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First Holy Communion

This spring, more than 4,300 young boys and girls in second and third grades received First Holy Communion in parishes throughout the diocese. It was an exciting and happy time for children and their parents after months of preparation, including their first Confession.

The First Eucharist (coming from the Greek word meaning “thanksgiving”) for children is also an important moment for the entire parish community because the young people join the faithful around the table of God’s family. “First Holy Communion reminds us that all must come to Christ as soon as possible with the mindset of children—be expectant, be in awe and be surprised by the Lord in our lives,” said Rose Talbot Babey, coordinator of elementary formation in the diocese. Many thanks to all priests, pastors and the directors of religious education (DREs) who prepare children for reception of sacraments throughout the diocese.
Bishop Caggiano receives SHU Honorary Degree

FAIRFIELD—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano delivered the keynote address to the undergraduates and received an honorary Doctor of Theology degree at the 51st Commencement Exercises of Sacred Heart University, held at the Webster Bank Arena. More than 2,000 Sacred Heart University students embarked upon a new journey the weekend of May 13-14, after receiving diplomas and words of advice and motivation from religious leaders, scholars and classmates. “We gather here in this vast arena to celebrate your equally vast accomplishments and achievements,” Bishop Caggiano said. “You have much to celebrate and much to be proud of during these past years. You have opened your minds and hearts to discover the gifts and talents that God has given to each and every one of you.”

During his speech, Bishop Caggiano asked the graduates about leadership. “What does a true leader look like? A true leader, my friends, is a man or woman who never uses people as a means to an end, a true leader is not someone who measures success simply in terms of material possessions, a true leader never forgets that a measure of a person’s heart is the principles on which that person will live.”

President John J. Petillo addressed undergraduate students on May 14. “Today is indeed your day. These past few years have slipped by so quickly. Yet in these years, friends have been made, knowledge has been shared and experiences have been afforded.”

Dr. Petillo told the students to always ask “why,” and to “be uncomfortable so that you think critically and analytically, and you may grow in knowledge and faith.”

Dr. Petillo ended his speech with, “Don’t try to always be normal, because you will never know how amazing you can be. Chase, reach, stretch for your dreams and hopes. Isn’t that what Pioneers do?”

Theresa “T” Fletcher, class of 2017 president, took her peers down memory lane as she reflected upon her time at SHU. “In the classroom, we were not only challenged in our subject matter, but our professors also made us think outside the box. They taught us how to think for ourselves, push ourselves and achieve things that we never thought we could. They taught us to be Pioneers and pave our own path through life.”

Shauna Santos-Dempsey, of Ludlow, Mass., received her bachelor’s degree in social work on Sunday. “I’m excited, nervous and sad,” Santos-Dempsey said about the day. The last four years presented her with many opportunities that she took advantage of, including becoming a resident assistant and president of her sorority, Chi Omega. “I don’t think I would be who I am today without SHU.”

Santos-Dempsey’s aunt, Annette Plourde, said she was incredibly proud of her niece who has “been through so much” over the last four years. Santos-Dempsey’s mom died while she was at SHU, and Plourde said she was smiling down on her daughter on Mother’s Day.

Spencer Kelly of Shelton received his bachelor’s degree in finance. Before the ceremony began he waited outside the arena with his brother and girlfriend. “It was a good experience,” Kelly said of the last four years. “I’m ready to be done and start working.”

Kelly landed a job at Cartus in Danbury.

Saturday’s festivities were all about the university’s graduate students. “In gathering today, we are celebrating an accomplishment, a dream, a recognition. Each of you has spent these past months and years preparing for your future. The faculties have taught you necessary strategies and skills for your careers,” Dr. Petillo said. “As this journey ends, please remember that it is character and virtues that will define you.”

Sacred Heart University, the second-largest independent Catholic university in New England, offers more than 70 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and certificate programs on its main campus in Fairfield and at satellites in Connecticut, Luxembourg and Ireland. More than 8,500 students attend the university’s five colleges: Arts & Sciences; Health Professions; Nursing; the Jack Welch College of Business; and the Isabelle Farrington College of Education.

The Chronicle of Higher Education names SHU one of the fastest-growing Roman Catholic universities in its 2016 almanac. Sacred Heart fields 32 division I athletic teams and has an award-winning program of community service.

Father Joseph Marcello named Vicar for Clergy

BRIDGEPORT—Father Joseph Marcello has been named vicar of clergy of the Diocese of Bridgeport, effective June 30.

In making the announcement, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said that Father Marcello will continue to serve as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

The Office of Clergy and Religious serves the more than 300 active and retired priests and deacons of the Diocese of Bridgeport as well as 350 religious. Father Marcello’s responsibilities include coordination of assignments for all clergy, continuing education and formation, and support services for the personal well being of active and retired priests and deacons.

“Through a young priest, Father Marcello has held a variety of administrative and pastoral posts in the diocese, and he brings excellent leadership and pastoral skills to his role of serving and supporting our priests,” said the bishop.

The post has been temporarily held since January 2016, by Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese. Prior to that, Father Ian Jeremiah and Msgr. Kevin Royal served as vicars for clergy.

Father Marcello was installed as the fifth pastor of the Parish of St. Catherine of Siena by Bishop Caggiano on Laetare Sunday, March 15, 2015.

Among his many diocesan posts, Father Marcello has served as secretary of the Presbyteral Council, on the formation faculty of the diocese’s Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, as one of the diocese’s assistant vocation directors and as vice chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

In 2009, Father Marcello became priest secretary to Bishop William E. Lori, Fourth Bishop of Bridgeport. He also held the post of priest secretary in the Archdiocese of Baltimore when Bishop Lori was named to the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2012.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Lori on May 17, 2003, at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull, Father Marcello’s home parish.

Father Marcello’s first assignment was as parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, beginning in June, 2003. While at St. Joseph, he also served as assistant director of vocations. From 2005 to 2009, he taught theology and served as spiritual director of St. Joseph High School in Trumbull.

He graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1994 and from Fairfield University in 1998 with a B.A. in religion. After entering St. John Fisher Seminary to begin his studies, Father Marcello completed his theology degree at Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., in 2003.

His parents, Joseph and Ellen Marcello, live in Monroe, and his sister Lisa, his brother-in-law James, and his two nieces live in Trumbull.
Annual Catholic Appeal

Lay leaders drive success

BRIDGEPORT—With the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) nearing the $10 million mark, William McLean, chief development officer of the diocese, says he is extremely grateful to lay leaders for their efforts to make the campaign a success. In particular, he thanked appeal chairs Elena and Steve Schlegel of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan and this year’s vice chair couple, Conrad and Carol Calandra of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton.

McLean says the new vicariate chairs have also done an outstanding job of getting the message out to people: Jennifer and Kevin Keating of Darien; Sue and John Steitz of Wilton; Roxanne and Jason Melaragno of Fairfield; Carol and Conrad Calandra of Shelton; Anne LeClercq of Danbury; and Angelo Cocco of Bridgeport.

“Our lay leadership has great credibility when they ask people to give because it’s really parishioner to parishioner. They’re making a difference wherever they go,” said McLean.

McLean is pleased with ACA results to date, but says there’s still more work to do to reach the $11 million goal for the appeal, which funds the major programs and ministries of the diocese.

He is awaiting results from the recent in-pew weekend and hopes they will provide a final surge before the active phase of the campaign closes at the end of June. However, people will have the opportunity to give over the summer and through the end of the year.

“Giving now sends a strong signal of support for the direction the diocese is taking and the good work it does for people of all faiths throughout Fairfield County,” McLean said.

He is encouraged by the fact that more parishes have reached their goals than last year at this time.

McLean says the average gift to the Appeal is over $500, making donors among the most generous in the U.S., but he is concerned about the number of people who gave last year but have not yet renewed their gift.

To date, more than 18,000 people have made a pledge, but McLean would like to expand the base of giving. He believes that many people on fixed incomes and younger couples are still feeling the lingering effects of the past recession as they struggle to pay taxes, school tuitions and other expenses. He wants them to know that even a small gift can make a difference.

“It’s really important that everyone make a gift. My message is give whatever you can. Every donation matters,” he said.

One very encouraging sign is the number of young people who are stepping up to take leadership in the campaign. McLean said they have given a very youthful stamp to the appeal and represent the next generation coming forward.

A new series of parish receptions also holds the key to introducing more people to the Annual Catholic Appeal and engaging young people in leadership. “We recently visited two very successful parish receptions, one at St. Aloysius in New Canaan, and the other at St. John’s in Darien. We’re very grateful for the pastors, Father Robert Kinnally and Father Francis Hoffman for their leadership.”

McLean is also grateful for the guidance of the Priest Advisory Council (PAC) led by Msgr. Laurence Bronkiewicz as chair and Father Reginald Norman,
The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport welcomed 100 supporters and alum to its Fifth Annual Golf Classic, raising more than $200,000 for much-needed scholarships.

The 18-hole, shotgun competition, held May 18 at the Country Club of Fairfield, featured putting and course contests, a delicious barbeque lunch and terrific player gifts. Following golf, guests enjoyed a cocktail reception along with the live and silent auctioning of sporting events, fine restaurants, golf foursomes and one-of-a-kind travel experiences by brothers and auctioneers Dave and Steve Sylvestro, who brought much fun and energy to the evening.

Also on hand were academy students who mingled and greeted guests, as well as current Fairfield Prep freshman and Catholic Academy alum José Dataram, who spoke passionately about the strong academic and faith foundations he received while at the academy. Dataram expressed his deep gratitude to all those donors present who enabled him and his six siblings to get the gift of a lifetime—an education.

During “paddles up,” more than one dozen students were sponsored through the Leaders of Tomorrow program, which pairs donors with students for whom they will pay toward their tuition. “It was a magnificent day,” said Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, executive director of the Catholic Academy. “We had perfect weather, great golf, terrific camaraderie and much good will. Because of the generosity of several board members, the entire event was underwritten, and every dollar raised went to our academy.” This year the event had eight sponsors, and welcomed American Transit Insurance Company as a new sponsor.

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CATHEDRAL CLASSIC—Kevin Indiveri receives high fives for a winning putt. From left: Andrew Schulz, Indiveri, and Chris Scyocurka.

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Proceeds from the gala benefit Bishop’s Scholarship Fund and will help students with a demonstrated financial need attend Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic elementary schools.

To learn more about Foundations in Education, please contact Holly Doherty-Lemoine at hlemoine@diobpt.org.
FAIRFIELD—During Fairfield University’s 75th commencement exercises on May 21, the class of 1951—the university’s very first class—was honored as part of the University’s ongoing 75th anniversary celebrations.

The nine men representing their class—many veterans of the World War II—donned their robes and sashes to watch as the class of 2017 received their degrees. Among those members of the first class present was Raymond Longden, JD, a member of the class of 1951, recognized by the Guinness World Book of Records as having “Refereed more football games than any other referee in America,” for officiating well over 2,000 games spanning all levels of the sport, including professional, college, prep school, high school and Pop Warner.

Longden’s advice to the Class of 2017: “Now you have the tools to achieve your goals, it’s up to you to use those tools and develop vital drive. You have to have vital drive to succeed in today’s world, so whatever your mission is, whatever you’re called to do, persevere, persevere, persevere.”

Nearly 10,000 people joined in celebrating the class of 2017 when the Jesuit University awarded 934 bachelor’s degrees, 393 master’s degrees, 28 6th year certificates and 36 doctorates. Fairfield’s interim president, Lynn Babington, PhD, RN, presided over the day’s events.

The undergraduate speaker, University President Emeritus Father Jeffrey P. von Arx, SJ, spoke to the graduates on the importance of conviction and discernment. “As you look around you, I’m sure you realize how hard it is for people your age, or any age, to develop values to live by,” he said. “It takes not only courage but also informed conviction to stand for contrary values of human dignity and human solidarity, and it is this informed conviction that we hope we have helped you to develop here at Fairfield.”

During the undergraduate ceremony, an honorary Doctor of Laws degree was given to Father Sean Carroll, SJ, who is the founding executive director of the Kino Border Initiative (KBI), which started in 2000 to serve migrants that travel between Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. In 2015, the KBI provided nearly 43,000 meals, shelter for 482 migrants, and medical assistance for over 3,500 sick and injured persons.

Dianne Dwyer Modestini, an internationally renowned conservator of Old Master and 19th century paintings, was given an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree; and a honorary Doctor of Laws degree was given to Stephen Braga, ’78, who was named one of the “Top Ten Criminal Defense Attorneys in the United States” by U.S. Lawyer Rankings and who, along with his wife, Kathy, runs a law firm dedicated to serving, primarily, the underserved and underrepresented within the legal system.

Later Sunday afternoon, the graduate ceremony speaker Juana James, the president and CEO of Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, spoke of the importance of service to others. “All of you have the power to transform our society for the better,” said James. “Nurture your personal relationships—friends, family, loved ones—and don’t forget yourself. It’s as important to you to pay attention to your own physical, spiritual, and mental wellbeing as it is to take care of others.”

Also at the graduate ceremony, Sister Patricia Eck, CBS, received an honorary Doctor of Science degree. As congregation leader of the Sisters of Bon Secours, she is responsible for ministries in France, Great Britain, Ireland, Peru, Africa, and the United States. In 2011, she received the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifici (the Cross for the Church and Pontiff), the highest honor given to a member of a religious community by the Vatican.

As Dr. Babington said, speaking of the leap of faith Fairfield University founders took in 1942, “Every year, every class, every new program, and each and every student represent a leap of faith. And that is how it should be.”

St. Vincent’s celebrates 25th commencement

BRIDGEPORT—St. Vincent’s College recognized 190 graduates at a ceremony held on May 19 at the University of Bridgeport’s Arnold Bernhard Arts & Humanities Center.

The graduates completed coursework in their respective area of the college, and will be recognized with a certificate, diploma, associate’s or bachelor’s degree in the areas of nursing, radiography or general studies.

This year’s commencement address was given by Debra Greenwood, president and CEO of the Center for Family Justice. Greenwood received her B.S. in business administration from Sacred Heart University and her master’s in exercise physiology from Southern Connecticut State University, with additional certificates from other institutions. Over the course of her 35-year career, she has showcased her natural talent for leadership by leading two YMCA’s as chief executive, and spearheading successful capital campaigns that resulted in the founding and opening of a new YMCA.

Greenwood has spent the last 10 years of her life helping restore hope to the lives of women, children and men who have been impacted by domestic and sexual abuse through her role with the Center for Family Justice.

For over 100 years, until their departure in 2014, the Daughters of Charity have serviced St. Vincent’s Medical Center and College in their mission to care for the poor and sick. The Daughters have stayed loyal to the mission and the institutions throughout the years, at one point dissuading the Medical Center from leaving Bridgeport to move to a suburban area in the neighbor town of Fairfield. Because of this dedication, St. Vincent’s honored Sister Marie Burns, Sister Anne Marie Graham and Sister Mary Jean Tague with honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters.

At the ceremony, St. Vincent’s honored Judy Ruggieri with the “Distinguished Excellence in Teaching and Service Award.” This award is given to an individual who has demonstrated excellence as an educator through a record of outstanding teaching effectiveness, both within and outside the classroom and the ability to inspire, promote and sustain intellectual development. Ruggieri joined the St. Vincent’s team in 2013 after previous careers as a registered nurse and in business administration.

Megan Halloran and Emma Alamo were honored by St. Vincent’s College as this year’s student speakers. Halloran, a radiography student, will be receiving her associate of science degree in radiography and plans to continue her education and earn her BSRS. Alamo, a nursing student, will be receiving her associate of science in nursing and plans to continue her bright career into the future.
Celebrating Our Lady of Fatima

WILTON—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano joined Father Reggie Norman, pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton, to lead the 100th anniversary celebration of the miracles at Fatima. Children from the parish re-enacted the scene of the miracle that occurred on May 13, 1917, in Fatima, Portugal, when three shepherd children reported seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary, who urged them to pray the Rosary daily for world peace.

During his homily, the bishop told parishioners about his mother’s pilgrimage to Fatima just months before she died in 2011. “Our Lady reminds us that there is no greater good than the eternal; there is no greater good than to be with her son in this life and in the life to come,” Bishop Caggiano said. “She reminded the visionaries, and she reminds us, that we must pray each day for the strength and courage to remain faithful to what the Lord has asked.”

After Mass, state Senator Toni Boucher, R-Wilton, and Selectman Lori Bufano presented the parish with an official state citation recognizing the 100th anniversary. “Our Lady of Fatima Church has provided moral and spiritual guidance to the Wilton community and beyond,” Senator Boucher said. “Congratulations on this celebration of Our Lady’s presence and maternal protection for the last 100 years.”

Father Norman presented Bishop Caggiano with a Lady of Fatima vestment and a commemorative 100th anniversary plate. He also presented the bishop with the first annual “The Most Reverend Frank Caggiano Award” for outstanding service to the parish.

Bishop Caggiano responded by expressing his own thanks for Father Norman’s service to the parish. “Father Reggie, you are such an outstanding, remarkable priest and a great pastor,” he said. “And I want to say, on the feast day in this parish, and on behalf of everyone here, thank you for your leadership, your dedication, all that you do and the love that you have in your heart.”

Father Norman also presented an award to parishioners Phil Lauria and Elaine Tai-Lauria for their service to the parish. Our Lady of Fatima was founded in 1953, just months after the Diocese of Bridgeport was formed. It was originally a mission of St. Mary Parish in Norwalk, but during World War II, when gas rationing made travelling more difficult, Mass was made available in Wilton by a priest sent from St. Mary’s. These Masses were held at the American Legion Hall in Wilton Center. The parish now numbers 1,700 families.

(Our Lady of Fatima Church is located at 229 Danbury Road, Wilton. For more information on the parish, visit www.olfwilton.org or call 203.762.3928.)
Jo-Anne Jakab says farewell to Kolbe

By PAT HENNESSY

A Bridgeport native herself, Jo-Anne Jakab will retire on June 30. After 43 years of service to the Kolbe Cathedral High School community, Principal Jo-Anne Jakab will retire on June 30. The Daughters of the Holy Spirit still staffed Cathedral Girls’ High School in Bridgeport when a young, newly-married Jakab arrived as a health and physical education teacher. In those first years, she and her husband Gary, who is also a teacher, co-coached the girls’ basketball team. Jakab had been at Cathedral High for two years when it merged with Kolbe Boys’ High School in 1976 to become Kolbe-Cathedral.

“I have gotten to know thousands of wonderful young people, witnessing their growth and development and celebrating their successes,” she says. “The only way I could have been here for that many years is to see how kids’ lives are changed by their experience at Kolbe.”

Over the years, Jakab has served as athletic director, development director, principal and president. She’s proud to point out that the school has earned a strong reputation as an educational force in the City of Bridgeport, sending 100 percent of graduates to college. This year's graduates have already been accepted to college. The school has earned a strong reputation as an educational force in the City of Bridgeport, sending 100 percent of graduates to college. This year's graduates have already been accepted to college.

As Jakab responded to educational changes over the years, Kolbe has added challenging offerings like engineering, biomedical science and entrepreneurship. It has a course in CSP mobile apps, and offers AP courses in U.S. history and English. In its engineering lab, students can learn to program a 3D printer.

This fall, the school will offer a social studies course that carries UCONN credit. It hosted the pilot program for Shepherds, Inc., which provides tuition assistance and mentors for inner-city students. Other programs will allow students to finish one complete year of college, and experience career possibilities in health care, business and industry before graduation from high school.

Sarah’s ER project

BRIDGEPORT—Sarah Maynard, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, is already incorporating the principles of affecting change into her life at the tender age of 12, as evidenced by the project she came up with to help children who visit St. Vincent’s Emergency Room. Remembering a time when she had to visit a local ER and felt bored and wornout, the seventh grade student at Fairfield Woods Middle School came up with a project for her health class that would help occupy children’s minds while they spent those anxious moments waiting to be seen in the Emergency Department.

Sarah collected little toys, coloring books, puzzles and other types of books from classmates, friends and family members to create “Activity Bags” to be distributed to children who visit the ER. She even customized the bags for girls and boys and different age groups.

The creative assignment from Sarah’s health class teacher Tina Bengermino had called for a project based on Steven Covey’s The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People—and based on the reaction of St. Vincent’s staff and the first young patient to receive one of the bags, Sarah’s project was highly effective. Her willingness to share her experience and use her problem-solving skills and initiative to devise a solution that will benefit so many children could be a Covey case study! But Sarah says her motivation also came from a very simple philosophy, “I just want people to be happy.”

Thank you, Sarah, for a very creative idea and a willingness to help others!
Notre Dame High School

‘The shoulders of giants’

By PAT HENNESSY

“I’m leaving, but I’m not leaving,” said Father Bill Sangiovanni, president of Notre Dame High School in Fairfield. “The bishop told me to stay close and do whatever I wanted to do. I’ve always loved it here, so I’ll be back to give lectures and take part in activities.”

Father Bill first came to Notre Dame as a history teacher in 1980. He became principal in 1994 and president in 2010. Now he and Vice Principal Carl Philipp, who came to Notre Dame as a foreign language teacher in 1965, are both retiring. Philipp had also gone to Notre Dame as a high school student, graduating in 1961. He has served as assistant principal at Notre Dame for more than three decades.

The two men between them capture the history and the legacy of Notre Dame.

“Talk about ‘on the shoulders of giants’ ... Father Bill and Carl are two of the giants in Notre Dame’s history, having given a combined total of ninety years of service to our school and our students,” said Principal Chris Cipriano. “They have both left a tremendous impact upon Notre Dame, and their legacies will certainly carry on.”

Their contributions are too numerous to list, but they leave a community extremely grateful for their support of ND and Catholic education.”

“I really enjoy working with Chris,” said Father Bill. “I keep reminding him that I hired him!” Principal Cipriano is building his own legacy since being brought to Notre Dame as a social studies teacher by Father Sangiovanni in 1998.

“Carl was already here when I came, and he has been integral to the operation of the school,” Father Bill continued. “He worked with Principal Armand Fabbri before I came, and he’s always there to help with the students and the alums. So many of them remember him from their school days!”

During those years, a lot has changed. But the core of Notre Dame, in its students and in its school spirit, has remained constant.

“Over time, we’ve introduced a lot of new subjects, mostly in science and math—and our music program has grown richer, too,” said Father Bill. “But most importantly, then and now, the people who worked here really liked the school—and the kids liked it, too. There are tons of activities for them and great sports teams and a musical every spring. I’ve never seen a play like the one they did this year, Les Miserables. It was phenomenal.”

He points with pride to the achievements of the past several decades at Notre Dame, most recently the close connection with nearby Sacred Heart University. Not only do qualified Notre Dame graduates get a discounted tuition at SHU, students can take classes at the university while still in high school, and they have use of the Ryan Matura Library. “By the time they graduate high school, they can have accumulated a lot of college credits,” Father Sangiovanni points out.

While top scholars can take advantage of these offerings, all students get the assistance they need at Notre Dame. “You get to know the kids pretty well,” says Father Sangiovanni. “If some student isn’t doing well, we take that kid on and work with them. All the teachers and staff are happy to do that for the kids. We have great people here.”

Another hallmark of Notre Dame’s spirit shows in the students’ yearly 26 Acts of Kindness Campaign, which they began as a way to honor the students and educators killed at Sandy Hook School in Newtown. The school’s Annual Day of Service falls at the end of the school’s Acts of Kindness Campaign.

“Everyone here works together, and we work hard. I’ve always loved that about Notre Dame. We laugh a lot, too. I remember the years when we put on the GarlicFest—that was so much fun. People still ask when we’re going to bring it back!”

That spirit is a constant that has infused Notre Dame over the years. “There’s a spirit of fun here. People are always coming up with new ideas and working to put them together. There’s an energy to the school. That is sure to continue.”

St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church
21 Cherry Street in New Canaan

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Monday/Wednesday/Friday 7 am, 9 am, 5:30 pm
Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday 7:00 am & 5:30 pm

Like and follow the parish on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter at StAloysiusParishNC!
Thomas Merton Center

Sister Amanda creates a whole meal experience

By ANNA JONES

Breakfast is still being served at the Thomas Merton Center, but Sister Amanda Carrier, RSM, already has her mind on lunch.

On a Tuesday morning in early May, she stood mixing a homemade dressing for a pasta salad that would have a zesty lemon flavor while she thought about what she would do with the chicken in the refrigerator. Although a client picking up his breakfast that morning had called back requesting lasagna, Sister Mandy had to use what was available to her.

“I just look around and say, ‘That’s what it looks like today,’” Sister Mandy said.

It’s one of the perks of her job as a chef at the Thomas Merton Center—every day the menu is completely different. While she orders the meats that she cooks with, most of the rest of the food comes from donations, and she never quite knows what she’s going to get.

Volunteers are around helping all the time, “and they make some of the best pancakes you could ask for,” Sister Mandy said.

Sister Mandy, 31, doesn’t have dreams of owning her own restaurant. The late hours and same old same old every day do not appeal to her, she said.

Instead, she helps prepare more than 100 breakfasts and more than 200 lunches five days a week, and aside from the creativity perks, she gets to serve a vulnerable population in her community. After all, that’s one of the many reasons why she became a Sister of Mercy. In addition to the three traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Sisters of Mercy take an additional vow to serve their community in their vocations.

“I get to introduce people to a whole new world of healthy eating,” she said. “This is about creating a whole meal experience.”

“And you get to know all sorts of fun people,” she added.

Especially working at the Thomas Merton Center, a place that used to be a church, her service to the homeless in the Bridgeport area takes on another level of meaning.

“I love that this used to be a church and this used to be the altar,” Sister Mandy said as she chopped vegetables for her pasta salad on a metal counter in a place where, presumably, the altar used to be.

Outside of the kitchen, she finds other ways to serve her community. She keeps a regular blog, “Nun with a side of pantry,” to chronicle her adventures on a countercultural path. “Most people don’t know any Sisters anymore,” she said, adding that the average age of Sisters is now in the 70s. “I wanted to write something that would’ve been helpful to me when I was just thinking about religious life.”

In her blog, Sister Mandy describes her journey to the Sisters of Mercy as a long one, one that didn’t have an exact “aha” moment she can put her finger on. Instead, it was a gradual process, in which God helped her to remain open to the possibility, even when she grew up thinking she would one day be married.

At the end of the day, she felt like she belonged in the community, she said. “You get to know Sisters as real people and you start to say, ‘Hey, I could do this too.’”

Merton Celebrity Breakfast a success

BRIDGEPORT—Over 230 people turned out for the Thomas Merton Center’s 23rd Annual Celebrity Breakfast on May 24 at the Holiday Inn in Bridgeport, raising approximately $140,000 for the center.

“We’re thrilled with the tremendous show of support we saw at this year’s breakfast,” said Al Barber, president of Catholic Charities.

Keynoter Speaker Paul Miller captivated the crowd with a personal and humorous account of his upbringing in Bridgeport and the close connection he feels to the people of this city. A successful businessman man, Miller conveyed that he has a deep gratitude for all the resources he car dealership has made available to him. This, he said, was a motivation to help those in need. Due to his affection for Bridgeport, he saw the Thomas Merton Center as a wonderful organization to contribute to, given the incredible work it does for the hungry and homeless in the community.

Miller also spoke of meeting Norma Pfriem. After being asked to become a trustee of the foundation in her name, he became very aware of the spectrum of needs across the Bridgeport area.

But he told the crowd that the Thomas Merton Center, and the people it serves, touched his heart the most. Miller’s actions have accomplished much to ensure the continued work of the Thomas Merton Center.

As a surprise to him and an expression of appreciation of his personal generosity and his leadership of the Norma Pfriem Foundation, the Thomas Merton Center presented Miller with its highest award of service. In addition, an award in recognition of the Norma F. Pfriem Foundation will be hung inside the center.
DANBURY—The sun struggles to break through the ominous clouds on a dark Sunday afternoon as a six-foot icon with the face of Jesus on it is being hoisted up on a wooden frame in Elmwood Park on Main Street in Danbury. Drops of rain sprinkle down on the two dozen folding chairs arranged in the center of the park around the icon, a lectern, and a crucifix.

Suddenly, a choir of voices is heard coming down State Street singing “Alleluia,” along with drums, tambourines, and guitars. The group is being led by Jan Pietryga, a Polish seminarian who studies for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., and David Rak, along with his wife, Michelle, and their five children, a Catholic missionary family from Illinois. The voices of children, young adults, and adults grow louder as they approach the park and assemble in the damp chairs.

The group of 40 to 50 that has gathered is comprised of some members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Danbury, others from around the area who had been invited to this Great Mission, and also members of the Neocatechumenal Way from around the diocese and from the Norwich diocese.

This Great Mission is a direct answer to the call of Pope Francis to “invite everybody to bring the Good News in every environment of life. Go into the squares and announce Jesus Christ, our Savior!” These Great Missions are being coordinated with the communities of the Neocatechumenal Way from Bridgeport for over 40 years. Communities are currently active in St. Charles Borromeo Parish and St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport, Sacred Heart and St. Mary parishes in Stamford, and at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Danbury.

Father Peter Towsley, pastor of Sacred Heart in Danbury, begins the mission with a prayer. “We walk with the Lord, and with St. Peter, and with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We take his message wherever we are sent.”

After Psalms from evening Vespers are recited, and a few songs are sung, two young women from the diocese of Norwich get up individually and speak about how they came to know the love of God for them through the sufferings, temptations, and failures of youth and young adulthood. They speak about how, through a small community of faith along with others like them, they discovered the deep and merciful love of God.

Afterward, David Rak offers a word of hope related to the blind man in John’s Gospel, that perhaps we’re not looking for God in our lives, but that he wants to enter the daily reality we’re living, to help us grow in faith.
Present and Future

It is often said that our youth are the future. That’s not entirely true. As the students and activities featured in our education section prove, these young men and women are very much the present of our Church and our communities.

A fifth grader who gathers diapers for a pregnant mother is changing that mom’s world now. Kindergartners who send bright cards and candy to military personnel lighten their burden today. High school students not only teach religious education in their home parishes, they serve as peer tutors in their schools and work with special education students and in the Special Olympics—and they have been voting delegates to the Fourth Diocesan Synod. They are changing the face of the Church this minute. Through their science experiments, young scientists research ways to improve our environment, from solar cells to clean water. Some of their research from previous years is already in place, improving the world we live in. Our youth are the future—and the present. Make room for them.

Summer ‘to do’ list

Before heading out on vacation this summer, we ask you to consider this simple “To Do” list that will help ensure your summer is prayerful and charitable:

Give to the Annual Catholic Appeal—If you haven’t made a pledge yet, you can use the envelope in this issue or go online: www.2017ACA-bridgeport.com. If you’re in a hurry you might even want to try to new text to give feature: Text sharing to 50555. The ACA feeds the hungry and houses the homeless, educates our children and seminarians, provides for retired priests and funds countless works of service throughout the diocese. Please join those who have already given!

Become “The Face of Prayer”—Bishop Frank Caggiano invites you to be the face of prayer by texting your picture, a prayer intention, or the word “prayer” to 55778 (Privacy protections are in place.) Participants will receive a prayer from Bishop Frank either every day or three times a week [your choice] as well as a weekly video from the bishop, access to great resources online and the opportunity to pray together with friends from all around the Diocese of Bridgeport. Visit www.thefaceofprayer.org.

Prepare for a Pilgrimage—Bishop Caggiano has invited people throughout the diocese to make a special pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. on Saturday, September 23. Young people in particular are expected to join Bishop Frank for the one-day pilgrimage, which represents the culmination of the Face of Prayer campaign and the dedication of a new shrine to Our Blessed Mother at the basilica. For more information about the pilgrimage visit: www.thefaceofprayer.org. (See the ad on page 5 of this issue).

Summer wishes

(In this reflection, originally distributed on video, Bishop Caggiano wishes young people—and the young at heart—a great and prayerful summer.)

Summer is upon us and I know all of us are looking for time for relaxation—to step away and rejuvenate. That’s the beauty of the summer. Many of you are ending school obligations, and I am proud of you for your achievements. You deserve time to rest, to meet with friends and enjoy the summer. I hope this summer is all that you’re planning it to be. But I’m also hoping that it’s not time away from your faith! We never take a vacation from the Lord and what we believe. I encourage you to make time to come to Mass. A tree without roots can’t live, but never take a vacation from the Lord and what we believe. I encourage you to make time to come to Mass. A tree without roots can’t live, but

Sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit

DANBURY—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano confirms a student at St. Peter School in Danbury while her pastor, Father Gregg Mecca, looks on. This spring, more than 4,000 8th and 9th graders were confirmed throughout the diocese. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized person is “sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ. In Confirmation, we receive the message of faith in a deeper and more intense manner with great emphasis given to the person of Jesus Christ, who asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to the Church for building up the community in loving service.

Clergy Appointment

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

Vicar

REVEREND JOSEPH A. MARCELLO, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, to Vicar for Clergy. Effective date is June 30. Father Marcello will continue to serve as Pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish.

REVEREND MARCELO R. LOPRESTI, IVE, residing at Saint Roch Parish, Greenwich, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Roch Parish, Greenwich. Effective date is June 30.

REVEREND GREG J. MARKEY, from Graduate Studies at the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Lawrence Parish, Shelton. Effective date is June 30.

REVEREND ALEXIS MORONTA, IVE, Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Stamford, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Ann Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date is June 30.

REVEREND AUGUSTINE NGUYEN, Part-time Episcopal Chaplain of Kolbe Cathedral High School and Part-time Parochial Vicar, Church of the Assumption, Westport, to Full-time Parochial Vicar at Church of the Assumption, Westport. Effective date is June 30. Father Nguyen will continue to serve as Episcopal Vicar for Vietnamese Catholics.

REVEREND IGNACIO ORTIGAS, Parochial Vicar, Saint Lawrence Parish, Shelton, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Aloysius Parish, New Canaan. Effective date is June 30.

REVEREND RALPH SEGURA, Parochial Vicar, Saint Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish, Norwalk. Effective date is June 30.

REVEREND LUKE SUAREZ, Episcopal Chaplain at Notre Dame High School, Fairfield, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull. Effective date is June 30.

Hospital Chaplain

REVEREND HYGINUS AGU, Assistant Chaplain, Bridgeport Hospital and Resident, Saint Andrew Parish, Bridgeport, to Chaplain, Saint Vincent’s Medical Center, Bridgeport. Effective date was May 31. Father Agu will continue to reside at Saint Andrew Rectory.

REVEREND MATTHEW R. MAURIELLO, to Assistant Chaplain, Stamford Hospital. Effective date is June 30. Father Mauriello will remain Part-time Chaplain to Saint Camillus Center, Stamford and reside at Saint John Parish, Darien.

Retirement

REVEREND ROBERT CROFUT, Parochial Vicar, Saint Pius X Parish, Fairfield to retirement. Effective is July 3. Father Crofut will reside at the Catherine Denis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford.

Residence

REVEREND JOSEPH GILL, Saint Mary Parish, Stamford, to Holy Spirit Parish, Stamford. Effective date is June 30. Father Gill will remain Episcopal Chaplain of Trinity Catholic High School.

REVEREND NELLO A. BARACHINI, Retired, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish, Shelton, to Baroness at Split Rock, Shelton. Effective date was May 5.

Monsignor Thomas W. Powers, Vicar General, June, 2017
June is the month of graduations at every level, from kindergarten to advanced university students. It is always a time to celebrate. For some, the accomplishment is easy and unremarkable. For others, the same graduation from the same school is almost miraculous, where obstacles and reality have called forth incredible courage and stamina. Children of professional people stand next to children of immigrants, some of whom are illiterate.

Parents are proud, but at the ceremony itself, many are grateful if it is brief. Graduation speeches are rarely remembered, many because they are boring at best and tasteless at worst. Some are political rallies, others diatribes against opposing views from those of the speaker’s. This year, a light in the darkness of graduation addresses the Big Man. I take it he means 82—calls this “getting right with the Big Man.”

I thought I could trust you,” he said. “I thought we were friends.” To which the young Richard Gore replied, “Hey, if you’re going to be that way about it.” I believe he may have rolled his eyes for emphasis.

Time passed but the two of them couldn’t reconcile. I tried some shuttle diplomacy. No use. They wouldn’t speak. They wouldn’t even acknowledge each other’s presence.

Again, like a meteor, the inconceivable—Brett was gone. There would be no getting affairs in order. Not for him. Not for his order. Not for his affairs. His dudgeon had been petty; he was too young to go to his father in our small homeschool. His seat-belt stupidity. Maybe I wasn’t as forceful as I should have been. It was thrilling to be around someone so unconcerned for his own safety. I was young, too. Everyone was young. It was years ago.

At the time of his death, Brett owed a small amount of money to another friend. This second friend had lent the money, perhaps inadvisably, because he didn’t know how to refuse the request. Of the English language’s 170,000 words, is any harder to say than “No?” It wasn’t a lot of money. How much can it be when you’re 24? But true to form, Brett failed to pay the loan back in a timely manner. The second friend took it as a personal insult.

“I thought I could trust you,” he said. “I thought we were friends.” To which the young Richard Gore replied, “Hey, if you’re going to be that way about it.” I believe he may have rolled his eyes for emphasis.

Time passed but the two of them couldn’t reconcile. I tried some shuttle diplomacy. No use. They wouldn’t speak. They wouldn’t even acknowledge each other’s presence.

Then, like a meteor, the inconceivable—Brett was gone. There would be no getting affairs in order. Not for him. Not for his friends and family.

Whatever pain and confusion I felt at Brett’s death—and it was considerable—was of a different order from that felt by my second friend, the money lender. There was no use trying to console him. His dudgeon had been petty; he knew it and felt it. He understood that he was headed for a lifetime of regret.

The whole tragic episode was substantially aggravated by the fact that we were all so young. In those days I had almost no experience with death, never mind grief, acceptance, compassion, or true forgiveness. My friends and I were wired to explode. Everything went to eleven, as it does when first you encounter what Joyce called “the reality of experience.”

All these bitter memories came rushing in like rain this week along with the news that Paul Windels had died. A fellow father in our small homeschool co-op, Paul had repeatedly and generously taken the time to play chess with our eight-year-old son, Patrick, when no other partner was to be found.

He made ancient history come alive for a room full of thirteen-year-olds. Our Clara was mesmerized when he’d lapse into Greek or draw ancient battle formations on the board, animately narrating the movements of Caesar’s legions.

My wife had lately been planning to drop him a note of thanks and every day: a smile, a creative act and a kind word, finding a way to love them and to do this in a creative way. Gandhi thought of the person who would find one sandal and knew he needed two sandals. He saw another’s need before worrying about his own loss. Senator Booker’s driver saw the man’s need for socks so he was creative enough to take off his own and give them to him. He saw the person in need and responded.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said that if God knows what he’s doing, heaven has enough room for these very different men: one wild stallion, the other pater familias. In each case our lives touched only briefly, but they haven’t been forgotten. They never will be.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

Keep your bags packed

A Dad’s View

By Matthew Hennessey

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

When you’re sick and you know you’re going to die you do what’s called “putting your affairs in order.” The phrase calls to mind matters of financial. More often, however, the ordering of affairs involves repairing personal relationships and inflating spiritual life rafts.

My dad—still going strong at 82—calls this “getting right with the Big Man.” I take it he means 82—calls this “getting right with the Big Man.”

I’m sorry I can’t help you,” but then his driver, a retired police detective born in Newark, raised in the projects, threw the car in park, kicked off his shoes, pulled off his socks and handed them through the window.

Matthew Hennessey, columnist for Rhode Island Catholic.
Diocesan News

DREs connect young people to the Eucharist

By PRISCILLA MAHAR

Writer and youth minister Kevin Dowd said Millennials are “a generation of brokenness,” who also represent the “the highest population of devout Christians in the past three generations.”

Speaking to more than 100 directors of religious education (DREs) at an end of the year gathering in Queen of Saints Hall at the Catholic Center, Dowd, a Harvard graduate, youth minister and researcher, stressed the importance of connecting today’s generation to the Eucharist.

He said there is a desire in youth for the communion with Jesus and for the Eucharist, and there is a need to nurture their interest beyond simply providing information. He praised the men and women who are responsible for coordinating the religious education of more than 30,000 young people in 82 parishes across the diocese.

Those who are called to spread the word of Jesus at a time when many people are not accepting of the message might often feel “like lambs in the midst of wolves.” Dowd told them that anyone who works in ministry may from time to time feel unworthy to follow in Jesus footsteps and finish his work on earth. Urging them to take heart in the Gospel, he referred to a passage from 2 Corinthians 12:9, “my grace is enough for you,” emphasizing that with the help of the Lord, people can act as Jesus did, even in situations that seem hopeless.

Dowd’s presentation reminded DREs that they are called to do something great, but in this they are not acting alone, but with the grace of God.

Throughout his presentation, Dowd emphasized the importance of not just teaching theology and providing information, but nurturing the spirit of particular individuals.

He said that youth have a desire to serve, and that many volunteer service projects “form good humanitarianists,” but in order to have fully formed Christians, the service must be rooted in the Eucharist.

Quoting Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven will enter,” Dowd said that service shouldn’t be about “resume building or personal gain,” but rather should reflect a genuine concern for others and love for the Lord.

DRE’S YEAR END GATHERING—Catholic writer and speaker Kevin Dowd says that Millennials represent the highest population of devout Christians in three decades.

Celebration honors consecrated life

WESTPORT—Twelve priests concelebrated at the Celebration Mass for Consecrated Life, held on May 16 at St. Luke Parish in Westport. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the principal celebrant and homilist at the Mass.

One hundred and fifty women and men Religious were present for the celebration, representing about 40 orders that serve in the diocese. In his homily, the bishop drew from the Gospel account of Jesus’ visit to the home of Martha and Mary (Lk. 10:38-42). In the narrative, Mary seated herself at the Lord’s feet and listened to his words, while Martha was busy with all the details of hospitality. “The bishop spoke of the balance that has to be struck between the more contemplative life that Mary represents and the active model that Martha gives,” said Sister Nancy Strillacci, ASCJ, the delegate for Religious for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The Mass included a Renewal of Vows, with all Religious standing and asking God to “grant the grace to live our consecration in love and with joy.”

At the end of the Mass, the bishop recognized 21 jubilarians.

The two oldest had each celebrated 75 years of religious life: Sister Amelia Menardi and Sister Marie Anna Moltz, both School Sisters of Notre Dame. The jubilarians were all presented with a framed picture of Christ in the House of Martha and Mary by Polish artist Henrik Siemiradzki during the dinner that followed.

In an unusual addition to the celebration, Bishop Caggiano’s 30th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination was also recognized because it fell on that date.
Priest Profile: Father Eric Silva

‘I’m finally who God made me to be’

By PRICILLA MAHAR

As he approaches the anniversary of his ordination, Father Eric Silva, parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield, says that his first year as a priest has been the best and most beautiful time of his life.

One thing he has particularly enjoyed is the ability to give the New Priest Blessing—which he’ll be able to do until his June 18th anniversary. Priests can give this blessing for up to one year after their ordination.

Three more men from the diocese will receive that privilege on Saturday June 24, when they are ordained as priests by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano at St. Augustine Cathedral.

As seminarians Tim Iannacone, Harry Prieto, and José Abelardo Vásquez prepare for ordination, Father Silva looks back on that important day in his own life and the blessings it has brought him.

“Ordination is not simply a graduation from the seminary, but is meant to give continued blessing for up to one year after their ordination.

Father Silva was ordained May 18, 2017. He grew up in Brookfield and attended St. Joseph High School. After graduation from the seminary, he served as parochial vicar at St. Mary’s Parish in Bridgeport. In August he was transferred to St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield.

Father Silva says he just desires to serve the Church, unless you glorify him first, God can’t be glorified through you.”

In regards to long-term goals, Father Silva says he just desires to give continued blessing for up to one year after their ordination.

The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
The Board of Trustees and the Entire Community of St. Joseph’s Seminary
Congratulates
Rev. Mr. Jose Abelardo Vasquez
Rev. Mr. Tim Iannacone
Rev. Mr. Harry Prieto
on their Ordination to the Priesthood
on June 24, 2017

“and when it comes to the mercy we receive in Confession, sin is just really forgettable.”

Aside from Our Lord and Mother Mary, Father Silva has great devotion for St. Joseph, and not just because Joseph is the patron saint of his parish. “Is there anyone else I should model my life after? St. Joseph is the perfect example of how a priest should live,” he says.

Just as Joseph took care of Mary and the child Jesus, a priest is called to take care of and act as a father for his parish, and Father Silva finds absolute joy in doing just that.
Thoughts of a Catholic Gardener

By BARRY WALLACE

Somehow a garden is not complete without a statue—and it’s interesting to note how many religious statues work their way into local gardens.

I have a statue of St. Francis of Assisi in my front yard. He stands surrounded by a ring of giant hosta beneath our Mountain Ash tree.

Now—I was told that this statue of St. Francis, but he looks suspiciously like a statue of St. Fiocre that a Jesuit friend of mine kept in his own garden. When it comes to Catholic statuary, male saints tend to look alike: bearded, rugged, rustic and gentle, all at the same time.

That’s fine with me. It gives me something to live up to when I put on the gloves and grab the shovel for another season. I’ve always been mindful of God in the garden and in the beauty of our growing season. Working a garden brings me closer to the divine energy that animated the world and still pours into our hearts like sun on a summer day. God is, after all, the light of the world.

I also keep a small Celtic cross in the backyard to keep me company with my weeding and to bless those hot summer days in the shade. The cross is fittingly broken like an ancient Irish grave stone, but in this case it was a gray squirrel that rudely knocked it over while chasing after a hickory nut.

Catholic garden statuary is a lot of fun as well as a sign of our bonds with creation. St. Francis is still the most popular of green saints. He appears with a menagerie of animals. You can find him standing with horses, wolves, birds and rabbits to name a few. The holy man attracted all living things towards him because of his love for God and his recognition of God in all things. His “Canticle of Brother Sun” is one of the most moving and joyful prayers in the Western tradition. In it he thanks God for Brother Sun, Brother Wind, Sister Water, and Mother Earth “who doth sustain us and keep us, and bring forth many fruits and flowers of many colors, and grass.”

St. Francis isn’t alone in his love for God and nature. There are many saints busy tending the fields and keeping their own sacred patch of earth. If you are thinking of becoming a vintner, you might pray to St. Urban, who had a hand for the grapes and a palate to match his talent. Do you think that Jesus’ turning the water into wine may have been one of Urban’s favorite passages? Jesus celebrated the good things of this earth, the fruit of the vine and the work of human hands.

Work is what Catholic saints do. St. Fiocre specializes in herb and vegetable gardens. Santa Barbara is patron saint of geologists, and a good saint to pray to if you have one of those naturally rocky Connecticut yards to contend with. In Catholic statuary, the angels are immediately put to work holding baskets, collecting rain, playing the harp and generally urging on the birds and the bees in the ongoing cycle of life. St. Joseph carves posts for the garden and does any of the carpentry needed. Today he might be put to work with raised beds and arbors for Mary’s dooryard garden.

Somewhat portly monks with Buddha smiles also join the group. Monks have always known their ways around the garden and the kitchen from soups to breads. The ancient traditions of food growing and gathering remain a part of monastic life today. A monk at work in nature is a sign of God at work in us. Of course the same is true for the convent, and I would suspect that the cooking is even better. Hildegard of Bingen is represented holding a potted plant. I carry a small book of her verse with me to read when I rest in the garden.

Let’s also recall that Pope Francis has cheered the hearts of gardeners everywhere with characteristic gestures early in his papacy. On the morning of March 22, 2013, the Pope celebrated a small Mass for the Vatican’s janitors and gardeners in the Domus Sanctae Marthae chapel. The following year he opened the spectacular gardens of the papal summer residence, Castel Gandolfo, to the public.

Of course, even with a papal blessing, the garden needs protection from pests and evil spirits. For this we have the fierce St. Michael the Archangel, a holy warrior against the wiles of Satan, aphids and woodchucks. I do remind myself that God created the woodchucks too.

St. Patrick had no use for snakes in his garden and banished them from Ireland forever. The snake, of course, is a problematic figure in Eden as well as your own backyard.

Nothing is perfect on earth, but with the saints behind us, let’s all have a good year in the garden.

Catholic Cemeteries
Diocese of Bridgeport

Pre-planning your final resting place will give you and your family peace of mind.

Purchasing a crypt in advance affords you the opportunity to have up to two years to pay interest free.

Crypts are available at the following cemeteries:

St. Michael Cemetery
2205 Stratford Avenue
Stratford, Connecticut
203.378.0404

St. John Cemetery
223 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut
203.838.4271

St. Mary — Putnam Cemetery
399 North Street
Greenwich, Connecticut
203.869.4828

By choosing a Catholic Cemetery, one selects a final resting place that reflects the beliefs and values from life’s personal journey. It is a resting place that is sacred and shared with all believers awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the promise of everlasting life.

Make an appointment today!

AACA

FROM PAGE 4

vice chair.

Appeal director Pam Rittman said there are many ways to give to the appeal including online giving and the new “Text to Give” program (text sharing to 50555 during the month of June). Parishioners who work for a company with matching gifts program, can inquire about the program, particularly if their appeal gift is designated for charities and education.

(For more information on programs and ways to give, go to www.2017ACABridgeport.com or phone 203.416.1470.)
Misa Latina, ‘un ejercicio de amor’

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

Celebrar la misa en latín en pleno siglo XXI parecería una práctica caduca, fuera de lugar y fuera de tiempo; sin embar- go, en la Iglesia Santa María (Saint Mary) ubicada en 669 West Avenue en pleno centro de Norwalk, es un recogimiento para sus feligreses participar en esta celebra- ción.

Ante esto el Padre Richard Cipolla, pastor de Saint Mary, y quien se ha acogido en cuerpo y alma a la tradición antigua de impartir la homilía en latín responde: “La misa hay que entenderla como un ejercicio de amor. La misa es acerca de Dios y él debe estar incluido en su totalidad”.

Hace más de una década el Padre Greg Markey, pastor de Saint Mary en ese tiempo, decidió tomar el riesgo de regresar las tradiciones católicas impuestas durante siglos.

Acorde con el Padre Cipolla, “la misa es un ejercicio espiritual para agradar a Dios y por eso es necesario que los fieles sepan que no se trata de un evento social para agradar al sacerdote ni a la feligresía, sino que sea visto como un misterio de fe”; razón suficiente para entender por qué los sacerdotes que ofician las misas tradicionales en latín dan la espalda a sus feligreses con la mirada al Santísimo en señal de que es un momento de sacrificio y conexión con Dios.

El padre admitió que este tema complejo de entender porque la población estadounidense es una sociedad secular con un alto porcentaje que vive con pequeño entendimiento de la fe y muchos que ni siquiera creen en Dios.

El Padre Cipolla nació en el seno de una familia protestante dentro de la iglesia episcopal y se convirtió al catolicismo cuando tenía 35 años de edad. El padre ya tiene 42 años de pertenecer a la iglesia católica. “Practicar la fe de la iglesia católica es un reto”, dijo el Padre Cipolla, quien siendo ministro episcopal decidió tomar la fe católica al entender, por fe, que la verdadera iglesia es la católica porque ésta fue funda-
Obituaries

Msgr. Peter Dora, 76, educator, pastor & chaplain

Msgr. Peter P. Dora died on June 5 at Calvary Hospital, Bronx, N.Y.
A Stamford native, he was born on April 29, 1941, the son of Paul and Rose Kmetz Dora. He attended K.T. Murphy Grammar School, St. Mary School and Stamford High School, and was prepared for the priesthood at St. Thomas Seminary, Bloomfield and St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore, Md.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Walter W. Curtis on May 20, 1967, at St. Augustine Cathedral, Bridgeport.

Always interested in education, after ordination he served as faculty member and spiritual director of Notre Dame Girl’s High School in Bridgeport (now Notre Dame High School); St. Mary High School (now Notre Dame High School in Bridgeport); St. Thomas Aquinas, Fairfield; and St. Michael the Archangel, Greenwich. In 1973, he was named director of religious education for the diocese.

In 1976, Msgr. Dora took a sabbatical to pursue ecumenical studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and at the Woodstock Center at Georgetown University, and he later completed further studies at Fairfield University and at the Monastery of Taize, France.

He was appointed director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs in 1981, a position he held for 10 years.

In 1984, he was named pastor of Saint Benedict Parish in Stamford. In 1990 he was appointed pastor of Holy Name of Jesus in Stamford, where he had started as a part-time parochial vicar after his ordination. In 2003, he became the pastor of St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull, a position he held until 2006, when he took the post of chaplain at Stamford Hospital with residence at St. Clement Parish in Stamford.

“Msgr. Dora was also a diocesan consultant, president of the Board of Directors Catholic School System for Region VI, and was on the Clergy Personnel Committee and the Priests’ Council. He was named Chaplain to His Holiness by Pope John Paul II in 1991, with the title of Monsignor. Msgr. Dora lived in retirement at Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Msgr. Dora at St. Bridge Church, Stamford, on June 9. Burial followed at St. John Cemetery.

Msgr. Dora is mourned by his older sister, Sister Patricia Dora, CSJ, of Hartford, his twin sister, Mary Rose Patton and her husband, Dwight, and by his nieces and nephews.

(In lieu of flowers, donations in Msgr. Dora’s memory may be made to the Congregation of St. Joseph, 650 Willard Avenue, Newton, CT 06111, and the Expansion Fund of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Retirement Priests’ Residence, 274 Strawberry Hill Ave., Stamford, CT 06902.)

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DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT JUNE 18—JULY 22

JUNE
Msgr. Frank Wissel……………………………………2014
20 Msgr. John J. Bumstead……………………………………1996
21 Rev. Albert D. Talbot……………………………………1962
22 Rev. Xavier Renda……………………………………2009
24 Rev. Franklin J. Corrigan……………………………………1974
25 Msgr. William A. Genaro……………………………………2015
27 Rev. J. Barry Furey……………………………………2012
28 Rev. John J. Draper……………………………………1966
30 Rev. Arthur E. Notton……………………………………2004
31 Msgr. Thomas P. Mooney……………………………………1956
30 Msgr. John E. Tomis……………………………………1986

JULY
1 Rev. Anthony J. Intagliata……………………………………1990
2 Rev. Alfred J. Carmody……………………………………1958
5 Msgr. John J. Hayes……………………………………1964
6 Msgr. Philip N. Salmone……………………………………1967
8 Rev. James J. Kane……………………………………1956
9 Rev. Sean F. Flynn……………………………………1978
10 Rev. Edward F. Doyle……………………………………1981
12 Rev. Edwin Coyne……………………………………2013
13 Msgr. James P. Devine……………………………………1972
17 Rev. A. Fred Constantinou……………………………………1980
18 Msgr. Walter R. Conroy……………………………………1997
21 Rev. Robert Terentieff……………………………………2011
19 Msgr. Bartholomew J. Langan……………………………………2004
20 Rev. John M. Conlisk……………………………………1990
21 Rev. Peter DeMarco……………………………………2015
22 Rev. Kevin P. Fitzpatrick……………………………………2008
23 Rev. Chester Kiza, O.F.M.……………………………………2003
19 Msgr. John J. Wigh……………………………………1995
21 Rev. David H. Krahel……………………………………2008
22 Msgr. Nicholas P. Coleman, P.A.……………………………………1963
For Mitchell, reading leads to Super Bowl ring

By DON HARRISON

Malcolm Mitchell is an engaging 23-year-old wide receiver who catches passes for the Super Bowl-champion New England Patriots, but he spoke about another of his passions—reading—during his visit to Bridgeport on May 17.

“Football, that came natural,” he said. “I had to work to read.”

Mitchell was the featured speaker at the School Volunteer Association of Bridgeport’s 50th anniversary breakfast at the downtown Holiday Inn. Some 300 people paid $75 per plate to support the School Volunteer Association and to hear Mitchell impart some of life’s lessons.

“He was the perfect person to talk about reading. It’s what we’re all about,” said Anne Gribbon, the School Volunteer Association’s executive director.

Mitchell, an NFL rookie with the Patriots last season, admitted that upon entering the University of Georgia on a football scholarship, he “could only read at a junior high level.”

The lone book in his Valdosta, Georgia, home was the Bible.

A chance meeting with a middle-aged woman at a Barnes & Noble led to his joining her book club, “Even though,” he noted, “we were of a different gender and ethnicity.” They clicked.

“we were of a different gender and ethnicity.” They clicked.

Mitchell read his book aloud, and then each student was presented a copy.

“Ten years ago, I was in your shoes,” Mitchell said Dunbar Principal Alyshia Perrin. “I didn’t like school. Skipped class. Especially if I had to read aloud in front of everyone,” he said Dunbar Principal Alyshia Perrin. “I didn’t like school. Skipped class. Especially if I had to read aloud in front of everyone,” he said. “I had to work to read.”

Mitchell read his book aloud, and then each student was presented a copy.

“After that, he met with adults from greater Bridgeport to talk about reading. It’s what we’re all about,” said Anne Gribbon, the School Volunteer Association’s executive director.

Mitchell was the featured speaker at the School Volunteer Association of Bridgeport’s 50th anniversary breakfast at its 50th anniversary breakfast (r). Malcolm Mitchell shared his story of overcoming his reading difficulties with students at Dunbar School following the School Volunteer Association breakfast. All students received a copy of his children’s book, “The Magician’s Hat.”

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“They come! The merry months of beauty, song, and flowers. They come! The gladsome months.” (William Motherwell, “The Merry Summer Months”)

A new summer has begun. We have the gift of another summer, when life is at the apex. For me, it is in summer when one really lives. It is the season when life is easier. For one whose professional life revolved around the academic calendar, summer still carries a sense of escape.

From childhood on, summer and I have been best friends—long have I loved it. Most of the good memories of my childhood are memories of summer. I look back happily upon summer which gave me sea and sand, picnics, sarsaparilla and cream soda, baseball time and fishing time, ice cream trucks jingling through the neighborhood and nothing seemed more important than the best choice of ice cream.

The summers of childhood seemed endless. There was the feeling that summer would never end, that such days had come forever. What child, while summer is happening, bothers to think that summer will end? The magic of summer may be something best seen by a child.

When I think of summer now, I think in images: the beach, blooming gardens, paperbacks stained by suntan lotion, the whir of a lawnmower, the sound of children’s jump-rope chorus on a summer evening, sweet-smelling rain. I love the long, soft evenings when it is still light long after supper. The day seems to go on and on. Color quiets down and gradually the air takes on a violet tinge. And there is summer’s mellow midnight.

There are those matchless summer mornings when the air streams with the pulse of life. And as Keats said, “what is more gentle than a wind in summer?” (“Sleep and Poetry”). “Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language” (Henry James). There is the tranquil silence of a summer afternoon; the silence is quite startling. Nothing moves, nothing dares to move. Everything is absolutely still. There is not a breath of wind and there are the magnificent cumulus clouds in the summer sky.

Midsummer brings thunderstorms to New England, and they have a grandeur which is awesome.

“The God of glory thunders, Extol Him Who rides on the clouds. The Lord thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful…” (Psalm 29)

“I love the long, soft evenings when it is still light long after supper. The day seems to go on and on.” (Psalm 29)

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: maggieclaire5@gmail.com
Or visit my website: www.kidneyforpeggy.com
Or call: 1.866.925.3897 – Yale
1.212.746.3723 – NY Presbyterian
I feel pretty good about myself after reading that the average American wastes 13,471 hours a year fiddling with the remote control, trying to discover we don’t own a TV. Try doing something productive. Such as shopping on Amazon, arguing with service salespeople still show up at our door and gasp when they discover we don’t own a TV.

They think we’re eccentric and even worse, un-American. Which is probably true.

Save your family. Turn off your TV. Try doing something radical … and pray together. If you don’t protect your children and yourselves from the destructive influence of television, it will seep into your lives, and soon things you were convinced were immoral will seem acceptable and fashionable. But by then, it will be too late.

Follow the Pope’s example. Switch off the TV.

Breaking free of TV prison

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

Joe Pisani

By Joe Pisani

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

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Bits and Pieces

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY is on a recess for the months of July and August. For more info, contact John Juhase: 203.762.3661 or juhaszjw@optonline.net.

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

FAMILY SUMMER RETREAT, a vacation to grow closer as a family will be held the week of July 2-7, at the Miramar Retreat Center, Duxbury, Mass. The goal of the retreat is to bring families closer to God and one another through fun, prayer, communication and affirmation. For more info, contact Deacon John or Peggy: 845.621.7000 or StarofSeaRetreat@gmail.com, or visit www.catholicfamilyretreats.com.

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

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

BASKETBALL CAMP for boys and girls in grades 1 thru 9 will be held on the campus of St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton, the weeks of July 10-14 and 17-21 in conjunction with Dribble Drive Basketball. For more info, contact Dennis Kelly: 203.668.9370 or dribbledrivebasketball@gmail.com. For details, check out dribbledrivebasketball.net.

HOLY HOUR: Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury will gather on Tues., July 11, at 6:45 pm for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish, 46 Stone St., Danbury, followed by a social. This event is open to all ages. For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

CARNIVAL OF FUN at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Riverside, will take place Tues.-Sat., July 11-15, from 6-11 pm. Great food, rides, games, raffles. Live entertainment nightly; dining under the big tent. Bracelets every night. For info, go to www.stcath.org or call 203.637.3661.

SUMMER BOOK CLUB: offered for five Thurs., July 13 thru August 10, from 10-11 am in St. James Parish Center, Stratford. The selection is “Ooning,” a collection of sixteen essays about ongoing conversion. Authors include Paula D’Arcy, Richard Rohr and Cynthia Bourgeault. For more info or to register, contact the parish: 203.375.5887.

“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., July 15, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass with Mgr. Ernest Esposito. There will be a social and meeting after Mass. There will be no meeting in August. Next meeting will be Sat., Sept. 16, same time and place. For more info, call Pat Helle, OPS: 203.255.8801 or phele15715@aol.com.

PROJECT RACHEL: Are you or someone you know hurting from a past abortion experience? There is help and hope. Project Rachel is offering an

Entering Canaan Day of Prayer and Healing on Sat., July 15, for women who are suffering from a past abortion. For more info or a confidential registration, contact us: 203.416.1619 or projectrachel@diobpt.org.

S'MORES AND STARS: Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35), will gather on Fri., July 21, at St. Ann Parish, 181 Clapboard Ridge Rd., Danbury. Join other young adults to watch the stars and to enjoy some Yummy S’mores over a fire pit! For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

WEEK OF DIRECTED PRAYER will be offered July 29-August 5, at St. James Parish, Stratford. Make a retreat with-
end of Sept. 9 & 10 at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA! Be renewed in your faith with inspirational talks by your favorite EWTN hosts as well as opportunities for Holy Mass, Confession and Adoration. For more info, go to www.ewtn.com/familycelebration.


BEREAVEMENT Support Group will meet at St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, for a series of 10 weekly meetings with experienced counselors beginning Thurs., Sept. 14, from 4:30-5 pm. Registration needed. For more info or to register, call the parish: 203.268.6217.

KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA Council 141, which meets at St. George Parish in Bridgeport, will resume its monthly meetings on Sun., Sept. 17, with Mass at 12 noon and meeting following. For more info, call 203.878.0519.

MOMs+DADs prayer/support group for those with Down syndrome, their family and friends will not meet during the summer. The group meets the third Thurs. of every month starting Thurs., Sept. 21, at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk. For more info, contact strapostolate@optimum.net.


50th REUNION for Notre Dame High School Class of 1967 (Boys and Girls), will be held the weekend of Oct. 27-29. For more info, contact Notre Dame’s Alumni Office: tmaznik@notredame.org.


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

COURAGE apostolate provides pastoral care and support for men and women who experience same-sex attractions and want to live chaste lives. Confidential meetings are held weekly. For more info call 203.803.1564 or email Courage@diobpt.org.

MASS CARDS are available from the diocesan Mission Office for all intentions. The donations support missionaries throughout the world. If you are interested in purchasing a Mass card, call Elaine Bissenden in the Mission Office: 203.416.1447.
“They’re on the cutting edge of medical technology with an amazingly caring and compassionate staff. Over the years, over the decades, St. Vincent’s has always been there for me. And it’s good to know they always will be.”

TOM
Monroe, CT
Pre-kindergarten students of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School are moving upwards to the wider school world. The proud women in the Caroline House ESL program have mastered the complexity of the English language. At every level, graduation is a time for celebration.

In this issue, Fairfield County Catholic recognizes the top scholars of diocesan and private Catholic high schools. While we focus on these students, we offer congratulations to all graduates, whatever their age and achievements. You earned it.

**Immaculate, Danbury**
Immaculate High School graduated 89 seniors on May 31 at Western Connecticut State University’s O’Neill Center in Danbury. This year, Immaculate had an enrollment of 471 students. The graduating class was offered over $19 million in grants, scholarships and awards.

Valedictorian Nicole Bao DiMauro earned the 2016 Governor’s Scholar Award and is a National Merit Scholarship finalist. An AP Scholar, she was a member of the National Honor Society and the Drama Club. The senior captain of the varsity tennis team, she volunteered with the Mustang All-Sports Club at Immaculate. She founded a club, Hearts Around the World, to support medical programs in poor countries; has performed in school drama plays; and received Immaculate’s President’s Volunteer Service Award. At her home parish of St. Gregory the Great in Danbury, she was not only a member of the youth group and a volunteer at the parish’s Vacation Bible School—Nicole became a member of the Synod Task Force at St. Gregory’s.

She will attend Northeastern University in Boston, Mass., this fall, where she plans to major in bioengineering.

Martha Haddad, Immaculate’s salutatorian, has been garnering science awards since middle school. She holds awards from the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair; I-SWEEP International Science Competition; GENIUS Olympiad International Science Competition; and the Society of Women Engineers Award for Excellence in Math & Natural Sciences.

A Key Club member, she was in the National Honor Society and was editor of the Newspaper Club. She was a youth group member and religious education teacher at St. Ann Parish in Danbury, and was an officer in the National Association for Melkite Youth.

Martha will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston, where she will major in chemical-biological engineering.

“We are very proud of all our graduating seniors. They are prepared to be leaders of change, leaders of the future,” said Mary Maloney, president of Immaculate High School.

“Nicole is well deserving of this distinction as valedictorian of the Class of 2017. In addition to maintaining a GPA average of 4.81, Nicole is diligent, respectful, kind and faith-filled and has a natural curiosity. Martha is an AP Scholar with Honor, a member of the Math League, is a student ambassador, and has been recognized in a number of music competitions. She excels in all that she does.”

**Kolbe Cathedral, Bridgeport**
Kolbe Cathedral High School held graduation for its 75 seniors in St. Augustine Cathedral on June 1. One hundred percent of
Vals and Sals

the graduates were accepted into college, and the graduation class earned $12.1 million in scholarships. The school’s total enrollment is 304 students. Kolbe’s valedictorian is Christopher Lopez, a graduate of the Catholic Academy from the St. Raphael and St. Augustine Academies. He has been at the top of his class throughout all four years, attaining honors and taking the most challenging classes offered, including AP classes. Christopher also challenged himself by taking college courses at Housatonic Community College. He has been a peer tutor and an ambassador for the school.

Salutatorian Destiny Mclellan is a graduate of High Horizons. Destiny has excelled academically throughout her four years of high school. She further challenged herself by taking college courses at Housatonic Community College and Monroe College in New Rochelle, N.Y., with which Kolbe has a partnership for students to enroll for free college courses on Saturdays. Destiny is a member of the National and Spanish Honor Societies. In addition to excelling academically, Destiny has been involved in the community. She has been a member of SADD, a peer leader and tutor. Destiny also helped form a writing club at Kolbe Cathedral, where students can receive academic support or explore creative writing projects.

“Both of these students exemplify our ‘Work Hard and be Nice’ motto,” says Principal Jo-Anne Jakab. “In addition, they are caring, compassionate and humble. While maintaining top honors throughout high school, both have demonstrated concern for others, reaching out to tutor others and providing encouragement and support. They fulfill the school’s mission to empower our learning community with knowledge, skills and Gospel values.”

Notre Dame, Fairfield

Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield held its 57th graduation ceremony the evening of June 2. The Class of 2017 is comprised of 113 graduates, representing 21 cities and towns, as well as Spain, China and Brazil. Notre Dame has a total enrollment of 501 students.

Olivia Keden of Easton has been named the valedictorian of the Class of 2017. She is a member of St. Nicholas Church in Bridgeport. Olivia’s resume includes participation in the Key, Spanish and Care Clubs, Campus Ministry and both the National and Spanish Honor Societies.

Celine has served as president of the National Honor Society and vice president of the Spanish Honor Society, in addition to her leadership in the Spanish Club. Celine will be attending Sacred Heart University in the fall, where she plans to double major in accounting and finance.

“Celine has worked very hard in and out of the classroom since her first day at Notre Dame,” said Principal Cipriano. “She has a tremendous work ethic and will undoubtedly be extremely successful in college.”

St. Joseph, Trumbull

St. Joseph High School graduated 183 students on June 3 at Dalling Field on the school’s campus. Trumbull First
Fairfield University
Annual Economic Impact in Fairfield County
Over $1 Billion

$604 million
TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY
Direct spending is defined as the amount of money spent directly by the university, university employees, students, and visitors.

- $50 million Direct Spending by Employees
- $58 million University Purchases
- $44 million Direct Spending by Students
- $15 million Direct Spending by Visitors
- $437 million Capital Spending (5 year average)

$407 million
INDUCED SPENDING IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY
The induced economic impact is the additional employment and expenditures of local industries that result because of direct spending.

19,336
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY ALUMNI call Connecticut “home”

7,348
JOBS CREATED by Fairfield University bringing opportunity to the region

The total economic impact of Fairfield University in 2014 was measured in terms of the direct and induced economic impact of its activity in the state and region.

Prepared by: The Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Source: Connecticut Independent College and University Institute for Research and Public Service, Inc., 2016 Economic Impact Study
Selectman Timothy Herbst was in attendance.

Valedictorian Erin Egan Welch is a member of the State Student Advisory Council on Education and represents St. Joe’s on the Trumbull Business Education Initiative Board. She is a member of the International Thespian Honor Society and has played in productions of the SJ Drama Club. An AP Scholar with Honor, she belongs to the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, English Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. A parishioner at St. Stephen Parish in Trumbull, Erin has been president of the St. Joe’s Irish Club for the past two years and was named Miss Shamrock 2017 for the Greater Bridgeport Saint Patrick’s Day Parade. Erin also volunteered with the Special Olympics golf program and is a Trumbull United Top Soccer buddy.

Erin has enrolled in the Honors Program at Boston College where she will major in Biology and pursue a career in Neuroscience.

Salutatorian Grace Jennifer Scully is a member of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Shelton. She is a member of the Spanish Honor Society, treasurer of the National English Honor Society, co-president of the Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society and a member of the National Honor Society. Grace is an AP Scholar with Honor and was co-captain of the Girls Varsity Swim Team. She has worked in the writing center and as a math tutor, is a Student Ambassador, a member of the Special Olympics swim and golf programs and a participant in the Midnight Run to NYC. Grace volunteered as a swim instructor at the Valley YMCA in Ansonia and became a member of their Membership & Marketing Committee as the “teenage voice.”

Grace is a recipient of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Award from Fairfield University School of Engineering and Sikorsky Aircraft. She will attend the University of Connecticut this fall as a member of the Honors program, receiving the Presidential Scholarship Award.

“Erin Welch and Grace Scully represent the best of the very best of St. Joseph High School. Not only are they each academic stand-outs, but their leadership and involvement in our vibrant community has been extraordinary,” said Dr. James Keane, St. Joseph’s principal.

Trinity, Stamford
In one of the most challenging classes in many years, Trinity Catholic High School is proud to announce that they have two valedictorians and two salutatorians for the Class of 2017.

Graduation for the 121 members of the Class of ’17 was held on June 3. The school had a total of 421 students this year.

Shannon Daine and Stephen Caponetti are co-valedictorians of the Trinity Catholic High School Class of 2017.

Shannon Daine, a member of St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Greenwich, was on the Trinity Catholic Diving Team for four years.
vals and sals

years and was named the CT Class S State Diving Champion during her sophomore and junior years, the all–FCIAC Diving Team for four years and the All-State Diving Team for three years. An active member of the Business Club and the National Honor Society, she received the CAS/CIAC Scholar Athlete Award, the Smith College Book Award and earned the FCIAC Scholar Athlete Award four years in a row. Shannon spent hours throughout high school volunteering at Kids in Crisis.

Shannon will be attending Villanova University in Pennsylvania where she will pursue a degree in political science. She hopes to become a lawyer.

Stephen Caponetti, a member of St. Cecilia Parish in Stamford, is a National Honor Society Member, was a four-year member of the Varsity Soccer Team where he served two years as captain. In addition, he played lacrosse for three years and has played in the Stamford Youth Soccer League.

Stephen held lead roles in school dramas and musicals as a member of the Crusader Players Group and served as a Student Ambassador. He has received the FCASSP Scholar Leader Award, the Halo Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actor, the Excellence in Math and Physical Education awards, FCIAC Scholar Athlete, Joseph F Carrigan Integrity Award and the Mickey Lione Jr. Award for Youth Excellence. He was named to the Stamford Magazine Top Ten Teens to Watch.

Stephen plans to major in chemical and bio-molecular engineering at the University of Maryland. He hopes to pursue a career as a pharmaceutical scientist.

The 2017 co-salutarians of Trinity Catholic are Rachel Nelson and Johanna Ruzzi.

Rachel Nelson is a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Stamford. Rachel is a National Honor Society Member and a Tri-M Honor Society Member. A FCIAC Scholar Athlete, she has served as a Student Ambassador, belonged to the Multi-Cultural Club and was a Varsity cheerleader. She volunteers as a coach with the Stamford Youth Foundation and also has volunteered at the Stamford Museum and Nature Center as well as the Maritime

> continued on page 30
** vals and sals from page 29**

Akvarium. She is an All-Star cheerleader at Gold Coast All Stars, where her team is nationally ranked in the top ten. This fall, Rachel will be attending the University of South Carolina.

Johanna Ruzzi is a member of the National Honor Society, has served as a Student Ambassador, Drama Club stage manager, Multi-cultural Club coordinator and Student Council delegate. A member of St. Leo Parish in Stamford, she was president of the Teenage Peaceworks Club, as well as Campus Ministry and Student Council, and has volunteered at the Catholic Heart Work Camp Mission, Voices against Brain Cancer and Crusaders for Life. She acted as chair for Red Cross blood drives, and was a member of the Yearbook Club, Animal Outreach Club, Ears for Years and the Outdoor Club.

Johanna was accepted early decision at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.

““These students have served as role models and ambassadors of Trinity Catholic High School,” says Principal Dave Williams. “We are so proud of them and wish them continued success.”

**Private High Schools**

In addition to diocesan schools, students from Fairfield County are among the top scholars in private Catholic schools in this area. We are pleased to recognize their academic excellence.

**Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich**

The 74 members of the Class of 2017 held graduation ceremonies held on June 2. Sacred Heart Greenwich has an enrollment of 731, which includes students from age three in its early childhood center through grade 12 in the Upper School.

Valedictorian Ava Vanech of Greenwich was co-editor-in-chief of Sacred Heart’s literary magazine Perspectives, a co-captain on the Speech and Debate team, and a singer in the Madrighals choir. She competed on the track and field team and served as a Eucharistic Minister. Ava, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenwich, started a community service organization called the Alzheimer’s Youth Alliance. She has received the Rensselaer Medal Award for Achievement in Mathematics and Science, was named an AP Scholar with Honor, and received the Alzheimer’s Association Women’s Champion Distinction.

Ava worked with premedical studies undergraduates and medical school students at the Yale School of Medicine over the summer of 2016 and completed research on Childhood Absence Epilepsy. She was awarded a Regeneron Science Talent Search Research Report Badge for the paper she wrote on her summer research.

Ava will attend Yale University this fall, where she will major in molecular, cellular, and developmental biology.

CHS has co-salutatorians this year, Jade Cohen of Greenwich and Kathleen Danahy of Yorktown Heights, N.Y.

St. Michael's Parish is proud to be home to another of Sacred Heart’s top scholars: Jade Cohen. At Sacred Heart, Jade served as secretary of the Barat Foundation, an organization that allocates grants focused on aiding children. In addition, she was content and opinions editor of the school’s newspaper. She was a speech captain for the Speech and Debate team, secretary of her class, and a member of the Admissions Committee and Future Alumnae Association.

Jade was a member of the cross-country, swim, lacrosse, and field hockey teams.

She shadowed a cardiologist at the New York University Langone Medical Center Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, during which she realized biomedical engineering is the ideal application of her interests in math and science.

Jade will attend Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. Co-salutatorian Kathleen Danahy, a parishioner at St. Patrick Parish in Yorktown Heights, N.Y., has served as a student ambassador, was named an AP Scholar with Honor, and was a leader in the Future Alumnae Association.

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL, GREENWICH

Co-salutatorians Jade Cohen and Kathleen Danahy, co-salutatorians

**FAIRFIELD PREP HIGH SCHOOL, FAIRFIELD**

**Scholars Kevin Gallagher and Brendan Flynn**

Eucharistic minister at CSH, has been involved with the Big and Little Sister and Peer Leadership programs, and started an Upper School club to raise awareness for Lyme Disease. She was named a National Merit Commended Student and induct-
Vals and Sals

LAURALTON HALL, MILFORD — Rachelle Ambroise, valedictorian and Lauren Ambroise, salutatorian

June 2017

Stamford was a Summa Schola for the Archdiocese of Hartford and a National Merit Semifinalist, and has taken both gold and silver awards in the National Latin Exam. A member of the Debate Team and involved in Youth and Government, she was part of the Healing Shawls Knitters. Olivia took a Yale summer program in astrophysics and earned the Yale Book Award.

Olivia will attend the University of Notre Dame in Indiana this fall, majoring in business analytics.

Laurentian Hall is proud to announce that Hope Hottois, a parishioner at St. Jude Parish in Monroe, has received the Catherine McAuley Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a graduating senior. This award is presented to the senior who has demonstrated a commitment to living the Gospel and Mercy values as a Christian woman and who responds to others with compassion, courage and genuine grace.

Dr. Antoinette Iadarola, president and Head of School, told graduates that, “You, in small way, will participate in remaking our world so that it is stronger, smarter, and more just.” On a personal note, Dr. Iadarola added, “This Class of 2017 will always have a special place in my heart because your last year at Lauralton is my last year as president.”

Sacred Heart Academy, Hamden

Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden graduated 117 young women on May 27. The Class of 2017 is proud to have received more than $20 million in academic, merit, and community service scholarships and grants, and one hundred percent of the class has embraced the spirit of service through 15,000 hours of community outreach. This year, Sacred Heart Academy welcomed 500 students in grades 9-12 from more than 80 schools and 60 towns in Connecticut.

Elizabeth Lamont of Hamden

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32
EXPLORING CAREER POSSIBILITIES and the paths to make them possible was the aim of the Catholic Academy Career Day. Season Jamison-Colley, organizational project manager at UCONN School of Social Services, was one of the day’s speakers. 

stories. “My favorite speaker was the Broadway actor,” says one seventh grader from St. Andrew Academy. “She really taught me that even if you fail or don’t get the job, you keep on trying.”

Her classmate was impressed by Atty. Reid’s account. “I liked the way she explained her difficult journey to success.”

And, of course, Officer Lariccia was a hit with the seventh grade boys, and provided the most interesting reaction of the day: “The Squat team police officer was interesting because I found his job very exciting and cool!”

“We want them to start thinking about where they are in the big picture of life,” says Principal Boccanfuso. “Maybe next year we can take them for a visit to the courthouse or one of the other locations where our speakers work, and give them the opportunity to further explore some career possibilities.”

The day ended with a wrap up and pizza for all.

Vals and Sals from page 31
Foundation in Education

Bidding up the giving for Catholic education

BY BRIAN D. WALLACE

There was an excitement in the room at Woodway Country Club in Darien at the second Foundations in Education Spring Gala on May 11, which drew business and education leaders throughout Fairfield County.

The event lived up to its billing in an evening filled with high spirits, generous giving and a strong commitment to Catholic education. More than 250 attended the gala, which included live and silent auctions while focusing on the transformative power of Catholic schools to change lives and lead to better futures for young people.

When the bidding was finished, the event had raised over $800,000, according to Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director of Foundations in Education (FIE), which manages the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund and other programs for innovation and investment in diocesan Catholic schools.

Many of the guests were alumni of Catholic schools, including recent graduates and those who remember the “golden era” of the schools in the 1950s. CNBC economics commentator Larry Kudlow started the ball rolling as master of ceremonies when he said that Catholic schools not only produce great names when he said that Catholic schools in the 1950s.

He said he was very grateful to return to Stamford Catholic, when his father died suddenly and his mother did not have the means to continue paying the tuition. As he reluctantly prepared to transfer from the school, he was told that he had received a scholarship.

“The scholarship was a life-changing event for me. I don’t know how I got it and what someone saw in me. Being able to return to Stamford Catholic was a gift to me. Remember, what you do tonight will change lives.”

Pavia said anything good Langdegger described Catholic elementary and high schools as “a highway to college,” particularly for families struggling with economic challenges.

He also praised Bishop Caggiano for his leadership in building support for Catholic schools and creating a new era in Catholic education. “We have been truly blessed to have the bishop in our midst. It has been my privilege to help and I thank you for the honor.”

Sister Joan Magnetti, executive director of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, offered a brief and spirited acceptance by thanking donors and encouraging continued generosity. “It’s really important in life what you show up for,” she said, thanking all those in attendance.

The education leader with over 30 years experience recalled that her mother often said, “Remember Joan, we all need help getting out of the womb.”

“Just 20 minutes from here is a different world,” Sister Magnetti said, referring to the children served by the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. “We have 921 students on four campuses. They need to feel the face of God and heart of Christ in their lives.”

Student speaker Joshua Alexandrinio, a seventh grader at All Saints School in Norwalk, brought the house down with his poised acceptance speech and a rendition of “I don’t need anything but you,” which he reprised from his role in “Annie,” the school play performed earlier in the year.

He said he was very grateful for the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, which has given him the opportunity to attend a Catholic school.

After dinner, the bidding started with Cardinal Shehan Center executive Terry O’Connor serving as auctioneer. Guests bid on a wide range of items, from a reservation at Rao’s restaurant in New York City to breakfast for 20 with Bishop Caggiano.

Hands and ballots continued to fly up with high bids to show strong support for Catholic schools. The final “Leaders of Tomorrow” auction bolstered proceeds with scores of donors raising hands to provide full and partial scholarships at the schools.

The mission of Foundations in Education is to support the Catholic schools of the diocese through scholarships and professional development grants in innovation and transformational leadership.

In the past year alone, the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund awarded nearly $2.3 million in aid to more than 1,240 students at diocesan elementary schools. Barbara and Peter Ripp served as chairs of the Gala Committee. Tom McInerney served as sponsor chair.

(For more information, call Holly Doherty-Lemoine: 203.416.1400 or go to www.foundationsineducation.org.)

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Congratulations to the Class of 2017 who were offered more than $19 million in Scholarships, Grants & Awards.

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State Science Winners

Young scientists take home honors

By PAT HENNESSY

Students from 10 diocesan schools excelled again this year at the Connecticut Science & Engineering Fair, seven at the middle school level and three from diocesan high schools. CSEF is a yearly, statewide fair open to all seventh through twelfth grade students in Connecticut schools and nearby areas of New York.

Through CSEF, students are encouraged to pursue independent work using proper research methods. More than 15,000 students compete for the 600 spaces at the state fair. Prizes are awarded in two divisions: Life Science and Physical Science.

Greenwich Catholic School was excited to learn that seventh grader Patrick McHugh won first place in Physical Science. In a project that may have long-term effects on energy usage, Patrick’s project, “Mass Maglev Manufacturing,” focused on the use of magnets to increase efficiency in powering wind turbines. In addition to the state award, Patrick was a finalist in the Energize CT/eesmarts Alternative/Renewable Energy awards.

Greenwich Catholic picked up three other awards in Physical and Life Science.

The St. Aloysius School team of Kaloyan Dimitrov, Andrew Tully and Alex Lanzillotti won first place for seventh grade teams. Their project, called “Mars Exploration,” swept several awards, including a Physical Sciences award from PepsiCo, an Excellence in Engineering award from UTC Aerospace Systems, and a first place from the International Society of Automation.

The students created and modified a rover using a Lego EV3, and tested it on various terrains similar to those found on Mars, which they replicated using rocks, sand and asphalt. By adding color, ultrasonic and touch sensors, their rover demonstrated the ability to detect obstacles and change its path. Further modifications included varying the wheel type and incorporating a forklift to assess carrying capacity. The students demonstrated the rover’s speed, wheel effectiveness and efficiency of the sensors based on different scenarios. Their project incorporated engineering, coding and automation, which are key components of STEM education.

In addition to their seventh-grade win, the team won first place overall for all middle school grades at the CSEF, and have been invited to compete in the Broadcom MASTERS, a national competition held in September in Washington, D.C.

The St. Aloysius eighth grade team earned second place in Physical Science for “the Future of Filtration.”

Two Danbury schools, St. Joseph and St. Gregory the Great, can claim the greatest number of young scientists, each garnering a total of eight winning projects. Two students from St. Joseph took home trophies, seventh grader Bronwyn Hyland in Physical Science and the eighth grade team of Matthew Riggs and Steven Soto in Life Science. St. Gregory’s seventh grader Anna Flaherty earned a trophy in Physical Science and an invitation to Broadcom in September.

St. Mark School in Stratford can claim six winners, with a trophy for seventh grader Kaitlyn Szczepanski in Life Sciences for “Watts’ the Efficiency of Solar Cells?” She also earned a UTC Aerospace Systems award for Excellence in Engineering and an invitation to Compete in Broadcom MASTERS.

St. Mary School in Bethel had seven winners; St. Rose of Lima claimed three, with first place awards going to two seventh graders, Gregory Gargano in Life Science and Irena Komminakas in Physical Science. St. Joseph School in Shelton had four finalists and St. Jude in Monroe brought home two.

Diocesan high school students garnered their own collection of trophies. St. Joseph’s in Trumbull had three winning projects, including two teams of firsts: Cheng Chang and Hao Zang in Life Science and Abigail Cloud and Anna Argulain in Physical Science. Notre Dame and Immaculate came home with an award each, in the Life Science and Physical Science divisions respectively. Among the private Catholic high schools, Sacred Heart Academy gained six wins, including one first place for Eunji Lee of Trumbull; and Fairfield Prep students took home four, with a first going to Jonathan Siwey from Monroe.

The participants in the Connecticut Science and Engineering fair are already budding scientists, having out-researched over a thousand competitors to bring their projects to the competition. In the years ahead, they will be researching, planning and exploring ways to make our world better.
**Little Flower Club puts virtue into action**

By PAT HENNESSY

“Oooh! Look at these tiny shoes!”

“The socks, too, they’re so cute.”

“The moms are going to love these.”

The fifth grade girls at the St. Therese Little Flower Club at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield are filling baskets of baby items for pregnant young women assisted by Birthright in Norwalk. All year long, the girls have been studying saints, Scripture and virtues, and have been learning ways to put their faith into action.

“The Little Flowers Club is about service and virtues for humanity,” says Dawn Marie Carpanzano, founder and co-leader with Rebecca Santoli. The girls study one virtue a month. The virtues are connected to a Scripture reading, a saint and a flower representing the virtue that saint is most noted for. “There’s time for discussion about that virtue and the way to apply it in their own lives. That’s the time the girls enjoy most,” Carpanzano says.

A craft time allows girls to each construct a flower for the month’s virtue and add it to a wreath. The club began meeting in October. By the final meeting in June, each girl has a wreath of flowers to bring home as a reminder of the virtues they have studied.

“The girls are quick to chime in with their favorite flowers. “Ivy is a symbol of St. Therese, because she would cling to hope,” says Georgia Rollins. “We chose her as a model so that we can cling to the hope that we can make the world a better place.”

“The sunflower represents St. Katherine Drexel, because she always faced God even when it was hard,” adds Maeve O’Donnell.

“St. Mary Frances Chantal is the rose, symbolizing love of neighbor, because she was kind to the people around her,” says Noel Carpanzano, Dawn Marie’s daughter.

Throughout the year, as the girls studied saints and their virtues, they talked about ways to put them into practice. In January, the month of the Respect Life March in Washington, D.C., the girls ran a bake sale to assist the pregnant moms who turned to Birthright for help. Not content with simply giving a check, they have also collected diapers and baby items, which they are now, with great enthusiasm, assembling into baskets. The girls are making cards to go along with the baskets and their collected funds, and praying for the expectant mothers.

“We want to give them the little things that make a difference in life,” explains Julia Ortiz. “St. Therese tried to do ‘little things with great love.’ Love is not a noun—it’s a verb.”

Amy O’Shea, whose daughter MacLean is a club member, was on hand this day to help transport the baskets. “I think that this group reinforces the values and morals that we try to teach at home and at St. Thomas,” she says.

“I think we tend to underestimate how compassionate they are at this age,” agrees Clare ➤ continued on page 40
Desert landscapes, distant mountains, ancient rock formations—these are the sights that characterized the winter break of my senior year in high school. Thanks to a unique service opportunity offered by the campus ministry at my school, Lauralton Hall, I was able to discover a place unlike anywhere I have ever been.

This past February, I spent a week with seven other Lauralton students and two faculty members in Tohatchi, New Mexico, part of the Navajo Nation. There, we met with members of St. Mary’s Franciscan mission as well as the Navajo community, learning about the role of the mission and learning Navajo culture. We assisted the community with daily tasks such as painting and cleaning as well as packaging and delivering food. We also attended several Masses with the Navajo people.

Why did I decide to go on this trip instead of relaxing with my family or hanging out with friends at home? When I first heard about the mission, I was drawn to the chance to help the Native American community in some small way. According to a study released in January 2017 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Native American families occupy the most severely overcrowded and rundown homes in the U.S. In fact, roughly 40 percent of total Navajo housing lacks electricity or running water. Yet most people I’ve spoken with are unaware of this crisis.

Each day, my classmates and I had a new opportunity to assist the community while becoming more familiar with Navajo culture. One day we helped Clara, one of the women of the community, make traditional Navajo fry bread. She then invited us to share a meal with her family. As we told stories from home and participated in their Navajo traditions, it dawned on me that this is what real service is about—being truly engaged in a community.

Another day, we prepared for and participated in a traditional sweat lodge, a Navajo purification ritual, led in native-language prayer by a Navajo woman. We also visited the capital of the Navajo Nation—Window Rock—as well as Native American ruins at Canyon de Chelly. Finally, we participated in an outreach program, helping to deliver food to several Navajo homes and visiting with the families.

All the while, I learned to understand and appreciate the richness of the Navajo culture and spirituality. The people are so firmly connected to the earth and their surroundings—it was an enlightening experience, so different from mine at home. The Navajo showed me how to be ready for the changes that will inevitably come in life. When something doesn’t go as expected, they accept and adapt rather than resist change. I also learned to better appreciate the home that we have been given on earth. Spending time with the Navajo, I realized that we have so much to be grateful for.

Perhaps the most important lesson that I took from my trip was one of mercy, a virtue that Lauralton Hall and our sponsor, the Sisters of Mercy, seek to instill in students as a way of life. The Navajo live their lives trying to give back to the earth and to the members of the community, never letting the horrors their people endured make them vengeful or bitter. Instead, they show compassion to all people they encounter, no matter where they come from—also a value emphasized throughout my four years at Lauralton. As I prepare to enter college, I know I will carry with me the wisdom gained by meeting and serving the Navajo people as well as the importance of making mercy real in this world.

(Gabriela Baghdady, Lauralton Hall Class of 2017, is a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton. She will attend Johns Hopkins University in the fall.)

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June 2017

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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 Right Stuff is the Never Give Up Stuff” proclaimed the motto above Astronaut Leland Melvin as he stood before the middle school students of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport on May 22.

“If you believe in yourself, you can do anything.” Melvin told the students, who had gathered in the Edgerton Theater at Sacred Heart University. “You have to prepare for jobs you can’t yet imagine. If you have curiosity, it’s like lifetime learning. If you have curiosity, you can pick up a book and apply that learning to do something to better yourself, better your community, better your family.”

Melvin spent over 565 hours in space beginning in 2008, orbiting the earth aboard the 24th mission of Shuttle Atlantis and then in 2009 aboard the 31st shuttle flight to the International Space Station. He engaged the students with videos of astronauts catching M&Ms and flipping coins in zero gravity, and gave them an engaging introduction to the science of space travel.

“It takes three days to travel to the moon,” he told the students, “but to reach Mars takes eight months. Then you’d have to wait until Mars and Earth were in alignment before you could start the eight-month trip back.”

His presentation introduced students to a much deeper topic: the determination, patience and perseverance needed to achieve their dreams. Melvin earned a football scholarship to the University of Richmond, Virginia, was chosen to play for the Detroit Lions and then for the Dallas Cowboys before a pulled hamstring ended his football career.

Students listened spellbound as he spun tales of blowing up a strange mix of chemicals in his mother’s living room, complete with videos of a similar, larger explosion. He described the tragic mistake that left him deaf after his first depth dive during weightlessness training. He showed them videos of the way, equipped with a master of science degree in materials science engineering and finally in space as a NASA astronaut, he made repairs to the space station with a robotic arm.

“The two most important days in your life are the day you were born, and the day you figure out WHY?—why you were born. When you figure that out, don’t give up. Even if you fail, don’t give up.”

The students reacted positively to his challenge.

“I really enjoyed the thought of going into space,” said Brayden Alexis, an eighth grader at St. Andrew Academy. “I enjoy astronomy and research on different types of stars and galaxies. His talk also makes me think that, even though you might be one thing at one point, you can change later.” Melvin later brought his message to the youngsters of St. Raphael Academy and to the Cathedral Academy. With the youngsters at St. Raphael’s, his simplified talk emphasized books like the Little Engine That Could and Curious George to bring home the qualities of persistence and curiosity.

Third grader Maria Santos continued on page 40

The Sky’s the Limit

“The Right Stuff”—Astronaut Leland Melvin, who spent over 565 hours in space, talked to Catholic Academy students about the determination, patience and perseverance needed to achieve their dreams.

Class of 2017 College Matriculations

Amherst College
Babson College
Boston College
Brown University
Bucknell University
Carnegie Mellon University
University of California Santa Barbara
Colby College
Colgate University (3)
Columbia University
University of Connecticut
Cornell University (3)
Dartmouth College
Denison University
Drexel University
Elon University (2)
Fairfield University
Franklin and Marshall College
Furman University
George Washington University (2)
Georgetown University (6)
Hilldale College
College of the Holy Cross
Johns Hopkins University
Lehigh University
Loyola Marymount University
Maryland Institute College of Art
University of Michigan
Northeastern University (3)
University of Notre Dame (4)
Ohio State University
Pennsylvania State University
Pennsylvania College
Quinnipiac University
University of Richmond
Rochester Institute of Technology
Sacred Heart University
St. Andrews University, Scotland
Saint Anselm College
University of Southern California
University of St. Andrews, Scotland
Stanford University
State University of New York at Buffalo (2)
State University of New York, Plattsburgh
Syracuse University
Union College (2)
University of Vermont (2)
Villanova University
University of Virginia
Wake Forest University
Washington and Lee University
Washington University in St. Louis (3)
Wellesley College
Williams College
University of Wisconsin, Madison (2)
Yale University

Congratulations to the Class of 2017!

Where young women become global leaders
BRIDGEPORT—“May our schools always be vibrant places where faith and learning are the center of our lives,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said in his blessing at the annual “Breakfast of Champions” held on May 25 in Our Lady Queen of Saints Hall at the Catholic Center. More than 200 parents, principals and pastors turned out to honor the 44 young people who were selected as recipients of this year’s St. Thomas Aquinas Award for academic excellence and the St. Sebastian Award for team leadership and sports achievements.

“I am very proud of these students, who have already achieved so much in their studies and on the field, and even more encouraged by their life of faith and virtue,” the bishop said.

Among the recipients was eighth grader Grace Tirado of St. Peter School in Danbury, who was honored to be accompanied by her mother, Christine, St. Peter’s pastor, Father Gregg Mecca, and Father Peter Towsley, pastor of her home parish of Sacred Heart in Danbury.

Her favorite subject at St. Peter’s is language arts, but she’s most excited about studying science and chemistry and becoming a cheerleader when she enters Immaculate High School next September.

“I’m proud of her,” said mom, Christine. “She worked very hard. This year she’s improved a lot. She focused on her studies, and when she sets her mind on something she’s determined.”

Jack Donofrio received the St. Thomas Award for his efforts at St. Theresa School, Trumbull. He was accompanied by his parents, Jeff and Suzanne.

Jack said that he loved all aspects of his life at St. Theresa, particularly playing clarinet in the school band, which led him to become part of the Future Musicians All State Band and gave him the opportunity to play at Lincoln Center. His favorite subject is math, and he’ll be attending St. Joseph High School next year on a Presidential Scholarship.

“It’s a sign of great achievement. Jack embodies not only high academic achievement but also the faith, which he expresses in terms of his character. He’s really exemplary. He’s one of those kids you can count on to bring the other kids up. Although he’s quiet, students look up to him and will emulate him,” said Principal Salvatore Vittoria.

Father Brian Gannon, pastor of St. Theresa, praised Jack for his commitment as an altar server and interest in Eucharistic Adoration.

After receiving individual awards, the students all came forward for a group picture with Bishop Caggiano and school officials.

“I am so proud of these young people,” said Dr. Stephen Cheeseman, superintendent of schools. “I hope that the recognition they receive today encourages them to always strive to reach their full potential. I pray that they remain rooted in Christ and use their gift in his service.”
DANBURY—Immaculate High School junior and Newtown resident Albert “A.J.” Vitiello received a National Medal in Flash Fiction from the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, placing him in the top one percent of all submissions. Out of 330,000 submissions from students in grades 7-12, only 2,736 received National Medals. He will be honored by Scholastic at a special ceremony in June at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

A.J. won the National Medal for his flash fiction short “The Gospel According to Steve Harvey,” which depicts how a teenage girl’s relationship with her grandmother is affected by Alzheimer’s disease. “I wrote ‘The Gospel According to Steve Harvey’ because I think that Alzheimer’s disease is a topic that doesn’t receive as much attention in literature as it should,” A.J. said. “My inspiration came from a family member who suffers from the disease,” he noted.

A.J. has received local recognition for this award. Senator Chris Murphy sent him a congratulatory letter, stating that “the ability to express oneself in any art form is invaluable…I am so proud of the example you have set for your peers.” A.J. is now in good company; past medalists have included celebrated authors and artists including Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Richard Avedon, Robert Redford, Lena Dunham and Paul Chan.

This is not the first time A.J. has won Scholastic Awards. The future novelist submitted excerpts last year from the first five chapters of his novel Field Mouse which he is currently writing, and ended up winning a National Silver Medal in the Novel Writing category of the 2016 competition. Additionally, his horror story “Masks” won a Silver Key in the Hudson to Housatonic region of the 2016 competition.

“My dream is to be a fiction writer, so I’ll probably take an English-related route for college; I already took a creative writing course at New York University last spring,” he said. Perhaps someday he will teach creative writing as well; A.J. has already taught creative writing camps for kids in grades 5-8 at the C.H. Booth Library in Newtown. His favorite genre to write is realistic fiction, but when reading, he loves all genres. A.J.’s favorite book is “The Road” by Cormac McCarthy, and his favorite authors are Stephen King, George Orwell, Gillian Flynn and J.D. Salinger.

This summer, A.J. will travel to Ghana, West Africa, as a volunteer with Global Leadership Adventures. There he will design lesson plans and teach basic English and math to Ghanaian children and make bricks for use in the construction of a new school. A.J. will also study social issues that face African women and children today, traditional art and dance, and the influence of slavery on African nations. He also plans to speak with local leaders about how to combat modern day slavery and human trafficking and will spend time at an orphanage that houses children who have lost parents to HIV and AIDS. He is currently fundraising for this trip.

2017 Breakfast of Champions

The recipients of the St. Thomas Aquinas Award were selected for excellence in academics and exemplifying Gospel values.

St. Thomas Aquinas Award
5th Grade Recipients
Katerina Koutouvides—Our Lady Star of the Sea School, Stamford
Marlee Petrizzi—St. Cecilia School, Norwalk
Cyara Scalipi—Holy Spirit School, Stamford

8th Grade Recipients
Matthew Catalani—Greenwich Catholic School, Greenwich
Julia Dabrowski—St. Mark School, Stratford
Megan DeLallo—All Saints Catholic School, Norwalk
Joseph DiMaria—St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown
Patrick Dinen—St. Catherine of Siena School, Trumbull
Jack Donofrio—St. Theresa School, Trumbull
Erica Estrella—Catholic Academy of Bridgeport (St. Augustine)
Jacob Fleischer—St. Lawrence School, Shelton
Jasmine Fuller—Catholic Academy of Bridgeport (St. Ann)
Grace Garvey—St. Mary School, Bethel

St. Sebastian Award
12th Grade Recipients
Stephen Caponetti—Trinity Catholic High School, Stamford
Andrew Fallon—Notre Dame High School, Fairfield
Christopher Lopez—Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport
Jillian Pruner—Immaculate High School, Danbury
Erin Welch—St. Joseph High School, Trumbull

St. Sebastian Award recipients were selected for leadership in their respective high schools as the captain of an athletic team.

St. Sebastian Award
12th Grade Recipients
Sean Fahy—Immaculate High School, Boys Indoor Track
Christian Morris—Immaculate High School, Boys Indoor Track
Diana Kirkman—Immaculate High School, Girls Cross Country
Danielle Marcone—Immaculate High School, Girls Cross Country
Kayla Lanza—Immaculate High School, Girls Soccer
Brianne Kydies—Notre Dame High School, Girls Soccer
Samantha Lavan—Notre Dame High School, Girls Soccer
Delaney O’Keefe—Notre Dame High School, Girls Soccer
Christina DiCesare—St. Joseph High School, Girls Soccer
Lindsey Savko—St. Joseph High School, Girls Soccer
Sophia Smith—St. Joseph High School, Girls Soccer
Peter Galgano—Trinity Catholic High School, Boys Basketball
was the first to identify the pyramids in the shots of earth taken from the space shuttle, and got a NASA patch from Melvin for her quick answer. She’s already set for her own space voyage. “I want to go to Mars,” she says. “I want to find a new species of animal there.”

Astronaut Melvin’s youngest fan, first grader Jesús Rivas, is already set on space exploration. His father had brought in a poster of the solar system, so that Jesús could give his class a presentation of the solar system. “The sun is not a planet,” he said with authority. “It’s a star.” After naming the planets in order, he added the planet Pluto, giving a spirited defense of the dwarf planet. “It’s smaller than Mercury, maybe about the size of the moon, but it is definitely a planet.”

For his interest and knowledge, Jesús, too, received a NASA patch.

Melvin had a couple of knowledgeable enthusiasts waiting at his last stop at the St. Augustine Academy campus. When fifth graders Chad Elie and Zaymar Clarke learned that Leland Melvin was coming to St. Augustine, they could barely contain their excitement. “Did you just say Leland Melvin!” Chad asked Principal Debi Boccafuso. “I just did a report on him.”

The boys asked Melvin to autograph copies of the report. “He’s my astronaut!” Chad said proudly.

(Astronaut Leland Melvin came to the Cathedral Academy thanks to the effort and generosity of Paul and Anne-Marie Quaally, who were classmates of his at the University Richmond. Melvin has just completed Chasing Space, a memoir about overcoming obstacles, persevering and realizing his dreams. There is both an adult and a young reader’s edition.)

O’Mahoney’s mom Kate. “Especially at this age, they’re so ready to give. This club helps them to see that ours is an active faith. It makes them see the connection between faith and action.”

The group has helped out at the school’s Breakfast With Santa, and gave tours of St. Thomas during Catholic Schools Week. More than that, discussions about the virtues lead them to think about ways they can express virtue in their personal lives. Following a discussion on the virtue of humility, Mia Whipple—all on her own, without encouragement and without telling her mother—got up early in the morning, emptied the dishwasher and started to make the day’s lunch.

“It’s encouraging to see them gain more awareness of the people around them,” says Carpanzano. When they bring their wreath of virtues home for the summer, its bright flowers will remind the girls every day, “Love is something we do.”