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Leadership and Pastoral Ministry

What makes an ‘Amazing Parish’?

By PATRICK TURNER

I recently had the opportunity to attend the “Amazing Parish” conference in Atlanta with nearly 1,100 parish and diocesan leaders from across the country. Joining with Father Peter Towsley and the leadership team from Sacred Heart Parish in Danbury, we had the privilege to pray together and to hear from a wide range of nationally recognized speakers offering ideas, insights, and best practices for strengthening parish life.

There is not a single, simple, template that will suddenly create an amazing parish. However, there are certain characteristics that have been identified across the country that can help re-engage current parishioners and excite newcomers and those who are not regular church attendees.

“This was a hands-on conference which came at a time of our own parish renewal, and we (the leadership team) are committed to growing our relationship with Christ,” said Bob Miazga of Sacred Heart Parish.

“The speakers, content, and worship certainly energized all in attendance. It was great to hear that all parishioners are called to help build a vibrant parish family. The pastor can’t do it on his own,” added Roger Palanzo.

The Amazing Parish movement has identified three building blocks of an amazing parish: Reliance on Prayer and Sacraments; Commitment to a Healthy Organization; Passion for Evangelization and Discipleship. The speakers emphasized the importance of prayer; something you’d think would be fairly obvious in a faith-based organization or parish. Yet, how often is prayer truly an integral part of the business part of parish management? Is it the foundation of what is being done, or is it a quick off-the-top of the head experience before getting to the “real” meat of whatever meeting is taking place? Is there a strong focus on the sacraments as prayer moments or are they merely a milestone to check off on our way to “completing” the course?

A strong leadership structure is the second component identified as a characteristic of an amazing parish. Patrick Lencioni, one of the founders of the Amazing Parish movement, has spent much of his career specializing in executive team development and organizational health, and now brings that expertise to the parish structure. Lencioni focused on five behaviors of a team, ranging from building trust to mastering conflict to achieving commitment.

At the conference, pastors were asked to focus on creating an intentional leadership team that would help create a vision for the parish and support the pastor in the day-to-day management of the parish. The speakers recognized that this leadership team needs to be a mix of parish staff and lay leaders in order to be successful.

Parishes in our diocese recently had the opportunity to come together in a workshop to learn ways to identify and nurture new parish leadership and to build strong cross-generational support for the parish activities. For many parishes, there is a strong need to include a broader cross-section of the parish in their leadership activities.

Father Michael White and Tom Corcoran, authors of “Rebuilt” and “Tools for Rebuilding,” focused on the Sunday experience. They identified three major components of Sunday (or weekend) worship: hymns, homilies and hospitality. The focus of liturgy is, of course, the Eucharist. Father White and Tom emphasized the need to offer good music, engaging homilies, and a welcoming atmosphere as necessary to engage today’s parishioners.

“The whole experience was not only informative, but transformative,” concluded Grace McNamara, head of the Office of Faith Formation for Sacred Heart Parish.

The attendees were sent home with a final message ringing in our ears: How will your parish uniquely fulfill its calling? What makes your parish ‘amazing’?

The Pastoral Planning office would welcome your insights into what makes your parish truly amazing. Please send an email to pastoralplanning@dobpt.org and let me know something that your parish is doing that makes it amazing! I will share some of those emails on our homepage and in future articles.

ON THE COVER

AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS—Thousands of men and women from four Bridgeport parishes process through the streets of the East Side on Good Friday in an act of solemn witness and devotion. During the walk they pray in five different languages. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will once again join in this procession as they put themselves at the foot of the cross in prayer and adoration. PHOTOS BY AMY MORTENSEN

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Bishop opens Lecture Series

Catholic social teaching can change the world

BY BRIAN D. WALLACE

“Don’t stop trying to change the world,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano told Sacred Heart University students on March 28 in the first Bergoglio Lecture, named in honor of Pope Francis. But he quickly added that even if they feel they can’t take on the big structural issues, the best way to transform the world is through a commitment to love and justice, “one person at a time.”

In a 40-minute talk followed by a question and answer session, the bishop urged students not to succumb to indifference or the feeling of powerlessness as he reflected on “Pope Francis and the Social Gospel.”

“Reaching out to the marginalized is the work closest to the Holy Father,” and at the core of what it means to be a follower of Christ. “There is an essential skill we need to have in your own heart and mind to have in your own heart and mind to do,” he said.

At times, the bishop’s appearance at the university felt like a “sit-in” with almost 300 students jamming the Schine Auditorium in the university library. They quickly filled the seats, sat in the aisles, and even gathered around the bishop on the small stage as he spoke.

“He has invited the poor and refugees to eat in his private quarters, has opened public showers for the homeless and has visited the world’s trouble spots where the lives of the poor are threatened.

Mentioning that many young people today define themselves as spiritual but not religious, the bishop said that they will find God in formal religious worship and in the context of a faith community.

He said that one of his goals for the diocese is to create welcoming and loving parish communities that will attract young people and make them want to join.

In his discussion of Catholic Social Teaching, the bishop said that it begins with a respect for the dignity of “the seamless garment of life woven in the mother’s womb and that goes to God in the mystery of death.”

Catholic Social Teaching has always been on the cutting edge of social concerns,” he said, adding that the Pope’s environmental concerns are part of a long-standing Church tradition.

“Catholic Social Teaching has always held that mankind should not exploit creation. All Francis did was reiterate a principle that goes back to the New Testament, but he gave it new force and moral authority in our own time,” the bishop said.

He said Pope Francis believes that young people can change the world. “The Holy Father asks you above all others to take this challenge. You’re generous, you are willing to sacrifice and you are ready to extend a hand to the people that the world often wants us to forget,” he said.

The bishop urged students to find time to pray every day and to examine their consciences at night. “Imagine the person who was most poor or vulnerable that you encountered during the day. If you treated them poorly, you have a lot of work to do,” he concluded.

Diocesan Town Hall Meeting on Facebook Live

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport will host a virtual Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, April 20 at 9 am. The meeting will take place on the diocesan Facebook page (Diocese of Bridgeport), airing on Facebook Live.

The Town Hall Meeting, a first for the diocese, will feature panelists Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute; Patrick Turner, director of Strategic and Pastoral Planning; and Pam Rittman, director of the Annual Catholic Appeal.

The panel will be hosted by John Grosso, director of Social Media, and Brian Wallace, director of Communications.

“The reason for the meeting is simple,” said Grosso. “We want to hear from the faithful. How can we assist you better? What can we do to communicate better? How can our ministries serve you and reach you more effectively? What do you need more of to be spiritually nourished?”

He expects most questions to come from parishioners throughout the diocese, but says that he also hopes to hear from Catholics who are not currently practicing their faith.

“Of course we want to hear from parishioners, but we also want to hear from those who feel disconnected from the Church. If you know someone who has stopped going to Mass, or who might be on the fringes of the faith, encourage them to submit a question. We want to hear from them, because we want to serve them too.”

Though Grosso encourages questions to be asked during the live-stream itself, early submissions are also being encouraged in order to ensure nothing is left out.

Under Grosso’s leadership the diocese has developed an active social media presence. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano recently went over the 10,000 mark in “likes” on Facebook and also has 3,540 followers on Twitter. The diocesan Facebook page has 5,309 likes with an average weekly reach of 25,000 people.

Likewise, the diocese recorded 239,000 sessions on its website (www.bridgeportdiocese.org) last year with an average duration of 1:57 minutes.

“Social media is a new, dynamic, immersive resource for communication. Though there is a lot ‘wrong’ with social media, the bishop believes this ministry is vital to the Catholic Church. It brings the Church to the marketplace of ideas and the important conversations in our culture. It puts us right where we need to be. Our hope is that the Town Hall Meeting will further expand communication within the diocese and become an online community that engages people in dialogue that both provides information and support their faith,” Grosso said.

(If people are unable to participate in the live stream, they can submit questions in advance, either by direct message on the diocesan Facebook, or by emailing TownHallMeeting@diobpt.org.)
St. Joseph, Brookfield

‘Do it big’ for the 125th

By PAT HENNESSY

St. Joseph Church in Brookfield Center proudly proclaims the parish history. Although the current church was built in 1990, the cornerstone proclaims the parish history.

As new initiatives continued, Father O’Neill connected with Parishioners asked for, and got, greeters at Mass to increase the welcoming aspect of the parish. They wanted, and got, an updated website. Following the request for a revived parish choir, St. Joseph’s now has three active choirs.

Responding to comments about time constraints limiting adult programs like Bible study, Father O’Neill connected with Formed.com, whose web accessible classes will be available to all parishioners. He made the formal presentation during Masses the weekend of April 1-2.

“Parishioners can take all the classes they want,” he says. “As part of the anniversary and as part of the evangelization requested by the parish survey, this is a gift to our people from the parish.”

As new initiatives continued, religious education went online, too, with a Eucharist-based program that encourages parents to work with their children. “The parents say that they’re learning, too,” says Father O’Neill with obvious pleasure.

With all that underway, the parish council decided that “do it big” should include a special festival for each season in the anniversary year.

Bob Goodman was named overall chair for the year’s four anniversary celebrations. First up, of course, was the parish feast day, St. Joseph’s Day, March 19.

“I’m Irish-German from Kentucky,” says Goodman. “When they started talking about San Giuseppe I was completely lost. Then they started talking about the food—and zeppoli—and I knew I was going to like the event!”

Goodman’s two youngest children ended up working at the festival as ziti servers, busboys, and zeppoli testers. By the end of the day the whole family thoroughly understood what a San Giuseppe Festival was all about.

Goodman, in turn, named Carl Monte, who comes from the Bronx and absolutely does know about San Giuseppe, as chair for this festival. “We had a tremendous outpouring of volunteers,” he says, praising the spirit of camaraderie that welled up in the parish. Thinking back to the Feast of San Genaro in Manhattan’s Little Italy, he envisioned a cityscape with scattered tables, plenty of room to mingle, and activities to keep kids happy.

It worked beyond expectations. “I was truly blown away by the number of people there, having a good time,” says David Hanley, who donated his grill and tent to the festival. David and his wife, Petra, have six children. They were pleased to see their oldest mingling comfortably with adults while the youngest ones played happily with other kids.

Christine Errichiello witnessed the spirit close to her heart. “My youngest daughter is a little bit on the shy side. At one point in the festival the DJ was playing music and all the kids were dancing. She kind of hung on the outside of it until Father Silva came over and drew her in.”

Errichiello sees the festival and ongoing anniversary events in that same light, pulling in more young families and making them feel at home. “We have all become more familiar with each other. That will definitely carry on.”

“There’s a higher level of energy in the parish,” agrees Monti. “We’ll use this as a springboard for the rest of the year’s events.”

Upcoming events include a float in the town’s Memorial Day parade with a mockup of the front of the church. Parish choirs will ride the float, surrounded by St. Joseph parishioners. Since Brookfield’s parade ends at the town green by the church, St. Joseph’s will hold a cookout at the parade’s end.

September will see the parish picnic, which will include rides and games this year. The 125th anniversary will close on November 10 at 11 am Mass with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, followed by a free buffet hosted at the Candlewood Inn.

“This event set the tone for the year,” says Father O’Neill. “Something changed within the parish. I saw children running, playing, eating, and people who didn’t normally mingle socializing with each other. There’s a new energy in St. Joseph’s.”

Rehearsal Schedule
Starting Summer 2017

Mondays | 4:30-6:00pm • Our Lady of Fatima Parish Center | 229 Danbury Road, Wilton

Tuesdays | 2:00-3:30pm • Kolbe Cathedral High School | 33 Calhoun Pl, Bridgeport

Tuesdays | 4:30-6:00pm • Catholic Center, Queen of Saints Hall | 238 Jewett Ave, Bridgeport

Tuesdays | 7:00-8:30pm • St. Joseph High School | 2320 Huntington Tpke, Trumbull

Wednesdays | 4:30-6:00pm • Trinity Catholic High School Chapel | 926 Newfield Ave, Stamford

Thursdays | 4:30-6:00pm • Immaculate High School | 73 Southern Blvd, Danbury

Calling All Singers!
Diocesan Youth Choir Auditions

Please be sure to register for the audition at C4YSings.com

C4Y, Choir For Youth, is open to all young adults in Fairfield County 7th grade through Senior in High School as of September, 2017.

The auditions will take place in six locations throughout the Diocese, feel free to come to any audition site.
HEALTHCARE AND HEALING—Jesuit priest and physician Father Myles Sheehan spoke to more than 200 invited guests at the 24th Annual White Mass in Danbury.

The Dartmouth Medical School graduate and Harvard-trained physician said what when physicians and other health workers “close themselves off from awe.” They close themselves off from God and the grace to respond with the deepest level of compassion and mercy to those who are suffering and ill.

The morning began when Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated Mass at St. Peter Church in downtown Danbury, which was filled to capacity. “You are the light in the darkness, and your ministry helps people to see they are loved by you and by Christ. Few vocations have so sacred a duty,” Bishop Caggiano said to health care workers.

Speaking to a gathering of more than 200 healthcare professionals at the breakfast, Father Sheehan said that Pope Francis has invested the Church with a sense of urgency about the need to reach out to those who need help the most.

“The Pope sees the Church as a place for urgent care, not for specialists,” he said, adding that health care workers have a “sacramental presence” because they “touch the flesh of Christ” when they treat the outcast and those who are ill.

In a half-hour reflection on Pope Francis’ concept of the Church as a “field hospital,” Father Sheehan turned the tables on the often-used phrase that hospitals “need margin in order to perform mission.”

“The Pope is challenging us to take the mission to the margins,” he said, noting that healthcare workers must be supported in their mission to accompany people “through the dark places” of their suffering and loss.

The Church must also reach out to the marginalized and those on the periphery, including Catholics who no longer practice their faith. “In Boston only 15 percent of Catholics attend Mass on Sunday. The Church must find a way to reach out.”

Father Sheehan said that an occupational job hazard for clergy as well as physicians is the temptation to “separate from people,” falling back on ideology or power that prevents them from responding with mercy and compassion. “We can create boundaries, or we can realize there is no safety except in God’s love and grace,” he said of the need of physicians and priests to remain open to others.

Father Sheehan said that most hospitals have brand tag lines that affirm the whole person and the spiritual aspect of care, but that Catholic healthcare providers need to “make compassion more than a slogan.” Likewise, he said many current measures of productivity in medicine are “increasingly out of step” with the patient’s needs and the Gospel.

Recalling his work as senior associate dean at Loyola University, Father Sheehan said he told young physicians that if they were interested in medicine for the money or the lifestyle, “they were in it for the wrong reasons.”

He added that in his experience he has found that “physicians become better doctors when someone in their own family is sick.”

When a young resident physician ridiculed a demented elderly patient who was disrupting the emergency room at Loyola, Father Sheehan said to him, “That’s what my father looks like now, and that’s what your dad will look like some day,” noting that doctors must always share the experience of mercy.

Referring to the Pope’s thoughts on “the apostolate of the ear,” Father Sheehan said that diagnoses would be more accurate and healthcare would improve if physicians and others spent more time listening to patients.

He said the challenge for Catholic hospital administrators and managers is to “encourage a deep sense of the vocation of medicine” and to continue their own formation in the understanding that Catholic healthcare is a mission of healing centered in Christ. He said the questions should always be asked, “What have I done for Christ? What should I be doing?”

Father Sheehan said he did not have the answers to the many challenges facing Catholic healthcare in the future, but “there is a sacredness to how we work that out.”

Catholic healthcare networks might also benefit by returning to the spirit of the religious women who founded them. Many faced discrimination and other obstacles, but they were totally committed to their patients and they lived alongside those they served, he said.

Father Sheehan, who is provincial assistant for Senior Jesuits of the USA Northeast and Maryland Provinces of the Society of Jesus, was introduced by Dr. John Murphy, president and chief executive officer of the Western Connecticut Health Network and a parishioner of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown. The breakfast, chaired by Dr. Murphy, was one of the best attended in years.

Candidates begin formation

BRIDGEPORT—A formation weekend was held in March for men aspiring to become permanent deacons for the Diocese of Bridgeport. Shown here with Director of Deacons Anthony Cassanteo (at right) are four men who are discerning a call to the permanent diaconate, known as Inquirers. (l-r) Richard Earls, Franklin Arosamena, Daniel Adu Dunkor, and Chris Greer.

When accepted, they will complete a four and a half year formation program, including both theology and an in-depth discernment of each individual’s vocational call.
Council of Religious

Presenting a fuller view of Islam

FAIRFIELD—“There are so many misunderstandings about Islam, triggered by stereotypes and media hype,” said Martin Nguyen, associate professor of Islamic Religious Traditions in the Religious Studies Department and Faculty Chair for Diversity at Fairfield University.

Professor Nguyen set out to clarify some of those misunderstandings at a lecture held at the university on March 25, sponsored by the Council of Religious of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

“The very first words of the Quran, ‘there is no God but God and Mohammed is his messenger’ are often used to justify their actions.”

Professor Nguyen began by exploding some common myths about Islam. To begin with, although the Prophet Mohammed lived in Arabia, the Arab countries are not home to the world’s largest Muslim populations. In fact, the nation with the world’s largest Muslim population is in an unexpected part of the world: Indonesia. Sixty-two percent of Muslims live in Asia and the countries of the eastern Pacific.

“Ramadhan—fasting, meditation, abstaining from food and drink during the daylight hours throughout the month of Ramadan. Hajj Pilgrimage: all Muslims, both men and women, are expected to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia at least once in their lifetime. After a Muslim makes the trip to Mecca, he/she is honored in the Muslim community.

Most Muslims are ordinary, peace-loving people, worshiping God the way they believe best, says Professor Nguyen. “Extremism is an aberration in the interpretation of the Koran.” In the Koran, as in the Bible, “people can always find a verse to justify their actions.”

The Council for Religious hopes that, through lectures like this one, Catholics can move beyond sensationalism and stereotypes and begin to understand their Muslim neighbors. “We have to counteract the fear of the unknown,” said Sister Nancy. “We have to counteract ignorance.”

(The next offering presented by the Council of Religious will be held on Saturday, June 3, from 1-3 pm at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport. Sister Maureen Fleming, SSND, will speak on human trafficking. Reservations needed by Friday, May 26. For more information or to register, contact Sister Nancy Strillacci: srstrillacci@d6bpt or 203.416.1511.)

Retreat focuses on Teilhard

WESTPORT—St. Luke Parish held a full-day Lenten Retreat on March 25 based on the spirituality of the noted Jesuit philosopher Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ.

Sister Kathleen Deignan, CND, PhD, a noted theologian, sacred song writer and author, guided approximately thirty participants said they were newly acquainted with Teilhard’s wisdom on the universality of God’s love and his presence throughout all of creation. It was one of Teilhard’s central tenets that we encounter God by looking at our world and our universe in reverence and love.

To understand Teilhard’s spirituality, Sister Kathleen emphasized his experience as a world-renowned paleontologist, as well as his Jesuit theological training. These led him ultimately to his understanding of God, particularly his belief in the unity of faith and science. She led the group in contemplating that the insight into Christ found in Pauline theology is the basis of the Christology of Teilhard; that St. Paul’s doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ focuses on human incorporation into Christ. This is the transformational life that Jesus called us to.

The very first words of Scripture remind us: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” God is illuminated through the universe, said Sister Kathleen, and we pray that we might see God in all things.

She challenged the retreatants to determine when they were first awakened to the divine. Everything in creation is a manifestation of this Divine. Everyone at the retreat enjoyed the chance to discuss their thoughts and questions over a simple soup and bread Lenten luncheon. Many participants said they were newly motivated to study Teilhard’s spirituality further and planned to read his most significant books: The Divine Milieu and The Phenomenon of Man.

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FAIRFIELD—To commemorate Fairfield University’s official birthday on March 17, the 75th Anniversary flag was raised at 11:30 am near Bellarmine Hall. A special Mass was then celebrated in the Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

On St. Patrick’s Day, 1942, against the backdrop of World War II, Father John J. McEleney, SJ, and six of his Jesuit brothers created the articles of association and by-laws for a Jesuit high school and college, originally named The Fairfield College of St. Robert Bellarmine—the beginning of both Fairfield College Preparatory School and Fairfield University. Fairfield University became the third Jesuit college in New England, joining the College of the Holy Cross founded in 1843 and Boston College, founded in 1858.

The university has grown from an initial class of 303 undergraduate male students admitted to the College of Arts and Sciences in 1947 into a coeducational university of more than 5,000 undergraduate male and graduate students.

FAIRFIELD University has awarded more than 45,000 degrees since its 1858 founding. With a 95% graduation rate, 92% of Fairfield’s graduates are employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months of graduation. Fairfield is one of the nation’s top institutions for return on investment.

The university’s Jesuit heritage and core principles are integral to the university’s mission. Fairfield University is education in the liberal arts, sciences and professions that prepares students to lead their communities with insight, empathy, critical rigor and a determination to serve and promote justice.

Additional anniversary events will include:

**Wednesday, April 19—** Student Achievement Awards including the 70th Anniversary Loyola Medal

4 pm, Kelley Center: The St. Ignatius Loyola Award is the highest honor, presented annually by the Alumni Association and the Division of Student Affairs to one senior who has exemplified the spirit of Jesuit education through a commitment to high academic standards and involvement in community service and/or extracurricular activities. Alumni Loyola Medal winners are invited to attend.

**Friday, April 21—** Essay Contest Deadline: At 75, Fairfield’s greatest legacy lies in the impact it has had on students, faculty, staff, alumni and Jesuits. Community members are invited to submit an essay, artwork or a short video on “A Fairfield Vocation: How Did Fairfield Shape Who You Are.” Winners will each receive $250 and be recognized at a reception on May 1 in Bellarmine’s Great Hall. Submit your essay or artwork to fairfield.edu/75essay.

**Wednesday, April 26—** A Work of the Society: Jesuits and Fairfield’s Past, Present and Future 4-6 pm, Kelly Center: A Conversation with Professor Kurt Schlitzinger and members of the Fairfield Jesuit Community who will reflect on their association with the University.

**Thursday, May 11—** 75th Anniversary Exhibition: Members of Fairfield University’s first graduating class, many of them World War II veterans, will participate.

**Friday, September 8—** Mass of the Holy Spirit Celebrating Fairfield’s Jesuit history and legacy.

**October 20—** Alumni & Family Weekend 2017: In addition to festivities, academics and service are being incorporated into the 75th commemoration. The Service for Justice Alumni and Jesuits. Community, which focuses on significant moments in Fairfield’s history as well as the university’s growth and its Jesuit roots.

Each member of the university community has also been invited to participate in community service by committing to 75 hours of service during this celebration year to honor Fairfield’s mission and history of serving the local community. Opportunities include working with organizations to address poverty, social justice, food insecurity, the environment, education, access to healthcare and economic development. In honor of the 75th, a new service program has been initiated and students are working with St. Anthony Parish preparing meals for Fairfield’s local food pantry, Operation Hope.

(For Fairfield University history and more information about anniversary related events go to: fairfield.edu/75.)
EDITORIAL

Entering Holy Week

On Palm Sunday we commemorate the Lord’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the City of David. It signals the beginning of Holy Week; a week we call holy precisely because we recall the great events of our salvation in the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection. It is a week that we are asked to keep holy by our prayer, reflection and participation, most particularly in the services of the Easter Triduum, the three days from Good Friday to Easter.

In the time of Jesus, the spreading of palms and cloaks at the feet of a dignitary was most often reserved for Caesar, the Emperor of Rome, and his dignitaries. It was a sign of the reverence and respect that they demanded from their subjects. It was also a sign of a person’s subjugation to the emperor’s rule, often marked by brutal violence, suppression and torture. As such, it was a gesture that was designed to evoke images of power, military might and conquest.

The people who greeted Jesus in Jerusalem afforded him this same privilege, in a vain attempt to make Jesus their conqueror and king. However, Jesus did not accept the privilege as they offered it. Rather, he transformed it into an occasion to reveal a far greater power than any military might or emperor of this world could ever wield. He entered the City of David as the true king who brought with him the power of divine, self-sacrificing love. Such love would see Jesus sit not on a throne of gold, but on the throne of the cross. It is this same love that on Easter morning revealed his divine kingship and gained for his believers a kingdom of everlasting glory and life.

During Holy Week we are invited to walk with our king and experience the power of his love. We are asked to join him in the Upper Room, walk with him to Calvary and encounter awe of his empty tomb. This is the week of Love’s eternal and enduring victory over sin, death, cynicism, loneliness, hurt and betrayal. It is a week that invites the heart of every man, woman and child to encounter how wildly God loves us, and how desperately our neighbors and friends need to feel God’s love through you and me.

It is the only journey that matters. It is the journey of Holy Week. Are you and I ready to begin?

(The above reflection was written by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano on his Facebook page. All are welcome to join Bishop Caggiano on Saturday, 8 pm at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport for the celebration of the Easter Vigil Mass.)

‘One person at a time’

When Bishop Caggiano spoke at Sacred Heart University last week, he was greeted enthusiastically by nearly 300 students who filled the Schine Auditorium and even sat around him on the stage.

The bishop told young people that the Holy Father believes they can be the church of tomorrow, “One person at a time.”

“If you do not like the direction that the world is moving towards, if you do not like the direction that you were born, or the direction that the world around you is going,” he said. “Don’t find yourself sitting on the sidelines, because you won’t learn anything about your faith by just being there. This is not a spectator sport... this is a participatory faith and this is a faith that changes the world.”

CELEBRATE OUR CLERGY!

Bishop Caggiano has invited Catholics throughout the diocese to join him as he celebrates Mass honoring priests and deacons who have retired from active ministry since his installation as Bishop of Bridgeport in 2013. Please join the bishop on Wednesday, April 26, at 7 pm at St. Matthew Church in Norwalk to publically thank all of our retired clergy for their dedication and service. All are invited; a light reception will follow the Mass.

EDITOR’S CHOICE

Recalling God’s gift of life

DANBURY—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano led the recent “In Defense of Life” prayer vigil held at the public entrance to the Planned Parenthood facility in Danbury. The vigil included parishioners from St. Peter Parish Danbury, Saint Joseph Parish, and Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, all located within Danbury.

40 Days for Life is a community-based campaign that takes a determined, peaceful approach to showing local communities the consequences of abortion in their own neighborhoods, for their own friends and families.

The visible, public centerpiece of 40 Days for Life is a focused, 40-day, non-stop, round-the-clock prayer vigil outside a Planned Parenthood center or other abortion facility in each community. (For more information visit www.40daysforlife.com.)

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

PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND PEDRO A. SOSA, I.V.E., new to Diocese to Parochial Vicar, St. George Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date was March 15.

RETIREMENT

DEACON JOSEPH GAGNE, Our Lady of Peace Parish, Stratford to retirement. Effective date was March 26.

DEACON DONALD M. BRUNETTO, Christ the King Parish, Trumbull to retirement. Effective date was April 1.

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

CELEBRATION
How good it is!

A WOMAN’S VOICE

By Ronnie Lazzaro

Ronnie Lazzaro is a member of St. Mary Parish in Branford.

Not many people remember their baptism. I do. It was March 25, 1989, at St. Aloysius Church in New Canaan at the Easter Vigil Mass. That night I received four sacraments, I was baptized, received Holy Communion, Confirmation and my husband of eight years and I were finally married in the Church. I was 41 years old. What a blessing it was, to be aware of what had just happened to me. I encountered the Holy Spirit, and members of the congregation wanted to touch me. It wasn’t about me; they wanted to touch God.

As a convert from Judaism, I was told I was “going from pillar to post,” but for me, I simply turned the page from the Old Testament into the New. It seemed to me a natural progression. While I’ll never know, I like to think that 2,000 years ago I would have been a believer, a follower of Christ. I imagine that just being in his presence and to only brush the hem of his robe would have been thrilling.

Sheer ecstasy. That thought alone warms me, comforts me, and heals me.

This year, the Easter Vigil was celebrated on the very same date I was received into the Church. I’m always mindful of when the day passes, but this particular time was different. I was once told by a priest friend, Msgr. Kevin Royal, that he considered one’s baptism day to be as, if not more, important than one’s birthday. I never forgot that. I believe that during the Easter Vigil I was baptized into eternity. I was gathered to himself and became part of everything before me and all that is yet to come. I was welcomed into the love affair between God and man. What a gift! I became part of something so all-embracing that I knew in an instant I would always be loved by this great God who made me to be his. With Jesus, I would never be alone.

Over these last 25 years, Jesus and I have endured much. And when I was sick, he was at my bedside. When I lost my son, he cried with me. When I became disabled, he was and continues to be my strength. I’ve been thrown some nasty curves, but I know that I am cherished by God and precious to him. I matter to God, and that compels me to be a person who is worthy of his promises and the good life he has given me.

The season of Lent and the joy of Easter that follows is the perfect time to reflect on this incredible gift of love. The season takes me back to the wonderful night my life was changed forever and it reminds me, as no other time does, of how near God is.

And, at the same time, I know he’s always touching me. Yes, all of it became manifest to me on that most important day when I was inextricably caught up into the glory of God. How good it is!

They Call Me the Wanderer

A DAD’S VIEW

By Matthew Hennessey

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

I didn’t always have five children and a wife. It wasn’t that long ago that I had no children and zero wives. On TV, they make bachelorhood seem a paradise of freedom and adventure. Not for me it wasn’t. The missus and me just blew past our fiftieth wedding anniversary—a mini-milestone. Not to be gibb... oh, never mind, gibb it is...I’d rather be in jail than be single again.

The carefree life of a wanderer was never the one for me. In those days I was Johnny Lonelyboy. Maybe you’ve been there too?

My restless heart had an emptiness. No time did I have for religion. I spent many an hour devising my own. It had a liturgy and some saints. It had sacred texts and heavenly hymns.

My way of worship was the wanderer’s way. Bartenders, not priests, prepared the high altar. We lit cigarettes, not candles. Irony, sarcasm, and wild abandon stood in the places where sanctity, grace, and sobriety should have shined.

Things are different now. The cigarettes are all ashes. I have rare occasion to enter a saloon—or even a salon. But you can’t keep me out of the Church of the Four Marks—One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

That’s not to say that I’m holier than thou. I’m no holier than him, her, you, or anybody. Most days I’m not holy at all. My heart still searches for the respite found only in God’s presence. But the wandering is over. I go to Mass. Sundays—during the week when possible—no excuses. I have to. Without my regular Mass habit, I could easily be tempted by the false idols of the up for it? Go. Bad night’s sleep? Go. Hungover? Go. Hopeless? Go.

I’m not trying to lecture anyone. I’m just telling you what I’ve learned. Sunday Mass is the linchpin, the cornerstone, the glue, the foundation. Without it, everything shakes. Neglect it and whatever you’re trying to build will fall.

Here’s another thing—a hopeful thing. People are watching. Your friends, children, coworkers. Go. Hungover? Go. Hopeless? Go. I’m not trying to lecture anyone. I’m just telling you what I’ve learned. Sunday Mass is the linchpin, the cornerstone, the glue, the foundation. Without it, everything shakes. Neglect it and whatever you’re trying to build will fall.

The season of Lent and the joy of Easter that follows is the perfect time to reflect on this incredible gift of love. The season takes me back to the wonderful night my life was changed forever and it reminds me, as no other time does, of how near God is.

And, at the same time, I know he’s always touching me. Yes, all of it became manifest to me on that most important day when I was inextricably caught up into the glory of God. How good it is!
St. Mary Parish, Bethel

‘It feels like a prayer’

By PAT HENNESSY

“The one big thing I discovered at the Dorothy Day homeless shelter—the guests are the most polite, thankful people,” says Mike Roberts. “Anything you do for them, they say ‘Thank you.’”

Roberts is the leader of the Men’s Group at St. Mary Parish in Bethel. Joe Simons, who is the coordinator of volunteers at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House Shelter, gives high praise for the St. Mary’s group as an exceptional example of service.

Volunteers, both men and women but mainly men, may volunteer at the shelter as individuals or part of a group. If a church or community group has a pool of volunteers, each person may spend only one or two nights a year at the shelter.

“Spending a night at a homeless shelter is a task outside the comfort zone of most people. Many groups approach the undertaking with some apprehension,” says Simons, who is a member of St. Edward the Confessor Parish. “The men from St. Mary’s started out with one night a month just like any other group. But when word went out that the shelter was short on volunteers, they stepped up and took a second night. This process was repeated three more times, and this one group now covers five nights a month.”

Father Corey Piccinino, St. Mary’s pastor, is happy to add his praise for the men volunteering at the shelter. “It’s good to see these men putting their faith into practice in such an essential way,” he says, adding that the Men’s Ministry assists the parish in numerous ways throughout the year.

The Dorothy Day shelter has 17 beds and welcomes both men and women, with a bathroom and shower for each. The doors open at 9 pm; volunteers are assisted by a shelter coordinator for the first hour or so.

“The first hours we’re busy getting organized, giving out shampoo and towels and offering tea or milk and cookies,” explains St. Mary’s parishioner Luigi Cazzaniga. “Some of the guests are very talkative; others want to keep to themselves. You get to know them after a while.”

After the guests are settled for the night, the volunteer does their laundry so that they leave with dignity, clean and ready for the day ahead. One thing that deeply touched every volunteer was the importance of socks.

“Homeless people can’t keep an extra pair of socks,” says John Licari. “That weighs so heavily on my mind, that something so basic is so crucial.”

Bill Taylor found that, as he got to know them better, stereotypes about homeless people began to fade away. “A fair number of people just need a leg up. Some of them are working.” Others may be disabled, making it difficult to raise the down payment for appropriate living space.

“You have a picture in your mind of what a homeless person should look like,” agrees Tony Iorfino, who is also Grand Knight of Pavia Council #48 at St. Mary’s. “But it’s not like that. He could be a 17-year-old; she could be older. They’re individuals.”

The Dorothy Day shelter does not admit people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Whenever possible, the shelter connects with Off the Streets, a local non-profit organization, to get people into their own apartment.

With guests asleep and the last load in the dryer, a volunteer may be able to grab a couple of hours of sleep. “Then I’m up at 4:30 to fold the last of the laundry and sort it into individual piles,” says Iorfino. Guests leave at 6 am. “Once the guests are out I go home, get dressed myself, and go to work.”

Volunteering at the shelter is definitely not in anyone’s comfort zone. And the men have jobs, families and commitments to attend to. What, then, makes them willing to take on one more responsibility?

“It’s terrifying the first time,” says Licari, voicing the apprehension many men feel at first. “I’m 54 years old and I’ve been a Catholic all my life. But when I’m sitting in the comfort of my home and with my family, I’m not likely to be hearing what God is saying to me. When I opened my heart to this call, I could hear the Holy Spirit—God saying ‘this is what you need to be doing.’”

“You take people who don’t have a warm bed to go home to, and you bring them inside and make them safe,” says Iorfino. “Doing that feels like a prayer.”

(There are many ways to assist Dorothy Day Hospitality House. For more information, call 203.743.7988, email webmaster@dorothydaydanbury.org, or visit their website: www.dorothydaydanbury.org.)

Quiet actions proclalm faith more unmistakably than the ashes on their foreheads as St. Mary, Bethel, men’s group volunteers (l-r) Mike Roberts, Tony Iorfino and Dave Pijenburg prepare for an evening at Dorothy Day Hospitality House shelter in Danbury.
BRIDGEPORT—More than 150 young people from throughout the diocese participated in the recent Catholic Service Corps spring cleanup for St. Margaret Shrine on Park Avenue in Bridgeport. The day of volunteer service concluded with a reflection on service and Mass in the shrine chapel.

The young men and women worked throughout the day to rake, mulch, prune and even plant spring flowers to help prepare the shrine to receive its many visitors who stop by daily to pray, reflect and enjoy the beautiful devotional statues and grounds.

“It is the bishop’s desire to help the shrine continue to provide a prayerful environment for those who visit for contemplation and devotion,” said Michelle Smith, director of the Catholic Service Corps. The cleanup will have the shrine looking beautiful when Bishop Frank J. Caggiano visits for the Palm Sunday Stations of the Cross.

The CSC was one of the major initiatives approved in the Fourth Diocesan Synod to provide opportunities for all the faithful, especially young people, to deepen and broaden their Catholic faith by inviting them to embrace a life of Christian service and the call to be missionary disciples.

The wooded knolls of St. Margaret Shrine include many outdoor shrines to popular saints: St. Margaret, St. Padre Pio, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Sebastian and Our Lady of LaVang. The faithful can also pray in St. Anthony Chapel and an All Saints Chapel.

Masses are celebrated at the shrine Monday through Saturday at 8:15 am, Saturday Vigil at 4 pm and Sunday at 8, 9:30 (Italian Mass) and 11 am. (For more information about the Catholic Service Corps, visit www.bridgeportdiocese.org/csc/home.)
Travel to India

In the steps of St. Thomas

By PAT HENNESSY

Nearly two millennia ago, a young man committed his life to following a charismatic, dynamic master. When his master was arrested and executed, his world shattered. In despair, he scoffed at his friends’ fanciful tales of the master rising from death to life.

His lack of hope was so intense that, down through the ages, he became known as “Doubting Thomas.”

His Risen Lord had an extraordinary life planned for his once-doubting Apostle. We—Father John Punnakunnel and Father Nick Pavia from Our Lady of Peace Parish in Stratford, Barbara Dispirito from St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, and I—picked up his path in India. Our main reason for travelling to India was to attend the ordination of Father John’s nephew, Francis, celebrated in the Syro-Malabar Rite of the Catholic Church, which was brought to India by St. Thomas himself.

The mind-opening discovery of the ancient roots of the Church in India destroyed a lot of assumptions. We began to realize that the Catholic Church isn’t only Roman—the Apostles went in all directions as they obeyed Jesus’ command to “spread the Gospel to all lands” (Mark 16:15). Not all Catholics are of our Roman Rite.

St. Thomas set out to the east, to Jewish communities in what is now Iraq, then part of the Roman Empire. Even before St. Paul headed west to evangelize Asia Minor and Greece, St. Thomas was working to establish the Church in the easternmost parts of the empire. The Syro-Malabar Rite of the Catholic Church continues to survive in Iraq and Syria and other countries of the Middle East.

Somewhere around the year 50, persecution of Christians forced Thomas to flee Iraq. Jews had been trading with India since the days of King Solomon’s Mines. Thomas followed their route down the Persian Gulf and landed on the west coast of India, possibly in Kochi in the modern state of Kerala, which is home to the oldest active synagogue in India.

That’s where we picked up Thomas’ trail. The Jewish traders of his time formed a prosperous trading community in Kochi. We respectfully took off our shoes to enter the venerable synagogue.

Later, Barbara and I wandered through tiny shops offering goods from throughout the world. We had the feeling that Thomas would have seen shops with the same sampling of wares when he walked this street. (Did we buy anything? Who wouldn’t!) Thomas’ heritage is alive and vibrant. When we got to the house of Father John’s relatives, the entire family was electric with joy. Francis was about to become the second of their sons to be ordained to the priesthood. Elderly family members gathered from afar, exchanging hugs and tears. Teenage girls adjusted their best dresses, fixed each other’s hair, called to their mothers for assistance. The youngest members of the family scampered in and out of rooms, feeling the excitement but not quite understanding it.

We felt like children ourselves. With the exception of Father John, we couldn’t fully comprehend the ceremony. What we could see was a church filled to overflowing, with the faithful spilling into the courtyard on three sides. We saw the youngest boys and girls flock to the front of the church, where their elders gladly made space for them. We saw more than 100 priests joining to welcome their newest member. We saw proud parents bringing up the offertory gifts at their son’s first Mass, his father blinking back tears of joy as he approached the altar. We saw the glow of happiness on the new priest’s face as he reached out to...

continued on page 19

ACROSS THE MILLENNIA—St. Thomas was killed in Chennai on July 3, 72 A.D. In one of the most moving experiences of our trip, Father Nick and Father John celebrated Mass in the crypt that contains his remains.

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continued on page 19

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Easter Reflection

Resurrection: to live a risen life!

BY SISTER PATRICIA MCCARTHY, CND

Resurrection is a hard sell. One would think it would be easier than suffering and crucifixion, but ironically it isn’t. No one alive today is unaware of the ordeal of suffering and pain: in themselves, in the people they love, in their own cities and countries. Unfortunately, we are also acutely aware of the sufferings of people around the world through the media. We can see on our televisions and media devices the horror as it unfolds from natural disasters and from evil inflicted by others. We can see the effects of torture and death on the evening news as clearly as if we stood on Calvary looking up at the Son of God as he was dying by the hands of those who hated him.

But resurrection is another story. It’s not enough to believe in the suffering but we are also called to hope in resurrection. It helps to look at the passion and resurrection story of Jesus to begin to break through the mystery of a risen life.

In the chaos of a Jerusalem Passover more than two thousand years ago, Jesus was taken by night and turned over to the authorities by Judas, one of his own disciples. He was moved around from Pilate to Herod and back. There were no 24 hour cable stations so news went by word of mouth. Confusion reigned. The murderer Barabbas was released. Jesus was condemned to death. His disciples followed at a distance at first. We know this by the story of Peter’s denial of knowing Jesus to the servant girl. Then they seem to disappear. The only other mention of any of them being around is of John at the foot of the cross according to the Gospel of John.

After Jesus’ death and burial, his friends and followers huddled in fear in an upper room in the city. Their fear wasn’t unfounded. If the authorities were after Jesus, they were probably threatening anyone who supported him as well. A few days later the women went to the burial site to anoint the body again with spices. They find the empty tomb and Mary meets Jesus in the garden. Word quickly spreads that Jesus is gone and yet here. Again confusion reigns. Was his body stolen as a final act of cruelty by his enemies? Was Mary of Magdala crazy? Resurrection of a real body was hardly within the realm of possibility.

It took multiple appearances of Jesus to his disciples before it could take hold in their consciousness that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead. And it took time—approximately forty days of this in-between time of living with the risen Jesus before they began to absorb the mystery fully. Even then those early followers needed a unique intervention of the Holy Spirit to become people of the resurrection. It wasn’t just Jesus who rose; it was also all his followers.

They finally rose from their fear and intimidation by the religious and political leaders of their day to a life of freedom and joy. From then on, they become people on fire with hope and trust. No matter what anyone threatened them with or what actually was done to them, they kept on singing and praising God and caring for each other and for the neediest among them. They kept on proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. This is when they became Christians who were known by how they loved one another.

This is resurrection. To live a risen life is to bear the pain of suffering, to confront the evils of hatred wherever they appear, to embrace the neglected, to welcome the stranger, to love as Jesus loved, without fear. It is to live in hope regardless of situations that seem hopeless. Resurrection is not an act of will; it is grace acting on us. It is the Christ appearing among us when and where we least expect it. Resurrection is not just what happens to us after death; it is how Christ lives in our difficulties and joys every moment of our lives which are so precious to him, moment by moment, day by day.

The Parish of Saint Catherine of Siena

Father Joseph A. Marcello, Pastor
Father Philip G. Bocznarsi, In Residence
Father Luke P. Suarez, Resident Priest
Deacon Patrick Toole

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2017

Palm Sunday, April 9, 2017
Saturday, April 8 - 4:00 p.m., 7:15 p.m.
Sunday, April 9 - 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:00 Noon

Tuesday of Holy Week, April 11, 2017
7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Confessions

Holy Thursday, April 13, 2017
8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
7:30 p.m. Mass of the Lord’s Supper
8:30 p.m. Adoration at the Repository until Midnight

Good Friday, April 14, 2017
3:00 p.m. - The Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord
5:00 p.m. - Viewing of The Passion of the Christ
7:15 p.m. - A simple supper of soup and bread in the Church Hall.
8:00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday, April 15, 2017
8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
12:00 Noon Blessing of Food
3:00 p.m. Blessing of Food
8:00 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter

Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017
*Note the special schedule
Masses at: 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12 Noon

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People’s United Insurance Agency wishes you and your family a Happy Easter.

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Happy Easter

MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THE RISEN CHRIST BE WITH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES DURING THIS JOYFUL SEASON AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Catholic Mutual Group
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606
(203) 371-8471

Best wishes for a Blessed and Happy Easter!
WHEN YOU MAKE A GIFT TO THE 2017 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

YOU ARE TOUCHING THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ACROSS FAIRFIELD COUNTY.

YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES IN THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT.

PLEASE JOIN OTHER GENEROUS DONORS IN MAKING YOUR GIFT TODAY!
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As disciples of Christ, we are called upon to follow in His footsteps. When we answer His call and share in the mission of the Church, lives are changed. I am grateful for your generosity and the gifts you share with others, many of whom you may never meet. The 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal, Sharing God’s Gifts, Transforming Lives offers us the opportunity to thank Him in return for all we have been given by supporting vital ministries and programs and continuing the Gospel message. The Appeal is a source of hope and charity to those in need and for the future of the Church. Each year I prayerfully ask for your help so we can continue our Christian journey; together we can transform lives. I offer my daily prayers for you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport
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Bishop of Bridgeport

SHARING GOD'S GIFTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES ONE PERSON AT A TIME

General Mission of the Church

• The Annual Catholic Appeal supports a variety of ministries that touch thousands of people every year. Every dollar that is pledged supports a variety of ministries where the Gospel is proclaimed and lives are changed for the better.

Catholic Education

• The Bishop’s Scholarship Fund provides support for students from across the Diocese who otherwise could not afford a Catholic education, which helps them live and learn their faith by growing intellectually, spiritually and morally.

• The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport educates nearly 1,000 inner-city elementary school children who benefit from academic excellence and Catholic values.

Charity and Justice

• Catholic Charities puts faith in action by feeding the hungry and homebound, housing the homeless, and empowering and counseling individuals and families in need.

• Priests, Deacons and Religious Sisters provide pastoral care of the sick and elderly in nursing homes.

Catechesis and Evangelization

• Youth and young adults are afforded opportunities to encounter Jesus Christ through parish religious education, the High School Apostolate Leadership program, Convivio, and more.

• The 75 member C4Y Diocesan Youth Choir with representatives from 35 parishes has inspired the Diocese.

Clergy

• Retired clergy live out their retirement in comfort and dignity at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence.

• Seminarians discern their vocation and prepare for the future of the Church at St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford and major seminaries.

• Deacons fulfill their vocational calling serving their parish communities.

Social and Pastoral Services

• Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs provides educational and pastoral services for people with developmental disabilities including autism through Saint Catherine Academy, Adult Day Services and parish outreach.

• The Catholic Service Corps invites young people to serve others in need as an expression of their Catholic faith.

• Training and development for priests, support for ethnic ministries, and strategic planning all provide for the future of the Diocese.

• The Leadership Institute offers all adults the opportunity to learn the richness of our Catholic faith and practical resources to help ensure that the next generation of leaders is well formed and enthusiastic about spreading the Good News.

ONYI, Bishop’s Scholarship Fund recipient

“My faith is very important to me and being in a Catholic school nurtures my faith and allows me to be the best I can be academically.” The Bishop’s Scholarship Fund gives families the opportunity to provide for a Catholic education.

PHYLLIS AND KIM
Catholic Charities
(Kim, right) “Before I came to Catholic Charities I was in a dark place. Now I am so happy; the counseling program changed my life for the better.”

(Phyllis, left) “I had chaos in my life before coming to Catholic Charities, now my life has meaning and I am confident in society.”

Phyllis and Kim became friends and now work together to facilitate a women’s group at CCFC.

FATHER MARCEL SAINT JEAN
St. Joseph Manor, Trumbull
Mother Teresa used to say: “Love in Action” and we love in action at the nursing homes. The staff and volunteers apply it through our caring in words and deeds to help people who are in the most vulnerable moments of their journey.
GOAL- $11,000,000
ALLOCATION OF FUNDS IN 2017

Each year, the Diocese of Bridgeport assesses its financial resources, the needs of parishioners and its ability to respond effectively and with compassion. This illustration is an overview of how Appeal contributions will be distributed:

CATHOLIC EDUCATION ................................................................. $2,000,000
  • Bishop’s Scholarship Fund $1,700,000
  • Catholic Academy of Bridgeport $ 300,000

CHARITY AND JUSTICE .......................................................... $2,175,000
  • Catholic Charities of Fairfield County $1,250,000
  • Pastoral Care of the Sick and Elderly $  925,000

CATECHESIS AND EVANGELIZATION ....................................... $1,401,000
  • Catechesis and Evangelization Programs $  701,000
  • Communication and Social Media $  700,000

CLERGY ................................................................................. $3,483,000
  • Formation of Priests and Deacons $1,817,000
  • Pastoral Care of Retired Priests $1,666,000

SOCIAL AND PASTORAL SERVICES ....................................... $1,470,000
  • Pastoral Life and Ministries $  950,000
  • Youth $  270,000
  • St. Catherine Center for Special Needs $  250,000

In the spirit of financial transparency, the cost to conduct the Annual Catholic Appeal totals less than 5 cents on the dollar based on the 2017 ACA goal. Fundraising expenses may also provide additional support to a number of these areas.

WAYS TO GIVE

When contemplating your level of sacrifice, please consider using the Pledge Plan. Pledging will allow a greater sacrifice by extending the payment of your gift through December 31, 2017.

GIFTS - Checks may be made payable to the Annual Catholic Appeal. Please do not send cash.

CREDIT CARD - A credit card gift may be payable online or by pledge card.


MATCHING GIFTS - Many organizations will match gifts to Catholic Charities and Catholic Schools. Please contact 203-416-1312 for more information.

GIFTS OF SECURITIES - If you own securities that have appreciated in value, they can be given to the Appeal and their full market value becomes a tax deductible gift. Please contact 203-416-1470 for more information.

For more information, please email 2017ACA@diobpt.org or call us at: 203-416-1470.

Court of Honor

The Court of Honor recognizes donors who have demonstrated their extraordinary generosity to the Annual Catholic Appeal. Membership is extended to any individual or family that contributes an Appeal gift of $2,500 or more.

- Bishop’s Leadership Circle ($25,000 and above)
- Lawrence Cardinal Shehan Society ($10,000-$24,999)
- Bishop Walter Curtis Society ($5,000-$9,999)
- Court of Honor Partner ($2,500-$4,999)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT!
YOU MAY MAKE YOUR GIFT ONLINE AT:
WWW.2017ACAbridgeport.com OR CALL 203.416.1470
bless the people surging around him.
Most of all, in the beauty of the ceremony, in the music, in the unfamiliar ritual, we felt the presence of the Holy Spirit showing us that, in every language and every culture and every ritual of the Universal Church, the centerpiece from which all this grace flows is the celebration of the body and blood of our Lord. This is what St. Thomas gave to the people of India, the overflowing love of Jesus: "My Lord and my God!"

"The Mass is always the Mass, everywhere" said Father Nick, who concelebrated on the altar with Father John. "It transcends every language."

St. Thomas founded seven Christian communities in Kerala. Most of them are still flourishing. In the fullness of time, he left ➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 23
School News

Honors at Notre Dame’s 60th

FAIRFIELD—Among the many honorees at the Notre Dame High School 60th Anniversary Gala Celebration on March 11 was Attorney Anne McCrory of Fairfield, chief legal and real estate officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport. McCrory, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield, was presented the Sister Marion Reilly Leadership Award by Principal Chris Cipriano in recognition of her work on behalf of the diocese and those it serves.

McCrory currently serves as the chief legal and real estate officer for the Diocese of Bridgeport—encompassing all of the parishes, schools and community centers, along with the many ministries of Catholic Charities, throughout the diocese. She supervises litigation, real estate sale and lease transactions, contractual arrangements, immigration matters, safe environment compliance matters and corporate governance of the diocese.

Currently acting as corporate secretary for diocesan boards, McCrory served as chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport from 2012 to 2014.

She currently serves as a trustee of Albertus Magnus College and is the treasurer of the United Way of Fairfield County. She has served as chair of both the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and Cardinal Shehan Center advisory boards and is a current member of the Assumption School advisory board.

“I can say both professionally and personally, Anne has been a true friend to Notre Dame over the years,” said Cipriano in presenting the award. “She has been a constant supporter and seeks to help Notre Dame grow wherever possible. Her goal was always to help the school and, most of all, our students.”

The two other Lancer Legacy Award Recipients were Janet Haffner, who was given the Carole Christy Surina Educator Award, and Peter McGuiness ’75, who was recognized with the Notre Dame Community Impact Award.

Haffner arrived at Notre Dame Girls’ High School in 1957. She was first a history teacher and later a religion teacher, a position she held until she retired in 1999. Even after retirement, she served as the Care Club moderator, helping to improve the lives of others. Haffner still serves as a substitute teacher at ND.

The Notre Dame Community Impact Award recipient, Attorney Peter McGuiness, is a graduate of Notre Dame’s Class of 1975. He has served on the board for the Center for Women and Families and was the first male member of this board in its history, and has served for the past several years as a member of the Notre Dame Advisory Board. His award recognizes McGuiness for exemplifying living the Notre Dame mission after graduation.
Lauralton Hall appoints new president

MILFORD—After conducting an extensive nationwide search, the Lauralton Hall, Our Lady of Mercy Academy Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Elizabeth Miller as the next president and head of the college prep. all girls’ Catholic school in Milford. Miller succeeds Dr. Antoinette Iadarola, who will retire at the end of the academic year in June 2017.

Miller recently returned to the United States after working for a year in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) opening a new school, of School at Villa Duchesne and Prior to that, she served as Head of School at GEMS Nations Academy. She also held roles as Chair of the Board of Trustees and acting Head of School at Humphrey School in Memphis, Tenn., where she was chosen as the state’s Administrator of the Year by the Tennessee Scholastic Press Association.

“Lauralton Hall is a welcome home for me,” said Miller. “It is a place of familiar values and traditions, a rigorous school consonant with my educational philosophy, a community rich in generations of scholarly young women. I am appreciative for this opportunity of service and stewardship during this chapter in Lauralton’s history.”

Miller also expressed her gratitude to the Board of Trustees for their show of confidence, and to President Iadarola for her legacy. “I am looking forward to working with the community of its students and their families, its alumnae and friends of the school, its faculty and administrative team, and the Board of Trustees.”

Miller graduated Summa Cum Laude from Ohio Wesleyan University with a B.A. degree in journalism with minors in French and economics management. She holds a master’s degree in Asian Studies from Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Miller is active in the National Association of Independent Schools and has completed their Aspiring Heads Fellowship, funded by the Edward E. Ford Foundation, where she focused on the research of female philanthropic patterns in 2011-12, as well as their Institute for New Heads in 2013. For the past three years she has collaborated on a panel at the organization’s annual conference.
High School News

Trinity Catholic gala

STAMFORD—Trinity Catholic High School is preparing for their Fifth Annual Legacy Gala to be held on Friday evening, April 28, at the Italian Center in Stamford. This year’s honorees are:

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport for his Legacy of Purpose

The Sam Cingari Family for their Legacy of Commitment

Art ’81 & Donna Mossa ’84 Murphy, Jr., for their Legacy of Encouragement

The Legacy of Purpose highlights a person who supports the Trinity Catholic High School mission to educate the whole person to live as a positive Christian witness in service to God and others. Bishop Caggiano exemplifies that mission and recognizes that our faith calls us to use our strengths and talents for purposes beyond ourselves.

Bishop Caggiano has worked tirelessly to strengthen Catholic education. He established the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund to provide financial aid for families wishing to send their children to Catholic schools. Foundations in Education, formally launched this February, provides a solid base under Catholic education as it moves forward in a competitive, faith-filled, academically excellent learning environment.

The Legacy of Encouragement highlights a person who supports the Trinity Catholic High School mission to educate the whole person to live as a positive Christian witness in service to God and others. Art and Donna Murphy have a lifelong commitment to Catholic education. Raised in Stamford, they attended Catholic element-

Donna celebrated her graduation with the Class of 1984, their oldest daughter Katie graduated with the Class of 2014.

This June 3 will be bittersweet for the Murphys. Their youngest daughter, Caroline, will graduate with the Class of 2017. Even though this may be the end of their children’s high school years, the Murphys are not leaving. They take Crusader Pride very seriously and the mantra “Once a Crusader, always a Crusader” is deep in their hearts. Families such as the Murphys are the embodiment of the Catholic High legacy.

The Legacy of Commitment highlights the Cingari family. Sam and Cindy Cingari have six children, 15 grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. Family, community and faith are synonymous with the Cingari name in Stamford. They give generously to all the communities they serve, and donate their time and business acumen as members of many local charity boards.

The Cingari family has been dedicated to many causes—and Catholic education in particular. At Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, Sam has sat on the parish council and since 1990 has been a trustee. For the past 30 years he has chaired the annual September Fest.

Son Tom Cingari, Sr., served on Trinity’s Board of Directors for over 10 years, and the Cingari family has supported Trinity Catholic faithfully for many years.

(Opportunities are available for advertising, sponsorships and underwriting as well as ticket purchases and item donations. For more information, contact Betsy Mercede: bmercede@trinitycatholic.org or 203.322.3401 ext. 303.)

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NORWALK—The St. Philip Youth Group sponsored its fourteenth annual 30-Hour Famine the weekend of February 25 for middle and high school students in Norwalk and the neighboring towns. The weekend drew in over 140 teens from more than 10 churches and 20 schools.

During the weekend, students grew closer to Christ and each other as they fasted together for 30 hours and raised funds to fight hunger. The initiative is sponsored by World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization that helps more than 4 million children in nearly 100 countries.

“Teens fast to fight hunger

The number of participants and donations has risen each year, and to date has raised in excess of $360,000. DiMarco noted that each $40 will help feed and care for a child for a month.

During this year’s weekend, the teens visited two nursing homes, packed 500 meals for Catholic Relief Services and collected food at two supermarkets for both Manna House and the St. Philip food pantry.

The fast began Saturday morning, emphasizing the community nature of the 30-Hour Famine, the teens, adult volunteers, parish and members of the community met at St. Jerome Church to begin “The Walk” to honor the Night Walkers of Uganda. These are 40,000 village children of Northern Uganda who travel on foot from their homes every night to protected shelters in town to be safe from rebels that abduct children for use as soldiers, porters and sexual slaves. The abductors themselves often are children.

“‘The Walk sets the tone for the 30-Hour Famine. It helps raise awareness among our own children and helps them understand what is going on in the world,” DiMarco said.

A full day’s program followed, including a blessing in St. Philip Church, keynote speaker, games, service projects, music and prayer. The long day ended at 11 pm with a prayer vigil in the church.

Sunday morning the teens broke their fast with the reception of the Eucharist at a closing Mass celebrated by Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport. A hearty breakfast followed, which was thoroughly appreciated by the hungry teens.

“These teens really wanted to make a difference,” DiMarco said. Indeed they did. During the weekend, the teens raised over $30,000 for World Vision and Manna House.

Kerala. We, with warm hugs and sad goodbyes, did too. Thomas sailed around the tip of India, formerly called Madras.

We drove over the mountains and through fertile farmland. Along the way we experienced scenes he would have found familiar: carts drawn by water buffalo piled high with straw or sacks of produce, and huts of the type he may have often stayed in, with woven sides and thatched roofs. We also witnessed the type he may have often stayed in, with woven sides and thatched roofs.

In Chennai, St. Thomas made stops at several churches and towns. The weekend drew in over 140 teens from more than 10 churches and 20 schools.

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St. Catherine of Siena, Trumbull
Reviving a time-honored tradition

Exploring innovative ways to deepen the experience of Holy Week led St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull to offer parishioners two events, one reviving a time-honored tradition and the other an emotional journey into the Passion.

On Holy Thursday, April 13, parishioners are invited to join in the tradition of visiting seven churches. This ancient tradition originated in Rome, where the faithful visit seven churches to venerate the Holy Eucharist at the altars of repose on the evening of Holy Thursday. It was a way to “make a pilgrimage” at a time when long-distance travel was dangerous.

Because Mass is not celebrated on Good Friday, during Mass on Holy Thursday extra hosts are consecrated so that the faithful can receive Communion at a Good Friday service. The hosts for Good Friday are not placed in the tabernacle, but are left on the altar, and the priest says a post-communion prayer. They are then carried in procession to a place of reservation somewhere in the church or, in some churches, an appropriately adorned chapel.

At the end of Holy Thursday Mass, all altars except the one used as the altar of repose, are stripped.

The Blessed Sacrament remains in that temporary place, where it is reserved as a focus of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration.

The Mass of the Lord’s Supper will begin in St. Catherine’s Church on Holy Thursday at 5:30 pm. The visit will begin directly following Mass, and finish at St. Catherine’s shortly before midnight.

Good Friday will be observed at St. Catherine’s in a very special way this year. Following the Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord at 3 pm, the parish will offer a screening of The Passion of the Christ, beginning at 5 pm in the church.

The Passion of the Christ focuses on the last twelve hours of Jesus of Nazareth’s life. The film begins in the Garden of Olives where Jesus has gone to pray after the Last Supper. Jesus must resist the temptations of Satan. Betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Jesus is then arrested and taken within the city walls of Jerusalem where leaders of the Pharisees confront him with the accusations of blasphemy, and his trial results in a condemnation to death.

Following the screening, all are invited into the church hall for a simple supper of soup and bread at 7:15 pm. Stations of the Cross will begin at 8 pm in the church.

(The Holy Thursday event is free of charge; the parish is especially seeking drivers for the visits. Free-will donations for Good Friday supper will be welcomed. To register for the events, or for more information, contact Monica Zuniga, coordinator of Evangelization and Parish Life: 203.377.3133, ext. 21, or monica.stcatherinetrumbull@gmail.com.)

120th Lincoln Day Banquet

DARIEN—More than 235 members and invited guest attended the 120th consecutive Lincoln Day Banquet held recently at the Waters Edge at Giovanni’s in Darien.

The Catholic Club was begun in January 1897 by Father J. J. Furlong of St. Mary Parish in Norwalk. The annual dinner honoring Lincoln so long to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

The annual dinner honoring Lincoln has carried forward since that time,” said Daniel O’Connor, Catholic Club treasurer, who served as toastmaster for the evening. “The club was started as ‘a social club for men irrespective of creed in which they could gather and discuss and learn about topics of the day,’ and has since evolved into the Catholic Club,” he said.

Thomas Gallagher, CEO of Religious News Foundation, spoke about Christian and Islamic relations in the Middle East, how the two peoples actually get along together better than is widely reported. Gallagher told the gathering that in many countries of the Middle East the two faiths cooperate in medical facilities and relief efforts.

He was the only reporter who traveled with Cardinal Dolan and his relief group when they visited the refugee camps in Northern Iraq in April 2016.

While some historians have asked what took President Lincoln so long to issue the historic proclamation, Dr. Oakes offered a perspective that said Lincoln actually moved forward early in his presidency and made a bold decision given the time in which he lived.

Father Charles Allen, special assistant to the president of Fairfield University, offered the invocation. Frank B. Page is serving as club president.

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Parroquia de San Pedro: construyendo un puente al futuro

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

El Cuarto Sínodo Diocesano de la Diócesis de Bridgeport, encabezado por el Obispo Frank J. Caggiano, ratificó lo que el vicario parroquial de la Parroquia de Saint Peter (San Pedro) de Danbury, Padre Bernardo Rodríguez, propone: “incrementar la vitalidad de la iglesia, asumiendo los retos de la inmigración actual”. En palabras del religioso de origen español, Danbury es una comunidad étnicamente diversa que busca la esparanza a través de Dios.

Hace tres años atrás, el obispo propuso al Padre Bernardo tomar el cargo de vicario parroquial, es decir de ayudante del párroco, con el fin de que atienda el Ministerio Hispano que estaba buscando establecerse con fuerza en la iglesia, ubicada en la principal calle de la ciudad en la esquina de 104 Main Street.

Fuerza que con un trabajo a tiempo completo por parte del Padre Bernardo, más el entusiasmo de los voluntarios como Doña Ana Espinal y Don Álvaro, lograron homogenizar al que estaban unidas por la misma fe y el mismo bautismo.

“La parroquia es hoy el hogar de celebración y crecimiento espiritual para personas con diferentes raíces étnicas que están unidas por la misma fe y el mismo bautismo”, dice el Padre Bernardo.

Aunque la parroquia no participa en forma directa en actividades cívicas, sus feligreses lo hacen en forma masiva y alentadora, dentro del Centro Cívico Ecuatoriano de Danbury o el Centro Brasileño de Bridgeport. “Los migrantes feligreses de la iglesia son mayoritariamente ecuatorianos, colombianos, dominicanos y mexicanos”, dijo el sacerdote reconociendo que no están involucrados en asociaciones parroquiales que los identifique como país, sino solamente dentro de la Comunidad Hispana de San Pedro.

Los ecuatorianos son piadosos de la Virgen de Cisne, los mexicanos de la Virgen de Guadalupe, los colombianos de la Virgen de Chinchinquía, los guatemaltecos del Cristo de Esquipulas; ellos piden hacer sus misas en honor a sus devociones, pero invitan a todos los feligreses y de esta manera la parroquia sigue nutriéndose de las culturas, pero sin segregación.

Conforme con el Padre Bernardo, a la parroquia asisten un aproximado de 800 personas, y un número mayor cuando hay fiestas especiales. Los niños acuden siempre acompañados de sus padres a todas las celebraciones religiosas, y de los 100 infantes que acuden a la catequesis preparándose para su Primera Comunión, 60 son de origen hispano.

El Padre Gregg Mecca, párroco de San Pedro, aunque no habla español, da la bienvenida llena de gozo a los hispanos a su hogar parroquial.

San Pedro, situada en el centro de Danbury, es la tercera iglesia en orden de antigüedad de la Diócesis de Bridgeport. Fue establecida en 1851 para servir a la creciente población de inmigrantes irlandeses. La parroquia es hoy el hogar de celebración y crecimiento espiritual para personas con diferentes raíces étnicas que están unidas por la misma fe y el mismo bautismo.

Este sentimiento de fe y esperanza fue percibido en su totalidad por los esposos guatemalteco-dominicanos, Edwin y Esther Galdamez, residentes de Bethel, que acudieron por primera vez a escuchar la misa en español; luego de que Edwin desertara de la iglesia evangélica Salvation Army.

“Al oír al Padre Bernardo hablar con tanta fe y entusiasmo en la homilía, decidi que debo volver a la iglesia en donde fui bautizado de niño”, dijo Edwin, que regresó al catolicismo una década después de su esposa, quien poco a poco lo atrae al rebaño.
**Father Clifford Grisé, 97**

Father J. Clifford Grisé, first pastor of St. Agnes Parish in Greenwich, died on March 25 at the Jerome Home skilled nursing facility in New Britain. He was 97 years old.

“He was a real gentleman, an affable, very cultured man,” says Msgr. William Scheyd, episcopal vicar for retired priests, who con-celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial for Father Grisé in his hometown of Southington at Mary Our Queen Church. “He was very close to his family, and would visit his sister every week for lunch right up until her death.”

Father Grisé was born on October 14, 1919, in Southington, and attended local schools before entering St. Thomas Seminary in Baltimore, Md. Father Grisé was ordained to the priesthood on March 17, 1945, in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford by Archbishop Henry J. O’Brien.

His first assignment was to St. Paul Parish in West Haven. He went to St. Joseph Parish in Shelton as parochial vicar in 1953 and was there when the Diocese of Bridgeport was formed. He served at St. Mary Parish in Norwalk before volunteering as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force. He later served at Holy Name Parish in Stamford, St. Thomas Parish in Bridgeport, and St. Joseph Parish, also in Bridgeport.

In 1963, Father Grisé became the first pastor of St. Agnes Parish in Greenwich, where he remained until his 1971 appointment as pastor of St. Peter Parish in Danbury.

Upon his pastoral retirement in 1987, Father Grisé faithfully assisted at St. Mary, Star of the Sea, in Longboat Key, Florida for many years. He returned to Connecticut, residing at the Catherine Dennis Keeffe Queen of the Clergy Residence for retired priests in Stamford.

**Peggy Gould, 88**

Mary Margaret (Peggy) Gould of Bridgeport went to be with our Lord on February 15. Born November 20, 1929, in Yarmouth, Maine, she passed the Maine State Nursing Board examination in 1950 and became a registered nurse in CT in 1955, beginning her long-standing career at St. Vincent’s Medical Center in Bridgeport. Over the course of her career, she took on various levels of responsibility, including pediatrics supervisor in 1969, and remained with the hospital until her retirement.

Peggy was a lady of great faith who lived her life as a Servant of God, putting the needs of others before her own. In March of 1964, she was involved in the incorporation of the Bridgeport unit of the Society of Our Lady of the Way, a society of consecrated lay women, and remained active in that organization throughout her entire life. The society was later renamed the Secular Institute Madonna Della Strada. Peggy was the last member of this pontifical secular institute in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Peggy in St. Patrick Church, Bridgeport, on February 25. Interment took place in Holy Cross Cemetery in Yarmouth.

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**DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT APRIL 9—MAY 13**

**APRIL**

- Rev. John A. MacNeil ........................................ 1994
- Rev. Frederick Saviano ....................................... 2016
- Rev. Emidio O. Gregori ..................................... 2016
- Msgr. Henry M. Callahan ................................... 1956
- Deacon Harold Lynch ......................................... 2016
- Rev. Walter J. McCarthy .................................... 1968
- Rev. William J. Fletcher .................................... 1988
- Msgr. Edward D. Halloran ................................ 2001
- Rev. John E. Hanning ....................................... 1959
- Rev. Philip J. O’Farrell ..................................... 1992
- Rev. Martin J. O’Connor ................................... 1988
- Rev. Vincent P. Bodnar .................................... 1988
- Msgr. William A. Nagle .................................... 2013
- Rev. Joseph F. Cleary ........................................ 1971
- Rev. Andrew Dube ............................................ 2006
- Rev. Austin R. Saunders .................................... 1986

**MAY**

- Rev. Richard R. Dunn ....................................... 1999
- Rev. Francis C. Metro ......................................... 1987
- Rev. David W. Howell ....................................... 2013
- Msgr. John F. Jazkowski .................................... 2010
- Rev. Hugh F. Gallagher ..................................... 1980
- Rev. Joseph V. Kazlauskas .................................. 1968
- Rev. Edward M. Horan ....................................... 1978
Tyler Bourne, quite literally, is no Big Man on Campus. But the soft-spoken 5-foot-8 junior point guard possesses the other essentials to excel on the basketball court.

Proof positive: In his first year at Notre Dame High in Fairfield, Bourne transferred to Notre Dame from Abraham Lincoln High in his native Brooklyn, where he was a star even as a freshman and sophomore.

Lincoln’s list of notable alumni ranges from playwright Arthur Miller, singers Neil Diamond and Neil Sedaka, actors Louis Gossett Jr., Harvey Keitel and John Forsythe to sportscaster Marv Albert, baseball’s Lee Mazzilli and two earlier point guards, Stephon Marbury and Isaiah Whitehead.

“I knew we were a good team in the summer, even before Tyler arrived,” recalls the Lancers’ first-year coach Chris Watts, who made the challenging transition from St. Joseph—his alma mater, where he had coached for four seasons—to Notre Dame. “When I saw the command Tyler had on the court, I felt really comfortable with him.”

Bourne took charge from the outset, and played a major role in noteworthy victories over Pomperaug, Bunnell in the SWC playoff title game, and Career Magnet (62-59 in overtime) in the state tournament’s second round. He netted a game-high 24 points—16 in the first half—in the 75-53 loss to Sacred Heart of Waterbury in the state title game. It was the Hearts’ fourth straight state championship.

“I think we beat ourselves,” Bourne says of that anguish-inducing defeat on March 19. “If we played them again, I think the outcome would be different.”

This season, Bourne topped the Lancers in scoring (16 points per game), assists (9.0) and steals (3.0). Both he and Davis (15.0 points, 10.0 rebounds) were selected to the SWC All-Star Team, while Reaves (12ppg, 8rpg) was named SWC All-Division.

Watts, who is completing his 19th year as a parole officer with the state Department of Corrections, has adopted many of the coaching techniques from the men who were his mentors—the legendary Vito Montelli at St. Joe’s and Rick Pitino at Providence, where Watts played four seasons.

“A life changer,” he says of Montelli, who won a New England record 878 games and a state record 11 state titles during his 50-year career as St. Joseph coach. “Before the Xs and Os, I try to give life lessons,” Watts chuckled, “although I don’t beat them over the head with it.”

BY DON HARRISON

Tyler Bourne, quite literally, is no Big Man on Campus. But the soft-spoken 5-foot-8 junior point guard possesses the other essentials to excel on the basketball court.

Proof positive: In his first year at Notre Dame High in Fairfield, he sparked the Lancers to a 23-3 record, the SouthWest Conference title and a berth in the CIAC Class L state championship game at Mohegan Sun. The Connecticut High School Coaches Association was impressed enough to select him to its Class L All-State Second Team following his first season with the Lancers.
Keep me in your sight

I think of my parents and what it meant to them that I was born and how for them the world was never the same. Could it be true of me what Jeremiah wrote: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (Jer.1:5). From the very beginning was I a part of God’s plan? Was there an eternal place chosen for me? And what about Isaiah 43:4: “Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you?” This is a case for wonder.

The man I saw looking out at me from the plate-glass window was a handsome enough fellow, but his expression was sad. That gaze of sadness has been impressed upon me from the outside looking in, nose pressed against the glass window. I don’t feel as if I have the world by its tail.

I’m a man of many winters who has some standing regrets for what no longer exists and might have been. There are things I wish I had done, things I should have done, and things that I wish I had not done. There are words not said that I should have said, and words I wish I had not said.

I had not done. There are words not said that I should have said, and words I wish I had not said. I’m most sorry for the loves in my life at which I blundered. There were those who loved me and suffered for it.

“Once, when I was young and true, someone left me sad,
Broke my brittle heart in two;
And that is very bad.
Once, there was a heart I broke;
And that, I think, is worse.”

(Dorothy Parker)

But there are some things I’m happy to have done. There were times when I felt Providence was using me as an instrument. I think we all have moments when the heartaches and sorrows of our lives suddenly diminish and only the brave things stand out.

I’m not especially sanguine about humanity. The rule of evil seems universal and ineradicable. It bears witness to the Christian doctrine of Original Sin. It is inescapable before us. Something is not right, will never be right, and we ourselves have a share in the darkness.

The writer John Updike made the provocative statement that “to be alive is to be a killer.” Further, in a New York Times interview, Updike volunteered that his fiction contained his “sense of futility and of doom and of darkness...of death being behind everything in life, a sort of black backdrop.”

Updike declared that “the natural state of the sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness.”

This speaks for me. I sense the sadness that flows under the skin of things, like blood. It is a part of life. There is a poison in our system. Good will and love are also constantly in evidence. Yet there is “this sad earth where flowers
The first day of our honeymoon to Nova Scotia, my new bride and I were driving north through Maine, and I asked her to read the map so we could take a scenic route along the rocky and rugged coast. As it turned out, we saw more scenery than I imagined possible because we took a wrong turn and then took a wrong turn because we took a wrong turn and then took a wrong turn. We ended up 40 miles off the beaten path, somewhere in Maine, and I asked her to read the map when you know I can’t?” A very good question.

She got the last laugh, though, because I’m still asking her for directions since I’m technologically challenged, and she’s expertly skilled at using Google maps to get from Point A to Point B and even Point Z. A female voice on the mobile phone even tells you when to turn right and when to turn left, and the only thing we quarrel now is when I’m convinced the anonymous female guide didn’t take us the quickest route... so I grumble at the cell phone, not my wife.

But what do you do when you’re lost in life and can’t find the way? Who do you turn to? In many ways, God works like that GPS, leading us and directing us and detouring us around things that could cause harm. The problem is we don’t rely on him as often as we should—which should be all the time. Instead, we’ll guess, we’ll wander aimlessly or we’ll seek advice from friends, coworkers, therapists, counselors, bartenders and hairdressers, instead of asking Jesus—who should be the first one we turn to.

He responds more quickly than Siri, and you’ll get an answer if you ask, “Jesus, which direction should I take?” or “Jesus, I’m REALLY lost! Can you help me?”

My friend’s 33-year-old son is confused about life. He’s confused about what he should do, confused about where he should live and confused about whether he should marry. Every week he’s pursuing a different course and agonizing over decisions he has to make. The problem is he isn’t turning on his spiritual GPS, and he isn’t turning to God for directions. Quite simply, he isn’t letting go and letting God take the steering wheel.

My daughters also get incapacitated by questions like “Should I go back to school?” “Should I buy a house?” and on and on. When they ask my wife for advice, she tells them, “Pray about it and ask Jesus to show you the way.”

But I’m not sure they do. They don’t turn on their spiritual GPS. You see, God knows the way. He has a plan and it’s better than our plan. All we have to do is ask him to lead us along the road he wants us to take and he’ll stay by our side. However, we’re often afraid to ask or we resist asking because we prefer our own route—even if it leads to a dead end or puts us in harm’s way spiritually. Our goal should be to grow closer to God, and not be perpetually distracted by the pursuit of pleasure, possessions, prestige and power.

Unfortunately, many of us aren’t convinced that God has a unique plan for us. Or we forget that God’s plan won’t be as much fun as our plan, and it will require self-sacrifice, which is something no one wants to do. The truth is that his route is the scenic route, and while it may not take you along the rocky and rugged coast, it will lead to peace, joy and happiness. No other route does.

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How do you find out what God’s plan is for your life? You don’t need an app or a map, but you have to take time to listen. If you sit in silence, you’ll hear the still small voice of God and he’ll make his will known. All the answers lie in the tabernacle, because that’s where your spiritual GPS is located.
Bits and Pieces

WEDDING JUBILEE MASS with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be celebrated Sun., April 30, at 2:30 pm at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull. This Mass is for couples celebrating 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 plus year wedding anniversaries. This will be the only Wedding Jubilee Mass for 2017. Mass will be followed by a reception in the parish hall. For more info, contact Kim Quatela: 203.416.1334 or kquatela@diobpt.org. To register for the Mass, contact your local parish or visit: http://x.co/diobpt. RSVP before Mon., April 24. Download flyer at Wedding-Jubilee-Mass-2017.

THE WILD GOOSE (another name for the Holy Spirit), a new program at St. Cecilia Parish, Stamford, can be enjoyed in class or at your own pace at home. The 4-week parish discussion group started Thurs., March 30, at 7:15 pm and was repeated Fri., March 31, at 9:15 am. You can follow the video series from home: thewildgooseisloose.com/series-segments or on YouTube. For more info or to join the group, contact Vicki Alton: 203.322.8526 or vickia@optonline.net.

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.

MOMs+DADs prayer/support group for those with Down syndrome, their family and friends meets the third Thurs. of every month (April 20), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk. For more info, contact strapostole5713@aol.com.

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 21; May 5) at 7:30 pm. For more info and for directions, call Bette: 203.338.0503 or Peggy: 203.834.1287.

“COME AND SEE” if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. The Secular Franciscan Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Church, Fairfield, on Sat., April 22, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass with Mgr. Ernie Esposito. Afterwards there will be a social and meeting. For more info, call Pat Heile, OFS: 203.255.8801 or pheile5713@aol.com.

ANNUAL LEGACY GALA for Trinity Catholic High School will be held Fri., evening, April 28, at the Italian Center, Stamford. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be honored at this year’s event. For more info and for reservations, visit www.malta-house.org or call 203.857.0088.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35) will be working in the facilities of Jericho Partnership, Danbury, on a service project on Sat., April 29, from 1-4 pm. Come in work clothes. For exact location and to RSVP, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

PASTA DINNER will be held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, Bridgeport, on Sat., April 29, in the grand hall. Doors open at 5:30 pm; dinner served at 6 pm. Includes pasta, meatballs, sausage, Italian bread, salad, dessert and beverage. Vegetarian dinner available. Cost: $10 adults; $5 children 6-12. For more info or to make a reservation, call Marge: 203.372.2784.

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For a personalized proposal, contact Betty Assell at 800-842-7804 or bassell@catholicextension.org. Visit www.catholicextension.org/annuities

Fairfield County Catholic
April 2017
ADULTS of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35) will gather on Tues.,
May 2, at 6:45 pm 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 (May 2) at 7 pm. How? Before 7 pm, call 877.216.5269 and type in the pin number 96869.

“NAVIGATING MORAL LANDMINES” with Dr. Frederick Simmons from the Center for Theological Inquiry, Princeton, N.J., will be the final First Friday Lecture at St. Luke Parish, Westport on Fri., May 5, at 7:30 pm. Wine and cheese reception at 7 pm. No charge, all are welcome. For more info, call 203.227.7245.

TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS is celebrated at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, the first Sun. of each month (May 7) at 4 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

WOMEN’S GROUP at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet Mon., May 8, at 10 am. Guest speaker Jennifer Gillis, outreach coordinator for the Trumbull Senior Center, will speak on “Social Services Work for You.” All are invited. For more info, call 203.268.6178.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35) will gather on Tues., May 9, at 7.30 pm at WCSU Newman Center, Eighth St, Danbury, for a talk by Fr. Sam Scott, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Danbury. For more info, go to catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (May 13) 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.

MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE: the Charismatic Renewal Services announces a Mass of Healing and Hope on Mon., May 15, at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton, at 7:30 pm. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.456.5610.

50th REUNION for Notre Dame High School Class of 1966 (Boys and Girls) the weekend of May 19-21; For more info, contact Notre Dame’s Alumni Office: tmarzik@notredame.org.

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LEARN ABOUT Walking with Purpose women’s Bible study program at an event held at Holy Spirit Parish, Stamford, on Sat., May 20, from 9 am-12 noon. Women and parish leaders are invited to find out about this fast-growing program and how to bring it to their parish. For more info, contact Laura Phelps: lauraphelpswwp@gmail.com.

PAPER SHREDDING will take place at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, on Sat., May 20, from 9 am-12 noon. No need to remove staples or paperclips. Cost: $10 for one box; $25 for three boxes. For info, contact the parish: 203.377.3133 or office@stcatherinetrumbull.com.


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.

KIDNEY NEEDED
My name is Peggy Karbovanec and I desperately need a kidney transplant.

To learn more about my situation, please contact me at:
203.666.6993
Email: maggieclare5@gmail.com
Or visit my website:
www.kidneyforpeggy.com
Or call:
1.866.925.3897 – Yale
1.212.746.3723 – NY Presbyterian

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.


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