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The online, anytime way to schedule care.

Schedule online with Ascension care teams at St. Vincent’s Medical Center at GetStVincentsCare.com.

BISHOP ROBERT MCELROY
Most Reverend Bishop of San Diego

THE CHURCH IS A FIELD HOSPITAL: POPE FRANCIS’ PASTORAL VISION FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

Tuesday, October 30, at 7 P.M. in the University Commons

Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY
Mass of Reparation and Purification

Bishop calls for atonement and transparency

By BRIAN WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—"The leadership of the Church has failed in many ways, it has been tarnished... Healing will take a long time," Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said at the Clergy Mass of Reparation which took place on Saturday, September 15 on the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, in response to the sexual abuse crisis in the Church.

More than 800 priests, deacons, religious and laity filled St. Augustine Cathedral for the Mass, which the bishop announced earlier in September as a major spiritual step toward atonement and moving the diocese forward.

The Mass began in a somber and penitential way when the bishop removed his crosier and miter—the symbols of his authority—and prostrated himself before the altar as he led the con.

In his homily, the bishop said Church leaders failed victims and the faithful by "holding their tongues" and compounding the evil of abuse.

"Survivors of this evil, this sin, this crime deserve our love, support and accompaniment. They are a sign of courage in our midst, a sign of hope," the bishop said, noting that he has become friends with members of the diocesan Healing Committee and is grateful for their witness.

The bishop began his homily by recalling an accident he sustained as an 8-year-old boy that brought him to Coney Island Hospital with a gash on his forehead that left a scar.

He said he learned that day that healing can only begin "after cleansing, and that will not be achieved by a program, but by a heart that stays vacant for the Lord."

"Those who were abused were deeply hurt by the crime of abuse. The scars that our sisters and brothers have endured may never go away," he said.

"Let us not be afraid of our wounds. Let them become the cracks through which the grace of Christ gets in and one day will set us free.

The bishop said the Church can only move forward from this present crisis through reparations in the form of "works of mercy and acts of charity," and by being transparent in all things.

"As AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) reminds us, we are only as sick as our own secrets, and we must end the culture of secrecy in the Church."

The bishop said that priests who abused were "wolves in sheep's clothing," who betrayed the trust of the innocent in a way that burdened them for life.

The audience broke into applause twice during the solemn liturgy, first after the bishop's homily, and at the end of Mass when the bishop called on the faithful to support the priests.

"The good and faithful priests need our support and prayers," he said.

Before leading the prayer to St. Michael, the Archangel, which the bishop has mandated to be said in every parish after Mass when the bishop called on the faithful to support the priests.

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Before leading the prayer to St. Michael, the Archangel, which the bishop has mandated to be said in every parish after Mass, the bishop urged those in the midst, a sign of hope,” the bishop said.

“Encourage them to come forward. We need to accompany them. We will do this together one person at a time.”

The morning began with a Holy Hour that included the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament where the Rosary was said in five different languages.

Fr. Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull and vicar for clergy, served as Master of Ceremonies for the Mass. The Mass was provided by Dr. Samuel A. Schmitt, director of Sacred Music and organist of The Cathedral Parish. Kathryn Aaron was the Cantor. The Communion Meditation was guided by The Sacred Beauty Schola including Valerie Tarantino, Paul Chu, Josephine Landback, and Alexis Hoadley.
By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano announced on October 3 that retired Connecticut Superior Court Judge Robert L. Holzberg, who is a partner in the law firm of Pullman & Comley LLC of Hartford and Bridgeport, will serve as counsel and lead investigator for the Clerical Sexual Abuse Accountability Investigation being conducted for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Judge Holzberg, who has extensive experience as an investigator, mediator and arbitrator, will lead the Accountability Investigation by overseeing a comprehensive analysis and review of claims of clerical sexual abuse of minors, the diocese’s knowledge of such abuse and its response to allegations and information presented to it concerning the alleged clergy abuse. As part of his investigation, Holzberg, a Middletown resident, will have complete and unrestricted access to all diocesan files, records and archives dating from 1953, when the diocese was founded, to the present, and the opportunity to interview diocesan clergy and administrators with information relevant to his inquiry. Pullman & Comley has not previously represented the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Work on the Accountability Investigation will begin immediately and is expected to be completed by Spring 2019. Judge Holzberg, who is not Catholic, will direct a team of attorneys and investigators to conduct the investigation.

Results of the investigation will be presented in a public report that will address sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the Diocese of Bridgeport, along with the response of Church leadership to that abuse. The report will also contain any relevant recommendations to the bishop resulting from the review.

“Judge Holzberg epitomizes long-term, dedicated and conscientious service to the community,” Bishop Caggiano said. “He possesses the highest integrity, and he has made substantial contributions to the administration of justice in Connecticut. We are grateful that he has agreed to lead this significant review.”

“I am committed to supervising a comprehensive, impartial and transparent investigation into clergy sexual abuse of minors and the diocese’s response to that abuse over the past 65 years. As a condition of taking on this assignment, I met with and obtained the commitment of Bishop Caggiano that I will have full and unrestricted access to all materials relevant to this investigation and that I will have full discretion to conduct this investigation as I deem appropriate. Bishop Caggiano pledged his full cooperation and commitment to this important initiative,” Holzberg said.

Prior to his retirement from the bench in 2012, Holzberg successfully mediated claims against St. Francis Hospital in Hartford involving allegations of decades long sexual abuse of minors by a hospital employee. In 2014, Holzberg was retained by the Stamford Corporation Counsel to lead an investigation into allegations that a Stamford Board of Education high school teacher was involved in a sexual relationship with her student.

The bishop personally met with Judge Holzberg and assured him that he would have the full and unfettered access to diocesan records and files necessary for a comprehensive review.

Bishop Caggiano announced plans for the Accountability Investigation on September 7 in response to the national clerical sexual abuse crisis and failures of Church leadership in accountability and transparency.

“His letter was read in parishes throughout the diocese and widely distributed through the diocesan newspaper, website and social media. He announced plans for the report and outlined some of the spiritual and administrative actions that the diocese will take to ensure transparency and accountability.”

“My hope is that these measures will begin to heal the wounds that we feel and address the legitimate desire for real change that restores confidence in every level of leadership,” he said.

The bishop also committed to presenting a financial report on settlement amounts for past claims of clergy sexual abuse of minors from the establishment of the diocese to date. The report will include sources from which funds were obtained to settle claims and provide an account of the financial support currently given to any priest who has been accused of sexual abuse of a minor and who is currently on administrative leave or has been laicized. The report will be released on October 31.

“These measures also build upon the extensive work we have done since 2002 to reach out to and support survivors of clergy sexual abuse in addition to providing the training and safeguards to protect our children and ensure that adults recognize the warning signs of any potential abuse,” Bishop Caggiano said.

“I believe that the Church is facing a moment of crisis that demands honesty and repentance from the bishops and decisive action to ensure that these failures will never happen again,” Bishop Caggiano said.

About Judge Holzberg

Retired Judge Robert Holzberg leads the Alternative Dispute Resolution practice at the law firm of Pullman & Comley, LLC.

By CALLA ALPERT

All Souls Day Masses for the faithful departed

All Souls Day Masses will be celebrated in six cemeteries throughout the diocese on Friday, November 2, 11 am, rain or shine. The Masses, which will be offered for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed, are open to the public.

“These Masses are a beautiful way for people to remember their loved ones this time of year,” said Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese. “We encourage Catholics throughout the diocese to pray that all those who have died may rest in the peace of Christ.”

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano announced the first outdoor All Souls Mass two years ago in the hope that it would become an annual tradition across the diocese. More than 150 people attended the first inaugural Mass, a number which only grew the following year.

Traditionally, Catholics visit cemeteries on All Souls Day to remember the dead and pray for their souls. During the Masses, the celebrants will remember in a special way all deceased bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated men and women and lay faithful.

Last year, two Masses for All Souls Day were held at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull and St. John/St. Mary Cemetery in Norwalk.

The diocese expanded the number of locations based on the enthusiastic responses to last year’s Masses.

Below is a list of locations and celebrants:

- **St. Peter Cemetery, Danbury:** Bishop Frank J. Caggiano
- **St. Mary Cemetery, Greenwich:** Msgr. Thomas W. Powers
- **St. John Cemetery, Norwalk:** Msgr. Walter C. Orłowski
- **Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Trumbull:** Father Joseph A. Marcello
- **St. Michael Cemetery, Stratford:** Father Arthur Mollenhauer
- **St. John Cemetery, Darien:** Father John P. Connaughton

The All Souls Day Mass held in Danbury will be streamed live on the diocesan Facebook page: Facebook.com/bridgepordiocese.

Arrangements for the outdoor Masses are supported by Catholic Cemeteries and the Diocesan Real Estate Office.

(The diocese sponsors nine cemeteries around Fairfield County. For information on Catholic Cemeteries, call 203.416.1494.)
Local News

Mass of Hope and Healing

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

The annual Mass of Hope, Healing and Reconciliation will be held on Sunday, November 18 from 2-4 pm at St. Francis Assisi Parish in Weston located at 25 Norfield Road, Weston CT 06883.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, together with a planning committee of survivors of clerical sexual abuse as minors invite anyone who has been sexually abused as a minor and others who have been impacted by sexual abuse to attend. Light refreshments will be served immediately following the Mass. Last year’s Mass of Hope, Healing and Reconciliation was condemned sexual abuse and its lifelong impact on victims. Those who attended the Mass were able to hear the authentic and soul-baring testimonies of victims of sexual abuse.

This year’s Mass comes in the wake of the recent sexual abuse scandals that have come to light on the national level. In response to this abuse, Bishop Caggiano has released a series of letters which outline real, concrete, administrative, spiritual and pastoral actions designed to achieve the highest level of transparency and accountability.

The bishop also led a diocesan-wide Mass of Reparation and Purification in September, and has asked that all pastors celebrate a local Mass of Reparation in their parishes no later than October 31.

“It is my desire to attack this evil in a variety of ways, starting with a series of spiritual initiatives and administrative actions. Our spiritual efforts focus on the grave need for the clergy to seek reparation for the past sins of those who have sinned and harmed innocent children and young people,” said Bishop Caggiano in his response to the sexual abuse crisis.

There are regularly scheduled gatherings for any person who has been sexually abused as a minor to meet with victim assistance coordinators from the diocese and fellow survivors of sexual abuse for friendship, prayer and support. (If you are an adult survivor of abuse as a minor, and you would like to learn more about the Mass, upcoming meetings and other resources that are available in our diocese, please contact one of our Victim Assistance Coordinators—Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., at: 203.650.3265, or Michael Tinirup, L.C.S.W., at: 203.241.0987.)

St. Augustine Medal Ceremony

The Saint Augustine Medal of Service prayer service and awards ceremony will be held at St. Augustine Cathedral on Saturday, November 17, beginning at 1 pm. A reception will follow at Kolbe-Cathedral High School on the grounds of the cathedral campus.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead the prayer service and present medals to more than 150 recipients from parishes and ministries across the diocese. Honorees will be recognized for their volunteer service to parishes, schools and charities throughout Fairfield County.

“True generosity comes from those who are grateful for their lives and who faithfully use the gifts God has given them,” said Bishop Caggiano. “We will celebrate the St. Augustine medalists as mentors, guides and prophets in their love and service. I look forward to meeting them and their families and recognizing their great commitment to others through the Church.”

Last year, friends and family of the recipients turned out in large numbers to the Mass of Service ceremony to celebrate the achievements of their loved ones.

Pastors, priests and deacons throughout the diocese accompanied the recipients as they came forward to be presented the medals by Bishop Caggiano.

The Saint Augustine Medal of Service was instituted in 2005 to honor the “unsung heroes” who selflessly give of their time and talents to build up parish communities. On one side of the medal is an image of St. Augustine of Hippo, patron saint of the diocese. The reverse features the coat of arms of the diocese.

Living by the charism of life

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

Sister Catherine Joy Marie, S.V. first encountered the Sisters of Life on a trip to the March for Life in D.C. while attending Trinity Catholic High School. Although she didn’t know it at the time, this was an encounter that would forever change the course of her life and which would eventually lead her to answer God’s call to consecrate herself to the Lord through a vocation to religious life.

“Two sisters from our retreat house, Villa Maria Guadalupe in Stamford, came down on our bus. While waiting in the National Basilica for the Vigil Mass to begin, I was struck by the sisters silently praying—so simple and sincere. I realized that I knew they weren’t just saying something, they were speaking to someone. Someone who knew them intimately and loved them deeply. I was struck for the first time that I wasn’t just looking at a sister, I was looking at a bride,” confided Sr. Catherine Joy.

Years later, Sr. Catherine Joy professed her first vows at Villa Maria Guadalupe in Stamford, on August 4, 2018, where Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated the Mass of Profession. Sr. Catherine Joy entered the religious order after graduating from Providence College in 2015 where she majored in theology and biology.

The Sisters of Life are a contemplative, active religious community of women founded in 1991 by John Cardinal O’Connor, Archbishop of New York, and dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the sacredness of human life celebrated.

“As Sisters of Life, we profess four vows: the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, and a fourth vow to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life. This fourth vow proclaims that every human being is a sacred, unique, unrepeatable expression of God’s love in the world. At first profession, I received my first mission to live and love at our convent and apostolic center in Toronto, Canada. Life with Christ is always an adventure!” explains Sr. Catherine Joy.

The sisters live and act by the charism of life, and all of their apostolates flow from that charism. They believe that every human life bears the imprint of God and their apostolic missions reflect that belief. Some of their apostolic missions include accompanying pregnant women who are in need or alone, sharing Christ’s promise of hope and healing with those who have suffered from the pain of abortion, hosting a variety of retreats, and sharing the beauty of God’s plan for life and love on college campuses and across the country.

“Our life is anchored in our relationship with the Lord, and all our actions flow from this union with Him, the source of all life. In contemplating Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, the loves of our hearts are opened so that we may recognize His presence in each person. Our Blessed Mother is the model of the unity between the contemplative and active life, and throughout the day we unite ourselves to Our Lady of the Visitation who ‘pondered all these things in her heart’ as she carried Christ to the world,” said Sr. Catherine Joy.
Leadership Institute

New Liturgical Norms & Sacramental Guidelines

The norms, or rules, governing liturgical and sacramental practices in the Diocese of Bridgeport, will be revised over the next four years, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano announced.

“When we concluded the diocesan synod, one of the major initiatives which I confirmed was the need to revise the diocesan sacramental guidelines,” Bishop Caggiano said on October 1.

“The sacramental guidelines are really the depository of all the norms and guidelines that allow us to pray effectively and reverently as a Church.”

The norms were last promulgated in 1983 under Bishop Walter Curtis.

Noting that things change over time, Bishop Caggiano commented that it is important that we undertake these revisions to ensure that all sacraments and liturgical celebrations remain fruitful, collaborative, participative, and reverent.

The bishop met with the priests of the diocese on September 13 and discussed the norms, which were distributed as a provisional document. Final comments from priests are due October 10.

“As the guidelines involve hundreds of pages and every aspect of our prayer as a community, I decided to break the revisions over several years and to invite others into this process,” Bishop Caggiano said. “For the last year, two dozen members of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission have been meeting to work on this first set of revisions, which cover those who serve as deacons, religious educators, coordinators of worship, choir directors, and others who share in the leadership in our parishes,” Donovan said. “There are four opportunities for parish leaders to come together in October to view the norms, make suggestions, ask questions, and discuss the revisions with those who share in the ministries governed by the norms.”

In November, there will be an additional four meetings, Donovan said. Those meetings, he said, are for anyone who serves as a reader, musician, or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Donovan added, “Any changes to the ministry of altar serving will be managed at the local level.”

The November meetings will include a chance to listen to proposed changes, learn about the formation process, and discover how those who are already serving will be grandfathered into ministry, using a truncated formation process. Those who wish to view the norms or to sign up to attend any of the meetings in the coming weeks are invited to visit The Institute’s website, www.formationimagined.org.

“This will be a guided process,” Bishop Caggiano said, “so that when the norms are promulgated on the first Sunday of Advent, all will understand what the norms are proposing and the principles behind them.”

“The Lord asks us to participate in his death and resurrection through grace—especially when we celebrate the Eucharist—and I am grateful to all who will accept this invitation to renewal,” the bishop said. “Through this catechesis and these revisions, may we become leaven for renewal in the rest of the world.”

(For more information, contact Patrick Donovan, director of The Leadership Institute at: 203.416.1657.)
By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—In a joyful and reverent Evening Vespers service lifted by the music of the Diocesan Youth Choir and the Latin Schola of St. Augustine Cathedral, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano conferred Papal Honors on 20 men and women from the diocese.

“There are angels in our midst,” said the bishop, explaining that the prayer service was held on the Feast of the Archangels, Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

The bishop said that angels are “messengers and protectors who bring the message of God and his presence in the world.”

Praising the medal recipients for generously sharing their experience, talent and gifts with those in need, the bishop said, “They’ve become messengers of the presence, mercy and hope of God.”

During the beautiful one-hour prayer service the bishop inducted ten men and women into the Order of Saint Gregory the Great and ten into the Pontifical Equestrian Order of Saint Sylvester, Pope and Martyr.

“Bless these insignia and those who will receive them. Renew within these men and women the gifts of Your Spirit that they may continue to serve Your Church” the bishop said in the blessing of the medals, after the reading and his homily.

The recipients, many of them couples, came forward as Fr. Robert Kinnally, pastor of St. Aloysius Church in New Canaan, read their names and the bishop congratulated them.

“Our sisters and brothers are being given a great and richly deserved honor by Pope Francis, the successor of Peter himself,” the bishop said.

“You’ve left the world for the better because of your witness of faith and love,” said the bishop to the recipients. “You have changed lives for the better throughout our diocese. The Holy Father wants to say ‘thank you.’”

The 100-member diocesan youth choir led by Mary Bozzuti Higgins sang a memorable arrangement of Open My Eyes/Amazing Grace as a prelude and led the singing of the three antiphons. The St. Augustine Schola sang the Magnificat in Latin and joined the youth choir for the final Salve Regina.

Induction into the Order of Saint Gregory the Great

This honor is bestowed upon Catholics and, in some cases, non-Catholics, to express the esteem of the Holy See, and in recognition of their personal service to the Roman Catholic Church, through their exceptional labors and the excellent personal example they have given in their communities and in their countries.

Mr. Rocco Cingari, Knight/Our Lady Star of the Sea, Stamford; Mr. George Landegger, Knight/St. Mary Parish, Ridgefield; Mr. Frank Martire, Knight/St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan; Mrs. Marisa Martire, Dame/St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan; Mr. Thomas McInerney, Knight/Church of Assumption, Westport; Mrs. Paula McInerney, Dame/Church of Assumption, Westport; Mr. Denis Nayden, Knight/St. Leo Parish, Stamford; Mrs. Britta Nayden, Dame/St.
Vocations

Lay Dominicans find a home in the diocese

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

TRUMBULL—“We are very happy to bring this affiliate chapter to the Diocese of Bridgeport,” says Mr. Stefano Santilli, O.P., a member of St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, who is helping to organize a chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic with the support of Father Brian Gannon at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull.

The St. Mary chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic, located in New Haven, assigned two fully-professed members—Mrs. Joan Cuomo, O.P., and Mr. Stefano Santilli, O.P.—to guide and oversee the establishment of an affiliate chapter in Trumbull. Additionally, Mrs. Cosette Heimann, O.P., Provincial President of the Lay Fraternities and a St. Mary’s member, will also provide guidance and support to the new chapter.

“With the inception of our Perpetual Adoration chapel a year ago here at St. Theresa’s, welcoming the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic is a substantial sign that Eucharistic Adoration brings greater and greater blessings to individual souls, parishes and the world,” says Father Brian Gannon, who welcomes the affiliate chapter to his parish.

The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic consist of lay men and women who seek to deepen their devotion to Christ by pursuing making profession and living a vocation of study, prayer, apostolate and community as Dominican Laity in everyday life. Lay Dominicans are fully incorporated into the Order of Preachers, and have been in existence since 1285. They have also been known throughout history as Third Order Dominicans and Dominican Tertiaries.

The Dominican Friars are an order of preachers founded by St. Dominic, whose goal is to spread and preach the gospel for the salvation of souls. The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic play a special role in the order through their proclamation of the gospel in their homes, parishes and offices. In this way, they are able to reach those who would not usually be exposed to the gospel message.

“This is something I wanted to do for my own spirituality and my own formation,” mentioned one of the members of the new affiliate chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic.

The new chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic at St. Theresa Parish will be holding monthly meetings, typically on the third Thursday of the month, from 7 to 9 pm beginning on Thursday, September 20 at the parish.

(For more information, contact Mr. Stefano Santilli, O.P. at: 203.524.4945, or by email at: ste.santilli@gmail.com or Joan Cuomo at: 203.215.0438, or by email at: richardcuomo839@comcast.net.)

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The Dominican Friars are an order of preachers founded by St. Dominic, whose goal is to spread and preach the gospel for the salvation of souls. The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic play a special role in the order through their proclamation of the gospel in their homes, parishes and offices. In this way, they are able to reach those who would not usually be exposed to the gospel message.

“This is something I wanted to do for my own spirituality and my own formation,” mentioned one of the members of the new affiliate chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic.

The new chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic at St. Theresa Parish will be holding monthly meetings, typically on the third Thursday of the month, from 7 to 9 pm beginning on Thursday, September 20 at the parish.

(For more information, contact Mr. Stefano Santilli, O.P. at: 203.524.4945, or by email at: ste.santilli@gmail.com or Joan Cuomo at: 203.215.0438, or by email at: richardcuomo839@comcast.net.)
Diocesan Blue Mass

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

DANBURY—Bagpipes played a reverent tune at the annual diocesan Blue Mass honoring fire, police and first responders who serve the diocese. The Mass was held on Sunday, September 9 at 10:30 am at St. Joseph Church in Danbury in solemn commemoration of the 17th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on 9-11.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the main celebrant along with diocesan priests who serve as police and fire chaplains in Fairfield County. Father Charles Allen, special assistant to the president of Fairfield University, served as chairman of the event.

Law enforcement, fire and emergency medical service personnel of all faiths in Fairfield County along with members of the general public were invited to attend the Mass and reception. “This is the first time the bishop has offered to celebrate the Blue Mass in the Danbury area. We’re deeply honored that he was able to do so at St. Joseph’s,” said Father Samuel Scott, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Danbury who hosted the event, and a member of the Blue Mass committee.

The Blue Mass takes its name from the blue uniforms worn by police, fire and emergency services personnel. Founded by Bishop William E. Lori, the Blue Mass was initiated to celebrate the life and heroism of those who died during the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C.

During his homily, Bishop Caggiano addressed all the men and women in blue. “Every time you respond with duty and honor, you do so as a messenger of the good news of the Lord.” Calling on St. Michael the Archangel, the bishop lifted up in prayer those who work in public safety saying, “So we honor you, hidden ambassadors of Jesus Christ. May He always protect you.”

The bishop thanked all gathered for being open to the call to pursue holiness through their public service profession. Each year awards are presented to individual local police, fire and first responders for acts of heroism and public service. Fr. Charles Allen read the citations, presenting the awards to the 2018 recipients.

For his service to the people of Stamford, CT, the Diocese of Bridgeport and the Knights of Columbus, and assistant Chief of Police Thomas Wuennemann of the Stamford Police Department presented the Blue Mass Award for 2018 and plaque to Officer Jerry Junes.

Junes is a 17-year member of the force and an investigator in Stamford’s bureau of criminal investigations. According to Assistant Chief Wuennemann, “In addition to being an outstanding police officer, Jerry Junes gives more to the community than any officer I know. He has run our Mighty Mites basketball program for over 20 years.” The program involves

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

Inner-City Foundation to honor Frantz & O’Connor

BRIDGEPORT— The Inner-City Foundation of Charity & Education will honor Greenwich State Senator Scott Frantz and his wife Icy Frantz at its 27th annual benefit gala next month for their local philanthropy. The benefit, to be held on the evening of Saturday, October 27th at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich, will also honor Terry O’Connor, the executive director of The Cardinal Shehan Center in Bridgeport.

“We’re delighted to be honoring the Frantzs, as well as Terry O’Connor,” says Richard T. Stone of The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education. “Their philanthropic work aligns with ours, which is to help the neediest among us right here in Fairfield County.”

State Senator L. Scott Frantz represents the 36th District, which includes Greenwich, New Canaan and Stamford. A business entrepreneur with a long history of service and commitment to our community, Senator Frantz serves as a board member of several nonprofit and club organizations including: Corporate Angel Network (Advisory); Connecticut Republican Finance Committee; Veteran’s Appreciation Council; Greenwich Country Day School; and the Greenwich Teen Center.

Icy Frantz is a longtime Greenwich resident, local philanthropist, and Greenwich Sentinel contributor. She taught a substance abuse prevention program at Greenwich Academy, was a member of the board at Greenwich Country Day School and ran the parents’ association there. Icy currently sits on the board for the Greenwich Teen Center and writes for the Greenwich Sentinel.

Terry O’Connor, a former college basketball coach and on-air sports personality, has also had a long career of service in Fairfield County. For the past quarter century, Terry has been the executive director of the Cardinal Shehan Center in Bridgeport, a non-profit organization that serves the recreational, educational, and social needs of moderate and low-income families and young people of lower Fairfield County, particularly inner city Bridgeport.

In 2012, Terry took on added duties as executive director of the McGivney Community Center on the east side of Bridgeport.

“The Inner-City Foundation was founded more than a quarter century ago in 1992, and since then has granted $30 million to at least 200 programs and organizations in Fairfield County that are helping the neediest among us. (For tickets, tables or to donate and help The Inner-City Foundation honor Scott Frantz, Icy Frantz and Terry O’Connor, visit innercityfoundation.org, call 203.416.1363, or email info@innercityfoundation.org.)

New Diocesan HR Chief

Tracy Casey has joined the Diocese of Bridgeport as the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Tracy comes to the diocese with over 20 years of human resources experience, most recently serving as the human resources director for the Glastonbury Public Schools. During her career, she has held a variety of positions across all human resources disciplines in both the private and public sector. While at Glastonbury, she developed the human resources function and transformed the benefits function.

Tracy is actively involved in her parish, Precious Blood Parish in Milford, where she is an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and works in the Confirmation program. She is married to her husband, Marty, for over 27 years and has four adult children. Please join us in welcoming Tracy to her new position.
Lorraine Gibbons named head of Shehan and McGivney Centers

By JOE PISANI

BRIDGEPORT—Lorraine Gibbons has been named Executive Director of the Cardinal Shehan Center and the McGivney Community Center, two agencies of the Diocese of Bridgeport, which have served youth from moderate and low-income families in lower Fairfield County for more than 75 years combined.

“Lorraine brings a strong sense of the role of mentoring and formation that the Cardinal Shehan Center and McGivney Center play in the lives of our young people and future leaders. In addition to her professional skills, she is held in esteem by leaders throughout the community, and will provide a new generation of leadership,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

Gibbons, who was Director of Development at the Shehan Center for 13 years, said she was excited to be named to her new position and that her focus will be on developing more training programs for youth, creating corporate partnerships, expanding tutoring opportunities and offering GED programs.

“I am very honored to be named to this position,” Gibbons said. “The Cardinal Shehan Center and McGivney Community Center have served thousands of young people who might never otherwise have had an opportunity to succeed without their guidance. I look forward to carrying on the fine tradition that they exemplify in Bridgeport and surrounding regions. As a woman who will lead both organizations, I want young girls to know they too can get to the top.”

Gibbons succeeds Terry O’Connor who is retiring December 31 after serving as Executive Director for 26 years at Shehan and six at McGivney.

“I’ve learned from the best,” Gibbons said. “Terry has been a great leader and mentor. Both the Cardinal Shehan Center and the McGivney Community Center under his leadership have risen to great heights. I plan to continue that upward trajectory for the centers. He’s taught me well, and he will be terribly missed.”

O’Connor said he was thrilled that the search committee chose Gibbons after an exhaustive search. “She has the passion, enthusiasm and the ability to be a tremendous leader for both organizations,” he said. “Having spent the last thirteen years joined together at the hip here at Shehan, I have every confidence that Lorraine will take both organizations to new heights.”

The Cardinal Shehan Center is a non-profit organization in Bridgeport. For 55 years, the Center has served the recreational, educational and social needs of moderate and low-income families and young people of lower Fairfield County, particularly inner-city Bridgeport.

The Center’s mission of enriching lives through learning is accomplished by the after school and Saturday youth development program, summer day camp, various basketball leagues, sign-up programs, physical education classes for elementary schools and alternative education program. The Center commits itself to offering a safe environment where positive, growth-enhancing opportunities are offered, regardless of race or religious affiliation.

“On behalf of the Cardinal Shehan Board, we are thrilled that Lorraine Gibbons will be leading the organization upon Terry O’Connor’s retirement,” said Board President James Lane, who is senior vice president of commercial real estate for Webster Bank N.A. “I’ve had the opportunity to work with Lorraine over the past several years and have been truly impressed with her commitment, passion and tireless work ethic to provide opportunities and improve the lives of Bridgeport’s youth. I look forward to working with her to build on the great success of the Shehan Center.”

The McGivney Community Center, which began as a summer camp program in 1992 for 50 youth, now serves more than 400 youth annually; 100 are enrolled in the after-school program, which draws students from 20 elementary schools and offers homework assistance, enrichment and recreation. The summer program serves 90 students, from K-to-8, providing athletic, academic and enrichment activities to stem the “summer learning loss” so that students can return to school well prepared in September.

The McGivney Community Center’s mission is to provide stimulating and enriching programs that foster academic success and self-esteem in an environment that nurtures children’s intellectual, creative and physical growth. Its motto is “Kids at McGivney don’t come and go, they come and grow.”

McGivney Board President Robert O’Connor, CPCU, senior vice president of Peoples United Insurance Agency, said, “Lorraine is an excellent choice to take over the leadership of Shehan Center and McGivney Center. She is passionate about the mission of both organizations and has a deep knowledge and understanding of both of these centers and the important roles they play in the community.”

A native of Jamaica, Gibbons received a bachelor’s degree in biology from Rhode Island College and went on to earn an MBA from the University of New Haven. She has held a variety of positions in the non-profit, public and private sectors. She previously was manager of shareholder relations for the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company and senior accountant. She has held positions as financial analyst for Great Country Bank and First Constitution Bank and was assistant branch manager for Westinghouse Electric Supply Company.

In addition, she has served on community boards for such organizations as Amistad Academy, the Barnum Festival, Burroughs Community Fund, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Mercy Learning Center, Bridgeport Public Education Fund and St. Vincent’s College.
BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and the Finance Council of the Diocese of Bridgeport have approved a fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 operating budget with a total of $21,471,010 in revenues and $21,419,740 in expenditures, representing a $51,270 projected surplus.

“This budget and projected surplus represents our obligation to operate with fiscal responsibility and manage our resources,” said Michael Hanlon CPA, chief financial officer (CFO) of the dio-

cese. “The Diocese of Bridgeport is continuing on its turnaround path by reporting an operating budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 with a slight surplus for the second consecutive year.”

Hanlon said the budget fulfills previously identified goals and mandates to present a balance or surplus budget and the elimination on reliance of one-time revenue sources such as proceeds from property sales.

“We will continue to be stewards of all funds entrusted to us as we continue fiscally responsible and prudent decision making at all levels of the diocesan management team,” said Hanlon.

Salaries and benefits continue to represent approximately 49.0 percent of the overall budget, Hanlon said, noting that “we need to continue to reward our diocesan employees for their dedication to our mission, thus market-rate salary increases have been budgeted again.”

Contributions and grants allocated from Annual Catholic Appeal contributions to diocesan mission-related entities represent approximately 21.8 percent of this budget. These contributions and grants support the missions of St. John Fisher Seminary, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, St. Catherine Academy for Special Needs, the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, the Cardinal Shehan Center and the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund with Foundations in Education.

The two major sources of revenue for the annual operating budget are the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) and the cathedraticum, the traditional assessment on parishes to support the administration and operating costs of the diocese.

Hanlon said that changes made last year in the cathedraticum formula were fully implemented this year. The Annual Catholic Appeal continues to fund Synod initiatives, faith formation and outreach to youth and other mission related programs.

He said the diocese continues to work to manage and control healthcare related expenses and benefits while providing affordable comprehensive coverage for employees and their families.

The diocese also realized savings by not filling some necessary positions and looked for other opportunities to reduce office related expenses and contracted services.

Hanlon said that Christopher Gillespie, the recently hired senior director of Technology Services, has identified cost saving measures that have reduced IT related operational expenses while developing a diocesan-wide information technology and communications system strategy that better serves schools and parishes.

The diocese also continues to eliminate the outstanding balance of the Knights of Columbus loan and related interest expense. This loan has been reduced from $15 million to $6 million in the last four years and hopefully will be fully paid in the near future by earmarking proceeds from asset sales.

Hanlon said that Andrew Schulz, director of real estate and Anne McCorry, chief legal and real estate officer, have identified new areas of revenue while overseeing the diocesan property portfolio.

“They continue to do a remarkable job in maximizing proceeds from real estate sales and also identifying opportunities to generate alternative sources of revenue from property leases by marketing vacant diocesan owned buildings for use,” he said.

The long-term unfunded liability obligations related to the frozen diocesan lay pension plan continue to be an area of concern and challenge for the diocese.

“Initial steps have been taken to reduce this unfunded liability based on a strategy developed by the lay pension committee, consisting of finance council members. Additional funding sources will also be identified to reduce this liability.”

In December 2013, Bishop Caggiano took a major step toward financial transparency when he released the audited financial statements for years 2010, 2011 and 2012. Audited financial statements for the subsequent periods ending December 31, 2013 and 2014, as well as financial statements for the periods ending June 30, 2015, 2016, and 2017 have been released annually. All reports can be found online. He also addresses finances in his yearly “State of the Diocese” report, which will be issued in January.

(To learn more, visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialreports.)
School News

New Principals

Kathryn Petrone
Principal, St. Joseph School, Danbury

DANBURY—Kathryn Petrone has been an educator in Catholic schools for many years throughout the tri-state area at both elementary and high school levels. Promoting the Catholic mission of a school and guiding students toward Christ is second-nature to her. A lifelong learner, her certifications range from teaching music to superintendent level administration. Mrs. Petrone holds degrees from Dartmouth College, New York University and Columbia University. She is especially interested in imbuing curriculum with Gospel values. Mrs. Petrone is recently married and is excited to settle into her new community at St. Joseph School of Danbury.

Jo Ann Mathieson
Principal, St. Thomas Aquinas, Fairfield

FAIRFIELD—Jo Ann Mathieson has spent her life in Catholic education, having attended 12 years of Catholic grade schools, college and graduate school. She holds a bachelor’s degree in education, and a master’s in theology and administration. She has served as a teacher or principal in Catholic schools (elementary, high school and collegiate level) for 30 years. She has a love for teaching theology with specializations in bioethics and Catholic social teaching. “My lifelong passion for Catholic education has only grown stronger through the years. Whether it is in primary grades, high school or adult education, watching the growing appreciation for all that is true, good and beautiful has always been one of my greatest joys,” says Miss Mathieson. Miss Mathieson was drawn to St. Thomas Aquinas School in Fairfield by its unique spirit of family.

John Paul II Grant recipients

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano invited all recipients of the Saint John Paul II grants to a reception on Tuesday, September 4 at the Catholic Center to celebrate their award. Around 60 clergy, staff and laypeople who share in their parishes’ ministry faith formation endeavors were in attendance. The recipients were presented with a commemorative certificate in recognition of receiving a grant promoting innovation in faith formation.

Grant recipients’ plans encompassed a wide range of ideas, some of which included revitalization of youth ministry and faith formation, creating a vacation bible camp, planning a service immersion program and the purchase of new and improved materials for catechesis. Responding to Bishop Caggiano’s invitation to lifelong formation, in February 2018, parishes were invited to reimagine faith formation at every level by announcing the Saint John Paul II Fund for Religious Education and Youth Ministry, which offered grant opportunities to assist their efforts. The grants were specifically designed to help diocesan parishes/organizations serve those populations they may not have been able to serve before and to fund significant changes in the very fabric of their outreach to the faithful in their parishes. They ranged from $500 to $10,000 in total. Proposals that sought widespread reform were preferred over smaller proposals. Requests in excess of $5,000 were to be so innovative that they sought to change the very fabric of formation

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Catholic Schools

Bishop gives thanks for ‘Miracle’ of Kung Academy

By JOHN GROSSO

STAMFORD—Last spring, a passionate group of men and women entered into Superintendent of Catholic Schools Steve Cheeseman’s office with a dream: opening up a new school dedicated to classical and affordable Catholic education.

They sought approval from Dr. Cheeseman, and then presented their idea to Bridgeport Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who was fully supportive.

There was just one problem. The group came forward with the idea in the spring of 2018, and they wanted to start the new school in September.

“I must confess, at first I thought, ‘that’s crazy,’” said Dr. Cheeseman at the official ribbon cutting of the Cardinal Kung Academy on September 5. “But it takes a little bit of crazy to try something new. And of course, here we are, gathered today to bless the school!”

Though the heat index approached 100 degrees on a sweltering late summer afternoon in Stamford, there was not a single complaint from the 20 students gathered for the ribbon cutting and blessing, nor the teachers, administrators, or parents gathered. Rather, a spirit of optimism and promise that often accompanies the new school year permeated the air.

Nancy Grimm, a member of the original group that approached the bishop about the possibility of opening a new school earlier this year, led off the ceremony with brief words of welcome and shared a bit about how the group arrived at this historic moment.

“It takes a leap of faith to join a school that is only a few months old,” said Grimm, who is also a parent of a student attending the academy, “but that faith will be rewarded. Our teachers and our staff are so excited to get started. And our patron, Cardinal Kung, will intercede for us.”

Grimm was followed by Superintendent Steve Cheeseman, who offered his remarks of gratitude for the work of Grimm and the Board of Cardinal Kung Academy.

“Without your tireless devotion and hard work, we would not be here today,” he said.

Bishop Caggiano concluded the ceremony, offering his thanks to all involved, and offered a few parting words of wisdom on the school’s patron.

“First, let us give thanks for the miracle that is this school,” he began. “The patron of this school, Cardinal Kung, was a man of tremendous faith, who believed with all of his heart that Jesus was his savior—and he spent years in prison because he would not betray him.”

“We must learn from his example, and live a life of virtue and faith, and the rest is up to God!”

After delivering his address and cutting the ribbon at the front of the school, the crowd sang the Salve Regina in thanksgiving for the occasion.

The ceremony concluded as Bishop Caggiano blessed each classroom and administrative space, and gathered in joy with all present for a brief reception. (Cardinal Kung Academy is a division of Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford. For information, contact Cardinal Kung Academy by email: cardinalkungacademy@gmail.com or phone: 203.918.0992.)

**Open House October 27**

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**Reimagining the Catholic school classroom**

*By PAT HENNESSY*

**BROOKFIELD**—“I know that you will love this school. And you will do great work,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano to the students at the new St. Joseph Catholic Academy (SJCA) in Brookfield.

“Throw your heart and your mind and your soul into this experience.”

The bishop was speaking to students during a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated in St. Joseph Church on September 6. The Mass celebrated the opening of the new academy.

Formerly St. Joseph School, SJCA opened its doors in August to a personalized, multi-age blended learning experience. In addition to pre-K 3 and 4, the academy is arranged in learning bands for grades K-2, 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8. With this configuration, teachers encourage each individual student to learn at his or her own pace. When every child is challenged at their appropriate level, students gain confidence and their learning becomes self-directed, interesting and exciting.

The new academy was born of inspiration, determination and hard, dedicated work. “Last winter, St. Joseph School was at a crossroads,” said Father George O’Neill, pastor of St. Joseph Parish. “While he was on a pilgrimage, the seed of an idea was planted in Bishop Caggiano’s heart by the Blessed Mother. He was able to see a path forward, a sense of renewal and springtime.”

The path forward required the encouragement of the School Advisory Board, parents, administrators and, most of all, teachers in the new learning configuration. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Cheeseman assisted at the ribbon cutting ceremony following the opening Mass. “Your teachers worked all summer,” he told the students. “I don’t think they got any vacation this year.”

Teachers were encouraged and assisted by the new administrative team at SJCA. Head of School Mary Maloney is also president of Immaculate High School in Danbury and is the former principal of St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown. Director of Education Pam Fallon, who came to SJCA after serving as a middle school Language Arts teacher at St. Rose, had served the Nashua, N.H. public schools as the district’s interdisciplinary curriculum specialist and as the assistant principal at Fairgrounds Elementary School, an urban school with 850 students. It was there that Fallon became familiar with the multi-age, personalized learning education platform. In 2009 she was named Teacher of the Year.

And then have the gift of going on an eight-day Ignatian retreat right before profession.

On her feelings upon professing her first vows, Sr. Catherine Joy shared, “From the cross Christ proclaims His deep, limitless love for each human person with His whole being. When I first encountered Christ’s personal and unique love for me, I desired to say “I love you” back with every ounce of my being.

In religious consecration, I am able to respond to Jesus’ love that gave all, by offering Him my whole life—my possessions, loves will, my entire being—back in love. What joy it is to say now that He is mine and I am His!”
Bishop Addresses Vatican Youth Synod

Bishop Caggiano is one of six U.S. bishops currently in Rome participating in the Vatican Synod of Bishops on young people, faith and vocational discernment, which will run through the month of October. In his first “intervention” before the Holy Father and other bishops at the Synod on October 4, he urged the gathering to discuss the sexual abuse crisis with our youth who demand honesty and authenticity. His words were widely reported by Catholic New Agency and other news services around the world. At a time when the Church moves ahead with its own response to the abuse crisis (see story on page 3), the bishop’s four-minute talk galvanized those who seek transparency and accountability from Church leadership. Fairfield County Catholic is pleased to post his remarks below.

Holy Father, my brother bishops and my sisters and brothers in the Lord, allow me to share two points that weigh on my heart as we begin this synodal journey.

The first is the need for the Church to continue to directly address the issue of the sexual abuse of minors and youth by clerics in many regions of the world. It is a both a crime and a sin that has undermined the confidence and trust that young people must have in the Church’s leaders and the Church as an institution, so that they may again trust their priests and bishops to exercise true spiritual fatherhood, serve as adult figures in their lives and as authentic mentors of faith. The Instrumentum Laboris speaks insightfully of young people’s growing disaffection with civil and social institutions and their desire to address issues of discrimination and exploitation. Building upon this, we must continue to face courageously and honestly the betrayal of young people by clerics to whom they were entrusted. This sin must never again be found in our midst. Only in this way can the youth of the world believe our synodal call to offer them reassurance, comfort, hope, and belonging.

The second issue involves the role that technology now plays in the development of young people. The Instrumentum Laboris rightly identified the key phenomenon that visual images play as the prime medium through which young people understand reality. However, it does not fully explore, nor take advantage of the formative power that technology now exercises upon the full development of young people. For example, the document notes that music and the arts are powerful ways to open up spaces of interiority among young people. For example, the document notes that music and the arts are powerful ways to open up spaces of interiority among young people. However, the document notes that music and the arts are powerful ways to open up spaces of interiority among young people. However, the document notes that music and the arts are powerful ways to open up spaces of interiority among young people. However, the document notes that music and the arts are powerful ways to open up spaces of interiority among young people. However, the document notes that music and the arts are powerful ways to open up spaces of interiority among young people.

Allow me to conclude by offering one concrete way towards achieving this goal. It was Saint Thomas Aquinas who taught that the human person can encounter God by three privileged paths: truth, beauty and goodness. In terms of technology’s formative influence on young people, I would respectfully suggest that it is the path of beauty that must be better explored for the sake of evangelization and catechesis. In my experience with young people, the questions that haunt them are not simply intellectual ones. They are first and foremost affective questions (i.e., “questions of the heart”), that ask about their self-worth, the reasonableness of hope, the ability to commit to another and to be loved in return. We must unlock the power of beauty, which touches and captures the heart, precisely by utilizing the many opportunities now afforded by digital communication and social media to accompany young people to experience beauty in service of the Gospel.

Let us offer the sacred liturgy as a celebration of the beautiful, the transcendent, with an engagement of the affective senses. Let us work to capture the heart of all believers to encounter a God who does not promise a sterile existence but a life that is itself beautiful, rich in meaning, that invites one’s heart to dare to believe that this earthly life is worth living and worth fighting for in light of an eternal life where the restlessness of the heart will find its final rest in the salvation thatalone comes from Christ Jesus the Lord.

St. Rose at 60: A rich history and a bright future

St. Rose School opened its doors on September 3, 1958, and was originally a first through fifth-grade school. Within three years it added a middle school. Many years later, in 1989, a kindergarten was added and eventually, in 2000, a preschool emerged and is housed in the former convent with thriving 3-year-old, 4-year-old and guided by several religious orders through the years. In 2008 an addition was made to the school adding a state of the art science lab and modern gathering hall/gymnasium, a library, music room and more. School spirit filled the air forever in their heart. Dedicated to academic excellence, stellar service and living the Gospel values, St. Rose School has been a second home to thousands of students for 60 years and it continues to thrive. 60 years and going strong!
St. Francis of the Suburbs

Swimming Upstream

BY JOE PISANI

Joe Pisani has been a writer and editor for 30 years and can be reached at乔efpisani@yahoo.com.

My neighbors call me St. Francis, but they snicker when they do. I’m not rebuilding the Church or giving up my aposessions, but I talk to the animals, sort of, sometimes.

In our front yard, is a statue of Francis of Assisi with bird baths and bird feeders. My wife Sandy insists I’ve taken it to the extreme ... or to use her actual words, “You can’t do anything in moderation.”

You see, over the past two years, I’ve put up 15 bird feeders, devices for sunflower seeds, meal worms, orange slices, Welch’s grape jelly, hummingbird nectar, peanuts and safflower seeds. Our yard has become a Whole Foods for the birds, although to my dismay, I’m attracting even more squirrels, chipmunks, woodchucks, deer and rabbits that descend on us like barbarians sacking Rome.

I’ve had a devotion to St. Francis all my life, and I love the tales of how he preached to the birds and tamed Brother Wolf. If he lived today, he’d probably have a group of rescue dogs following him around town like Cesar Millan.

“All things of creation are children of the Father and thus brothers of man,” Francis said.

Our Lady of the Lamp and Hammer

A Dad’s View

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

Matthew Hennessey and his family are parishioners of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stamford.

It is a dark and drizzly night. The Hennesseys are enjoying a convivial evening, socializing at the home of The Friendly Family. All is going unusually smoothly. There’s always a hitch when the Hennesseys go a-visiting. But tonight? No hitch. Just laughter and good cheer.

Curfew looms. Mr. and Mrs. Hennessey check in with each other. It takes only a look. The youngsters have reached the natural limit. Time to wrap it up. Declare victory on this lovely outing and head home.

Air kisses, handshakes, hugs, and goodbyes. “Everybody into the car,” croons Mr. Hennessey, a handsome fellow with a lovely Irish tenor voice. He slips so effortlessly from friendmode to dadmode. See how he rolls.

Children pile in. The key turns and the engine starts. The Hennesseys wave as their mini-van reverses out of The Friendly Family driveway.

Then, on cue, the thumping. Bwap bwap bwap bwap. The unmistakable sound of a deflated tire.

Mr. Hennessey’s lovely Irish tenor voice drops into its base range. “Hello hitch,” he mutters to no one and to everyone.

“God wants us to help animals if they need help. Every creature in distress has the same right to be protected.” He certainly was ahead of his time in his thinking. I grew up in a place called Pine Rock Park and our home was surrounded by woods, fields and streams so I had rabbits, frogs, birds, turtles, snakes and dogs. It wasn’t the same for our four daughters, who have never been fond of snakes or any other woodland creature for that matter.

The closest I’ve come to Brother Wolf was a three-legged coyote that ran through the yard while we were barbecuing. At first, my family thought it was an injured German Shepherd, until I told them, “Noo, that’s a coyote.” Then, hysteria erupted. I won’t even describe what happened when they saw a bear in the blueberry bushes.

My love of birds has provoked a few family squabbles because they think the money I spend on seed could be spent more profitably repairing my car air conditioner.

We occasionally have exchanges like this:

WIFE: “The turkeys are standing near the door waiting for you to come out!”

ME: “They have to eat too.”

WIFE: “So do we.”

ME: “WWFD? (What would Francis do?)”

Our yard is like the Bronx Zoo on a busy day. I have a wagon filled with seed that I pull around to the feeding stations, and before you know it, I’m being followed by chickadees, titmice, blue jays, woodpeckers, nuthatches and grosbeaks, not to mention chipmunks that sneak into the pails when I’m not looking.

St. Francis, whose feast day is October 4, is the patron saint of animals and the environment. He didn’t have Wild Birds Unlimited or the Audubon Society, but he knew the natural world is a wonderful manifestation of God’s love and creative power. He also understood that the way we treat animals says a lot about how we treat others: “If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men,” he said.

In his encyclical about care for the environment, Pope Francis wrote, “St. Francis’ response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists.”

The other day I was looking out the kitchen window, when a house wren perched on the feeder. It opened its mouth and burst into song and its tiny breast seemed to be heaving with joy as it sang a heavenly melody. This tiny, tiny creature was giving praise to his Creator. Yes, we should consider the birds of the air.

“The very flowers of the field and the birds which His human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with His radiant presence,” Pope Francis said.

The smallest creatures can teach us the greatest truths about God. All we have to do is listen and learn.
Respect Life
40 Days for Life

DANBURY—Members of the diocesan community gathered in Danbury for the “40 Days for Life Vigil” on Saturday, September 29.

“Our community united with many others from coast to coast—and internationally—for a major simultaneous pro-life mobilization—the 40 Days for Life campaign,” said Christine Murphy of Danbury who organized the vigil.

Murphy, a parishioner of St. Mary Parish in Norwalk, said the vigil was held in the public right-of-way outside the Planned Parenthood facility located at 44 Main St., Danbury.

“This was the largest 40 Days for Life Campaign ever, with vigils taking place in 415 cities around the world. Faithful believers are praying that these efforts will mark the beginning of the end of abortion,” she said.

She said the mission of the campaign was to bring together the body of Christ in a spirit of unity during a focused 40 day campaign of prayer, fasting and peaceful activism.

“The vigil was one of repentance to seek God’s favor, and to turn hearts and minds,” said Murphy. “We can’t wait to see what God will accomplish when people of faith across our community and beyond unite for 40 days of prayer and fasting.”

For more information on the 40 Days for Life campaign, visit their website at: www.40daysforlife.com/danbury or contact Christine Murphy at: cmurphy1224@comcast.net or 203.733.9597.

Project Rachel

Day of Prayer and Healing: The healing journey begins with a “Day of Prayer Healing.” It consists of a healing witness talk, a video on the dynamics of healing from abortion, an opportunity to share if they so desire; and, most importantly, the offering of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Sacrament of the Mass in which they memorialize their children. A first step, this day gives them hope of healing from the pain they have often been living with.

Monthly Gatherings: The Gatherings (monthly healing groups), deal with specific issues of healing from post-abortion trauma, including denial, grief and shame, which are addressed through scripture meditations followed by questions and group sharing. Participants are able to grow as a community, facing their fears together and learning to deal with their individual experiences and abortion connectors that are crucial to identify in order to reach healing.

Hope and Healing Weekend Retreat: The Hope and Healing Weekend Retreat is an opportunity for those who have been involved in the process of the Day of Prayer and Healing and the gatherings to delve more deeply into their abortion experience. Conferences on post-abortion issues such as shame, acknowledgement of sin and forgiveness of self are given throughout the weekend by women who have been through the healing experience as well as the priest spiritual director of the retreat. Special annual events such as the Mercy and Advent Retreats are also available for continued healing.

Sibling Retreat: The Sibling Retreat allows a safe, confidential environment for those impacted by their parent’s abortion to connect with others who experience similar feelings. Like the other Entering Canaan retreats, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist are an important part of the healing process for the siblings.

(If you would like to know more about Project Rachel Ministry, visit the website: hopeafterabortion.com; if you would like to know more about Entering Canaan, visit the website: www.enteringcaanau.com. Please contact 203.895.3554 or projectrachel@diobpt.org for more information about the Day of Prayer and Healing and confidential registration for the retreat.)

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Open House is Sunday, October 28 from 2-4 pm.

For information please call 203.322.5866.
Respect Life

Compassion at the border

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—The nine days that Maria Palacios, a member of the Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC) Immigration Team, spent at the border in July as part of a humanitarian relief team left her with a sense of hope as well as dismay about the conditions she encountered.

On July 24, she departed for the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas where she joined a national Catholic Charities relief effort for immigrants.

At that time, the courts had ordered the federal government to reunite families that had been detained and separated at the border, and the respite center she visited was working with the children and parents who had been sent there from other sites.

Palacios traveled to Texas as a result of a call from Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, who requested that Catholic Charities across the country send professionals to provide support and assistance in the emergency effort.

On July 25, she wrote in her travel journal, “To say that the situation at the border is overwhelming is an understatement. Everything is extremely fast moving because the center is receiving 100 to 200 families each day. Families that have recently been released from ICE custody are left at a bus station where Sister Norma and her team pick them up and bring them to the center.”

Once at the center, the families were housed, assisted with their immigration paperwork, fed, clothed and helped with arrangements to reconnect with their family members who were located in many settings across the country. “Our days here are long and exhausting,” she wrote in her travel journal on July 31. “There is always something that needs to get done and someone that needs to be assisted. Sometimes it’s impossible to simply find time to eat.”

Prior to coming to the Diocese of Bridgeport, Palacios worked at Catholic Charities of Las Cruces where she provided case management for clients in need of V-Visas and those who were part of the Women Against Violence Act (WAVA). She also spent last year teaching middle school newcomers in the border town of Chapareal, New Mexico with Assumption Mission Associates, a Jesuit Volunteer Corp.

While working with the families, her heart went out to the children. “Most are terrified to leave their parents,” she wrote. “I was filling out the change of address with one father that had a five-year-old child with him. The father had to step away about six feet away from where I was while his daughter was writing on a notebook. When she looked up and saw he was gone, she started crying asking ‘Y mi papa? Donde esta mi papa?’—‘and my dad, where is my dad?’ My heart broke and as I held back the tears I calmed her down and pointed to her dad.”

One mother told Palacios that she had been separated from her nine-year-old daughter for two months. She said that she cried for weeks non-stop in the detention center and the officers would tell her to stop crying and “man-up.” She had left her country after losing hope due to the gangs in her hometown.

The experience left her questioning why the situation had to be handled that way.

“I am disappointed in the way the entire situation was created. It showed a disregard and lack of compassion for the families.”

However, her work and the voices of so many people who spoke out, volunteered or sent donations renewed her sense of hope and mission.

“There were all these great volunteers who donated clothing and cooked food and brought it to the families who were waiting for days to be reunited. The experience gave me a new appreciation for order, organization and most of all leadership. Overall it was an amazing experience. I am grateful to be part of this history.”

Palacios said she knows she’s doing the work that God wants her to do and she hopes to pursue a law degree to better serve people with immigration issues.

“Even though the days are long and the work is constant, I know that God is giving me the strength to continue to do this service. I also do this with the love and strength from everyone back home that has been sending me endless support,” she wrote.

Remembrance Day

TRUMBULL—A group of women from the Diocese of Bridgeport commemorated the National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children by praying the Rosary for the unborn.

They gathered at 3 pm at the memorial site in the Gate of Heaven Cemetery on Daniels Farm Road in Trumbull for pro-life prayers and remembrance.

The group also visited the memorial site last year to pray for the unborn. For more information visit: abortionmemorials.com

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Capitol Punishment
Evolution or Revolution?

By GEORGE F. KAIN, Ph.D.

When Pope Francis recently declared that the death penalty is “inadmissible” for consideration in any criminal case, some of us actively involved in the anti-death penalty movement were intrigued by the initial responses from many of our Catholic friends and casual supporters of abolition. The directive which allegedly “changed” Catholic Church teaching on the issue of capital punishment was characterized by some as primarily a warning to other countries who actively practice executions for them to end their barbaric, wanton use of the death penalty. Upon closer examination, however, the “new” teaching concerning the use of the death penalty must be seen as a call directed as much to Catholics living in the United States as it is to those living in other, more “barbaric” countries. There are a number of reasons that the Catholic community at large must understand the history and significance of the Pope’s declaration, which is now part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC #2267). That section of the catechism now will read:

“If we are called to be a witness to the truth, we can do so as we stand together.”

Church (CCC #2267). That section of the catechism now will read:

“Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

In consideration of Pope Francis’ effort to raise our awareness of the importance of the renewed Catholic teaching on the death penalty, here are some practical considerations regarding the change that he made, how this change occurred, and what it should mean for all of us.

All Catholics need to consider their own views, and need to support governmental leaders who respect all life without distinction. This teaching is a call for all Catholics who might be “on the fence” on right-to-life issues to greater accountability. Practically speaking, this renewed teaching is designed to restore, and unify all Catholics on all right-to-life issues rather than leaving room for fragmentation through the use of loopholes and special conditions. Church communities can now stand strong and in unity. If we are called to be a witness to the truth, we can do so as we stand together, empowered through our vehement objection to the death penalty. Acceptance of and reflection on this teaching can therefore actually serve as a catalyst to strengthen and intensify our worldwide call to end abortion and euthanasia as well. Catholic leaders need to unify and strengthen their desire to create a healing environment for victims to achieve true justice,

Continued on page 25

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Protecting God’s Children

Leadership Summit discusses moving forward

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—“There is tremendous hope in a difficult climate,” said diocesan director of Safe Environments Erin Neil, at the Safe Environments Leadership Summit recently held at the Catholic Center.

“Christ is our true healer and he will help guide us through this time as he has in all times,” said Neil who gave a brief overview of the Dallas Charter and also introduced survivors of clerical sexual abuse who now lead the diocesan Committee for Hope and Healing.

Neil said revisions that began on the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in 2013 have already been in place in our diocese since 2003. These revisions include extending the charter to include all individuals working with young people and to include vulnerable adults. These revisions were passed and are to be put in place in other dioceses in June of 2018.

Survivor group members Peter Philipp, Peggy Fry and Joseph Cann shared difficult and heartbreaking stories of their own experiences with abuse and answered questions from the more than 60 religious educators at the Safe Environments Leadership Summit.

Survivors discussed how abuse changes lives and how important it is to look for and notice signs. “If you think it might be [abuse] report it,” said Philipp. The survivors each explained also learned about resources for survivors, procedures on maintaining Safe Environments in the diocese, and an overview of Safe Environments training programs for children and parents.

Presenting at the summit were Erin Neil, director of Safe Environments for the Diocese of Bridgeport, Rose Talbot-Babey, coordinator of Adult Faith Formation for the Diocese of Bridgeport, Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute for the Diocese of Bridgeport, and Deacon John DiTaranto, Safe Environment Program assistant, and Astrid Alvarez, VIRTUS Training & Development specialist for the Diocese of Bridgeport. Survivors included Peter Philip, Peggy Fry, and Joseph Cann, father of an abuse survivor.

The Safe Environments program in the Diocese of Bridgeport has a full time director, Ms. Erin Neil, L.C.S.W. Safe Environments programs oversee the implementation of Charter mandates including victim assistance, criminal background checks, written Codes of Conduct and child sexual abuse awareness and prevention training for priests, deacons, lay employees, volunteers, children and youth.

(For questions or concerns relating to Safe Environments, background checks, VIRTUS Awareness Training, resources for victims of abuse or mandated reporting, please contact: Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., Director of Safe Environments by phone: 203.416.1406; 203.650.3265 or email: eneil@diobpt.org.)

SURVIVORS SPEAK—Survivor group members Peter Philipp, Peggy Fry and Joseph Cann shared difficult and heartbreaking stories of their own experiences with abuse and answered questions from the more than 60 religious educators at the Safe Environments Leadership Summit.

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Survivor group members Peter Philipp, Peggy Fry and Joseph Cann shared difficult and heartbreaking stories of their own experiences with abuse and answered questions from the more than 60 religious educators in attendance.

They expressed the joy they felt upon getting to experience the Mass of Reparation, which took place at St. Augustine Cathedral on Saturday, September 15. Philipp told the gathered that he turned to Fry during the Mass and said, “I am so sad that we had to have this,” to which she responded, “but aren’t you glad we did?”

Survivors discussed how abuse changes lives and how important it is to look for and notice signs. “If you think it might be [abuse] report it,” said Philipp. The survivors each explained also learned about resources for survivors, procedures on maintaining Safe Environments in the diocese, and an overview of Safe Environments training programs for children and parents.

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Respect Life

‘Conversion of heart needed’ to address racism

By JOHN GROSSO

PROVIDENCE—The Catholic Church must implement consistent practices that result in concrete progress in the fight against racism, said participants from five New England dioceses and Providence College who gathered for an evening symposium on “Racism in the Catholic Church.”

“Catholic social teaching on race suffers from a lack of passion. Racial justice is not now ‘Conversion of heart needed’ to address racism nor has it ever been a passionate matter for most Catholics,” said Bishop Shelton Fabre, Bishop of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, and Chair of the USCCB Ad-Hoc Committee Against Racism.

More than 300 gathered for the evening, which was hosted in the Diocese of Providence and co-sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Speaking after a stirring performance from the McVinney School youth choir, Bishop Fabre, the keynote speaker, offered a perspective on what the Church has historically done to combat the sin of racism, where we are now and what we can do in the future.

“In order to affect change, we as a Church must have a genuine conversion of the heart,” said Bishop Fabre, “Conversion is a long road to travel for the individual, for institutions and for a nation, but in Christ, we can find the strength necessary to make the journey.”

After recounting the history of the Catholic Church’s response to racism, Bishop Fabre cited the progress made by the USCCB Ad-Hoc Committee Against Racism through a slew of initiatives, including listening sessions, resource development, tools for parishes and schools and much needed policy changes.

“It is only from a place of humility that we can look honestly at past failures, ask for forgiveness and move toward healing.”

After the keynote from Bishop Fabre, four panelists from various backgrounds spoke about their experience of racism in the Catholic Church.

“Speaking as a Catholic African American, I can tell you that the Church does not feel like home. We don’t feel comfortable,” one panelist said.

There was an audible murmur in the crowd after that statement, and many spoke up to voice their agreement with it.

Taking the podium once more to respond to the emotion, Bishop Fabre responded: “The Church must move forward and to do so, we place our confidence in Jesus Christ, for with Christ, we stand in the spirit of justice, love, and peace.”

After the emotional testimony, the panelists spoke of the spirit of optimism they shared at the Ad-Hoc Committee Against Racism’s plans to enact real and lasting initiatives to help rid the Church, the country and the world of racism.

Bishop Fabre shared in that optimism.

“We will make our way towards progress with faith in God’s grace, hope in our own determination, confidence in the workings of the Holy Spirit and love for each other as fellow children of God.”

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‘Everybody has at least one mission’

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—“We all have a mission, whether young or old, big or small, healthy or sick... right here in our own parishes and our own homes,” says local businessman and charitable volunteer, Vince Santilli.

The long-time parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, along with his wife Jeanine and three children, says he often reflects on the challenge of Pope Francis to become a “missionary disciple” of Christ. Santilli, a former banking executive for People’s United Bank, now serves as CEO/Executive Director of Homes for the Brave.

“I think everybody should have at least one mission,” Santilli explains, as he considers his work at Homes for the Brave, a Bridgeport based non-profit organization that works to provide housing services to those experiencing homelessness, with a special focus on service to men and women veterans.

During his visit, Santilli worked closely with Father Tom Hagan and Hands Together— an organization based in Port-au-Prince which seeks to give hope to the poor living in rural Haiti through a variety of human development programs, including: water well digging, agricultural programs and production, assisting the poorest schools, clinics and parishes in the northern diocese of Gonaives and in Cap Haitien. Hands Together was founded in 1986 by Fr. Tom Hagan after he led a group of Lafayette College students to Haiti and was compelled to respond to the needs of the poor there. He left his post as Catholic Chaplain of Princeton University and moved to Port-au-Prince in 1997. Since then, Hands Together has emerged as a key educational and development organization working in Cite Soleil.

They have built free schools where there were none and provided every student with a daily hot meal. Hands Together has 7 campuses, including a high school, as well as a free clinic and an elderly outreach and housing program. They are one of Cite Soleil’s largest employers, giving decent, service-oriented jobs to hundreds of residents.

Santilli met Fr. Hagan while he was attending college at the University of Pennsylvania, where Fr. Hagan was the chaplain. Santilli says of Fr. Hagan, “He has had a major impact on the way we lead our lives.”

Santilli discussed the farm in Gonaives, where 450 people were generating food for themselves and their families. Describing the type of poverty he witnessed in Haiti, Santilli recalled, “We understand that even people here in some cities in Connecticut and in other parts of the country are experiencing extreme poverty, but in Haiti misery is a better descriptor and even might be being too generous.”

Santilli describes Cite Soleil as a “3 square mile slum with 500,000 people, no electricity and scarce medical care, where the rats outnumber the people 10 to 1, and the people are desperately hungry all the time.”

“It is one thing to hear about it, another to see it in person,” Santilli says, “Even our poorest live like kings and queens in comparison.”

Throughout the years, Santilli has visited parishes in the diocese to speak about his experience with Hands Together and the importance of giving to charitable organizations such as this. He shares about the conditions in Haiti, the amazing work that Hands Together does, and the responsibility we all have, especially as Catholics, to respond to this.

This is his fourth year doing mission appeals. He has spoken at St. Joseph’s in Danbury, St. Luke’s in Westport, St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull, and Assumption in Westport, as well as throughout the Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania and the Archdioceses of Providence, Boston, Newark, Albany, Rhode Island and all across Connecticut. “I find it very fulfilling to do my part to respond to those cries of the poorest of the poor,” says Santilli, reflecting on both his work at Homes for the Brave and Hands Together.

Opening its doors in 2002, Hands Together has at least one mission.
Vocations

Clark to begin formation at major seminary

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

DARIEN—On Saturday, September 8, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated Mass at St. Thomas More parish during which Michael Clark was admitted to candidacy.

Michael Clark was born in Chichester, England on May 5, 1983 to Timothy and Lesley Clark.

He studied at Cambridge University, graduating with a master’s in theology and law in 2005. He studied for five years. At the same time, he was singing professionally at Exeter Cathedral and later moved to Buckfast Abbey as director of music, establishing a new professional choir of men and women.

In 2012, he entered seminary to discern the call further and started a second assignment in the diocese and as a barrister for five years. At the same time he was singing professionally at Exeter Cathedral and later moved to Buckfast Abbey as director of music, establishing a new professional choir of men and women from scratch.

In 2012, he entered seminary to study philosophy and theology. He received an STB from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 2016 and studied at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute.

In 2016, Clark visited Diocese of Bridgeport as a guest, not expecting anything more than a pleasant vacation. When he returned to seminary, the people of Fairfield County were a constant preoccupation in his prayer and he began to discern the possibility of a call to serve as a priest in Bridgeport.

Clark was due to be ordained to the diaconate in July, but left the Diocese of Plymouth in England at the request of Bishop Caggiano, in order to come and “breathe the air of Fairfield County.”

Clark arrived at St. Thomas More in Darien in November of 2017 as a guest of the diocese to discern the call further and started a second assignment at the Catholic Academy of Stamford/Trinity Catholic High School in Bridgeport as a guest, not expecting anything more than a pleasant vacation. When he returned to seminary, the people of Fairfield County were a constant preoccupation in his prayer and he began to discern the possibility of a call to serve as a priest in Bridgeport.

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Clark arrived at St. Thomas More in Darien in November of 2017 as a guest of the diocese to discern the call further and started a second assignment at the Catholic Academy of Stamford/Trinity Catholic High School.

August 2018.
Below, Michael shares some of his thoughts and feelings as he begins his major seminary journey.

“It was something of a homecoming to return to St. Thomas More parish for Candidacy after a summer away. It was my first assignment in the diocese and as such, will always hold a special place in my heart. It was wonderful to greet parishioners who I’m blessed to call friends and to share stories of a long hot summer.

But this was no ordinary homecoming, because my difference of attire from regular clothes to a clerical suit was symbolic of a deeper change within me.

I came to Darien a stranger from a foreign country with a task to discern whether or not I might be able to call Fairfield County home. Due to the extraordinary generosity of the whole parish community I was quickly welcomed into the family, and as such I was able to see the Lord’s face in the people he wants me to serve. Without knowing it, I was changed: for I could not have stood up and made promises to the bishop stating my intention to complete my preparation for ordination were it not for the support and love of the parish.

It was humbling in the extreme to greet people as they wished me well and assured me of their prayers. I pray for St. Thomas More parish every day—and now that I have moved into St. John Fisher Seminary, I am privileged to have yet another great English saint as a patron, though perhaps I have an even greater affinity with the Cardinal Martyr, because I studied at the same University and walked some of the same streets as he did, albeit some 500 years later.

Nevertheless, I feel very blessed to have had such a deep experience of parish life as part of my formation, because it showed me so clearly that the gospel is not just a set of propositions; it is a dynamic relationship with Christ, nurtured by the sacraments and lived in community with all the joys and sorrows that ensue. It was the people of St. Thomas More parish who taught me that—and such a gift is priceless.”

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A Mass of joy!

FAIRFIELD—This year, the annual Mass for those with Down syndrome, their families and friends was celebrated on September 16 at St. Pius X Church. The Mass would best be summed up in one word... "joy".

As a father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete" (John 15:9-11).

No one can deny the joy and light of Jesus Christ that shines forth from these children with Down syndrome. They are truly a gift to our community. They bring happiness wherever they go and to whomever they meet. You see it on their faces, their beautiful smiles and the families who love them so much and who are trying to be the very best they can be for them.

The mission of the St. Robert Bellarmine Apostolate is to support and strengthen individuals with Down syndrome, their families and friends through prayer.

You could see the "joy" they brought to all who attended the Mass, the family members, friends, teachers, paraprofessionals and caregivers. It was a lovely sunny day outside and sunshine radiated in St. Pius X Church that day as well! We are certainly looking forward to the Mass next year.

The mission of the St. Robert Bellarmine Apostolate is to support and strengthen individuals with Down syndrome, their families and friends through prayer.

1) Praying the intercessory prayers to St. Robert Bellarmine to increase devotion to this saint as a patron for individuals with Down syndrome
2) Celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on the feast day of St. Robert (September 17, or the Sunday before or after his feast day) for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and friends
3) Encouraging Catholic parents to join or to form MOMs+DADS (Mother of Mercy spiritual Divine Advocate for Down syndrome) prayer/support group at their local parish

For more information about the St. Robert Bellarmine Apostolate contact: strapostolate@optimum.net, or visit the website, www.saintfordown-syndrome.org.

You can help the Blue Mass

about 200 boys and girls who play basketball or who are cheerleaders. Janes also has 23 boys in the Wilderness Program, which introduces many children to the outdoors.

On receiving this award, Janes says, "It is a great feeling of accomplishment. It reminds me why I do what I do. I have always felt it is my civic duty to give back to these kids and help them succeed in life.”

Janes also holds an annual coat drive for the less fortunate of the community, he has an annual backpack giveaway program and also meets community members at the Coffee with a Cop events.

For his service to the people of Norwalk, CT, the Diocese of Bridgeport, the Knights of Columbus, and Chief Thomas Kulhawik presented the Blue Mass Award for 2018 and plaque to Detective Christopher Imparato.

Chief Kulhawik noted that Detective Imparato joined the

Norwalk Police Department in February 2009. He has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Marist College. Detective Imparato worked in the patrol division until his promotion in April 2014. He has received two meritorious commendations in his career as well as a unit citation. Detective Imparato was the 2017 Norwalk Police Department Officer of the Year. He worked extensively for two years on two cold case murder investigations in conjunction with the cold case unit of the Office of the Chief States Attorney. Because of his persistence and diligence as the lead investigator, Detective Imparato was able to develop evidence to support probable cause for the arrest of the suspects involved in these two murder cases. Detective Imparato has always taken great pride in his work and in studying these cases, to fully understand them by deconstructing and then reconstructing them in order to bring them to fruition. Detective Imparato’s professionalism and his commitment to his work are a credit to him and the Norwalk Police detective bureau.

There was a moment of silence for all the men and women in blue who died this past year, and a special remembrance of Ridgefield Police Chief John Roche who passed away only a week prior to the Mass. Dr. George Kain, Commissioner of the Ridgefield Police Department, read a heartfelt tribute to Chief Roche, saying, “he encouraged others to be the best they could be,” calling him a man of strong faith. Family, friends and members of the community gathered in the school gym following the Mass.

The Blue Mass is sponsored by The Fairfield County Councils and Assemblies of the Knights of Columbus and other generous benefactors throughout Fairfield County.

Judge Holzberg from page 3

He has extensive experience serving as a mediator and arbitrator in civil matters in state and federal court, including personal injury, employment, construction, environmental, probate, insurance, intellectual property and commercial disputes.

He retired from the bench in September 2012 after more than 22 years of service as a Superior Court judge.

He was appointed to the Superior Court in 1990 by Gov. William O’Neill. While on the bench, he served as the presiding judge for civil matters in the Middlesex, New Britain and Waterbury judicial districts. During his career, he earned a reputation for his skill in crafting settlements in some of Connecticut’s highest profile and most complex cases and became one of the state’s most sought-after mediators.

He has received several awards, including the 2011 Connecticut Bar Association’s Henry J. Nardoni Award for distinguished service and the 2005 Hon. Robert F. Zampano Award for Excellence in Mediation. In 1998, he received the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association Judicial Award.

Before his appointment to the bench, he was on the faculty of the University of Connecticut School of Law and also served as an Assistant Public Defender in the Office of the Chief Public Defender.

He is a frequent speaker and author on the topic of mediation and arbitration. He has been an invited speaker on ADR strategies for the Practicing Law Institute, the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, the Connecticut Defense Lawyers Association and the Hartford County Bar Association. Holzberg serves as co-chair with Retired Chief Justice Chase Rogers of Day Pitney LLP of Connecticut Lawyers for Immigration Justice, www.ctjustice.org.

Pullman & Comley will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2019 and is one of Connecticut’s largest firms, providing a wide range of legal services to clients in the New England region, as well as throughout the United States and internationally. The firm has offices in Bridgeport, Hartford, Stamford, Waterbury, and Westport, Connecticut and White Plains, New York. The firm is an active member of the Law Firm Alliance, an international affiliation of law firms.

(For more information, please visit www.pullcom.com.)

Ip II Grants from page 11

in a given parish.

Grant requests needed to match specific criteria and relate to the announced theme for each year. The theme for the 2018 inaugural grants was Reimagining Faith Formation. Grants could be used for projects in parishes/organizations within the Diocese of Bridgeport that:

Targeted a demographic previously underserved

Reflected innovation in faith formation

Provided creative ministry to/with/families

Offered specific ministry for a population mentioned in an Invitation to Lifelong Formation publication.

Those who received grants from the Saint John Paul II Fund for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry are expected to:

Complete a report in December 2018 and April 2019 outlining the ministry opportunities made possible by the
Bishop’s Lecture Series

Sign of Cross is most powerful prayer

By EMILY CLARK

If asked, “What is the most powerful prayer?” one might answer the Lord’s Prayer or the Hail Mary. To Jon Leonetti, however, it is the Sign of the Cross.

A widely-known Catholic speaker, successful author, and radio host, Leonetti spoke with a group of local parishioners on Thursday, October 4 at Assumption Church in Westport as part of The Bishop’s Lecture Series. This new initiative of The Leadership Institute invites inspirational speakers to present stories of their realizations of Jesus’ presence in their lives.

According to Leonetti, this sign that commemorates of the crucifixion of Christ for all Catholics allows us to see the greatest act of love.

“We believe He took on the worst execution: dying on the cross,” said Leonetti, gesturing toward the crucifix hanging behind him. “He freely chose to lay down His life. In the cross, we live.”

Leonetti preached that in taking up his own cross and sharing his encounters with God, this author of three inspirational books sees an obligation to re-engage family life.

“I am a Mother Theresa fanatic!” he said, laughing. “I always ask myself ‘How can I bring peace?’ Go home and love your family.”

Speaking of his own pre-school-age children, he said they—and all who believe—are pure gifts, the results of God’s love and life. “Young people today are not satisfied with just the ‘what,’” he said. “They want to know ‘why.’” And this, he added, is what the Lord is calling for us.

Dying on the cross was the ultimate death penalty, Leonetti said, calling it “disgusting” and “smelly” with bone fragments littering the ground. “But saints see suffering as an opportunity,” he added, “not an obstacle.”

According to Leonetti, a new Christian martyr is born every six minutes. “We are the martyrs of the new millennium,” he said, making the Sign of the Cross. “We will live the way in which we love.”

JON LEONETTI—A widely-known Catholic speaker, successful author and radio host, Leonetti spoke with a group of local parishioners on Thursday, October 4 at Assumption Church in Westport as part of The Bishop’s Lecture Series.

Rain Down

Sunday, October 28, 2018 from 2:00-8:30pm
Open to all teens in Grades 8-12
Registration Fee: $10

The Church of St. Cecilia
1184 Newfield Avenue, Stamford, CT 06905

Keynote & entertainment by internationally-known performer: Tony Melendez

- Dynamic & Inspirational Presentations
- Sunday Mass & Eucharistic Adoration
- Service Projects
- Food & Games
- Sacrament of Reconciliation

Sponsored by St. Cecilia Parish & the Diocese of Bridgeport
Register online at wwwFORMATIONreimagined.org/rain-down
by Sunday, October 21. Space is limited!
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www.fairfieldctelderlaw.com

Students meet their donors

Students sat captivated as Mr. O’Malley recounted how he grew from modest means. He shared with them his own passions and something he would do if he were president.

Mr. O’Malley went on to say, scholars and I are a part of something great,” remarked DeLallo.

The O’Malleys suggested the students also “thank the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano for being the compelling advocate for Catholic education that he is.”

and to not exacerbate the pain and suffering that victims have already suffered, through the continued calls for execution of offenders. Pope Francis wrote a letter in 2015 to the International Commission Against the Death Penalty, and characterized capital punishment as “cruel, inhumane and degrading” and said it “does not bring justice to the victims, but only foments revenge.”

In closing, where does all of this leave us, as Catholics, today? Some will most certainly defy the Pope’s declaration as being out of touch with the will of the people, and claim that this issue is and should remain under governmental authority that should not to be disturbed by the Church. Such declarations are now more clearly inconsistent with Church teaching. Of the new formulation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Ladaria, said it “desires to give energy to a movement toward a decisive commitment to favor a mentality that recognizes the dignity of every human life and, in respectful dialogue with civil authorities, to encourage the creation of conditions that allow for the elimination of the death penalty where it is still in effect.”

Sadly, it remains in effect right here in the United States. The question is, armed with this renewed call to respect all life, what will we do to change this?

George F. Kain, Ph.D. is police commissioner, Town of Ridgefield, is professor and chairman, Division of Justice and Law Administration Program at Western CT State University. He has worked for the last 20 years to abolish the death penalty by serving as president of the CT Network to Abolish the Death Penalty, and testifying in various state legislatures around the US to continue abolition. He also serves as a volunteer consultant with the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops in Tallahassee FL, working to abolish the death penalty there. He is presently in the Diaconate Formation program for the Diocese of Bridgeport and a parishioner at St. Mary, Ridgefield, where he is involved in multiple ministries.

(To read the full article visit our website or follow this link www.bridgeportdiocese.org/evolution-or-revolution-the-catholic-church-call-to-abolish-the-death-penalty.)
Lavery, revered football coach, dies

By DON HARRISON

Earl Lavery’s Fairfield Prep football teams won three state championships and 80 percent of their games across 28 seasons, but he accepted few plaudits for this sustained success.

“It is still about the team,” he once said. “Good relationships with the kids remain the key. Success was always a team thing. Any success for a head coach depends on the kids he has and the assistants he has.”

James Earl Lavery, the man who became synonymous with Fairfield Prep for his record-setting 28-year career as head coach, died at his home in Westerly, R.I., on August 25. He was 86.

When Lavery retired as the Jesuits’ head coach following the 1992 season, his 230 career victories represented an all-time high for Connecticut high school football coaches. (He’s now seventh).

Earning a football scholarship to Holy Cross, he played three varsity seasons—primarily as a defensive tackle—for the Jesuit college and graduated in 1954 with a bachelor’s degree in political science. Lavery sold cars and worked at Sikorsky Aircraft before returning to Prep as a math teacher and assistant football coach. This career move paid many dividends. He taught math for 32 years at his alma mater, and also coached track and golf briefly. And after nine seasons as an assistant, he succeeded Joe Brosley as head coach in 1965.

He proceeded to direct the Jesuits to three CIAC Class LL state titles (1977, ’82, ’88), four undefeated, untied seasons (1967, ’69, ’73, ’77) plus an 11-0-1 record in 1975.

No fewer than a dozen of his players earned first-team berths on the New Haven Register All-State Team, among them end Tom Lyddy (1966), defensive backs Paul Halas (1973) and John DiTulio (1977), tight end Tim Grant (1991) and the Zingo brothers—linebacker Chris (1989) and defensive lineman Randy (1991).

Chris Zingo developed into a two-time All-American linebacker at Cornell and was voted into the university’s Athletic Hall of Fame. Lavery received his share of honors through the years, too: induction into no fewer than three halls of fame (Connecticut High School Football Coaches Association, 1991; Fairfield County Sports, 2013; Fairfield Prep Athletics, 2017), a Gold Key award from the Connecticut Sports Writers’ Alliance in 1996, and several Coach of the Year designations.

Survivors include his wife, Eleanor; two children, Kathleen A. Lavery of Bridgeport and James M. Lavery of Jacksonville, Fla.; two sisters, Sheila Creatore of Westport and Kathleen Campion of New York City; three grandchildren, an infant great-granddaughter, a stepson and several nieces and nephews. (Donations in Lavery’s name may be made to the Fairfield Prep Athletic Dept., 1073 North Benson Road, Fairfield, CT 06824.)
Inicia el Mes Morado del Perú
En honor al Señor de los Milagros

BRIDGEPORT—La misa de 11:30 de la mañana del domingo fue especial para los feligreses de la iglesia Saint Mary en Bridgeport, porque la fuerza de la fe en el Señor de los Milagros, patrono del Perú, atrajo a cientos de peregrinos y varias cuadrillas de devotos que desde lejos vinieron para cargar las andas con un inmenso cuadro del Cristo crucificado en la cruz y a sus pies la virgen de Los Dolores.

El Padre Rolando Torres, oficiante de la homilía en honor al Señor de los Milagros que se presenta como una imagen del Cristo crucificado, reveló que la misa dominical era para reparar el corazón de Jesús herido con una muestra de valentía de que la iglesia católica está viva a pesar de los reportes que salen en las noticias y en los periódicos de abuso sexual en la iglesia católica está viva a pesar de los reportes que salen en los periódicos; pero nosotros tenemos que entender que nuestra vida está rodeada del amor de Dios y esta es una muestra de valentía de que la iglesia católica está viva a pesar de los reportes que salen en los periódicos.

En plena celebración de la fiesta en honor al Señor de los Milagros, el sacerdote pidió a sus feligreses que se queden y caminen en la procesión como una muestra de valentía de que la iglesia católica está viviendo a pesar de los reportes que salen en las noticias y en los periódicos.

“Estamos en una batalla que es sobre las fuerzas malignas que quieren destruir nuestra iglesia. Pero vamos a pelear por todos por los que aman la fuerza de la iglesia. Las fuerzas malignas quieren acabar con la iglesia, pero no podrán vencernos porque si Cristo está conmigo (nosotros) quien contra él”, dijo el Sacerdote durante el sermón dominical.

Habló además de la fe y se lamentó que muchos miembros de la iglesia hayan lastimado a los niños y por ende el corazón de Jesús y eso ha producido que muchas personas tengan dudas sobre su fe. “Hay maldad y esta duelo, pero nosotros tenemos que entender que nuestra vida está rodeada del amor de Dios y estamos aquí para reparar el Corazón de Cristo”, dijo.

Para luego afirmar que no va a faltar el amor de Cristo y que la fe debe estar afianzada en el amor de Dios. “Tenemos que ser valientes, tenemos que pedir perdón y misericordia”, dijo.

Luego agradeció a la Hermandad parroquial de la iglesia de Saint Miguel Arcángel, rezo que se realizó en la misa de Celebración del Señor de los Milagros minutos antes de que el sacerdote diera la bendición final.

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Catholic Academy of Bridgeport
Something more.

Las cuatro escuelas de la Academia Católica de Bridgeport proporcionan un entorno de aprendizaje centrado en Cristo, académicamente riguroso en el cual la diversidad cultural es bienvenida y celebrada. Nutrimos, fomentamos y retamos a nuestros estudiantes en preparación para una vida exitosa de liderazgo y servicio. TODAS LAS RELIGIONES SON BIENVENIDAS. ASISTENCIA FINANCIERA DISPONIBLE.
The voice of God

Poetry

By Thomas H. Hicks

As one grows older, one comes again to love the elemental world: a gray squirrel making his wary stop-and-go way across a tumbled stone wall, the late afternoon slant of the sun, birds singing their good-bye to the day.

For me, the mixed world of the four seasons is the best world. I would not forfeit the beauty of a New England May and the glory of our October just to be warm the year round.

Poets, mystics, and the Scriptures tell how there are some immortal elemental sounds in nature where God’s voice can be heard.

The first is the sound of rain. Hosea 6:3: “Let us strive to know the Lord… He will come to us like the rain, like the rain that waters the earth.” Thomas Merton wrote that there is the talk that the rain makes, and he calls rain “the most comforting speech in the world, and as long as it talks, I am going to listen” (Raid on the Unspeakable).

I think there is no sound sweeter than the sudden beat of rain at midnight. We sleep content with the drone of rain on the roof. It seems to me you never feel alone when it rains. Job 37:13: “He always brings the rain to water His earth and show His love.”

In his famous Rabbit novels, author John Updike describes a scene where his protagonist, Rabbit, now living in Florida, is back in New England visiting his son. He is given the same room he had when he grew up in the house. He sees that his son had cut down the tree that was outside the window. Rabbit is saddened by that and reflects, “The sound of the rain in that beech tree had been the most religious experience of his life.” We should pay attention, listen to the sound of rain. If God has any voice in the world it is the wind. Job refers to the wind as “the breath of God” (37:10), and Psalm 104:3 says God “walks on the wings of the wind.” Psalm 135:7 says that “from His treasures He sends the wind.”

If God has any voice in the world it is the wind. Job refers to the wind as “the breath of God” (37:10), and Psalm 104:3 says God “walks on the wings of the wind.” Psalm 135:7 says that “from His treasures He sends the wind.”

The waves keep coming like they’ve been doing for billions of years—the endless waves, an image of eternity. There’s the slap and hiss of the waves, followed by the seething sound as the water recedes. There’s the endless incoming and gathering. The sea is never quiet, it talks all day and all night. And there’s the squabble and cry of the gulls, and the moon glaze across the water is a loveliness hard to surpass.

In one of the Psalms there is a line that says of God: “He has cupped in His hands the waters of the sea.”

Listening to the sea one can hear God’s power and grandeur, and voice. Walk winter beaches. The voice of the sea is seductive, inviting the spirit to wander in solitude.

Thunderstorms are the eminent manifestation of the voice of God. Job 37:2 “Listen! Listen to the roar of His voice, to the rumbling that comes from His mouth. He thunders with His majestic voice.” Psalm 18:13 “The Lord thunders in the heavens; the Most High lets His voice be heard.” Thunder and lightning are the voice of presence and judgment, an expression of irresistible power and the voice of God.

The lightning passes, usually to the west, and the thunder still growling and rumbling slowly moves on. The arrival of a storm, full of intimations, is an experience in itself.

God’s voice speaks and thunders in the world in marvelous ways. There is the language of nature, which is a manifestation of the voice of God. Listen.
ARISE PROGRAM is taking place at St. Joseph Church in Danbury beginning on the week of Sun., Sept. 30 through the following six weeks. Participants will meet in small groups, for 90 minutes once a week for six weeks. Small group sessions are held at various times throughout the week for your convenience. Registration is open to all who are 18 years or older. For more info, or to register, email: tjs@stjoesdanbury.org or call: Sherry Morris at 203.770.5356.

DIACONATE DISCOVERY EVENINGS will be held on the second Thurs. of each month beginning in Oct. of 2018 and are scheduled through Sept. 2019. Diacurate Discovery Evenings will be the space to wonder, explore, and come to an understanding about these and any other questions that you may have regarding serving the Church as a Permanent Deacon. Dates are as follows: St. Stephen Parish (7-8:30pm): Oct.11, Dec. 13, Feb. 14, April 11, June 13, Aug. 8, St. Philip Parish (7-8:30 pm): Nov. 8, Jan. 10, March 14, May 9, July 11, Sept. 12.


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 in Fairfield on Sat., Oct. 20, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass in the Church with a reception to follow. Celebrant is Fr. Norm Guilbert, Jr. All are welcome! For further info, call Pat Heble, OFS at: 203.255.8801 or phlele5715@aol.com.

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION RETREAT is being held at St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport on Sun., Oct. 21 from 9:30-11:30 am. The topic is: Renewing Our Appreciation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Joan Kelly will be presenting. Contact Antoinette Piantedosi at: 203.374.2038 or Marie Tedesco at: 203.334.2751.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES CELEBRITY BREAKFAST is being held on Thurs., Oct. 25 at 7:30 am featuring two-time Emmy award winner Kevin Brody. Price is $65 for individual tickets, $600 for a table of ten. Checks can be mailed to: Catholic Charities, 24 Grassy Plain Street, Bethel, CT 06801. View www.2018ccfbreakfast.eventbrite.com for tickets.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES CONNECT present Bill Donaghy from the Theology of the Body Institute at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan on Thurs., Oct. 25. He will be covering the topic of “Faith Matters: Sexuality.” This two part presentation takes place from 7-8 pm for high school teens, parents and adults of all ages and from 8:10-9 pm for parents and adults to learn how to continue the conversation at home. For questions, contact STG. SMS@global.net.

CHILDREN’S HALLOWEEN PARTY sponsored by the St. Theresa Guild is being held at St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport on Sun., Oct. 28 from 12 noon-2 pm. Join us for Mass at 11 am. Costumes welcome, but not required. Take pictures with surprise characters! Free admission, crafts and games! Concessions available.

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

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St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull. This annual retreat is a great opportunity to get away, be involved in meaningful discussions, listen to encouraging talks, and have time to reflect.

FALL FESTIVAL is being held at St. Margarette Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield on Sat., Nov. 3, from 9 am-4 pm.

AN EVENING WITH SISTER HELEN PREJEAN is being held at the Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius of Loyola located at Fairfield University on Wed., Nov. 7, at 7 pm. Sister Prejean, author of Dead Man Walking, will speak about “Abolishing the Death Penalty in the United States.” For more info. contact Dan Cosacchi, PhD at: dcosacchi@fairfield.edu.

VENDORS WANTED for Christmas Fair at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel in Bridgeport on Sat., Nov. 10, from 9 am-4 pm. To reserve a table for $25 call Johanna Cinotti at: 203.372.3740.

A CHRISTMAS FAIR is being held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel in Bridgeport on Sat., Nov. 10, from 9 am-4 pm. The fair will feature food, raffles, a bake sale, jewelry, toys, handcrafted items, tag sale items and much more!

THE MAGNIFICAT FALL BREAKFAST is being held on Sat., Nov. 10, from 9:30 am-12 noon, at the Ethan Allen Inn in Danbury. Tickets are $25. Please register by Nov. 1. Contact Fran Hood at: 203.744.1856.

NEW PROGRAM SERIES “Reflections on Religious Identity within the Contemporary World” by Deacon Robert Henrey at St. Catherine of Siena in Riverside. One-hour presentations will begin after Mass by 11:45 am in the parish hall. Deacon Robert Henrey will share his interest in different religious traditions by presenting a series of his photographs taken while visiting countries where those traditions took root. Presentations will take place on the following Sundays: Sept. 23: Egypt; Nov. 11: Anatolian Turkey; Jan. 20: India; Feb. 17: Pre-Columbian Peru.

OBERAMMERGAU PILGRIMAGE 2020—St. Mary Parish in Bethel is hosting a pilgrimage to the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany from July 13-23, 2020. We will be visiting various sites in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The trip starts at $4159 a person. For more information and an itinerary please call the parish office at: 203.744.5777.

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Catholic Underground featuring Tony Melendez

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2018
HOLY HOUR AT 6:30PM
CONCERT AT 6PM
ST AUGUSTINE CATHEDRAL
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BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604

Catholic Underground is open to all ages. A free will offering will be taken.
Questions? Contact the Office of Faith Formation at 203.416.1470 or officeoffaithformation@diocby.org

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