

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

NOVEMBER 2018 | VOLUME 35, NUMBER 10 | THANKSGIVING ISSUE

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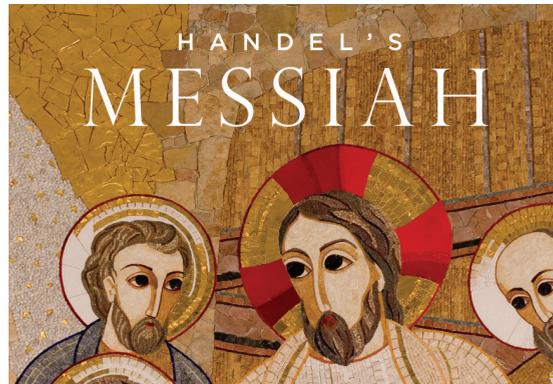
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All Souls Day Mass

Bringing a message of hope

BRIDGEPORT—More than 1,000 people throughout the diocese attended the outdoor All Souls Day Masses held in six cemeteries on November 2.

With a blustery autumn wind flapping the large white tents and maples trees lit by their fiery orange leaves, people joined in

Youth Synod began with Mass celebrated by Pope Francis before 100,000 people in St. Peter's Square, Piazza San Pietro.

As he was overwhelmed by the beauty of St. Peter's Basilica, the bishop said he realized "the piazza is also a cemetery," because in Roman times it was

power; trust your own voice. They are all lies. There is only one to trust, the one we encounter here at the altar."

"As we pray for all the deceased, let us remember this is a pilgrimage unto eternal life," he said

"The Church asks us to pray for our deceased brothers and

"We as a Church pray together; we as a Church rejoice together; and we as a Church also weep together. And today we unite ourselves with all those who have died, with all the angels and saints and with Our Lord in this Eucharist. In this Eucharist, Jesus Christ in His body, blood, soul

our beloved dead is to pray for them," said Father Marcello.

Father Marcello explained, "We know that those who have died in Christ, their souls are very much alive." As Christians, we believe that the dead are not gone. Their bodies have died, but their souls live on forever.



prayer for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed.

November is the month of the Holy Souls in Purgatory and All Souls Day, a special day in particular during which we pray for those who have died.

"The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead... but they are in peace," the faithful heard in the First Reading from the Book of Wisdom.

As people processed out of Mass they were gifted with long-stem red and white carnations which many placed on a nearby grave to remember their loved ones.

Two years ago, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano called for outdoor All Souls Day Masses to be said in cemeteries around the diocese. This year was his first visit to St. Peter Cemetery in Danbury for the observance.

In his homily, the bishop noted that the recent Vatican

a stadium where hundreds of thousands of Christians were put to death by Emperor Nero, who thought he could get rid of the Christians once and for all.

"How wrong they were!" the bishop said, noting that he and others were gathered at the cemetery in gratitude for the gift that Jesus gave through his own death on the Cross. "In this cemetery, we celebrate the death of one who has given life to us all."

"When we lose someone we have loved, it is a moment of grief, sadness and loss. There is a hole we are not totally able to fill. Yet despite the loss, we believe that those who die in Christ are destined for an empty tomb. They will rise from the grave and receive what Christ has promised in His Resurrection."

The bishop said that it is not easy being a faithful Christian in the 21st century. "There are many voices whispering around us. They say: trust money; trust

sisters," Fr. Arthur Mollenhauer said to the 150 people who attended Mass at St. Michael Cemetery on the Bridgeport/Stratford line.

"We know that death is only a new door that brings us to the glory of God forever," said Fr. Mollenhauer, who was assisted by Deacon Joseph Koletar.

"Today we remember and are united with all who have gone before us... We are also reminded that we too are destined to leave this world and pass through the door they have passed through."

At the end of Mass Fr. Mollenhauer thanked the cemetery workers at St. Michael's along with all those who maintain the other Catholic cemeteries across the diocese. He said they serve families in grief through their hard work in all kinds of weather.

During his homily at St. Mary Cemetery in Greenwich Msgr. Thomas Powers said, "We are here to console one another in faith."

and divinity tells each one of us, I love you and He reminds us that He also loves those who have died and who He helps prepare so that God can bring them fully into His eternal embrace."

Msgr. Powers said that All Souls Day is a celebration of hope. "We believe, as St. Paul tells us, that our loved ones are still alive in Christ."

"It has always been a festival of hope in the life of the Church, because in Jesus Christ, death does not have the final say. St. Paul tells us today, 'If, then, we have died in Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.'"

"The best gift we can give anyone is the gift of prayer," said Father Joseph A. Marcello as he addressed the crowd of over 200 at the All Souls Mass at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull.

"The best thing we can do for

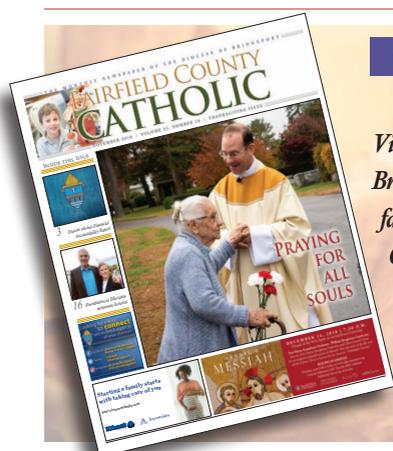
"This is why we say they have 'fallen asleep in Christ.' They are not dead, only sleeping," said Father Marcello addressing the gathered with a message of hope.

"By our very presence we are looking forward in expectant hope...because Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ will come again in glory," Father Marcello explained. This is why Christians have never spoken of death in an absolute sense.

All Souls Day Masses were also celebrated at St. John Cemetery in Norwalk by Msgr. Walter C. Orlowski, and at St. John Cemetery in Darien by Father John P. Connaughton.

Arrangements for the outdoor Masses are supported by Catholic Cemeteries under the direction of Frank Spodnick and the Diocesan Real Estate Office.

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



ON THE COVER

MSGR. THOMAS POWERS,
Vicar General of the Diocese of Bridgeport, greets a member of the faithful at St. Mary Cemetery in Greenwich after the All Souls Day Mass, one of six outdoor Masses held throughout the diocese on November 2. (PHOTO BY MICHELLE BABYAK)

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Latest News

Diocese releases Financial Accountability Report

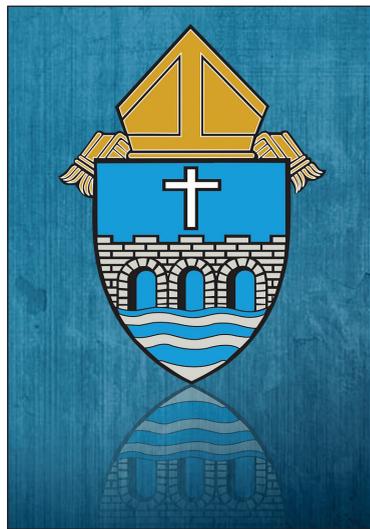
By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport released a Financial Accountability Report on October 31, detailing the cost of sexual abuse settlements and support for priests on administrative leave or laicized.

The document reports that the diocese has paid settlement amounts totaling approximately \$52.5 million for 156 settled cases of abuse since its inception in 1953. The report was released on October 30.

The report was commissioned by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in his September 8 letter outlining a reparation plan and a pledge of total transparency and accountability in the diocesan handling of sexual abuse of minors. Among the highlights of the report:

- Total settlement amounts paid by the diocese since 1953 are \$52.5 million.
- Of the \$52.5 million paid, \$27.7 million was from sale of properties, \$19.5 million was from insurance recoveries; \$4.2 million was from other revenues, and \$1.1 million was from other contributors (i.e., religious orders or other dioceses).
- \$31.9 million of the total paid came from diocesan assets after insurance and other contributions.
- 97.7% of the settlements paid



relate to claims of abuse that occurred before 1990.

- 95.4 % of the settlement amounts were paid after 2000.
- The \$52.5 million payments represent 156 settled claims and the average settlement payment was \$337,000.
- 87.8% of the settlement amounts paid and the majority of the 156 settled claims were attributable to twelve credibly accused priests.

In addition to these settlement payments, the diocese estimates that legal fees associated with these settlements that were not paid for directly by insurers or reimbursed by insurers were

approximately \$ 6.5 million.

In his letter to the faithful in response to the national abuse crisis and the need for total diocesan transparency, the bishop commissioned the financial accountability report and also announced a comprehensive investigation of all files related to clerical sexual abuse and diocese's handling of it.

On October 3, the diocese announced that Retired Connecticut Superior Court Judge Robert Holzberg is serving as counsel and lead investigator for the Clerical Sexual Abuse Accountability Investigation being conducted for the diocese. The judge will have complete access to all diocesan files, records and archives dating back to 1953. His investigation will review and address sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the Diocese of Bridgeport along with the response of Church leadership to that abuse.

"My heart breaks at the damage done by predator clergy and incompetent or complacent leadership. I wish to express my heartfelt apology to all those affected by this tragedy. I also recognize that restoring trust will require the heroic witness of holiness on the part of every priest, especially myself. I am confi-

dent that the Lord will heal and strengthen us," said the bishop.

The complete report, available on the diocesan website, includes charts that show the monies paid based on when the alleged abuse occurred. Almost all of the incidents are clustered in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Only one of the settlements is for alleged abuse that occurred after the year 2000.

The report was compiled by Anne McCrory, Chief Legal Officer, and Michael Hanlon, Chief Financial Officer of the diocese. The diocese closely reviewed historical executed settlement agreements, related correspondence, legal files and settlement history information to compile a comprehensive list.

"It should be noted that, with just a few exceptions, the vast majority of the settlements were the result of negotiated resolutions between the diocese and the victims or their counsel, mediated using judges or experienced mediators," said McCrory.

"The diocese has managed the settlement of these cases as efficiently as possible, utilizing consolidation of cases, global settlements, magistrates as mediators, mediation and cooperative settlement discussions outside of litigation to minimize these

costs. Insurance recoveries contributed to these defense costs as well as the settlement amounts," McCrory said.

The report also documents Current Financial Support for the ten Credibly Accused priests who are on administrative leave or have been laicized. The following points summarize the major findings of this section of the report:

- Eight credibly accused priests who are still alive are receiving between \$1,319-\$1,466 per month in support, which comes from proceeds from the past sale of diocesan properties.
- Based on the required submission of three years of tax returns in 2016 by credibly accused priests, financial support was reduced.
- In 2018, a total of \$135,460 in support payments will be paid to eight credibly accused priests.
- As of January 1, 2019, all financial assistance to six of these credibly accused priests will completely cease.
- A seventh priest will cease receiving financial assistance in June 2019. The support of an eighth priest will be determined by the result of a canonical penal process. Support to these two priests in 2019 will not

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Quick wins in Faith Formation

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—"We're not watering down formation by using digital methods," said Rose-Talbot-Babey, director of parish engagement for the Diocese of Bridgeport. "The expectation is still high."

The Office of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Bridgeport hosted a "Quick Wins for Faith Formation" session on October 26, 9 am-3 pm at the Catholic Center, which was open to directors of religious education and faith formation leaders throughout the diocese.

Author John Roberto updated DRE's and leaders in faith formation on parent faith forming practices and ways to incorporate a blended faith formation program in their parishes.

"You want to use these methods to help you do things that you couldn't otherwise do any other way," said John Roberto.

John Roberto is president of LifelongFaith Associates and works as a consultant to churches and national organizations, teaches courses and conducts workshops in faith formation and has authored books and program manuals in faith formation. He is also the project coordinator of the "Certificate in Faith Formation for the 21st Century"—a two-year online ministry education program, sponsored by Vibrant Faith.

His latest publications include *Families at the Center of Faith Formation* (editor and co-author, 2016), *Seasons of Adult Faith Formation* (editor and co-author, 2015), *Reimagining Faith Formation for the 21st Century* (2015), *Generations*



Together (co-authored, 2014), *Faith Formation 2020* (2010), and *Becoming a Church of Lifelong Learners* (2006).

He was the creator and project coordinator of the Generations of Faith Project—a five-year Lilly Endowment funded project from 2001-2006—to develop intergenerational faith formation in Catholic parishes across the

United States.

Roberto discussed how the blended strategy of faith formation incorporates online, at home and at church. "With the focus on hours of engagement, we can expand ministry in ways we couldn't always do on campus," explained Roberto.

"Giving parents options

accounts for diversity of all learners," Roberto told faith formation leaders.

Attendees discussed different ways they could use technology to make information more accessible across platforms and ways to engage parents, grandparents and the whole family.

DRE's also discussed ideas such as including videos on their websites, encouraging prayer practices in the home and meeting three or four times a year to demonstrate what students have been learning.

Many gathered remarked that they were encouraged by these new and innovative ideas and couldn't wait to implement them in their faith formation programs.

(For more info visit the office of Faith Formation at www.bridgeport-diocese.org/faith-formation.)

Diocesan Red Mass

Judge Hardiman discusses Faith, Law & Culture

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

FAIRFIELD—U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the 3rd Circuit Thomas Hardiman said he is much more concerned about the cultural crisis in the country than any danger to the constitution based on current divisions and polarization.

Speaking to more than 100 legal professionals and others at the annual Red Mass breakfast following Mass in the Egan Chapel of Fairfield University, Judge Hardiman said that Catholics are becoming “counter-cultural” because the popular movie and media culture is increasingly “debased and lacking in decency.”

In his talk in the university’s new Dogwood Room, the judge discussed the Catholic concept of vocation as an alternative to the current culture that promotes the wrong values. He said that “vocation with a small ‘v,’” invites people to a life of faith and service by asking, “What

is God calling us to do?”

Reflecting on the lives of the great Catholic boxer and heavy-weight champion Gene Tunney and Saint Mother Teresa, he said they “were not who other people expected them to be, but listened to an inner voice.”

He described Tunney as a gentle, learned and refined man in a brutal profession and Mother Teresa as a teacher who heard “a call within a call to serve all those who were unloved and a burden to everyone.”

Defining his vocation as a husband, father and judge, he said, “We should pray for and accept our own vocations which come in different forms and different times in our lives.”

“The Catholic vocation is accessible not only to heroic figures” but also to those who work quietly in faith to improve the lives of others, said the judge who lives outside of Pittsburgh with his wife and three children.



JUDGE THOMAS HARDIMAN

The judge, who is a 1987 graduate of the University of Notre Dame (and a classmate of Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport) described his own faith as “routine” until he entered Notre Dame, the first Catholic school he attended.

“I found myself wanting to go to Mass every Sunday,” he

said, adding that the university strengthened his faith by offering a culture of prayer that constantly reinforced the difference between right and wrong.

When asked about the role of contemporary Catholic colleges in promoting Catholic teaching, he said it was important that “the universities don’t cede the playing

field to the dominant culture.”

Judge Hardiman urged people to look inward into their own families, neighborhoods, churches and communities in order to change society.

In a relaxed and wide-ranging question and answer session that followed his talk, Judge Hardiman, who was reportedly on the short list for Supreme Court Justice, said that regardless of what one thinks about Justice Brett Kavanaugh, the recent confirmation process became a “debacle.”

“What we do is not about politics. It’s about the law and the constitution,” said the judge who said the hearing process must remain fair and appropriate.

The audience applauded when he responded to a question about politicians who have criticized Catholic judges. “That is bigotry,” he said. “People of any faith are not willing to sacrifice their beliefs for their profession.” ■

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Safe Environments

Diocese launches 'A Pledge to Protect' website

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

"Many words have been said regarding the crime of sexual abuse of minors and the scandals that these crimes have produced, words that are needed to express our grief, anger and confusion. However, words alone are insufficient. The time for further action has come," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in his letter to all those visiting the new A Pledge to Protect website, which launched on October 30.

This website (www.bridgeportdiocese.org/pledge) is one of the many ways that the bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport has planned to address the abuse crisis in the Church by focusing on a movement toward accountability and transparency.

"This newly designed website brings together and updates information concerning diocesan Safe Environments efforts, our outreach to victims and survivors of clerical sexual abuse, and the comprehensive policies and practices we have put in place to prevent future abuse and intervene immediately when allegations are brought forward," said Bishop Caggiano.

The bishop acknowledges that, although we can never fully atone for the pain caused to the victims of clerical sexual abuse, healing, reconciliation and rebuilding trust must be the Church's goal.

"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.

A Pledge to Protect website outlines specific promises to everyone that has been affected, which is the whole Church. The bishop specifically addresses the faithful of the diocese, the clergy and the seminarians.

Most recently, Bishop Caggiano commissioned a Financial Accountability Report that will address transparency regarding past incidents of sexual abuse of minors and a financial report that will address settlement amounts for past claims, including sources from which the funds were obtained and other information on financial support of accused clergy. The report was issued on Wednesday, October 31.

The website also links to the Safe Environments page, which has all necessary information about

registering for VIRTUS training, which is required by all diocesan volunteers and employees, reporting an incident, resources for survivors and background checks. In an effort of full transparency, there is a list of accused clerics, which includes the names of accused diocesan clerics or accused religious order priests who served in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

On October 3, the bishop announced 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.

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.

Bishop Caggiano has also released a number of spiritual initiatives in an effort of healing and reconciliation throughout the diocese and the greater Church. On the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, Saturday, September 15, Bishop Caggiano led a Holy Hour with

Rosary and a Mass of Reparation and Purification at the Cathedral of St. Augustine in Bridgeport, which more than 800 priests, deacons, religious and laity attended.

The bishop also asked all pastors to celebrate a local Mass of Reparation in their own parishes no later than October 31. After the diocesan Mass of Reparation, the bishop led the faithful in reciting the St. Michael Prayer, which he has now mandated to be said after Mass in every parish throughout the diocese.

"Along with A Pledge to Protect website, all these initiatives act as tangible steps toward healing for the whole Church as we move forward in transparency, accountability and hope," says Bishop Caggiano.

(Visit the new A Pledge to Protect website at: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/pledge.)

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Catholic Charities

Adoption builds families

By ELLEN MCGINNESS

For 102 years, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC) has provided services for expectant parents and adoptive families. Over the last century the program's core focus has remained the same: to help those who choose to build their family through adoption, and to help the expectant mothers as well.

Family Directions offers a broad spectrum of services in the pregnancy counseling and adoption area. For example, if an expectant mother who is

considering adoption has concerns about being able to parent effectively or being capable of affording the cost of raising a child, the Family Directions staff helps her feel supported and not alone. Whatever the mother's choice is—keeping the baby or going the adoption route—they are there to help her. In the circumstance where she keeps the baby, the agency provides counseling and guidance for as long as the mother needs it and also assists her in obtaining as many supportive services as possible. If howev-

er, she decides on an adoption plan, a coordinator is by her side to make sure she understands all of the legal and emotional elements of her decision.

For the families who are adopting, Family Directions helps them prepare to welcome the child into their home and supports them during the entire process. "When you are adopting a child, there is some anxiety because you are dealing with the unknown," explained Chris, who is an adoptive parent along with his wife Louise. "You wonder if you are going to be capable



CHRIS AND LOUISE'S CHILDREN seven years ago.

of this responsibility, which of course biological parents do too. But the difference is, you do not know exactly when you will be taking your child home because you have to wait for the agency to tell you that they have found a match for your family. For biological parents, there is a known due date so that uncertainty is eliminated. Catholic Charities was great at putting our minds at ease while simultaneously guiding us every step of the way."

Chris and Louise now have five children, four of whom were adopted through Catholic Charities. Although there were many agencies to choose from, the couple chose CCFC for a few reasons. As Catholics, they were naturally attracted to the agency. They were also incredibly impressed by CCFC's absolute commitment to the well-being of everyone involved: the child, the expectant mother and the adoptive family. Lastly, because

CCFC is a nonprofit, they knew the agency had no ulterior motive that could have been driven by financial gain.

"We are extremely proud to offer services that center on adoption," said Al Barber, the president of Catholic Charities. "Our staff truly cares about everyone involved and keeps in touch with them long after the adoption process is completed."

For Chris and Louise, the four experiences of taking the leap into adoption with Catholic Charities by their side was nothing short of incredible. As Chris summarized, "It's like winning the Powerball... but four times over."

CCFC is licensed by the Department of Children and Families as a child-placing agency and is COA Accredited, with full Hague Accreditation.

(For more information, contact Amy Zajac the Director of Family Directions at azajac@ccfc-ct.org or 203.416.1336.)

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Raining down at St. Cecilia



RAIN DOWN AT ST. CECILIA PARISH of Stamford was a tremendous success. Over 200 youth from around the diocese gathered together on Sunday, October 28 for an afternoon of prayer, fellowship, food, fun and Eucharistic Adoration!

Parish News

Father Lenox installed as pastor of St. Joseph's

By **JOE PISANI**

SOUTH NORWALK—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano installed Father Peter Lenox as pastor of St. Joseph Church on Nov. 4, praising him as “a man not afraid to preach the truth, a man who understands what it means to offer right worship and a man who has a compassionate heart.”

Bishop Caggiano told the packed church that we are living in a time of crisis and challenges when the responsibility of Catholic priests is even greater. “We must find men who mirror Christ and who speak the truth in season and out of season.”

“There are too many people,” he said, “who have not heard the name of Jesus in a moving way,

people who need a home and this is their home.” He urged parishioners to work with Father Lenox to help people find “what every human heart is looking for—and his name is Jesus.”

“I am delighted to install him as pastor,” the bishop said. “And I ask you, my friends, to work together as one family to build this church community in a neighborhood that continues to change, a neighborhood that has too many people who were once worshipping but are no longer with us.”

At the conclusion of the rite of installation, Bishop Caggiano said, “Father Lenox has my confidence and my support. We pray the Lord will grant him many years of happy service in collaboration with you as we work to



FATHER PETER LENOX was installed as pastor of St. Joseph Church in South Norwalk on November 4 by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. Father Lenox, who was parochial administrator for the past year, thanked Bishop Caggiano and his parishioners for their support.

bring the Kingdom of God in our midst.”

Father Lenox, who was parochial administrator for the past

year, thanked Bishop Caggiano and his parishioners for their support. Among those concelebrating the Mass were Monsignors

Walter Orłowski, pastor of St. Matthew Church in Norwalk, and Laurence Bronkiewicz, pastor of St. Mary in Ridgefield, Father Frantz Desruisseaux, director of the Haitian-American Center in Stamford, Father Francis Hoffmann, pastor of St. John's in Darien, and Father Juan Gabriel Acosta, pastor of St. Ladislaus Parish in South Norwalk.

Father Lenox delivered the homily on the Gospel of Mark in which a scribe asks Jesus which is the first of the commandments, and Jesus responds by reciting the *Shema Yisrael*, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is Lord alone.” Then, He adds, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

A celebration of education

By **ELIZABETH CLYONS**

BRIDGEPORT—“How delighted we are to be celebrating

wisdom and faith in Christ,” said Bishop Caggiano, addressing those gathered at the reception.

“The definition of being a

students, their families, principals and the donors who sponsor a portion of their tuitions.

In explaining why he chose to make a donation to Foundations in Education, Robert Fox, a generous donor to Foundations in Education said, “With a good solid foundation in Catholic education they can go forward in Catholic Education and make a difference in this world.”

“Leaders of Tomorrow” is a

unique program of the Bishop's Scholarship Fund which provides need-based scholarships to students in Catholic elementary schools who were identified by their principals as students of strong academic standing, good character and possessing leadership potential. Donors to the program transform the lives of children through the gift of Catholic education.

Foundations in Education is committed to strengthen and

transform the mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport by supporting innovation in academic and extra-curriculum programs, fostering opportunities for the professional development of school leaders in innovation and leadership and providing scholarship assistance to families in need.

(To find out more about Foundations in Education visit: www.foundationsineducation.org.) ■



these wonderful students,” said Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director of Foundations in Education.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Foundations in Education hosted the annual “Leaders of Tomorrow” breakfast reception for students, their parents and donors on Thursday, November 8 at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport.

Leaders are chosen by their principals as students of good character, academic promise and leadership potential.

“I am delighted to be here...to celebrate our leaders of tomorrow, who are quite frankly the leaders of today, as many of their classmates follow their example and continue their journey towards

leader is a person who has the personality and skills to encourage others to action,” said the bishop. “You are here because we believe in you...we see exactly what I described in you.”

“It is the God given talents He has given each and every one of you...a generous heart, an open spirit, a willingness to listen, a willingness to learn...and you have the gift of Catholic education to learn the skills of mind and heart.”

“This is your day...I ask that you take the gift God has given you and use it to the fullest,” the bishop encouraged the boys and girls to continue to be leaders in our society.

The reception brought together

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Personalized Learning

Great minds don't think alike

By PAT HENNESSY

"Every student has been gifted by God with individual talents and abilities," said Alan Barnicle, Personalized Learning coordinator, in opening the Professional Development (PD) Day at Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Shelton. "Personalized Learning allows teachers to meet students where they are and respond to their individual strengths and needs."

All teachers in diocesan elementary schools were focusing on Personalized Learning at the PD day on November 6. The traditional classroom model, familiar to most parents, had the teacher in the front of the room leading all students through their subjects at the same pace. But parents as well as teachers already know that not all children learn the same way, or at the same speed.

The question teachers were exploring this PD day: "How do we best personalize learning for our students?"



ALL TEACHERS IN DIOCESAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS were focusing on Personalized Learning at the PD day on November 6.

The teachers from the six schools in the Phase I pilot program, who implemented Personalized Learning in their classrooms this semester, and those in Phase II who will do so next year, gathered at Holy Trinity. Teachers in Phase III schools met at All Saints School in Norwalk. All elementary schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport will implement the Personalized Learning Model by 2020.

The path to effective implementation of Personalized Learning in a classroom is a long one, and teachers have spent a great deal of effort working on it. Professional Development days like this one give teachers tools and concepts they can implement in their own classrooms, and the opportunity to share with their colleagues the best practices they've developed.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Cheeseman called

the diocesan teachers "Pioneers" as he thanked them for their efforts. "We've only had this in play for a couple of months, but the amount of growth that we have seen across the schools is extremely positive. When we look at the results and the student assessments, we're amazed at the effect."

The Phase III teachers at All Saints School were led by Kathryn Cioffi, diocesan director of Educational Technology and Innovation. For them, the initial presentation this day was followed by small group discussion sessions by grade level, with discussions by subject for

middle school teachers, grades 6-8. Separate sessions were held for administrators. By fostering the elements of a growth mindset, the teachers were preparing both their students and themselves to join the Personalized Learning Initiative.

At Holy Trinity, teachers from Phase I and Phase II schools were assisted by Barnicle and personalized learning coach Stacy Clements, with sessions lead by professors from Fairfield University, Catapult, Buncce, and

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

LENOX FROM PAGE 7

"God is telling us something about what it means to follow the law earnestly," Father Lenox said. "One cannot do so honestly and authentically without love... The fulfillment of all sacrifices is love, and the love of God is inextricably linked to the love of neighbor."

As their new pastor, he urged his congregation to continued growth in love.

"Love is what makes this community truly a great community of faith," he said. "I ask for your prayers. I ask for your support, and I ask for your love." The diverse congregation, which celebrates Mass in English, Spanish and French Creole, broke into applause.

During an interview, Father Lenox said the South Norwalk neighborhood is beginning to change in ways no one ever imagined ten years ago. Some projects include a major retail shopping center on West Avenue, several multifamily housing and apartment developments near the church and an extended-stay hotel.

"I see challenges and opportunity right now," he said. "We are on the cusp of major change, and in all of this, the challenge is to take St. Joseph Church, as the territorial parish of the region, and meet the pastoral needs of the future."

The task ahead is to "bring the joy of living the Gospel to the people of South Norwalk," he said. "The call to holiness is always there, and we will do our best to meet it."

One ministry begun at St. Joseph to reach young adults is Credo, which is Latin for "I believe." The group of adults in their 20s and 30s meets twice a month.

"It is a way to come together and experience the beauty of the Christian faith and support one another in fraternity," Father said. "We meet for discussion and meditation about an aspect of Sacred Scripture and then go to dinner, where the discussion is continued." The program is grounded in Scripture, community and liturgy.

Father Lenox, who was born in Bridgeport and raised

in Trumbull, graduated from St. Michael School and Notre Dame High School. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Sacred Heart University in 1996 and entered St. John Fisher Seminary. He received his master's in theology from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia and was ordained by Bishop Edward Egan in 2000. He later served as parochial vicar at St. Andrew Church in Bridgeport, St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat in Stamford and St. Mary in Ridgefield.

He also served as administrator of the Cathedral Parish and rector of St. Augustine Cathedral before pursuing his pontifical license in liturgical theology and a master's degree in liturgical music at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome. He was a student in degree programs in Liturgical Music and in Sacred Art & Architecture.

A talented pianist and organist, Father Lenox is an expert on Sacred Music and wrote his thesis titled, "*Sicut in Caelo, et in Terra: The Actiosa Participatio of the Faithful in Sacred Liturgy*

through the Beauty of the Pipe Organ in Sacred Music," which was one of several considered for the prestigious Premio Sant'Anselmo honor last year.

A member of the American Guild of Organists, he was responsible for completing the renovation of the Cathedral organ. He serves on the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Committee on Liturgical Ministries and the Sacred Arts Commission and on the board of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions.

"The diocesan priesthood has a very important role to play in modern society, and it should be the shining example of how to live the life of holiness in the secular world," Father Lenox said. "The joy of working for the Lord in the diocese is to help people encounter Christ and love him and serve him by supporting one another in a sacramental community. The challenges may be different in every place in the world, but the Gospel is the same." ■

FINANCE REPORT FROM PAGE 3

exceed \$26,500.

Two other credibly accused priests were eligible for and are now receiving a pension benefit; two of the eight priests currently receiving financial support will become eligible to receive some pension benefit after diocesan support terminates as of January 1, 2019.

The conclusion of the Financial Accountability Report states that, "by recognizing that people deserve a full and transparent report of the financial impact of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy, the Diocese of Bridgeport hopes to further the process of healing and reconciliation. It remains the work of the Church to support and help to heal all those affected by abuse and to move forward in the solidarity of faith, a spirit of transparency and commitment to absolute accountability that will renew the Church."

(To read the complete report, visit the A Pledge to Protect page on the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/pledge.) ■

Personalized Learning

GREAT MINDS FROM PAGE 8

diocesan teachers and building leaders.

In a flexible learning environment, students learn through a combination of traditional teacher-led instruction, small group collaboration and individual learning. Teachers give a short lesson to the entire class, then meet with one small group at a time while other groups work collaboratively to deepen their understanding. At individual stations, students can work on the topic at their own pace.

"We already do this naturally," observed Mary Falkner, a fourth-grade teacher at St. Andrew Academy of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, which will implement Personalized Learning next year. "In a subject like reading, the only way I can relate to my kids is in small groups."

The use of technology to fill in gaps in comprehension or enrich learning help teachers with this small group process. Technology is a tool that can add variety to a

lesson, and can help teachers identify students' skills and challenges.

At one technology session at Holy Trinity, Phase I teachers shared the different programs they had found useful and the ways students put them into practice, from making up math games or publishing their own version of Bible stories to deciding who George Washington would have "Liked" on Facebook.

Collaboration between teachers in the pilot program and those about to implement it is another important factor in professional development. "When I started, I took the directions too literally," shared Jenn Blank, a middle-school social studies teacher at St. Gregory the Great in Danbury. "At our advanced level of study, a ten-minute introduction was too short."

Teachers at that session were advised to consider what worked best for their particular class, this particular year, realizing that the mix of students and their needs changes from year to year.

Toward the close of the day, teachers and principals from the Phase II schools held individual breakout sessions to discuss what they had learned from the day's presentations. Many of them had attended sessions led Phase I teachers, discussing what's working and what needs to be thought out a little further.

"It's about the routines in the classroom, and it takes a lot of work for teachers initially," said Lori Wilson, principal of St. Andrew's. "Some of our teachers are scared but some are excited. We'll learn as we begin to try it."

"We will make sure that you're getting the assistance you need as you move ahead," promised Alan Barnicle at the close of the day. "Let us know what's working well and what you are struggling with, and we'll be on hand to work through it with you."

That assurance, and the knowledge that they were all working together on this innovative learning project, energized teachers as they concluded this intense and productive Personal Development Day. ■

Hartigan speaks at St. Catherine event

Catholic Relief Services joined forces with the Social Justice Committee from St. Catherine of Siena Church (SCSC) recently in Riverside for an enlightening presentation by CRS's Kevin Hartigan. Hartigan, based out of Cairo, has been with CRS for 28 years and is the Regional Director for the Middle East, Europe and Central Asia. He oversees roughly 800 staff implementing emergency response and development programs in roughly 20 countries.

A group of about 80 people attended this event to learn about "the Catholic Church's role in aiding and healing war victims in the Middle East." The event began with a delightful lunch graciously prepared and served buffet style by the Social Justice Committee. All gathered enjoyed it and were grateful to have time for camaraderie.

Hartigan's 20 minute presentation, with impressive photos, was followed by 40 minutes of Q&A. The Social Justice Committee placed jars in the middle of each table suggesting a donation to Catholic Relief Services, which was a nice surprise to all attending.

Msgr. Alan F. Detscher, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena closed the event with some touching words validating the good work of CRS, and how impressive it is that 94 percent of CRS' spending goes directly to operating expense.

Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas.

(For more information visit: www.crs.org) ■



'Kindness Matters'

A commitment to kindness in our schools

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

With the 2018-2019 school year well under way, there are many positive stories about students spreading a message of kindness throughout the academic environment.

St. Catherine of Siena School in Trumbull decorated their bathroom stall doors with positive and affirming messages. SCSS encourages their students to be positive, kind and confident and they hope these encouraging messages will inspire students.

The Class of 2018 alumni of St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown gave a class gift to the school of a "Be Kind" mural, following the "Be Kind Challenge" of the Ben's Bells Project.

Ben's Bells "be kind" murals are a series of kindness-themed mosaic murals created by local artists, students and community members. The brightly colored public art pieces symbolize



KINDNESS MATTERS—Alumni from the class of 2018 of St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown have been busy making a mural as a class gift to the school.

community connection and support through kindness and are created by a diverse group of community members wherever they are located.

The mission of Ben's Bells is to inspire, educate and motivate others to realize the impact of intentional kindness and to empower individuals to act according to that awareness in

order to strengthen relationships and communities. Students at St. Rose have begun work on the project and the mural will be put up on one of the welcoming brick walls at the entrance to the school.

The third-grade students at St. James School in Stratford worked hard painting 'kindness rocks,' displaying colorful messages of

kindness. The students brought a basket of 'kindness rocks' to the Stratford Train Station after praying as a class that they would go out into the world as a sign of the love that God has given them and that they want to pass on to others.

The message in the basket read:

"Our hope is that you can stop for a moment and take one of these rocks with you today, hold it and feel the strength of God that is always with you. Put it in your pocket and let it remind you of the mysterious and great power of love that surrounds you when times are good and times are challenging. And when you are ready one day, place your rock back in the basket for others to receive the gift of strength and love meant for all people. Or, pass it on to someone that needs this important reminder. Truly, God is my rock and my salvation; my fortress. I will not be shaken (Psalm 62:6)," and was signed by the third-graders at St. James.

Macaroni Kid is a company

that publishes weekly e-newsletters and website articles which feature events, activities, products and places for kids and families, with a local "publisher" parent managing each community.

Publishers all over the nation have been giving back to their communities since Macaroni Kid 'Act of Kindness Day' on September 15. In celebration of this event, three Macaroni Kid editions here in Fairfield County (Danbury, Westport and Monroe) have partnered with the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools to sponsor the printing and distributing of 10,000 'Kindness Cards' to students in their schools across the county. Students all throughout diocesan schools are doing random acts of kindness and passing it on.

Our diocesan Catholic schools believe in the power of kindness, inspired by the love of God! ■

Conversion Stories

A spiritual journey leads to the Catholic faith

By JOE PISANI

The following profile is part of a series on converts to the Catholic faith, exploring the spiritual path that has led people to the Church and the profound changes that have occurred in their lives.

Fifty-five years ago on a lazy Saturday afternoon, Debbie Moye's neighbor started her on a journey that changed her life forever and led her down a new spiritual path.

As journeys go, it was a short one—a simple stroll down the streets of Bridgeport, from her home on Wheeler Avenue, down Main Street and up North Avenue ... to St. Patrick's Church.

But as a spiritual journey, it was a profound one that eventual-

ly led Debbie to the Catholic faith.

"I was only 12 and our neighbor asked me to go to church with her while she went to confession," Debbie recalled. "I guess it was the Holy Spirit that touched my soul so deeply that afternoon. We walked into the lower level of St. Patrick's, and there was a feeling that overwhelmed me—a feeling of peace. I can still remember the fragrance of the burning candles and the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I never forgot that experience. It always stayed in my heart."

It was an entirely new experience for Debbie, who regularly attended services with her godmother at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Sunday, while on

Saturday she went with her grandmother to the Seventh Day Adventist church, where she sang in the choir.

"It was the first time I had ever been in a Catholic Church," she said, "And I realize now that God was leading me there."

Forty years later, she entered into full communion with the Catholic Church at St. Theresa's in Trumbull, and she believes that every step of the way God was directing her.

Debbie was born in Bridgeport in 1952. She attended Shelton School and Central High School, where she was a cheerleader and named the best female athlete in her class.

After graduating, she enrolled in an institute to learn hair dress-



DEBBIE MOYE—Growing up in Bridgeport brought Moye on a spiritual journey that eventually led her to the Catholic faith. Today, Debbie, a member of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, is eager to share her faith with others and has been active in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults since 2015.

ing and began her first career as a beautician, working at Lane's Hair Stylists at the Trumbull mall for four years. She had always wanted to become a nurse, but shortly after she began studies at Housatonic Community College, her father was diagnosed with lung cancer in the autumn of 1983, so she dropped out to help care for him until he died a year later.

She, her sister and two brothers grew up on the lower north end of Bridgeport. She was baptized in St. Mark's Episcopal

Church in Bridgeport and was raised in a faith-filled family. Her maternal grandmother was a devout Seventh Day Adventist who made sure her grandchildren went to church regularly. Her maternal grandfather was Catholic, but he didn't attend Mass.

"I was surrounded by faith," she says. Her mother was a Seventh Day Adventist and her father was a Methodist.

In 1985, Debbie met Leroy

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



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Trinity Catholic High School

Night of Unity brings ‘Immeasurably More’

STAMFORD—The fourth annual “Night of Unity” brought to Trinity Catholic High School an ecumenical evening of “immeasurably more” on Tuesday, October 23. The evening was filled to overflowing with inspiring talks by local pastors, moving and powerful testimonies and great music! Fr. Joseph Gill, TCHS chaplain and master of ceremonies for the evening, gave an inspiring talk during which he said, “Grace is God’s divine life living in us! We have God in us so that we can begin to radiate God to the world.”

Pastor Kenny Sullivan, pastor Charles Thomson, and pastor Nathan Hart also focused their talks on the scripture passage Ephesians 3:20, “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to Him be glory.” Christina Vander Kolk (parent of TCHS student), Gabi Nagle (student at Cardinal Kung), and



David Mangahis (student at TCHS) shared their witness to the immeasurably more that God has done in their lives.

For the fourth time, Trinity’s music director, Angelo Natalie (TCHS alumni parent), brought together a very talented group of musicians, most with connections to Trinity: Tony Antonucci (TCHS parent) on drums, Steve

DeMott, on guitar, John “Ratso” Gerardi (TCHS alumni parent) on guitar, Angelo Natalie (alumni parent) as worship leader and keys, Todd Natalie (TCHS Class of 1996) on bass, and Dani Wasserman (former TCHS parent) as worship leader. Our special guest once again was Christian rap artist, Zabbai, who continues to gain a following on Spotify and iTunes—we knew him when!!

After a great evening of being filled with encouragement, hope and joy, guests were filled with a wonderful reception chaired by Sheila Uhl and Karen

Pritchard. Finally, an enormous thank you to Frank D’Andrea and SoundCity for all of the sound, lights and video of the evening! Thank you to everyone who came out to support Night of Unity and to the Trinity administration and staff who helped in so many ways to make it a great evening! See you on Thursday, January 31 for our Fifth Anniversary Night of Unity!

(To learn more about Night of Unity and to see videos of previous evenings, please go to the Night of Unity Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Night-of-Unity-806068439541953/!](http://www.facebook.com/Night-of-Unity-806068439541953/))

POSITION AVAILABLE

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Archdiocese of Hartford – Bloomfield, Connecticut



The Office of Communications has an opening for an Archdiocesan Magazine Editor, who will act as a point of contact between the Office of The Archbishop of Hartford, Office of Communications and Public Relations, Archdiocesan Offices, Parishes, Schools, and related agencies, concerning issues including content planning, scheduling/upkeep of editorial calendar and scope of new content, and will attend and contribute to all content-related meetings and discussions.

In this full-time position, the editor will further manage the editorial budget and be responsible for the recruitment and oversight of freelance writers and work with FAITH Catholic staff and designers. The editor will follow the standards set by the Archbishop of Hartford, or his designate.

Duties will include, but are not limited to: working with diocesan officials to define editorial direction, voice and content of the diocesan magazine to be consistent with generally accepted editorial standards; oversee and manage the editorial budget; outsourced content and special projects; maintain final review of each publication to ensure high-quality content of the publication, including both print and digital versions; track content quality and maintain consistency and integrity of editorial voice; and, generate story ideas, research and write for special sections, supplements and pages.

A Bachelor’s Degree in Journalism, English, or a related field is required, in addition to five or more years of experience in hands-on writing, editing, and publication. Knowledge and experience in writing and/or editing Catholic-focused content, is preferred. Qualified candidates must be familiar with the position of the Church about issues that are central to stories and have the ability to articulate that position in such stories. Also important is a knowledge of advertising and the ability to manage content and sales, including recruitment of content sponsors and advertisers.

To obtain a full copy of the position description or submit a letter of interest and resume, please email: karen.kean@aohct.org.

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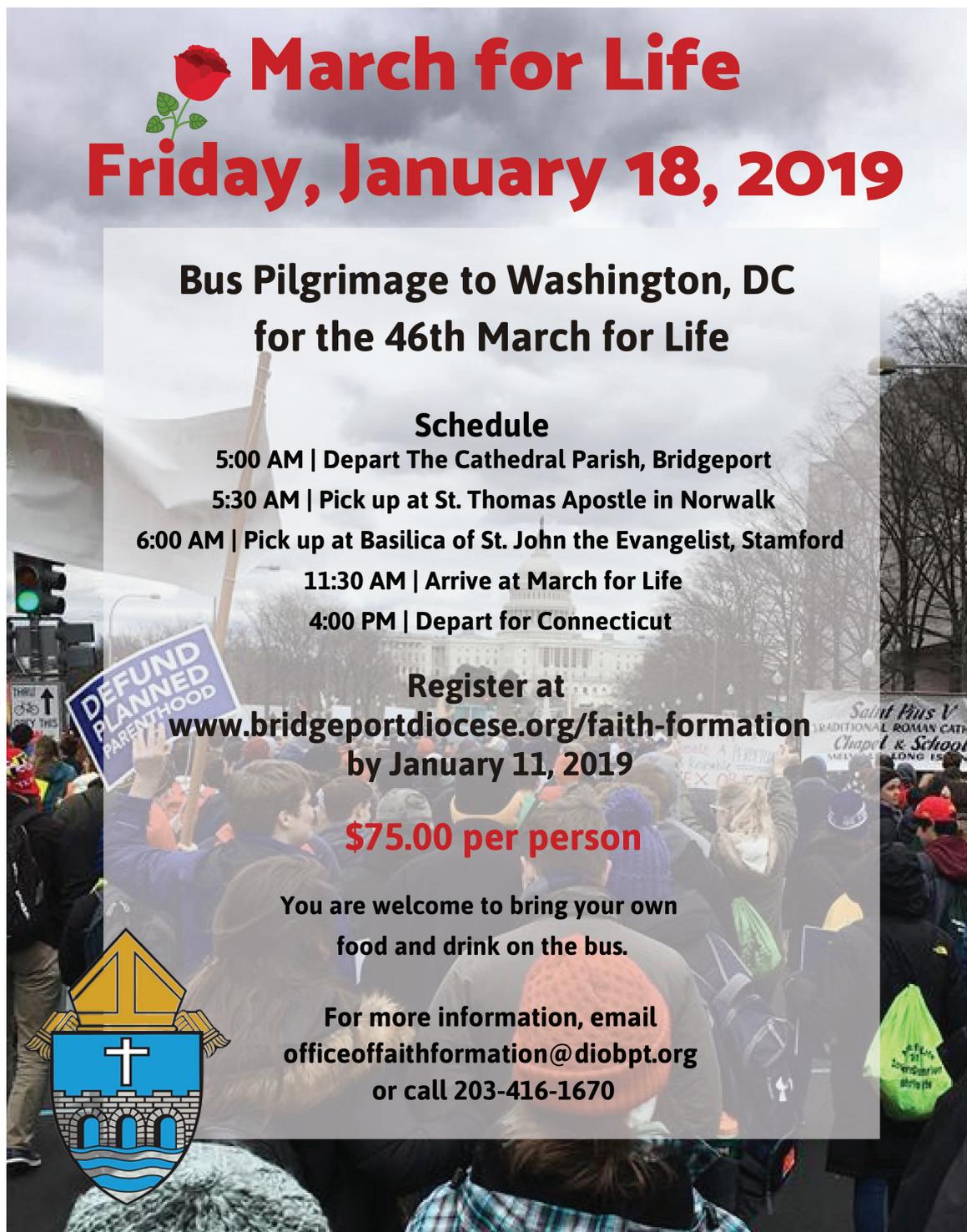
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EDITORIAL

The power of the table

In many ways it has been a difficult year for the Church as well as the country. Yet in the midst of crisis we have so much to be thankful for, and perhaps now more than ever, it important not to lose sight of all that unifies us as people of faith. Each week tens of thousands worship together, side by side in our 82 parishes, and we come forward in humility and gratitude for the gift of the Eucharist.

Bishop Caggiano has written: "Nothing symbolizes our unity more than people gathered around the table. Each day when the Church celebrates the Mass, we come together to offer the Eucharist, a Greek word that literally means "to give thanks." Through grace, we join ourselves to the self-offering of Christ to His Father in His Death and Resurrection. As people of faith we must never forget the power of the "table" to be a place of nourishment, dialogue and healing. It is at the table where we are all reminded of our essential human dignity."

As we gather around the table for Thanksgiving, let us also pledge to enlarge the meaning of this observance in our own hearts, which begins with the deepest sense of gratitude for the gift of our lives and the many blessings we receive—not just material things—but core spiritual values we celebrate as Americans and live in our faith.

Inspired by Youth

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano recently returned from Rome after participating in the Vatican Synod Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment. On the last day he concelebrated Mass with all the Synod 2018 Fathers as Pope Francis presided at the Eucharist in Saint Peter's Basilica. "It was a beautiful, reverent and joyful Eucharistic celebration that brought together all the insights, hopes and dreams of everyone who was part of this extraordinary synodal journey," he said. The bishop also left the synod with a great deal of hope because of the faith of young people around the world. In this reflection, he praises their faith and courage:

"What was most striking to me is the global diversity that marks the lives of young adults in different parts of the world. While it is true that the need to listen and be listened to, the daily pursuit of holiness and the importance of discerning a vocation that allows each person to live holiness in the concrete circumstances of life are of universal concern to all the young adults, the challenges of ordinary life take different forms throughout the world. The diverse challenges are quite profound.

For example, it is very sobering to hear about the active persecution that many young adults face in Asia, Africa and the Middle East because of their Christian faith. One bishop related the story of the martyrdom of a young man who was buried to his neck in a pool of mud so that he could be frightened enough to renounce his Catholic faith. When he refused, the young man was stoned to death, reminiscent of the first Christian martyr Stephen. Other bishops spoke about young people being forced to migrate because of the threats of poverty, drug trafficking and sexual and ethnic violence.

Their witness gives me great hope for the renewal of the Church. If courage is an essential ingredient in the spiritual renewal of the Church, the young adults in many parts of the world are ready to lead the way!"

First Call
for Christmas Concert

If you haven't begun to think of Christmas shopping yet, you may want to treat yourself and family members to this year's Arise & Shine Christmas concert on Friday December 21, 7:30 pm at the Klein Memorial Auditorium in Bridgeport. The concert featuring the 100-member diocesan youth choir under the direction of Mary Bozzuti Higgins, has become one of the most anticipated and joyous event of the year. The young people will perform a challenging program of Christmas songs and chants from different ages and cultures. The program includes scriptural readings in different languages. It is a beautiful and prayerful way to observe the Christian season. Tickets are \$20 for general admission.

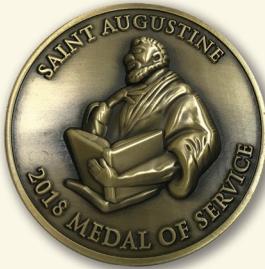
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Or by phone at: 203.416.1670.)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

A Centennial Celebration for Father Brady

HAPPY 100th!—Our priests and pastors are with us at life's most memorable, inspiring and challenging moments, and we keep them in our thoughts, prayers and hearts throughout the years. It was no exception at Father Philip Brady's 100th birthday when an entourage of former and present parishioners of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Shelton where Father Brady was pastor, traveled to Orchard Park, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, to attend his milestone birthday party. Parishioners were delighted to make the trip and spoke of the compassion, care and friendship they received over the years from Father Brady who retired to his native Buffalo. Pictured above: Maryellen (center right) and Richard Kosturko (far left) from Shelton shared thoughts with others on how they received their first Holy Communion/Penance, Confirmation and Holy Matrimony from Father Brady. Maryellen's mother, Mickey Hope and Richard's father, John Kosturko also attended. John was Father's first Eucharistic minister.





BRIDGEPORT—Full coverage of the St. Augustine Medal of Service prayer service including a complete list of recipients along with photos will be provided in the December issue of *Fairfield County Catholic*.

The St. Augustine Medals of Service will be awarded this Saturday November 17, 1 pm, just after the November issue has gone to press. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will lead the prayer service and present medals to more than 150 recipients from parishes and ministries across the diocese.

All those interested in viewing photos and the list of recipients can also get the news online at: www.bridgeportdiocese.com.



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

MONSIGNOR THOMAS W. POWERS, to temporary Parochial Administrator at Saint George Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date is December 8, until a permanent provision is made for the parish. Monsignor Powers will continue to serve as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

DEACON JOHN C. DITARANTO, to Pastoral Administrator, Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date was August 15. Deacon John will continue with all other diocesan responsibilities.

DIOCESE

MONSIGNOR DARIUSZ J. ZIELONKA, from sabbatical,

returned to Diocesan Tribunal as Judicial Vicar. Effective date was November 1.

LEAVING DIOCESE

FATHER THOMAS LAKRA, from Parochial Vicar, Saint Luke Parish, Westport, returned to Diocese of Varanasi, India. Effective date was October 3.

Father Joseph A. Marcello
Vicar for Clergy, November, 2018

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Editorial



He Offers Us Healing

A YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

BY ELIZABETH CLYONS

Libby Clyons is Communications Associate for the Diocese of Bridgeport. She can be reached at elizabeth.clyons@diobpt.org.

As I read and reflected upon Bishop Caggiano's homily at the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, I was reminded of one of my favorite passages in Luke's gospel.

Luke (13:10-17) tells the story of a woman who was burdened by a disabling spirit for eighteen years, so much so that she was physically bent over.

We don't know much about this woman. We know that she was a woman of faith, for she was at the synagogue on the

Sabbath. We don't know exactly what her disabling spirit was, we just know that it manifested itself in a physical way, as "She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself" (Luke 13:11b).

Jesus saw her and called out to her. So also to us. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).

At a time when both women and those with disabilities were outcasts, He called her over to Him. Our infirmities are never too disabling or too many that He would not call out to us, bring us

to Himself, lay His hands on us, heal us.

For He is the divine physician. He said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability" (Luke 13:12b). "He laid His hands on her and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God" (Luke 13:13).

She was made straight. She glorified Him. So must we, in all that we do, so that others may also know His healing love.

Bishop Caggiano said, "For Christ alone is the Divine Physician who can truly heal us with His love. It is Christ who is the face of Mercy Himself. It is His gift of loving mercy, offered not as object to be received but a share in His very life, that can enlighten our minds, comfort us in our doubts, give consolation in our suffering and forgive the burden of our sins."

One of the topics discussed during the Synod is how youth and young adults are searching for a sense of belonging. To be

loved, affirmed, and accepted for who they are. Their hearts are yearning for the unconditional, healing love that only God can give.

And He offers it to us with open arms. He offers us healing, just as He did to the woman with the disabling spirit.

At a time when many in our Church are broken-hearted, we can turn to the divine physician.

"My friends, we cannot truly heal anyone on our own.

Only Christ brings authentic and lasting healing. Luke understood this and lived his life serving as a simple channel of Christ's mercy. As a true physician, Luke healed broken hearts not by anything he did on his own but by allowing the Lord's mercy to flow through all that he did," Bishop Caggiano

explained in his homily.

But we can show others the true path to healing. We can lead them to the Lord, the divine physician who heals the broken-hearted.

"St. Luke challenges us to offer our feet, eyes, hands, talents and knowledge to be channels of God's mercy, so that broken hearts can be healed," bishop said.

Bishop Caggiano implored his brother bish-

ops gathered at the Synod with him, "Let us bring God's mercy into the world, one broken heart at a time."

I feel that this is a challenge for us all. Let us accept God's healing love for us and think of who we can invite into the joy of His mercy. ■

"It is Christ who is the face of Mercy Himself... His very life can comfort us in our doubts."



Find a Penny, Pick It Up

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

Isaw a penny on the kitchen floor the other day while I was sweeping up. The temptation came over me to knock it into the dustpan along with the hair ties, shrunken peas, and dried-out Rice Chex. I was on my way to the trash can to pitch the whole shebang, penny and all, when Sally, my five-year-old, piped up.

"Hey, you're not going to throw away that penny are you?"

"No, sweetie, Daddy would never do such a thoughtless and wasteful thing like throwing perfectly good money in the trash. Here, you take it."

I offered her the dustpan and winced a little as she plucked the coin from among the fuzz and fur. Letting out a squeak of joy, she held the dull copper coin to the light and smiled.

"Thanks Daddy!" she said. You'd have thought the child had won the lottery.

When did I become such a grinch? A penny's still a penny after all, even one that isn't pretty. To Sally it was a windfall. To me it was a pain in the back, sitting there under the kitchen table amid the spilled milk, toast ends, and broken pencil tips.

I wonder sometimes how a

thing goes from being so important to being a trifle. Have you looked at leaf lately? I mean, really looked at one? Amazing things they are—marvels of engineering and beautiful, too.

When your only interaction with leaves involves raking them into large piles and stuffing them into brown paper bags on the weekends it can be easy to miss the magic.

I confess: It's been a long time since I saw the magic in a leaf.

Kids know what leaves are for. They are for raking into piles so you can jump in them. They are for tucking under your baseball hat and wishing ladies good day as the leaves cascade over your face. They are for filling up your sweater and laughing ho ho ho while you pat your giant crunchy belly. They are for pasting onto posters and painting them to look like turkeys.

Leaves are for jokes. They are for handing to your sister and saying "Leaf me alone."

"Hey Dad, what did one leaf say to the other? I'm falling for

you."

"Good one. Now let's make like a tree and leave."

I guess I forgot what leaves are for. There is a tree on at the end of our street that makes leaves that look like Zulu warrior shields. I hadn't noticed until Ms. Pennypincher went crazy for them. While the rest of us tossed a football on a recent autumn afternoon, Sally gathered as many

It's related to the process that sends you to bed during the third quarter of the big game. Sports used to matter to me. Now I know I'll find out in the morning who won and it's better to have a good rest. There will be another game tomorrow.

When did I become such a grown up?

Age brings wisdom, the ability to see things more fully and more

"Age brings wisdom, the ability to see things more fully and more clearly than you did in youth."

Zulu shields as she could find.

The change happens on the inside, and slowly. You forget to notice the leaves. You forget that you once thought a penny was a lot of money. You forget what a miracle it is that the sun rises and the sun sets and every day you get a fresh start.

clearly than you did in youth. That's good and necessary. But along with that vision comes a certain selective

blindness. Raking the leaves may be a drag, but it probably doesn't have to be.

A penny may not be worth much, but throwing it in the trash is just about the laziest grown-up move there is. A penny saved is a penny earned, after all. Especially when little eyes are watching. ■

Cardinal Shehan Center

Shehan serves 'breakfast' with an impact

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—The 31st Annual Cardinal Shehan Center Celebrity Breakfast turned out to be a memorable one as it was the last one celebrated by Terry O'Connor, the long-time executive director, and also included a lively Q&A session with talk radio sports icon Christopher "Mad Dog" Russo.

Hundreds of friends and benefactors filled a packed banquet hall to support the ongoing youth learning, recreation and mentoring mission of the Shehan center.

Many gave words of thanks for O'Connor's 26 years of service to the center during this morning's breakfast held at the Vazzano's Four Seasons.

O'Connor passes the torch to Lorraine Gibbons as the new executive director of both the McGivney Community Center and Cardinal Shehan Center as of January 1. O'Connor's son Ryan will be the new director of development.

Addressing O'Connor, Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim remarked, "What a great turnout, what a great showing of support for the Shehan Center and all the work that has been done for 31 years...that is quite a tribute, Terry."

"The Shehan Center has always played a big role in my life," said Shehan member Samuel Alvarez who served as the traditional youth guest speaker.

Samuel, a seventh grader at St. Augustine Catholic Academy in Bridgeport, said, "I have been attending the Cardinal Shehan Center since I was five, and it has been an important part of my life these past few years."

Samuel spoke about how the Shehan center has allowed him to make new friends, enjoy fun things such as the game room, movie room and art room. Samuel also spoke about his love for robotics, an activity which has been available for two years.

Samuel also described how the Shehan Center provides students with job readiness skills, opportunities for field trips and many other activities.

After thanking everyone who has helped him at the Shehan Center, Samuel added, "...I want to thank God too, he has guided me here."

Father Charles Allen, S.J. blessed the event, praising all the good works the Shehan Center does and praying for all its efforts.

All proceeds from the breakfast will benefit the Shehan Center's After School and Saturday programs.

The Shehan Center Celebrity Breakfast is held in the fall and brings nationally known speakers to Bridgeport for a fundraising breakfast that benefits the various programs offered at the center.

Local business leaders, educators and politicians serve as "Celebrity Waiters" and purchase a table of ten for their friends and/or colleagues. The waiters serve breakfast to their guests and each guest

leaves a "tip" that is a donation to the Cardinal Shehan Center.

Past Celebrity speakers include Ed Cooley, Mike Lupica, Gail Goodrich, Frank Gifford, Jack Welch, Jim Nantz, Rod Thorn, Tiki Barber, Dan Hicks, Brian Cashman and Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

This year's guest speaker was Chris Russo, known as "Mad Dog," who is an American sports radio personality best known as the former co-host of the Mike and the Mad Dog sports radio show with Mike Francesa, which was broadcast on WFAN in New York City and simulcast on the YES Network. Russo joined SiriusXM Radio in August 2008 and is in charge of his own channel, Mad Dog Radio. He also hosts an afternoon radio show, Mad Dog Unleashed, SiriusXM Ch. 82



SHEHAN CENTER BREAKFAST—Samuel Alvarez, a Shehan Center member, was the youth guest speaker for the 31st Annual Cardinal Shehan Center Celebrity Breakfast held at the Vazzano's Four Seasons.

Mad Dog Sports Radio. In 2013, he added to his daily routine hosting the baseball show High Heat on MLB Network.

Russo is known for his quick manner of speaking, his whistles and his trademark greeting of "Good afternoon everybody!" at the start of the Mike and the Mad Dog show, which he was sure to demonstrate for the crowd. Russo currently resides in New Canaan.

"God closes one window

and he opens up another one," the "Mad Dog" remarked while explaining his journey into the world of sports radio.

Russo talked sports in a Q&A with the crowd, as well as taking questions about some of his most memorable radio moments. "It's God's work," he said of his successful career.

(To find out more about the Cardinal Shehan Center visit: www.shehancenter.org.)

Emmy winner praises Catholic Charities

DANBURY— Over 300 people came out to the Amber Room Colonnade on October 25 to support the programs and services of Catholic Charities of Northern Fairfield County, including Behavioral Health, Community Support Program, Family Loan Program, Homeless Outreach Team, Housing, Morning Glory Breakfast Program and New Heights. They were there to support the programs which focus on services for the needy, homeless and those struggling with mental issues, but walked away with so much more.

The event promised a "celebrity" speaker, yet two-time Emmy Award Winner Kevin Briody will even tell you that he considers himself anything but that. In fact, he sees the staff of Catholic Charities as the true celebrities as they are faced with the daily challenge of helping those in need. Kevin charmed the audience with the story about his life from growing up in Ridgefield and hitch hiking to St. Mary's Church to meeting his wife and taking a chance on



BREAKFAST WITH KEVIN BRIODY—Singer/songwriter Kevin Briody (far right) served as the guest speaker at the recent Catholic Charities of Northern Fairfield County Celebrity Breakfast held at the Amber Room in Danbury. (l-r) Event chairperson Tony Giobbi, vice president of the board, Al Barber, president and CEO of Catholic Charities, and MayAnne Murtha, president of the board.

song writing. His life has changed over the years, but it was always grounded in faith.

Kevin has done quite well as a song writer. His compelling song "We're All Heroes" opened the Special Olympic World Games and Autism Speaks commissioned him to write the song "Bring Them Back" to help generate awareness. After speaking to the group, Kevin performed two of his songs which were filled with so much emotion, that many

could be seen wiping away the tears from their eyes.

In addition to hearing from Kevin Briody, Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton spoke about the importance of the services provided by Catholic Charities and Father Chip O'Neill honored former Advisory Board Member Bob Leggett who passed away this year. Finally, Regional Director Michelle Conderino expressed how important it is to support Catholic Charities and

provided insight into the number of people being served in the Danbury area by the agency. At the end, she implored people to take the centerpieces on the table and give them to anyone who could use some compassion and in need of brightening their day.

Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, Inc. is one of the largest private social service providers in Connecticut.

Since 1916, Catholic Charities has served all people with programs that feed the hungry and homebound, shelter the homeless, strengthen families, assist the physically and emotionally challenged, and deliver consultation and assistance to immigrants. It serves all people without regard to age, race, religion, or ability to pay. Catholic Charities puts faith into action by providing food, housing, mental health, adoption, immigration and family support services to the needy and vulnerable of Fairfield County.

(For more information visit: www.ccfairfield.org.)

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

Gratitude and humility mark dedication of Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality

By JOE PISANI

FAIRFIELD—Words of gratitude and humility set the tone for the dedication of the newly renamed Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality as a wall plaque was blessed and a specially commissioned oil portrait was unveiled. The painting bears the likenesses of the parents of University Trustee Robert J. Murphy Jr. '71, Robert J. and Elizabeth K. Murphy, for whom the Center has been named.

Bob Murphy addressed those gathered in front of the picturesque stone façade of Dolan House on the northeast corner of Fairfield's campus. "It's an honor to be joined by family, lifelong college friends, professional colleagues and Jesuit mentors who have gently lived and taught by powerful example what the spiritual message of St. Ignatius really means."

Murphy recently pledged \$3 million to the center, as well as a gift of \$500,000 to support its ongoing operating expenses, ensuring that for generations to come, Fairfield University will continue to offer the transformational experience of Ignatian discernment to all Fairfield community members and those from the Diocese of Bridgeport who

seek to deepen their relationship with God.

"In grateful recognition of these foundational and sustaining gifts, and in gratitude to Bob for his profound personal commitment to the mission of the center, Fairfield University respectfully dedicates this center to the enduring memory of Bob's parents," announced Rev. Gerald Blaszcak, S.J., director of the center and vice president for Mission and Identity. "May the Murphy Center serve as an enduring tribute to them, and be for this University, our diocese, and the surrounding community a lasting resource for our growth as women and men of faith, and as collaborators in bringing God's Kingdom of reconciliation and hope, of justice and of peace."

While Murphy said that his parents never formally took part in the exercises or actively practiced Ignatian spirituality, he reflected that the lives his parents lived and the lessons they taught their eight children were an early introduction to the Ignatian way, which has been a part of their family dating back to at least the mid-nineteenth century.

"Fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, uncles, cous-

ins and in-laws across three different centuries have attended Jesuit institutions and passed on the unique lessons of that common experience," Murphy noted.

Describing his own journey through the full 19th annotation of the Ignatian spiritual exercises as "the most profound experience in my adult life," Murphy expressed hope that his gift will grant succeeding generations of Fairfield students early and ongoing access to this life-changing opportunity. He stressed the necessity of equipping graduates with the strength of character and firmness of faith to navigate the increasingly complex world in which we find ourselves.

Murphy also pointed out that the dwindling number of Jesuits combined with other contemporary challenges faced by all private institutions of higher learning creates a responsibility to maintain and grow a sustainable model for the University. "I firmly believe that in the success of continuing to make Ignatian spiritual development synonymous with what it means to be Fairfield, we will endow a long and solid future for this institution."

President Nemecek agreed, offering his personal heartfelt



MURPHY CENTER—Students gather at the newly named Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Fairfield University, which offers programs for students, adults, parishes and corporations that include spiritual direction, retreats, religious studies and formation.

thanks to Fr. Gerry Blaszcak for his leadership of the center and Bob Murphy for his extraordinary generosity noting, "The Murphy Center for

Ignatian Spirituality embodies all our commitments as a modern, Jesuit Catholic university and reflects our pursuit of truth grounded in faith and reason." ■

POSITION AVAILABLE

Director of Family Life

Archdiocese of Hartford – Bloomfield, Connecticut



The Director of the Family Life Office for the Archdiocese of Hartford will educate and be a resource to all parishes regarding the promotion and enhancement of marriage and family life. The office is responsible for the development and provision of services pertaining to significant phases in the lives of the Catholic faithful in the Archdiocese of Hartford. The office is also responsible for the Archdiocesan Common Policy for Marriage Preparation and ministry to culturally diverse married couples.

Duties and responsibilities will, in part, include, the administration and monitoring of all family life programs with attention to the effective response to all parishes, ministries, and community groups. Also, coordinate, oversee, and supervise the Engaged Couples Conferences and Engaged Encounter Weekend programs throughout the Archdiocese and coordinate and support Natural Family Planning Programs for married and engaged couples.

Qualified candidates must have a knowledge of church teachings on marriage and family, and have exemplary communication skills, both oral and written, as well as the ability to educate adults in small and large group settings. In addition, experience in pastoral ministry, at the diocesan level or equivalent, is preferred. A MS/MA Degree in theology, marriage and family ministry, religious studies, or related fields and five or more years of supervisory experience is preferred. All candidates must have a thorough knowledge of and appreciation for the Roman Catholic faith and traditions, as well as a familiarity with its structures, functions, and institutions.

To obtain a full copy of the position description or submit a resume and cover letter, please send an email to: karen.kean@aohct.org.

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Education News

Foundations in Education announces honorees

By **THERESA SCIALLO**

BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Education, a non-profit organization created to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport's ongoing mission to support Catholic education in Fairfield County, announced its 2019 Honorees—recognizing generosity in support of Catholic education, excellence in teaching and corporate partners.

The 2019 Honorees are Barbara and R. Bradford Evans; The Faculty of St. Joseph Catholic Academy; and Fairfield University, President Mark R. Nemeč, Ph.D. Foundations in Education will honor the recipients at the 4th annual Spring Gala on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at Woodway Country Club in Darien, Conn.

"Each year, we have the privilege of acknowledging individuals and an organization

who are true partners in our mission," remarked Foundations in Education Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine. "Our honorees have impacted thousands of children and their collective contributions may be felt across the Diocese of Bridgeport."

Barbara and Brad Evans have long been supporters of Catholic education, both in New York and here in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Together, they tirelessly give of their time, talent and treasure to impact the lives of thousands of children. As a senior advisor of Morgan Stanley, Brad joined the firm in 1970, became a vice president in 1976, was elected a managing director in 1979 and a vice chairman of the Investment Banking department in 2000. Brad received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth in 1964, served four years as an officer in the United States Navy and then



received an MBA from Columbia Business School in 1970.

He is a member of several educational boards, including the Overseers of Columbia Business School, Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, Wakeman Boys and Girls Club and Horizons at Sacred Heart University, a summer enrichment program

serving Bridgeport children. He is a former trustee of Dartmouth College. Brad is a member of Foundations in Education's Board of Trustees and serves on the finance committee. Barbara graduated from the Eliot Pearson School of Education at Tufts University in 1964 and taught elementary school for many years.

She is a member of the board of the Partnership for Inner City Education which operates six K-8 Catholic schools in the Bronx and Harlem serving approximately 2,000 students. She is also a former board member of the Collegiate School in New York City, the Southport School in Southport, Conn. and Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport, Conn. Barbara and Brad reside in New York City and Southport and have been married for 48 years. They have three sons and 6 grandchildren.

The faculty of St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Brookfield are being recognized this year as innovative orchestrators of a paradigm shift in school structure. St. Joseph's is the first school in the diocese to utilize the multiage classroom model school wide, where teachers act more as guides than lecturers. Multiage promotes both digital and project-based learning.

Technology is utilized to ensure a highly personalized education and "real time" feedback to teachers. Teachers move from "teaching to an imaginary middle of the class" to creating learning activities that meet the needs of diverse individuals.

Fairfield University lent their expertise in working with the office of the superintendent on the viability of our schools' study. Most recently, the Diocese

of Bridgeport entered into a multi-year partnership with Fairfield University's Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) to integrate technology across the curriculum and address individual student learning needs. Faculty and graduate students will support professional development focused on classroom management, technical skills, course design and online teaching strategies. An ed tech certificate program became available for diocesan teachers this summer.

GSEAP will also train and certify new teachers who will work in the district and receive spiritual direction from Fairfield's Center for Ignatian Spirituality as part of the new diocesan Aquinas Fellowship Program. Fairfield undergraduates enrolled in service learning courses will also have the opportunity to work in diocesan classrooms. Mark R. Nemeč, Ph.D., the 9th Ignatian and first lay president of Fairfield University, will be receiving the award on behalf of the university.

The annual Spring Gala is Foundations in Education's premier fundraising event. Gala proceeds benefit Foundations in Education, including Bishop's Scholarship Fund and Innovation and Leadership Grants. This year alone, Bishop's Scholarship Fund awarded 1,380 students more than \$2,500,000 in tuition assistance. The Foundation also funded nineteen grants to educators in the amount of \$105,000 for innovative and leadership initiatives within diocesan Catholic schools, thus benefiting students further.

(Please visit www.foundationsineducation.org for more information.) ■



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HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NOURISHED

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185,000 lunches
74,000 dinners

Welcomed **3,100** individuals
to shop in our food pantries

Home-delivered
72,500
meals to

180
seniors through our Meals
on Wheels service

Served **63,000** lunches
at **8** senior centers

Collected and donated
800+ turkeys and side
dishes to help families with
holiday dinners

SHELTERED

Case management services
provided for **251** homeless
or formerly homeless adults and
children in **102** federally
funded housing units

Provided
\$313,419
in rental assistance to help clients
stay in their homes

Secured **35** permanent
housing units to assist formerly
incarcerated to reintegrate
into society

Helped over **80** homeless
individuals move off the streets
into safe housing



STRENGTHENED

Provided **15,000**
counseling sessions

Educated **132** preschoolers
of low income families

Collected fully-supplied
kindergarten backpacks for
70
preschool graduates

Conducted **511** immigration
consultations and assisted
46
individuals with obtaining
U.S. citizenship

Distributed **2,900** donated
toys and **1,230** clothing
items to **940** individuals
during the holidays

Message from the President of Catholic Charities

For over 100 years, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has implemented a philosophy of faith in action to provide a broad spectrum of social services to the extended Fairfield County community. Catholic Charities hopes to extend our reach...but we cannot do it without you.

When you give to Catholic Charities, you are partnering with us to feed, shelter and strengthen those in our community who need help. You are broadening our reach and making a difference.

We hope you will continue to partner with us through a generous gift because your donation will make Catholic Charities' impact on the community that much stronger. On behalf of those we champion, I thank you for your support.

Serving together,

Al Barber
President, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County



For more information on giving options (including by check, online, matching gifts, recurring gifts, gifts of securities and charitable IRA rollover) visit "Support CCFC" at ccfairfield.org. Questions? Contact Bob Donahue at 203-416-1313, or rdonahue@ccfc-ct.org.



Catholic Academy

Students and parents meet

By PAT HENNESSY

Smiles and laughter, balloons, music, dancing and lots of yummy breakfast food filled the large, beautifully appointed catering hall. A Family Breakfast hosted by Vazzy's Four Seasons in Stratford brought together nearly 400 families from the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport.

"It was fun," said Wendy Juarez, a seventh grader at the St. Ann Academy Campus. "I got to see my friends and I got to meet new friends."

One school with four campuses in convenient locations throughout the city of Bridgeport, the Catholic Academy is home to more than 900 students. They took the generous offer from restaurant owner John Vazzano as an opportunity to build a greater sense of community both within the campuses and between families and teachers. "It pulled in all four corners of Bridgeport," said

Sister Joan Magnetti, RSCJ, executive director of the Academy. "It helps them feel that they're all part of a family."

Vazzano himself feels part of that family. "I went all the way through Catholic schools," says the Bridgeport native. Now the owner of six restaurants, he took to heart the lessons he learned in his younger years. In addition to helping the Catholic Academy, he is on the Board of Directors of the McGivney Center and Homes for the Brave, and has assisted SWIM Across the Sound, the Cardinal Shehan Center and the Marilyn Goldstone Foundation. Every year, he hosts a holiday food and toy drive in cooperation with the Bridgeport police and fire departments and EMS. "You've got to build community and it has to come from the heart," he says. "That's what I do. It's a big part of my life. We're making leaders for tomorrow."

An important way to form

tomorrow's leaders is to reach out to their families and let them experience the close-knit Catholic Academy community. "It was a great chance to connect with other parents," said Diana Parks, whose son Tyler is a second grader at the St. Andrew Academy campus. "Even with the families at St. Andrew's, you don't really get to know them. You're always running to drop your kid off before work and pick him up afterward. It felt so good to sit with other families and talk to them."

For the principal of the St. Augustine Academy campus, Dr. Deborah Boccanfuso, Parks' experience was exactly what she hoped for when the family breakfast was first suggested. "The kids know we're connected because we've had events together since the youngest grades," she explained. "Now we want the parents to see themselves as part of a larger community,"

At the family breakfast, parents—and some grandparents, too—got to see the warmth and friendship their youngsters have experienced since their earliest years. The middle school students have all been to each other's campuses at events as varied as an environmental cleanup day, the seventh-grade career day and the recent Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral and the pizza party afterward to usher in their final year. The pastors of St. Ann, St. Andrew and St. Augustine parishes joined in this special Mass.

"I've seen these kids at other gatherings since I was in sixth grade," said St. Ann eighth grader Bianca Reyes. "They're cool because we're all mixed together but it's just our grade. We get to know other people."

She has also helped out at field days held at St. Ann's for the lower grades with St. Raphael and St. Andrew. "We do simple events in so many ways with the younger students," said Sister Christine Hoffner, ASCJ, principal of the St. Raphael Academy campus. St. Raphael's students start at pre-K and go through third grade, when they move to the upper school at St. Augustine. "We hold a Teddy Bear Picnic together with kindergartners from



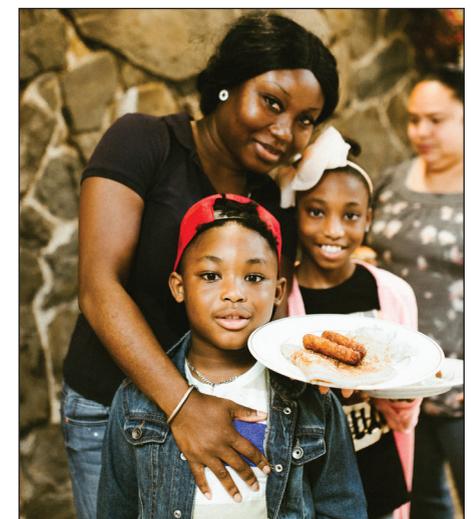
CATHOLIC ACADEMY BREAKFAST—Nearly 400 families from the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport gathered for a pancake breakfast hosted by Vazzy's Four Seasons. It was a morning to get to know each other.

St. Ann and St. Andrew. It's fun, just structured play time together with games like a bean bag toss, so they can come together, laugh and get to know each other."

Joint field trips continue that awareness. Once they learn to write, students send letters to their prayer buddies on other campuses. When they meet at prayer services, they might share popsicles with their buddy. It's a simple, but effective, way to let kids know that they are part of a kind, loving safe community that is spread throughout every campus.

Building this sense of community is part of the "something more" that the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport gives their students. It begins with an excellent education, with Chromebooks in every classroom and a strong emphasis on math, science and STEM curriculum. Not limited to mere academics, the Academy builds leaders for tomorrow through faith formation, encouragement of personal responsibility and a safe and nurturing environment with a culture of kindness and respect.

The fruits of these projects to build community paid off in a dramatic manner toward the end

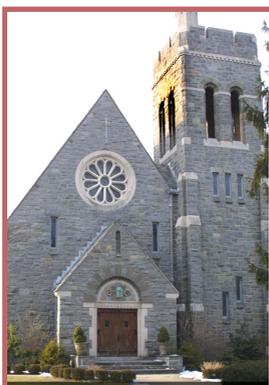


of the month. Torrential rains on September 25 flooded St. Andrew School. Within the briefest of times, accommodations had been made with the other academy campuses. Young Tyler Parks found his routine barely changed as he stepped off the bus at St. Raphael's, his new home for the next few weeks.

"He was worried that he wouldn't know what to do," his mother Diana recalled. "But when he got home, he said 'Mom, it was easy. It was just like being in my own school. I know everyone.'"

Tyler, his classmates, and all the students of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport know that they belong to a kind, safe bigger world that loves them and cares for them—and sometimes invites them to a yummy pancake breakfast.

"It feels so good," Diana said. "We're family." ■



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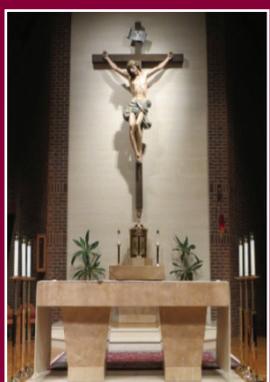
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God Bless You!



Vatican Synod on Youth

Bishop says accountability key for USCCB

CRUX online magazine conducted this online interview with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano shortly before the completion of the Synod of Bishops on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment,” where he joined nearly 300 bishops around the world for his first go at a synod. His talks and thoughts were widely reported on catholic media around the world.

Crux: Since this is your first Synod of Bishops, give us your impressions of the experience

Bishop Caggiano: The presence of the youth here has been tremendous. They’ve given an energy and a focus to everything we do, which I did not expect to happen. I think there’s general harmony, and the bishops seem to be moving in the same general



BISHOP CAGGIANO AT VATICAN SYNOD YOUTH

direction, which in my greater fears I was wondering if that would happen, but it is, in fact, happening.

I’ve been so involved with young adults back home that a lot of these themes resonate in my heart. The one take-away, which has changed me the most, is the global sense: what other bishops are struggling with regarding young adults, we are not. It’s basic human needs, human problems, that have been a sobering experience for me in the Church, that we in the United States don’t have.

Crux: Give us some examples.

Bishop Caggiano: Human trafficking. Martyrdom. Some of

the bishops gave beautiful, compelling stories of young women and young men who literally gave their life because mobs wanted them to renounce their Catholic faith. I’ve read it in books in the ancient Church, but this is going on in Asia and Africa right now and in our midst, and I think it’s something our young people need to hear.

Crux: In the synod, you were the first to raise the issue of sexual abuse. Realistically, what do you expect this synod to produce with regard to forward movement toward reform on sexual abuse?

Bishop Caggiano: The day before I left, I met with a number of young people from Bridgeport. I said to them, what message do I bring and every single one of them began with this question of abuse. The real question was the credibility of leadership, and the real question was “can I trust you?” One young woman said, “can I trust you?” Meaning me, not “you” in the plural. So, I promised them I’d bring it, and it confirmed in my heart what I knew I had to raise.

Crux: We’ve heard apologies before. We’ve heard Francis apologize, we’ve heard Benedict apologize, and we’ve heard the U.S. bishops apologize. At the same time, we still see mistakes that shouldn’t be happening, so how do you think trust can be regained?

Bishop Caggiano: There is no document on earth that is going to heal the broken trust that one individual has. We have to find the courage in this generation to come to sit with individuals and let them express what they’re really feeling and be able to answer to that. To a certain extent, I think it’s good that we empathize, but when I go back

to Bridgeport, it’s going to have to be my ministry and to allow that forum to tell me directly how they feel and to be able to answer that, because that is where we’re going to be able to rebuild trust.

Crux: Last question: are you going to go home more or less optimistic about the prospects of the Church because you took part in this synod?

Bishop Caggiano: More—much more.

Why?

Two reasons. Because the youth—the ones who are here—are committed, and they’re the tip of the iceberg. They’re willing to slug it out even in these times for their faith and for the Church, so it gives me great hope.

The second is that no matter

what happens with the aftermath of what we’re going through in the United States, this may be a period of humility, and it may even be a period of humiliation for the leadership of the Church. But, in that being stripped, you people will see leaders who are not standing over them but are standing with them. They’ll respond to rebuild the Church. I think there’s a whole army of young people who are willing to say yes.

When you take away the pomp and circumstance, and if you’re just standing with them in the rags, they’ll be with us. And I think that could be a moment of great grace in a moment of great woundedness and great hurt, so I think that’s what I go back with. ■

Thank you
Ms. Jeanne Bisson
Director of Religious Formation
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St. Emery Parish, Fairfield



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With thanks
and blessings

to

Ms. Kathleen

Rooney,

our entire religious
education team,
and to the catechists
and volunteers



Our Lady of Fatima
Wilton

Women Religious

Foundress of Apostles of Sacred Heart is beatified

By JOE PISANI

HAMDEN — She was born into a family of wealth and privilege. Her father sent her to a private school to prepare her to take over the family business in an age when women seldom achieved worldly success. But Clelia Merloni shunned the lure of success for another calling—to follow Christ and begin a religious congregation, which today has 1,000 sisters worldwide in 15 countries.

Eighty-eight years after her death, Mother Clelia Merloni, foundress of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was beatified on November 3 during a

Mass at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. At the same time, a Mass of celebration was held in Hamden at the congregation's U.S. provincialate.

Born in Forli, Italy, on March 10, 1861, she rejected the niceties of privileged society from an early age and preferred a life of prayer and solitude, contrary to her father's wishes. Even after founding a community committed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1894 in Viareggio, Italy, her life was one of reparation and exile, marked by "humility, rejection, hiddenness and yet a passionate desire to love and share that love."

A prolonged scandal over the

mismanagement of the congregation's finances by a person she trusted led to a 12-year exile from her community.

Sr. Ritamary Schulz, provincial superior of the Apostles in the United States, described Blessed Mother Clelia as a model of holiness, a woman of strength and courage who made Jesus the center of her life. Her devotion to the Sacred Heart, her life of reparation and her acceptance of suffering were hallmarks of her heroic virtue and sanctity.

"It is truly a day of joy and great celebration for all of us here and all who do and will know our beloved foundress," Sr. Ritamary said. "'God alone.' 'The love of Christ impels us.' 'Reparation.' Such are the phrases that she lived by and we in turn share that legacy."

She said that Blessed Clelia had an intimate relationship with Christ, which is the reality and core of the charism of the Apostles—a congregation committed to spreading Christ's love to the poor, orphans, the abandoned, the sick and the elderly.

"This is our legacy," she said, "to embrace and to be embraced by the love of Christ. To reach out to make that love known no matter what the cost. To be women of faith, of joy, or reparation even when stretched to the limits... This is our hope: That the love, service and reparation we speak is lived and intensified in our lives."

"Blessed Mother Clelia Merloni stands in sharp contrast to our culture today," said Sr. Colleen Therese Smith, director of mission advancement for the congregation. "She was a woman who was misjudged, slandered and humiliated. Her reputation was completely ruined and yet she never retaliated. She forgave those who hurt her, even within the community."

Sr. Colleen said that it is appropriate for Mother Clelia to be beatified this year.

"This is a year of reparation for us," she said, "because our foundress was so maligned and misunderstood even by our sisters. But she never took her focus off Christ and never retaliated. You can see her sadness and suffering ... but you never see anger or revenge."



SISTER COLLEEN THERESE SMITH, Director of Mission Advancement for the congregation and former principal of St. Rose of Lima School in Newton, joins Sister Dolorita Colinni, 96, at a reception following the Mass.

There is a great need of reparation in the world today, she said. "Reparation brings healing and compassion to the wounded members of the Body of Christ and ends the cycle of jealousy, division and judgmentalism," she said. "Blessed Mother Clelia showed us how to do that through forgiveness, and I believe the Holy Spirit is raising her up in the Church at this time because right now we need reparation."

Their call as Apostles of the Sacred Heart is to be one with the Crucified Christ and bring healing and reconciliation, following their motto, "*Caritas Christi Urget Nos*," which means "the Love of Christ impels us."

The congregation, which has 115 sisters in the United States in 34 ministries, began on June 16, 1902, when six missionaries sailed from Genoa to Boston. Since that time, the work of the Apostles has spread to 10 other states including Connecticut, Missouri, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Michigan, Rhode Island, Florida, New Jersey and California.

In 1906, the Apostles moved to New Haven and established their first provincial headquarters near Wooster Square as the sisters continued to work with Italian immigrants. In 1953, the provincialate moved to Mount Sacred Heart in Hamden, where currently Sacred Heart Academy, the Novitiate, Sacred Heart Manor, a nursery school, kindergarten and adult day care center are also located.

The Apostles are active throughout Connecticut. In the Diocese of Bridgeport, they arrived in 1960 at St. Raphael School and served at that same campus in the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. In recent years, they have been assigned to St. Rose of Lima School in Newton, Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford, in the Catholic Schools Office and the Office for Clergy Personnel coordinated by Sister Nancy Strillacci, ASCJ at the Catholic Center.

(For more information about the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, visit www.ascjus.org.)

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¿Por qué el juego es importante...

En la vida de los niños pre-escolares?

POR HNA. MIRTA CRUZ

En el Convento María Inmaculada tomamos muy en serio el aprendizaje de los niños de tres y cuatro años de edad que participan en nuestro programa pre-escolar. El programa está diseñado con juegos y actividades para enriquecer y estimular el desarrollo máximo de los niños.

En el programa hemos observado como el juego ayuda a los niños a ampliar su vocabulario, exponerse a la diversidad, a desarrollar destrezas cognitivas, sociales, emocionales y físicas que les va a ayudar durante toda su vida. Los juegos ayudan a los niños a explorar y descubrir el mundo por ellos mismos, entender relaciones con otros, a liberar sus tensiones y a sanar.

A través del juego le enseñamos a los niños a desarrollar destrezas sociales y emocionales, aprenden a comunicarse apropiadamente, a compartir, a resolver sus propios problemas, a respetar y adquirir confianza en sí mismos y en los demás. A través del juego aprenden a identificar y expresar emociones de coraje, miedo, enfado o tristeza usando palabras o gestos en una manera correcta, en vez de morder, golpear o hacerse daño a sí mismos o a los demás.

Proveemos oportunidades de actividad física como saltar, correr, galopar para que desarrollen destrezas motoras. El juego físico contribuye a la salud, al desarrollo muscular y a mejorar el control motor y la coordinación entre la vista y el tacto.

Usualmente los salones de clases en muchos programas son diseñados para que los niños aprendan estas destrezas en diferentes centros de actividades, por ejemplo:

1. Área de Bloques- Aquí los niños desarrollan su imaginación, aprenden a ser pacientes y a respetar a sus compañeros. Aprenden a resolver problemas, por ejemplo, como construir escaleras para subir a la casa que han construido. Aprenden conceptos matemáticos (figuras, tamaño, contar y agrupar objetos). Aprenden sobre la longitud, altura, peso medida, y a clasificar los objetos por colores, formas, tamaño y peso.

2. Área de Arte- Aquí aprenden a valorar y a respetar el arte de ellos y otros niños cuando expresan sus ideas a través del dibujo y utilizan su imaginación. También desarrollan un sentido de orgullo en su trabajo, sintiéndose capaces de hacer cosas por sí mismos. A través del arte identifican



HNA. MIRTA CRUZ

colores, textura y patrones con los cuales pueden trabajar. ¡Pueden soñar que son grandes artistas! Con el arte los niños expresan sus sentimientos manipulando materiales como la plastilina, pintura y colores. Desarrollan destrezas del lenguaje y motoras.

3. Centro Dramático- Aquí los niños aprenden a socializar con otros niños cuando pretenden durante el juego hacer el papel de mamá o papá, o mediante su imaginación pretenden cambiar su apariencia para creerse que son héroes u otras personas como la

maestra, el doctor, la enfermera, el bombero. Se le enseña destrezas como abotonarse la camisa, amarrarse los zapatos, abrocharse el zíper y aprenden a ponerse su ropa independientemente. Cuando juegan al restaurante los niños escriben y dibujan los menús, fijan los precios, toman los pedidos y escriben las facturas. Aquí los niños imitan la realidad, representando por medio del juego simbólico todo lo que han vivido o quieren vivir.

4. Centro de Ciencias- Los preescolares exploran usando sus

cinco sentidos. Aprenden a clasificar, medir, pesar, observar, y resolver problemas. Estas actividades alimentan su curiosidad y motivan a que aprendan nuevas cosas. A lo mejor en el mañana se interesan por ser grandes científicos o grandes inventores.

5. Centro de Música- Aprenden ritmos, movimientos, bailes, y nuevo vocabulario a través de las canciones y música.

Los padres son los primeros educadores de sus niños y es de suma importancia que el padre elija un programa pre-escolar que apoye al desarrollo y aprendizaje de su niño. Jugar y aprender son actividades entrelazadas, no separadas. Se aprende jugando y se juega aprendiendo. El juego ayuda a que los niños crezcan saludables y fuertes y las destrezas que se aprendan a través del juego son el fundamento.

Termino con una cita del Dr. Stuart Brown "Nada ilumina más la mente de un niño que el juego".

(La Hermana Mirta Cruz de las Hermanas Misioneras del Santísimo Sacramento es directora de su programa pre-escolar en Bridgeport. Para más información, pueden llamar a 203.334.5681 o escribir al correo electrónico Maryimmaculatedcc@gmail.com).

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Obituary

Patricia Brennan, spiritual director, 69

FAIRFIELD—Patricia Brennan, 69, a spiritual director for the Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Fairfield University, was born into eternal life on October 21, 2018.

Patricia was a proud member of the Fairfield University community and parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, as well as a psychotherapist.

Patricia was known for her gifts in mentoring students at Fairfield University, as well as spiritually accompanying people of all ages as they journeyed through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola.

At her Mass of Christian Burial, which was held at her beloved St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, those who spoke about Patricia described her remarkable gift to love and to listen with beautiful and indisputable sincerity.

Her son Sean offered words of remembrance at the service, sharing his emotional testimony with



PATRICIA BRENNAN

the same combination of witty humor and warm authenticity that characterized Patricia. Patricia will be sorely missed by many—but her gentle and powerful devotion to the Lord and to all of whom she accompanied will live on in every person who had the immense fortune to meet her.

In her counseling work, Patricia often accompanied people in some of the hardest moments of their lives—facing traumatic loss, difficult medical news, or deep family trouble, and she did it all with grace and sincere love.

“Patricia was the kindest and most genuine soul I have ever met,” said John Grosso, director

of digital media for the diocese, whose spiritual director was Patricia.

“She was so in tune with the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and always let Him be in the driver seat of her life. I always knew that no matter what I was facing, whether it was spiritual, personal or professional, I could always take it to Patricia—and she would help me find where God was in all of it. Her thoughtfulness, attentiveness and deep love of the Lord is something that I strive for every day. My life is better for having known her.”

Her family, particularly her son and daughter, were her pride and joy, and she delighted in sharing stories about them with her students and friends.

She is survived by her daughter Kelly Gougen and her husband, Tim, and their daughter, Blythe; her son Sean Driscoll and his wife, Heather, and their daughters, Beckett and Braelyn; her brother Frank G. Brennan, Jr. of Newport, RI and his daughter, Eilise, of Redding, Conn. ■

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FROM PAGE 10

Moye, who was a Catholic and worked at Action for Bridgeport Community Development Inc. A year later, they got married and shortly after she became pregnant and gave birth to her son Ian.

When it came time for Ian to enter kindergarten, she wanted to enroll him at St. Theresa School in Trumbull, and the late Monsignor Louis DeProfio advised them to baptize him in the Catholic faith.

“I realized it was also time for me to enter this beautiful Church which Christ started,” she said. On April 19, 2003, she received the Eucharist and Confirmation and became a Catholic.

“It was my birthday,” she said. “I couldn’t believe it. Talk about God’s Providence.”

She is enormously grateful for the people she met at St. Theresa’s who led her forward in her faith.

“I was so enamored by everyone at St. Theresa’s,” she said. “My brothers and sisters at that parish are phenomenal. The dedication and the love they have for Christ is just amazing, along with their generosity. My life has never been the same. They were role models for me, and I love them all.”

Their son Ian graduated from St. Theresa’s and went to Notre Dame High School, where he was president of the Student Council and captain of the track team. He got a degree in motor sports management from Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina and lives in Charlotte and has a job doing public relations for a NASCAR race team.

Eventually, all her siblings, except one brother, converted to Catholicism.

“If you came to my apartment, you would think you were in a religious store because it’s filled with statues and candles,” she said. Every day when she goes to the mailbox, she receives Mass cards from different religious orders, and one of her joys is having Masses offered for other people and praying for them when they have a birthday or are sick.

Her greatest joy as a Catholic is the Eucharist and the realization that she is receiving Christ—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

“There is no other gift that can compare,” she says. “The Eucharist brings us salvation; it brings us closer to Him. At the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, when the priest consecrates the host, I believe angels and saints are with us, all around the altar. It’s such a wonderful joy that it brings me to my knees.” ■

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15	Msgr. Lawrence J. McMahon.....	2009

Trinity Catholic Sports

Kriftcher succeeds Walsh

By **DON HARRISON**

How do you replace a living legend? Trinity Catholic's new head basketball coach, Brian Kriftcher, chuckled when he heard the question.

"It's like John Wooden's successor or the likes of that," he said, citing UCLA's incomparable coach, the legendary 'Wizard of Westwood,' as an example.

Kriftcher, 52, has accepted the daunting challenge to succeed Mike Walsh, the Crusaders' head coach for the past 39 seasons, a period of unparalleled achievement at the Stamford high school that included seven CIAC state championships and 13 title game appearances, six FCIAC titles and a multitude of lesser honors. Trinity's most recent state championship came at the Class S level in 2016-17.

In Connecticut's pantheon of high school coaches, Walsh ranks fourth in career victories (633 versus 294 losses) and fifth in the number of state titles.

Moreover, Walsh takes pride in the number of Trinity Catholic alumni who went on to play the game in college, notably Rashamel Jones—who co-captained the University of Connecticut's first national championship team (1998-99)—Dave McClure (Duke), John Smyth (Princeton), Earl Johnson (Rutgers, Iona), Torey Thomas (Holy Cross), Craig Austrie (UConn) and Schadrac Casimir (Iona).

"I respect Mike immensely, the relationships he has, the success he's had," Kriftcher said. "I'm confident in my own

approach, though, and we'll be building upon a real strong foundation."

Two factors contributed to Walsh's decision to retire at age 71. First, he wanted to be able to devote more time to his eight grandchildren, three of whom live in Florida. And in Kriftcher, who served as Trinity's associate head coach the past two seasons, he found a knowledgeable basketball person "who is very dedicated to helping the student athlete. He's really the best qualified to coach at Trinity Catholic."

Indeed, Walsh and his successor get on so well together that he intends to stay on as an assistant coach (and as the school's assistant baseball coach as well).

In many respects, Kriftcher is a basketball junkie. His playing career spans more than two decades—Seaford (N.Y.) High, the State University at Albany, and the U.S. masters (35 plus) Maccabi team, which won a gold medal in the 2007 Pan American Maccabiah Games in Argentina and a silver medal in the 2009 World Maccabiah Games in Israel.

His coaching career, though, did not take root until after he earned a law degree at St. John's University and spent 18 years in investment management on Wall Street. So why did he leave this lucrative world?

"The passion I had for (basketball) was so great. I love to teach and I use the game to teach," explained Kriftcher, who was the chairman, COO and principal at Satellite Asset Management.

In 2008, he founded the Stamford Peace Youth

Foundation, a 501c not-for-profit organization that offers year-round basketball programs, camps and clinics for young people as well as an academic component called Beyond Limits. Kriftcher serves as president as well as head basketball coach. "Coach K" proclaims the Stamford Peace website.

He also developed his coaching skills at St. Luke's School in New Canaan, guiding the boy's team for four seasons and winning one Fairchester Athletic Association (FAA) tournament title. His 2010-11 squad advanced to the championship game of the New England Preparatory Schools Athletic Conference tournament.

Then, deciding he "wanted to coach my middle daughter Charlotte in high school," Kriftcher moved on to Stamford's



BRIAN KRIFTCHER—Trinity Catholic's new head coach, Kriftcher, 52, has accepted the daunting challenge to succeed Mike Walsh, the Crusaders' head coach for the past 39 seasons, a period of unparalleled achievement at the Stamford high school.

Westhill High, where he directed the girl's squad for two years.

Now, after two seasons as an assistant, Coach K is prepared to

lead Trinity Catholic's flagship program, with Mike Walsh at his side and home games played in—yes—the Walsh Gym. ■

"We have, as a church, lost our way; our structures are weakened if not corrupt; our leadership in disarray."

— Michael W. Higgins

CONTRIBUTORS: Tina Beattie, Catherine E. Clifford, David Gibson, June-Ann Greeley, Michael W. Higgins, Paul Lakeland, Brent Little, Robert Mickens, Catherine Mulrone, Gerry O'Hanlon, Jennifer L. Reek, Daniel A. Rober, Brian Stiltner, Myroslaw Tataryn, Michael Sean Winters



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Column: Thomas Hicks



Quakers & Silence

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

Elected Silence sing to me
And beat upon my
whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still
and be

*The music that I care to hear.
(Gerard Manley Hopkins)*

Quakers fascinate and inspire me. Indeed, they often beckon me.

The Quakers sprang up in the mid-seventeenth century England. George Fox was their founder.

They referred to themselves as the Society of Friends, which refers not to friends of each other, but to friends of Jesus. Quakerism is rooted in the Christian faith.

Quakers base their worship on the concept of silent expectant waiting. Their exemplar is Elijah on Mt. Horeb waiting to hear the voice of God. That voice was not in thunder and lightning, wind and fire, but in the sound of a

soft gentle breeze (1Kings 19:12). Quakers meet in silence to hear more clearly that still small voice whispering softly.

At Quaker services no formal prayers are recited; no music played. Quakers discarded rituals and a paid ministry. They have no formal creed or prayer book. There is no central person directing their service. They meet in plain, unadorned rooms, because in such places they are less distracted from hearing the still small voice. The chairs face each other signifying that all are equal before God.

Quakerism is a faith of personal experience and direct communion with God. Quakers approach silence as the pathway to God. They consider silence as God's first language and as the substance of sanctity. So Quakers wait expectantly in holy silence.

They take the Psalmist's statement literally: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

After about 25 minutes the silence may be broken when someone feels a need to verbally share the Light that had shone in his or her soul. Quakers value spoken messages that are prompted by the Spirit. They believe something of the Divine is in everyone. They speak of "the Christ Within," "the Inward Light," "the Seed of Truth." Quakers do not answer or argue with something that might have been said, and several minutes are allowed to pass before anyone else speaks.

After about 45 minutes a Quaker service ends when one Friend, designated in advance, shakes hands with his or her neighbor. Then everyone shakes hands. They usually have coffee and snacks afterwards.

The first part of the movie "Friendly Persuasion" presents a fairly accurate depiction of a Quaker meeting.

Again, the Quaker approach to worship is based on the idea that silence is the pathway to God.

Our Catholic worship tends toward words. Indeed, as one Mass goer put it, "it's like being hit by a tsunami of words." From the opening "Good Morning" to the "Have a nice day" there are wordy outpourings. There is a quiet following communion. Depending on the priest, this only lasts from ten seconds to about 30 seconds. Sometimes one can feel that our church is awash with words. There can be such a thing as an overexposure to words. Thomas Merton wrote: "There are so many words. God is thought to be on the other side of the words...One sinks in the mud of words; the flies gather" (Letter to Ludovico Silva, April 10, 1965, Essential Writings, p.83).

The famous Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, did not enjoy solemn liturgies with all their ceremonies and verbosity. He attached a great deal of importance to the "silent" Mass. He would get up at five in the morning to celebrate the Eucharist alone.

The famous Catholic French novelist, François Mauriac, wrote "the longer I live, the less need I feel for ceremonies and words. A silent Mass is what I seek now. I am not dazzled by the pomp of many of our liturgies."

Many Catholics who seek a more adult faith find it in withdrawal from wordiness into silence; find it in moving beyond multiplied words.

God is beyond the multiplied words. We fill every possible opening with sound. "Let us turn to the back of our missalettes and recite together prayer number 32 on page..." We keep piling up vocal prayers.

One more quote, from a Protestant minister who wrote: "Jesus is usually found in a gentle whisper, in a genuine experience of silence. We fill our religious activity with the noise of our words, plaguing God with our needs and petitions or mindlessly repeating liturgical prayers. Some, if not most of that time, is better filled with silence and attentive listening, usually with Scripture as a guide" (Mark Galli, Charisma, September 2018, p.24).

Silence should be an integral part of worship. We need to listen more to that still small voice. In general, more attempts need to be made to introduce Catholics to contemplative practices. This is key to a healthy spirituality.

"You must be silent. Then God will be born in you, utter His word in you, and you shall hear it" (Johann Tauler, Spiritual Conferences, p.27) ■



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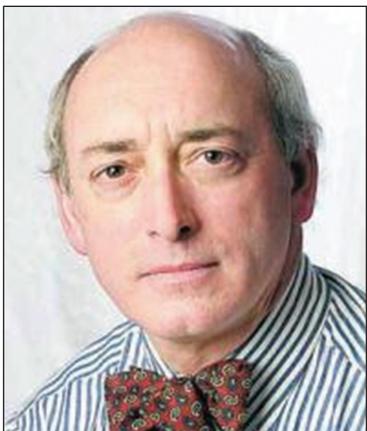
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Column: Joe Pisani



The high school reunion blues

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

There's no greater terror than the high school reunion, except maybe that first trip to the delivery room on a dark and stormy night. Or possibly an IRS audit. But the class reunion stands apart because it takes us back to adolescence, and through some strange transformation, we start to think like teenagers again. We worry about how we look, what people will think, am I a success, am I popular? (Actually, I'm still obsessed with those things.)

So on a dark and stormy night, I went to the St. Joseph High School reunion after many years ... let's just say it was more than 10.

I suffered the misfortune of being somewhere between class nerd and class clown. I wasn't smart enough to be the class nerd, and I wasn't funny enough to be the class clown. I did, however, have the distinction of being voted the Guy Most Likely to Lose His Hair.

The yearbook photo shows a fellow with a full head of black hair, but now I have virtually no hair and it's gray. We age for some mysterious reason, and I'm not sure what it is. Perhaps so that we're no longer obsessed

with superficial things like hair or hot cars, which probably means I have a lot more maturing to do.

The small slice of mortal existence known as high school has a way of branding us for eternity. Four years is a short time, but it can influence your self-image forever. You might not see your former classmates for decades, but when you're put in the same room years later, it's as if nothing changed except your waistline. Life may batter and beat us, but at our emotional core, we're still teenagers at heart.

There we were—a bunch of Baby Boomers thrown together in a country club ballroom with hot hors d'oeuvres, cheese platters, carving stations and a deejay. We ate, we reminisced, we commiserated, we grieved over those who died, we talked about grandchildren, and we tried to recapture if only for a moment what we shared during those adolescent years when Vietnam hung over our hopes like a foreboding storm cloud.

There was no need to be cool, and the teenage craving for popularity, thank God, was replaced by a more fundamental need—the longing for compassion over the pain life can bring.

I saw classmates who struggled with me through four years of Latin. Actually, they did well. I did the struggling. There was a couple that met in second grade and found love years later. More noteworthy than winning the State Finals, they had four sons and 12 grandchildren, not to mention 46 years of marriage. Another woman had professed as a Lay Carmelite committed to prayer and spiritual growth.

I saw Cindy, the girl I took to my junior prom and the only cheerleader I've been privileged to date in my entire life. I tried three other times with three other cheerleaders, and the answer was always no. Thank you, Cindy.

There were stories of worldly success, but the stories I'll remember are the ones of perseverance and faith in the face of life's challenges. High school was a prelude to life, and during life,

some of us struggled with illness, some with addiction, some with marriages, some with loneliness, some with careers, some with our children. Some of us spent years

dedicated to simple, noble causes like caregiving for parents or children, and others

pursued profound causes like preserving life in a society that has no respect for life. One fellow got sober after years of drinking, and he helped hundreds, perhaps thousands, of men recover from alcoholism until the day he died.

Just as I was on the verge of overdosing from nostalgia and stories about grandchildren, the deejay played "Locomotion" by Little

Eva and I returned to the real world circa 1968. "Cmon, Baby, do the Locomotion with me!"

My reunion reminded me that worldly success can't compare

"There were stories of worldly success, but the stories I'll remember are the ones of perseverance and faith."

with spiritual success. The things I thought were important back

then like varsity letters (I never got one), awards and trophies don't mean much in the end ... although I would have liked to date one more cheerleader.

The lesson I learned that night is a simple one: Look for the love. And when you look for the love, you'll find the joy.

(Joe Pisani can be reached at joeppisani@yahoo.com.)

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Catholic Men's Conference

Laity can help lead the way during Church crisis

By **JOE PISANI**

BRISTOL—More than 500 men, including a delegation from the Diocese of Bridgeport, recently attended the 11th annual Catholic Men's Conference held at St. Paul High School in Bristol.

The conference, whose theme was "Go Into the Whole World," featured the Rev. Bill Casey of the Congregation of the Fathers of Mercy, who is a frequent guest on EWTN.

"There must be a spiritu-

al renewal that must begin with us," he said to sustained applause. Echoing the words of Christ to St. Francis of Assisi during a similar period of turmoil in the 12th century, he told the men they must rebuild the Church.

Calling for the defense of faithful priests, he said there are 45,000 active priests in the United States and 96 percent of them had no part in the abuse scandal. He also criticized the news coverage of the secular media for overlooking the efforts of faithful clergy.

Fr. Casey said times such as these produce the greatest saints. "We must never fail to be loyal sons to Holy Mother Church," he said. "Heroic virtue is what it will take to turn things around in this time of turmoil in the Church."

Steven Lee of Ridgefield, president and CEO of Veritas Catholic Network said, "The conference left me renewed and reenergized to put my faith into action. It's our responsibility by our baptism to go out into the vineyard, to re-evangelize the world, and to heal, strengthen and protect the Church."

Thomas Hart of New Fairfield said the speakers, particularly the discussion about father wounds, led to self-reflection because it reminded him of his experiences with his father and the need for love and compassion. "Being the father of three boys and having coached many young men, my focus was always to insure that they developed a little better self-esteem."

Regarding the sex abuse crisis in the Church, he said, "The stories are tragic and unthinkable and we must address them and insure they never occur again."

Art Maggiola said he went to confession for the first time in 40 years, which he described as "an exciting experience." He said, "It's always reassuring that other people have similar problems as expressed by the stories we heard, but if we stick together and fight this demon, I think we will come out stronger than ever."

Otis Shelton, who attended his first conference last year and this year brought 20 men from St. Edward the Confessor Church, said the talk by Father Casey about



A GROUP OF MEN from St. Edward the Confessor Church in New Fairfield join Father Bill Casey, a keynote speaker at the Men's Conference in Bristol

the crisis in the Church was sobering. "Today's sexual abuse scandal is serious," he said. "And the clergy and laity need to respond to the call to action and address it. But we should always remember that the Catholic Church has faced serious challenges since its beginning and has survived them."

Other speakers at the conference were Jason Calvi of EWTN News, Bob Kroll of With All Your Heart Apostolate, Deacon Doug Hoffman of the Diocese of Norwich and Hartford Archbishop Leonard Blair.

In a far reaching and candid question and answer session Archbishop Blair discussed the abuse crisis triggered by the revelations concerning Archbishop McCarrick and responded to the men's concerns during a question-and-answer session.

"I am as deeply troubled, distressed and angry as you are about what has happened," the Archbishop said referring to the abuse crisis. He added that the U.S. Church did much in terms of prevention and outreach over the past 15 years.

Father James Sullivan, chaplain for the Men's Conference, said: "In the spirit of Vatican II, there is a universal call to holiness, to evangelize, preach and spread the Gospel, not only for priests and religious, but everyone, no matter where they are in life—married, single, in offices, in sports, in factories, in fields. We need to redouble our efforts in this time of crisis and go out boldly proclaiming the Gospel because the power of evil is always at work to break down, divide and destroy."

He said that priests he knows are intensifying their efforts; they are wearing their collars and they are walking proudly.

"We need to reach over the edge of the cliff to reclaim the lost sheep. It is not a time to retreat but advance and go further," he said. "There is a wound in the Church and we have to understand people are hurting. We need to show the mercy and compassion of God, but we must do it in a spirit of joy because joy always attracts. During times like these, saints are made." ■

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A HOLY HOUR FOR THE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE will be held on **Wed., Nov. 28**, from **6-7 pm** and on the fourth Thurs. of every month after at the Church of St. Cecilia in Stamford.

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CRAFTERS WANTED FOR ST. JUDE CHRISTMAS FAIR on **Sat., Dec. 1!** Any crafter interested in participating in the fair can email stjudechristmas-fair@gmail.com or call Elizabeth Edgerton at: 203.258.3354.

ST. MARGARET MARY HOLLY FAIR will be held at St. Margaret Mary parish in Shelton on **Sat., Dec. 1**, from **9 am-4 pm**. Join us for shopping a variety of crafters & vendors, a cookie walk, raffle, Santa and a bake sale.

A CONFERENCE IN HONOR OF THE 50TH

ANNIVERSARY OF HUMANAE VITAE is being held at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers on **Sat., Dec. 1**, from **9 am-4 pm**. Speakers include: Fr. Paul Check, Rector, St. John Fisher Seminary Residence, Stamford, Dr. Marguerite Duane, executive director, Fertility Appreciation Collaborative to Teach the Science (FACTS), Anna Halpine, founder, World Youth Alliance and CEO of FEMM, Dr. Martin Owen, Founder and CEO, Vitae Medical Solutions. Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Byrne.

ST. CATHERINE CENTER 2018 MASS CELEBRATING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS will be held on **Sun., Dec. 2** at **2 pm** at Holy Cross Church in Fairfield.

ST. EMERY CHURCH IN FAIRFIELD PRESENTS 'BE BORN IN US TODAY' praying the stations of Advent and Christmas written by David Haas on **Sun., Dec. 2**, **2 pm**.

A MASS OF HOPE AND HEALING will be held on **Wed., Dec. 5**, at St. Marguerite in Brookfield at **7 pm**. Fr. Larry Carew will be the celebrant.

THE 25th NORWALK CELEBRITY BREAKFAST is being held on **Fri., Dec. 7**, from **7:30-9:30 am** at Shorehaven Golf Club in Norwalk. Father Kinnally of St. Aloysius Parish will be the keynote speaker. Buffet breakfast.

Individual tickets: \$50. Tables of 10: \$350. For more info: www.25thnorwalkbreakfast.eventbrite.com.

THE 5TH ANNUAL TRADITIONAL ITALIAN CHRISTMAS EVE STYLE DINNER is being held at Sacred Heart Church in Stamford on **Sat., Dec. 8**, from **6-10 pm**. The event features entertainment by Street Harmony and the cost is \$45 per person. Reservation deadline is **Mon., Dec. 3**. Call Jeff Curtis at: 203.968.1234 or Fran Bianco at: 203.329.2126.

DIACONATE DISCOVERY EVENINGS will be held on the second Thurs. of each month beginning in Oct. of 2018 and are scheduled through Sept. 2019. Dates are as follows: St. Stephen Parish (**7-8:30 pm**): **Dec. 13, Feb. 14**. St. Phillip Parish (**7-8:30 pm**): **Jan. 10, March 14**.

ST. MARGARET SHRINE ADVENT RETREAT is being held on **Fri., Dec. 14**, from **7-8 pm** with an evening of song and scripture and on **Sat., Dec. 15** with an **8:15 am** Mass followed by an Advent morning of reflection from **9-11:30 am**. For reservations, call the Shrine Office at: 203.333.9627.

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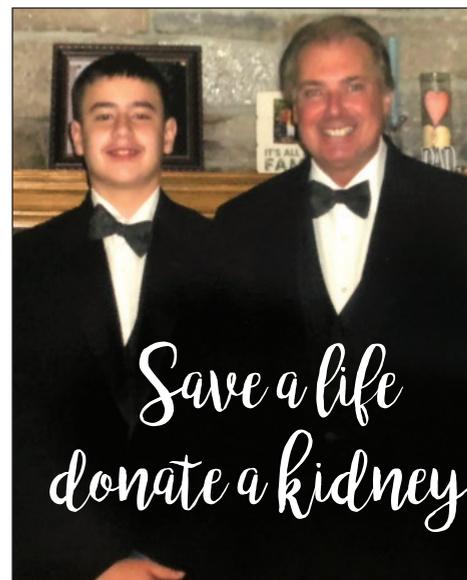
on **Sat., Dec. 15**, at **9:30 am** to celebrate Mass in the church. Celebrant is Father Norm Guilbert, Jr. For further info call Pat Heile, OFS at: 203.255.8801 or pheile5713@aol.com.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT The St. Theresa choirs will present a Christmas Concert in Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary on **Sun., Dec. 16**, at **4 pm** at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull. For more info call: 203.261.3676.

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. Presentations will take place on the following Sundays: **Jan. 20**: India; **Feb. 17**: Pre-Columbian Peru.

A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, CROATIA and MEDJUGORJE is being held from **Sun., Sept. 23-Sat., Oct. 4, 2019**. For more info contact Father Marcel Saint Jean at Christ the King: 203.434.7208; 203.268.8695. ■



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