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Vacation Bible Camps

Faith and Field Trips!

By MICHELLE ONOFRIO

Summertime is upon us, and while this season brings opportunities for rest, relaxation and recreation, there are also many programs that allow people in the diocese to experience spiritual growth. Vacation Bible Camps provide this and so much more for school-aged children, as well as teen and adult volunteers.

St. Theresa Church in Trumbull has recently wrapped up their fourth Vacation Bible Camp to date, for children in preschool through Grade 5. Rose Talbot-Babey, the camp’s coordinator, has been directing the camp since she came to the diocese.

Open to regional Catholic and non-Catholics, over 100 campers and 70 teen volunteers gathered at St. Theresa’s the week of June 24-28 for the camp, which was led by three Dominican sisters from Mary, Mother of the Eucharist of Ann Arbor, Mich. Each summer, on their way back to their Motherhouse, the sisters who are in formation engage in mission work, including helping at Vacation Bible Camps.

This year’s theme at St. Theresa’s was “Meeting Jesus in the Mass,” and two of the sisters assisted with the teaching portion of the camp, while another, who is also a professional musician, provided liturgical music for the Mass held on the last day of camp.

St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown also held a Vacation Bible Camp this summer. The theme of this year’s camp was “Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus,” where the focus was on “the saving power of Jesus’ love,” says camp co-coordinator Laura Brennan. Campers had the opportunity to sing, dance, play outdoors and have time.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5
By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—A decree issued by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and published on Friday, June 28 mandates that all parishes throughout the diocese establish a parish pastoral council “for the good of the faithful of the diocese.” The decree states that beginning on November 1, 2019, the Solemnity of All Saints, each parish is to have “a functioning parish pastoral council,” according to guidelines set forth in the Diocese of Bridgeport Parish Handbook. While most parishes currently have parish councils, some have grown inactive. The bishop said that the establishment of pastoral councils is important as the diocese seeks to move toward greater subsidiarity and increased lay leadership in accordance with the Synod. The Parish Pastoral Councils serve as a consultative body to the pastor, with the role of advising and assisting in developing a pastoral plan for the future of the parish. The council should be representative of the entire parish, reflecting a parish’s particular diversity (by gender, age or ethnic background).

According to Patrick Turner, director of the Diocesan Office of Strategic and Pastoral Planning, Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils were also issued at the end of June.

“A well-functioning parish pastoral council can be of great assistance to a pastor and parish leadership team,” said Patrick Turner.

“By providing input on the views of the broad range of parishioners, the council can assist a pastor in developing necessary priorities to help the parish become vibrant and sustainable for the long term. I have been so impressed by the lay leaders and council members I have engaged with over these past five years at the parishes in the diocese.” Turner said the bishop’s goal is “to ensure that all of our parishes have a well-functioning structure in place to support the clergy and staff.”

The guidelines issued at the end of June outline principles behind the formation of a Parish Pastoral Council, suggested membership of the council, and the relationship of the council to other parish organizations and committees.

Turner said that while no two Parish Pastoral Councils will look the same due to the characteristics of an individual parish, the guidelines will offer a structure to assist pastors and administrators in making sure that their council can provide the support and consultation necessary.

First Lay Dominicans chapter in the diocese

By MICHAEL MILLER, OP

TRUMBULL—A new affiliation of the Lay Dominicans of St. Dominic (Third Order) has found a home in Fairfield County at St. Theresa’s Church in Trumbull. The new affiliation formed one year ago and has been thriving since then. The affiliation has been named “Our Lady of Fatima,” and is currently under the St. Mary’s, New Haven chapter for its spiritual guidance.

Members of the Lay Dominicans are lay men and women who are fully incorporated members of the Order of Preachers, but live out their Dominican vocation in the world. They are called to do spiritual and apostolic work in the service of Christ. Lay Dominicans are lay men and women who are fully incorporated members of the Order of Preachers, but live out their Dominican vocation in the world. They are called to do spiritual and apostolic work in the service of Christ. Lay Dominicans are lay men and women who are fully incorporated members of the Order of Preachers, but live out their Dominican vocation in the world. They are called to do spiritual and apostolic work in the service of Christ.

The newly formed affiliation has nine newly received members and one member entering his final profession phase. On Thursday, April 11 and Thursday, May 16, the members of the newly formed affiliation went through their Rite of Reception into the Lay Dominican Order. The Rite of Reception was a beautiful ceremony, led by the Lay Dominican region president Kathy Kendrek, immediately following a Mass offered by St. Theresa Church pastor, Father Brian Gannon.

The life of a Lay Dominican is based on the Dominican four pillars: prayer, study, community and apostolate. A daily life of prayer revolves around the Liturgy, both daily Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office), which helps to sanctify the entire day. The Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer that all the Church’s religious pray daily, in union together.

Study is a life-long endeavor for Dominicans as well. Scripture study, the study of Dominican Saints and the Dominican Rule, as well as the study of Catholic teaching, are central to Dominican life and assist in their charge to “Go out to the world and proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Lay Dominicans come together a minimum of one time a month with their chapter, for prayer and study. This is key to the spiritual life of each member and apostolate—each affiliation or chapter discerns a community apostolate to serve the body of Christ and to further His evangelical mission. Lay Dominicans are called to do apostolate with those whom they come in contact with in their daily lives.

Some of the notable Dominicans are: St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope St. Pius V, St. Vincent Ferrer and some Lay Dominicans are: St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church; St. Pier Giorgio Frasassi and Bl. Margaret of Castello.

(For more information, call, text or email: Michelle Rowe at: orapronobis98@gmail.com or 203.218.6882; Michael Miller at: Michaelmillere_910@hotmail.com or 203.326.7655; Joan Cuomo at: richardcuomo939@comcast.net or 203.215.0438.)
Summer Fairs and Festivities

Summer Picnics & Carnivals

Summer officially kicks off the season of parish picnics and carnivals throughout the diocese. The events have a way of bringing the entire parish family together as people of all ages volunteer, serve and enjoy each other’s company.

The newly combined parish of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes started its carnival off (see photos) with procession and prayer, when parishioners gathered outside St. Catherine Church in Riverside on July 9 to follow the bagpipes and banners around the carnival grounds for a blessing just before the start of the five-day event. The annual carnival featured great food and live entertainment including the St. Catherine Players! The parish also managed to beat the heat with a “dunk tank,” courageously manned by Father Bill Platt, the pastor.

St. Francis of Assisi in Weston started its summer off with a Lobster Palooza enjoyed by 200 guests. St. Jerome in Norwalk and St. Mary’s in Stamford held their annual parish picnic and family fair, respectively and St. Aloysius in New Canaan enjoyed its “Parish Feast.”

Delicious homemade foods, including pierogi and stuffed cabbage, along with children’s games and dancing were all on the menu at the St. Anthony of Padua summer picnic held on July 14. In addition great time for all, it raises money for Merton Center.

St. Anthony parish coordinator Eleanor Sauers said it best in her thank you note to parishioner: “This picnic is so much more than a fund-raiser for the parish and the Merton Center. It represents the best of who we are, a Christ-centered community that works together for the good of all, welcoming the stranger and reaching out to others to share God’s love.”

Many more parish fairs and celebrations are scheduled for summer into early autumn.

(To learn more visit the diocese calendar dobcalendar.bridgeportdiocese.org.)
for a snack, while learning about God through all of it. “We refer to it as the happiest week of the year at St. Rose,” says Brennan.

Kathleen Rooney, director of Religious Education at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton, directed this year’s Vacation Bible Camp. The parish has hosted a Bible Camp since the early 1990s and enrollment usually averages around 40-60 children. Each day consisted of a rotation of half-hour sessions, including music, crafts, Bible stories and outdoor recreation.

On the final day, a closing ceremony was held, during which children read Scripture passages that related to the camp’s theme, “Jesus is Our Friend,” and sang songs that they learned throughout the week.

Donna Lane has been helping out with the Vacation Bible Camp at her parish, St. Jude in Monroe, since she arrived in 2001. Each year, they have about 100 campers, as well as a combination of adult and teen volunteers. Most of the teens have already gone through the program themselves and then return as volunteers.

The Bible lessons are told through the stories of different animals, as part of this year’s theme: “Into the Wild.” The last day of camp includes a closing program, which Lane says is one of the highlights. The campers perform songs they have learned for their parents and grandparents, and they enjoy the interactive hand movements.

At St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan, children in Vacation Bible Camp learned about the Holy Trinity through the teaching of St. Patrick. One of the camp co-directors, Kianna O’Reilly, hoped that the children would come to “understand the Trinity like a family” and “keep thinking about God every day.” In addition to daily activities, such as music, crafts and Bible lessons, campers were treated to special programs, such as “water day” and shows put on by the parish’s Youth Group Bible Troupe.

Coming from the perspective of a parent, Kianna notes that “we’re all trying to do the best we can in raising them. When it becomes difficult, we can reach out to the Church.” Vacation Bible Camp is one of the ways parents can do that.

Children between ages 3 and 9 attended Vacation Bible School at St. Mary Parish in Bethel from July 8-12. “Led by adult staff and volunteer counselors, VBS offered fun and learning for the whole week,” says Maggie Kent of St. Mary’s Religious Education. Kent says “we look forward to keeping children engaged in the community, having fun and learning about Bible stories that affect their lives and how they can live those out every day!”

Every year, the town of Brookfield hosts an Ecumenical Vacation Bible Camp, a tradition that has been going on for about 50 years. St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield is one of three host parishes, along with two Protestant churches in Brookfield.

The camp is run by parents, college students and high school students, and “has the support of all church leaders,” says Margaret Petta, one of the coordinators.

Through engaging in Bible stories, creating a craft project, playing games outside, working on a science project or enjoying snacks donated from parishioners of the different host parishes, the campers learn about and encounter God as a Christian community, Petta said.

Karen Soares-Robinson is the director of Religious Education and director of the 5-Week Summer Camp at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport. She has led the program for the last four years and notes, “I’m the director and I get excited about it!” The primary goal, she says, is “for the kids to have fun and there are plenty of opportunities for them to do so.

On Fridays, they take field trips to various fun spots, such as Lake Compounce, Urban Air or a group hike with pastor, Father Joseph “Skip” Karcinski. Toward the end of camp, they have opportunities to tie-dye T-shirts, build camaraderie through a field day and even participate in a baking competition (Top-Chef-style, with judges). Even with all of these activities, each day of the camp begins with time for the children to read books and receive spiritual formation.

St. Mark Parish in Stratford hosted their Vacation Bible Camp this year with the theme “Roar,” focusing on how “life is wild but God is good.” Students started the day with song and dance, surrounded by amazing life-size jungle decorations. Children ages K-6 broke up into groups for different activities throughout the day. “It is such a joy to see everyone in the parish come together for this camp every year,” says Patricia Nettleton, director of Religious Education at St. Mark’s. “We have people of every age helping out and wanting to be involved.”

This was evident as young and old alike joined in the opening song, “ROAR!”

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News Around the Diocese

Catholic Scouts honored for their achievements

By JOE PISANI

NEW CANAAN—Scouts from throughout the diocese were honored for their achievements at the 2019 Catholic Scouting Awards Ceremony on Saturday, June 29 and reminded by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of the importance of “walking in the footsteps of Jesus” by following the Scout Oath.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to share this great night with all of you,” Bishop Caggiano said. “You have worked very hard to receive these emblems, and I am proud of you for taking your faith very seriously because it is a great gift, and with these wonderful people who are guiding you, great things await you in the future if you stay on the path of faith.”

The bishop blessed the emblems they were to receive and then awarded them to the young men. Six scouts received the Light of Christ Religious Emblem, which is given to Tiger or Wolf Cub Scouts in first to third grade who, with their parents’ participation, strive to develop a personal friendship with Jesus.

Twenty-two boys received the Parvuli Dei “Children of God” Religious Emblem for those who have completed second grade and strive to discover the presence of God in their daily lives by meeting requirements determined by their parish priest, counselor and family.

One scout received the Pope Pius XII Award, designed to help Catholic scouts understand God’s call in their lives. He also received the Pillars of Faith “Duty to God” Award, which is given to a boy or girl scout who has earned all four Catholic scouting emblems, demonstrating tremendous commitment to the Catholic faith.

St. Rose of Lima—Pack 570 was given the Pope Paul VI Medal, given to a boy or girl scout who has earned all four Catholic scouting emblems, demonstrating tremendous commitment to the Catholic faith.

National Catholic Quality Unit Award. Joe Belasari and Chris Kirkman were honored for their work encouraging participation in the emblem program and other religious activities.

“I want to remind you that you wear an emblem on the outside to show the world what is on the inside,” the bishop told the scouts. “And the emblem only has real meaning if it matches what you are growing up to be... and your Scout Oath tells exactly the road map to follow. If you do all of that, you will be walking in the footsteps of Jesus.”

Several adults were recognized for their achievements.

Stephen Prostor, the cubmaster at Pack 70 in New Canaan, was given the Bronze Pelican Award, a diocesan recognition for adults who have made a significant and outstanding contribution to the spiritual development of Catholic youth in the Boy Scouts of America.

Prostor also serves as Cub Scout activities chair and roundtable commissioner for the Powahay District. He is Catholic Religious Emblems Coordinator at St. Aloysius Parish, where he is an active parishioner and an advocate for scouting. He also encourages Scouts to pursue religious emblem awards for their respective faith.

Hugh Welch, an active scouter who promotes the Catholic faith in scouting and formed Troop 20 at Our Lady of Peace in Stratford also received the Bronze Pelican Award for encouraging scouts to pursue religious awards of their faith.

The St. George Emblem is a diocesan recognition given to... CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Catholic radio comes to diocese

By JOE PISANI

WILTON—More than 250 people turned out to celebrate the launch of Veritas Catholic Radio, which Bishop Frank J. Caggiano called “an historic moment in the life of our diocese.”

He praised Steve Lee, president & CEO of Veritas Catholic Network Inc., for his efforts to bring Catholic radio to the Diocese of Bridgeport. “Without you, this would not have happened,” he said. “Your sacrifice will be deeply blessed by the Lord, and I am honored to collaborate with you on this, for this is a moment of great opportunity to evangelize our sisters and brothers.”

With the FCC approval of his purchase of a radio station, Lee, a Ridgefield resident, is going to begin broadcasting EWTN Catholic programming this summer throughout Fairfield County, the north shore of Long Island and parts of Westchester.

Lee purchased WNLK-AM 1350 radio and an FM translator at 103.9 MHz from Sacred Heart University, which will allow him to simulcast EWTN programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide local coverage of Catholic and community events.

He hopes to reach an audience of 5.6 million Catholics. “Radio did not die; it found its audience to contribute to the spiritual development of Catholic and community events,” Lee said.

Lee introduced Christopher Check, president of Catholic Answers, the largest lay-run apologetics and evangelization organization in the English-speaking world and producer of the leading national radio show, “Catholic Answers Live.” Check’s brother is Father Paul Check, rector of St. John Fisher Seminary.

Check, who came from San Diego, spoke of the obligation that confirmed Catholics have to evangelize and encouraged the audience to contribute to... CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
He even went so far as to fill out an application during his senior year of high school, but never got around to handing it in. It wasn’t until after attending college at Southern Connecticut State University and beginning a master’s degree at Kent State University that a priest friend of his challenged him on why he never pursued further the call he felt to be a priest.

“I didn’t have any answer for him except to listen to him and start to take my discernment and call seriously,” says Father Ford. That conversation inspired him to speak with then vocation director, Father Robert Kinnally and enter the seminary.

Father Ford recalls the summer he spent at the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University in Omaha among his most memorable experiences in formation. IPP is a program for diocesan seminarians that gives them deep, meaningful formation especially in the spiritual life and in personal growth. “Throughout my summer at IPP, I was invited and challenged to new depths in my relationship with God, to really learn to receive His love and presence in my life as His beloved son, so that I was more prepared to be able to take on this new role as a spiritual father,” shares Father Ford.

The image of the crucified Jesus. Father Ford shares, “It was so humbling that this woman who didn’t know me was thinking about praying for her new priest. I was able to do the wake service for her.”

It was moments like these, moments of the human encounter, that made Father Roman know he was called to the priesthood. There were moments of spiritual affirmation throughout his formation including teaching catechetical sessions at Malta Hospital, that helped to shape Father Roman’s spirituality along the way. “I learned how to pray with people, walk with people and really be with people in their suffering,” shares Father Roman.

Life after ordination finds Father Roman at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan, where he has jumped right in to life at this very active parish, being able to give first blessings to parishioners, blessing local businesses, getting involved in their youth ministry program, as well as making plans for future young adult initiatives. He has recently performed his first anointing, been able to go into nursing homes, bring people Communion and “to love people where they are,” he says. “Through my unworthy hands, Jesus is made manifest in the Eucharist. I am the most unworthy person and Jesus uses me as a conduit for His love,” says Father Roman.

Father Roman shares a stand-out moment for him as a new priest. He recently gifted a priestly prayer card to a parishioner who was suffering from terminal cancer. On her death bed, she gripped this prayer card, holding it with her every day, looking at the image of the crucified Jesus. She made it her mission, on her
Swim Across the Sound

Shelton resident to SWIM with the ‘Survivors’

BRIDGEPORT—On Saturday, August 3, Shelton resident Teresa Gagnon will SWIM Across the Sound with the ‘Survivors’—a six-person relay team that will take turns swimming 15.5 miles from Port Jefferson, New York, across Long Island Sound to Captain’s Cove Seaport in Bridgeport. Teresa and her team will be crossing the sound along with approximately 100 other swimmers, accompanied by a fleet of 65 escort boats and 20 law enforcement boats. All are participating in St. Vincent’s SWIM Across the Sound to help raise money for cancer patients. Net proceeds are used for a great cause. “I still miss her every day,” said Gagnon. “Although I lost my sweet mom, I am so grateful for having her in my life for so long,” said Teresa. “I still miss her every day.”

A veteran of the SWIM Across the Sound Marathon, Teresa is happy to be back for her sixteenth consecutive year. She and the Survivors will be swimming this year in honor of her mother, who passed away from colon cancer last December. “Although I lost my sweet mom, I am so grateful for having her in my life for so long,” said Teresa. “I still miss her every day.”

Driven by her love for swimming, Teresa is excited not only for the marathon, but also for the great cause that it supports. “Participating in the marathon is my reward for getting into a healthy exercise routine, doing something I love, and raising money for a great cause,” said Gagnon. “I am so grateful for having her in my life for so long.”

Teresa’s team, the ‘Survivors,’ is comprised of both cancer survivors and supporters. “We use the team name ‘Survivors’ because I wanted to put forth the message that while we will always swim in memory of the many loved ones we have lost, we are also swimming for survivors in hopes that their numbers will continue to increase.”

As a matter of fact, Teresa is one of those survivors herself. “In May of 2017, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Thanks to early detection—one of the many services the SWIM provides—my treatment involved surgery and radiation,” Teresa explained. “I didn’t need chemotherapy and the impact on my daily activities was minimal. I swam that August.”

There are several ways you can support Teresa and her team. Donate online at www.give.stvincents.org and join the excited live, on Saturday, August 3, at Captain’s Cove in Bridgeport as the swimmers cross the finish line.

(For more information, contact the St. Vincent’s Medical Center Foundation at 203.576.5451 or visit www.SwimAcrossTheSound.org.)

CT Bishops Statement on Immigration

Recent images and news reports have shed new light on the disturbing conditions at the United States border with Mexico. On July 10, Archbishop of Hartford Leonard P. Blair, Bishop of Bridgeport Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Norwich Michael R. Cote, Bishop of the Ukrainian Diocese of Stamford P. Paul Chomnycky and Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford Juan Miguel Betancourt released the following joint statement regarding this humanitarian crisis at our southern border:

These past months have been marked by escalating tensions at our southern border. Most recently we were confronted with the tragic images of the drowning deaths of Oscar Martinez and his 23-month-old daughter, Angie Valeria, who were fleeing the dangers of El Salvador for the safety of the United States. Other immigrants have crossed the border with their lives, but have been captured and are now detained in overcrowded conditions as a result of political gridlock in our nation’s capital.

We, the Catholic Bishops of Connecticut, urge our government to act for a complete overhaul of existing immigration policies. Those responsible in government need to undertake an examination of conscience as to what they have done and have failed to do when it comes to respect for human persons and the enactment of fair and balanced legislation. This overhaul needs to ensure a welcome for immigrants in keeping with our history and laws as a land of immigrants as well as the integrity of our borders.

In recent decades U.S. governments led by both of our major parties have failed woefully short of enacting immigration reform and of honoring the basic humanity of migrants and refugees. According to the U.S. Border Patrol, over the last twenty years there have been an average of 357 immigrant deaths annually in our southwest border sectors. The governments of other nations also need to be encouraged and aided where necessary to remedy the conditions that force people to flee their homeland.

As one nation under God, not only founded by immigrants, but made what it is in large part by immigrants, the United States can and must do better. Those fleeing the hazardous conditions of their homeland to make the perilous journey to the safety and freedom of America are currently facing treatment that undermines our shared values of freedom and belief in human dignity.

We urge everyone to work and pray for a better way forward in addressing this humanitarian crisis.

High School students take ‘SHU Journey’

FAIRFIELD—Recently, twenty-four high school students from around the diocese dove deeper into their faith education, self-discovery and leadership through Sacred Heart University’s SHU Journey. During the week, six Sacred Heart University student mentors lead an exploration of faith, in small group conversations learning about oneself and real-life issues, in sharing profound prayer, liturgies and excellent music and in providing service in the community. Participants also heard from keynote speakers who are Catholic leaders, both lay and religious, around the diocese. The goals of the program are to educate students in faith and help them to relate what they learn to their lives and the greater world; and to foster the ability for them to become leaders in their faith.
Greening our Parishes

Giving Garden featured at farmers market

FAIRFIELD—St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School recently welcomed all to their vegetable and flower garden! The students worked hard in constructing a garden full of lush veggies and bountiful flowers, and sold their produce to anyone and everyone. The St. Thomas “Giving Garden” stand was located at the Fairfield Farmers Market on Sherman Green on Sunday, July 21. Visitors saw a hut which looked like it was built by thousands of garden gnomes. In fact, the shop design, all of its marketing, pricing strategy, product design and harvesting were decided by the students themselves. This first course in running a market business included the following upcoming 7th grade students: Makayla Cunningham, Hollis Huntington, Nora Lestizia, Claire Russell and Maggie Russell. “I highly recommend going to Saint Thomas Aquinas, where there are creative activities year-round such as ‘running the garden,’” wrote one of the students. “We hope you had fun checking out our garden goods, and thank you for participating in helping the students of Saint Thomas Aquinas learn about business!”

About St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and recognized as an award-winning Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. For nearly 100 years in the heart of downtown Fairfield, we have served a critical role in Fairfield County by providing a strong foundation for students in faith and knowledge at an affordable cost for students in Pre-K-8th grade. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is conveniently located at 1719 Post Road, Fairfield.

Our Lady of Fatima youth care for their plot of land

By MICHIELLE ONOFREIO

Members of Sodality, a youth group for middle school students at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton, recently did a variety of projects around the church grounds. From picking up litter, pulling weeds and planting beautiful flowers, children of the parish cared for “our plot of land here at the parish,” said youth group director Mara Fleming. Both Sodality and Children of Mary (a group for younger children of the parish) are community service-based groups that were founded during the Year of Mercy, declared by Pope Francis in 2015. They commit to performing spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and “all of the projects are chosen by the kids themselves,” says Fleming. “I went into it [leading this group] thinking I would plan all of these events, but their ideas are much better than anything I could ever come up with! They’re really creative,” she says.

The inspiration behind this particular service project came from an appreciation and gratitude for the gifts which God gives us. “The first gift is the gift of his creation,” says Fleming, who attests that the easiest way for their group to exercise Christian stewardship is through taking care of the part of creation that is entrusted to them at Our Lady of Fatima. Members of Sodality were joined by younger children, who they helped and led through working in teams.

The rose bushes and plants that were planted were donations to the parish. Sodality members planted them around a statue of Our Lady, which inspired the parish’s high school students to start a “Mary Garden.” “We’re starting small, with rosemary and marigolds,” says Fleming, and “the kids will get to see the fruits of their labor immediately.” To complement this activity where students receive immediate gratification, the youth group also plants bulbs between the church and school that require a period of waiting. Keeping the Parable of the Sower and the Seed at the forefront of their minds and hearts, “the kids plant and do everything they can to make sure their plants are nourished,” says Fleming. All that is left is for them to let God do the rest and “just trust it.” Come springtime, the children are elated to see their plants start to bloom.

the station. He said, “Because of Catholic radio in this diocese, people are going to come back to the Church and people are going to come into the Church. And your vocations are going to increase—we have drawers full of testimonies from seminarians and priests who say to us Catholic radio was important in the formation of their vocation.”

Peter Hosinski of Stamford, who is a supporter of the station, said, “It’s fabulous that they are bringing Catholic radio to Fairfield County. It will bring benefits far beyond the Catholic community and provide tools that will help people cope with life. It will also give them the answers they are not finding in the secular culture.”

There are currently 380 EWTN affiliates in the United States. After operations begin in Fairfield County, Lee believes the network can expand further into Westchester County and New York City and eventually throughout Connecticut.

Veritas will have a presence at parish festivals, school fairs, sporting events and conferences at Catholic colleges and universities. Some morning drive-time shows he plans to produce will feature a rotating cast of clergy, including Bishop Caggiano, parish and school news and programs for young people and religious communities in the area. Listeners will also be able to live stream through the veritasradio.com website and an app that is being developed.

Lee, who left his job in finance on Wall Street, says the past two years have presented him with trials and challenges...and rewards. He credits his wife Roula with providing him spiritual and moral support.

“This whole thing started when I was driving into work in July 2017, listening to an EWTN program, and the head of EWTN radio came on and said, ‘If you want to bring EWTN radio to your area, call me.’”

The next day Lee called him and said, “I don’t really know why I am calling you, but I heard you on the radio.”

In September 2017, Lee incorporated Veritas and shortly after met with Bishop Caggiano. In his office, there is a statue of the Blessed Mother, carved out of cedar from the Holy Land, which was given to him by Bishop Caggiano. He calls her “Our Lady of the Lights.” Nearby, he has a relic of St. Therese of Lisieux, given to him by the wife of the manager of the EWTN affiliate in Omaha, wishing him success in his venture.

Lee says his goal is a simple one: “To make Jesus really happy with what we are doing.”
Compassion is Key

At a time of intense division and disagreement over many issues, Pope Francis has been a prophetic and consistent voice urging compassion, service and mercy for all those who are suffering. In one of his earliest statements, he compared the Church to a field hospital where people who are wounded can find the healing that only faith can confer.

In a recent homily, the Pope has reminded us once again that we as Catholics need to think first about our own hardness of heart, not the sins of others.

“Helping a person in need requires compassion toward their situation. If you go down the street and see a homeless man lying there and you pass by without looking at him, ask yourself if your heart has hardened, if your heart has become ice,” the Pope said.

The true “face of love,” he continued, is “mercy towards a human life in need. This is how one becomes a true disciple of Jesus.”

Reflecting on the parable of the Good Samaritan, which he called “one of the most beautiful parables of the Gospel,” the Pope said, “This parable has become paradigmatic of the Christian life. It has become the model of how a Christian must act.”

The parable shows that having compassion is key. “If you do not feel pity before a needy person, if your heart is not moved, then something is wrong,” he warned. “Be careful.”

“May the Virgin Mary,” Francis prayed, “help us to understand and above all to live more and more the unbreakable bond that exists between love for God our Father and concrete and generous love for our brothers, and give us the grace to have compassion and grow in compassion.”

Who is my Neighbor?

In his recent Facebook reflection on the Good Samaritan, Bishop Caggiano asks the question, “Who is my neighbor?” The bishop notes that “those who ignored the injured man (the priest, the religious person, the one who was observant of the law) passed him by precisely because they made the judgment they owed him nothing.” In the writing below, the bishop challenges us to expand our sense of neighbor and bring the Gospel to others:

“There was nothing due to the man because, in fact, he was not their neighbor, but the Samaritan does stop and he treats and cares and makes real the love of God to the person who fell at the hands of the thieves. He recognized the great truth that everyone is our neighbor. That challenges us, doesn’t it? For it is very natural for us to want to put up divisions and boundaries to care for those we like or those who may not even welcome our aid, but does not the scripture say that the rain falls upon the just and the unjust, the sun shines upon the just and the unjust?

Did not Christ come and extend his hands on the cross to embrace everyone, saints and sinners alike? And so Jesus tells us that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, precisely because we are to love everyone, saints and sinners alike? And so Jesus tells us that we are to love every one—will their good—even when we don’t feel like doing it. That is what it means to be a Christian and that is what it means to live the parable of the Good Samaritan in your life and mine.”

Summer Thank You!

This issue features the many Vacation Bible Camps for young children now underway throughout the diocese and also offers a glimpse of some of the parish fairs and carnivals that celebrate life and bring parish families together in fun and faith over the summer. For example, more than 8,000 people attended the summer carnival of the newly formed parish of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes Parish, while enjoying recreational activities. Many thanks to all who have served and volunteered and in the process are making our parishes more joyful and welcoming!
Humility isn’t a piece of cake

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@dibpt.org.

At birthday parties growing up, when it came time to cut the cake, there was always a goal in mind...obtain the piece of cake with a flower on it (or whatever was garnishing the cake at that time) by whatever means necessary.

Obtaining the coveted piece of cake seemed to always be the job of the most boisterous. Whoever fought their way to the front of the group and who pleaded the loudest “me, me, me.”

For the quiet and shy little girl that I was, that piece of cake was never something I set my sights on...or even thought to, for that matter.

I was perfectly happy watching the chaos ensue while quietly and contentedly enjoying my own piece of cake.

As I’ve grown up, I’ve found the same rules usually apply when it comes to amassing goals, accomplishments and accolades. Those same people who always got the piece of cake with the flower on it seem to be further along when it comes to careers and other life accomplishments.

For us that are content to be behind the scenes, it can often feel like people are racing ahead of us in leaps and bounds. And in a world that often favors those who make the most noise, it can feel like we are being forgotten.

But what does Jesus tell us? Our Lord reveres humility. In fact, He is the perfect embodiment of it. He says, “For God so loved those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Luke 14:11). He promises, “The last will be first, and the first will be last” (Matt 20:16).

One of my favorite Old Testament figures is Gideon. Gideon was a member of the weakest clan in the area and was considered “least in his father’s house” (Judges 6:15). When the angel of the Lord appeared to him, he was gathering wheat under the cover of darkness to hide it from an oppressive enemy. Yet the angel of the Lord called him, “O mighty man of valor” (Judges 6:12).

God believed in Gideon, even though he was considered “weak” and “lowly.” I would assume Gideon would not be one to rush forward to claim his piece of cake. He was probably perfectly happy on the sidelines, but God called him to do a great thing for Israel, leading them to victory against the Midianitans followed by forty years of rest for the nation (Judges 8:28).

Gideon wondered whether he was enough. He asked, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel?” (Judges 6:15). He was humble enough to know that he couldn’t accomplish this great task on his own, but God equipped Gideon for what he was called to do. God uses the humble to accomplish great things. He uses the weak and lowly things of this world to accomplish His will. He says, “One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much...” (Luke 16:10).

Another one of my favorites is St. Andrew, the Apostle. Being the brother of Peter, he often gets overlooked. This resonates with those who often humbly serve behind the scenes, seemingly unappreciated but crucial to spreading the Gospel message. That being said, St. Andrew was the very first disciple called by Our Lord, and he even had a hand in convincing his brother, St. Peter, to follow Jesus (John 1:40). He also pointed out the boy who had five loaves and two fish that Jesus multiplied in order to feed the 5,000 (John 6:8). He was the conduit for the Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus (John 12:21).

Although his ministry occurred behind the scenes, he played an important role in bringing others to Christ.

One can also look to women in the bible such as Jaal, Rahab, Ruth and Elizabeth, just to name a few. Often overlooked, each of them crucial to the story.

It is this kind of humility that often speaks the loudest. The people that I meet who are living out the Gospel message and humbly serving the people around them remind me most of what Jesus calls us to be.

True Christianity isn’t loud and glamorous. It surely isn’t ostentatious. It’s not the piece of cake with the flower on it. In fact, I don’t think it’s a piece of cake at all. It’s serving the cake to others until all are fed.

Changing Table Elegy

A DAD’S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

While potty training a child is nobody’s idea of a fun time, my wife and I take solace in knowing we won’t be doing it again. The potty party will soon be over for us. Please clap.

Our Billy is the last of the litter, fifth of five. He’s just turned three, which means we’re late to the potty training with him, but that’s what happens when you’re bringing up the rear of a big brood. You get the parenting style known as “benign neglect.”

In our family, Billy is the caboose, though he runs more like an engine—nonstop and full steam from the breakfast bell to lights out. The only thing he hates more than taking a nap is taking a break from cooking with Crisco.

The little guy has one setting: blast.

“The sun camed up,” he trumpets while toddling into our room every morning. He enters like Olivier, ready to hold the stage (even if he can’t hold his bladder). No matter the hour, he projects his voice to the last row.

“Daddy, look, the sun camed up. Look.” Our Billy is a charm-er. I won’t suggest otherwise.

But he exhausts us. He exhausts us on top of the exhaustion we already feel. For people in midlife, our overall exhaustion levels are abnormally high. We’ve been continuously parenting small children for 15 years. There’s only so many miles you can put on an engine and expect it to run without backfiring.

“We’re almost like his grandparents,” my wife said recently. I knew what she meant. We get a huge kick out of Billy. We want the best for him. But we don’t obsess over his vocabulary or fret about whether he’s met this or that developmental milestone. Like grandparents, we think he’s probably going to turn out fine no matter what we do.

With our Clara—baby No. 1, precious princess of the realm—we endeavored daily to nourish mind, body and soul. Intellectual stimulation followed regular outdoor physical activity. You’ve heard this story. Maybe you lived it. With each successive child the stress reduced.

Billy gets the parental scraps. Don’t waste your pity on him. He’s not the wallowing type. Nothing’s gonna slow his roll. Not on a day when the sun camed up.

Under ideal conditions you can teach a child to use the toilet in a weekend. You clear the schedule. Hunker down. It can get messy, but you commit to regular bathroom trips every 20 minutes until the youngster gets the picture. Easy peasy. Happens every day.

The problem is, we don’t live in ideal conditions.

Our house is like Grand Central without the trains. Also without a janitorial staff and without air conditioning. People come and go constantly. It’s a beautiful bouillabaisse of aban- doned cups, muddy cleats, broken crayons, newspapers, base-ball hats and ripped pages from Robert McCloskey books. No sooner is breakfast cleared then it’s time for lunch.

Somebody’s doing Play-Doh at the table. Somebody has sum-mer camp. Somebody’s playing the banjo. Somebody needs to use the bathroom.

In a family with seven people in it, somebody always needs to use the bathroom. The potty training kid has dibs.

Despite the madness—or maybe because of it—everything gets done. The children learn to walk and talk. They learn to ride bikes. They learn to use the toilet. Their homework gets done.

And in 15 years not a single Hennessey child has starred.

Days went by, then weeks, then months, then years, until one day the sun camed up on a house where no one was wearing diapers. Exhusted as I was, I could see that it was good.
**NORWALK—**St. Matthew Parish recently celebrated groundbreaking for an 18,000-square-foot two-story Recreation Center. Designed by the architectural firm Doyle Coffin, the center will feature a basketball court, indoor walking/running track and college lounge for a Catholic Newman Center Club.

“This is really an historic moment in the life of a remarkable parish,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who offered the blessing and addressed the crowd including Norwalk Mayor Harry W. Rilling and former State Representative Larry Cafero.

“The church is its people—each of us a living stone of a living edifice, which is the mystical Body of Christ that expands through time and space. We ask that the undertaking we begin this day for His glory and our well-being may progress day-by-day to its successful completion.”

Msgr. Walter C. Orlowski, pastor of St. Matthew, thanked supporters for making a multi-generational recreation center a reality. “As a pastor who comes from the old CYO leagues, I’m delighted to create a place for busy families to come together, to have fun, to offer basketball tournaments, soccer, volleyball, martial arts and boot camps.”

Using golden shovels, the groundbreakers ranged in age from eight to 90 years. “These groundbreakers represent all generations, which is Msgr. Walter’s vision for the Rec Center—that all ages will enjoy this facility together,” said Larry Cafero.

“We’re building on what we already have, to give people the training space and programs they need to encourage health in body, mind and spirit,” offered Msgr. Orlowski. “It’s all about creating a parish even more welcoming than ever before—one that can be the center of people’s lives. It’s all for the good, all for God’s people.”

Proposed wellness programs include individualized and group sports training, meditation, mindfulness, Tai Chi, parent education and support, alcohol and drug prevention programs and recovery support.

St. Matthew is partnering with Norwalk Community College for the development of a Catholic Newman Club to serve the 40 percent Catholic student population at the college. The club will be based at the St. Matthew Recreational Center and open to all NCC students. Newman Centers focus on strengthening today’s Catholic young adults in the faith during their college years.

Reflecting on Msgr. Walter’s vision and leadership, Bishop Caggiano said, “You, my friends, are absolutely blessed to have a true spiritual father who has been here nearly a quarter of a century. One who has guided, laughed with you, cried with you, walked with you, has come to love you—probably more than he could love anything or anyone else. You have responded to his vision because you have seen the genuineness of Msgr. Walter and what he wants: the best for you and for the Church. So I would be neglectful if I did not say, on behalf of everyone here, thank you, Monsignor, for everything you have done all these years; thank you for great leadership.”

The new $2.9 million facility will be built to the west of the Parish Center. Developer Carl Lecher of Lecher Development estimates that construction will take 9-12 months.

*(For more information, visit www.StMatthewNorwalk.org)*
FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

Name: ________________________________
Address/Town: _______________________
Email: ______________________________

Age: (Check One)
- 10-19  - 20-29  - 30-39
- 40-49  - 50-59  - 60-69
- 70-79  - 80-89  - 90+

How satisfied are you overall with Fairfield County Catholic?
- Extremely Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not at all Satisfied

Would you like to receive a weekly email from Fairfield County Catholic?
- Yes
- No

Did you know that you can access the latest news, photos and videos on our diocesan website, which is updated daily?
- Yes
- No

Which diocesan social media pages do you visit?
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

Would you like to receive the Fairfield County Catholic more often/less often?
- More often
- Same amount
- Less often

How much do you agree or disagree that the Fairfield County Catholic does a good job of presenting the news, stories and people of the Diocese?
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree

What are your favorite sections of the FCC?
- News about the Bishop
- Catholic School News
- Parish News
- Profiles of Priests/Laity
- Columns/Editorials
- Obituaries
- Sports
- Nuestra Voz/Spanish-Speaking

How much do you agree or disagree that the Fairfield County Catholic...
- ...helps you better understand your Catholic faith?
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree
- ...inspires you to become more involved in your parish and the Church?
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree
- ...helps you better understand the Bishop’s goals for the diocese and his teachings?
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree
- ...encourages you to support the Annual Catholic Appeal and the We Stand with Christ Capital Campaign?
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree
- Do you look at the advertising?
- Yes
- No

How many other people in the household read the FCC?
- 0
- 1
- 2+

How much time do you spend with each issue?
- < 1 hours
- 1-2 hours
- 2+ hours

How involved are you with your parish?
- Extremely involved
- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

How often do you attend Mass?
- Daily
- Every Sunday
- Monthly
- Easter and Christmas
- Other

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

How often do you read the Fairfield County Catholic?
- I read each issue of the FCC
- I read the FCC most of the time
- I read the FCC occasionally
- I never read the FCC

FCC
- I never read the FCC
- Occasionally
- Usually
- Frequently
- Always

How involved are you with your parish?
- Extremely involved
- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

(PRINT EDITION)

We hope you will take a couple of minutes to fill out this survey concerning the overall communications efforts of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

You will find questions about Fairfield County Catholic, our monthly newspaper, along with the website (www.bridgeportdiocese.org) and the growing social media platforms used by the diocese to inform and evangelize. Your response to the attached survey will assist us in our mission of evangelization and renewal.

If you would like to fill this survey out online please go to: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/survey-july-2019 or scan the QR Code.

We thank you for taking the time to accurately fill out this survey.

Please mail back this survey in an envelope addressed:
The Catholic Center
Office of Communications (Survey)
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606
Redemptoris Mater Seminary

Seminarians welcome guests to their home

By JOE PISANI

STAMFORD—Catholics from throughout the diocese were given a look inside Redemptoris Mater, the missionary seminary of the Diocese of Bridgeport, during a recent open house that offered tours and opportunities to meet 10 young men in formation for the priesthood.

Reflecting on the success the seminary has had since it opened in December 2015, the rector, Father Marco Pacciana, said, “It is the Holy Spirit; that is all I can say. The Neocatechumenal Way has been recognized as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. That is the secret. We are weak, but God can do marvels in our lives.”

Father Pacciana said two more seminarians will be assigned to the Stamford seminary in September. “These are young men who feel the call to become missionary priests,” he said. “We need priests to spread the Gospel of Christ wherever this is a need. The only requirement is that they are willing to go anywhere.”

Father Pacciana, a native of Italy, says he came from a family that was not religious. They never prayed at home, and he went to Mass alone on Sunday. “But the Lord has ways to make you raise your eyes to him, and that is what happened to me through different events, and that is what brought me close to the Church,” he said.

Speaking of the challenges that young people face today, he said, “The only message I have is that God loves them no matter what, and the only thing that God wants for them is their happiness. The problem is that they look for happiness in many places without finding it. They have suffering in their lives and they don’t know why they are suffering. God wants to enlighten them in their suffering and show them that he has always been there. God has loved us since the beginning.”

Four years ago, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano decided to kindle the missionary spirit in the Diocese of Bridgeport by opening a Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Stamford with the purpose of preparing priests for missionary work anywhere in the world—from China to Europe and the Philippines and even the streets of Bridgeport.

Redemptoris Mater (Mother of the Redeemer) seminaries are under the auspices of the Neocatechumenal Way, a 55-year-old charismatic in the Church dedicated to Christian formation and the New Evangelization.

Redemptoris Mater international seminaries were inspired by Pope St. John Paul II and his call for a “New Evangelization.” The first seminary opened in 1987 in the Diocese of Rome, and today there are 127 on five continents and in cities such as Denver, Manila, Philippines, Brasilia, Brazil and Medellin, Colombia. The first one to open in the United States was in Newark in 1990.

Since they began, more than 2,000 men have been ordained to the priesthood, and some 1,500 seminarians are in formation worldwide. Even though they have an international character, they function as diocesan seminaries with the same theological formation, except that the young men are also sent out to do missionary work for two years.

David Klein of Trumbull and Juan Jose Escobar Borda of Colombia were among the guides who took visitors through the seminary and explained the daily life of the ten seminarians, beginning at 6 a.m., followed by morning prayer and breakfast, studies from 8:30 to noon, then midday prayer and lunch. There is a period for athletics and rest from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. and more studying or house chores from 3 to 5 p.m., followed by scriptural reading and meditation, Mass at 6 p.m., dinner at 7:30 and recreation and prayer from 8:30 to 10 p.m.

David, who is currently doing three years of mission work, was recently in the Central Pacific at the Gilbert Islands and New Zealand. Juan began his formation in Stamford in 2017 and will be returning to see his family this August after two years away from home.

Service and community are fundamental to their lives as seminarians, they said.

“We serve as a way of getting outside of ourselves and thinking of the needs of others first, the way Christ did,” David said. Both men are roommates and their arrangement encourages cooperation and communication...and reconciliation when there are disagreements.

The room called the Sanctuary of the Word, which is where the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament is located, can be a quiet place of meditation, prayer and study, Juan said. He goes there often at night to pray the rosary in the presence of Christ.

The Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Stamford opened in December 2015 under the direction of Father Alfonso Picone, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish. It was the ninth in the United States. Today there are ten young men from five different nations (USA, Brazil, Colombia, Kiribati and Honduras) under the direction of Father Pacciana and Father Giandomenico Flora, who is the spiritual director and also rector of St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport.

There are currently 1,000...
Parish News

Bishop installs two new pastors

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

St. Jerome, Norwalk

NORWALK—Father Rojin Karickal was recently installed as pastor of St. Jerome Parish in Norwalk. In a message to parishioners in the parish bulletin, Father Rojin expressed his sincere thanks to all those who helped out with the celebration of his installation. Father Rojin also asked for the prayers and support of parishioners, writing, “I would like to uphold the legacy of Father David Blanchfield and St. Jerome in coming years. We will continue to cherish the love, commitment and cooperation among all members of our parish. As I begin my journey as a pastor, what I ask from you is your prayer and support. I am sure that the Holy Spirit will guide us to move forward following His footsteps!” Father Rojin Karickal is a priest from the Archdiocese of Tellicherry, Kerala, India. He was ordained in 2009. Father Rojin joined the Diocese of Bridgeport in July 2015. After receiving three bachelor’s degrees, he earned an MBA in Bangalore, India and presently is pursuing a doctoral degree in management. His spiritual insights, communication skills and ability to relate to people provide distinct skills in his pastoral ministry. Passionate in his ministry, Father Rojin is also interested in traveling, games and technology.

Church of the Assumption, Westport

WESTPORT—Father Cyrus Bartolome, born in Laguna in the Philippines, was ordained in 2007. He graduated from Liceo de Bay and lived in Germany before coming to the United States. He enrolled in Norwalk Community College hoping to pursue a career in the medical field, but the call to the priesthood proved to be stronger. He attended St. John Fisher Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. In Maryland and St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. He graduated from Liceo de Bay and lived in Germany before coming to the United States. He enrolled in Norwalk Community College hoping to pursue a career in the medical field, but the call to the priesthood proved to be stronger. He attended St. John Fisher Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. Join us in wishing both Father Rojin and Father Cyrus a sincere congratulations!

BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO RECENTLY INSTALLED Father Rojin Karickal as pastor of St. Jerome Parish in Norwalk.

Discover St Joes!

Open Houses
October 6 & December 4

2-Day Entrance Exam Prep Course
October 18-19

Entrance Exams (One-time test)
October 26 or November 9

Application Deadline
November 11

St Joseph High School
2320 Huntington Turnpike
Trumbull, CT 06611
(203) 378-9378 x308
@SJCadets

Neocatechumenal communities in the United States. The movement spread from Rome in 1975 to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. One of the first communities was formed at St. Raphael Parish in Bridgeport, and David Klein’s grandparents were among the founding members. “I am very happy for the open house and that the people who have participated in it could see what we are doing,” Father Marco said. “We are forming these men to be like Christ, who is the answer to everything they are looking for. Then, they will go out to look for the lost sheep... wherever they are.”

(For further information about the seminary, visit www.rmbridgeport.org.)
Science Fair Winners

Real world solutions receive recognition

By PAT HENNESSY

Again this year, middle school and high school students in diocesan Catholic schools proudly took home honors and recognition, including one Life Science Trophy winner, at the Connecticut Science & Engineering Fair (CSEF). The statewide fair is open to students in grades 7-12; students in 120 schools and regional fairs statewide compete for the 600 available spaces. To participate, students must pursue independent work and use proper research methods. More than three dozen students in diocesan schools received honors and cash awards at CSEF this past semester. In addition, St. Gregory the Great’s Thomas Fanelli took home the trophy for his Best-in-State eighth-grade Life Science project, “One Man’s Trash Is Another Man’s Energy.” In addition to an impressive number of cash awards, Tommy received a nomination to the Broadcom MASTERS nationwide science and engineering competition held in Washington, D.C. Of the ten diocesan schools taking home honors at the fair, St. Gregory had eight medal-winning projects, including one team project. The Life Science team, seventh-graders Joseph Halas, Patrick Haslin and Ryan Devin, have also been invited to Broadcom for “Fire for Farming.” “Their teacher, Christine Fahey, has such an excitement for science,” said St. Gregory’s principal Suzanne Curra. “Her passion shines through and encourages middle school students.”

In common with many diocesan schools, St. Gregory holds a school science fair every year. “It’s part of the middle school science curriculum, and every student has to participate,” says Fahey. To build enthusiasm, she encourages students to choose and explore any topic that interests them. Trophy winner Tommy Fanelli took Fahey’s suggestion to pursue any interesting topic. “I’ve always liked making something useless into something useful,” he says. His experiment, “One Man’s Trash Is Another Man’s Energy,” was to produce energy in a container with simple materials, specifically, to see if compostable trash fermenting with cow manure could create enough gas to power a Bunsen burner.

He turned a metal 14-gallon container (about the size of a garbage can) into an airtight vessel with a feeding tube and a tube to let out and measure gas. About five gallons of cow manure and water were added through the tube. Once fermentation began, Tommy added household waste from his family, chopped vegetable leftovers, orange peels and the like, every week.

The container was kept in an outside shed, away from the house, because of the flammatory potential of the experiment. (All science fair parents should get a special award for their willingness to accept the challenges of living with their children’s projects.) After more than a month of tending, measurements and data analysis, Tommy drew off a two-gallon container of biogas. It lighted a Bunsen burner for almost a minute.

In addition to St. Gregory’s eight winners, St. Mary School in Bethel had seven finalists, with seventh-grader Jenna Saidman receiving an invitation to compete at Broadcom for “Does Boiling Vegetables Affect Vitamin C Content?”

The newly formed blended learning school of St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Brookfield had six winners, with eighth-grader Shaun McKenna going to Broadcom for his exploration of the “Effect of Various Combinations of Materials as Biosand Filters on the Filtration of Fresh Water.” St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown had three medalists, with Rohan Carey headed to Broadcom for his seventh-grade Physical Science Project, “How Does the Shape of an Airplane Affect Its Speed and Lift?”

In an interesting twist, Greenwich Catholic School had four winning projects, all of them team projects, for a total of twelve students bringing home medals. Two of the teams are headed for Broadcom. Eighth-graders Camelia Zuniga, Emily Cook and Catherine May earned a spot for their Life Science project “Factor Fiction,” which examined the protection factor of sunscreens. Seventh-graders William Carragher, Joseph Pizzurro and Ryan McIntire will take their project “Breathe Better,” which also earned them First Place in the Alexion Biotechnology Awards.

St. Joseph School in Danbury saw six winning projects. The Catholic Academy of Stamford is proud to claim five, and St. Mark School in Stratford had four. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield had one winning project. At the high school level, Immaculate High School is proud of sophomore Elias Haddad, whose Physical Science project on biofuel formation gained him his latest medalion. Elias has been a finalist in every single CSEF fair since he first attended in the seventh grade.

In addition to diocesan schools, Fairfield Prep had two winning projects at the high school level. Sacred Heart Academy, home to many high school women from this diocese, can claim an amazing nine winning projects.

Middle school science teacher Marde Dimon of St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Brookfield said of her students’ projects, “I challenged them to think about real world problems and to design well controlled projects that lead to real world solutions.”

From biofuel to vitamin C to aerodynamics, these young winners are indeed thinking of “real world” solutions. In so doing, they are already building the future.
St. Luke Parish, Westport

New teen communication internship

By Jennifer Coffman

WESTPORT—St. Luke Youth teens have long been recognized for their faithful witness, joyful enthusiasm and willingness to share their time and talents with the parish. Now, a new internship has been created allowing teens to contribute to parish communications ranging from writing Gospel meditations to pitching stories to local media.

“This idea originated after a conversation with Deb Toner, who is the youth minister for St. Luke’s,” shared Jennifer Coffman, mentor for the SLY Communication Interns. “I saw such joy in the SLY teens and would often say to Deb, ‘I wish we could simply unleash the teens into the world and let their special brand of enthusiasm change the culture.’ After saying this a few times, Deb and I decided to create an outlet to harness the evangelical spirit of the teens.”

Building on the post-synodal focus on areas of evangelization, family life and community, St. Luke Church set out to redesign its website and rethink the way in which it communicated the Gospel with parishioners and the broader Westport community, especially by sharing the “good news” of what is happening at St. Luke’s. The internship was established to connect the communication and social media expertise of parish youth with the evangelical needs of the church.

Currently four teens—Allie D’Angelo, Chelsea Fox, Gabriel Sargent and Emma Van Riper—have volunteered to meet twice a week to discuss upcoming parish programs and to brainstorm communication strategies for each initiative. Successes have already been noted with increased participation in fall and Advent activities and with increases in charitable fundraising efforts benefiting local charities. In addition, the percentage of opened emails and texts has doubled from Advent to Lent.

One SLY Communication Intern, Gabriel Sargent, has updated the website and written and designed several Flocknotes—including Gospel meditations and interviewing staff to highlight the work of parish volunteers. “Being a part of this mission has been such a powerful experience for me because it’s amazing to see how our work engages our parish,” Gabe shared.

“One of the most exciting aspects of this internship is the gift of watching these young teens blossom and seeing their faith deepen with each meeting,” noted Deb Toner. “The teens gain important skills in strategic planning, marketing and communications, presenting to parish advisors, while growing in their Catholic faith. They are learning how to become active Church members wherever they go to college or the workplace.”

SLY Communication Interns Emma Van Riper and Chelsea Fox agreed. Emma commented, “I love how the communication internship has allowed me to combine my passion for writing and my future communications major with my faith. Being able to explore this within the church has also enabled me to find my role in the youth group.”

Chelsea added, “I really love being a part of the internship program because I also want to pursue communications in college and maybe as a career, so it gives me a great opportunity to learn about different communication techniques while connecting to my faith.”

Since the inception of the program in October 2018, the teens have worked on many communication projects, including website design, parish-wide communications using Flocknote, event and activity promotion, Gospel reflections, traditional public relations including press releases, blog posts, event photography, social media assistance and parishioner tech support and tutorials for Flocknote.

SLY Communication Intern Allie D’Angelo added, “I have had the ability to go into groups within the church, such as the Men’s Group, to help them sign up for Flocknote and increase membership within the parish. The internship is a great way to incorporate faith into my passion for communications.”

“As a pastor, communications is a big part of my vocation,” shared Msgr. Andrew G. Varga. “It has been a joy and an enormous help to include the teens in this ministry. I would not have been able to keep the website updated, custom-design weekly Flocknotes and submit event language for local media promotion. I can bring my ideas to the interns and they work with Deb and Jennifer to create the best strategy and implementation plan. Personally, I look forward to Monday afternoons when the team gathers at the rectory dining room table and discusses the Sunday Scripture readings and upcoming Church events.”

There is a wonderful quote attributed to Saint Ignatius of Loyola that illuminates what is happening with this program: “Act as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God.” When parish leaders invite our teens to join them in sharing the Gospel and accompany the teens in their faith journey, Jesus takes it from there.

(To see the SLY Communication Interns’ work firsthand, visit the parish website at: www.saintlukewestport.org and receive updates by texting slwestport to the number 84576 or go to flocknote.com/SaintLukeWestport.)
Legacy students testify to faith foundation

‘They had to go to St. Thomas’

By PAT HENNESSY

“Throughout all my journey of faith, St. Thomas Catholic School has been the foundation,” says Jonathan Wilson, a graduate of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield.

Jonathan was a legacy student at St. Thomas—his mother, aunt and uncles had all gone there. When his young daughters were ready for school, there was only one possible choice: “They had to go to St. Thomas.”

Legacy families, those who value their own school experience so highly that they make the deliberate choice to send their children to that same school, are a testimony to the lasting value of Catholic schools in this diocese. In the case of the Wilson family, Jonathan’s mother, Diane, was in charge of music ministry. He remembers with fondness Christmas plays, healing Masses, Catholic Renewal gatherings and Cursillo. “I really enjoyed being an altar boy,” he says. “Being up on the altar was so cool to me.”

He is still active in the parish, not as an altar boy but as an officer in the parish chapter of the Knights of Columbus.

His wife Adrienne had attended St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield.

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His wife Adrienne had attended St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield.

When Jonathan was young, his life revolved around the Church and school. He went on to Notre Dame High School, also as a legacy student, following his mom there. Notre Dame’s principal, the late Father Bill Sangiovanni, became a valued mentor.

He attended Fairfield University, still comfortable in the Catholic orbit. “But when I was in my 20s, the world was changing. People were going in different directions. I spent those years trying to figure things out, trying to find a path.”

He had a strong role model in Father Sangiovanni, with whom he developed a lasting friendship, and with Father Paul Merry, who would eventually officiate at his marriage to Adrienne. Much as he valued their friendship and guidance at an uncertain time, underneath everything else he relied on the formation in faith he received at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

“They gave me an unquestionable trust that I should keep trying to do God’s will. That’s the summation. That’s the formation I got from St. Thomas. That’s what I want for my daughters.”

(For more information on diocesan Catholic schools, visit www.diocenofsbridgeportcatholicschools.com or contact Amy Griffin, Director of Community Engagement: agriffin@ dioctbpt.org or 203.416.1408.)
By PAT HENNESSY

BRIDGEPORT—"The first week after our new playground opened, one of my teachers came to me with tears in her eyes to thank me for getting it finished," recounts Sister Christine Hoffman, ASCJ, principal of St. Raphael Academy in Bridgeport. "She told me that the students were having so much fun running around and climbing on the equipment and simply happy being children, and this was a source of joy for her."

The St. Raphael Academy of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport welcomes students in grades PreK-3. The initiative for the playground restoration for these youngsters began last year when Boy Scout Luke Feretti, a member of St. Stephen Parish in Trumbull and a senior at Trumbull High School, was exploring possibilities for his Eagle Scout Project. Luke connected with the diocesan Deacons Wives Ministry who knew of the tired condition of St. Raphael's play space and the need for its renovation.

Luke agreed to take the project on. "I knew it was going to help kids who don't have a lot of places to play in their neighborhood." When Father Giandomenico Flora, rector of St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport, dedicated the playground on June 22, the project had taken more than a year to complete, with the assistance of a cadre of volunteers.

Luke's Eagle Scout project was impressive in its own right. Luke met with scout leaders and school board members, talked to contractors and assembled a team of fellow scouts to do the heavy work of hauling away the old equipment and clearing and leveling the land.

That project earned Luke his Eagle Scout badge, awarded at a ceremony this January.

His initiative set in motion the assistance of many others, a number of them in partnership with DWM and others connected to St. Raphael's. "The playground project brought together many from our community, who gave of their time, talents and treasures," says Sister Christine. "In particular, I am indebted to Luke and the Boy Scouts, who gave several days to the work, going beyond the scope of his Eagle Scout project by not only removing the previous structure but returning to assist in laying the new playground surface."

After the old equipment was carried off, the degraded surfacing had to be removed—a huge job in and of itself. Then the enormous mountain of underlayment pellets for the new surface drew the scouts again for this next phase, along with student volunteers from Sacred Heart University, parents from St. Raphael and volunteers from the Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ). Angie Staltraro, program assistant for the City of Bridgeport, acted as project manager for part of this phase.

Luke was on hand right through the completion of the playground and its dedication by Father Flora. Headed for his freshman year at the University of Vermont this fall, the Trumbull High School graduate plans for a future in civil engineering.

Ilene Ianniello, president of Deacon Wives Ministry, was also on hand for the blessing. "When we walked on the grass-like topping of smooth artificial turf, it was like walking on a cloud," she said.

In the end, the Deacons Wives Ministry was able to call on generous donors and volunteers for all expenses except that final topping, including the cheerful new playground equipment donated by the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Hamden.

Now enthusiastic youngsters could be seen bouncing up bright pink stairs, hiding in sheltered nooks, peering out of yellow port holes, choosing the long slide or the shorter one and swinging from the bars of the climbing dome.

"Our students love having this new space to play!" said Sister Christine, her face beaming as she watched the children's joy.

(The only expense outstanding from the entire playground project is $10,000 for the turf surfacing. Anyone wanting to help out with this expense can send a check to Deacon Wives Ministry, 11 Green Acres Lane, Trumbull, CT 06611. Write "Playground Project" on the memo line.)

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

FAIRFIELD—July 8 marked a big day for the Notre Dame community as they took off on their first international mission trip.

"This day was inevitable: we are a school that believes service is integral to the Christian life," said Mazal, "but we are going to Peru to paint, build and enhance, sure," said Sarah Savia '18. "Before starting, we were told that this room would be used as a classroom much like the ones the students use at Cruz Blanca, and the room would help that mission continue."

Students had the chance to visit the homes of locals and hear their stories. "As I encounter others, I also encounter God through each person we meet and each project we do," reflected Leanne Onofrio '19.

There was no shortage of hard work for the team, as they took turns digging, sifting and carrying sand to the framers, who would finish the room that the group would eventually paint. Afterwards, the group played soccer with the local kids.

"After dinner, the local parish priest, introduced us to a confirmation class, presenting us as missionaries and invited us to Mass the following day when we were presented to the whole church community," reflected Olivia Carreiro. "To be able to put a face to the people we’re helping is a special feeling."
Trinity Catholic High School

Turning the corner with the new school model

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

STAMFORD—Communication with parents, students and the community is the key to moving forward as Trinity Catholic High School prepares for the new school year.

Since announcing a new school model for Trinity Catholic in June, Head of School Patricia Brady and Principal Scott Smith have issued a series of weekly letters to update parents about the progress being made.

Their email communications have been well received with a high open rate and a positive response as the school leaders discuss a wide range of issues from new personalized learning to Catholic identity. More than 1,300 including parents, students, alumni and donors viewed the July 1 letter with its theme of “turning the corner.”

And there has been much good news to communicate. Enrollment for the fall semester continues to gradually build (now nearing 200). The faculty has been participating in an innovative workshop to prepare them to roll out new academic programs and the administrative staff has been working with a diocesan team, led by volunteer consultants Jim O’Neill and Paula Summa, to expand marketing and admissions efforts and to get the word out to the community that Trinity is providing an education that is vibrant, personal and authentically Catholic.

“A new Trinity, with a community of faith and education 60 years in the making, is moving forward with commitment to change, excitement for the future and excellence as the goal,” wrote Brady and Smith in the July 1 letter.

“Trinity Catholic High School will always be an authentic, unapologetic environment of our Catholic faith, where the Truth of Jesus Christ is taught, learned and lived. In everything that we do, our students are formed in our Catholic faith.”

Students and parents can also look forward to an innovative personalized learning approach that will create a true cutting-edge educational experience to prepare students for college and their personal goals in life.

“Personalized Learning meets each student where and who they are. It identifies each student’s unique talents, abilities and interests and creates a pathway towards these goals all four years here,” the school leaders said.

In 2019-2020, Trinity will be offering 10 AP courses in the sciences, math and other subject areas. Two of its science courses are being offered in partnership with UCONN with plans on expanding its college relationships and internships in the years to come.

Virtual High School courses, with live on-line instructors, will be offered in selected core classes and other electives as student preferences demand.

On July 16-17, families interested in learning more about the virtual component of blended learning attended either of two presentations by representatives of Trinity’s Virtual High School (VHS).

Trinity Catholic leaders also took their message to the public with an open letter recently published in the Stamford Advocate. The letter celebrates Trinity’s legacy in the community, its impact on students and plans for the future.

“At Trinity, more than $8 million has been invested in our infrastructure, renovations, athletic fields and curriculum over the past three years alone. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has visited the school, spoken with parents and personally unveiled plans for a new Trinity that will introduce exciting and contemporary learning opportunities that are second to none in preparing students for academic and career success,” Head of School Brady and Principal Smith wrote.

Their letter pointed out that the school has produced generations of alumni who have gone on to successful careers and civic engagement in community by preparing students for academic success and personal growth.

The average Trinity student’s SATs (English and Math) outperform the Stamford Public Schools and surpass the statewide average. This year, 95 of Trinity’s 97 graduates in the Class of 2019 are going on to college. That is 97 percent of the class; historically in-line with the school’s 95-100 percent college attendance rate, over the past two decades.

This fall, Trinity’s Class of 2019 will be moving on to such prestigious universities as Brown, Purdue, Syracuse, Penn State, Ohio State, Alabama, Villanova, Maryland, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and many others.

“The story of Trinity Catholic is not simply important to alumni and current students; it is also a story about the power of faith, education and enduring values that have contributed so much to our young people and to the community. We invite all to join us in this living legacy.”

(For enrollment and admission or information on how you can help support Trinity Catholic, visit www.trinitycatholic.org.)
Spiritual Direction

St. Pius is ‘my spiritual home’

By MICHELLE ONOFRIO

As someone who attends college seven hours away, I always look forward to an opportunity to come home for a break. I love where I am, but there is something about the familiarity of home that provides refreshment and joy amidst the challenges each semester presents. My family is very close-knit, so I always try to enjoy each moment I get to spend with them. Although most of my time during breaks is spent at my house—my physical home—I don’t feel like I’m totally “home” until I’ve visited my spiritual home, St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield.

My family and I became parishioners of St. Pius when I was a junior in high school. Both my sister and I were looking for a good youth ministry program and St. Pius had just hired a new youth minister, Paola Peña. I started attending youth group meetings and other outings in the summer, such as a hike and a BBQ, and I made instant connections with Paola and the other youth ministers, Shari Garcia and JP von Uffel. They were (and are) people who are passionate about their faith and share it in a relatable and meaningful way. Most of my friends in school at the time were Catholic, and we would talk about our shared faith often, but it wasn’t the same as the relationships I was building with the people at St. Pius.

In February of my senior year of high school, the youth group went on a retreat. I was not prepared for how powerful that weekend would be for me. It was here that I was introduced to the different ways in which God speaks to us, two of the most important being through Scripture and Eucharistic Adoration. The youth ministers opened my eyes and ears to God in a powerful, yet gentle way that weekend. I began to develop a greater love and appreciation for the Eucharist, which was further augmented through going to Mass at a parish where the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated with the utmost reverence.

Shortly after the retreat, Paola reached out to me and asked if I wanted to start doing discipleship. Paola was a former FOCUS missionary and discipleship was a process that she had used during her time as a missionary at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. I would meet with Paola one-on-one every week or so and she would introduce new aspects of evangelization to me. She mentored me in my faith and strove to lead me to become holier. I was so amazed that she was willing to invest so much time into my life in this way.

After my high school graduation, I began feeling spiritually dry. All of my senior activities had come to a close and I was beginning to transition into the mindset of a college student. I felt lost and I decided to reach out to Paola. I told her everything I was experiencing, and she listened attentively and with empathy. She recommended that I ask Father Sam Kachuba, the pastor at St. Pius, if I could go to him for spiritual direction.

She explained the benefits of having a spiritual director and I agreed that this was something I should pursue. During our youth group’s summer mission trip at Catholic Heart Work Camp, I asked Father Sam if I could meet with him for spiritual direction sometime after the trip. I am being completely honest when I say this was one of the best things I ever did.

I met with Father Sam about once a month in the time before I left for college. These meetings were so fruitful, helpful and encouraging for me. Although the major stressor in my life at the time was preparing for college, I talked to him about all aspects of my life. As a young priest, he himself had experienced what I was experiencing not too long ago, and he was able to provide me with wise insight. Most importantly, in learning more about me as a person, he was able to gauge the health of my spiritual life: something that I could not do on my own. He identified what my good habits were and challenged me to grow in my weak areas. Knowing that I had experienced and seek his guidance. Like any good father, he knows what his daughter is capable of and gives loving advice. Whenever I meet with him, I am always amazed at how well he can read what is going on in my soul and I always feel like a weight has been lifted off of my shoulders when I leave.

Whenever I come home, I try to get together with Paola and Shari, too. They, along with Father Sam, make up my spiritual family, and the relationships I forged with them as a member of their youth group have grown into treasured friendships. It is so refreshing to be able to talk to and hang out with these faith-filled, fun women who still help me to become the best version of myself. Without these experiences and connections that I had throughout high school at St. Pius, my spiritual life would not be where it is today, nor would I have felt so grounded throughout college. It saddens me that so many young people fall away from the faith once they get to college. I truly believe that if more of them had a spiritual support system at home, their faith would soar once they get to college. I am beyond grateful to God for my spiritual foundation and home at St. Pius.

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Retreat for Victims of Abuse

Victims find healing for wounded hearts

By JOE PISANI

Seventeen years ago, when the clergy sex abuse crisis began hitting the news, a priest on chaplain at the Danbury Federal Correctional Institution approached Father Lawrence Carew about developing a healing retreat for victims of abuse, to help lead them out of the darkness from what seemed were wounds that could never be healed.

Father, who had a healing ministry in the prison system, undertook the project with Methodist minister Dr. Gail Paul. What they created was a six-session retreat titled, “Disregarding the Shame, Reaching Out for the Joy,” which has touched hundreds of victims of not only sexual abuse, but also physical and emotional abuse, and is being used in Latin America and other parts of the United States. The retreat is based on a simple creed that says: “Jesus Christ is today healing people of what he considers ‘incurable wounds.”

Starting in 1996, the Lord brought me into some experiences of his healing presence, which left me with a whole new trust in his desire to bring deep and lasting healing in the lives of the sexually and emotionally abused in the here and now,” Father Carew said.

Father Carew, a native of Boston, grew up in Stamford and was ordained in 1966. He then went on to serve as parochial vicar at St. Peter Church in Danbury, St. Therese’s in Trumbull, St. Joseph’s in Danbury and Christ the King in Trumbull, where he was pastor until his retirement in December 2016. He has been active in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal since 1971 and was named spiritual adviser to the renewal in 1997. He has also served in several leadership positions in the national Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Father Carew says that through healing prayer we invite Christ to the places inside of us that are in pain, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It is based on a trust that the Lord cares about those things and that there can be a solution through our relationship with him.

Father said that an estimated 90 percent of inmates were seriously abused in childhood and that the majority of cases he has encountered were not abused by clergy but teachers, Scout masters, people in authority and family members.

“When I meet with victims of abuse, I will talk with them about how healing prayer is a part of Christ’s help and I will pray with them, and they almost always have a sense that the Lord is there, blessing them, and that something good is happening inside of them.”

At the end of the session, he tells them that he has no power of himself but he is asking Christ to use his prayer and the touch of his hands on their head to be a conduit of his healing love. He also encourages them to spend five or ten minutes every day to talk to the Lord about their hurt and ask him to pour his healing power more deeply into them.

The retreat, which is on DVD, is based on six talks, followed by six healing prayer exercises, a period of music and opportunities for individual prayer.

“This retreat is part of the answer to the wounded Church,” he says. “Father Carew’s talks are inspiring for anyone. When people hear the talks, there is a sense that this is really medicine for a broken heart. The Lord works through him, and it is a healing balm for those who experienced abuse.”

(The “Disregarding the Shame, Reaching Out for the Joy” retreat will be held August 3 and August 10 from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at the Oratory of the Little Way at 8 Oratory Lane in Gaylordsville, Conn. For more information, call 860.354.8294.)
High School Sports

St. Joe’s adds two more state titles

By DON HARRISON

On the second Saturday of June, 2019, St. Joseph High added two more CIAC state titles—baseball and boys lacrosse—to its impressive collection and nearly earned a third, in girls lacrosse. For the tournament-tested Cadets, some would suggest it was just another day on the athletic field.

Coach Jim Chaves’ baseball team completed its five-game sweep through the Class M field by upsetting top-seeded Wolcott, 6-3, at Palmer Field in Middletown. It marked the Cadets’ second state championship under Chaves.

In boys lacrosse, coach Brendan Talbot’s St. Joe’s squad captured its second straight Class S title and sixth state championship since 2009 with a closer-than-it-looking 9-3 decision over Bacon Academy at Jack Casagrande Field in Norwalk. The Cadets snapped a 3-3 tie by scoring six goals in the second half.

Meanwhile, coach Leeland Gray’s St. Joe’s girls lacrosse team, which had ousted top-seed Guilford, 14-10, in the Class M semifinals, came up short against East Lyme, 10-6, in the title match at Jonathan Law High in Milford. It was the Cadets’ first appearance in a state championship game.

“All season long, we had a good offensive team,” said Chaves, pointing to the Cadets’ 9.8 run per game, .340 batting average and 31 home runs that produced a 19-8 record. “The team completed its five-game sweep through the Class M field by upsetting top-seeded Wolcott, 6-3, at Palmer Field in Middletown. It marked the Cadets’ second state championship under Chaves.

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“All season long, we had FCIAC is tough,” he noted. “We lost three or four games we could have won.”

Stephen Paolini, St. Joe’s two-time All-State senior centerfielder, homered on the second of the title game—his 11th of the season, a school record—and concluded the spring with a .490 average. Selected by the Atlanta Braves on the fifth round of the 2019 Major League Amateur Draft, Paolini is spending his summer playing in the Braves’ farm system at the Class-A level.

“As the season progressed, we had a pretty good idea he’d be drafted,” Chaves said. “Scouts from five or six teams were coming to our games.”

In addition to Paolini, several other seniors made noteworthy contributions to the Cadets’ 2019 state title. Lefty pitcher Jimmy Evans, who is headed to Tufts, earned his ninth victory against one loss in the title game against Wolcott. Evans was selected to the Coaches’ All-State second-team. Fairfield U-bound Charlie Pagliarini, a first-team pick on the GameTime and Coaches’ All-State teams, topped St. Joe’s at the plate with a .519 average and walloped 10 homers. Chaves was pleased with his team’s 12-8 record and state runner-up finish this spring.

“We’re the only school in the FCIAC that isn’t in the L class,” he said. “It’s taken a while to turn it around, but now we’ve shown we can beat Danbury, Trumbull and Norwalk.”

Two Cadet seniors, tri-captain Jettke Gray—the coach’s daughter—and senior Erin Owens, were selected to the Coaches’ All-State team. Another senior tri-captain, Annie McNiel, was a Coaches’ second-team All-Stater. Gray is headed to Ithaca College, while Owens will attend Central Michigan.

Meanwhile, teammates Preston Kral and Phil Passeg were chosen to the Coaches’ All-State first team, and junior attack Declan McGinley, who notched three goals in St. Joe’s title-game victory, was a Coaches’ All-State second-team pick.

“I’m proud of our commitment,” Talbot said. “Success comes from hard work and dedication. It took 365 days, working in the summer, fall and winter, to get back here and win the title.”

Gray, who has transformed St. Joe’s girls lacrosse program from “more of a social gathering” to a consistent state title contender,
Column: Thomas Hicks

In the Catholic Embrace

I was born one mild, rainy day in the merry month of May—a Sunday to be exact. I am told I was a nice quiet baby. I was once a little boy breaking his nails on a walnut shell and running to his mother, who said she was "a woman naturally born to fears." Sometimes I have a sense of the strangeness of my being here at all.

My whole life I've been held in solitary. I have always been afloat, solitary. I always yearned to be more at ease in life. I was incapable of forging any profound change in myself. I am what I have always been, which I think is true of everybody. The old solitary is still there. I need healing solitude from time to time. I have never been bored. I was afraid too much of the time. Even when I was a little boy, it was always there. I cannot remember a time when I had not been dreading something. I was afraid of too many things.

It's always a problem for me. My nature was always to expect the worse, as if a savage beast were lurking somewhere in the pathway of my life. The fear returns to tug at my elbow and whisper in my ear. It was Shakespeare's Constance who said she was "a woman naturally born to fears."

I am more of a sluggard than a slugger—a drudge, a grind; a hard-working, worrying man. My whole life I've been held in the Catholic embrace. I grew up in the Catholic world of novenas, scapulars, sodalities, first- and second-class relics, plenary and partial indulgences, indulgenced prayers, benedictions, ember days, fast days, rosaries, forty-hour deviations, stations of the Cross, Holy Name Society parades. It was a world of statues and holy water, votive candles, religious medals and holy pictures—all the Catholic paraphernalia. Keeping nine First Fridays guaranteed a holy death. Visiting a Protestant church was forbidden. I do not believe in the same way I believed as a child. I moved away from the old devotional practices. Indeed, many features of Catholic devotional life have disappeared. By and large the church of my childhood is gone. Most of the devotions we practiced went back to the Italian and French 17th century.

For me, Catholicism provides an interpretation of reality. It gives a coherent understanding of the meaning of life. Catholicism offers a depth and beauty that gives me a larger world into which to live. The Catholic faith has enlarged and anchored my life. And the Catholic faith is a good religion to die in.

The Catholic vision of reality makes sense to me. The Catholic novelist, Walker Percy, said: "The reason I am Catholic is that I believe that what the Catholic Church proposes is true."

The Catholic vision of reality enables me to see better and deeper. It has given me comfort and courage, an equanimity and confidence. According to Scripture, God has first sought me. So how did God find His way to me? It came through certain teachers, and a lot of it came from books. The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins made a huge mark on me.

There's all the bad news about the Church today. People are leaving the Church in droves. The Church has lost one-third of its baptized members. In Boston, more than 60 parishes have been closed since 2000. Many other are simply on life-support. These days, many parishes in many dioceses worry if they will survive the latest diocesan pruning. In Boston, only one in six registered Catholics was attending Sunday Mass. A new Georgetown University survey found more than two-thirds of Catholic parents don't enroll their children in any sort of religious education, either during or after school.

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It came from books. The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins made a huge mark on me. There's all the bad news about the Church today. People are leaving the Church in droves. The Church has lost one-third of its baptized members. In Boston, more than 60 parishes have been closed since 2000. Many other are simply on life-support. These days, many parishes in many dioceses worry if they will survive the latest diocesan pruning.

As I see it, we failed to bring the Catholic people to an encounter with the intellectual and spiritual wealth of the Catholic tradition. Today there is even an anti-intellectual strain in the Catholic faith. Fewer and fewer Catholics now do regular Catholic reading of any sort, and only a small number avail themselves of Bible Study or faith formation programs. This lack of formation for adults is now bearing dark fruit. Pittsburgh Bishop David Zubin said that when Pope Francis calls on the Church to evangelize, Catholics themselves may have only a very limited understanding of the faith. Most Catholics are biblically illiterate. This amounts to saying we have to first evangelize the evangelizers.

There's the famous dictum given by Karl Rahner in the 1960s that "the Catholic of the future will be a mystic or he won't be anything at all. He will no longer be held by social conventions or inherited customs." Catholicism has a mystical tradition which seems to be kept a secret. We need an adult Catholicism. When we talk of inspiring the young to return to the faith, we would do well to ask the difficult question: What are we inviting them to? Are we simply inviting them back to a Church that reminds them why they left in the first place? So, I'm grateful for the journey I've made and that, so far, I survived the battles. I do like to think that God occasionally uses me for His purposes. 1 Cor. 15:10: "By God's grace I am what I am, and the grace that he gave me was not without effect."

"Good Shepherd, come, seek me and bring me home safe" (St. Jerome).
I still remember the time I didn’t get the job. Well, actually there were a few times I didn’t get the job and I don’t like to remember them. Then, there was the time I didn’t get the girl or the promotion or the mortgage or the college acceptance or (fill in the blank).

Life is full of disappointments, and I suspect if we sat around cataloging every time we were disappointed, we wouldn’t want to face another day. Sometimes you just have to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again, as the song says.

My typical response to a major disappointment is to raise my eyes to heaven, shake my head and ask, “Why, God, why? Why did this happen? Why didn’t you prevent this?” But disappointment is a fundamental fact of life that we can’t escape, and it has served us well. We typically consider the failure, we typically consider the mortgage or the college acceptance or (fill in the blank).

One of the most painful scripture readings for me is in the Acts of the Apostles, and we hear it every May 14 on the feast of St. Matthias. Although he wasn’t one of the original apostles, Matthias got the job after they voted to replace Judas.

St. Luke recorded: “So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas—who was also known as Justus—and Matthias. Then, they prayed, ‘You, Lord, who knows the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place.’ Then, they gave lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the apostles.”

Joseph Barsabbas didn’t get the job, and he was lost in the shadows of history, eclipsed by someone else’s success. Did he go home and brood? Did he complain to his wife and family that he was better qualified than Matthias? Did he walk away from Christ like so many others and return to his Jewish faith? Was he angry and resentful?

To my thinking, none of our disappointments can compare to being named one of the Twelve Apostles. That’s the kind of disappointment I don’t think I could have survived … without Jesus. I’m pretty sure the same was true of Joseph Barsabbas, now known as Saint Joseph Barsabbas, who stands as an example for all of us who’ve suffered disappointments in life. He didn’t let his disappointment defeat him.

St. John Chrysostom writes, “The other candidate (Joseph) was not annoyed, for the apostolic writers would not have concealed failings of their own, seeing they have told of the very chief apostles, that on other occasions had indignation, and not only once, but again and again.”

Joseph was one of the disciples, who followed Christ from his baptism in the Jordan to his Ascension. He served Christ faithfully until the end. He became a bishop, and tradition says he was martyred at Eleutheropolis, a city in Judea, southwest of Jerusalem.

During the first century, it was a village called Bethar, which Roman forces under Emperor Vespasian attacked in 68 A.D. to quell Jewish rebels. Among the 10,000 who were killed was Joseph Barsabbas, who refused to renounce his Christian faith. There’s a relic of him in the chapel at the University of Notre Dame, and his feast day is July 20.

In our success-obsessed culture, we typically consider the guy who didn’t get the job as unlucky, or worse, a failure. God, however, doesn’t have a corporate mentality. With God, worldly titles and honors count for nothing. He’s not interested in short-term gains at the expense of long-term goals. He sees the entire picture, or more accurately, the eternal picture. And here’s a secret: We find Jesus in our greatest disappointments.

Even though God’s will is inscrutable, I like to think he knew Joseph could deal with the disappointment. I also like to think Joseph wasn’t less worthy, just that God had a different plan for him. He was a humble man, and Jesus surely considered humility one of the greatest virtues. (Let’s not forget the other St. Joseph, who was a humble man of quiet, courageous accomplishment.)

Even though he hasn’t been designated the patron saint of a particular cause, Joseph Barsabbas should be the patron saint of the disappointed. St. Joseph Barsabbas, pray for us, that we see God’s will in our disappointments.
Un hogar de devoción mariana

By MARICARMEN GODOY

BREIDGEPORT—El Rosario de la Virgen es una devoción practicada por siglos por los fieles católicos, por eso el fervor Mariano sigue vigente en la parroquia de Saint Mary de Bridgeport, donde su superior, el Padre Rolando Torres, mantiene inclusivo un programa radial de “Mariología” y el vicario parroquial, Padre Jaime Marín, reafirma al “Misterio de María como el misterio de Dios”.

Para hablar de María, dijo el sacerdote, hay que remontarse al Antiguo Testamento cuando en el libro de Lucas Dios revela a través del Arcángel Gabriel la anuncioación de la venida de Jesús desde las entrañas de la Virgen y por qué fue ella la elegida para ser madre del Verbo, y porque su misión es tan importante para el mundo.

Pero la Mariología no solo se ha extendido como una clase universitaria sino, ahora, gracias a los medios de comunicación y a las redes sociales muchas iglesias las ofrecen a través de estas plataformas digitales o impresas, “El interés de los católicos, pero no adorada porque la adoración es solo para Dios. Acorde con el Padre Jaime Marín rezar el Rosario es con María en la tierra y porque fue el misterio de Dios”. "Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas: Ya el verano está aquí y es tiempo de vacaciones de la Iglesia, por favor recuerden asistir a las misas y ser parte de todas las actividades que vamos a tener en nuestra comunidad. Felicidades a todos los graduandos y también a todos los que recibieron sus sacramentos de Primera Comunión y Confirmación".

En verano, la iglesia les recuerda a los padres que tengan niños que bautizar que las clases pre-bautismales se llevan a cabo el último sábado del mes, es decir, el próximo 25 agosto, de 9 a 12 pm.

Cada segundo viernes del mes siguen ayudando a servir alimentos en el Thomas Merton Center de 11:30 am a 1 pm. Los interesados en ayudar pueden comunicarse con el Padre Rolando.

Horario de Misas en Español
6:30 am—lunes, miércoles a viernes (misa en la capilla)
4 pm—Sábados
Domingo—8:30 am y 11:30 am
La iglesia de Santa María está ubicada en 25 Sherman Street, usted puede llamar a la parroquia marcando al 203.334.8811.

Oportun a Nuestra Madre
Tú eres toda justa, ¡Oh Virgen María!, nunca conociste la mancha del pecado; Tú eres la gloria de Jerusalén, Tú eres el gozo de Israel, tú, el gran honor de nuestro pueblo, Tú la abogado de los pecadores. ¡Oh Marial, la Virgen más prudente, Oh María, Madre muy misericordiosa, ruega por nosotros, interces por nosotros con nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Obtenga para nosotros la gran gracia del heroico valor cristiano que debe marcar a los soldados de Cristo. Amen.

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

10 de julio de 2019
Estos últimos meses han estado marcados por un clima creciente de tensión en nuestra frontera sur. Recientemente, nos enfrentamos a las imágenes trágicas de la muerte por ahogamiento de Oscar Martinez y su hija de 23 meses, Angie Valeria, que huían de El Salvador en busca de la seguridad de los Estados Unidos. Otros inmigrantes han cruzado la frontera con vida, pero han sido capturados y ahora están detenidos en condiciones de hacinamiento como resultado del estancamiento político en la capital de nuestra nación.

Nosotros, los Obispos Católicos de Connecticut, instamos a nuestro gobierno a que actúe para realizar una revisión completa de las políticas migratorias existentes. Los responsables dentro del gobierno deben realizar un examen de conciencia sobre lo que se ha hecho y dejado de hacer concerniente al respeto por las personas y la promulgación de leyes equitativas y equilibradas. Esta revisión debe garantizar una bienvenida para los inmigrantes de acuerdo con nuestra historia y nuestras leyes, como también con la integridad de nuestras fronteras.

En las últimas décadas, los gobiernos de los Estados Unidos liderados por nuestros dos partidos principales han desatendido deplorablemente la promulgación de una reforma migratoria y el respeto a la humanidad básica de los migrantes y refugiados. De acuerdo con la Patrulla Fronteriza de los Estados Unidos, en los últimos veinte años ha habido un promedio de 357 muertes de inmigrantes por año en zonas de nuestra frontera suroeste. Los gobiernos de otras naciones también deben ser alentados y ayudados cuando sea necesario para remediar las condiciones que obligan a las personas a huir de su tierra natal.

Como una nación bajo Dios, no solo fundada por inmigrantes, sino hecha en gran parte por inmigrantes, los Estados Unidos pueden y deben mejorar esta situación. Aquellos que luchan contra las peligrosas condiciones de su tierra natal para emprender el peligroso viaje en busca de la seguridad y la libertad de los Estados Unidos, actualmente enfrentan un trato que socava nuestros valores compartidos de libertad y creencia en la dignidad humana. Instamos a todos a trabajar y orar por un mejor camino para enfrentar esta crisis humanitaria.

Mons. Leonard P. Blair, Arzobispo de Hartford
Mons. Frank J. Caggiano, Obispo de Bridgeport
Mons. Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMY, Obispo Auxiliar de Hartford
Mons. Michael R. Cote, Obispo de Norwich
Mons. P. Paul Connimucky, Episcopada de Stamford
Bits and Pieces

THE BLACK ROCK SUMMER CONCERT SERIES IS BACK! Concerts run Tuesdays June 18-Aug. 15 from 6:30-8:30 pm at St. Ann Field in Bridgeport. $5 admission.

MEET THE NEW DEACONS SUMMER GATHERING AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL will be held on Thurs., July 25 from 7-9 pm. Come meet the newly ordained deacons of the diocese for Evening Prayer and an Ice Cream Social afterwards. If you have been discerning a call to the diaconate or attended any of our previous Discovery Evenings, this would be a great time to come and learn first-hand from their experience in formation.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS OF GREATER DANBURY will gather Tues., Aug. 6, and Tues., Sept. 3 at 6:45 pm for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish in Danbury, followed by a social at a local eatery. On Wed., Aug. 21 and Wed., Sept. 18 at 7 pm the group will gather for Faith Formation and Discussion at Sacred Heart Parish Center in Danbury. The group will gather for S’mores and Stars on Fri., July 26 and Fri., Sept. 27 at 8:30 pm at St. Ann’s in Danbury. The group will also be having a talk from Fr. Michael Boakye Yeboah, a visiting priest from Ghana on Fri., Aug. 16, at 7 pm at Sacred Heart Parish Cafe in Danbury.

FATHER NOVOJASKY, PASTOR OF THE CATHEDRAL PARISH will be giving a talk on the life of St. Dominic (his feast day is Thurs., Aug. 8) on Fri., Aug. 9 at 7 pm in the Lower Parish Center at St. Theresa Church, Trumbull. All are invited to attend.

THE EUCHARIST AND MARTYRDOM SILENT RETREAT will be held on Sat., Aug. 10 at St. Patrick Church in Bridgeport. This one day silent retreat will be led by Fr. Michael Novojasky and run from 8:30 to 3 pm. A suggested donation of $25 (cash or check) made payable to The Cathedral Parish. Please mail registrations to Michelle Rowe at: 20 Cardinal Circle Trumbull, CT 06611. Registration deadline is Sat., Aug. 3. For more info contact Michelle Rowe at: 203.218.6882 or orapronobes@gmail.com.

ST. MARGARET SHRINE’S VETERAN’S MEMORIAL deadline for donating a Veteran’s Brick, in order to ensure installation by our 2019 Veterans Mass, is Sat., Aug. 10. The names of the veterans, on the newly donated bricks, will be read at our 9th Annual Veterans Mass in September 2019 and be included in our Mass Program Book. For info on donating a brick for a veteran, from the U.S. Military and our Allies—living, deceased, wartime, peacetime, reserves, regulars and currently serving—call: 203.345.3244 or email artfalco@optonline.net.

DIACONATE APPLICATION DEADLINE—The application deadline to be considered for Aspirancy beginning in February 2020 is Fri., Aug. 30. Applications must be submitted to the Coordinator of Diaconate Vocations, Dr. Tim Bolton at dnbolton@diobpt.org no later than this date. Please call the Office of Diaconate at 203.416.1323 or email Dr. Bolton for more information.

OUR LADY OF PEACE CHURCH in the Lordship section of Stratford will be conducting a free 10-week program. The group will meet every Wed. from 6:30-8 pm in the Parish Center. If interested call Janet Gillick, certified facilitator at: 203.377.4817 or call the Parish Center at 203.377.4863.

OUR LADY OF PEACE CHURCH in Stratford will also be selling tickets for its 2019 raffle to take place on Sat., Sept. 7, the same day as the annual block party. First prize is $20,000 and there are 5 additional prizes of $500 each. Tickets can be purchased at the OLOP parish center during normal working hours or through Mike Morin, raffle chairman, at 203.520.7319 or mikef.morin@gmail.com. Price of each ticket is $100 and there are only 500 tickets. Checks payable to OLOP-Raffle.

ST. STEPHEN PARISH IN TRUMBULL will be hosting a Blood Drive on Sat., Sept. 21 in the Parish Hall from 8 am to 1 pm. The blood drive is being held in conjunction with the American Red Cross. Donors should sign up online at www.americanredcrossblood.org.

RETREAT DAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ABORTED A CHILD BECAUSE OF AN ADVERSE DIAGNOSIS—Sat., Sept. 28; email: lumina@postabortionhelp.org or call: 877.586.4621.

PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE AND MEXICO is being held Mon.-Sat., Dec. 2-7, 2019. The price is $1,695 and includes round trip airline tickets, airline taxes/fuel surcharges, hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, sightseeing, transportation to JFK, tips to tour guide and bus driver). For reservation contact Fr. Marcel at Christ the King Church: 203.434.7208 or email: marcelsaintjean@gmail.com.

THE 2000 HAIL MARYS Project Rachel Ministry presents two upcoming Enterin...
ST. VINCENT’S SWIM ACROSS THE SOUND

22ND ANNUAL
Memorial Service
Open to all - rain or shine

Celebrating the lives of family members and friends who have been lost to cancer

SUNDAY, AUG. 4, 2019

Registration 8 a.m. – Service 8:30 a.m.
Captain’s Cove Seaport, Bridgeport (handicapped-accessible)

• Prayer Service • Reading of Names • Musical Tributes
• Inspirational Readings • Refreshments

Dedicate a flower to be cast into the Sound in memory of your loved one.
If unable to attend, please visit our website at stvincents.org/swimmemorial and submit the name of your loved one to be remembered at the service.

For information, please call 475-210-5550