeport, email epsencik@diobpt.org, or call 203.416.1649.)

CAPP Educator of the Year

Sister Mary Grace Walsh honored

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

FAIRFIELD—Sister Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, former superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport, was presented the CAPP “Educator of the Year Award” at the Ninth Annual CAPP Communion Breakfast held at Sacred Heart University on March 12.

“No one exemplifies the leadership that Catholic educators bring to the Church more than Sister Mary Grace,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

The bishop said that all teachers “are agents of hope” who transform lives through personal example, self-sacrifice, and the depth of their own faith.

More than 150 turned out to honor Sister Mary Grace and to listen to the bishop’s keynote address on the uniqueness of Catholic education. The morning began with Mass in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

Sister Mary Grace was presented the award by Frederick Fakharzadeh, M.D., newly named president of *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* (CAPP), USA.

“She has a passion to transform the lives of young people

because she sees in them the face of Jesus,” said current superintendent of schools, Dr. Steven Cheeseman, who introduced Sister Mary Grace.

In accepting the award,

a public school principal, Sister Mary Grace said she was blessed to “learn to love the Church and to love learning” through the example of her parents. She also urged those in attendance to not only support



Sister Mary Grace, who now serves as provost for Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Hartford, turned the tables on the many educators, friends and family members who assembled to honor her.

“I’ve learned so much from so many of you in this room,” she said, acknowledging the “many teachers and mentors” at the breakfast who had shaped her life.

Noting that her mother was

their students but also their parents, “who remain the primary educators of children.”

In his keynote address the bishop said educators play a “transformative role” in the lives of students by their personal example.

“Long after they have forgotten what you taught them, they will not forget you,” he said, adding that, at a time when we put so much emphasis on test scores, it’s easy to lose sight of the purpose of education.



CELEBRATING CATHOLIC EDUCATION—(above) Dr. Steven Cheeseman, diocesan superintendent of school, introduces Sister Mary Grace Walsh, recipient of the CAPP Educator of the Year Award at Sacred Heart University. (left) Nicole Perone, director of adult formation for the Archdiocese of Hartford; Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, and John Grosso, social media leader for the Diocese of Bridgeport, congratulate Sister Mary Grace at the CAPP Communion Breakfast.

“Education is about giving greater life,” he said. “Teachers inspire ‘willing change’ in students.”

Noting that many students come from broken families, challenged neighborhoods and a society that often “seeks to reduce young people to a commodity,” the bishop said that Catholic education affirms their “God-given personhood.”

Bishop Caggiano said that even during the heyday of Catholic education in 1965, when there were 5.6 million children

in Catholic schools, there were many more Catholic youth in public schools.

“Teaching the faith was important, but the main purpose was transforming students through the life of faith.”

CAPP was founded in 1993 to promote Catholic social teaching. It is named for Pope John Paul’s encyclical of the same name that marked the 100th anniversary of the landmark papal document on social responsibility, *Rerum Novarum*.

SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING SEMINAR

Featured Speaker:

James D. Funnell, Jr.
Attorney-at-Law

His practice is limited to estate and trust planning, special needs planning for family members with disabilities, and estate and trust administration. Jim is a fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Estates and Probate Section of the Connecticut Bar Association. He is AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell, and has been named a Connecticut Super Lawyer each year since its inception in 2006. Jim is admitted to practice law in Connecticut and Texas.

Jon M. Starr General Agent
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Where and When:

March 28th 7 to 8:30 PM
Our Queen Mary Church Hall
248 Savage Street
Plantsville, CT 06479

March 29th 7 to 8:30 PM
Knights of Columbus Hall
37 West Putnam Avenue
Greenwich CT 06830

March 30th 7 to 8:30 PM
St. Pius X Church
Community Room
834 Brookside Drive
Fairfield, CT 06824

All are invited
RSVP please seating is limited
Email: starragency@kofc.org
Voicemail: 475-489-7866

ST MARGARET SHRINE

a diocesan shrine

Outdoor Stations of the Cross and Benediction

with Bishop Caggiano sponsored by the Knights of Columbus

Sunday, April 9th, 2 pm



Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 8th

12-2 pm (Egg Hunt 12:30 sharp)

All children welcome

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday—9 am Lauds, 7 pm Mass

Good Friday—9 am Lauds, 2 pm Stations, 3 pm Adoration

Holy Saturday—9 am Lauds, 7 pm Easter Vigil Mass

Sunday Easter Mass—8 am, 9:30 am in Italian, 11 am

2523 Park Ave, Bpt 203-333-9627 SaintMargaretShrine@gmail.com

Masses: Mon–Sat 8:15am, Sat Vigil 4pm, Sunday 8, 9:30 (Italian), 11am

Come for a visit, tour, retreat, or day of prayer.

Knights of Columbus

Field agents help protect families

By PAT HENNESSY

"I have conviction about doing the right thing for people," said Jon Starr, general agent for Western Connecticut Knights of Columbus

insurance. "When Father Michael McGivney started the Knights of Columbus back in 1882, the original focus was for Catholic men to come together to care for the vulnerable. The men would pass

the hat around for the widows and orphans. The Knights insurance program grew from that."

As a priest at St. Mary Parish in New Haven, Father McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus

with about a dozen men in the church basement, establishing their fledgling group on charity, unity and fraternity, as well as patriotism. From that fragile beginning, the Knights developed into the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization.

Beginning with "passing the hat," the Knights of Columbus has grown to have one of the highest-rated insurance companies in the United States.

While their insurance is only avail-

able to Knights and their families, insurance is seldom the reason men

join the Knights of Columbus. "Men become Knights for different reasons," Starr noted. "They want to be part of the good works of

the Knights—everything from helping their parish, to assisting the Special Olympics, working with children and adults with special needs, as well as holding fundraisers to support the Knights 'Coats for Kids' project as each winter draws near."

The Knights of Columbus were among the first groups to recruit blood donors during the Great Depression. After 9/11, the Knights raised over a million dollars, enough to donate \$3,000 to the families of each fallen first responder regardless of their religious beliefs.

While the Knights' charitable works are impressive, many men join from a simple need to share their faith with fellow Catholic men, sharing in prayer groups, in the casual setting of a Super Bowl party or in golf tournaments. Family is part of that equation as well, as with the upcoming night at the Bridgeport Sound Tigers ice hockey team. "These are Catholic men being men," Starr described their activities. "If you have a deep Catholic faith, you want it to grow and you want to share it."

The Knights insurance program grows out of the sense of fraternity and care of families. "Being a field agent is a full time job," Starr explained. "It's not primarily to sell anything, however, but to educate people on what they should be doing. We make an analysis of how to meet



JON STARR

the goals, wishes and necessities of a person. In addition, the field agents have an obligation to contact every single Knight in their portfolio every year. They may be fine, with no changes, or they may want to talk about term

insurance if they have young families, or annuities or long term care insurance as they look ahead."

He noted that, given the demographics of Connecticut, long term care has become the most popular

insurance for Knights.

"Our field agents are also on hand, when needed, to help stricken families with funeral arrangements and fill out necessary legal paperwork. It's our moral obligation to help when people are vulnerable."

During the year, individual parish councils or several councils in an area may hold an insurance planning night to help their members understand particular insurance possibilities. While the insurance is limited to Knights of Columbus members and their immediate families, the seminars are open to everyone.

This March, the Knights will be holding a series of planning seminars open to all families with special need members. The featured speaker will be Attorney James Funnell, Jr., who practices estate and trust administration.

"We want to help men protect their families appropriately," said Starr. "We want people to be taken care of."

(Where and when: Special Needs Planning Seminars will be held in this diocese on Wed., March 29, from 7-8:30 pm in the Knights of Columbus Hall, 37 West Putnam Ave, Greenwich; and Thurs., March 30, from 7-8:30 pm in St. Pius X Parish Community Room, 834 Brookside Drive, Fairfield. No charge; all are invited. Seating limited; RSVP to starragency@kofc.org or 475.489.7866)

"Our field agents are also on hand, when needed, to help stricken families."

Sacred Heart University's Department of Catholic Studies, Office of Mission and Catholic Identity and the Diocese of Bridgeport present

THE JORGE BERGOGLIO LECTURE SERIES

INAUGURAL SPEAKER
the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, will present his talk, "Pope Francis and the Social Gospel: Where Do We Go from Here?"

Tuesday, March 28, at 7 p.m.
Schine Auditorium

Hosted by Father Anthony Ciorra, interim vice president for Mission and Catholic Identity

Caggiano was installed as Fifth Bishop of Bridgeport in 2013. A Brooklyn native, he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Brooklyn and titular bishop of Iris Cathaig in 2006.

This new lecture series honors the spirit and vision of Pope Francis.



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

Notre Dame 60th

Father Sangiovanni recognized at gala

FAIRFIELD—One of the highlights of Notre Dame's anniversary gala was the recognition of Father William Sangiovanni, the school's president. This month, on March 19, Father Bill is celebrating the 40th anniversary of his ordination. In his 37 years with Notre Dame, he has had an enormous impact on the school. One of his famous nicknames comes from the annual GarlicFest popular at Notre Dame for many years—"Father Garlic."



Born in Brooklyn, Father Sangiovanni first came to this diocese when he enrolled in Fairfield University, where he graduated with a degree in history. He would later earn a master's from Fairfield U. in education and arts.

Prior to his ordination, he was extensively involved in government on the state and federal levels. He served as special assis-

tant to the Minority Leader of the Connecticut General Assembly, and as assistant to U.S. Congressman Steward McKinney from 1969-75.

He completed his theological studies at the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels at Niagara University, N.Y., and was ordained in St. Patrick Church in Bridgeport on March 19, 1977. After serving first as parochial vicar at St. Patrick's, he was named to the faculty of Notre

pal of Notre Dame by Bishop Edward M. Egan in 1994, he was extensively involved in youth activities and programs in the Bridgeport area. In making the announcement, Bishop Egan said, "I join the faculty and staff of Notre Dame in rejoicing at the assignment of one of our most distinguished priests to this important work."

Father Sangiovanni was named president of Notre Dame in 2010 by Bishop William E. Lori.

Honoring Notre Dame Lancer Legacy Award Recipients

Janet Haffner
Carole Christy Surina Educator Award

Anne McCrory
Sister Marion Rielly Leadership Award

Peter McGuinness '75
Notre Dame Community Impact Award

Notre Dame Alumni Hall of Fame Inductees

Daniel Augustine '70, Anita McBride '77 Frank Martire '65, Garrett Mendez '05

Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees
Frank Carrano '99, David Mihalov '02 Michele Mihalov Miller '04, Ken Burns '06 1999 State Championship Hockey Team

25+ Year Anniversary Faculty and Staff Awards.

Dame in 1980 and became the school's spiritual director the following year.

In 1991, while teaching at Notre Dame, he was appointed to the State of Connecticut's Ethics Commission, and later became vice chair. Father Sangiovanni also served as a part-time chaplain at the Bridgeport Correctional Center for 11 years.

Prior to being named princi-

POPE'S VISION FROM PAGE 3

he said.

After his talk, the nuncio took questions from audience members who used the microphone in the center aisle.

In response to a question by a student who asked how the Church should respond to the surge in populist and nationalist governments that are hostile to refugees, the nuncio said the Church is not political or ideological. He said that that Pope Francis seeks a "collegial relationship" with governments and that people should not expect "confrontation between the Pope and world leaders."

He seemed momentarily taken back when a man asked him

if the Church was near schism because some cardinals have asked for clarity on the Pope's thoughts concerning divorced and remarried Catholics receiving communion as discussed in *Amoris Laetitia*, the post-synod apostolic exhortation of the Pope. "You should be careful what you say—you should not dramatize that," he said. "The Church is not near schism or divided over the challenge. People should read it carefully," he added, noting that most bishops have worked within the spirit of the Pope's teaching and are responding to people in their particular situation.

When asked by a young woman what young people

should do who are discerning a vocations, he said, "The major source in discernment is prayer. It helps people to recognize in their own lives what God wants."

The nuncio's talk was co-sponsored by the Diocesan Leadership Institute of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The nuncio was introduced by Father Anthony Ciorra, assistant vice president for Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University.

"He's an alumnus now. He's one of ours," Father Ciorra said. The Sacred Heart University choir sang, "Lord we pray for unity" to begin the evening's program.

'Sweet Cases' for foster children

The St. Ladislaus Youth Group raised funds raised funds to help "Together We Rise" and is donating 36 "Sweet Cases" for foster children in Norwalk area. "The young people wanted to do something to help," said Donna Forcier, DRE and Youth Minister



at St. Ladislaus. She got in touch with Together We Rise, which is a non-profit organization that helps facilitate the process of getting duffel bags to local foster children. "We especially liked the idea that the cases would go to local children and that we would be involved in personalizing the cases and not just donating money," she said. The Youth Group held a bake sale and thanks to the generosity of the small but enthusiastic parish, they were able to purchase 36 Sweet Cases! Youth group members assembled to decorate all the duffel bags with positive words of encouragement and fun drawings. The St. Ladislaus Youth Group was founded in October of 2016 with 4 original members. The group meets on Wednesdays and welcomes young people in 8th through 12th grade. St. Lasilaus Parish is located at 25 Cliff Street in South Norwalk. For more information visit the website.



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Convivio 2017

'I am with you always'

By DANIEL GARDELLA AND
ABIGAIL WOLPIUK

On a weekend where most teens are inside watching Netflix, around 150 youth flooded Sacred Heart University for Convivio 2017. Filled with participants, group leaders, and a plethora of volunteers, the Edgerton Theater became active with excitement. As Convivio President Gabriel Bitencourt brought down the gavel during the opening ceremony, the fun-filled weekend, centered on the theme "I am with you always," commenced!

Following a satisfying dinner, Diocese of Bridgeport seminarian Andre Escalera gave the opening talk, stressing the importance of knowing what an authentic relationship with God feels like.

Saturday brought even more enthusiasm as a 12-hour day began with a talk by Blake Brouillette. Brouillette, as well as some others, flew all the way from Christ in the City, a non-profit organization in

Denver, Colorado, that forms missionaries and volunteers to serve the poor in the streets. His moving testimony was about being connected to the world yet still experiencing loneliness. From there, small groups broke out into discussion of how social media has affected our very psyche.

Participants were given a witness about the importance of receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation by Father John Connaughton. He was assisted by me, Daniel. Being able to give my own testimony to so many people about the sacrament was humbling to me. To express how good it truly feels to be cleansed of all my sins is a feeling like no other.

Numerous participants attended Reconciliation and felt the weight of their sin lifted. With all that renewed energy, they moved onto games in the next room over.

Once the intensity of the games subsided, it was time for Lauren Scharmer, a youth minister from St. Louis, Missouri to give her witness about living in communion with God and others. Group sessions focusing on the *Lectio Divina* (Divine Scripture) followed the talk.

A poignant and powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross was delivered by the High School Apostles before beginning Eucharistic Adoration. Adoration was the highlight of Convivio 2017 for many participants as

they were able to look at Christ and have Christ look back into their hearts.

The mood changed quickly again from solemn to spirited as the dance party started. The last hour of a long but fruitful day saw everyone come together in communion on the dance floor.

The final day of Convivio brought a renewed sense of community, a dissipation of loneliness, and a reawakening of the faith. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano arrived, welcomed by a lively crowd eager to hear his wise words. Bishop Caggiano encouraged the youth to "go into the desert"—a place where there are no phones, no distractions, just thoughts. A place where we can find the God who has been searching for us. Mass was celebrated by Father Connaughton, whose homily reminded us that, just like Adam and Eve, we cannot hide from our sins. Even if we try, God will always be looking for us because he is with us always.

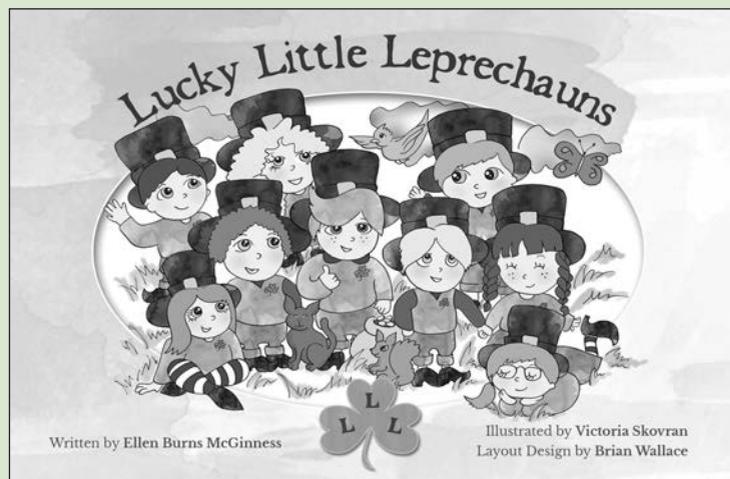
"Love," "passion," and "authentic encounters with Christ" were just a few of the ways participants and group leaders summed up Convivio 2017. As students head back into their everyday social lives, they are better equipped to know how to fight loneliness in a disconnected world.

(Daniel Gardella is a senior at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, and Abigail Wolpiuk is a senior at Lauralton Hall in Milford.) ■



Lucky Little Leprechauns

Liam, a plush toy leprechaun from Dublin, was the inspiration for *Lucky Little Leprechauns*, a light little tale of misfit leprechauns by Ellen Burns McGinness. Although St. Patrick's Day has just passed, the tale pulls in elements and rhythms from other seasons, giving little ones a reason to giggle as they enjoy a quick story certain to sprinkle good luck charms in their imaginations. *Lucky Little Leprechauns* is available at Amazon.com. ■



**Annual Children's
Tag Sale**
St. Thomas More Church
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Saturday, March 25th from 9am-1pm

Early Bird Entry at 8am with \$10 donation
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Directions: Exit 10 from 95 to Noroton Avenue. Head north
on Noroton to Middlesex Road. East (right) on Middlesex to Church

Special Events

Spring Gala set for Foundations in Education

BRIDGEPORT—A business leader and philanthropist, along with two long-time Fairfield County educational leaders, will be honored at the Foundations in Education Spring Gala set for Thursday May 11, at 6 pm at Woodway Country Club in Darien.

The evening will get underway at 5:45 with a sponsor/honoree reception, followed by a 6 pm registration and cocktails and 7 pm dinner seating. The formal program will begin at 7:15.

George F. Landegger, chairman and president of Parsons & Whittemore Enterprises Corp; Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, executive director of the Catholic Academies of Bridgeport; and

Tony Pavia, Stamford educator and principal, will be honored at the gala.

Proceeds from the evening will benefit the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, a major source of financial aid for families throughout the diocese who wish to enroll their children in Catholic schools.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will present the awards during the evening, which will bring together business and charitable leaders throughout Fairfield County.

Formally launched this February in an event at Sacred Heart University, Foundations in Education is an independent, non-profit organization working to create resources that will help transform diocesan Catholic

schools into competitive, sustainable, 21st century learning environments that are faith-filled and academically excellent.

Barbara and Peter Ripp of Greenwich are serving as event chairs. Committee chairs include Christine and David Cappiello of Newtown, Jody and John Meyers of Fairfield, Pat and Jim Ruane of Bridgeport, Janet and Joseph Tatuski of Southport and Christine and Jim Woods of Shelton.

Honorees

George F. Landegger is chairman and president of Parsons & Whittemore Enterprises Corp., and director at Cobalt Technologies, Inc.

He graduated from Georgetown University's School

of Foreign Service in 1958.

He served for 22 years as chair of Georgetown University's Foreign Service School, where he is now chairman emeritus, and was a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Artillery. He has been chair of the Commission on Higher Education in the State of Alabama, and chaired Reading Alabama, which provided interactive computer reading education to 70 percent of the students in all public school kindergartens and first grades in the State of Alabama. He was honored, together with Martin Luther King, Jr., and Booker T. Washington, as one of the twelve most outstanding individuals for the advancement of education and commerce in Alabama's history.

Additionally, he is the founder and primary supporter of Destin Harvest, a charitable organization established to provide perishable food to soup kitchens and other recipients which serve the needy. As the primary support of Karuna Niwas, he financed and established a K-12 grade school for girls in Midwest Pakistan.

Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, a Sister of the Society of the Sacred Heart, was named executive director of the Catholic Academies of Bridgeport in January 2010, and has led the effort to build financial support and other resources for the four Bridgeport schools. She is also well known for her successful, 19-year tenure as headmistress of Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich. She also served as headmistress at Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart

in Princeton, N.J., for 13 years.

A native of New Jersey, Sister Magnetti graduated from Manhattanville College with a B.A. in government. Upon graduation, she entered the Society of the Sacred Heart, an international religious congregation dedicated to the education of youth. She earned an M.A. in theology from Union Theological Seminary in New York. In May 2008, she received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Manhattanville College.

Tony Pavia, a native of Stamford and graduate of Stamford High School, has over 40 years of experience in the education field, including six years as principal of Stamford High School from 1996 to 2002, and nine years of service as principal of New Canaan High School.

His service to the diocese began in March 2011, when Bishop William E. Lori appointed him principal of Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford after the school was suffering from the sudden passing of two beloved administrators. During his tenure, he developed a comprehensive needs assessment of the campus and drew up the preliminary plans for school improvements. He earned his bachelor, masters, and Sixth Year degree from Southern Connecticut University. He and his family are members of St. Bridget Parish in Stamford.

(For more information on Foundations in Education or an invitation to attend the gala, contact Holly Doherty-Lemoine: HLemoine@diobpt.org or 203.416.1405.)

Jesuit priest, MD, to speak at White Mass breakfast

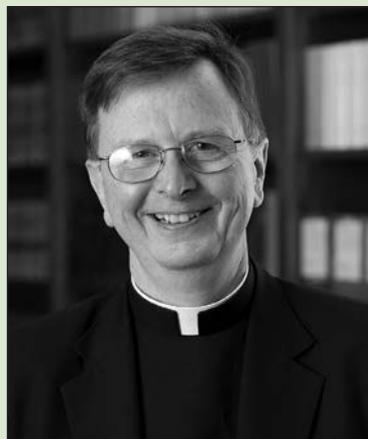
BRIDGEPORT—Physician and priest Father Myles Sheehan, SJ, MD, will be the featured speaker at the 24th annual White Mass breakfast set for Sunday, March 26, at 9 am at St. Peter Church, 104 Main St., Danbury.

"Pope Francis' vision of the Church as a Field Hospital: What does it mean to health care providers?" will be his topic at the breakfast, which will immediately follow Mass. The breakfast and talk will be held at Ridgewood Country Club, 119 Franklin St., Danbury.

Father Sheehan is assistant to the provincials of the USA Northeast and Maryland Provinces of the Society of Jesus, a role in which he oversees Jesuit health care centers.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be the principal celebrant and homilist at the Mass, which honors healthcare professionals throughout the diocese.

"As a trained physician and priest, Father Myles Sheehan's ministry offers a unique perspective at the intersection of spiritual and physical healing," said Bishop Caggiano. "We welcome Father Sheehan's reflections at a time of great change and challenge in



FATHER MYLES SHEEHAN, SJ, MD

Catholic health care and other institutions."

During the White Mass, two area healthcare professionals will be presented with the Father Rufin Compassionate Care Award. The recipients are traditionally drawn from the ranks of physicians, nurses, dentists, healthcare workers or healthcare volunteers in Fairfield County. The Father Rufin Award is presented to those who exemplify the compassionate and loving care for the sick. It is named after the late Father Rufin Kuveikis, a Capuchin Franciscan and chaplain at Norwalk Hospital for 18 years. He died in 2008 at age 86.

Father Myles Sheehan, SJ, former provincial of the New

England Province, was named the assistant to the provincial for senior Jesuits in May 2015. He was named provincial of the New England Province in 2009.

Father Sheehan was born on April 18, 1956, in Marshfield, Mass., and graduated from Thayer Academy in Braintree, Mass. in 1974. Prior to entering the Society of Jesus, he completed his undergraduate degree and doctorate in medicine at Dartmouth.

Father Sheehan joined the New England Province on August 25, 1985, and made his novitiate at St. Andrew House in Boston. After completing his philosophy studies at Loyola University in Chicago, he did two years of post-doctoral studies in gerontology at Harvard Medical School. He earned his M.Div. from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge and was ordained to the priesthood on June 18, 1994.

(All healthcare workers and their guests are invited to attend the White Mass, which is also open to the general public. To make a reservation for breakfast at Ridgewood Country Club, (\$25/person), contact Janet Davis: 203.416.1636 or jdavis@diobpt.org.)

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EDITORIAL

Free yourself!

If you let it, Lent can feel so restful, so clear, so free. The last of the holiday decorations get boxed and put away. The house looks suddenly larger, cleared of clutter, possibly even cleaned a bit. There are no glittering lights outside and Easter flowers are weeks away. The yard is barren. It's a time for letting the outside rest, no demands on your time or labor. If you go to Confession, your inside landscape is cleared, too. It will clutter up again, but not right now.

Some people bring an intense devotion to Lent; others perhaps merely observe Ash Wednesday. Any devotion you pursue will make you feel stronger, more in control. Lack of chocolate will clean your blood; daily Mass can clear your brain. Eschewing Facebook will definitely give a boost to your spirit.

All these spiritual gestures, large or small, are your own choice. No one has to know you made them; no one will know if you break them. The choices are all yours. It feels so good. It feels free.

The Journey of Faith

Much has been written about the number of people who are no longer practicing Catholics, but the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Fairfield on the first Sunday in Lent tells a different story.

A total of 1,200 men and women filled the Church for the rite that prepares them for the final steps toward full communion with the Church.

During the ceremony, 400 people came forward, many of them Spanish-speaking from inner city and suburban parishes. Most were young adults; in some cases, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives became the "candidates and catechumens" prepared to enter the Church. It was a day of great joy and excitement, and it should inspire us all.

On that same weekend, 150 youth gathered at Sacred Heart University for "Convivio," a weekend celebration of faith for young people in the diocese. At a time when many young people identify as "spiritual but not religious," their participation in the "Convivio" experience is reassuring and hopeful.

In the coming months there will be many more youth events including the "Fan the Fire Youth Rally," a diocesan pilgrimage, SHU "Journey," and "Encuentro," which will give youth the opportunity to encounter Jesus and grow in their faith.

There is also much good news in the programs of the Diocesan Leadership Institute and the Parish Pastoral Planning Teams that are working side by side to evangelize, to engage young people, to welcome Catholics back to the Church, and to renew the faith life of the diocese.

Bishop Caggiano has often spoken about the spiritual hunger that many people experience, and the need for the Church to be prepared to "reach out one person at a time." This Lent, as we take our own faith journey, it is good to know that others are walking alongside us as we work together to put Christ at the center of our lives.

Fire and Ashes

(This reflection is reprinted from Bishop Caggiano's Facebook page: BishopFrankJ.Caggiano. The bishop is also on Twitter @BishopCaggiano.)

Are you afraid to approach fire? On a natural level, our response should be yes, since fire has unbridled power to destroy whatever lies in its path. However, as we immerse ourselves in the discipline of Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday, the Church places before us the ashes of burnt palms, to remind us of our natural death and to invite the power of spiritual fire into our lives.

What is this spiritual fire? It is nothing other than the purifying, transforming power of the Holy Spirit, who came upon the heads of the apostles on Pentecost and is ready to come upon you and me as divine, purifying fire. For if we are serious in desiring a purer, more authentic love for our Lord and his people, there is much in your life and mine that needs to be burned away this Lent.

What are the spiritual obstacles that you and I have created into our lives that now prevent us from believing our Lord more firmly, loving our neighbor more generously, and hoping in God's love during a time of such great challenges? Can you and I name what these obstacles are? Are we ready to name our sins? faults? failings? And if we are ready to name them, are we also ready to invite the awesome power of the Holy Spirit to burn those obstacles, faults, sins and failures away through prayer, abstinence, fasting and works of charity?

If we end the season of Lent with only the ashes of burnt palms to show for it, what will we have accomplished in Christ? ■

EDITOR'S CHOICE

The Way of the Cross



ASHES ON THE MOVE—(Above) Thousands of people throughout the diocese received ashes in churches and in other locations. St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk fueled up the parish bus to once again bring "Ashes on the Move" to businesses, schools, a local scrap yard and even a hair salon! "I'm bringing the bus onto the street to offer others a reminder of Ash Wednesday," said Father Walter Orłowski, pastor of St. Matthew. "To give them ashes. To tell them our about great Catholic Church. To invite them in and listen to them."

YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY THE CROSS—(right) Youth from Norwalk parishes carried the Cross throughout the city on Ash Wednesday to begin their Lenten observance. In this photo, the young people provide a striking witness as they cross a bridge with South Norwalk (SONO) in the background.



CLERGY APPOINTMENT

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

RESIDENCE

REVEREND GILBERT D'SOUZA, Retired, to Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence, Stamford. Effective date was February 15.

RETIREMENT

DEACON FRANK J. MASSO, Deacon, Saint Lawrence Parish, Shelton to Retirement. Effective date was February 4.

Monsignor Thomas W. Powers, Vicar General, March, 2017

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Editorial



The birdsong of grace

A WOMAN'S VOICE

BY KATIE-SCARLETT CALCUTT

Katie-Scarlett Calcutt is the mother of four.

This was the first year I noticed it: the absence of birdsong. It takes a special attention to notice something's absence, and I had never before pined for those trills and chirpings. But one morning during the dead of winter, I woke up to find myself yearning for their song and thinking to the spring, when it floods through open windows and helps me greet the day.

Why did I only now notice? I hypothesize it comes from gardening over the last few years.

I can grow an eight-foot sunflower, but I still have a long way to go with my vegetables. All the same, I've developed a connection with the seasons that makes me giddy at the first snowfall, or the smell of spring, or summer sun on my skin or the sound of crunching leaves. While I may not be able to harness all that she has to offer, I am at least more fully aware of Mother Nature's gifts, from birdsong to begonias.

I've had a similar experience with grace.

Let me rewind: My First

Reconciliation, perhaps like yours, came when I was seven: I snuck a Starburst, I teased a classmate, a bike destroyed the flowerbed and I happened to be riding it. After that, I averaged a Confession every seven years. One priest politely informed me this was not a good batting average. Honestly, I wasn't opposed to it. It just wasn't on my radar.

At some point, I learned it was a precept of the Church that I go once a year. This realization came about 1.5 seconds after I learned there were such things as precepts of the Church. So I started, merely out of obedience, to go a bit more often. Then a bit more often until, eventually, my husband and I set a goal of once a month.

That's when I began to notice it: the absence of grace. Immediately after Confession, I could feel the "birdsong," the grace, at work in my heart. But as the month went on, I would feel this grace less and less. It was there if I could make room for it, but sin and self were

edging it out. I could feel when it had been a month or more since my last confession: I would be short with my family, distracted during the day, lazy about my responsibilities. My reform needed always to start first with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. So off I'd go to the confessional before things got worse.

Now that I am going more than once every seven years, it is tempting to get discouraged as I hear myself confessing the same things over and over again. Seriously, I say to myself, this again? But I trust Christ when he tells Peter to forgive his brother not seven times, but seventy-seven. If he would ask it of Peter, then he will give that forgiveness to me, as long as my heart sin-

cerely desires to let go of the sin and cling to him.

It is so much easier to do that if I am regularly humbling myself in the confessional and seeking forgiveness. I used to think the fruit of a good Confession would be a magic end of a habitual

"That's when I began to notice it: the absence of grace... I could feel the 'birdsong' at work in my heart."

sin. Rather, it more often looks like a heightened awareness of how damaging that sin is to my friendship with Christ, as well as an awareness of how necessary, nourishing and powerful his grace is.

My path to holiness, like my garden, will be chock full of failed attempts. But I am grateful for the sacrament that makes it possible to sense the silent beauty around and within me, waiting to sing. ■



He has doubts about the program

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

Scientists keep futzing with the human genetic code. Embryonic stem cells, cloned sheep, lab-grown organs—that stuff is yesterday's news. Today's medical monster-makers have cooked up an embryo that is half pig, half human.

Call it Frankenstein's frankfurter.

But really—what are these white coats doing? Messing with the source code is the height of hubris. These guys should read about Icarus. Flying too close to the sun on wings of wax doesn't get you a nice tan. It makes a mess.

That's not to say there aren't a

few things I would change about the old bag of bones. If scientists are absolutely committed to scrambling God's handiwork, then here's my wish list.

Number One: Humans should be born knowing how to blow their own noses. This would give parents of young children some restful nights during flu season. The genetic code, it seems to me, could be easily tweaked to effect this change.

Number Two: Couldn't someone figure out a way to make our elbows bend backward? Evolution has let us down here. Backscratching is my main concern. Currently it takes two to tango. Someday, I hope, science

will find a way to empower us to hit the spot solo.

(Elbows that bend backward might require biceps on both sides of the arms, which would change how we do everything from flexing in the mirror to dressing for success. Any loss of elegance, however, would be more than made up for by the increased utility. I promise.)

Number Three: All my life I've battled an insubordinate tuft of hair at the back of my head. If we isolate the gene that causes this, we can finally lick the cowlick! While we're at it, let's deprogram whatever causes crooked teeth and low humor.

Number Four: The beer belly must go. This should be pretty self-explanatory. Please make it happen during my lifetime. Maybe this should be Number One?

Number Five: Our knee caps should be on the outside, like horseshoes. Anyone over the age of 43 will appreciate the need for this, especially Catholics, especially during certain parts of the liturgy, and especially if you were ever a baseball catcher.

Innovation is a good thing. Fresh thinking is salutary. But there is—or ought to be—a limit to how far the white coats go in rewriting the genetic code. Creation is beautiful.

We are a part of it, even when we don't understand how it works. God's

plan is beautiful, even the parts we can't see.

I often wonder why so many environmentalists seem so unconcerned by genetic meddling.

Maybe they hold a corrupted view of creation. Man is not a part of the natural environment, according to this view, but a blight upon it. A certain type gets more exercised by the idea of GMO crops than he does by tests designed to weed Down syndrome and other genetic abnormalities out of the population. There's a name for that, and it's not nice.

I'm the type who views the human body—and human society—as part of the environment. My guiding principle is stewardship.

We should not exploit our bodies any more than we should exploit the earth, the oceans, or

"Humans should be born knowing how to blow their own noses. This would give parents of young children some restful nights during flu season."

the air we breathe.

"Exploit" is the key word. Everything hinges on what is meant by it. Exploitation is abuse. Abuse is the opposite of God's desire.

We should be good stewards of creation. We should keep the faith.

Just don't forget to laugh once in a while at the absurdity of it all. ■

Catholic Schools

New leaders in Stamford and Shelton

In the announcement below, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Dr. Steven Cheeseman, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, introduce the leadership for new Catholic schools formed as a result of recent consolidation and the overall Strategic Plan for schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The bishop and Dr. Cheeseman presented the plans for the new schools in early February.

"I'm happy to report that enrollment for next year is going well and growing each day for both of our new schools. I am confident that our new school will be a vibrant and diverse community of students and families committed to Catholic education," said Dr. Cheeseman. "I am especially grateful to current parents for their patience and understanding during this time of transition."

Stamford leadership team

The diocese has announced the principal and school leadership team for the newly-formed Catholic Academy of Stamford, which will formally open its doors in fall 2017. The announcement was made by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Dr. Steven Cheeseman, Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Patricia Brady, currently principal of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield, has been named Head of School. Natalia Cruz has been named campus principal for Pre-K through grade 5, and Abbey Camillery has been appointed grades 6-8 campus principal.

In addition to announcing the new administration, Dr. Cheeseman also announced that the new school name is The Catholic Academy of Stamford. "Our new name is a derivative of Stamford Catholic Academy, which received the highest number of votes in our parent survey. We modified the name so as not to be confused with Stamford Academy, which is a public



PATRICIA BRADY

school in the area. We're grateful to all who voted and helped us name the school."

The four schools that will become The Catholic Academy of Stamford are Holy Spirit School, Our Lady Star of the Sea School, St. Cecilia School, and Trinity Catholic Middle School.

"While Cruz and Camillery came to our diocese this past year as principals, each of them has worked under the principal mentorship of Pat Brady," said Dr. Cheeseman. "Please join me in welcoming them to The Catholic Academy of Stamford, and pray for their success and the success of all teachers and students. The three administrators are creative, innovative, and visionary leaders who are committed to ensuring a strong future for Catholic education in Stamford."

Reporting to a Board of Directors for the new school, Brady will serve as the chief academic, education and executive officer of the corporation and report to the School Board of Directors to ensure that all orders, resolutions and policies of the board are carried into effect, said Dr. Cheeseman.

"Pat has served as a member of the Stamford Catholic Education Strategic Planning Committee for the past year and because of that experience, understands the challenges at hand as well as the vision moving forward," he added.

Patricia Brady holds a bachelor of science degree in elementary education and two master of arts degrees in history and elementary school administration. She has devoted her entire professional career to Catholic education as a teacher for 14 years and a principal for the last 22 years.

Brady currently serves as principal of St. Thomas Aquinas



NATALIA CRUZ

Catholic School, a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade elementary school in Fairfield, with an enrollment of 400 students and 42 faculty and staff. Under Brady's administration, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School earned the 2010 National Blue Ribbon of Excellence Award.

Her exemplary leadership has been recognized nationally. She received the Distinguished Principal Award for the Archdiocese of St. Louis in 2007, the National Catholic Education Association's Dr. Robert J. Kealey Distinguished Principal Award in 2008, as well as being named a National Distinguished Principal by the United States Department of Education in 2008.

She currently resides in the Huntington area of Shelton and is a parishioner at St. Lawrence Parish. Brady plans to relocate to the Stamford area.

Abbey Camillery was appointed principal of Trinity Catholic Middle School in August 2016. She holds two master of arts degrees, in adolescent education and educating students with disabilities. Camillery came to this diocese with over ten years of experience teaching Catholic middle school and high school students.

In her short time at Trinity Catholic Middle School, Camillery has been instrumental in creating an Innovation Lab and introducing STEM programs to the curriculum. She resides in Stamford during the week and spends most weekends in Rocky Point, N.Y., where she is a parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua Parish.

Natalia Cruz was appointed principal of Our Lady Star of the Sea School in July 2016. She holds a master of science degree



ABBEY CAMILLERY

in childhood education and is currently working towards a dual master in building and district school leadership. Cruz came to the Diocese of Bridgeport with twelve years of experience teaching in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York. She has been instrumental in building a strong sense of community, especially among the Latino population, as she is fluent in Spanish. Cruz resides in Bronx, N.Y., with her husband and three children. They are members of St. John Chrysostom Parish.

Dr. Cheeseman said parents and community members are invited to meet the new administration and Board of Directors on Sunday, March 19, at 2 pm at Trinity Catholic High School.

Under the plan, during Phase I, the Holy Spirit School and Our Lady Star of the Sea students will come to St. Cecilia School and Trinity Catholic Middle School beginning in September 2017. Students in Pre-K through grade 5 will study on the St. Cecilia campus, and grades 6-8 will attend classes on the Trinity Middle School campus.

Phase II of the plan will begin in the 2018-19 school year with the 6th-8th grades moving to the new location within the Trinity High School building. The lower grades will remain at the St. Cecilia campus while construction and renovations begin on the Trinity Middle School building, with an estimated completion date of September 2020.

(For more information, visit the website: www.catholicschoolsstamford.org.)

Monroe and Shelton

Dr. Gail Kingston has been named principal of the new Catholic elementary school in Shelton that will incorporate stu-



DR. GAIL KINGSTON

dents from St. Lawrence and St. Joseph in Shelton and St. Jude in Monroe in the fall of 2017.

The new school will be named Holy Trinity Catholic Academy based on a vote by parents and students. All parents and students are invited to come "meet and greet" Dr. Gail Kingston and the newly formed Board of Directors on Sunday, March 26, 2017, at 2 pm in the St. Lawrence Parish Center.

The announcement was made by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

"We are fortunate to have Dr. Kingston in a leadership position as we move forward to unify the three school communities into a vibrant new Catholic school," said Dr. Cheeseman. "She brings more than 26 years of experience in school administration including 16 years as a principal to this new post. Her work as an educator has been distinguished by development of innovative and inclusive curriculum and differentiated instruction."

Dr. Kingston first joined the diocese in 2016, when she was named principal of St. Lawrence School in Shelton. Prior to that appointment she served as principal of St. Gabriel School in Milford for 15 years.

Dr. Kingston holds her bachelor's and masters' degrees in education from Connecticut College, a Certificate in Administration from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

Among her numerous awards and achievements are service as chair of the New England Association of Schools and

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

St. Joseph High School

New governance model announced

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has announced a new governance model for St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, including a new nine member Board of Directors.

“The new governance model is a major step forward as we work to redesign our schools and plan for the future,” said Bishop Caggiano. “The model will help to promote investment and innovation, and contribute to the overall transformation of Catholic education in our diocese.”

The bishop said that although the majority of new directors currently serve on the school’s Advisory Board of Directors, the change in governance represents a major change relative to the authority of the board.

“Given the strong Catholic school background of the individual directors, and their collective success in managing this excellent school, we have only the highest expectations for St. Joseph High School’s future. The board has presented a strong strategic plan for the next five years. I am very grateful for their service and confident in their leadership,” the bishop said.

The Board of Directors will assume their new level of responsibility for St. Joseph High School on July 1, 2017.

William Fitzgerald PhD, president of St. Joseph High School said the major advantage of this shift in governance “will be seen in our ability to quickly and effectively respond to trends and initiatives in Catholic college preparatory education. Most constituents in the school will not notice a change, as the current Advisory Board has been exceptionally responsible in guiding St. Joseph High School. We are mission driven, fiscally sound, fully enrolled, and highly regarded by colleges and universities.”

Under the new structure, the diocese will reserve certain privileges, such as approval of the members of the Board of Directors, guardianship of the school’s Catholic mission, and ownership of the property. Day-to-day management of the school, its administration, operational budgets, and facility maintenance will transition to the Board of Directors.

Dr. Fitzgerald said that the



CHRISTOPHER WILSON



BRIAN BELLOWS



DR. STEVEN CHEESEMAN



ATTY. JOHN GSCHWIND

transition to a self-governing institution under the auspices of the Diocese of Bridgeport is an outcome of the nearly two-year vitality and viability study of the thirty-one schools of the diocese led by Bishop Caggiano and diocesan education officials.

The new directors of the board are:

Chair Christopher Wilson, a senior partner of Stonehill Capital, is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he serves on the board of the Wilson-Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities. He and his wife Lorraine are members of St. Jude Parish in Monroe. Their three children graduated from St. Joseph High School.

Brian Bellows, recently retired as national vice president for client development for United Healthcare, is a graduate of Fairfield University. He and his wife Brenda are members of St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Trumbull. Their two daughters graduated from St. Joseph High School.

Dr. Steven Cheeseman, ex officio, is the superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. Dr. Cheeseman was associate superintendent for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and holds a doctorate in educational leadership and technology. Dr. Cheeseman, his wife Danielle, and their three children are parishioners of St. Catherine of Sienna in Trumbull.

Attorney John Gschwind is the vice president, legal and general counsel, and corporate secretary for Rexel USA. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, he serves on the Executive Advisory Board of the



FATHER MICHAEL JONES

university’s Center for Ethics and Culture. He and his wife Katherine saw their son through St. Joseph High School, and are parish members of St. Patrick Church in Redding.

Father Michael Jones is pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College, and holds a doctorate in sacred theology from Rome. He is the episcopal vicar for the Diocese of Bridgeport’s Development Office.

Andrea Maldon, CPA, is an alumna of St Joseph High School, and a St. Joe’s parent. She is a managing director at Lone Pine Capital, and a graduate of Fordham University. She and her husband Jonathan are members of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield.

Patrick O’Keefe is vice president of engineering and manufacturing for O’Keefe Controls, and a graduate of Fairfield University. The members of the O’Keefe family have been strong supporters of Catholic education, with their children having graduated from diocesan schools. He and his wife Karen are members of St. Jude Parish in Monroe.



ANDREA MALDON, CPA



JAMES WOODS, CPA

Deacon Patrick Toole has held several senior positions at IBM, and is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame. He and his wife Lyndy currently serve St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Trumbull. Their daughter is an alumna of St. Joseph.

James Woods, CPA, is the managing member of Venman & Co. LLC., and a graduate of Villanova University. Jim and his wife Chris are members of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton. Their three daughters graduated from St Joseph High School.

Christopher Wilson, chair of the new St. Joseph High School



PATRICK O’KEEFE



DEACON PATRICK TOOLE

Board, said the Catholic mission and focus of the school will not change, but “The enhanced site-based autonomy will allow St. Joseph High School to act responsively and vigorously in an accelerating college prep marketplace. The students will be the biggest beneficiaries.”

St. Joseph High School is the largest Catholic high school in the diocese, enrolling approximately 800 students. The school was opened in 1962 by Bishop Walter Curtis and has long been recognized as an outstanding Catholic college preparatory school in southern Connecticut. ■

Catholic Schools

Saint Mary School, Bethel

First Blue Ribbon School

BETHEL—Founded in 1963, St. Mary School in Bethel has provided a quality Catholic education in a faith-based, family-filled environment to thousands of graduates. Building upon our rich history of excellence, we continue to nurture and form each child spiritually, academically and socially in the likeness of Jesus. Students foster their relationship with God through prayer services, Mass attendance and daily religious instruction.

We are especially proud to be the first school in the diocese to

receive the Blue Ribbon Award for Academic Excellence. Our academic curriculum is designed to exceed national and local standards, providing a rigorous and challenging program for our students. Our small classroom sizes afford our teachers and students a unique advantage. At St. Mary School, our students are not just a number, but are part of an intimate school community that can provide personalized attention and focus.

St. Mary has become the choice of parents who desire flexibility

within a nurturing private school environment. Families are particularly drawn to our robust Pre-K program (at right), which enrolls over 50 three and four year olds in a separate, cheerfully designed Pre-K wing with large rooms.

The complete St. Mary experience does not take place solely in the classroom. Our outstanding sports program continues to shine in our section of the state! Our array of after-school clubs, such as drama, crafts, music recording, speech and debate, Spanish, robotics, creative sign language, meditative coloring, nature club and keyboard prove to be an attraction to those students looking for enriching afterschool activities. We are also the first middle school to offer Cyber Patriot afterschool club.

St. Mary also offers parents the opportunity to take advan-



tage of complete before and after school programs.

(Come visit us and see for yourself why enrollment at St. Mary's has

increased over 30 percent in recent years. For more information, call us at 203.744.2922 or visit us online: www.StMaryBethelCT.org)

Saint Augustine Academy, Bridgeport

'We are...!'

BRIDGEPORT—The big smiles on the faces of these seventh grade students prove the enthusiasm students bring to St. Augustine Academy. St. Augustine is a wonderful place of love and learning. With two teachers per grade, the students in grades 4-8 move throughout the building for their academic classes as well as for art, music, physical education, Spanish, and technology.

This year our theme is "WE ARE..." We are followers of

St. Augustine was visited by AlyssaLynn, a Girl Scout from Pelham, N.Y., who has fully embraced love of reading. For her Gold Award, the highest possible Girl Scout award, AlyssaLynn has donated over 2,500 books and has spent three days with fourth graders, teaching them how to create their own books and inspiring them to both read and write.

At St. Augustine we have a beautiful bell choir that enhanc-



Christ. We are role models for others. We are readers, writers, scientists, and mathematicians! We are artists, writers, and creators! We are givers, doers, and providers of love!

The school's goal this year was to create a living library to encourage reading, with the motto: "Free books for all students every day!" To date, students have collected 12,000 donated books. Recently

our liturgies. Our Student Council is busy looking for ways to provide food, coats, Christmas gifts, pajamas, and other necessary items to our greater community. We are an active school that takes pride in giving to others.

(Everyone is welcome to visit. Call 203.366.6500 to set up a phone appointment. To find out more about St. Augustine Academy, visit us online: staugustine.catholicacademy-bridgeport.org.)

Saint Andrew Academy, Bridgeport

Work hard and have fun

BRIDGEPORT—St. Andrew Academy is a faith-based, academically rigorous, family oriented school offering something more in education. We are small, which allows us to focus on each individual child's needs—intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

Enthusiasm shows on the faces of these sixth-grade students engaged in project-based

learning during an "Edible Cell" project in the month of February. The objectives were to accurately model cells and cell parts, differentiate between plant and animal cells, and explain the relationship between structure and function of cells and their importance to the life processes.

In our second grade, a month-long study of Martin Luther King, Jr., in January culminated

in a Martin Luther King, Jr., tea with parents where students shared their own dreams for a better world.

Our campus ministry club most recently prepared a prayer service for the entire school, highlighting the reflective writing and public speaking skills of students as they shared their faith and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The ministry club creates service projects for the entire school and lives our school's mission as they lead and serve.

Our school community works hard and loves to have fun. We have events throughout the year for the whole family: ice cream social, Santa Breakfast, Sweetheart Dance, paint nights for parents and for students and a basketball game with students versus parents/teachers.

(Come for a visit, give us a call or check our website: standrew.catholicacademybridgeport.org, or our Facebook pages.)



Catholic Schools

Saint Ann Academy, Bridgeport

A community of students, parents and teachers

BRIDGEPORT—Student leadership is an essential skill that is developed at St. Ann Academy. All students, even our youngest learners, lead prayer at the beginning and end of each day. The youngest students are joined and supported by their Book Buddy, with whom they have developed a relationship through weekly fun, educational experiences.

At St. Ann Academy, we are proud of our student leaders. Our student leaders in grade 5-8 facilitate peer workshops through a program called Wingman. These fun, interactive student run workshops support the development of compassion, perseverance, empathy and acceptance within the student body.

St. Ann Academy is a community of students, parents and teachers that support one another to grow in faith, knowledge and service. The



sense of belonging encourages many families to send all their children to St. Ann, like the Martinez brothers in the photo at right: (l-r) Lorenzo (Pre-K), Gabriel (grade 2) and Evan (kindergarten).

St. Ann believes in the development of the whole child and provides opportunities for growth in social, emotional learning as well as academics. In the primary grades, children's literature is

selected to support the development of kindness, peer relationships and problem solving. Interactive workshops and the Second Step Program are implemented once the students reach middle school.

We celebrate traditions with students and families throughout the year: Muffins with Mom and Donuts with Dad morning breakfasts; Parent Open House;

Living Rosary; Wintertime Family Dance; Grandparents' Day; Mothers' Day Tea; Pre-K Nativity; Christmas Pageant; and a Fine Arts Festival.

For International Peace Day, students presented personal Peace Poems or shared their class'

reflections on what makes a peaceful community and how each of us contribute to building peace. The observance taught students that prayer, service and building a community of compassion and kindness can change the world.

(Call St. Ann Academy at 203.334.5856 to schedule a personal tour with the principal, or visit us online: Stann.catholicacademy-bridgeport.org)



Saint Raphael Academy, Bridgeport

Activities enrich lessons and engage students

BRIDGEPORT—At St. Raphael Academy, we are a diverse, family-orientated community which provides a safe, secure and nurturing learning environment for children from preschool through third grade. Catholic values are taught and modeled, encouraging students to grow in their relationship with God as well as treating others with kindness and respect. On First Fridays and on Holy Days, the entire school community attends Mass together.

We have very experienced teachers and staff who work with families to ensure the best possible education for their children. We strive to meet the individual needs of each child while teaching values such as responsibility and good decision-making.

Our teachers also work to incorporate activities into their lessons which connect special holidays with course content. Before Halloween, kindergarten students learned about how pumpkins grow. They were fascinated by the huge leaves of this fast-growing vine and amazed that pump-



kins are actually its colorful fruit.

Tablets are used at every grade level. We have a dedicated science room for classes to participate in labs and small group learning. We also have a library that is filled with age-appropriate texts that the students are able to check out weekly to bring home.

Each December, we host a Lunch with Santa for our students and families, as well as a "Santa Shop" in which students can purchase gift items for a nominal cost

to give to other family members.

After the young students chose a particular present, volunteers helped wrap them. Each grade also participates in a Christmas concert. A highlight for the year is always the Field Day at Fairfield Prep for grades K-3.

Learning to give as well as receive, students make sandwiches and participate in a food drive to benefit the Thomas Merton Center participate in drives to support the Homes for the Brave,

and encourage the residents of Homes for the Brave with handmade cards and decorations during the year.

(Come for a visit! Tours can

be arranged at a mutually convenient time by calling our school at 203.333.6818. Families can also visit our website: straphael.catholicacademybridgeport.org.)



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Catholic Schools

Saint Joseph School, Brookfield

A welcoming and giving atmosphere

BROOKFIELD—St. Joseph School in Brookfield is best described as a place where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our school is a community based on core values; faith, respect, responsibility, kindness, and honesty. The northernmost Catholic elementary school in Fairfield County, its reputation for excellence has been a magnet for families in in Westchester, Hartford and New Haven Counties. St. Joseph draws more than a third of its students from towns outside its borders.

This photo shows third graders Nora Ovanessian and Raechel Tricarico, who are both part of the “Little Flowers” girls club. Raechel is proudly wearing a sash with a badge she recently earned. Similar to Girl Scouts, the Little Flowers club is about building friendship, citizenship, and a commitment to caring for people and the world in a giving way via the study of virtues. The faith based club is run by parent volunteers, who are an integral part of the SJS community.

St. Joseph School is extremely



proud of our standardized test scores. The Terra Nova measures concepts and objectives taught throughout the nation. Our students recently scored above the national percentile in all grade levels tested. Our curriculum, assessments, and certified teaching staff focus on individuals and tailor instruction so all students are successful.

Each year we improve our technological resources. We

recently implemented the one-to-one Chromebook initiative in our junior high. Our extra-curricular activities are created with all learners in mind, offering a variety from the Cooking Club, band and ballet to the Odyssey of the Mind, Art Club, Paleo Club, and energetic sports teams.

Our community is best described as welcoming and giving. All new families are paired with existing families to help for-

mate a smooth transition into SJSB. Each classroom volunteers with a community service project. We sing for the local seniors and team with the local Handy-Dandy man to rake yards for the elderly. In our Buddy System, buddies attend weekly Mass together, enjoy an extra recess, read stories and make cards for veterans. Our students develop a bond, and

together make a difference.

(Our admissions process can be easily accessed on our website: sjs-brookfield.org. Parents and students are invited to schedule an appointment, tour the school, shadow for a day, meet with the principal, and will be paired with parent references within our community. Financial assistance is available through an application process.)

Saint Joseph School, Danbury

Progressive model for the 21st century

DANBURY—St. Joseph School is a Catholic, multi-cultural, child-centered school seeking to permeate every educational experience within the guidance of the school with the message of love and the vitality of Christ's presence. We are committed to nurturing individual excellence in every child.

The proud recipient of the 2012 National Blue Ribbon Award, our vibrant and unique school is a model for progressive Catholic education in the 21st century. We are proud of our diverse population, our close relationship with our on-site parish church, and our ability to maintain a strong Catholic identity while welcoming other faiths.

St. Joseph provides students with a full range of opportunities, starting with state of the art technology and including enrichment through its extensive music program, instruction in Spanish from Pre-K through eighth grade and ongoing participation in community service and outreach as part of our lived faith. Enrichment includes activities like the 4th grade-pajama day, shown here, during Catholic Schools week.

St. Joseph School offers an array of academic, athletic and extra-curricular activities such as robotics, spring musical, children's choir, sports programs and CARES Service Club. Valued school traditions include Advent Wreath/Lenten ceremonies; graduation dinner, Mass and ceremony; liturgical experiences, classroom buddies; eighth grade pin ceremony and Living Nativity.

(For more information on the unique opportunities we offer, explore our website: www.sjsdanbury.org, or contact the school.)





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Catholic Schools

Saint Gregory the Great School, Danbury Close-knit community

DANBURY—We are a Pre-K through grade 8 Catholic school located in suburban Danbury near Candlewood Lake. Our school community is very close knit, with a strong alumni base; current faculty, staff and board members are alumni themselves. The parents of many of our current students are also proud graduates.

The culture at St. Gregory the Great is a nurturing one, where our older students care for and work with our younger students. The older students accompany

and sit with our younger students during Mass and prayer services. During special events, such as First Holy Communion, our eighth grade students work with our second grade students on their First Holy Communion project. Our students come together during Read Across America, with older students reading their favorite Dr. Seuss books to younger students.

The joy of reading starts early, and includes analysis, comprehension and imagination even at the youngest ages. Here,

kindergarten students and their teacher Jeanine Sullivan proudly display the snowmen they made after reading *Snowmen at Night* by Caralyn Buehner. Their snowmen are slowly melting after a night of fun. They also wrote a short account themselves about what their snowmen might be doing at night.

One of the many events St. Gregory students look forward to each year is our middle school science fair, held in January. Many of our students advance to the state level and



earn top awards. At last year's fair, one of our eighth graders achieved First Place in Life Science and was invited to participate in a national competition.

Our drama and musical performances are rooted in tradition. Our first big performance is the Thanksgiving Prayer Service, followed by our Christmas show, and Grandparents Day Concert. Our year culminates with our annual middle school play, which is always a junior Broadway production. Our stage is equipped with color-changeable LED front

lighting and a state of the art sound system that allows for a truly spectacular production.

In addition, St. Gregory's has a Mock Trial Club, Chess Club, Drama Club, Poetry Club, band, yearbook, school newspaper and sports teams. Parents have the option of before and after school care.

(For more information on St. Gregory the Great School, call 203.748.1217, email info@sgtgs.org, or stop in on Take a Look Tuesdays between 9:30-11:30 am each week.)

Saint Peter School, Danbury Proud of diversity

St. Peter School is a Pre-K through eighth grade school in the heart of downtown Danbury. We are proud to be the most diverse school in the Diocese of Bridgeport. In spite of that, almost 100 percent of our students are Catholic. Siblings and cousins make up a large number of our students, and at one time even our faculty was made up of two sets of siblings.

Our faith drives the daily life of the school. Prayer begins and ends each day, monthly liturgies are celebrated as a school and as a class, and Rosary and Stations of the Cross are prayed throughout the year.

Our diversity is what makes us so unique. We are made up of first, second and third generations of immigrants, dating back to our first class in 1885. Our students and their parents are from countries around the world including, Poland, Brazil, Guatemala, Ecuador, Haiti, United States, Philippines, France, Dominican Republic, just to name a few!

To honor our diversity, we celebrate an annual Multicultural Mass. Readings and petitions are shared in languages representing our students and their families.

English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Creole and Tagalong are just some of the languages spoken at this annual Mass. Students and their families are invited to dress in the traditional outfits of their heritage and many of them do.

Firefighter Jamie Hines, a former St. Peter School teacher, talks to teacher Rachel Janey's first grade class.

Our Pre-K children and first graders especially look forward to seeing a fire truck up close.



We have a great love of the community in which we live. We have partnered with the Danbury Senior Center a few doors down from us. The students have visited for Halloween and Christmas, singing carols for the seniors, and the seniors came to our building to read to the students for Dr. Seuss Day. Our location makes it easy for the preschool children to walk to the library, for the police and fire departments to come visit classes to talk about what they do for our community on a daily basis. Here, City of Danbury

St. Peter School offers a full day preschool program and school readiness for children ages 3-5. We have a sports program offering basketball, cheerleading and track. Afterschool activities including choir, student council and baking are held all year. These are just a few of the things that make St. Peter School an enriching environment for our students.

(To find out more about St. Peter, call us at 203.748.2895 or visit us online at stpeterschooldanbury.org.)

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Catholic Schools

Assumption Catholic School, Fairfield

Learning responsibility to last a lifetime

FAIRFIELD—At Assumption Catholic School, children are taught that education is far more than information; it is a way of life, a way to serve God, family and community, while growing in mind and spirit. Each of our classes sponsors a service project and gives back to the community.

At Assumption, the Gospel message, along with academic and cultural programs, are integrated to form the whole child: spiritually, intellectually, emo-

tionally, socially, and physically. Our special atmosphere feels like family to all who enter our doors. The academic environment is strong with long-standing teachers who teach with traditional methods utilizing lectures and books and are always on the cutting-edge of technology. Our teachers are given the tools and continuing education that they need to give our students an outstanding education and high school preparation. Our students

are placed in advanced courses when attending high school due to the strength of our academic program.

One of our key unique features is that all of our students are taught responsibility through activities including the “Buddies” of older students to the younger grades. Each day the students make the daily announcements, they plan and participate in school Masses, they raise and lower the flag, and are responsible, alongside a teacher, for the dismissal of cars each day. We believe it is important to teach students responsibility that they can take with them long after they graduate from Assumption



Catholic School.

Responsibility starts with the youngest students. Colin Purzycui, shown here, and his twin brother, Ryan, are both in Pre-K4. The two boys exude what it means to be kind and respectful at such a young age, and are ready to take leadership on their age level in activities like the Pledge of Allegiance or

Veteran’s Day ceremonies.

(We love to welcome prospective families to our school and invite them to visit during the week any time between 8:30 am-2:30 pm. We offer personal tours and meetings with our enrollment director and teachers. We also invite families to visit our website: www.assumptionfairfield.org, and call at any time with questions: 203.334.6271.)

Saint Thomas Aquinas, Fairfield

Know your world

FAIRFIELD—St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School advanced to the National Geographic Bee State Finals! Recently, seventh grader Alex Clarkin placed among 100 finalists in the Connecticut National Geography Bee Competition.

Alex initially competed against fellow students of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. Although the competition was tough, Alex kept his cool and was declared the school winner. His school-wide victory is giving him the opportunity to compete on a state-wide level. “Congratulations Alex!” says Principal Patricia Brady. “We are so very proud of you, and we wish you only the very best at the state finals.”

Alex’s achievement highlights the way St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School strives for academic excellence and encourages children to reach their full potential and to become lifelong learners. From Pre-K through eighth grade, technology and classroom experience are integrated into each lesson. All classrooms are equipped with Smartboards and computers to provide a state-of-the-art learning experience. St. Thomas has been awarded the 2010 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education, and students consistently perform on standardized testing at levels higher than their current grade level.

In addition to academics, the Catholic faith is practiced each and every day, and all classes begin with prayer. St. Thomas Aquinas is also a service-driven school that builds a strong student and parent community. In 2016, the school earned national recognition as “The Kindest School in America.”

(For more information, visit: www.stasonline.net or come in for a school tour.)



Greenwich Catholic School, Greenwich

Renovated Upper School

GREENWICH—Greenwich Catholic School is a coed day school for students in Pre K 3 through eighth grade. We provide students with a life-long intellectual and spiritual foundation through a rigorous and innovative curriculum focused on faith, critical thinking, responsibility, and service.

In the fall of 2016, we proudly opened the doors to our newly renovated, state of the art Upper School. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano officiated at the ribbon cutting ceremony to the applause of students, parents, and local dignitaries.

The environmentally friendly, energy efficient building features bright and spacious classrooms that allow students to work collaboratively. Each classroom is also equipped with interactive, Smartboard technology.

Our teachers are focused on educating the whole child and their common goal is to accomplish what is in the best interest of the students academically and spiritually; to make them the keepers of the faith and provide guidance to them to make a

lasting contribution to the global community. Greenwich Catholic School is a testament to a strong commitment to faith and the indispensable value of Catholic education.

winter and spring sports which include soccer, basketball, swimming, lacrosse, cross country and many more! We are also proud to offer over 30 after school enrichment courses, designed to provide



Our beautiful, 38-acre campus boasts numerous amenities to enhance our students’ learning experience including an indoor swimming pool, four tennis courts, playing fields, and a working garden.

GCS is proud to offer Varsity and JV teams for all of our fall,

children with enjoyable and educational experiences in the creative arts, the sciences, and athletics.

(Space is available in select grades for the 2017-2018 school year. Contact Joan Williams, director of admissions to schedule a tour: 203.869.4000, ext. 149, or visit gcsct.org/admissions.)

Catholic Schools

Saint Aloysius School, New Canaan

Successful in writing and science competitions

NEW CANAAN—St. Aloysius School, a 2010 National Blue Ribbon Award winner, continues its sixty-year history of promoting academic excellence in a faith-filled environment. Our car-

ing and professional staff offers challenging academics, including 21st century STEM skills, technology-infused instruction, and an integrated curriculum to foster real-world applications of learn-

ing. Enrichment includes Spanish instruction, gym, art, and music, as well as educational and cultural field trips.

We are a Nationally Recognized School and our students compete successfully in regional writing and science competitions. The seventh grade team of (l-r) Kaloyan Dimitrov, Andrew Tully and Alexander Lanzilotti won first prize in the school's science fair for their project on Mars Exploration and are excited to be heading on to the CT State Science Fair.

St. Aloysius students regularly qualify for the Johns Hopkins Talented Youth programs, and our school is ranked among the top 50 private schools nationally. Our students are well-prepared for high school, and go on to

attend Fairfield Prep, Luralton Hall, Notre Dame High School, Trinity Catholic, Kent School, and New Canaan High School, among others.

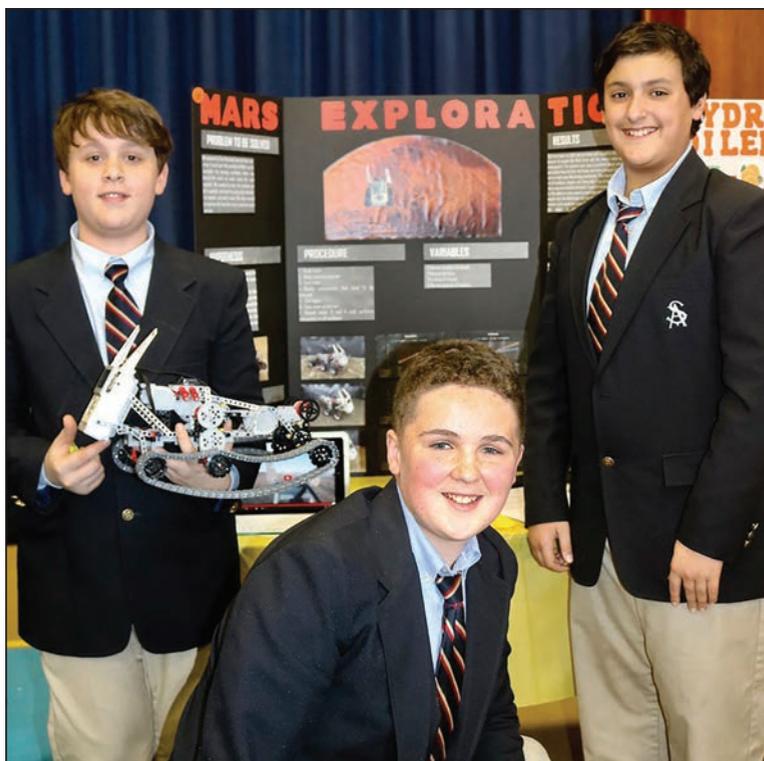
In addition to academics, student talent is further nurtured through after-school athletics and clubs. Our clubs and enrichment programs include American Girl Doll & History, art club, band and string program, basketball, cross country, STEM program, Scrabble club and our performing arts club, Book Bunch and indoor tennis.

At St. Aloysius, our school climate is strengthened by community and family collaboration and engagement. Parent volunteers actively contribute to our success in many ways, including mentoring new families, organizing special events, and supporting school

programming.

Service projects and community service are an equally important aspect of student learning at St. Aloysius. From creating and sharing holiday decorations with local seniors to collecting over 4,000 pantry items for the Catholic Charities' New Covenant Center, our students experience many opportunities to live their faith. In addition, St. Aloysius carries on many special annual traditions such as our Kindergarten family dinners, Mother/Daughter Tea, Daddy/Daughter Dance, our Christmas Pageant, and other special events, all of which contribute to our warm and welcoming community.

(For more information about attending St. Aloysius School, call admissions: 203.966.0786, or visit our website: sasnct.org.)



BECOME A CONNECTED CATHOLIC THIS LENT

- **Young Adult Mass**
6:30 pm - Holy Hour and Reconciliation
7:30 pm - Mass (Basilica of St. John - Stamford)
- + Thursday, March 2nd
- + Thursday, April 6th
- **Book Club - Screwtape Letters** - 8:00 pm
(Basilica of St. John - Stamford)
- + March 9th + March 23rd
- + March 16th + March 30th
- **Social Night of Service** - March 14th - 6:30 - 9:30 pm
(New Covenant Center, 174 Richmond Hill Ave., Stamford)
- **Catholic Underground** - 7:30 pm Holy Hour
9:00 pm Artist Performance (St. Ann - Bridgeport)
- + Saturday, March 18th - Fr. Joseph Gill
- + Saturday, April 8th - Chris Bray
- **Afternoon of Reflection** - March 18th - 12:00 - 6:00 pm
(Basilica of St. John - Stamford)
- **Faith on Tap** - March 28th - 7:00 pm
(Murphy's Townhouse Café - 97 Franklin St., Stamford)
- **Young Adult Stations of the Cross** - March 31st - 7:30 pm
(Basilica of St. John - Stamford)
- **Holy Thursday Mass and Pilgrimage to 7 Churches**
April 13th - 7:30 pm to midnight (Basilica of St. John - Stamford)




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Catholic Schools

Saint Rose of Lima, Newtown

‘Hands and hearts in the community’

NEWTOWN—Whether working in a state-of-the-art science lab or presenting the lives of the saints from a first person perspective, students at St. Rose of Lima School experience a Christ-centered learning environment providing a program of academic excellence from preschool through grade 8.

Visitors often comment about how happy the students and teachers are at St. Rose. Happiness grows through the student buddy program that matches older and younger students together. The buddies collaborate on community service projects, share holiday celebrations and pray together at Mass. Academic excellence shows in signature

courses such as Mandarin and Spanish starting in preschool, a strong STEM curriculum, and a complete course of Algebra 1 for 8th grade. A new TV recording studio and computer coding club enhances the communication and technology skills of our older students.

St. Rose encourages a strong partnership with our parents through family events such as an annual 5K, a “Trunk-R-Treat” party, Sock Hop and an international dinner. All these provide opportunities for families to come together informally and to enjoy one another.

Service has become the hallmark of the St. Rose School community, with ongoing ser-

vice projects at every grade level throughout the year. From the youngest to the oldest, and from faculty to parents, joining hands together in service is the signature component of the St. Rose family. Our mission to “be the Hands and Heart of Christ in the world” drives everything we do. A unique event to highlight our mission is our annual “Hands and Hearts in the Community,” where we honor an individual for his or her service in the local community. This individual receives the Monsignor Robert E. Weiss Award for Service at an event each spring.

(To learn more, contact admissions@stroseschool.com or visit us on Facebook or: www.stroseschool.com.) ■



All Saints Catholic School, Norwalk

‘Nurturing, Healing, Love.’



NORWALK—All Saints Catholic School is unique in many aspects. We have an on-site chapel for class Masses, a dedicated STEM teacher and STEM classroom, a robotics, science and energy recreation park, a “Bring Your Own Device” program in the middle school, iPads and Chromebook carts for classroom use, a two-floor library, a fine arts program that includes art, music, drama, band and violin lessons, Spanish classes from Pre-K through grade 8, a full size gymnasium with bleachers, 650 seat auditorium, a five-acre campus with an outdoor track, and an after school program that runs until 5:45 pm daily.

All Saints students can study robotics through an after school program. Starting in April, students in grades 2-8 will be able to join the school’s new Robotics Club. Students as young as second grade will utilize many of the WeDo 2.0 LEGO designed STEM activities to learn how to move heavy objects, to create flood gates, to rescue people in high risk areas, to improve the speed of racecars, to design earthquake proof houses, and many other robotics applications. Students in every age group will learn 21st century skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.

At the heart of All Saints is the Jesse Lewis Choose Love PreK-8 Curriculum. Its mission is to spread the message Jesse left on the kitchen chalkboard shortly before he died at Sandy Hook School—“Nurturing, Healing, Love.” Scarlett Lewis, Jesse’s mother and founder of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation, has visited All Saints twice to interact with students and to obtain feedback from teachers piloting the program. This message encourages our students to choose love by learning and practicing gratitude, forgiveness and compassion.

All Saints is committed to providing an education that enables students to love God and supports the development of body, mind, spirit and service to others. This identity informs and influences everything that we do.

(For more information, stop in for “Take a Look Tuesday” on any Tuesday from 8:30–10 am, visit the school website: www.allsaintsnorwalk.com, or email the admission office, admissions@asc.net.) ■

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Catholic Schools

Saint Mary School, Ridgefield

Positivity claims first place at St. Mary's

RIDGEFIELD—The student version of St. Mary School's mission statement is "Work Hard, Be Kind, and Smile." These words are visibly displayed in every classroom and repeated at the conclusion of the daily Pledge of Allegiance and Morning Prayer. More importantly, the sentiment is alive in the hallways and classrooms of St. Mary School, and it is that hard-to-describe essence that makes St. Mary School such a special place.

The theme for this school year is "Positivity." Positivity glows from the faces of third grade girls making signs in September for Parents Night, when their parents would be in their classrooms, and the sixth grade boys overflowing with energy.

Every two months, students

focus on a different aspect of positivity that aligns with Gospel values. The focus in March and April is positively using technology, being a good digital citizen, and having a positive impact on the environment.

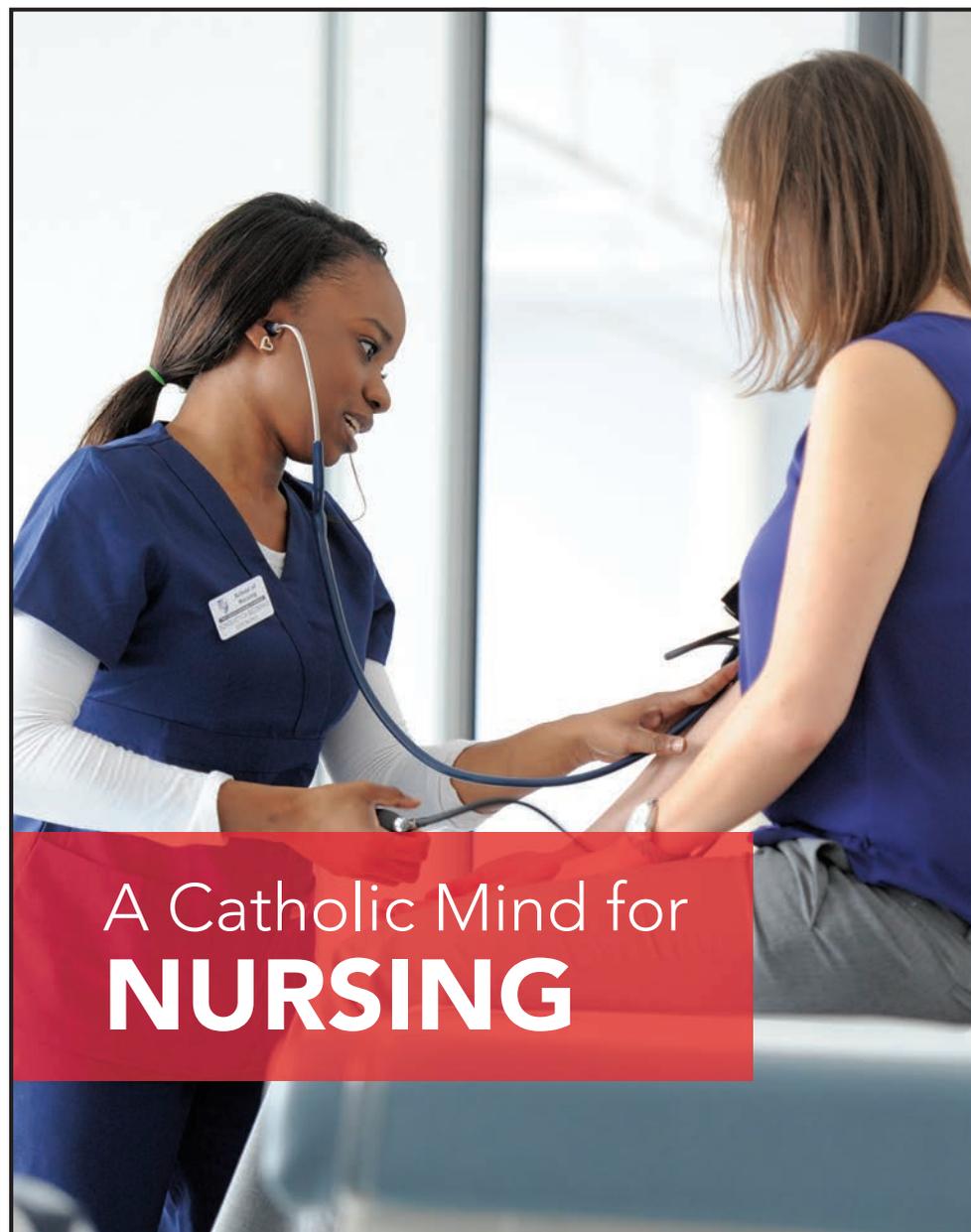
The halls of St. Mary continue to buzz after-school as well! We offer clubs like First Friday Singers, newspaper, yearbook, STEM, 7 Service Club, cheerleading, Scouts, American Heritage Girls, and track, and

after school enrichment activities like Lego-mania, drone flying, leatherworking, knitting, and project design. Other specials—everything from Mother-Son bowling to Living Stations of the

Cross bring students, staff and families together.

In addition, St. Mary offers aftercare for students PK-4 through grade 8, Monday-Friday until 5 pm.

(We think that St. Mary School is a special place but the best way for you to learn more is to come and visit. Call 203.438.7288 and arrange a tour at your convenience, or look us up at www.smsridgefield.org.)



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Catholic University offers our nursing students opportunities in the classroom, the clinic, and on campus. An honors student, Scholastica works part time as a home health care aid and is active in the Student Nurses Association, Black Student Alliance, and Student Organization of Latinos. Most important, she says, "Catholic University has helped me to figure out who I want to be as a nurse and as a Catholic, because we're an open and tolerant community of different races and beliefs."

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Catholic Schools

Saint Mark School, Stratford

Continued growth in technology

STRATFORD—St. Mark is a Blue Ribbon School. Because we have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a National School of Academic Excellence, we make sure that the expectations and challenges of our curriculum prepare our students for the demands of today's society.

We are proud of our continued growth in technology.

Fiberoptics have been installed. We have a computer room with 30 computers for weekly technology classes. Additionally, we have an iPad cart with 25 iPads for classroom use. Recently, we purchased 30 Chrome books and a cart. Teachers and students are using Google Classroom and accessing information for lessons and projects in their classrooms.

We have a strong science program which includes many hands-on activities and experiments. Students in grades 5-8 participate in a yearly Science Fair. Winners are invited to compete at the Connecticut Science Fair where St. Mark students have earned trophies, cash prizes, and an invitation to complete in the Broadcom Masters, the premier science and engineering competition for middle school students.

Through acts of stewardship and service, our students are encouraged to imitate Christ and deepen their faith. The Student Service Club is busy throughout the year coordinating activities, including a Walk-a-thon/food collection for Sterling House Food Pantry, Halloween candy

for troops overseas, toys for children for Christmas, and Valentine cards and goodies for men and women in the armed forces stationed overseas. Here, Christian Rouse and Molly Kery take part in remembering First Responders on September 11.

This year's Cut-a-Thon for Breast Cancer Awareness raised \$2,400, and students have raised over \$15,000 to date for the Pfiem Swim Center.

Faith-based traditions fill the year: the Living Rosary in October; Celebration of Saints on All Saints Day; the Nativity in story and song during our

Christmas Concert; the Living Stations of the Cross; and the May Crowning.

We offer extra-curricular activities at our school, and have established a band program with lessons in wind and percussion instruments, and added a strings program for violin or cello this year. Band and strings students give a winter and spring concert at our school for all to enjoy!

(We encourage families to call our school for tours: 203.375.4291. Prospective students are welcome to visit our campus for a "shadow day." It is a wonderful way to get to know our students and teachers!)



Saint James School, Stratford

Encouraging individual gifts

STRATFORD—St. James School is a community with over 70 years of rich tradition and history. We lead with the mindset that each child is a unique creation of God, who has special talents and gifts to offer the world. Our team strives to awaken in each student, the sense of his or her gifts and the desire to use those talents to serve others.

That dedication to each individual student is demonstrated in the photo of fifth grader Daniel Brennan playing the recorder. In addition



to enjoying musical opportunities, Daniel is an active volunteer and Eucharistic Minister. Through daily prayer and liturgical celebrations, students like Danny strengthen their relationship with God.

Through Mindfulness coaching, students learn practical strategies to cope with the pressures and stresses of life. Chromebooks and Google Classroom are used throughout the grade levels to supplement and extend our teaching strategies. We are grateful to have our campus sit across the street from the Stratford Public Library and our faculty can take full advantage of this incredible resource.

We are especially proud when our students are recognized for their academic achievement or community service. Recently St. James had several students who were winners of the Town of Stratford's Black History Essay contest. Middle school families were out and about throughout town spreading messages of hope and kindness to home-bound seniors through our Valentine Telegram program, which is an 18 year old St. James tradition!

Currently, our eighth graders are partnering with St. Joseph's High School students to learn about microbiology and economics through a study of the Ebola virus.

(We invite you to witness our school in action by visiting our campus in Stratford. Families are welcome to 'take a tour' at St. James any Tuesday morning from 8-11 am. For more information, visit us online at www.stjamesstratford.org.)

Saint Catherine of Siena School, Trumbull

A special place to grow

TRUMBULL—St. Catherine of Siena School has been successfully shaping the lives of young children since 1965. SCSS is purposefully a small school, fostering close personal connections between students and their peers and students and the adult role models. The faculty work with children to help them understand their role within this Catholic community.

We strive to support students' development in all areas: academic, social, spiritual, emotional, ethical, and physical. St. Catherine of Siena School is a special place for children to grow into young adults. In 2010, SCSS was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon National School of Excellence. We are honored and proud to be considered one of the best schools in the country.

SCSS is proud to offer state of the art wi-fi infrastructure throughout school and advanced technology in classrooms. Students have access to over 180, computers including Windows laptops, Android



tablets, Chromebooks and Linux devices. Our robust extracurricular activities and opportunities for leadership support the development of the whole child. Among the activities included are Lego engineering, SCSS service team, school newspaper, yearbook, chess club, art, knitting club, track, choir and scouting.

The eighth grade class at St. Catherine of Siena School provides the leadership for a strong Student Council. Students work collaboratively toward a common goal and participate proactively in the spirit of the school.

SCSS has a very strong and caring community. Parent vol-

unteers lead basketball for boys and girls in grades three through eight. The annual Walk-a-Thon, Trunk or Treat, Trees of Hope, Christmas pageant and talent show activities are some of the students' favorites. Parents come together to support SCSS at the annual Harvest Wine & Cheese Art Fundraiser and the spring Golf Classic.

(For more information, please visit our website, www.stcatherinesienatrumbull.org, call 203.375.1947 or email info@scsstrumbull.org. We welcome you to visit SCSS for a tour or to schedule a classroom visit.)

Catholic Schools

Saint Theresa School, Trumbull

Living in faith, growing in knowledge

TRUMBULL—The motto of St. Theresa School is Living in Faith, Growing in Knowledge. This is visible every day because faith is integrated throughout the

student experience in all subjects: morning prayer, school Masses, weekly Rosary, and class and school wide service projects; and we close our day with student-led prayer. Special occasions call for even more involvement, as shown at left, as Caroline Richmond addresses the student body at the St. Theresa Feast celebration.

St. Theresa's provides an academically challenging curriculum, with flexibility to allow for the dignity and uniqueness of each student. The Buddy Program pairs older and

younger grades for support and special activities, as shown here, where the sixth and second grade are doing a Chromebook project together.

Our students have consistently earned award scholarships from the area Catholic high schools including the Presidential Scholarship from St. Joseph High School, the Lancer Achievement Scholarship and Distinguished Scholars Program from Notre Dame High School. This year, Jack Donofrio, Jillian Nunez and Luka Silva received scholarships

from St. Joseph High School in Trumbull and Notre Dame High School in Fairfield.

(Contact us to set up a tour of the school or schedule a day for your child to come and experience our warm environment, wonderful faculty and enthusiastic students. Call 203.268.3236 or visit www.stesonline.org.)



Saint Catherine Academy for special needs students

Developing each student's potential

St. Catherine Academy is a state-approved, private special education school in Fairfield, Connecticut, serving students of all faiths, ages 5-21 who are impacted with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The academy provides a stimulating learning community where students develop their potential in all areas of development, including the use of advanced technology where it is helpful. That technology can include using a device that encourages a student to practice standing and walking, with the assistance of a physical therapist, encouraging greater independence.

In this nurturing, learning community, students develop positive self-esteem and self-confidence while acquiring the necessary skills to reach their potential for vocational skills, independent living or a return to a mainstream environment.

(Interested families can call the school directly and come in for a visit. For more information, contact Brian Farrell, director of education: 203.540.5381 or bfarrell@diobpt.org.)



Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton

'Service above self'

WILTON—As a National Blue Ribbon School, students experience Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School's excellence starting in its Pre-Kindergarten for three and four year olds.

The Pre-K program, the entry point for the school, offers a choice of either five full days (8:15 am-2:50 pm) or five half-days (8:15 am-12:30 pm) depending on your individual child's developmental needs. The program prepares children by providing academic readiness, structure and socialization experiences within a nurturing environment.

Small class sizes allow for individualized instruction and mastery of core academic concepts, achieving excellence beyond standardized testing norms. Experienced and caring teachers create a nurturing environment that motivates children to reach their highest potential. Students' weekly schedules include classes in physical education, art, library, STEM robotics, computers and music.

In addition, students in the fifth through eighth grades receive instruction in either Spanish or French. National Junior Honor Society recognition is achieved by the majority of 7th and 8th grade students each year. Graduates

consistently achieve honors recognition at area public, parochial and private high schools. To meet the needs of working parents, the school opens at 7:30 am and

enjoying time in the school library.

Academic events include a first grade year-long journaling project, second grade



offers a supportive and flexible after-school program that operates daily until 6 pm.

A hallmark of the school is the emphasis on "Service above Self," with projects and community events scheduled throughout the year to develop strong character, moral values, and respect for self and others. A myriad of extra-curricular activities are also offered including cross-country, field hockey and basketball programs; after-school band; a school musical and special interest clubs. Shown here, Ryan, a middle school student, proudly wears his basketball jersey while

Invention Fair, third grade Native American dioramas, fifth grade Science Riverwalk and the Middle School's STEM Fair and Living History Museum. Catholic identity is enriched through weekly Mass attendance, daily saint recognition, and annual events including the Living Rosary, Stations of the Cross and the popular and well-attended Palestinian luncheon.

(To become acquainted with Our Lady of Fatima, visit our website: www.olfcatholic.org and Facebook page: www.facebook.com/OurLadyofFatimaWilton.)

High School

Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport

STEM camp grant from Bridgeport Rotary

BRIDGEPORT—Kolbe Cathedral High School has received a grant for \$11,000 to provide continuing support to the school's summer STEM camp throughout the year.

Kolbe is an urban high school dedicated to serving a diverse, multicultural population. Its small size, with a current enrollment of about 325 students, allows the faculty to understand and address each individual student's strengths, abilities, and difficult subject areas.

As shown in this photo of the summer STEM program, incoming freshmen are invited to attend a two-week program in August, just prior to the start of the school year to engage in science, technology, math, and engineering education and get a boost into high school. Students develop skills that will serve them well through their high school years: measuring, analyzing, reading non-fiction, drawing conclusions, working cooperatively in the Google classroom.

During the summer, students enjoyed creating biospheres, testing water, cleaning up oil spills and much more. Shaspeare Pierre Paul, class of '20, was thrilled to have a "real" lab science experience. "We learned a lot in a short time this summer, but we had fun because we did a lot of hands on activities including dissection!"

In addition, students appre-

ciate the opportunity to get to know others in their new school, making the first day of high school less stressful. Autumn Moye described her time as running the range of "being nervous to having fun" and expressed her appreciation for "the chance to build confidence and meet new people."

This Bridgeport Rotary Grant will support ongoing student progress programs. Students entering Kolbe Cathedral come from a wide variety of elementary schools; both public and private, and have tremendous differences in the math and science programs they have experienced. The grant support allows KCHS to help students level the playing field and close the achievement gap. Carolyn Vermont, a KCHS alum and Bridgeport Rotarian was the sponsor of the grant.

The mission of Kolbe's faculty is to empower students with knowledge, skills and Catholic values. Members of the school community are expected to "Work Hard and Be Nice." The school and family form a partnership to foster the development of young Christian men and women academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically. Successful completion of four years at Kolbe Cathedral produces an individual who exhibits caring for others in the spirit of Christianity, sharing of knowledge, skills and talents for

the good of others, and strength of character that dares to make a difference by living the Gospel message. ■



Immaculate High School, Danbury

Artists and CyberPatriots

DANBURY—In the past two months, Immaculate High School (IHS) students have won prestigious awards in both art and technology competitions. IHS strives to allow students to attain both academic and extracurricular personal success, and these awards reflect that commitment.

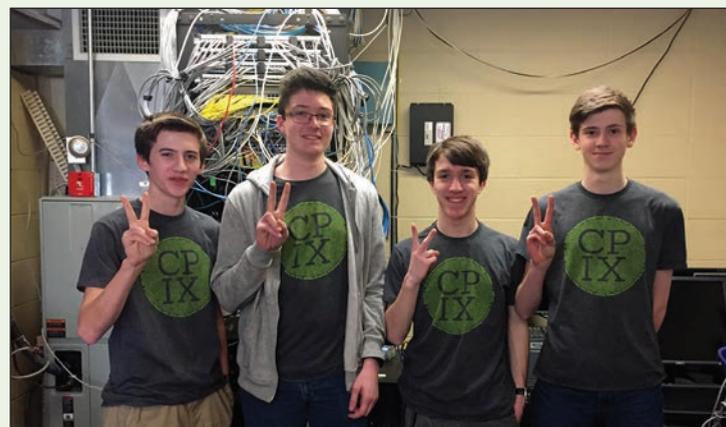
The Immaculate High School CyberPatriot team swept first, second and third place in the Connecticut Open Division Gold Tier State Round competition, as well as earning a first-place Silver Tier State Round Award for the CyberPatriot IX challenge. This is Immaculate's second year in a row securing the State Championship title. In early February, the team competed again in the regional competition in the Gold and Silver Tier levels; Immaculate took fourth place in the

Northeast Regional round.

CyberPatriot is part of the National Youth Cyber Education Program, conceived by the Air Force Association (AFA) to inspire students toward careers in cybersecurity or other science,

of high school and middle school students in the position of newly hired IT professionals tasked with managing the network of a small company.

In the rounds of competition, teams are given a set of



technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future. At the center of CyberPatriot is the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, which puts teams

virtual images that represent operating systems and are tasked with finding cybersecurity vulnerabilities within the images and hardening the

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

WORLD WAR I

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High School

Notre Dame High School, Fairfield

Teams with Catholic Charities to help others

By AMY ZAJAC

Every year, Notre Dame High School conducts an Annual Day of Service. This activity falls at the end of the school's 26 Acts of Kindness Campaign, which honors those students and teachers lost during the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. During this day of giving back to the community, approximately 400 Notre Dame students volunteer at organizations throughout the diocese.

This year, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County contacted Jessica Medoff, the teacher who coordinates the event, to offer opportunities for students to volunteer within their programs. Students from Notre Dame volunteered at four agency programs throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport: the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport, New



Covenant Center in Stamford, Morning Glory Breakfast Program in Danbury, and Room to Grow Preschool in Norwalk.

At the Thomas Merton Center, students were outfitted with aprons and helped out in

the EatSmart Marketplace food pantry and the soup kitchen. Carts were unloaded and shelves were stocked with food and produce that were just delivered to the Merton Center that morning to prepare for clients who would shop that afternoon for their families. In the soup kitchen, cans were opened, lettuce was chopped and pies were cut to prepare lunch for the day. The students then took their places behind the counter and served the meal to the hungry guests.

A similar scene was taking place at the New Covenant Center food pantry in Stamford, where about 10 students were working hard to help unload an abundance of groceries and stock the shelves of the brand new food pantry. There is a different type of pantry

at the Morning Glory Breakfast Program in Danbury. The Morning Glory Marketplace is a mobile non-food pantry that provides items such as cleaning products, paper goods, and hygiene products. Four students from Notre Dame helped unpack a large donation that was recently delivered for the Morning Glory Marketplace. They sorted the items and stocked the shelves for the program to be ready when it opened the following Friday.

Room to Grow Preschool in Norwalk is always a fun place to visit. The children were excited to have seven student volunteers come and visit. The Notre Dame students were divided between two classrooms where they assisted in leading the activities

of the day. Games were played, stories were read, and snacks were served. They even helped to facilitate the morning craft project and taught some of the kids a few soccer skills. The preschoolers enjoyed having their older buddies around and asked for them to come back and visit.

"Notre Dame's Annual Day of Service provides a great opportunity for students to see the different volunteer opportunities available in their communities. It is a great way for these kids to get involved and make a difference. Catholic Charities felt it was important to join in and share our mission. This collaboration was a win-win situation for everyone involved," said Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities. ■

Saint Joseph High School, Trumbull

Excellent academics, service, activities

TRUMBULL—St. Joseph High School is the largest Catholic co-ed high school in Connecticut, drawing from over 30 towns in Fairfield and New

avenue counties. St. Joseph is known for its strong college placement and Advanced Placement course offerings, along with dual enroll-

ment courses with neighboring colleges and universities. To prepare students to participate in the emerging global economy, the school has launched

ic work. Students may participate in two or more of the school's domestic or international immersion trips. These are intense experiences, whether building a wall during a school vacation week in Peru or changing the world of some of the youngest members of our community nearby.

St. Joe's 47 athletic teams have given the school a reputation as an athletic powerhouse. Their achievements are too many to mention in this short space. Beyond that, with over 50 student clubs, students have access to a variety of extracurricular activities, from the Stock Market Club to drama and robotics. Most importantly, students devote over 30,000 hours of community service each year.

The school boasts first-rate facilities like state-of-the-art science labs, where students can study advanced engineering or accept the opportunity to handle a live snake. (No, they are not

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Haven counties.

an innovative program that connects international and domestic travel, service towards the poor, advanced study in world languages, and globally-centered academ-

Trinity Catholic, Stamford

Service to others



STAMFORD—Trinity Catholic High School students hail from 16 communities throughout Fairfield County and nearby Westchester County, N.Y. Founded in 1958, Trinity is proud of its tradition of excellence in academics, athletics and community service. It provides an atmosphere of respect and reverence in which each member is able to live as a positive Christian witness and responsible citizen in the service of God and others.

A big component of student life at Trinity Catholic High School is giving back to the community beyond the walls of our school. In the last year we have trained 500 faculty, students and staff in "Hands Only" CPR. We collected 4,156 lbs of food at Thanksgiving for the local food bank; 1,200 pairs of shoes for "Soles4Souls"; 400 toys for the Inspirica's Holiday Collection; 1,000 personal care items for the Little Sisters of the Poor's nursing home in Enfield; 500 baby items for Malta House in Norwalk and 350 summer necessity items for Kids in Crisis.

Trinity students raised \$1,500 for Bennett Cancer in Stamford and an additional \$1,571 for Go Pink in support of breast cancer awareness month. They collected 72 pints of blood for the American Red Cross; 60 sophomores participated in a community Pay-It-Forward project; 21 Chinese students did their community

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

High School

IMMACULATE HIGH FROM PAGE 24

system while maintaining critical services.

The CyberPatriot team is coached by Dave Cirella, Immaculate High School's Director of IT.

"This has been another great year working with the students. The field of cybersecurity is complex and difficult, especially for students just entering the computer science field. I am very proud of my students' commitment and accomplishments for this past CyberPatriot season," said Cirella.

Five Immaculate High School students were named winners in the 2017 Connecticut Regional Scholastic Art Awards. Established in 1927, the Connecticut Regional Scholastic

Art Awards is the largest juried student art exhibition in the state. The exhibition features select work from 145 participating Connecticut schools in grades 7-12, and winners are chosen from approximately 3,000 total art entries.

The IHS students were honored at the 2017 Scholastic Art Awards Ceremony on January



and their artwork was included in a statewide art exhibition held at the Hartford Art School from January 29- February 3.

David Mercier won a Gold Key award for his design of the IHS production "Hamlet" program book cover and will move on to the National Level Scholastic Art Award competition, where a national jury will choose works for exhibit in the National Show. Linus Jia, who is part of IHS's International Student Program, won a Silver Key award for his painting "A Snowy Day in Canada."

"We are very proud of the students," said IHS art teacher Samantha Kohler Kohler. "They all worked very hard and it is good to see them receive recognition." She noted that they will find out in April if David Mercier's program book cover will be exhibited in the national show.

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL FROM PAGE 25

slimy and not cold) Additionally, the school participates in a 1:1 iPad program and there are Smartboards in each classroom. In 2016, 100 percent of graduates were accepted into a four-year, private college. Two thirds of the graduates were accepted to a



top-100 college or university as defined by US News and World Report.

(The best way to see St. Joe's is to visit. We offer shadow appointments, Open Houses, and private tours/information sessions. You may also request information to be sent directly to your home by completing a quick inquiry at www.sjcadets.org/admissions or use that website to view our video, fast facts, FAQs, and admissions information.)



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Nuestra Voz

‘Luces se encenderán por todo el la diócesis’

“La gente de fe siempre querrá ayudar a otros”, dice el Padre Gustavo Falla, párroco de Santa María y San Benedicto-Nuestra Señora de Montserrat en Stamford. “Cuando la fe entra en acción, las personas de fe ofrecen lo que tienen como testimonio personal. Es así como tocan corazones, como tocan vidas. La fe nos enseña que no estamos solos: todos estamos juntos. Dar no se limita a las cosas financieras, pero donde hay gente de fe, los

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en Danbury. La devoción a la fe entre los católicos de habla hispana les mueve a ofrecer su apoyo, tanto financieramente como con su tiempo y talento, a su parroquia y a la diócesis en general.

Andrés y Judy Grajales son feligreses de la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Stamford. “Hace aproximadamente cuatro años nuestro pastor, el Padre Alfonso Picone, realizó una encuesta

sario hacer más. Organizaron los Seminarios de Vida en el Espíritu, diseñados para ayudar a los feligreses a desarrollar una relación más profunda con el Señor.

Los Seminarios de Vida en el Espíritu ofrecen una oportunidad para que los cristianos exploren una vida más plena en el Espíritu Santo. Los Grajales han visto cerca de 800 personas completar los cursos de siete semanas.

El año pasado, comenzaron a ofrecer un grupo de oración el viernes por la noche en español. “Si escuchas la Palabra de Dios en tu lengua materna, tiene un mayor impacto en tu corazón”, dice Judy, explicando la necesidad de estos programas.

Al mirar a la Iglesia en general, Andrés traza un paralelo práctico que todas las familias pueden entender. “En casa, las luces no se pueden encender si no eres financieramente responsable. La Iglesia es el hogar de Dios y nuestro hogar. Eso es verdad de la parroquia, y de los programas que ayudan a tanta gente en toda la diócesis. Tenemos que hacer nuestra parte. Si somos responsables, las luces se encenderán para la gente en todo el Condado de Fairfield”.

En la Parroquia de San Benito-Nuestra Señora de Montserrat, mayormente hispana, Julio y Liliana Sánchez expresan el mismo sentimiento. Ellos, que también aparecen en el video de apelación, dirigen un retiro de fin de semana cada mes, basado en la Escuela de Evangelización de San Pablo. El objetivo del programa es la formación de los feligreses para convertirse en líderes laicos, que van a servir a la parroquia y la diócesis dondequiera que se necesiten.

“La energía de las personas de fe es el Espíritu Santo”, dice Julio. “Nos trae la energía para salir y ayudar a otros. La misa y las escrituras no son algo para ser escuchado y olvidado. Si la gente abre su corazón, se involucrará más a menudo. En sus parroquias pueden convertirse en lectores o ministros extraordinarios de la Eucaristía. Desde allí querrán llegar a la comunidad y ayudar a todo el mundo”.

“La Campaña Católica Anual es una forma en que la gente puede hacer eso”, añade Liliana.

“Es una manera importante de ayudar a la gente en la comunidad”. Como padre con hijas jóvenes, señala en particular al Fondo de Becas del Obispo para ayudar a las familias a ofrecer una educación católica para sus hijos. Ayudar a los pobres a través de los comedores comunitarios en la diócesis es otro servicio que toca su corazón. “Si tuviera más tiempo, me gustaría hacerlo cada semana”.

Liliana considera que el video de la ACA, con su énfasis en el testimonio personal, habla poder-

osamente a los católicos que lo ven. “Cuando la gente ve una cara familiar, es más probable que responda. Ahora, cuando la gente viene a mí después de la misa, les digo que podemos hacer grandes cosas juntos. Dios te da todo. Incluso si todo lo que puedes dar es un poco, una persona que no tiene comida está comiendo ahora mismo gracias a ti”.

(Para más información o para donar a la Campaña Católica Anual, comuníquese con Pam Rittman: prittman@diobpt.org o 203.416.1479.)



ANDRÉS Y JUDY GRAJALES y su familia son feligreses activos en la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Stamford. (To read this article in English, see page 4.)

fondos siempre están disponibles. La gente de fe siempre será generosa”.

El Padre Falla, quien también es vicario episcopal para los hispanos en la Diócesis de Bridgeport, señala que la fe profunda de los católicos hispanos está impactando la vida de la Iglesia en el Condado de Fairfield. De los 400 candidatos y catecúmenos que se prepararon para ingresar a la Iglesia Católica a través del Rito de Elección el primer domingo de Cuaresma, la mayoría eran católicos de habla hispana procedentes de parroquias urbanas y suburbanas, muchos de ellos adultos jóvenes.

Santa María y San Benedicto-Nuestra Señora de Montserrat presentaron un abrumador número de candidatos y catecúmenos, seguidos por otras parroquias tradicionalmente hispanas como San Pedro y San Carlos Borromeo, en Bridgeport, y

comunitaria y reconoció cuántos hispanohablantes vivían en el barrio. Obtuvo el permiso del Obispo Frank J. Caggiano para comenzar a ofrecer misa en español”, recuerda Andrés, quien habló en el video de la ACA este año.

A medida que más y más católicos hispanos comenzaron a asistir a misa en el Sagrado Corazón, Andrés y Judy se dieron cuenta de que, si bien la parroquia tenía una vida social activa, poco se ofrecía en español. Con el estímulo del Padre Picone, comenzaron un proceso de RCIA en español.

“Creemos firmemente que la fe conduce anima a ayudar”, dice Judy. “El Espíritu Santo te empuja a la acción”.

Escuchando los comentarios de los candidatos en RCIA, y a los feligreses de habla hispana ansiosos de tener más conocimiento de su fe, Andrés y Judy se dieron cuenta de que era nece-

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HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE - 2017

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY

Daily Mass – 8:00am, 12:00noon and 5:30pm

WEDNESDAY, April 12

Tenebrae Service – 7:30pm

HOLY THURSDAY – April 13

Morning Prayer – 8:00am

Celebration of the Lord's Supper – 7:30pm

Adoration at the Altar of Repose – 8:30pm to Midnight

GOOD FRIDAY – April 14

Morning Prayer – 8:00am

Commemoration of the Lord's Passion – 3:00pm

Mary's Way of the Cross – 7:30pm

Good Friday is a day of Fast and Abstinence from meat

HOLY SATURDAY – April 15

Morning Prayer – 8:00am

Blessing of Easter Food – 12:00noon

Easter Vigil – 8:00pm

(Attendance at Vigil satisfies Obligation for Sunday)

EASTER SUNDAY – April 16

(Please note change from regular Sunday schedule)

7:00am, 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am and 12:30pm

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Tuesday – 7:00pm-9:00pm

Holy Thursday – 3:30pm-4:30pm

Good Friday – 11:00am-12:00noon and 4:30pm-5:00pm

Holy Saturday – 11:00am-12:00noon and 3:30pm-4:30pm



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A Survivor's Story

A life of service after abuse

BRIDGEPORT—Peter Philipp has led a remarkable life of service to others and to the Church.

The 66-year old has taught in Catholic schools, administered transitional housing and the state's first AIDS residence, and worked in parish ministry as a director of religious education.

However, until recently few people knew that he was a victim of clerical sexual abuse as a boy—a trauma he has struggled with all of his adult life.

Peter Philipp was one of four victims of abuse who provided personal testimony at the Diocesan Healing Service for survivors of priest sexual abuse held last fall in the Egan Chapel of Fairfield University. "Healing is a gift and we have to accept God's will," he said at the end of his remarks at the service. "I'm plan-

ning to leave here tonight with a renewed sense of hope, risking to love and to be loved."

Since that time, Philipp has moved forward and seeks to continue to reach out to others by telling his story, but also emphasizing the need for healing and forgiveness.

Like many victims of abuse in early childhood, Philipp says he struggled to come to terms with why it happened—the traumatic impact it had on his life and relationships—and even the inability to be able to talk about it for so long.

Speaking out is the first task and often the most difficult step for victims. "We didn't say anything because we didn't think anyone would believe us," he says, noting that he had just turned seven when the abuse began, and like many children

he didn't have the vocabulary or the resources to process what was happening to him.

Most childhood victims know "that something isn't normal," but they are totally vulnerable. Unfortunately, the abuse leaves them with a sense of guilt and complicity that haunts them most of their lives. In the short term, his studies suffered and he spent a lot of time alone taking long bike rides.

"Why me, and why didn't anyone notice? Was it something I did? Was something wrong with me?" Philipp says he often asked himself. He also thinks of the man who abused him, Father James Gildea, a member of the Order of the Holy Cross.

"I don't think anybody wants to be a child abuser. Part of me always thought about that," he says, but he wants to do all in his power to ensure that young people aren't abused in the future.

"Some people think it can't happen to their own children, but you have to remain vigilant. Safe environments are only as good as the people who use them."

Peter Philipp says his life came crashing down in 1990, when he lost a teaching job due to budget cuts and felt he was going nowhere. He finally sought treatment, but even at that point did not discuss the abuse. He never told his parents, in part because they had encouraged him to be with the abuser and also because he did not want to hurt them.

Not long after getting out of the hospital, he shared the news with his brothers and sisters, and began the long process of reclaiming his life from the depression and self-image problems that followed the abuse.

His advice to anyone who has



REACHING OUT TO OTHERS—Peter Philipp on a recent visit to the Catholic Center. The retired teacher and administrator has made a profession of helping others who are suffering or in need. He provided a survivor's reflection at last year's Diocesan Healing Service and is committed to reaching out to other victims and preventing future abuse.

been abused: "Find a professional who knows what he or she is doing. I wanted a doctor, and I wanted someone who had a sense of spirituality, a soul. Dr. Vince Stephens was Catholic and a former seminarian. There were a lot of things I didn't have to tell him. He was the good that came out of my pain."

Planning for and participating in the Diocesan Healing Service helped him to move forward in his reconciliation with the Church. The group formed out of the Safe Environment Office of the diocese and met with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

"There was a great exchange of ideas. Everyone talked and felt free to talk. The bishop had a great deal of warmth about him and wanted to hear from us to discuss our feelings and concerns," he says, noting that group members also benefitted from each other's company.

"Listening to the others in the group gave me a whole new perspective," said Philipp. "Meeting Peggy Fry and others and hearing what happened to them helped me understand abuse in a whole different way."

Peter Philipp believes that the abuse he experienced may have opened him to other's suffering. While he was serving as administrator of the AIDS residence

in Hartford, 400 of the residents died, and he personally held the hands of 200 of them. Many were substance abusers and abandoned by their families.

Philipp never lost his faith in spite of the abuse, but feels that Church leadership let him and others down. He says meetings with the bishop and other survivors have helped him to rebuild trust and continue in the work of reaching out.

"We're planning a Mass for sometime in the fall. We're going to call it a celebration of hope and joy. We want all people to feel welcome," he says.

While Peter Philipp works to move on in his own life and help others, he says the Church must continue to talk about this painful and disturbing subject. "I think people in the next generation or two may at some point look back and say, 'Remember when that happened?' It will be in our history and we should not look to remove it from our history. We should learn from it."

(For information concerning healing and victim's assistance, call Erin Neil, LCSW, director of Safe Environment and Victims Assistance coordinator of the diocese: 203.650.3265 or eneil@diobpt.org; or Michael Tintrup, LCSW, victim assistance counselor: 203.416.1305. or mtintrup@ccfc-ct.org.)



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TRINITY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL FROM PAGE 25

service at The Family Center's Gateway Project in Greenwich; and 100 animals benefitted from a food and supply drive for the Westchester Humane Society.

FAITH—artwork done by our international students displayed on the chapel wall.



Order of Malta

Malta House Gala to honor Bishop Caggiano

NORWALK—Malta House, a residence for homeless pregnant and parenting mothers of all faiths and their children in Norwalk, will hold its Annual Gala on Saturday, April 29, at Woodway Country Club in Darien. The gala, starting at 6:30 pm, includes cocktails, dinner, live auction, and a popular “Bubbles & Bling” raffle to benefit the programs provided at Malta House.

This year’s gala honors Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

The vision for Malta House came more than 20 years ago when a young father learned that there were few services for homeless pregnant women in Fairfield County who chose life for their unborn child. Vulnerable young mothers often found themselves living on the street or in sub-standard conditions.

Once accepted into the residential program at Malta House—which can accommodate up to 10 families—the young women are supported with programs aimed at self-sufficiency, including training in parenting, education, career and financial security. Unlike a shelter, Malta House provides enriching residential services that also include spiritual direction and personal development. It is the only maternity group home for pregnant women over 18 years old—and one of a limited number of residential programs for young parenting mothers and their children—in Fairfield County.

The residential program lasts up to 18 months with a “Partnering Success” program that provides follow-up services and outreach to guide the women through the initial stages of life as parents on their own.

Malta House board chair Kim Petrone says, “We are very grateful to Bishop Caggiano for his continuing support of the Malta House mission, and so pleased that he has agreed to be honored as recipient of the annual John Swanhaus Award at our upcoming gala. Bishop Caggiano has been a true friend of Malta House—he graciously responds to our requests for assistance, such



MALTA HOUSE—Bishop Caggiano will be honored at the upcoming Malta House Gala for his supporting and affirming the Malta House mission of reaching out to pregnant and single mothers and their children.

as inviting our residents to his house for a cookout every summer, and he makes every effort to participate in our events when we celebrate the courage of our young women. We are so blessed to have him as our bishop.”

Bishop Caggiano values the dreams of those who seek the help of Malta House. He says, “Malta House plays an integral part in the mission of our diocese,

as it offers young mothers and their children to have a healthy and holy start to their life. Malta House provides the children an opportunity to grow and be educated, and the young mothers a beginning to a life that holds promise and opportunity.”

(For more information about Malta House and details about its upcoming gala, visit www.malta-house.org or call 203.857.0088.)

Lenten Reflection

By DEACON JEFF FONT

Pope Francis has used in his agenda the phrase “pastoral conversion.” Lent is an especially suitable time to think and pray about conversion. But what is pastoral conversion?

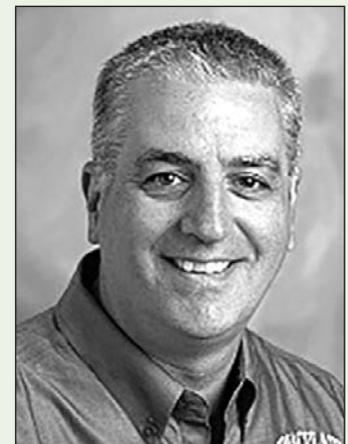
Conversion is about a change of mind and heart that affects all the baptized. The source of this is our encounter with Jesus Christ and especially the experience of his forgiveness, love and mercy. Pope Francis insists that the Church, which means us, the people of God, must go out to encounter others and share the experience of God’s love.

The starting point is a matter of experience, an event, and not a proposition to subscribe to with the mind. Doctrine and morality certainly do count, but the Church’s mission to evangelize does not start there.

Redirecting the Church’s outreach to the invitation to experience Christ’s love brings with it an ability to engage in real dialogue. Pastoral conversion demands the capacity to encounter others and respect their views, even when they differ from our own. True dialogue reveals respect for the dignity of people, even one’s “enemies,” in a world where polarization, taking sides and culture wars are so very common.

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three traditional activities of Lent. They can be viewed as the embodiment of pastoral conversion that requires noticing your dependency on God and others through prayer, the experiencing of hunger or the “embodied need” of the poor, and giving of your substance to those in need. Pastoral conversion is just another name for living the incarnate love of God manifested at Holy Week, the final destination of our Lenten journey.

(Deacon Jeff Font is Chaplain for Immaculate High School in Danbury.)



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Obituary

Sister Angela Bodnar, FDC, Bridgeport native

Sister Mary Angela Bodnar, FDC, passed away peacefully on January 30 at St. Joseph Hill Convent, the provincial home of the Daughters of Divine Charity, in Staten Island, N.Y.

Mary Bodnar was born on September 3, 1929, in Bridgeport, to Bertalan and Elizabeth Bartok Bodnar. She attended the former St. Stephen's grammar school in Bridgeport where she was captivated by the faith and joy of the teaching nuns, members of the Daughters of Divine Charity. She completed elementary and high school at St. Joseph Hill Academy on Staten Island, N.Y., which was run by their religious order, and entered the novitiate on July 2, 1947.

She professed her vows there on July 4, 1949, taking the name Mary Angela.

Sister Angela earned a bach-



SISTER MARY ANGELA BODNAR

elor's degree in education from Seton Hall University and taught in parish elementary schools

in N.Y., N.J., and Penn. After 25 years of teaching grades 2 through 6, she achieved her life-long dream of becoming a cook, and for six years she cooked and baked for her fellow nuns at Villa Madonna, the province infirmary and retirement home in Allamuchy, N.J. She also spent two days a week teaching at the Villa Madonna Nursery School.

Sister Angela was also a school librarian, the provincial secretary, assisted at a shelter for homeless women, was the administrator at Edna McLaughlin Residence for elderly women, served as the superior at St. Joseph Convent and was administrator at Villa Madonna from 1999 to 2004, when she suffered a stroke and was forced to retire.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Angela at the St. Joseph Hill Convent

on Staten Island. Interment took place in nearby Resurrection Cemetery. A memorial service

will be held on Saturday, April 22, at 11 am at St. Emery Parish in Fairfield.

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MARCH

19	Rev. Bartholomew J. O'Shea.....	1959
20	Msgr. Francis A. Campagnone.....	2003
24	Rev. Jon C. Bokron.....	1993
27	Rev. Bertrand E. Parent.....	1973
30	Msgr. Patrick F. Donnelly.....	1993

APRIL

2	Rev. Richard R. Dunn.....	1999
3	Rev. Francis C. Metro.....	1957
4	Rev. David W. Howell.....	2013
	Msgr. John F. Jazowski.....	2010
5	Rev. Hugh F. Gallagher.....	1980
7	Rev. Stephen E. Opra.....	1992
8	Rev. Joseph V. Kazlauskas.....	1968
	Rev. Edward M. Horan.....	1978

Sports

Immaculate High boys' indoor track wins states

By DON HARRISON

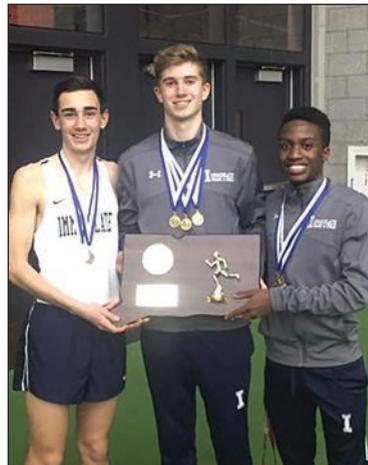
Immaculate High School has won state championships in multiple sports—football, boys' basketball, ice hockey, baseball and soccer, girls' lacrosse, soccer and cross country, 25 titles in all—but never in boys indoor track.

Well, never say never. The Mustangs' 2016-17 boys indoor track squad captured the CIAC Class S state title with 55 points on February 14 at the Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven. Bloomfield, which placed second in the boys meet, won the girls state championship and Immaculate was runner-up.

"We knew going into the meet, we'd be one of the teams in the mix," said Carlo Pascuzzi, who coaches the Mustangs indoor track teams with Brian Hayes.

"We knew if we did what we were supposed to do, we could win," said Hayes. "We let the kids know they had a chance to win it."

Two college-bound seniors were the sparkplugs in the Danbury school's break-through victory. Christian Morris, who will attend Sacred Heart University this fall, captured



IMMACULATE HIGH INDOOR track tri-captains (from left) Connor McNerney, Sean Fahey and Christian Morris performed well in leading the team to the Class S State Championship on February 14 in New Haven. Senior Danielle Marcone won medals in three distance races, helping Immaculate's girls indoor track team to a runner-up finish in the Class S State Championship meet.



the 600 meters with a time of 1:24.36, and classmate Sean Fahey—headed for Mount St. Mary's in Maryland—won the long jump (21-0.75) and placed third in the 300 (37.08).

Morris and Fahey also teamed up with junior Dominick Curra and sophomore Matt Christe to take the 4x400 relay with a time of 3:34.01. The foursome of Christe and juniors Connor McNerney, Patrick Cropsey and

Sean Connolly finished second in the 4x800 relay with a time of 8:38.21.

"Fahey holds the school records for the long jump and triple jump," pointed out Pascuzzi. "The 4x400 relay team also broke the school record."

On the girls' side, Immaculate senior co-captain and All-Stater Danielle Marcone earned medals in all three distance races in the Class S state meet, placing second in the 3,200 (11:41.63), third in the 1,600 (5:25.09) and fifth in the 1,000 (3:07.10). Marcone, an honor roll student from Bethel, recently signed a National Letter-of-Intent to attend Quinnipiac University.

Immaculate sophomore Morganne Cartee combined with juniors Audrey Sedensky, Emma Connolly and Dominique Valentine to place third in the 4x400 relay (4:21.41). Meanwhile, senior Diana Kirkman and three sophomores, Taylor Mascetta, Christina Carboni and Maura Murphy, finished third in the 4x800 (10:42.38), and the foursome of Cartee, Sedensky, Valentine and Connolly placed second in the sprint medley relay (4:29.81).

Immaculate lacks an indoor track facility, and so the coaches appreciate the student-athletes' resolve and pluck to endure the elements during outdoor practice. "They are a phenomenal group of kids who go out there and run in the rain and snow, and even when the temperature is well below freezing," said Pascuzzi,

who has spent a quarter century at the Danbury school.

"The guy who takes care of the parking lot does a great job, so the kids can go out there and run," Hayes said.

In the South West Conference

indoor meet on February 4, the Immaculate boys and Weston shared the co-championship with 72 points. Fahey (21-04.25) and Curra (20-05.50) finished one-two in the long jump, and Fahey placed second in the 300 (37.23).

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for March 26, 2017

John 9:1-41

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A: how Jesus saved a blind man. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

HE SAW	A MAN	BLIND
BIRTH	GROUND	MADE CLAY
EYES	GO WASH	POOL
SILOAM	WASHED	NEIGHBORS
A BEGGAR	SIT AND BEG	PHARISEES
SABBATH	OPENED	ANSWERED
WHO IS HE	SEEN HIM	LORD

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D S O I D N I L B J H E
A E C C D G D E H S A W
M H M I H N E E S T L S
P O I B I R T H N J O N
M A O L I S S E Y E O A
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Column: Thomas Hicks



Sorrow and joy blend into one fabric

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

Hebrews 11:13-14: "recognizing that we are only strangers and nomads on earth... seeking a homeland... a better country, that is, a heavenly one." More and more I marvel at the wonder of being alive. Life is an

unmerited gift. With the span of life allotted to me, I wander once across the world's stage in a brief episode. There is a sense of mystery about it all. There is more to life than meets the eye.

But while I'm here, I like listening to people and hear the

different ways they stick themselves in the world. Every life has its own theme. I'm, sadly, convinced that many people live in a world of mostly missed signals. I'm amazed how far people go out of their way to mess up their lives. In his novel, *The Second Coming*, Walker Percy posed the question, "Is it possible for people to miss their lives in the same way one misses a plane?" and says the answer is "yes."

One of the themes of the Letter to the Romans and the Psalms is that we make our own punishments in life. I believe that.

Sorrow and joy blend into one fabric. Soren Kierkegaard said that (*Fear and Trembling*, p.27).

Life is full of suffering. To be

human is to take on the weight of illness, pain, growing old, failures, separations, losses, disappointments, people dying. There are the many wishes denied, the small humiliations, the frictions of human relations, the loves missed, loves lost. Life was more terrible than I had imagined. Sometimes it seems that we are boats in a storm. You just ride it out and hope the boat holds together. The ancient Greeks taught that the gods were jealous, and when you have good fortune, you should conceal it. We Christians speak of sharing in the Lord's Passion.

However, to be human is also to share in many luminous things in life: springtime, mimosa trees, blackbirds, Mozart, love, wine, dancing, the eyes of a loved one, etc. We know days of happiness and beauty. Indeed, life contains times of exhilaration. Good will and love are constantly in evidence. There are many grace notes in life. Life is often burdensome—what bitterness, but also what sweetness. Life is to be enjoyed.

But there is an off-kilter quality to life. Something is missing. There is a feeling of incompleteness. No matter how happy our lives are, this feeling of incompleteness never fades. No happiness lasts; I've come to know that. There is nothing good in life that will not be taken away. Our final home is not here. There is something crucial missing—something that only God can satisfy. We are searching for

something the world is not giving us. The world is a place where the heart is both at home and homeless.

A man once spoke to me about how he could not help wondering why it was that life, even when it gave so much, after all, seemed to give so little. What was it that he had expected and missed? Why was he, more than anything else, disappointed?

Most people have no conscious sense of this at all. Perhaps sometimes in a moment of quiet reflection they may sense something calling them to greater fulfillment, but would be at a loss to explain it further. They wouldn't think of it as providing a glimpse of a longing for God.

The danger is that we will ask too much of persons and objects in this world. We are homesick cranes, stretching and yearning to be home—homesick cranes who are winging our way to the homeland.

My long, practical struggle with life has taught me some lessons. One is that life is a series of dyings and risings—dying and being born again. It is the story of the Passion and Resurrection working themselves out in our lives. This is what it is like "under the sun."

*Give us joy to balance our afflictions
For the years when we knew misfortune...*

Give success to the work of our hands

Give success to the work of our hands.

(Psalm 90)

NEW LEADERS FROM PAGE 12

Colleges Accreditation Visiting Team. She was the recipient of the State of Connecticut General Assembly Citation in 2011 and was awarded the Connecticut Center for Child Development Autism Advocacy Award.

In the past she has served as principal of the Little White Schoolhouse in Mystic, CT, serving students with cerebral palsy; and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal School in North Stonington, CT.

Born in Nyack, N.Y., she was raised in Pennsylvania, then moved to Connecticut 33 years ago due to her husband Dewey's career in the U.S. Navy

Submarine Force. Their home parish is St. Mary's in Groton; they have four grown children.

The new school will be located in the present St. Lawrence School, 503 Shelton Ave., which will be renamed to reflect the combined schools.

Parents from the three schools have received a letter from Dr. Cheeseman, announcing Dr. Kingston's appointment. In the letter, Dr. Cheeseman also announced that "no consensus was reached" in the naming of the new school and asked parents to participate in a follow-up survey.

(For more information, visit www.ournewschool2017.org.)

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Column: Joe Pisani



The Divine Therapist

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

Late Friday afternoon I was sitting at my workstation, anxiously waiting for the next crisis to erupt—that seems to be the witching hour when things can get really crazy, according to some yet-to-be discovered cosmic law.

Nothing's more annoying than being in the "TGIF" frame of mind, counting the moments until the bell rings, only to have someone call with an allegedly earth-shattering problem that should have been dealt with on Wednesday or could have waited until Monday.

Suddenly, an email popped up on my computer screen, and I feared the worst. But it was only an article from Apple News titled, "How to Change Your Personality" and transform your-

self ... with the help of a therapist.

I've been on a lifelong, often unsuccessful mission to change my personality. It's a goal I dream about the way middle-aged stockbrokers dream of climbing Mt. Everest or partying in Turks and Caicos with Leonardo DiCaprio.

You see, I've been dissatisfied with my personality a long time, at least as long as I've known it. One of my friends, who compiled an encyclopedia of self-help, once assured me there's a cure for every ailment—psychological, physical and spiritual—that self-help techniques can solve. I believed him, along with millions of other Americans who thought they could use biofeedback, transcendental meditation, yoga, reiki and other practices to become the person they always wanted to be.

My experience has been that change for the worse is easy, but change for the better is hard. Heavy drinkers become alcoholic drinkers; people who swear, swear even more; little liars turn into pathological liars; and students who cheat on their college exams eventually end up in the cell next to Bernie Madoff. A person who isn't improving is most likely headed toward failure because there's no standing still when it comes to spiritual growth.

Jesus was right. The path to spiritual perfection is narrow and steep and little populated, while the path toward perdition is broad and wide, and there's so much traffic that people are stumbling over one another.

Whenever I struggled to become a better person—to control my anger, pride, lust, criticism and impatience—I overlooked one factor, and it wasn't a therapist. It was grace. True change, you see, only comes from Christ. It's all about grace, and if you ask Jesus, he'll give you what you need ... in his time.

St. Paul, who was frustrated by one of his defects, famously said, "To keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.'"

Christ is the best therapist there is. Even though he doesn't take insurance, his fees are reasonable and the sessions last as long as you want, so talk to him often during the day. He knows our weaknesses and our strengths, and he knows what we need to become holier. He'll lead us down a path that is guaranteed to make us better people. (My wife, who admits she has no patience, keeps encountering situations that test her patience—and they usually involve me.)

In his book "The Case for Grace," Christian author Lee Strobel tells stories of Christ's transforming power in people who were tragically lost but now are found because of grace, including atheists, addicts, orphans, murderers and prisoners. I've also seen desperate people overcome addictions to alco-

holism, pornography and gambling—one day at a time.

First, you have to recognize you have a problem and ask for help. It's important to do a daily examination of conscience and take an honest look at yourself. When you fail, immediately ask Christ for forgiveness and help. The wonderful result is you'll become a better person and not even recognize the changes while they're occurring ... although people around you will. Prayer, regular Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, and quiet moments

listening to the still small voice of God are the simple steps that lead to spiritual progress.

Christ waits to flood his amazing grace into a willing soul. All we have to do is ask. And we should never hesitate to ask him to help others who are wandering in darkness. You can be sure that at the right moment, he'll send graces to change their lives.

He knows all our defects. He knows what must be done to lead us to holiness, and he'll provide spiritual therapy everyone can afford. ■

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Bits and Pieces

“UNDERSTANDING ISLAM and the Muslim Experience in Contemporary America,” by Martin Ngyyen, Ph.D. will be sponsored by the Council of Religious of the Diocese of Bridgeport in Gonzaga Auditorium, Gonzaga Residence Hall, Fairfield University on Sat., **March 25**, from 1-3 pm. Free presenta-

tion, light refreshments served. Reservation deadline: Fri., **March 20**. For more info and to RSVP, contact Sr. Nancy Strillacci: srstrillacci@diobpt.org or 203.416.1511.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one is forming at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull. A series of 10 weekly meetings will

begin Thurs., **March 23**, from 4-5:30 pm. Registration required by Mon., **March 20**. For more info and for registration, call the parish: 203.268.6217.

LENTEN PASTA DINNER AND STATIONS, hosted by Trinity Catholic High School to raise money for a weeklong service trip in Boston, will be held **March 24**, from 5:30-7:30 pm. Come for some delicious food, donated by Columbus Park Trattoria. 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.

LENTEN RETREAT will be held at St. Luke Parish, Westport, on Sat., **March 25**, from 9:30 am-3:30 pm, with Sr. Kathleen Deignan, speaking on the spirituality of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Lunch included; registration is required. A goodwill offering will be appreciated. For more info, call the parish: 203.227.7245 or contact Jeanne: jfennels@aol.com.

MUSIC IN THE KEY OF SPRING, a concert by the Fairfield University Glee Club, will be held in St. Catherine of

Siena Church, Riverside, on Sat., **March 25**, at 8 pm. Club soloists as well as a cappella groups the Bensonians and Sweet Harmony will perform. Tickets are available at St. Catherine's rectory, Bennett Jewelers in Old Greenwich and Packages Plus in Cos Cob. Cost: \$10 presale, \$15 at the door. Children free. For more info, call 203.637.3661 or go to www.stcath.org.

THE GREATEST GIFT a short film on the Passion, will debut at the Westport Town Hall Auditorium, Fri., **March 31**, at 7 pm. The evening will include original scripture reading video contemplations with Dr. Thomas Hicks and Lenten-themed music by the CantiamoCHOIR. A second event will be held at St. Emery Parish in Fairfield on Fri., **April 7**, hosted by the Knights of Columbus. For more info, go to www.faithmusicmedia.com.

MAGNIFICAT Ministry to Catholic Women will host a prayer breakfast on Sat., **April 8**, 9:30 am-12:30 pm at Tashua Knolls Golf Club, Trumbull. The breakfast will be open to both men and women. Christopher and Lisa from the Catholic Apostolate “Encourage” will

be the guest speakers. Cost \$25: pre-register by Sat., **April 1**. No tickets sold at the door. For more info, call Fran Hood: 203.744.1856 or email s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net.

IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL GALA will be held Sat., **April 1**, in the Amber room Calonnade, 1 Stacey Rd., Danbury, from 6:30-11:30 pm, with magician tom Pesce, Class of '99. Black tie optional. The gala will honor Kathleen Casey and Jennifer Rosenblum. For more info or for reservations, contact Debbie Basile: dbasile@myimmaculatehs.org, call 203.744.1510, ext. 159, or go to www.immaculatehs.org/support-ihs/events/gala-dinner-dance.

TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS is celebrated at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, the first Sun. of each month (**April 2**) at 4 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35) Ice Skating: The Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury will gather on gather on Tues., **April 4**, from 6:45-9 pm



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All teens are invited to a night of worship music and an inspiring message with Catholic speaker and musician Chris Bray. There is no cost to attend; however, a free will offering will be taken up to help off set the costs. To RSVP or for more information contact Evan Psencik at epsencik@diobpt.org or 203-416-1649.

Bits and Pieces

for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, followed by a social. This event is open to all ages. For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

JOIN IN PRAYING the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for Persecuted Christians from your home/car/office the first Tues. of every month (**April 4**) at 7 pm with a conference phone number. How? Before 7 pm, call 877.216.5269 and type in the pin number 96869.

MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE: the Charismatic Renewal Services announces a Mass of Healing and Hope on Wed., **April 5**, at 7 pm at St. Marguerite Parish, Brookfield, with Fr. Larry Carew. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.456.5610. NOTE: Change of telephone number for Charismatic Renewal.

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 (**April 7; April 21**) at 7:30. For more info and for directions, call Bette: 203.338.0503 or Peggy: 203.834.1287.

"SCIENCE AND RELIGION" with Dr. Glenn Sauer, associate professor of biology at Fairfield University, will be the next First Friday Lecture at St. Luke Parish, Westport on Fri., **April 7**, at 7:30 pm. Wine and cheese reception at 7 pm. No charge, all are welcome. For more info, call 203.227.7245.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (**April 8**) 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.

PASSION AND PURPOSE event with international speaker and author Matthew Kelly and special musical guest Eliot Morris will be held at St. Paul Parish, Greenwich, on Sat., **April 8**, from 9 am-1:30 pm. Cost of tickets and retreat materials: \$39. For more info, call the parish: 203.531.8741.

WOMEN'S GROUP at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet Mon., **April 10**, at 10 am in the parish hall. Featured speaker will be Joanna Leone, author of "Slices of Life-Italian

American Stories." All are welcome. For more info, call 203.261.8020.

DEADLINE FOR DONATING a brick at the St. Margaret Shrine Veteran's Memorial, Bridgeport, is Sat., **April 15**, in order to have it in place for Memorial Day. For more info on donating a brick for a veteran from the U.S. military or our allies; living, deceased or currently serving, call 203.345.3244.

DIVINE MERCY MASS will be celebrated by Bishop Caggiano on Divine Mercy Sunday, **April 23**, at St. Augustine Cathedral at 2:30 pm immediately followed by the C4Y Spring Concert. For more info, contact Janet Davis: jdavis@diobpt.org or 203.416.1636.

ANNUAL LEGACY GALA for Trinity Catholic High School will be held Fri. evening, **April 28**, at the Italian Center in Stamford. Bishop Caggiano will be honored at this year's event. For more info and for tickets, contact Betsy Mercede: bmercede@trinitycatholic.org or 203.322.3401, ext. 303.

MALTA HOUSE, a residence for homeless pregnant and parenting mothers and their children, will hold its Annual Gala on Sat., **April 29**, starting at 6:30 pm at Woodway Country Club in Darien. Gala includes cocktails, dinner, live auction, and popular "Bubbles & Bling" raffle. This year's gala honors Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. For more info and for reservations, visit www.malta-house.org or call 203.857.0088.

VENDORS NEEDED for a parish sale at St. Mary Parish, Stamford, Sat., **April 29**, from 9 am-3 pm. Rent a pre-assigned 6-foot table for \$35 or \$60 for two tables. For more info, contact Sharon MacKnight: 203.327.1806 or smacknight@optonline.net

REUNIONS for Notre Dame High School (Bridgeport/Fairfield) Classes of 1966 and 1967 are planning their 50 year reunions. Class of 1966 (Boys and Girls) the weekend of **May 19-21**; Class of 1967 (Boys and Girls), the weekend of **Oct. 27-29**. For more info, contact Notre Dame's Alumni Office: tmarzik@notre-dame.org.

PILGRIMAGE to the major shrines of Portugal, Spain and France, an 11-day journey, will depart from New York on Sun., **Sept. 24**, returning Wed., **Oct. 4**. Price: \$3,175/person, includes

airfare, taxes, hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, sightseeing, transportation to JFK, and gratuity. For more info, contact Fr. Marcel Saint Jean: 203.434.7208 or 203.268.8695, email marcel-saintjean@gmail.com.

PILGRIMAGE to Fatima, Lourdes and Barcelona, **Sun., Oct. 1-Tues., Oct. 10**. Price: \$3,548/person double occupancy includes airfare, taxes, hotels, breakfasts, one lunch, and dinner. For more info, contact Fr. Cyrus Bartolome: 203.652.1155.

ENCOURAGE apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions or gender ID confusion holds confidential meetings monthly. For more info email EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com.

COURAGE apostolate provides pastoral care and support for men and women who experience same-sex attractions and want to live chaste lives. Confidential meetings are held weekly. For more info call 203.8031564 or email Courage@diobpt.org.

Bishop to Join 'In Defense of Life' Prayer Vigil



DANBURY—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead the "In Defense of Life" prayer vigil in Danbury on Sat., March 25, at 12:45 pm.

"Recalling God's precious gift of life and his forgiving mercy, we're asking people to join us Bishop Frank Caggiano as he leads us in prayer this Lent," said Sharon Boland, co-leader of 40 Days for Life Danbury.

The vigil will be held at the public entry driveway of the Planned Parenthood facility, 44 Main Street.

Boland said the vigil will include parishioners from St. Peter's Danbury, Saint Joseph Danbury, and Sacred Heart of Jesus Danbury; all are welcome to join this prayerful vigil.

For more information, go to <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/danbury/>.

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