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Call to reform & purify the Church

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Inside this issue

We all seek healing

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

WESTON—Calming piano music filled the church of St. Francis of Assisi in Weston on a beautiful spring Saturday morning, making a perfect atmosphere of healing for those who gathered at the Healing and Anointing Mass, seeking to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

“This morning we gather as a people of faith to pray for our sisters and brothers who are gathered here who will be asking for the healing and healing Mass, concelebrated by Father Jeffrey Couture, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. "They come here to seek healing, to ask God’s grace of consolation to help them bear the suffering, physical, mental or whatever it may be that the Spirit can help them to do,” said the bishop.

The bishop reflected on his trip to Lourdes, France last year with them to do,” said the bishop. "This morning we gather as a people of faith to pray for our sisters and brothers who are gathered here who will be asking for the healing and Anointing Mass, concelebrated by Father Jeffrey Couture, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

“They come here to seek healing, to ask God’s grace of consolation to help them bear the suffering, physical, mental or whatever it may be that the Spirit can help them to do,” said the bishop.

The bishop reflected on his trip to Lourdes, France last year with the Order of Malta, saying, “All of us coming to Lourdes were in some way seeking healing, for we were all, in some way, seeking healing…from the hurts that come from perhaps the inability to attend to someone we love in his or her hour of suffering, or the hurts that we inflict upon ourselves, the suffering from our own sinfulness, which is a sickness of spirit, which differs from the sickness of the body or the mind… but we were all seeking, in some way, healing.”

Each reading at the Mass was centered on healing, of which the bishop said, “Recall the miracles that we just heard in the Gospel. Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and even raised the dead as a sign of a truly healed life which we will not have in this earthly existence. They were signs of the inbreaking of the body of grace, as a foretaste of a life which is promised to us by His death and resurrection, where every tear is wiped away, every disease is cured, every brokenness made whole and every sin forgiven.”

The bishop addressed the gathering, saying, “healing will come to everyone in this church who seeks it as the Lord wishes to give it, not as we wish to have it for ourselves.”

To those being anointed, the bishop said, “God will touch you mightily. He will come to you. He will lighten your burden in ways seen and unseen, but He will never abandon you.”

“We will all be invited to be healed,” the bishop said, “May we dilate our hearts to be surprised by the ways that grace will change our life so that we may carry this burden for a purpose that only God may know...so that we may all leave this church this morning better and more fully healed in His infinite and merciful grace.”

After the homily began the liturgy of anointing. Those who were being anointed were asked to stand and the bishop walked from pew to pew to administer the sacrament to each of them, first the laying on of hands and then the anointing with chrism oil.

Instruments of Amazing Grace, the St. Francis Prayer and other beautiful melodies played in the background as those seeking healing received the Anointing of the Sick.

At the closing of the Mass, the bishop reminded the gathering, “He is the Divine Physician and He has come to each of us today.” After announcing that the Healing and Anointing Mass would now be an annual event, the bishop left the congregation with one last reminder, saying, “Never forget, my friends, that in your greatest hour of suffering, the Lord is never more close to you than that. As difficult as whatever burden you carry do not be afraid, the Lord is with you every step of the way.”

The bishop then personally greeted each of those who received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick outside after Mass.

This Mass was organized by the Office of Faith Formation. (For more information visit the Office of Faith Formation website at: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/faith-formation. For any questions call: 203.416.1670 or email: officeoffaith-formation@dioctep.org)

Christ is the hope that comes from Easter

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the coming days, we will enter the most sacred mysteries of our faith through the observance of Holy Week, which begins on Palm Sunday with the account of the jubilant crowd joyfully welcoming the Lord Jesus into the city of Jerusalem, and leads to Good Friday and His suffering and crucifixion.

It is a time to reflect upon the selfless gift of love that Christ offers us in His Cross and to deepen our understanding that anyone who wishes to call themselves Christian must be prepared to love in the same way.

Through the solemn liturgies, we are invited to walk with the Lord to Calvary, go to the garden with Him and stay with him in the upper room.

Our Easter challenge is clear. We are to embrace everyone and love as generously and radically as Jesus did. We must pray in a special way for all those who are suffering because of physical or mental illness or because they are victims of violence, abuse and injustice.

We especially remember those who are suffering so terribly around the world because of their Christian faith. May the Lord grant them strength in their time of need and a share in everlasting life.

Yet we must never forget that the great gift of Christianity is Christ and the hope that comes from Easter! Despite the suffering and evil in the world, we who wish to follow Christ need to ask for the gift of joy, which our Father in Heaven will give to each of us.

With joy, we will be able to confront any challenge or difficulty, because God will lead us every step of the way. Even more, the Lord promises us that our suffering will not end in pain but in glory and transfigured life.

I pray that the new life offered by our Risen Lord abundantly bless you and your family with joy, hope and peace of mind and heart this Easter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport
Latest News

Crisis is call to reform and purify the Church

BY BRIAN D. WALLACE

FAIRFIELD—The sexual abuse crisis has led to a call to reform and purify the Church and meaningful change is already underway in many dioceses across the country, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said at the first Listening Session held at Notre Dame High School.

The bishop told that gathering that in addition to innovating its own response, the diocese has sought out best practices models to respond to the crisis and reach out to victims and survivors of abuse. “This is a crisis that has not only shattered the lives of victims but wounded the whole Church,” said the bishop.

“The very fact that we’re here talking about this saddens my heart. It should never have happened in the life of the Church. No one is the same. Trust has been damaged,” he said, adding that the Church can only move forward if it fully confronts the crisis.

In a candid and at times poignantly discussion the bishop said that the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report issued last summer was a turning point in the life of the Church as people came to terms with the prevalence of abuse and the failure of leadership to stop it.

He said that the faithful have asked for complete “transparency and accountability” in response to the crisis and the assurance that child protection programs are working. They also want justice for the victims.

The bishop said that he asked retired Superior Court Judge Robert Holzberg to address the accountability issues in his upcoming report including how the crisis was handled by diocesan leaders in the past until the present day. The judge’s independent investigation and report is expected to be issued at the end of June.

The bishop said he has met with many victims and survivors over the past few years who have “lived with indescribable pain and who share courageous stories of trying to put their lives back together.”

He told the men and women present that the diocese has reached out to victims through Erin Neil, victim assistance coordinator, a Healing Mass, a survivor’s group and other activities to bring healing and improve child protection policies.

He is hopeful that as a result of Safe Environments program and Virtus training, people throughout the diocese are much more attuned to boundary issues and aware of or any signs of abuse.

When asked if the crisis has had an impact on the way the diocese prepares seminarians for the priesthood, the bishop said that they undergo psychiatric and peer evaluations and participate in human formation programs.

In a one-hour question and answer session the bishop responded to a wide range of questions and concerns including the cost and source of funds for legal settlements, the financial support given to priests who were credibly accused of abuse and the impact of the crisis on the Church.

Some who attended the listening session spoke personally about the impact of abuse in their own lives, while others discussed the impact of the crisis on family members who no longer attend Mass because they’ve lost faith in the Church.

“There are many people who may never come back, but our Lord hasn’t abandoned us and he will accompany us on our way,” the bishop said.

The bishop also held a listening session at St. Joseph High School on April 9. The final listening session will be held on May 1, 6:30 pm at Immaculate High School in Danbury. All are welcome to attend.

(A full accounting of the diocesan response to the abuse crisis including a financial accountability report and a full list of resources can be found on the “Pledge to Protect” page of the diocesan website. Visit: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/pledge/welcome.)

New scholarship opportunity for Trinity Catholic

STAMFORD—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has announced a new scholarship opportunity to make Catholic high school education at Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford more affordable and available to more families in Lower Fairfield County.

The new Bishop’s Scholarship Initiative for 2019 will award a total of $12,000 ($3,000 for each of four years) to any Catholic student who is currently an 8th-grade student in good standing at one of the five Catholic elementary and middle schools in the area.

An additional scholarship of up to $8,000 ($2,000 for each of 4 years) is available to any student who qualifies for the incoming 9th-grade scholarship and has a sibling currently enrolled in any Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic elementary or high school.

“The scholarship initiative is another step forward in our efforts to create a new energy and vision for Catholic education on the Trinity High School campus,” said the bishop. “Along with the new governance model and major renovations to the campus, we are redesigning Trinity as a center for Catholic education in Lower Fairfield County. I am grateful to the board, the staff and all those who are contributing to the overall transformation of Catholic education in Stamford.”

Students in the following schools will be eligible for scholarship assistance: Trinity Catholic: The Catholic Academy of Stamford, All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk, Greenwich Catholic School, St. Aloysius School in New Canaan and Regina Pacis in Norwalk.

“This is an extraordinary opportunity for 8th graders making the transition to high school this fall,” states Pat Brady, head of school at Trinity Catholic.

The bishop is committed to making a four-year Trinity Catholic high school experience available to every Catholic student in our Catholic schools here in lower Fairfield County.”

“A $12,000 to $20,000 in tuition reduction is substantial, especially in that it will follow a student for all four years of high school,” she added.

This month, Trinity Catholic completed a two-year, $5M renovation project including extensive renovations to the school’s media center, classrooms, offices, labs and guidance wings, which were completed in late 2018.

Earlier this year, the diocese approved a new governance model for Trinity Catholic. Under the governance model, the diocese will continue to sponsor the school and provide global vision and a new nine-person local board of directors will provide oversight and decision-making authority, to both institutions, on a day-to-day basis.

As a result of the bishop’s leadership and the commitment of the new governing board, Trinity Catholic High School has a master plan that is already bringing new energy, investment and innovation to the campus,” said Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of Catholic Schools.

The 40-acre campus will also include the Catholic Academy of Stamford upper schools (grades 6-8), which is scheduled to move into a newly renovated space in the Trinity building this fall 2019-20 school year.

Trinity Catholic High School is Lower Fairfield County’s educational center for Catholic identity and education. Its 40-acre campus in the quaint, rural Newfield area of Stamford is easily-accessible for families in lower Fairfield County and for those who have to travel from Westchester County, New York. Trinity offers a safe, nurturing environment of authentic Catholic education; academic, college-preparatory excellence, technologically-enabled personalized learning with virtual high school course electives.

(To schedule a tour or visit or for more information on The Bishop’s Scholarship and application procedures, including easy online application at Trinity, please contact Mrs. Cindy Willette, director of admissions, via email at cwillette@trinity catholic.org.)
Annual Catholic Appeal

Fairfield couple leads ACA

By JOE PISANI

When Jason Melaragno’s parents came to America from Italy, they settled in Torrington, where his father had a barbershop on Main Street and worked in the factory at night to support his family and send his sons to Catholic school. It was that important to him.

Even though Victor Melaragno went to church only a handful of times in his 53 years of life, Jason still recalls the many acts of charity that typified his father’s generosity. If someone couldn’t afford a haircut, he would do it for free. If someone was in need, his father always said yes.

And it was Jason’s mother Mary who gave her two sons a solid foundation in the faith and made sure they went to Mass every Sunday at St. Peter Church, where they were altar boys.

Today, Jason and his wife Roxanne, who are parishioners at Holy Family Church in Fairfield, are so faith-filled, and they are on the path of discernment for the priesthood.

The couple became active in the Annual Catholic Appeal when their pastor, Father Norman Guilbert, asked them to be co-chairs for their parish’s Development and Parish Support Task Force. Until their son Justin was born two years ago, she had been a teacher and administrator in Seymour.

Being active in their parish is nothing new to the Melaragnos, who grew up participating in church activities. As a girl, Roxanne and her family went to 8 am Mass every Sunday at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Harwinton, where she was a member of the angel choir.

The couple became active in the Annual Catholic Appeal when their pastor, Father Norman Guilbert, asked them to be co-chairs for their parish several years ago. This introduced them to the services and ministries the Appeal supports.

Pamela Rittman, director of development and the Annual Catholic Appeal, said the generosity of those who participated in last year’s Capital Campaign, We Stand With Christ, is already at work strengthening parishes and making it possible for the diocese to plan for and implement essential ministries and programs for generations to come.

“This year, we hope that you resume your participation in the Annual Catholic Appeal so that we may remain steadfast in our mission to renew the world through God’s love one person at a time,” she said. The Capital Campaign gifts support future and long-term needs, while the Appeal responds to the day-to-day, ongoing needs of the diocese, she said.

Gifts to the Appeal support Catholic Charities’ nutrition, housing and counseling programs by nourishing the hungry, sheltering the homeless, strengthening families and individuals, in addition to assisting other ministries and services.

“When people understand where the money is going, they’re more willing to give to the appeal,” said Jason, who works in sales and marketing for Pfizer pharmaceutical company.

“The ACA does good in so many ways,” he added. “We have seen everything the Appeal helps, including care of the elderly, encouraging teenagers, who are the future of our faith, and Catholic Charities, which helps people in need.”

This past year brought them to a greater understanding of what the Appeal does, including its support of St. John Fisher Seminary. They have had dinner with the seminarians and Father Paul Check, the rector, and Father John Connaughton, vocations director.

“The seminarians gave us a lot of hope for the future of the Church,” Roxanne said. “They are so faith-filled, and they are on the path of discernment for the priesthood.”

“We as a Church community need hope and faith and direction more than ever, so when we see guys who have committed, it gives us encouragement,” Jason said. “Hope for the future keeps us grounded in our faith.”

Roxanne has also visited the Thomas Merton Center and the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence for retired priests. In addition, they both recognize the importance of Catholic education in cultivating the faith of young people in the diocese.

“We see Catholic education as the future of the Church,” said Jason. “There is so much value to a Catholic education.”

Giving witness to their Catholic faith is a fundamental part of their lives, whether it is done in subtle or overt ways. At work, Jason tries to create an image for his coworkers of what it means to be a Catholic.

“It’s well known that we are involved in our church, and I often share what we do with them,” Jason said. “I hope they walk away with the understanding that Catholics are good people... and that understanding may even lead some of them to come back to the Church.”

In her work with Matthew Kelly’s ministry, Roxanne emphasizes the importance of “being the best person you can be.”

“That is what being a Catholic is all about, trying to be holy,” she said. “People who became saints weren’t holy all the time. When we go to church every week, it’s in the back of my mind about being the best I can be and bringing other people in.”

For the Melaragnos, being involved with the Appeal is “an opportunity to ignite our faith more and more.” They also stress the importance of encouraging everyone to participate in the Appeal and say “you don’t have to give large amounts of money.”

“The Appeal gives us the opportunity to participate,” Jason said. “If you have never given before, please use this opportunity to give one dollar — or if you have given before, use this opportunity to give one dollar or more above what you did last time.”

“We really believe that if we can increase participation rates, more people will be vested in the Annual Catholic Appeal and all that it stands for,” he said.

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2018 Annual Catholic Appeal—‘We Stand With Christ’

First Phase: Capital Campaign

Parishes Annual Catholic Appeal Results

Pilot Parish Results

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Guaranteed Annual Catholic Appeal Parish Goals: Total $2,115,000
26th Annual White Mass

Homeless struggle with great loneliness

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

FAIRFIELD—After completing his residency at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1985 James O’Connell, M.D., spent his first two months as a physician soaking the feet of homeless men and women in Boston. His first assignment came as a surprise and a life-changing revelation of the meaning of service and an insight into the homeless and suffering.

“Something as simple as soaking the feet of the homeless reverses the power structure. You are sitting at their feet providing comfort,” said Dr. O’Connell to almost 100 people who gathered for Twenty-Sixth Annual White Mass Breakfast at Brooklawn Country Club.

The breakfast followed the White Mass to honor healthcare workers, which was attended by hundreds of faithful at St. Augustine Cathedral. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano served as the principal celebrant of the Mass on the 5th Sunday in Lent.

Dr. O’Connell, who is President of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program and who has earned national recognition for his care of people living on the streets of Boston, said that the nurses who ran the healthcare clinic where he began work there told him the only way to serve the homeless was to listen, to get to know them and to build trust.

“The homeless often don’t hear their name called with any dignity for months or even years at a time,” said O’Connell, who made a point to call his patients by their first name.

The Harvard Medical School professor and winner of the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Award said that working with the homeless has taught him the contradictions of American life and healthcare.

“The death rate for the homeless is 12 to 20 times higher than for any other group. The leading cause of death of people on the streets is cancer,” he said. “Many go untreated though they live in the shadows of the best healthcare in the city.”

Dr. O’Connell said that he has worked in Haiti and Africa and witnessed abject poverty, but people were often surrounded by their family and children. In contrast, the homeless of the U.S. suffer from serious and dangerous isolation and loneliness.

During the breakfast, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano presented the Father Ruffin Compassionate Care Awards to Greenwich Hospital nurse Maureen McLaughlin, R.N., and Patricia Stockdale for her compassionate service as a hospital chaplain and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

A native of New York City, Patricia Stockdale was one of the first female lectors at St. Patrick Cathedral and since moving to Connecticut in 1992, she has taught CCD, led prayer groups and participated in outreach to the poor and homebound. After becoming certified as Catholic Chaplain in 1996, she has served at St. Joseph Manor in Trumbull and St. James Church in Stratford, where she also offers the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick weekly.

Maureen McLaughlin earned her nursing diploma at Saint Elizabeth Hospital School of Nursing in Brighton, Mass., and a bachelor’s in Nursing from Sacred Heart University. As a full-time home health and hospice nurse she coordinated end of life care and support for patients and families. She currently serves in the ambulatory care unit of Greenwich Hospital. She is an active member of the St. Matthew Parish Nurse program and cooks meals for the Parish seniors and the Martha Hospitality Committee. Maureen and her husband Barry and son Michael are parishioners of St. Matthew Parish.

Dr. William J. Fessler, DDS served as Master of Ceremony for the breakfast and Fr. Thomas Lynch delivered the invocation. In his homily at the White Mass, Bishop Caggiano said that healthcare professionals are witnesses to people’s suffering, but also share in the healing mission of the Church.

The bishop thanked doctors, nurses, technicians and all healthcare workers for “serving as agents of God’s mercy and witnesses to His Kingdom that will conquer death.”

He said that doctors and nurses see patients in their most vulnerable moments and darkest hours,” and help to bring hope and healing.

Easter Retreat set

NORWALK—Noted Dominican professor, spiritual director and retreat master Father Luke Buckles, O.P., will lead an Easter Retreat during the Octave of Easter, beginning Wednesday, April 24 and ending on Sunday, April 28 at St. Joseph Parish in South Norwalk. The retreat is open to all people throughout the diocese.

The theme of the Easter Retreat is “Meeting the Risen Christ in the Journey of our Life.” It will be held Wednesday through Friday from 6-8 pm, Saturday from 10 am-noon and ends with the Sunday 10 am Mass.

Father Buckles is a priest of the Western Dominican Province who is stationed in Rome, Italy, where he is professor of spiritual theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum). He also serves as the Rector of the Convitto Internazionale S. Tommaso D’Aquino.

“On meeting him, one will find Father Buckles to be a man of great joy and undiminished faith. His priestly spirituality is experienced in his fervent prayer, his love of our Lord and devotion to our Blessed Lady and the holiness with which he approaches the sacred mysteries,” said Father Lenox, pastor of St. Joseph.

“Through focusing on how the first disciples had a personal, meaningful encounter with their Risen Lord leading to acts of faith and the joyful recognition, Father Buckles will help retreatants to encounter the resurrected Lord Jesus as they gather in his name, read his word and participate in the Sacrament of the Eucharist during the days of the Easter Octave,” said Father Lenox.

“In the Scriptural readings for the days after Easter, we remember with the whole Church the meetings of the first disciples with their Risen Lord. Each of these encounters was very personal, particularly designed to be especially meaningful to each disciple,” Father Lenox said. Father Lenox said the retreat will begin daily with Mass and continue with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, particularly designed to be especially meaningful to each disciple,” Father Lenox said.

“The death rate for the home- less is 12 to 20 times higher than for any other group. The leading cause of death of people on the streets is cancer,” he said. “Many go untreated though they live in the shadows of the best health- care in the city.”

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(Ft. Joseph Church is located 85 South Main Street in South Norwalk. For more information, call: 203.838.4171 or visit: stjosephscono.org.)
More than 100 people attended a Mass of Hope, Healing and Bridgeport. Group formed by the Diocese of Bridgeport has D’Andrea found peace, hope never told her husband for fear of being abused by his parish priest and that it affected his health. It was a secret so dark and spiritually corrosive that it affected his health and led to post-traumatic stress disorder.

When he was 13, he was abused by his parish priest and although his mother knew, she never told her husband for fear of what he might do. Only recently has D’Andrea found peace, hope and fellowship in a survivors group formed by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

He shared his story Sunday at a Mass of Hope, Healing and Reconciliation that was celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano at St. Joseph Church in Danbury. More than 100 people attended the liturgy, which was planned by the survivors’ group and diocesan staff.

“I am very grateful to you, my friends, for being here today,” Bishop Caggiano said. “This is one step in a journey that we will walk together for years to come as we seek healing, a deepened friendship and ways to have others who have been hurt or abused find their own personal road to healing and wholeness.”

Members of the group praised Bishop Caggiano for his compassion, openness and willingness to listen.

“Bishop Frank reached out to me, and it was absolutely the best thing that ever happened,” D’Andrea of Greenwich said. “We had a long meeting, more than 2-1/2 hours, and I was amazed at his ability to listen and offer me his deepest apology and whatever else he could do.”

Despite the torment over his abuse and a series of serious health issues that culminated several years ago with stage-three cancer, he said, “The Lord took me through each time. My faith never wavered, just my respect for some priests...I always trusted in God. I always prayed because I believe in prayer, big time.”

He said, “You ask ‘Why?’ You ask ‘Why me?’ The best thing you can do is to reach deep into your faith, and trust in God and the professionals and the other survivors who can help you. That bond will be life-altering and the healing will begin.”

In his homily, Father Lawrence Carew told stories of two inmates at a state correctional facility who were victims of sexual abuse by priests and how in each case a personal experience of Christ’s healing love brought them back from anger and despair.

“All of us need healing from this tragedy,” he said. “Anytime we sense the weight of this kind of discouragement, we need to invite the Lord into places within us where this darkness has descended. Then, we need to give him permission to replace it with fresh hope, peace and courage.”

In her welcoming remarks, Peggy Fry, who grew up in Trumbull, recalled being abused at 16 by her parish priest, who was a family friend. She never told her parents and said, “There were times when my secret burden became so overwhelming that I found myself looking for ways to cope. It was at these times that I would make phone calls and write letters to priests, bishops, archbishops and even the pope. No one helped me.”

Then, four years ago, she found hope when Bishop Caggiano invited victims of abuse to meet with him and tell their stories. “His genuine reaction and response to us gave us hope. He followed this session by forming a team of committed people, both victims and diocesan professionals, to develop this feeling of hope and use it to work toward healing.”

She said that throughout her ordeal, she never lost her faith. “He never abandoned me and always held me in his hands in times of despair.”

Other members of the survivors’ group participated in the liturgy, including Tim Murphy and Joseph Cann Sr., who is studying for the diaconate and whose son died of an accidental overdose after telling them he had been abused.

In thanking the organizers, Peter Philipp said, “I prefer, along with some others, to look ahead, to look towards the goodness of God...”

Bishop Caggiano said the Mass was offered for those who did not survive abuse, including Joseph Cann Jr. and John Dwyer.

In his concluding remarks, he said, “The problem is betrayal and the abuse of power and crime and evil in our midst, which we as the Body of Christ need to root out to the extent that it still may exist anywhere on Earth.”

“A truth I have come to learn in this life is that we can heal,” he said. “Jesus does it and he does it through us. Every single one of us is called to be a messenger of that healing love and the power of Jesus. Together we can walk this journey because it is not meant to be walked alone.”

(For more information about resources available to persons who have been sexually abused or to meet with the victim assistance coordinator, contact Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., director of Safe Environments and victim assistance coordinator at 203.650.3263 or enn@diobpt.org or Michael Tintrup, L.C.S.W., victim assistance counselor at 203.241.0907 or mttinrup@ccfc-ct.org.)
Youth News

Convivio 2019 explores teens’ suffering and joy

By EMILY CLARK

Though suffering is an inevitable part of our lives, Christ encourages us to see him on the Cross and find joy. This was the message imparted to over 125 area teens at the annual Convivio High School Conference hosted by Sacred Heart University on March 1-3. Through small group discussions, Eucharistic Adoration, confession and testimonies, these young people embraced and explored the theme of “To Whom Shall We Go?”

As high schoolers tackle pressure from contemporary society and are challenged by images and appearances on social media, they welcome a forum like Convivio to ask questions, reflect and share stories as they search for meaning in their lives. Convivio coordinator Jessica Mazal recognizes all that they encounter, saying, “There’s something in the news every day. We see students struggling and asking ‘Where is God?’ We want them to face this and leave here with hope.”

The opportunity to find that hope emerged from stories by speakers such as Caroline Borlet of EWTN’s ChurchPOP, Gianna Maria SV of the Sisters of Life, and Father Paul Check, rector of St. John Fisher Seminary who all encouraged the teens to face their troubles and learn to be compassionate. Small group discussions, facilitated by young adult leaders, allowed participants to connect with the theme and find joy in their suffering.

“It’s great to hear the talks and see everyone’s reactions,” said Leanne Onofrio, a senior at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield. As presidents of Convivio, Onofrio and Daniel DeMenezes from Norwalk High School assist with the event planning and encourage all attendees to be open and honest in their conversations.

“They start off shy and then get involved,” Onofrio added. “They all seem to enjoy it!”

Such enjoyment is also witnessed by group leaders like Sean Duda, a volunteer from Assumption College who feels that through Convivio, participants learn to live out their faith and embrace empathy. From thoughtful dialogues and activities to reflective writing in their Convivio journals, there is no shortage of methods offered to guide teens throughout this weekend.

“They all have a great desire for a relationship with God,” Duda said. “He calls each of us to be instruments of his love, but sometimes that gets lost in everyday life.”

Finding inspiration in the speakers’ narratives comes naturally to these high schoolers with discussions aimed at helping them understand individual struggles and how God is leading them. They related well to Father Check’s commentary on moderation in their lives. Though he himself revealed a need to cut back on eating too much chocolate cake, Father Check’s listeners applied that idea to their own lives with their frequent use of cell phones, technology and video games.

Within the comfortable environment created by the leaders at Convivio, students had the freedom to ask questions and confront what concerns them. Duda remembers one teen who said he found it difficult to push against societal pressures.

“This boy realized that some things aren’t right,” Duda said. “He called me over and said, ‘What do I do?’”

Father Check’s commentary on modern life was oftentimes that gets lost in everything. “I keep coming back here for my faith,” said Frankie Mahar, a third year participant from Bunnell High School in Stratford. “I love to share our thoughts and problems and listen for God’s call.”

Emma Romaniello, a junior from Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden, echoed those thoughts, adding, “Convivio is so much different than other retreats. I love the speakers who share their stories. A lot of people don’t like to talk about their own suffering, but everyone here is so receptive. You really get the full experience.”

As the leaders of Convivio encourage teens to live the Christian life beyond this weekend, they pray that bonds forged with God and connections made with peers lead them to grow in their faith.

“To whom shall I go?” said Mahar, reiterating Convivio’s theme. “I go to God.”

Q&A session with The Face of Prayer

NEW CANAAN—On March 21, 2019, Emma Ryder, coordinator of The Face of Prayer visited with the Level 1 and Level 2 Confirmation classes at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan. Youth & Family Ministry Coordinator, Chris Otis planned the hour-long class to introduce the students to The Face of Prayer initiative, allow them to ask their own questions, and encourage them to pray along with the daily text message as a spiritual work of mercy in preparation to make their confirmation.

Ryder reviewed all of the resources available on the website and where to find them, showed example videos from multiple catechists and reviewed the resources attached with each of the videos. The second part of the class was spent with Father Rob Kinnally, pastor of St. Aloysius, who answered questions previously submitted to The Face of Prayer, as well as five questions asked by the students in the class. The live question and answer session allowed students to fully experience The Face of Prayer and its mission to answer the questions and concerns of young people.

Father Kinnally’s answers can be viewed at www.thefaceofprayer.com/kinnally.

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SHU Journey

Summer Theological Institute

FAIRFIELD—SHU Journey is an extraordinary six day residential summer experience of faith education, self-discovery and enjoyment for high school youth. We invite Catholic high school students from rising sophomores to rising seniors who are interested in growing in and becoming leaders in their faith. SHU Journey is developed specifically for young men and women who want to become more knowledgeable, effective, confident, faith-filled leaders in their parishes, schools and communities. During this week, six of our own college students will lead you in an exploration of faith, in small group conversations learning about yourself and real life issues, in sharing profound prayer, liturgies and excellent music, and providing service in the community.

This exceptional week is filled with exciting activities, events and experiences including faith instruction, small group conversations about real life issues, music ministry, prayer, reflection, liturgy, journaling, community service, key note speakers, a day trip to The Cloisters, fun activities every day, all meals and snacks, rooming with peers and mentors in the residence hall, free time.

When and where?

SHU Journey takes place on the beautiful campus of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. SHU Journey begins Sunday, June 23, 2019 and concludes on Friday, June 28, 2019. Students stay in one of the University’s comfortable residence halls.

How much does it cost?

There are no costs! This Summer Theology Institute is funded by the Lilly Endowment. Each of the 24 high school youth selected to participate in this program will receive a $500 scholarship for attending this Summer Institute. Only 24 high school youth can be accepted for this Summer Institute. Applications must be in no later than May 1, 2019. If a group is applying, please have each individual complete a separate application and note on the form the name of the group with whom they are affiliated. (Apply at www.sacredheart.edu/journeyapply. For info: www.sacredheart.edu/shujourney)

Reconciliation Monday locations

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has designated the Monday of Holy Week, April 15, 2019 as “Reconciliation Monday.”

Deanery A (Queen of Peace)
1. St. Andrew Parish: 435 Anton Street, Bridgeport
2. St. Ann Parish: 481 Brewster Street, Bridgeport
3. St. Augustine Cathedral: 399 Washington Avenue, Bridgeport

Deanery B (Mystical Rose)
1. St. James Parish: 220 Shelton Road, Trumbull
3. St. Rose of Lima Parish: 46 Church Hill Road, Newtown

Deanery C (Queen of Martyrs)
1. St. Catherine of Siena Parish: 220 Shelton Road, Trumbull
2. St. Joseph Parish: 8 Robinson Avenue, Danbury

Deanery D (Our Lady, Queen of Confessors)
1. Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish: 46 Stone Street, Danbury
2. St. Edward the Confessor Parish: 21 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield
3. St. Joseph Parish: 8 Robinson Avenue, Danbury

Deanery E (Seat of Wisdom)
1. St. Elizabeth Seton Parish: 520 Schuyler Avenue, Ridgefield
2. St. Mary Parish: 55 Catoonah Street, Ridgefield
3. St. Pius X Parish: 834 Brookswood Drive, Fairfield

Deanery F (Mother of Divine Grace)
1. Church of the Assumption: 98 Riverside Avenue, Westport
2. Our Lady of the Assumption Parish: 545 Stratfield Road, Fairfield
3. St. Francis X Parish: 834 Brookswood Drive, Fairfield

Deanery G (Mother of Divine Grace)
1. St. Aloysius Parish: 21 Cherry Street, New Canaan
2. St. John Parish: 1986 Post Road, Darien
3. St. Matthew Parish: 216 Scribner Avenue, Norwalk

Deanery H (Cause of Our Joy)
1. St. Cecilia Parish: 1184 Newfield Avenue, Stamford
2. Holy Name of Jesus Parish: 325 Washington Boulevard, Stamford
3. Sacred Heart Parish: 37 Schuyler Avenue, Stamford

Deanery I (Mary, Mother of the Church)
1. St. Catherine of Siena Parish: 4 Riverside Avenue, Greenwich
2. St. Mary Parish: 178 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich
3. St. Michael the Archangel Parish: 469 North Street, Greenwich

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www.bridgeportdiocese.org/faithformation
Questions? Call the Office of Faith Formation at 203-416-1670

BE READY AND VIGILANT EVERYDAY
Diocesan Youth Choir

‘Strengthening faith through music’

BY ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—“We have to remember what it’s all about… strengthening young people’s faith through music,” said Mary Bozzuti Higgins, director of the Diocesan Choir for Youth, C4Y. C4Y will be recruiting new singers this spring to join the family. “It is like a small family,” Bozzuti Higgins remarks, “the members look forward to getting together to work at something they love, for a common goal.”

“It’s a great program. You get to meet kids from all around your area that you end up hanging out with,” remarks one singer.

C4Y is open to all young people in the Diocese of Bridgeport, grades 8-12, as well as seventh-graders with a letter of recommendation provided by a music or choir teacher. This year, auditions will take place the week of June 10, with rehearsals beginning in July.

Rehearsals take place weekly in six locations throughout the diocese. “The six different rehearsal options provide accommodations to young people’s already busy schedules,” says Bozzuti Higgins. “Singers are expected to attend one rehearsal per week, but can come to any site at any time….or multiple times per week, if they like!”

Bozzuti Higgins explains that rehearsals are always a joyful experience, where students can “leave their stresses at the door.”

“As a parent of three daughters who were involved in extracurriculars, I try not to put too much pressure on my singers, but rather to be the antithesis of that pressure,” reflects Bozzuti Higgins, explaining that the choir prays together at both the beginning and end of every rehearsal. One singer mentions, “being able to enjoy beautiful music and explore the limits of my own talents as well as others’ talents, is a great way for me to unwind after a stressful week.”

Bozzuti Higgins likes to remind her singers of the service aspect to what they’re doing. “Not only are you getting something out of it for yourself, but you’re providing a service, something very special by your mere presence.”

C4Y has sung at many events around the diocese including: the Closing Mass of the 2014 synod at Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport, a television taping of Mass for EWTN in 2014, the Ordination to the Priesthood at St. Augustine Cathedral in 2016, the diocesan pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine in Washington D.C. and of course, the annual Arise and Shine Christmas concert, among many others.

“You don’t have to know how to read music,” says Bozzuti Higgins, “if you’re willing to learn, that can be a second benefit of joining.”

Bozzuti Higgins explains that C4Y singers don’t need formal training, “the more you do it, the better you’ll be,” she says.

C4Y recently sang at Sacred Heart University’s Gospel Fest. It was a fantastic event as students joined their voices with SHU’s Choir program and special guest artists showcasing upbeat Gospel music.

When asked what C4Y means to them, one singer remarks, “We’ve realized that music really brings together teenagers from all different parishes, different ages and different backgrounds, and provides a way for us to express our faith and that expression can be a gift to others.”

Leanne Onofrio, a member of C4Y says, “C4Y is such an amazing experience that helps you grow in your faith and musicianship. It is so incredible for each member and audience member to witness how powerful music can be when using it to praise and worship God.”

Caroline Taylor, a junior at Lauralton Hall says, “I urge anyone who has the opportunity to join C4Y to do so because it allows me to get my mind off the stresses of the day and reconnect with my faith through music.

In addition, I have a great support group in this choir who are passionate about their faith and music. C4Y has built up my confidence in God and in my voice.”

St. Joseph High School senior, Tom Griffin, shares that, “participating in C4Y has given me the opportunity to meet new people, be a part of something bigger than the sum of all its moving parts, and has helped me deepen my appreciation for music. I am so glad I decided to join C4Y; it is definitely an experience I will never forget.”

C4Y is a truly unique and beautiful way to connect young people from all over the diocese who would have no other way to meet! Coming together in song and sharing their talents has bonded new friendships and continued to deepen their faith. C4Y sings at Masses and other venues as needed throughout the year as requested by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. (Interested in becoming a part of this amazing group of talented young singers? For audition information, please visit c4ysings.com and fill out the registration form. For more information contact c4y@diopt.org. For the rehearsal schedule visit: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/c4ysings/ diocesan-youth-choir-registra tion-form.)

Calling All Singers!

Diocesan Youth Choir Auditions

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

C4Y, Choir For Youth, is open to all young adults in Fairfield County 8th grade through Senior in high school as of September, 2019. (7th grade with recommendation from choir director or music teacher.)

Auditions for the 2019 - 2020 Season

FIRST: Please go to C4YSINGS.com and REGISTER for your audition.

If you can’t make a designated time, please fill out the Registration and then contact mhiggins@diopt.org for your personal audition time.

Auditions will take place the WEEK of JUNE 10, 2019 at the 6 rehearsal sites and times mentioned below. It will last no more than 15 minutes. All singers need to prepare The Star Spangled Banner to sing. (Words don’t matter, LA LA LA is fine!)

Ability to read music is NOT a criteria.

If you read music, that’s a bonus! If not, and you love to sing and want to be a part of C4Y, come prepared to learn how!

Hope to see and hear you in June!

Weekly Rehearsal Days and Times

Mondays 4:30-6pm Our Lady of Fatima Parish Center 229 Danbury Rd., Wilton, CT

Tuesdays 2:15-3:30pm Kolbe Cathedral High School 33 Calhoun Place, Bridgeport, CT

Tuesdays 4:30-6pm The Catholic Center, Queen of Saints Hall 230 Dewitt Ave., Bridgeport, CT

Tuesdays 7-8:30pm St. Joseph’s High School 2320 Huntington Tpke, Trumbull, CT

Wednesdays 4:30-6pm Trinity Catholic High School 926 Newfield Ave., Stamford, CT

Thursdays 4:30-6pm Immaculate High School 73 Southern Blvd., Danbury, CT
EDITORIAL

Face-to-Face Formation

Since Bishop J. Caggiano re-promulgated the Norms Governing Liturgical Ministry in December 2018, more than 3,200 who are serving as readers, musicians and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion have gathered for face-to-face formation provided by the diocesan Leadership Institute at 53 locations around the diocese. Another twenty formation sessions will be held between now and May 19, 2019.

It has been a remarkable experience for the men and women who have participated—an affirmation of their role in the Church and an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the faith.

The sessions cover a wide range of topics including a history of liturgical ministry and ways to engage in ministry prayerfully and respectfully. When participants gather, they watch a video in which Bishop Caggiano speaks of missionary discipleship and they share in small group discussion about their own experience of reaching out to the periphery.

“It is in these conversations where the participants find the greatest joy – sharing their faith with others, telling stories of what their own experiences were like as young people, and learning more about the history behind the Norms,” says Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute.

At the root of these discussions is the bishop’s own challenge. Quoting the Venerable Fulton J. Sheen, Bishop Caggiano reminds the faithful that “if we do not act as we believe, eventually, we will believe as we act.” A genuine love for the Eucharist is at the heart of these reflections—and certainly at the heart of formation.

During the Lenten Season as we prepare for Easter, we are grateful to all those who serve in liturgical ministries and encourage the praise and worship of God through their participation in sacred rites and prayers.

Special thanks also go to Patrick Donovan who has guided the Leadership Institute, which grew out of the synod, since its inception and has tirelessly and creatively led these very engaging formation sessions.

(To learn more about the many resources and events sponsored by the Leadership Institute, visit: formationreimagined.org)

Following the Cross

Bishop Caggiano recently spoke at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress, an annual gathering held at the Anaheim Convention Center that regularly attracts in excess of 30,000 youths, catechists, religion teachers and other leaders in the Church. While stressing the need for improved structures and procedures to combat clerical abuse and better engage youth, he also called for “spiritual conversion” as the basis of change. In an interview with CRUX online magazine, the bishop shared his belief in the power of the Cross to bring personal and communal healing.

“We have veneers in life. The modern world is filled with them, and things are not what they appear to be. We have become a society that sees everything in terms of power, as an authority or force over you, rather than a service in support of you, which is the way the Lord defines authority and power. Yet in this period of life we’re living in, in which there’s a lot of darkness, the Cross is the path we have to walk.

In following the cross we will see the beginnings of real change, grace and light. The cross is our courage and hope.

Our salvation is found in the core Christian proclamation, known by the Greek term kerygma. The kerygma is one momentous sentence: ‘Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.’

The Cross is both the symbol of our salvation and the hope for the forgiveness of sin, and eventually for healing even the wounds of sin. Many people have been wounded by the sins of those who were entrusted to care for them. They’re wounded, and they’re betrayed. The Cross is about a wounded Christ, a betrayed Christ, but a Christ who’s triumphant, a Christ who ultimately breaks the chains of sin and death. It is the Cross that (gives) us hope for recovery. When you stand before the Cross, there’s no wound, there’s no hurt, there’s no suffering as profound as it can be, that cannot find healing. Before the Cross there’s no reason to give up hope, because the victory already ours. We need to go back to that…we’ve got to get back to the basics because the moment demands it.”

EDITOR’S CHOICE

Remembering Msgr. William A. Nagle

STAMFORD—Kudos to Bishop Frank J. Caggiano for his transparency in releasing names of those clerics credibly accused of abuse. And even more so, for his courageous proclamation of the Gospel “in season and out.” The most recent names identified by the Diocese of Bridgeport were reported in the Stamford Advocate March 23. Unfortunately, the Advocate merely listed the names without posting the more complete statement released by the bishop.

That statement carefully and prominently distinguished one name on the list—the Rev. William R. Nagle—from one of Stamford’s great Catholic leaders, my uncle, Monsignor William Aloysius Nagle, pastor of St. John the Evangelist from 1973-1998 and before that pastor of St. Bridget of Ireland on Strawberry Hill Avenue.

Monsignor Nagle was a great man of deep faith, service to the poor and orthodox faith. His legendary service to the community, is well known: chaplain to the Knights of Columbus and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a priest who kept his church open every day for worship and prayer, who heard confessions daily at lunch time for the business community, who visited the sick and comforted the homeless.

Perhaps his greatest gift was unknown to many. In 1973, Bishop Walter W. Curtis told him that St. John parish was slated for closure. He appointed Monsignor Nagle as pastor and gave him one year to turn around a dying parish that had been decimated by the urban decay of the late 1960s and early ‘70s and the opening of new Catholic parishes that drew away neighborhoods tradition-

ally within the boundaries of St. John. Monsignor Nagle took extraordinary steps to save St. John, going so far as to add his own funds to the weekly collections for many years to prop up the collection total and save the church from being shuttered and sold.

The bishop’s own words, appearing in bold print in his statement, deserve greater publication: “It is important to note that this is not the priest of a similar name, Monsignor William Aloysius Nagle, a priest of the Diocese ordained in 1949 with a long-distinguished career at many parishes, who died in 2014 after serving as pastor of St. John’s in Stamford from 1973 to 1998.

The Rev. Deacon Thomas Davis St. Ann Melbite Catholic Church Danbury

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

FATHER PEDRO A. SOSA, I.V.E., from Parochial Vicar, Saint George Parish, Bridgeport, to Parochial Administrator, Saint George Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date was March 25.

FATHER BERNARDO C. RODRIGUEZ, from part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Peter Parish, Bridgeport and part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Peter Parish, Danbury, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Peter Parish, Danbury. Effective date was April 1.

DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIAIN FORMATION

FATHER PAUL N. CHECK, from Director of Seminary Formation, to Director of Seminary Formation. Effective date is June 30. Father Check will remain Rector of St. John Fisher Seminary Residence.

MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MONSIGNOR THOMAS W. POWERS, to medical leave of absence. Effective date was March 23. Monsignor Powers will remain Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia.

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Beauty breaks forth amongst the ordinary

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.

I sat in the hospital waiting room, waiting for inspiration. Well really, I was waiting for my dad to come out of surgery, but I thought inspiration might come, as it usually does at times like this. The faces around me looked tired and strained. I watched different families file in and out, hoping that in with one of them would come a story waiting to be told, inspiration begging to be beheld. But as the hours passed by I realized...hospitals aren’t at all glamorous and maybe, just maybe, I wouldn’t find inspiration here.

But sometimes inspiration comes in the places we are least looking for it. Beauty shows up in the most unexpected places. Something my cousins and I always reminisce about is the way we celebrated Easters growing up. My grandparents would hide our Easter baskets all around the house and before our coats were even off or before we greeted everyone hello, we would be off and running to search for them. We’d look high and low, up and down and every direction in between, to the sound of my grandpa or my uncle behind us yelling “you’re getting warmer... or COLD, YOU'RE COLD.”

The thing is though, more often than not, our Easter eggs were hidden in the most ordinary places. Like in a coat closet or behind the stairs or in the fireplace.

These places that we saw every day in this old house now held hidden treasure. Something beautiful in an ordinary place. Something beautiful disguised as something ordinary or even mundane. This makes me think of the crucifixion. Those who followed Jesus had just witnessed the grotesque death of not only their very best friend but also the Son of God.

But to others who did not know this, he was just another criminal being crucified. I can imagine the people that lined the streets as Jesus came by with His Cross, acting as if they were witnessing just another execution. Something awful to some...but to most, part of their everyday lives. To them, something ordinary. “Who is this Jesus?” they might have asked.

But then the Resurrection happened. And that changed everything.

Something beautiful happened. In an ordinary place, in an ordinary time to seemingly ordinary people.

And God deemed Himself ordinary, because He loves us that much.

And because of this something beautiful, we can partake in the beauty of heaven.

After a long Lenten season, some of us may feel that our spiritual life has become ordinary. We may have become used to not having what we gave up with such difficulty in the beginning, or our prayer and almsgiving has become rote. But with the Easter season, something new is coming. Eventually, those tired and strained faces in the hospital waiting room turned joyful, as they were called to reunite with their well-mended loved one. And so did my mother and mine, as my father’s surgery went well, in perfect timing for a celebration of new life.

Let that hope fill our hearts as we look toward this new season with joy. That hope that God has a way of making beauty out of the most ordinary things.

I guess inspiration did eventually come to me in that hospital waiting room...but not in the way I expected it. How like our God. Like an Easter basket nestled in a pantry. Like a father recovering from an illness. Like the Son of God Risen from the dead. Beauty breaks forth amongst the ordinary.

Gaelic football is our green new deal

A DAD’S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

Matthew Hennessey is a writer, husband, and father of five. Twitter:@matthennessey

Sprin is here. The season of new beginnings. Of baseball and baby chicks. Of Cadbury eggs and confirmations.

We are involved in something entirely new—new, that is, to us. Our Paddy (10) and our Sally (6) are trying their hands (and feet) at Gaelic football.

This year at the Hennessey homestead Spring is the season of hand passes and Sperrin Ogs. Gaelic is best described as soccer mixed with basketball plus a touch of violence and a pinch of volleyball. The goalposts are a mixed marriage of soccer net and football upright. It’s a sport mainly played in Ireland, but wherever Irish migrants settle in large numbers they are apt to form local associations of the county committees that govern the game back home.

Gaelic is quite popular in our new neighborhood of Southeast Yonkers, an honest-to-goodness enclave bordering the northern Bronx neighborhood of Woodlawn. Green, white, and orange tricolors easily outnumber the stars and stripes here, and not just during the month of March.

Mrs. Hennessey is consistently delighted at the preponderance of broguish speech she hears in the pews at St. Barnabas and the aisles of the Acme on McLean Ave. Paddy and Sally have been learning this new game with the underage teams of the Tyrone Gaelic Football Club of New York—aka, Sperrin Ogs. I know from reading a bit that the Irish word “og” is a suffix meaning little or, in English parlance, junior. The Sperrins themselves are a mountain range in Northern Ireland that have been officially designated an “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”

The thing is, the Sperrins are quite low-rise as mountains go. Add the suffix “og” and you have a translation situation leaving the youth squad’s name as something like Pretty Little Mountains Jr.

That may not be the right handle to put the fear of the Banshee in your opponent’s heart.

Last year, on the Tonight Show, the Irish comedian Chris O’Dowd described Gaelic football for Jimmy Fallon. “It’s played by a lot of farmers, people from the countryside, very rural, very rough, brutal but beautiful like a big wave,” he said. “A great sport. You should try it, if you like wrestling or death.”

Things are not so smash-and-grab at the youth level. It’s good exercise with a lot of running and the kids are developing a fair amount of ball-handling skills. I can see how it could be beautiful like a big wave, when played by people who know what they’re doing.

The best thing about the Gaelic experiment from Paddy and Sally’s point of view is that their old man has no idea what’s going on. I wish I could help them. I really do.

Yes, my family tree has roots in the auld sod, but I never played the game. Until recently I’d never seen it played. I’m unfamiliar with the ground rules and don’t know the names of the positions. The points and scoring regime are a mystery. Couldn’t tell you what’s a foul and what’s not. I wouldn’t be able to name a single famous player, or even say if there are any.

I can Google though. A little research shows that Gaelic was first played looong ago. Irish history records the accidental shaving of a football player at a match in County Down in 1308. This is the kind of game we’re talking about.

Things went dark for a few centuries due to the meddlesome influence of a certain neighboring imperial power, but the Gaelic football—and other indigenous revelries such as hurling, which is basically baseball where everyone gets a bat—played a significant role in the Irish national revival of the late 19th century.

Soccer, if you didn’t know, is an English game. Playing a purely Irish game was a weighty symbol to those who’d grown tired of the oppressor’s yoke.

In Northern Ireland, which, if you didn’t know, is part of the United Kingdom, Gaelic games took on an explicitly political bent. This is a place where politics and religion are sometimes indistinguishable. Gaelic sports, tied up as they were (and are) with expressions of Irish nationalism, were (and are) mostly played by Catholics.

Long way of saying: A Gaelic football family is a family that eats fish on Fridays. It marks you as papists.

Thank goodness these religious and political undertones don’t enter into Paddy and Sally’s weekend games at Van Cortland Park. America is a land where such ancient complications can be forgotten over a generation or two. Yanks like us are lucky we can still try something new, even if it has been around since 1308. Sperrin Ogs Abu!
Diocesan Vocations

Holy Hour: Let faith be your guide

By ANN YANNETTI

NORWALK—A Holy Hour for Vocations drew lay faithful, seminarians, priests, religious and permanent deacons to St. Matthew Church in Norwalk recently. Father Abelardo Vasquez, assistant director of vocations for the Diocese of Bridgeport, presided over the devotion.

Homilist Father John Connaughton, the director of vocations for the diocese, reflected on a Gospel reading from Luke when Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”

“That’s a command to trust Him, even when it seems hard or unreasonable,” said Father Connaughton, noting how we often prefer to just go on with our own plans. “If Simon Peter hadn’t said ‘yes,’ he wouldn’t have had the experience of the miraculous catch. He would have just gone home and missed out on something amazing—this amazing thing Jesus wanted to do through him. Out of goodness, Simon Peter said ‘yes’ and hauled in the catch of a lifetime.”

Then when Peter realizes his profound unworthiness to be in the presence of Jesus, what does Jesus say to him? “Jesus doesn’t correct him by saying, ‘Don’t be so hard on yourself,’ offered Father Connaughton. “No—instead He says, ‘Do not be afraid.’”

The Lord who called Simon Peter “is the same Lord who calls each one of us to holiness, and who offers to some the gift of a priestly vocation, the invitation to religious life,” Father Connaughton said.

Father Connaughton’s own invitation to the priesthood came at a very young age. “Thousands of years ago, it was a great honor to be called to discipleship by the rabbis, but I certainly didn’t see it as any great opportunity. In my mind, it was pretty much the worst thing that could happen to a guy. So I pushed it away and sought happiness elsewhere.”

The call to vocation “is often viewed as an unwelcome imposition on our lives—an unfortunate disruption of plans for ourselves, plans for our families,” said Father Connaughton, noting that parents will often pray that their sons will not be called to the priesthood.

“I remember hearing someone
Local News

say once, ‘If there’s not some part of you that wants to be a priest, then you don’t know what a priest truly is.’ The truth is: there is no crisis of vocation. The crisis we experience is a crisis of faith. It blinds us to the greatest call, and to our own unworthiness to it. If we really had faith, rather than praying that someone else may be called to the priesthood or religious life, we would beg the Lord to call us, and invite us to the extraordinary life of one who is wholly consecrated to Him.”

The challenge he put to those gathered is to spend time with Jesus in the Eucharist. “Ask God—beg Him—to convert our hearts,” said Father Connaughton, “to ask Him to let us not be afraid. To open our eyes that we boldly listen to what He has to tell us, and with great zeal, desire and love to respond boldly to whatever He’s asking us to do.”

In closing remarks, Msgr. Walter C. Orlowski, VF, KCHS, pastor of St. Matthew and dean of Deanery G, Mother of Divine Grace, thanked Father Connaughton and Father Abelardo. “I was thinking to myself: what if tonight a man or woman is called to the priesthood or religious life? Or a married man might be called to the permanent diaconate? Always remember that our God is a good and loving God who works in wonderful ways. As Father Connaughton said so beautifully, ‘Let faith be your guide. Do not be afraid.’ ”

After the Holy Hour, a reception was held in the Masterpool Great Room, where some of the seminarians shared their discernment process with their guests.
Transforming and strengthening Catholic Education

Foundations in Education

Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director of Foundations in Education, was recently attending a meeting to discuss the future of Catholic education, when a Greenwich mother raised her hand to tell her personal story. She had gone through a separation and her children received help from the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund. If it wasn’t for that money, she said, they wouldn’t be able to have a Catholic education.

From Greenwich to the Diocese of Bridgeport, from Norwalk to Danbury, throughout the 20 Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport, nearly 1,400 students — approximately one in four — were awarded tuition assistance for the 2018-2019 school year, totaling more than $2.5 million.

The We Stand With Christ capital campaign will provide $12.5 million to Foundations in Education that help with financial assistance, instructional programs and professional development.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steven Cheeseman said, “We Stand With Christ will allow us to have resources necessary to continue innovative instructional programs in our schools. Not only will it allow an endowment for future scholarship funds, including high school scholarships, but also give us needed money to infuse into our schools for new programming.”

Foundations in Education is a non-profit initiative which, Holly says, is committed to strengthening and transforming Catholic education in the diocese by supporting innovation in academic and extra-curriculum programs, fostering opportunities for professional development of school leaders in innovation and leadership, and providing scholarship assistance for families in need.

“We see hardships across the board, from job loss to a death in the family and illness,” Holly said. “In all these cases, if it weren’t for these funds being available, the students may not be able to attend our Catholic schools.”

She also said it is beneficial to parents and families because it gives them a choice about how and where they have their children educated.

“The support of Catholic education through the We Stand With Christ campaign will be transformative for our students,” Holly said. “It will provide more children the opportunity to benefit from Catholic education and also allow professional development for our teachers, and make individualized learning a part of the overall experience, which will truly transform the way our children are taught and how they learn.”

The $75 million capital campaign has already raised more than $65 million from Leadership Gifts and parishes that participated in the pilot program, making it the largest and most successful campaign in the 64-year history of the diocese.

With the public launch of the We Stand With Christ campaign, parishioners throughout the diocese are being asked to make a pledge that will benefit the long-term needs of parishes and diocesan ministries.

The We Stand With Christ campaign is led by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and a 26-member executive committee with the support of priests, deacons, religious and lay leaders, whose co-chairs are Brian Young of New Canaan and Father Reggie Norman.

The campaign has designated 50 percent of the funds raised, an estimated $37.5 million, for parish needs. The remaining 50 percent will be invested in three major foundations: Foundations in Education ($12.5 million), Foundations in Faith ($15 million) and Foundations in Charity ($10 million).

One of the flagship initiatives of Foundations in Education was funded by a $5.5 million gift to develop a personalized learning program that Bishop Caggiano says is “transforming the paradigm of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport.”

The gift from Westport couple Tom and Paula McNerney is financing a personalized learning initiative launched last fall with pilot programs at six schools. It will eventually be rolled out at all Catholic elementary schools over the next three years.

“Transforming the Paradigm of Catholic Education is a diocesan-wide initiative that will provide an updated technology infrastructure, new hardware and student devices and programs to support the traditional Catholic school educational experience,” Dr. Cheeseman said. The technology will not only improve academic performance among students but also increase their self-confidence and give them lifetime learning skills.

“These programs will serve as the foundational cornerstone for the transformation of our schools and support our mission as we CONTINUED ON PAGE 15...
Our Lady leads a parish to peace and prosperity

By JOE PISANI

Forty years ago on a cold winter night, Alberto Boyer and his wife Hilda showed up at the rectory of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission in Danbury, holding a battered statue of the Blessed Mother. The 300-pound lead statue of Our Lady of Miracles had been damaged and defaced...and discarded in a garbage dump.

Father Jose Fernandez took the statue for his small faith community, who promised to build her “a little house.” In the history of his parish, he later wrote: “The fact is that Mary in her image was crucified as her Son was. He on the cross, and she in a dump.”

At the time, the Spanish-speaking community celebrated Mass in the lower-level chapel of St. Joseph Church in Danbury. Their first collection took in $67.

The mission was named after Our Lady of Guadalupe because, as Father Fernandez wrote: “The Virgin of Guadalupe was our guide and patron, the Mother of the Americas, who appeared 1531 to Juan Diego and said, ‘Go to the bishop and ask him to build a chapel on this very spot from which I can demonstrate my maternal vigilance and give compassionate assistance to those who ask for it.’

Maybe the echo of Mary’s petition in the priests, the bishops and the people. The original goal for Our Lady of Guadalupe in the We Stand With Christ campaign was $342,000, and thus far they have raised more than $1.1 million, with one man giving Father a check for $12,000. More than 50 parishioners helped him with the campaign, reaching out to others to spread the word.

“They did this because they love their parish and they love their community,” Father said. “They show an amazing faith in God and the Blessed Mother. The campaign helped me to see clearly that there are so many people who love the Church in the midst of difficult times. They believe in the Church, in the priests, the bishops and the pope. They are a faithful people.”

Father Perez, who has been pastor for six years, previously served at St. Benedict-Our Lady of Monserrat Parish in Stamford. He is from a family of 16 children and felt a vocation to the priesthood from the time he was young, but it was difficult for him to enter the seminary in Colombia so he went into the food services industry. God, however, led him back to the priesthood and through the efforts of Msgr. Christopher Walsh, he came to Connecticut. In 1999, he entered Mount St. Mary’s University in Maryland and was ordained in 2003 by Bishop William Lori.

His parents, Jaime and Rimirez are very proud of him, and he says, “For my mother, it is the greatest marvel in the world to have somebody in the family who is a priest. And now, one of her grandsons is also studying for the priesthood.”

Father Perez says the commitment and devotion of his parishioners are the secret of his parish’s success. Most of the 1,500 families are from Ecuador and the Dominican Republic with a number from several other Latin American countries. Almost 600 children are enrolled in the catechism program and that the enrollment increases every year. The parish has groups devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and Our Lady of the Clouds from Ecuador, along with people who are charismatics and Cursillistas.

“This is a very vibrant church,” Father Perez said. “I have 250 volunteers who help me—Eucharistic ministers, lectors, choir members, ushers, 62 catechists and almost 40 altar servers.” He is assisted by Father Edison Orozco, the parochial vicar, and Deacon Rafael Regus.

“We have a lot of services here, and people invite others to come,” he says. “When people find a church that has its doors open for their needs, they feel comfortable. People from Ecuador have very pious lives and if they decide to have a procession, especially dedicated to the Blessed Mother or Baby Jesus, they know our doors are always open to them.”

In his history of the parish, Father Fernandez, who later retired to New Jersey, wrote, “In the beginning, most of the men worked 70 to 80 hours a week in diners and restaurants without health insurance, paid vacations or other benefits. Life was a bit hard. The mission fostered finding better jobs, fostering small businesses and especially urged them to purchase their own homes. By 1989, there were about 50 families who lived in their own homes. In 1990, there were 21 businesses run by Spanish-speaking residents. The parish also promoted scholastic and occupational learning.”

The faithful began a campaign to build their own church with the slogan, “WITH GOD WE CAN.” Several woman approached Father Fernandez and said, “Father, if we all put a dollar in each time we enter the church, something can be done.” Each month, people donated an additional $5, $10 and $15 and held other fund-raising activities.

“Even with all this, faith and God had to complement our human limitations,” Father wrote.

In 1983, they found a 5-acre parcel of land, which they purchased for $70,000, and on June 3, 1985, Bishop Walter W. Curtis blessed the cornerstone, and Father Fernandez was named pastor. A year-and-a-half later, the church was completed. Some companies worked for reduced fees, many parishioners donated their time and talents, and one contractor let them use excavators free of charge.

The church was finished on December 12, 1986, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and on Sunday December 14, the first Mass was celebrated.

Ten years after Alberto and Hilda Boyer brought the damaged statue of Our Lady to the priest, the parish fulfilled the promise to build her a shrine called “Little House of Mary.” On June 25, 1989, Bishop Edward Egan joined the faith community and blessed the shrine, which had the inscription, “Mary, Mother of Peace.”

Our Lady leads a parish to peace and prosperity
GREENWICH—On Thursday, March 28th, Greenwich Catholic School’s First Annual Service Day brought students “Together in Kindness,” as they celebrated bringing Christ’s love to the broader, outside community.

Students in grades Pre K-8 partnered with their “buddies” throughout the day to complete creative activities that filled baskets for residents of Malta House in Norwalk, Conn. The students completed 12 different projects for the moms and babies of Malta House, including writing and decorating cards of encouragement, wrapping baby gifts and assembling diaper bags.

The GCS “Faith, Service, Outreach” Committee, led by Mrs. Kim Garcia and Mrs. Andrea Kopilak, worked throughout the year to plan the school-wide event. Parent volunteers helped prepare for the day by knitting baby blankets and hats, donating baby items and other supplies from the committee’s Amazon Wish List, and working throughout the day to help students with their crafts.

After completing projects throughout the day, students, faculty, staff and parents gathered for a prayer service celebrated by Father Richard Murphy from St. Michael’s Parish, accompanied by music performed by the GCS Prayer & Worship group.

Father Murphy reminded the children of the importance of on-going service to others, and celebrated their generosity. Mrs. Kopas, principal of Greenwich Catholic School, concluded the day by thanking the students for their dedication to the Virtue of Mercy and expressed her gratitude to everyone who worked so tirelessly to make the day a success.

Malta House, located in Norwalk, is committed to promoting the dignity of God-given life by providing a nurturing home environment, support services and independent living skills to pregnant and parenting mothers of all faiths and their children.

Greenwich Catholic School provides students with a life-long intellectual and spiritual foundation through a rigorous and innovative curriculum focused on faith, critical thinking, responsibility and service.

Students at Greenwich Catholic School are rooted in faith, surrounded by community and committed to excellence. Greenwich Catholic School, in partnership with parents and parish, is focused on the formation of the whole Christian person in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.

(For more information on Malta House visit: maltahouse.org. For more information on Greenwich Catholic School visit: www.gcsct.org.)

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Feast Days 7pm
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FAITH, FUN AND SERVICE—Greenwich Catholic School students recently came together to help residents of Malta House.
Lenten Practice

Pilgrimage to the Seven Churches:
‘Stay & keep watch with me’

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—“Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me” (Matthew 26:38).

At the end of Mass on Holy Thursday, the Blessed Sacrament is placed on a temporary “altar of repose.” It has become a tradition for the faithful to process together to this altar and spend time in quiet prayer and adoration. Out of this custom has grown the Pilgrimage to the Seven Churches, practiced by many Catholics around the world.

Before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked his disciples to stay and keep watch with Him. In a similar way, those who visit the altar of repose during their pilgrimage are keeping watch with Him. Different churches correspond to each of the seven places or “stations,” that were made by Jesus between the Last Supper and His crucifixion. The seven stations consist of: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46), Jesus bound and taken before Annas (John 18:19-22), Jesus taken before the High Priest, Caiaphas (Matthew 26:63-65), Jesus taken before Pilate (John 18:35-37), Jesus taken before Herod (Luke 23:8-9; 11), Jesus taken before Pilate again (Matthew 27:22-26) and Jesus given the crown of thorns and led to his crucifixion (Matthew 27:27-31).

Upon entering each church, pilgrims visit the altar of repose, kneel, make the sign of the cross, read the appropriate Scripture for each station and engage in private prayer and adoration. Groups may also read the corresponding Scripture or pray a Rosary on their way to the different churches.

This practice can be traced to the tradition of the Station Churches in Rome credited to Saint Philip Neri, back in the 16th Century. Beginning on Wednesday of Holy Week, Philip and his companions would set out to visit the four major basilicas of Rome (St. Peter’s, St. Mary Major, St. Paul Outside the Walls and St. John Lateran), as well as the three significant minor basilicas along the way. George Weigel’s book “Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches,” follows this popular pilgrimage.

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, many groups will be participating in the tradition of the Seven Churches. A group from St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull will begin their pilgrimage after their Mass on Holy Thursday and finish at St. Catherine’s before midnight. Transportation will be provided. To sign up please call: 203.377.3133 or email: office@stcatherinetrumbull.com.

Last year, a group of young adults met after Holy Thursday Mass at St. John the Evangelist in Stamford for a Pilgrimage to the Seven Churches. The group prayed before the Blessed Sacrament at each church for about 5-10 minutes. “It was beautiful to see how many people were out late adoring our Lord,” said Diane Kremheller of Catholic Adventures. “We ended the night with some food and a social right before the Good Friday fast began at midnight, after we completed the pilgrimage.”

This year, Catholic Adventures is planning two pilgrimages. The Stamford pilgrimage will begin right after Holy Thursday Mass at St. John the Evangelist. There will also be a group leaving from St. Mary’s in Norwalk.

The Pilgrimage to the Seven Churches is a powerful way to spend time in adoration, meditating on Christ’s sacrifice of love in preparation for the joy of Easter. “It is a participation in Christ’s invitation to the apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane on the first Holy Thursday: ‘Watch and pray,’” said Father Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2019

Palm Sunday, April 14, 2019
Saturday Vigil Mass ~ 4:00 p.m., 7:15 p.m.
Sunday Mass ~ 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:00 Noon

Tuesday, April 16, 2019
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. ~ Lenten Confessions

Holy Thursday, April 18, 2019
8:00 a.m. ~ Morning Prayer
7:00 p.m. ~ The Solemn Mass of the Lord’s Supper, followed by Adoration at the Repository until Midnight

Good Friday, April 19, 2019
8:00 a.m. ~ Morning Prayer
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. ~ Confessions
3:00 p.m. ~ The Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord
6:00 p.m. ~ Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday, April 20, 2019
8:00 a.m. ~ Morning Prayer
12:00 Noon & 3:00 p.m. ~ Blessing of Food (Church Hall)
8:00 p.m. ~ The Great Vigil of Easter

Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019
Note the special Mass schedule
Masses at: 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12 Noon

A Heart Untouched by Time
The relic of the heart of Saint John Vianney, Cured of Ars and patron saint of priests.

Monday, April 29
7:00pm ~ Holy Mass, Most Rev. Daniel A. Crenin, Principal Celebrant and Homilist.
8:30pm - 7:00am ~ All-night vigil of prayer
8:30pm - midnight ~ Confession

Tuesday, April 30
9:00am ~ Holy Mass
Bishop launches Aquinas Fellowship Program

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

“Are you ready to take up the Lord’s call to be a missionary disciple by serving as a Catholic educator? For to live the mission of Catholic education means to give life to our students by opening their minds, hearts and lives to Christ and his Gospel. It means challenging our young people to know and live the Truth. It is to stand with them as they grow in wisdom and maturity, as they develop personally, professionally and spiritually. Fellows will live in a residence classroom, and transform Catholic school classrooms.

Aquinas Fellows are invited to deepen each fellow’s relationship with God and encouraged to integrate spirituality into their community life and schools and to use spirituality as a support to provide strength and nourishment. A spiritual director will work with the community of Aquinas Fellows throughout the program live communally with other program participants, are given opportunities to develop their individual spirituality and work towards a master’s degree either in Education, in a specific subject, School Counseling or School Psychology, while teaching full-time in one of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The Aqua...
two years to assist in deepening one’s relationship with God by developing an active, vital prayer life through coursework, retreats, Mass and prayer services.

During their first two years of service, Aquinas Fellowship teachers:
• Are placed in affordable housing, arranged by the diocese
• Receive a modest living allowance ($15,000 per year)
• Are placed in a teaching position within the Diocese of Bridgeport schools
• Receive educational and spiritual support as they balance life, college and teaching
• Focus on professional development, community and spiritual growth
• Will live in a community and study together as part of a university collaboration and make a significant impact on the lives of the children that they serve
• Gain an extraordinary teaching experience

Upon completion of the program, receive a tuition-free master’s degree in one of the degree areas offered through our collaboration with Fairfield University
Are eligible for loan deferment with full-time student status
The Aquinas Fellowship Program prepares teachers by integrating graduate level coursework with an immersion teaching experience in our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Participants must commit to a minimum of five years — two years as a fellow, living in community, as they complete the coursework and then three years as a paid employee of the Diocese of Bridgeport once the degree is completed, after which the participant is not required to live in community.

The mission of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, guided by the Holy Spirit, is to care for the education and faith formation of our Catholic school communities through leadership and service while advancing sustainable, thriving school models centered in the excellence of Christ.

“Our schools, while each individually possessing their own unique environment and charisma, are an educational community of families committed to academic excellence and faith development and guided by the belief that all are created in the image and likeness of God,” says Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steve Cheeseman.

(For more information on the Aquinas Fellowship Program visit: dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com or email: afp@diobpt.org.)

Experience the Joy of Easter at St. Pius X
Rev. Samuel Kachuba, pastor and Rev. Timothy Iannacoone, parochial vicar

Holy Week
Palm Sunday, April 14
Reconciliation Monday, April 15
3PM-9PM Confessions at St. Pius X Church, Assumption in Fairfield, and Assumption in Westport

Easter Triduum
Holy Thursday, April 18
8:30AM Morning Prayer • 7:30PM Mass of the Lord’s Supper • Adoration until 11PM

Good Friday, April 19
8:30AM Morning Prayer • 12Noon Stations of the Cross (Church) • 3PM The Lord’s Passion
7:30PM Tenebrae

Holy Saturday, April 20
8:30AM Morning Prayer • 10AM Blessing of Easter Food • 2PM-4PM Confession (Church)
Easter Vigil, 8PM, Saturday, April 20

Easter Sunday
Sunday, April 21, 7:30AM, 9AM, 10:30AM, and 12Noon

www.st-pius.org
St. Catherine of Siena

Bishop consecrates church after renovation

By JOE PISANI

TRUMBULL—More than 600 people gathered for a Mass of dedication and consecration at St. Catherine of Siena Church that Bishop Frank J. Caggiano called “one of the most extraordinary liturgical celebrations I have ever done.”

A majestic ceremony with a grand procession and a special dedication Mass “brought to fruition these last 60 years of work and prayer and faith in the parish,” Bishop Caggiano said.

The “Christ at the Center” project entailed much more than merely moving the tabernacle from a side chapel into the sanctuary. The main architectural feature is a large “retablo,” which provides a frame above and behind the new 3.5-ton marble Altar of Sacrifice made in Italy. The inspiration for the design came from the altar of Our Lady, Health of the Roman People at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. On top of the retablo is the dove of the Holy Spirit, which is original to the church.

The altar has a grill through which can be seen a first-class relic of St. Catherine of Siena, contained in a sunburst held aloft by two bronze angels. The piece of bone of the church’s patron saint was given to the parish by the Dominican General in Rome. A new tabernacle sits on a pedestal

St. James Parish
Community of Faith
2110 Main Street, Stratford, Connecticut • 203-375-5887
Rev. Arthur C. Mollenhauer, Pastor

2019

Palm Sunday - April 14
Mass Schedule - Saturday, April 13 Vigil 4:30 pm
Sunday, April 14 - 7:00 am*, 9:15 am, 11:15 am, and 6:00 pm
(* Please note our Palm Sunday Mass will be at 7:00 am)

Holy Week
Everyone is invited to attend all the services of Holy Week

Holy Thursday - April 18
8:00 am - Morning Prayer
7:30 pm - Mass of the Lord’s Supper & the washing of feet

Good Friday - April 19
8:00 am - Morning Prayer
10:00 am Living Stations of the Cross with Bishop Caggiano - begins at St. Mary Church, Bridgeport
12:00-2:00 pm – Personal Way of the Cross - Chapel
3:00 pm - Celebration of the Lord’s Passion
5:30 pm – Novena of Divine Mercy - Chapel
7:00 pm – Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday - April 20
8:00 am - Morning Prayer
10:00 am - Blessing of Easter Food
3:00 pm – Novena of Divine Mercy - Chapel
7:30 pm - The Easter Vigil
(There are NO Confessions on Holy Saturday)

Easter Sunday - April 21
Mass Schedule - 7:00 am*, 9:00 am, 11:00 am
There will be no 6:00 pm Mass
(* Please note our Easter Sunday Mass will be at 7:00 am)
3:00 pm – Novena of Divine Mercy – Chapel
Novena will be recited daily at 3:00 pm in the Chapel
concluding on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27 at 5:00 pm

Divine Mercy Sunday - April 27
Conclusion of Divine Mercy Novena – 3:00 pm
- Parish Center Chapel

St. Thomas the Apostle RC Church
203 East Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut 06855 • 203-866-3141

Palm Sunday Weekend April 13/14
Confessions: Saturday: 4:30–5:00 pm Vigil for Palm Sunday at 5:15 pm
Sunday Masses at 7:30 am, 9:00 am (Family Mass), 11:30 am, and 5:00 pm

Holy Week Schedule
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following until 11:00 pm

Sunday, April 15
Mass at 7:00 am and 5:30 pm
Adoration from 6:00-8:00 pm

Tuesday, April 16
Mass at 7:00 am and 5:30 pm
Confessions from 6:00–9:00 pm

Wednesday, April 17
Mass at 7:00 am (No 5:30 pm Mass)

Holy Thursday, April 18
Mass of the Lord’s Passion at 3:00 pm (Main Service)
No Regularly Scheduled Masses
Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion at 3:00 pm (Main Service)
Mass at 7:00 am (No 5:30 pm Mass)
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following until 11:00 pm

Good Friday, April 19
No Regularly Scheduled Masses
Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion at 3:00 pm (Main Service)
Mass at 7:00 am (No 5:30 pm Mass)
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following until 11:00 pm

Holy Saturday, April 20
No Regularly Scheduled Masses
Blessing of Easter Food at 11:30 am
The Easter Vigil at 8:00 pm

Easter Sunday, April 21
Masses at 7:30 am, 9:00 am (Family Mass), and 11:30 am
No 5:00 pm Mass
behind the altar.

Deacon Patrick Toole recalled having breakfast with Father Marcello two years ago on the feast of St. Stephen, when they decided to approach noted architect Duncan Stroik, a professor at the University of Notre Dame, about the project. “The beauty is overwhelming and it elevates our souls to God,” Deacon Toole said. “Everything there is intentional and has meaning.”

Professor Stroik, who attended the ceremony, said, “This is a beautiful country church that now has a stunning gem at its center.” He said the project was a demonstration of the faith of the parish and its pastor. Every church has many parts, he said, but the Blessed Sacrament is the center, and just as a rock thrown into a pond causes ripples, the sanctuary lets beauty emanate to other areas of the church.

Deputy Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus and a parishioner, Patrick Kelly, said, “At a time of grave difficulty and confusion for the Church, the Christ at the Center project brings our focus back to where it should be. I was enormously encouraged by this sign of life and vitality. Beauty attracts, and this new sanctuary is a wonderful gift to us in the present day, but also to future generations.”

Ken Martin, who was a member of the steering committee, and his wife Ailis were donors to the project. A lifelong parishioner, Ken said, “I’m super happy to see three years of work manifested in such a beautiful dedication ceremony. I am so grateful for Father Marcello’s leadership. This is something we will admire for many years to come.”

During the dedication, Bishop Caggiano deposited the first-class relic of St. Catherine of Siena in the altar. The previous week on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, he deposited a metal box containing first-class relics of martyrs Saints Eugenius and Candidus, which were original to the church, along with those of Saints John-Marie Vianney, Frances Xavier Cabrini, Pope Pius X, Elizabeth Ann Seton, André Bessette and Blessed John Henry Newman.

The changes, he said, will help parishioners deepen their relationship with Christ: “Since Jesus is the Center of our life and of our faith, it is integral to our parish’s mission of evangelization that we put together one of the most effective ways to form people in the faith and deepen their relationship with Christ through the Church’s liturgy celebrated beautifully and reverently and prayerfully.”

The sanctuary also has a new crucifix. The crucifix has a newly designed walnut titulus crucis with the inscription in Hebrew, Latin and Greek modeled after a piece believed to be from the original wood preserved in the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem in Rome.

The side chapel, which previously was the Eucharistic chapel, has been transformed into the Memorial Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a special place of prayer for the deceased. The altar from a 1997 renovation was moved there, and above it is a triptych containing the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with images of angels on either side, one holding the implements of the Passion and the other St. Catherine’s Church being presented to the Sacred Heart.

On display in the Memorial Chapel are flags honoring veterans, first responders and law enforcement officials, along with a mosaic of Our Lady in memory of children who have died from stillbirth, miscarriage and abortion, a book containing names of those buried from the church and memorial plaques in honor of deceased parishioners. The original Stations of the Cross have been reframed and now include meditations by Blessed John Henry Newman.

Several years ago, Father Marcello began discussing the idea for the “Christ at the Center” project with Fathers Luke Suarez and Philip Bochanski and Deacon Patrick Toole. The plan was announced on the Solemnity of the Assumption in 2017 and work began a year later. The project was financed through legacy gifts from parishioners.

The project is particularly meaningful to Father Marcello, who was named pastor on January 31, 2015 and has been a member of the St. Catherine community since he was a kindergartner at the school.

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Obituary

Father Szlezak, 101

FLORIDA—Father Emeric Szlezak, OFM, a professed Franciscan friar for 79 years and a priest for 74, died on March 16 in St. Petersburg, where he had lived since 2005. Father Szlezak was 101 years old and the longest living friar in the history of Holy Name Province. Father Szlezak was born on Dec. 17, 1917, in Budapest, Hungary, to Kalman and Elizabeth (née Beck). He moved with his family to the United States in 1923. Father Szlezak attended Catholic grammar school in Brooklyn before enrolling in St. Joseph Seraphic Seminary in Callicoon, N.Y. He was received into the Order of Friars Minor in 1938 at St. Bonaventure Friary in Paterson, N.J., where he professed his first vows in 1939. Fr. Szlezak made his solemn profession in 1942 and in 1944 was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Amleto Cicognani at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, D.C. After World War II and again after the Hungarian Revolution in the 1950s, he assisted displaced persons, refugees and struggling immigrants. For 30 years, Fr. Szlezak gave weekly sermons in his native Hungarian language for a New York radio station that conducted a Hungarian broadcast. He also served as a chaplain to Catholic War Veterans on both the state and national levels and to local sheriff departments. In 1986, he was assigned to St. Emery Parish in Fairfield, Conn., where he served for 19 years. In 2005, Fr. Szlezak retired to St. Anthony Friary in St. Petersburg, from which he traveled to Sarasota and Venice to celebrate Mass and offer pastoral care. He also served as chaplain to the Knights of Columbus, Council 2105, St. Petersburg.

Two Catholic Schools win New England championships!

SHELTON/ STRATFORD—Two Catholic elementary schools from the Diocese of Bridgeport recently shared in the magic of March Madness in New England. The Holy Trinity Catholic Academy Boys of Shelton and St. James Schools girls of Stratford recently captured New England Catholic Youth Organization championships in their division.

This Holy Trinity Catholic Academy boys JV basketball team finished their 2018-2019 campaign winning the 2019 New England Catholic Youth Organization in the JV division.

The team fought off an impressive group of teams in single elimination format—St. John the Evangelist from Fall River, Massachusetts, St. Christopher from Manchester, N.H., and in the championship game beat previously undefeated Saints Peter and Paul from Waterbury, Conn. Other teams in the division were from Boston Mass., Providence R.I., Worcester Mass., Manchester N.H., and Norwich Conn.

The boys were there representing the Diocese of Bridgeport where they were back-to-back champions of the JV Division.

This season, the team also won the Tyler Ugozyn Memorial Tournament at Our Lady of Fatima in Wilton, Conn. and the St. Mary Tournament in Milford, Conn.

Mike Spadaccino, John Fahey and Daryl Bouchard are the head and assistant coaches respectively.

That same weekend, St. James JV Girls’ won the 2019 New England Catholic Youth Organization championship.

The tournament was hosted by the Diocese of New Hampshire Manchester. The St. James team won the Diocese of Bridgeport tournament last month.

In the first two rounds, the team beat St. John the Evangelist of the Diocese of Fall River in the first round 47-37 and St. Leo’s of the Diocese of Worcester 34-14.

In the championship game St. James beat St. Raphael’s of the Diocese of Boston by a score of 31-21.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23
**Trinity girls hoops, Prep hockey champs**

By DON HARRISON

It’s Christmas week, and Mike Walsh is spending the holidays in Florida with his son and his family. Alas, he receives an unexpected phone call and is told that Mike Martino, coach of Trinity Catholic High School’s girls basketball team, had just resigned. The caller asks: “What can you do to help?”

Well, Mike Walsh knows the game like few others, and his success as coach of the Crusaders’ boys team across 39 seasons may be found in the Trinity Catholic archives: Seven state championships, six FCIAC titles, 633 victories, a total exceeded by just three other Connecticut high school boys coaches.

So, would the 72-year-old semi-retired coach be willing “to help?” His answer was in the affirmative.

“I love the school so much, I’ve been around here 50 years, so I told them I’d take over as girls coach for the remainder of the season,” explained Walsh, who had been assisting his successor, Brian Kriftcher, with the boys team on a part-time basis.

“On January first, I flew home, on January second we held our first practice, and on January third, we played our first game of the new year (a 68-49 victory over Staples),” he related.

On the third Saturday in March, Walsh’s Trinity Catholic girls team put the finishing touches on a remarkable 2018-19 season by defeating top-ranked Canton, 52-45, in the Class S state championship game at Mohegan Sun. The Crusaders finished 22-5 (17-4 under Walsh) in capturing the school’s first state title since 2006.

Iyanna Lops, Trinity Catholic’s 6-foot-2 senior forward who is headed to Division-I Cal State-Bakersfield on a basketball scholarship, did most of the heavy lifting in the title game: 26 points, nine rebounds, seven blocked shots.

Seventeen of those points came in the second quarter, transforming an eight-point deficit into an 11-point lead at halftime.

“She shot six-for-seven from the floor including three three-pointers in the quarter,” a delighted Walsh said. “She has the desire and work ethic to be successful (at the collegiate level).”

Lops, who was selected to both the GameTime (formerly New Haven Register) and Coaches 2018-19 All-State teams, averaged 19 points per game during the season, complemented by 13 rebounds and 6 blocks a game. In the five state tournament games, she increased those averages to 24 points, 15 rebounds and 7 blocks.

When Walsh arrived as interim head coach, Lops said she was “impressed by his basketball knowledge.”

“The first thing he said to us,” she related, “was ‘we had so much potential.’”

Prior to this championship season, Lops, junior Caitlyn Scott and the Crusaders’ other upperclassmen endured two forgettable years on the court: 1-19 two seasons ago, and 8-12 under Martino in 2017-18. Now, the ball is in Walsh’s court. He hasn’t yet decided on whether he’ll return next winter.

Subhead Prep wins second straight title
Fairfield Prep earned its second straight Division-I state hockey title on March 19, and in the process surpassed Hamden on the list of Most State Championships Won.

Coach Matt Sather’s Jesuits received at least one goal from each of their four forward lines en route to defeating Notre Dame-West Haven, 5-2, in the title game before a capacity crowd of 3,500 at Yale’s Ingalls Rink. This represented Prep’s 18th CIAC state championship on the ice, Hamden has won 17.

A goal by junior Thomas Sather noted—“the first of his career,” Sather noted—put Prep in front, 1-0, and then, in succession, the Jesuits got goals from senior Nick Petty, sophomore Mason Whitney and senior Colin Bella. Senior goalie Jake Walker also distinguished himself by making 21 saves.

“Jake sat behind an All-State goalie last year, and this season he was our best player,” Sather said.

Bella was voted 2018-19 Player of the Year and selected to the Coaches’ All-State Team. Teammates Walker, defenseman Connor Boyle and forward Calyb Reeves were named to the All-State second team.
Column: Thomas Hicks

Not all prayer involves saying prayers

Potpourri
By Thomas H. Hicks

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

Aristolote, the famous Greek philosopher, arrived at the conclusion that there is one God who made all things. He further concluded that this God was a self-actualizing, eternal and immaterial Person. However, Aristotle concluded that this Supreme Reality did not care in any way about his human creatures. Relating to us would lessen God; it would be degrading to him. Here is a quote from Aristotle: “God is self-sufficient and has no need for the service of others, nor of their affection...God cannot have any need of human friends, nor will he have any.” (Eudemian Ethics, VII, 1244B). Aristotle spoke of his friendship involves equality.

Accordingly, there can be no friendship between humans and God.

This generally was the view of the Greek philosophers. For example, Epicurus stated that “it is absurd to think that the gods should concern themselves with the affairs of humans. This would upset their serenity and peace. Thus, the gods take no interest in human affairs and have no need of human worship.”

The Biblical God is presented as Someone Who knows and loves us in the uniqueness of our person. The Scriptures say He calls us by name and numbers the hairs of our head. He made human beings in order to offer His friendship. We are taught to speak of God as a “Father.”

Prayer is best defined as a search for God. It is an attempt to develop a relationship with the Ultimate Mystery. In his famous Rabbit novels, John Updike presents his protagonist, Rabbit, as someone who nothing he experiences is quite enough. He remains incomplete and searching. Toward the end of the novel Rabbit is Rich there is a scene that takes place at the end of day when Rabbit always felt most at peace, “the moment of the day when the light dims and the weeping cherries glow in the dark.” Rabbit insists to himself that “somewhere behind all this, there is Something or Someone that wants me to find Him.”

The writer C.S. Lewis spoke of prayer as seeking a relationship with “that unnameable something behind the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves.”

There is something in us that longs for God. Many experience a hunger for a deeper prayer life. The Lord was explicit and blunt in directing us against wordy prayers. “When you pray do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them” (Matthew 6:5). We are cautioned against wordiness. St. Augustine wrote: “To pray at a deeper level is not the same as to pray by multiplying words...God does not seek human words” (Letter to Proba). The mystic Meister Eckhart wrote: “People make a goat of God, feeding Him on word-leaves.”

We can grow tired of words. Sometimes one can feel that our church services are awash with words, verbosity. This can lead to such monstrosities of language as “Mother inviolate” and “singular vessel of devotion.”

Not all prayer involves saying prayers. Jesus spent whole nights in prayer. “In those days he departed to the mountain to pray and he spent the night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). It is unlikely he spent the night uttering words.

It was John of the Cross who stated that “silence is God’s first language.” Prayer often involves wordless attention, just being there, quietly gathered in God’s presence. “Stay quiet before the Lord, and wait longingly for Him” (Psalm 37:7). We need to build times of silence into our lives. Without silence there can be no interior life. We need to fast from too much togetherness and enjoy more solitude and silence. Solitude and silence are the sine qua non of contemplative prayer.

Isaiah tells us to “be still and know that I am God.” The way of contemplation is found in all the great religions. It is practiced in Hinduism and Buddhism, among the Sufis in Islam, and is part of the Hasidic movement in Judaism.

If someone has a true experience of contemplative prayer, nothing else really satisfies anymore. Many people today are experiencing a hunger for something more than a spirituality of devotion. Life causes one to examine one’s ideas of holiness. One tends not to see it as bound up with merit and reward; that’s part of the childhood of the spiritual life.

Close contact with worldly people often arouses a longing for the spiritual. We feel at times a certain weariness with the world.

A truth of the spiritual life is that “no one can come to me unless the Father draws him/her.” God takes the initiative. We do not get to God by our own efforts; God comes to us. John of the Cross stressed that no two people travel the exact same route to God. God has varied ways and methods to draw people to Himself. In the end, an individual is found by God.

Lately it has dawned on me that God is seeking me. For the first time, I truly believe this to be so. I look over my past and have a sense of God’s persistent pursuit. A mature spiritual life eventually feels much more like Someone has found you.
Melissa decided to go back to college. After 25 years. Things had changed and she had the misfortune, or dumb luck, of taking a course titled, “The Sociology of Marriage and Family,” which is a difficult topic for an orthodox Catholic in the hookup culture. Our views are countercultural on a lot of topics, but especially marriage and the family. She found herself in a crowded classroom of young people and she wasn’t prepared for the tempest. The first assignment the professor gave them was to write their definition of sex and things went downhill from there. He called on an outspoken 20-something fellow who fancied himself the next Jimmy Kimmel. The young man stood up and gave a personal definition that included himself and his girlfriend and went something like: “Sex is when … (content not suitable for a family publication, Catholic or otherwise.) The class erupted in laughter, while Melissa sat seething in her front-row seat. Then, throwing caution and political correctness to the wind, she raised her hand and even before the professor could call on her, she blurted out, “That’s disgraceful!” The class nodded in agreement. From that point on, students began calling her “Church Lady,” after the Saturday Night Live character. But Melissa didn’t object because she was proud of her Catholic faith. They laughed but they listened and little by little, week after week, she noticed a change especially in the girls, who came to appreciate her views, which set her apart in a permissive and abusive society. So many young people are wandering in darkness, but when they’re shown the Truth, they’ll respond positively. Marriage and the family are under constant assault after decades of social indoctrination that came out of the sexual revolution, which ultimately degraded the meaning of love and promoted exploitation, recreational sex and loveless relationships. Our challenge is to make sure young people understand the difference between the cheap substitute that society and celebrities promote … and the real deal.

We have to tell young people that despite what secular society says, true love and marriage are not what is portrayed in popular culture, celebrity lifestyles … and Saturday Night Live. The Catholic Church Lady wasn’t afraid to do that. In an address John Paul II once gave to young people, he said things that are outlandish by today’s standards: “Do not let yourselves be carried away by sexual excitement, for this puts genuine human love at risk and leads to the breakup of the family.” Which is why, he said, “so-called ‘free love’ is morally unacceptable.”

George Weigel, biographer of St. John Paul II, said the pope recognized one of the most urgent questions of our age involved love and the family. As Archbishop of Krakow, he played a central role in drafting the encyclical Humanae Vitae and eventually developed the Theology of the Body, which restores a sense of sacramentality to the body, making visible the spiritual dimension of the human person.

Fundamental to John Paul II’s theology, Weigel says, is the belief that “Our love is a truly human love when it is a gift of myself to another … and not the use of another, which is the type of exploitation that characterizes the modern world’s view of sexual relations. We need to ask, ‘How do I live a life of sexual love that conforms to my dignity as a human person?’”

Sexual intimacy is sacred. That’s a truth that society, and many Catholics, have forgotten. 
Nuestra Voz

La música es una ofrenda a Dios

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

DANBURY—Más de dos horas le tomó a Pedro Ruvalcaba, director nacional del Departamento Música Litúrgica de la iglesia católica, con sede en los Ángeles, California; explicar cómo los fieles deben alabar a Dios a través del canto dentro de las homilías (misas) y celebraciones religiosas y cómo en este momento la organización de obispos del país han determinado los parámetros para que la música sea solemne en base al Concilio Vaticano II y sus lenguas vernáculas.

Para iniciar el encuentro, Pedro Ruvalcaba, cantó una de sus composiciones haciendo hincapié que seguramente Dios estará escuchando ese canto comunitario y tomó como ejemplo lo que dice el libro del Evangelio según San Mateo: Donde dos o más estén reunidos en mi nombre ahí estaré yo; y enseguida explicó que como editor del libro Flor y Canto, edición en donde se encuentran los cantos impresos de la iglesia tanto en español e inglés con sus partituras incluidas y que son el referente a seguir dentro de la liturgia nacional; es necesario que los maestros de capilla, los coros y los directores de las parroquias y diócesis entiendan correctamente cuáles son las normas a seguir. “La iglesia es clara en afirmar que el canto tiene que ser de expresión hacia lo divino a Dios”, y por ser una manera de expresión hacia lo divino ésta debe ser vista como un acto humilde listo para ser solemne y a su vez en lengua nativa.

El MAESTRO PEDRO RUVALCABA, de origen mexicano, llegó a la Diócesis de Bridgeport para dictar un taller de cómo los obispos estadounidenses piden a los fieles de la iglesia cantar dentro de la liturgia los cantos sagrados, para que se mantenga como un canto solemne y a su vez en lengua nativa.

Por ejemplo, dijo, la primera parte que es el “arrepentimiento” donde como iglesia nos confesamos, como los fieles al momento de la imposición de manos “convertidos” para comulgar con el Señor, Ruvalcaba: “La mayor parte de veces los coros siguen cantando y el sacerdote debe sentirse a esperar que termine el canto”. Ruvalcaba, le respondió que tenía razón, pero por esa misma causa, los obispos quieran normar y educar mejor a los fieles y músicos para que se cumpla el principio de “la música acompaña al ritual”. Como parte del entrenamiento de Ruvalcaba con los presentes era enseñar la “Liturgia musical”, una de las preguntas suyas fue cuestionar qué se entendía como “liturgia”. Las respuestas fueron varias pero la acertada, acorde con el Maestro fue: “La liturgia es la obra del pueblo que se ofrece a Dios”, y por ser una manera de expresión hacia lo divino se debe ser vista como un acto solemne dentro de un acto litúrgico.

Como una reflexión propia para los fieles, Ruvalcaba mencionó que a la hora de cantar o componer o de interpretar, los músicos y los fieles deben estar “convertidos” para comulgar con la divinidad en forma plena y esa plenitud da belleza y armonía y por ende se convierte en un “canto litúrgico solemne en nivel de bellas artes”.

Solo así se puede entender por qué el “negocio” de la música dentro de las liturgias de las misas NO tiene mayor cabida en las iglesias hispanas; porque NO se habla de un nivel de “conversión de los gestores musicales”, dijo Alejandro, un hombre nativo de México, miembro de la parroquia de Saint Peter de Danbury, que canta en los coros de su parroquia.

Ruvalcaba, extendió el vocablo “convertido” al bautismo, sacramento al que todo ser humano tiene derecho para tener una vida participativa dentro de la iglesia: “Activa, consciente y plena”. Y en forma dicharachera dijo: “San Agustín manifiesta que la música es para los enamorados”, entonces hay que estar plenamente activo y consciente dentro de la iglesia para amar y expresar musicalmente dentro de la liturgia esta frase tan acertada del santo.

Ruvalcaba, narró que lleva más de 40 años dictando talleres para mejorar la música dentro de la liturgia, y dentro de su experiencia cada vez aprende nuevas formas y nuevos rumbo para que la dinámica musical esté acorde con los tiempos.
THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS CT STATE COUNCIL will be having Stations of the Cross and Benediction on Palm Sunday, April 14 at St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport starting at 1 pm with an optional Mass at 11 am. Mgr. Peter Cullen will be the main celebrant.

THE BLACK ROCK COMMUNITY COUNCIL PRESENTS the 2019 Hippity Hoppity Easter Egg Hunt on Sun., April 14 at 1:30 pm at St. Ann’s Field for children ages 0-6.

ST. MARGARET SHRINE'S VETERAN'S MEMORIAL deadline for donating a Veteran’s brick, in order to ensure installation by Memorial Day 2019, is Mon., April 15. The names of the Veterans, on the newly donated bricks, will be read at our 9th Annual Veterans Mass, in September 2019. For info on donating a brick call: 203.345.3244.

ST. ANN'S MEN'S GROUP invites everyone to a Holy Hour of the Cross and Benediction on Mon., April 15 from 7:30-11:30 am.

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FRANCIS X. CABRINI COUNCIL #4096 is holding its Lenten Fish dinners on Fri., April 19 from 5-7 pm at St. Andrew Church in Bridgeport. The dinner consists of fresh baked fish and fries, coleslaw, mac and cheese, coffee, tea, wine, soda and donated homemade desserts. The cost of the meal is a good will offering. All are welcome to enjoy our dinner.

NEW COVENANT CENTER'S 15TH ANNUAL CELEBRITY BREAKFAST will be held on Wed., April 24 at Woodbury Country Club in Darien, starting with a Networking Coffee at 7 am. The Keynote Speaker will be Bobby Valentine.

TAG SALE Vendors NEEDED A Tag Sale will be held at St. Mary Parish Stamford on Sat., April 27, from 9 am-3 pm. For more info call Sharon MacKnight at 203.327.1806 or email smacknight@optonline.net.

COME AND SEE if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. The Secular Franciscan Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fairfield on Sat., April 27 and Sat., May 18 at 9:30 am with celebrant Fr.Gene Szantyr. Afterwards, there will be a social and meeting held in the Parish Hall. All are welcome! For further info call Pat Heile, OPS at: 203.255.8801 or email at: pheile5713@aol.com.

A RETREAT WITH DR. KELLY, Martan Veneration through the Ages will be held at the St. Margaret Shrine Community Hall in Bridgeport on Sat., April 27 and May 4 from 9:30-11:30 am. For more info call the Shrine office at 203.333.9627.

A PASTA DINNER will be held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel in Bridgeport on Sat., April 27 in the Grand Hall. Doors open at 5:30 pm and dinner will be served at 6:30 pm. The cost is $10 for adults, $5 for children 6-12 years of age and 5 or younger are free. For reservations call: 203.372.3740. Tickets will be available at the door.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, April 28, will see a special continuing celebration of the Divine Mercy feast and devotion in the afternoon at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull. Devotions begin at 2 pm with Holy Mass, followed by the Chaplet of Divine Mercy before the Blessed Sacrament at 3 pm.

THE ST. PIUS X SENIORS in Fairfield, are sponsoring a day trip by bus to the Westchester Broadway Theatre in Westchester, N.Y. on Wed., May 1 to see “Newsies”. Cost is $84 which includes lunch and transportation. Time of departure from the St. Pius parking lot is 9:30 am returning at 5 pm. For reservations contact Pete Carey, 203.673.2081 or email him at: aandp1964@aol.com.

FIRST FRIDAY LECTURE SERIES is being held at St. Luke Church in Westport. On Fri., May 3, Professor Frederick V Simmons will discuss astrobiology and Augustinianism, an interesting and contemporary way to understand some basic aspects of Christianity and science. Each evening begins at 7 pm with a wine and cheese reception. The lectures begin promptly at 7:30 pm and conclude with a question and answer session until approximately 8:45 pm.

THE GUILD OF THE MOTHER OF JESUS membership will meet on Wed., May 8 in the church for their May Crowning at 7 pm. A business meeting will follow in the parish hall.

DIACONATE DISCOVERY EVENINGS will be held on the second Thurs. of each month through Sept., 2019 from 7-8:30 pm. St. Phillip Parish: May 9

THE CHRIST THE KING WOMEN'S GROUP will meet on Mon., May 13 the speaker will be Claudia Connor speaking on immigration.

THE SECOND ANNUAL RECTOR’S DINNER will be held at the Italian Center in Stamford on Mon., May 18. We will honor Msgr. Stephen M. DiGiovanni, the first rector and Judy & Phil DeFelice. Save the Dates and Invitations will be mailed out for more info.

THE ST. FRANCES X. CABRINI COUNCIL 4096 of the Knights of Columbus are having their annual Memorial Day Remembrance Mass on Sunday before Memorial Day, May 26 at the 11:30 am Mass at St. Andrew Church in Bridgeport.

CONFESSION AND ADORATION is offered every Tuesday from 7-8:30 pm at St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull. The opportunity for both anonymous and face-to-face.

PERPETUAL EUCHARISTIC ADORATION! Spend time, heart to heart with Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist at Our Lady of Fatima Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration Chapel of St Theresa Parish at 5310 Main Street, Trumbull. The Chapel is open 24 hours, 7 days a week. The entrance to the Chapel is on Rosemond Terrace. If interested in making a weekly or holy hour as a Eucharistic Guardian, please visit our website at: StTheresaTrumbull.org or call the Parish Office at: 203.261.3676. Office Hours are: Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am-4:00 pm.

TO MAKE A RESERVATION: Events@stjohnfisherseminary.org

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In Memory of Richard T. Carroll

The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport

Position Available

Full Time Youth Minister

St. Paul Parish in Berlin Connecticut

St. Paul Parish in Berlin, Connecticut, a large active suburban parish, is seeking an experienced Youth Minister to lead the parish youth ministry program for grades 6-12 as well as engage the college-age and young adult population.

Position is full time with benefits.
Visit stpaulkensington.org for more information and qualifications.
Deadline is April 26, 2019.
When it comes to orthopedic needs, Ascension care teams at St. Vincent’s Medical Center are here when you’re ready. With a full range of orthopedic services, our goal is to help you live with less pain so you can get back to what you enjoy in life.

Get the orthopedic care that’s right for you at ascension.org/bridgeportortho