



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

NOVEMBER 2020 | VOLUME 37, NUMBER 9 | THANKSGIVING ISSUE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



4 *Parishes step up for Annual Catholic Appeal*



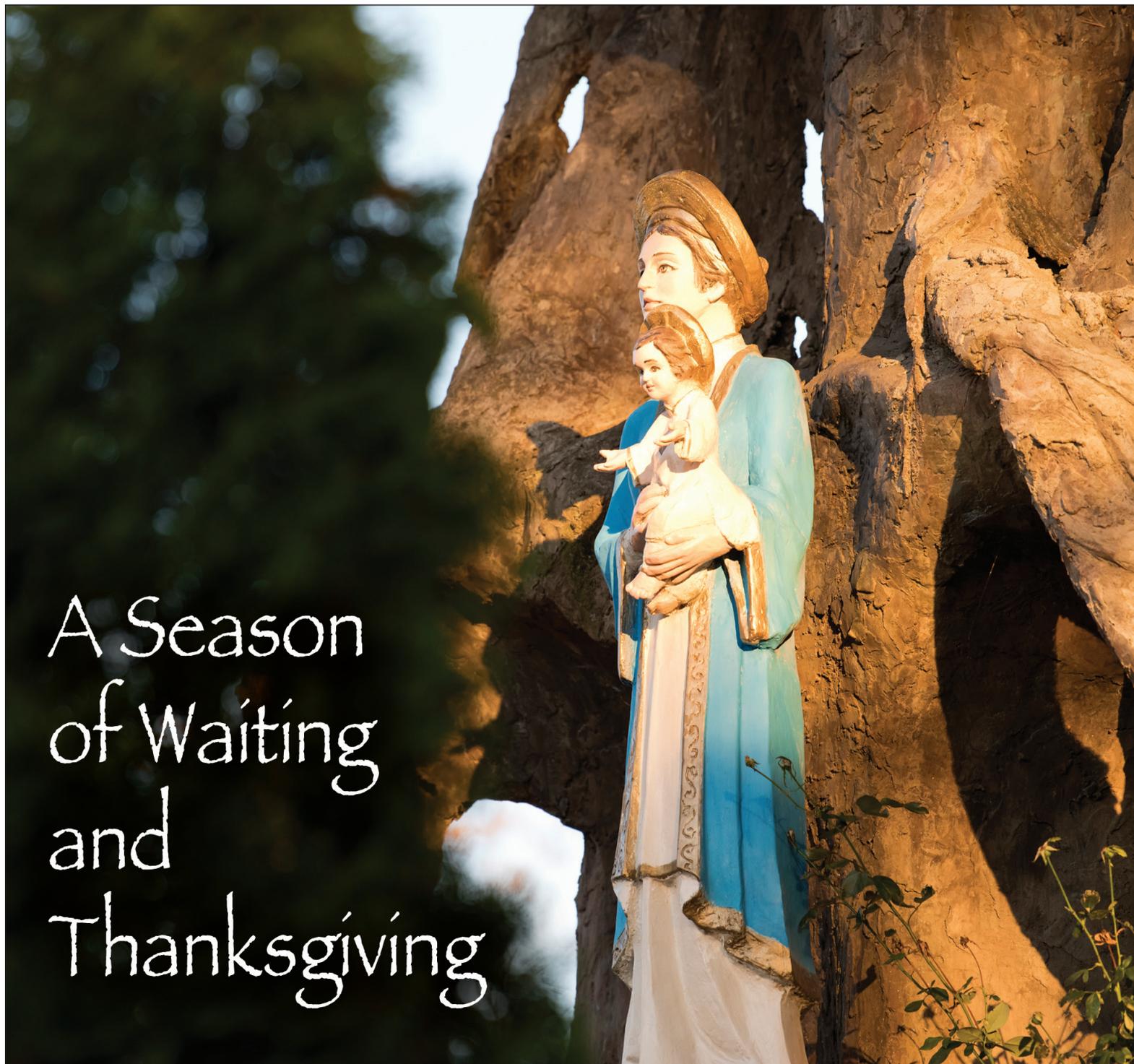
13-14 *Father McGivney Beatification weekend celebrated*

Looking for a way to **connect** with the best aspects of your **diocese**?

Facebook: **Diocese of Bridgeport Bishop Frank J. Caggiano**

Twitter: **@diobpt @BishopCaggiano**

Instagram: **dioceseofbridgeport bishopfrankcaggiano**



A Season of Waiting and Thanksgiving

Knees, Hips, Shoulders, Spine in Fairfield County.

Orthopaedics in all the right places. Learn more at StVincents.org/Ortho.



CATHOLIC CEMETERIES DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU IN YOUR TIME OF NEED!

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT CALL: **203.610.3414**



Around the Diocese

Living the faith and serving others

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

Pet blessing welcomes all

RIDGEFIELD—It is a long-held Catholic tradition to hold a Blessing of the Animals on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals, merchants and ecology.

St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield held their Blessing of Pets ceremony on October 4 in the St. Mary School parking lot.

St. Mary's welcomed everyone to participate, encouraging parishioner to bring their pets, a photo of their pets, or a special stuffed animal to be blessed. "If you don't have a pet, come celebrate with those who do," the flyer encouraged.



Masks were worn and all social distancing guidelines were followed.

Update from St. Rose of Lima School

NEWTOWN—On Sunday October 18, a St. Rose School family spent the afternoon creating pumpkin patches around the school grounds with the help of several 8th grade students. Preschool, kindergarten, first and second graders had time to run through their own designated pumpkin patches to find and pick their pumpkins.

Another notable moment came when a Mom made a spe-



cial, "on screen" visit to the first grade classroom to read a story in honor of her daughter's birthday. Parent participation is such a big part of St. Rose School life; it's nice that they can continue to connect, even from a distance.

Children's chalk Rosary

RIDGEFIELD—St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield held a Children's Chalk Rosary on October 24. About a dozen families prayed a decade of the Glorious Mysteries together, enjoyed some delicious cider donuts, fresh fall apples and cold apple cider, and played on the playground in their rain jackets and umbrellas!

"God's blessings rained down on this event, as parishioners gathered to share their faith, socialize, laugh and praise the Lord!" shared Carolyn Haitsch,



communications manager for St. Mary Parish.

The Pumpkin Patch Project

FAIRFIELD—As fall continues, Saint Catherine Center

for Special Needs' months-long pumpkin patch project is coming to completion. Students have used their observational skills, counting and measuring, some basic botany and, of course, teamwork. The project has helped students become more aware of the seasons and their connection to the growing cycle.

The project is the brain-storm of Patty Loh, one of the Academy teachers. "In summer school I thought it would be fun



to study the life cycle of pumpkins," she said. "I bought the tray of seeds; we planted them, and within a week we had sprouts. The students were all excited."

St. Catherine/St. Agnes food drive continues

RIVERSIDE—Generous donations have arrived to the weekly Tuesday morning Neighbor-to-Neighbor Food and Essentials Drive at St. Catherine's sponsored

by the Social Justice Committee.

Donations filled three trunks and two back seats. Volunteers and staff sent out a heart-felt thank you to all who participated. The need continues!



Until further notice, there will be a car or SUV with an open trunk in the parking lot across from St. Catherine's church on Tuesdays from 9-11 am. Please drop your bagged grocery donations in the trunk, and we will take them to Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

(For more information visit www.stc-sta.org.)

Local Knights to distribute over 300 brand new coats

NORWALK—More than 300 brand new coats will be distributed by the Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids



Initiative with Family & Children's Agency (FCA). This Initiative helps keep kids warm over the winter months by providing this necessity. To be safe during the pandemic, the Knights of Columbus and FCA decided to have the Knights set up the coats at FCA's building in Norwalk on Saturday, October 24. Social workers picked up the coats and distributed them to the families directly. "Even though we had

to change how we do the event, the most important thing is that children will receive a warm coat for the upcoming winter season," said Project Chairman and District Deputy George Ribellino.

Pandemic can't stop St. Mark School's pink tradition

STRATFORD—Every October, since 2009, St. Mark School in Stratford has hosted a school wide breast cancer awareness event. Like most celebrations this year, the 2020 cut-a-thon looked a little different.

While the school could not host their traditional assembly where students shaved their heads or donated their hair to Wigs for Kids, they did manage to spread cancer awareness and raise funds for the worthy cause.

Stylists from CKC Salon and Keratin Bar in Fairfield partnered with the school once again in support of the event. They set up a mini outdoor salon on campus, where fifty-one students purchased pink hair extensions.

The entire school community rallied together in the fight against cancer. The event also included a "pink out" where students and faculty dressed in various shades of pink in an unwavering show of support.

The school raised \$1,913 for the Elizabeth Pfriem Swim Cancer Center at St. Vincent's Medical Hospital in Bridgeport. Over the past 11 years, St. Mark School has raised over \$23,000! ■



ON THE COVER

St. Margaret Shrine at dusk. The statue of Our Lady and the Christ Child is one of many prayerful settings that draw people to the Bridgeport shrine.

Photos by Amy Mortensen

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 5 | DIACONATE FORMATION
<i>Candidates move forward</i> | 16 | RELIGIOUS ARTICLES FOR SALE
<i>Sharon MacKnight's ministry</i> |
| 6 | PARISHES COME TOGETHER
<i>New pew blessed and dedicated</i> | 17 | FRIGHTENING FALL FUN
<i>St. Greg's offers 'Forest of Fear'</i> |
| 8 | CATHOLIC CHARITIES
<i>Generous mask donations</i> | 19 | THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
<i>New offerings and initiatives</i> |
| 10 | EDITORIALS
<i>A Thanksgiving message</i> | 23 | SHU SPORTS
<i>Jackie Robinson Scholarship</i> |



Diocesan News

Decree allows for earlier Christmas Vigil Masses

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has issued a decree permitting the celebration of Christmas Vigil Masses beginning at 3 pm in parishes throughout the diocese on Thursday December 24, in order to provide more options to the faithful seeking to safely attend the Mass on Christmas.

The decree, issued on October 26, states that the earlier vigil time represents a one-time exemption for Christmas 2020 because of the extraordinary situation created by the pandemic, the larger number of people expected to attend Mass, and the need to socially distance and follow other restrictions to safeguard health.

“With this provision, it is my desire and hope that each parish priest or rector ensure that enough Masses are celebrated in order to allow the reasonable accommodation of all the faithful who wish to personally attend a Holy Day Mass for Christmas,” the bishop said.

While the exemption is only

an hour earlier than the permitted vigil time, it will enable parishes to add one or even two more vigil Masses to their schedule over the Christmas observance.

The expanded Mass schedule will make it possible for more faithful to attend Christmas Masses while at the same time following the guidelines issued by Governor Ned Lamont as the number of positive cases and hospitalizations continues to increase in Connecticut.

In a recent virtual conversation sponsored by The Leadership Institute and the Development Office of the diocese, the bishop told those who participated online that he approved the earlier vigil time because given current restrictions he wants to avoid people being turned away from Mass at Christmas—the time of year that many Catholics and their families who are not normally at Mass reconnect with the Church.

Some pastors have already created Christmas Mass schedules and many parishes will be using



multiple locations (church, parish hall, school gymnasium, outdoors (weather permitting) as well as live streaming.

Masses will be scheduled to allow for ample time to sanitize the church (and other spaces) in between Masses.

In line with the bishop’s decree, the diocese has also recommended that parishes prepare for Christmas by scheduling multiple, early opportunities for the faithful to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so

that lines are not too long in the days before Christmas. Likewise, Christmas Pageants and live Nativity scenes must be carefully planned to ensure the safety of children and adults.

The pandemic has presented numerous challenges to worship, but pastors throughout the diocese are working to invite the faithful to the celebration of the Nativity with a tone of hopefulness and joy.

“Some will return to church on Christmas for the first time,

others will long for the pre-pandemic time when they could simply ‘show up’ for Mass without signing up or signing in. These celebrations of Christmas provide us with an opportunity to extend a sincere welcome and ensure an environment that is safe and reverent,” the bishop said

In announcing the earlier Christmas vigil time, the bishop reiterated that people should register in advance for Mass because it enables a parish to plan and to notify parishioners if someone should test positive for COVID-19 at a Mass they attended. They also need to wear a mask and practice safe distancing when they are in church.

Editor’s Note: As Fairfield County Catholic goes to press, the bishop is considering an even earlier start time of 2:00 pm, which would enable more people to attend Christmas Vigil Masses while complying with health and safety policies restricting indoor seating capacity. A second decree will be issued if circumstances dictate the need for additional Mass times. For the latest news visit: www.bridgeportdiocese.org. ■

Bishop re-promulgates Safe Environments Policies

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has re-promulgated the Diocesan Safe Environments policies and practices for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In a formal decree, issued on October 30, the bishop said the new policy and handbook will become effective immediately and available online in its entirety.

“As Catholics, we share a sacred obligation to protect all of God’s Children, especially the children, youth and vulnerable adults who are entrusted to our care,” the bishop said.

Printed copies of the revised Safe Environments Handbook along with information for reporting suspected abuse in the Diocese of Bridgeport will be posted in a central location in all Churches and Schools, where they can be easily accessed and a copy of the Safe Environments Handbook should be made available on all school

and parish websites.

“As our society and the Catholic Church face new challenges when it comes to the problem of child sexual abuse and other forms of abuse, we must continue to strengthen our response to this problem to ensure a safe environment, therefore we are issuing our third update to our policies and procedures relating to our implementation of the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in the Diocese of Bridgeport,” said Bishop Caggiano.

The bishop said he is grateful to Erin Neil, director of Safe Environments, to members of the review board and to all staff and volunteers who worked on the report and participate in the program.

“Our diocese has shown great leadership in the areas of early detection, reporting and prevention of abuse and I am grateful for the support and cooperation of

our ongoing efforts to safeguard children, youth and vulnerable adults,” he said.

Erin Neil said the diocese remains fully committed to upholding the highest standards set forth in the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Neil said that among the key changes contained with the 2020 Safe Environments Handbook are the following:

- A list of numbers for reporting allegations of abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult are now located on the front cover of the Safe Environments Handbook
- A third party-reporting hotline option for victims
- Procedures for reporting abuse of a vulnerable adult
- Procedures for reporting an allegation of abuse to police in addition to the CT Department of Children and Family Services
- Procedures for reporting an

allegation of abuse involving a U.S. bishop or cardinal

- Procedures for reporting suspected boundary violations and grooming behaviors toward minors and vulnerable adults

The new handbook also updates training information on identifying early warning signs and grooming behaviors in offenders of child sexual abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults and the definition of vulnerable adult, makes changes to the Sexual Misconduct Review Board process to include the review of allegations against deceased clerics, and updates the definition of a Credible Allegation.

With the publication of the new handbook the diocese also provides the CT Department of Children and Family Services updated definitions of abuse. It also updates training and criminal background check requirements for visiting members of the clergy.

Many of the changes and new

procedures have been made in response to the recommendations included in the historic 2019 Accountability Investigation and report conducted by Judge Robert Holzberg.

“The judge’s recommendations were designed to further strengthen our efforts to address the ever-growing challenges we face as a Church and as a society to prevent abuse and assist victims. The bishop has incorporated them into the policies of the diocese,” Neil said.

In 2015, the bishop issued a revised set of policies relating to the implementation of the Charter in our diocese which are to be reviewed every five years.

Neil said the renewal of criminal background checks and Safe Environments training related to the policies contained within the revised 2020 Safe Environments Handbook will continue for all members of the clergy, lay employees, tenants, vendors, inde-

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

2020 Annual Catholic Appeal

Parishes step up participation in ACA

By **JOE PISANI**

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Father Norbert Siwinski O.F.M., pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Bridgeport, discovered parishioners he never had before—from all over the world.

As part of his strategy to reach out to his faith community through Facebook and live-stream Masses in English and Polish, he touched many more people worldwide.

“Now, I have two parishes—in Bridgeport and our online visitors,” he said. “It’s so nice for me, like a big family. There are people from Texas and Arizona, where they don’t have Polish-speaking parishes, who come to pray with us.” Not to mention visitors from as far away as Lithuania, United Kingdom, Germany and Russia. In fact, the

St. Michael Facebook page has 1,000 followers.

The enthusiasm he brings to his job as pastor for the past two years is evident. He came to America after being the pastor of a German church outside Cologne for 14 years. Father, who is half Lithuanian and half Polish, grew up in Poland.

A year ago, St. Michael’s celebrated its 120th anniversary, and for most of that time, it was a Franciscan-run parish, which today attracts visitors from all over the state, including German-speaking people who come to Father for their confessions. The only other German-speaking priest is in Boston, he says.

Father Norbert is especially proud that his parish raised more than 80 percent of its goal for the Annual Catholic Appeal.

“It was a really hard year for our parish because of COVID-

19, and we had to find new solutions,” he said. “We couldn’t celebrate in the church, so I started doing Facebook live-streaming every day with evening Mass and prayer services. We are a Polish-American church, and this has become a meeting place for Polish-speaking people and many visitors come to be with us online.”

St. Michael’s also has a YouTube channel with sermons and songs, which Father calls, “a piece of home for Polish people in America.”

“For me, the Annual Appeal is very important; it is part of our identity,” he said. “While we are a Polish-American family, we are also part of the diocese. We have our own traditions and liturgy, but we belong to the Diocese of Bridgeport.”

Participation is key

Joe Gallagher, chief develop-

ment officer of the diocese, said that over 11,270 generous donors have made over 13,700 gifts to the appeal, raising \$7 million.

Gallagher said that Mass attendance restrictions with the limited ability to attend services in person is effecting the Appeal performance in dioceses across the U.S.

“Many dioceses are seeing a 30 percent reduction in the overall goal achievement, we have achieved 77 percent of the goal and it continues to grow,” said Gallagher who believes the response has been above the national average because of the bishop’s leadership during the crisis.

“Participation is key, not just for this year but for the future,” says Gallagher. “Our bishop has made it clear that we’re all in this together and that we’re facing extraordinary needs. There

is still time to join those who have responded to the bishop’s call and given so generously,” he said.

For Gallagher who joined the diocese in August, this year’s ACA is his first and he says he is encouraged by enthusiastic response by donors and the parishes who are nearing or have already achieved goal. He said the leadership of pastors is one of the most significant factors in a parish’s response to the ACA.

St. Elizabeth Seton, Ridgefield

Father Joseph Prince, pastor of St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Ridgefield, who will be celebrating his 50th anniversary as a priest next year and 25 years in his parish, believes his faith community has an astute awareness of the mission of the universal Church.

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



Blessed Gifts

Diocese of Bridgeport

The Gift of Giving

1. Visit www.BlessedGifts.org to select a ministry area.
2. Dedicate a ministry to a friend or loved one.
3. The Diocese will send a card to your gift recipient or you may print one on your computer or send an e-card.
4. The Diocese will direct your gift to the selected ministry.

YOUR GIFT WILL SUPPORT A BROAD RANGE OF SERVICES IN FOUR MINISTRY AREAS:

CATHOLIC CHARITIES serves over 10,000 individuals each year through nutrition, counseling and housing programs.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION supports the overall good of Catholic schools, its students and programs through supplies, textbooks, technology and tuition assistance.

SAINT JOHN FISHER SEMINARY prepares college-aged men and young adults for ordination to the priesthood by providing tuition assistance, prayer books, groceries and local travel expenses.

QUEEN OF THE CLERGY PRIEST RETIREMENT HOME supports retired priests who continue to serve. Gifts provide meals, building maintenance, cleaning and utility services.

Blessed Gifts supports your faith in action through ministries across the Diocese of Bridgeport.

To make a gift, please visit www.BlessedGifts.org or call 203.416.1470

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
238 Jewett Avenue | Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606



Diaconate Formation

Proclaim the word in a world that runs from truth

By **JOE PISANI**

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano urged five candidates for the permanent diaconate to proclaim the Word of God to a “world that runs from the Truth,” during a Mass at which they were installed in the ministry of reader, a major step in their formation as deacons.

As readers of God’s Word, they will be able to proclaim it in a liturgical assembly, instruct children and adults in the faith, and prepare them to receive the sacraments. This is a milestone for the men who are discerning the vocation of deacon.

“Be a humble servant of the Truth, for the Truth itself has the power, not you and not me,” Bishop Caggiano said in his homily at St. Augustine Cathedral.

“Open your hearts in charity when you teach. Be humble before the mystery that is greater than all of us combined and allow charity to always animate what you do in service of the Lord for he will allow you to bear great fruit.”

He thanked the men for their perseverance, and their families for the sacrifices they have made so the candidates, as husbands and fathers, could be involved in the formation program.

“Allow me to begin by offering my sincere thanks to you for persevering in formation in these very difficult, challenging and unpredictable times,” he said. “It is the calling God has given to all of us to meander this world, and I am deeply grateful that you have persevered in the call you have discerned in your heart and that the Lord has brought you to—your call to come into the great mystery of the Sacrament of Service as leaven in the Body of Christ.”

Deacon Jerry Lambert, director of the Diaconate, said, “The Institution in the Ministry of Reader is a significant milestone along the four-and-a-half-year journey toward ordination. Our five candidates have begun their third year of studies and discernment. As they continue their journey, they will grow and strive for balance among the human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral dimensions of their diaconate formation.”

During the institution, Bishop Caggiano called each candidate forward and as they knelt before him

and held the Bible, he said, “Take this book of Holy Scripture and be faithful in handing on the Word of God, so that it may grow strong in the heart of his people.”

The candidates who were instituted as readers were:

Christopher Greer of Westport, who received his bach-

men’s group and an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.

George Kain of Ridgefield, who holds a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from the City University of New York. He has worked as a university professor and chairman in the Division of Justice and Law Administration at Western

RCIA instructor. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus, an adoration chapel volunteer, a member of the Disciples for Life Parish Retreat Team and men’s ministry. He is father of daughter Grace and grandfather of Mercy.

James Meehan of Westport, who holds a bachelor’s degree in

Assumption, Meehan serves as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and reader, coordinating both ministries. He also serves in the elderly/homebound ministry, acts as financial secretary for the Knights of Columbus and is a volunteer coordinator at the Thomas Merton Center.

Rock Desances and his wife Mireille attend St. Margaret Shrine parish in Bridgeport, along with their five children. Desances serves as an usher, reader, altar server and extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus and has worked as dietetic assistant, food manager and health care assistant.

Vincent Pia who has worked as a writer, photographer, professional picture framer and art conservator. He is a member of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys in Brookfield, with his wife Holly and children Caitlynn and Brandon. He is active in the parish, serving as a reader/lector, an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, altar server, parish Rosary leader, adult faith formation facilitator, a member of the Knights of Columbus (having previously served as both officer and director) and a former member of the choir. ■



elor’s degree in economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He has worked as a development consultant as well as a professional sports photographer. He is a member of St. Luke’s in Westport along with his wife Kristine and their two children, Cassidy and Kevin. He is involved in the adult choir as a cantor/soloist, a member of the

Connecticut State University in Danbury for 25 years and served as police commissioner for the Town of Ridgefield for 20 years. He is a member of St. Mary’s in Ridgefield along with his wife Marilyn. He has served as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (as well as a homebound minister to the sick), a cantor, usher, altar server and

accounting from City University of New York. He has been the owner/operator of several businesses for historical window restoration, home heating oil delivery and heating/air conditioning. He and his wife Athina attend Church of the Assumption in Westport, along with their children Christopher, Andrew and Christina. At

Foundations in Education, Inc offers 2020 year end giving tips

Year-end charitable giving can have a substantial positive impact on your tax situation and overall estate plan. If you are considering giving a gift of a Catholic education, here are some tips from Foundations in Education:

1. Timing of Gift

Make sure you date and postmark checks to your favorite charity no later than December 31, 2020. Per IRS regulations, single gifts of \$250 or more require a substantiation letter from your charity. For donors who itemize, the CARES Act increased the 2020 charitable deduction limit for cash contributions from 60% to 100% of adjusted gross income.

2. Gifts of Stock

Electronic transfer of stock is an advantageous, easy and quick method of contributing.

Visit www.foundationsineducation.org/make-a-donation/ for stock gift instructions to Foundations in Education. Donating stock instead of cash can be a savvy tax-planning strategy since you can eliminate most capital gains and take a charitable deduction on the fair market value of the gift. Please contact your tax advisor for advice.

3. Gifts of IRA Required Minimum Distribution

If you are over 72 and required to make a minimum distribution from your IRA, you may consider using a charitable IRA rollover, also known as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), to make your contribution. Any charitable gift made directly from your IRA to Foundations in Education counts toward your minimum distribution and is not

considered taxable income. Each individual taxpayer can give up to \$100,000 tax-free in any year. This form of gifting may be particularly appropriate if you are required to take a minimum distribution from your IRA but do not need additional income.

4. Donor-Advised Fund

It is not too late to set up a donor-advised fund for your charitable gifts this year. The advantage of a donor-advised fund is that you can get the deduction for making the gift this year but decide later which charities to which you want to donate the money. Most major brokerage firms can assist you. Please consult your tax advisor for advice.

5. Planning Your Estate

The end of a calendar year is a great time to update your will and estate plans. This is an important

step to secure the future for your loved ones. A will legally protects your spouse, children and assets, and can also spell out exactly how you would like things handled. This simple step will allow your legacy to endure.

Contact your legal or financial advisors for assistance in planning charitable gifts with tax and other financial implications. Visit www.foundationsineducation.org/make-a-donation/ or contact Foundations in Education at 203.416.1405 or mquinn@foundationsineducation.org for information.

Foundations in Education Inc.
EIN: 47-5130557
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606
www.foundationsineducation.org

Parish News

Pew from 'mother parish' celebrates history

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

TRUMBULL—Wednesday, November 4, was the liturgical memorial of St. Charles Borromeo, who served as Archbishop of Milan in the 16th century, and was one of the truly great pastors and saints in the Church's history. "The name of St. Charles is especially familiar to us here at St. Catherine's, because our 'mother parish' in Bridgeport—from whose territory our parish was formed in 1955—is named for him," said Father Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

"There is a beautiful stained glass window of St. Charles about half-way along the north wall of the church, on the Blessed Mother's side," he explained.

On Sunday, November 8, St. Catherine of Siena welcomed Msgr. Christopher Walsh, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, for a special blessing and dedication at their 11 am Mass. "When we were doing the Christ at the Center project last year, I wanted to incorporate some tangible link with our 'mother parish' as part of that project," Father Marcello explained. "Earlier this year, Msgr. Walsh gave us a

pew that for many decades was located in the lower church of St. Charles. Generations of students of St. Charles School – including my father and grandmother—attended Mass there, and generations of faithful sat, knelt, and prayed there at Masses, Novenas, Adoration and other devotions."

The pew became available to St. Catherine's due to the fact that many pews in the lower church of St. Charles were removed years ago to make room for Religious Education classrooms.

Jim Panullo, director of Parish Operations and a skilled woodworker, cut the pew down and



PARISHES COME TOGETHER—Msgr. Chris Walsh (left), pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bridgeport recently gifted Father Marcello (right), pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull a pew from the lower church of St. Charles to be used in St. Catherine's Memorial Chapel.

faith
& Love
hope

The greatest of these is love
Love never fails

"Since the first days of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the diocese has served those in urgent need through the Annual Catholic Appeal. Programs for food, housing, educational assistance, psychological support and spiritual consolation are experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of people being served.

Our neighbors and friends continue to face urgent need. Without the help of compassionate and loving individuals like you, we will not be able to serve all those who turn to us for assistance."

Please help me to meet the demand for services.

I need your help today.

Donate at 2020ACABridgeport.com or call 203.416.1470.

Does your company participate in a matching gift program?
Your gift may be doubled or tripled, contact the Development Office for more information.

Thank you for your generous support, may God bless you.

refinished it.

"The pew is available in St. Catherine's Memorial Chapel to provide a place for quiet prayer and contemplation, and as a tangible link with the parish in Bridgeport from whose territory

our parish was carved out, and from which so many of our original families came," said Father Marcello. "I am grateful to Linda Marini and her late husband Enrico for underwriting the cost of the project," he added. ■

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FROM PAGE 3

pendent contractors and volunteers.

The changes include volunteers who do not have scheduled contact with children, every five or 10 years based on their ministry, utilizing VIRTUS, Protecting God's Children for Adults program and the VIRTUS database for parishes and school to track completion of these items.

Safe Environments training will continue annually for all students enrolled in a Catholic School through virtual or live instruction utilizing The Child Lures Prevention Program, Think First and Stay Safe and Personal Safety Training utilizing the Netsmartz.org program for middle school and high school students.

Parishes will make available Safe Environments training for parents and children enrolled in religious education programs using online instruction through the Netsmartz.org and Kidsmartz.org videos in order to complement the training that children receive through their public school.

"Parents may choose to teach this at home and opt-out of Safe Environments training at a parish or school by placing their request in writing. Training materials are publicly available and located on our diocesan website," Neil said.

Printed copies of the revised Safe Environments Handbook along with information for reporting suspected abuse in the Diocese of Bridgeport must be posted in a central location in all Churches and schools where they can be easily accessed and a copy of the Safe Environments Handbook should be made available on all school and parish websites.

Beginning in November for tracking purposes, VIRTUS will have the revised policies and procedures uploaded to their website. Parish employees and volunteers may log into their VIRTUS account and sign these electronically or your parish Safe Environments coordinator will be able to quickly log receipt of the handbook into a parish VIRTUS database by searching a person's name.

(For assistance with this step, contact Astrid Alvarez, VIRTUS training and Development Specialist 203.416.1407 or aalvarez@diobpt.org.) ■

Catholic Education

Mater Salvatoris Prep School to open at Trinity site

STAMFORD—The Diocese of Bridgeport and Sisters of the Company of the Savior have announced a sale of Trinity Catholic High School and a long-term land lease of the campus of the former High School in Stamford as the permanent location for Mater Salvatoris College Preparatory School.

“With great joy, we move forward with this agreement, which will lead to the expansion of our presence in Stamford and a permanent location for the Mater Salvatoris College Preparatory School. The Sisters of the Company of the Savior are deeply grateful to the Diocese of Bridgeport and the ongoing support of Bishop Frank Caggiano to make this possible,” said the Order’s Mother General, Sister Mercedes Díez de Angulo.

The move to the former Trinity Catholic High School campus will allow the Sisters to accomplish their project of a Pre-K through grade 12 school, and enable the Sisters to gradually open a high-school division.

In addition, driven by the need to serve the family as a whole, and to meet the needs in Stamford, the Sisters of the Company of the Savior are

pleased to announce the opening of a boys’ division at Mater Salvatoris. Boys and girls develop and learn differently, and in order to meet their individual needs, the school will introduce a model of single-sex classrooms in a co-ed campus, starting in first grade, as enrollment makes it feasible.

Plans for the 2021-2022 school year call for the school to enroll girls from Pre-K 3 through fifth grade, and boys from Pre-K 3 through first grade. The school will add one grade level each year through grade 12.

Bishop Frank J Caggiano said that, consistent with his commitment to find the best use for the Trinity campus, the Sisters’ plan to continue the tradition of catholic education in Stamford was a major factor in his decision to move ahead with the agreement. After Trinity Catholic closed, there was a great deal of interest on the part of commercial and other interests to acquire the property.

“Our goal with regard to the future of the Trinity Catholic campus has been the preservation of Catholic education in the greater Stamford community. Many families have sacrificed and con-

tributed to Trinity Catholic over the years, and we believe this is the best way to honor their commitment and lasting legacy while giving parents a new option for Catholic education.”

The initial proceeds from the agreement will be used to cover a portion of the debt incurred from the renovation and operational deficits of the former Trinity Catholic High School over the decade before it closed.

Under the agreement, the balance of the funds to be paid by the Sisters will not be received by the Diocese for a number of years.

The bishop said that the Sisters are working with diocesan superintendent of schools, Dr. Steven Cheeseman, to look for areas of growth and collaboration.

Mater Salvatoris school opened in Stamford in in 2018, in the former Holy Spirit School building on Scofieldtown Road and it became the seventh school that the Sisters of the Company of the Savior have founded around the world. The mission of the Schools is to accompany students from their early years until their admission to the university, seeking to nurture in each student the development of the whole



SISTER M. MARIA ALGUACIL, C.S., HEAD OF SCHOOL

person in all its dimensions.

Sister M. Maria Alguacil, C.S., head of school, said with 20 acres of property and more than 125,000 square feet of building space, the site of the former Trinity Catholic High School meets all the needs to develop the Mater Salvatoris project—including classrooms and labs, a chapel, sports fields gymnasium and playgrounds, and an auditorium.

“In this way, the mission for which the campus was designed and built—to provide a faithful Catholic education—will continue,” said Sister Maria.

Mater Salvatoris Schools are supported by over 60 years of experience in educational excellence in Europe, North America, South America and Africa, and currently educate more than 6,000 students worldwide. Following the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola and the charism of our Mother Foundress, Venerable Servant of

God Maria Felix, the Sisters of the Company of the Savior offer a faithful Catholic education, student-centered learning environment, strong academic formation and experiential and active education.

On February 27, 2020, Bishop Caggiano announced the decision to close Trinity Catholic High School in the face of mounting deficits and declining enrollment. At the time, the bishop thanked the board for their extraordinary efforts on behalf of the school, and said that he would look for ways to preserve secondary Catholic education in the future.

(To learn more about Mater Salvatoris College Preparatory School and the Sisters of the Company of the Savior at stamford.matersalvatoris.org. Contact us by email at stm.school@matersalvatoris.org, or by phone at 203.489.0977. The new Mater Salvatoris campus is located at 926 Newfield Avenue, Stamford, Conn.)

Seminarians to move to St. Charles Borromeo

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—Beginning in January 2021, college seminarians and pre-theologians of the Diocese of Bridgeport will undertake their formation and studies at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano announced the change in seminary formation on September 16, in a letter he sent to all priests of the diocese.

“Given that fostering vocations and supporting our seminarians is a unique obligation that I possess as bishop and a successor of the apostles, I have made this decision because I am convinced that it will be to the great benefit of

our seminarians and their future priesthood.”

The bishop made the decision following an in-depth review and analysis by ad hoc committee of curial officials who examined the long term viability of Saint John Fisher House of Discernment. The Presbyteral Council and the College of Consultors were also involved in the process.

“In order to fulfill my ministerial responsibility to provide men aspiring to the priesthood the best opportunity to be formed in the mind and heart of Christ, a few months ago I authorized the analysis,” the bishop said.

“After further analysis, I recently received the final recommendation that our collegiate seminarians and pre-theologians

would be best served by attending the formation programs offered by St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia.”

The bishop said the study team was given the charge to examine every collegiate formation program east of the Mississippi River, and to provide him with a detailed oral summary of the strengths and weaknesses of seven programs of formation.

St. Charles Borromeo seminary was chosen because of its strong academic and formation program which serves 65 seminarians from 14 U.S. dioceses and six religious congregations. Likewise, 78 percent of college seminarians and 61 percent of its pre-theologians go on to major seminary formation.

The bishop said the larger number of seminarians and the cultural and racial diversity of its population (35 percent of all seminarians) along with St. Charles’ strong emphasis upon human and spiritual formation (seeking to form “Men of Communion” with Christ and His Church) were all factors in his final decision. He also appreciated the possibility that a pre-theologian can earn a master’s in philosophical studies.

The seminary also has a self-contained faculty comprised of two full-time spiritual directors, a full-time psychologist and counselor and 16 full-time priests.

The bishop praised St. John Fisher House of Discernment, which has provided nearly two generations of priests. However,

he said the program faced increasingly difficult obstacles to fulfill its formational object lives.

He said the diminished number of candidates residing in the house has made fostering basic human formation challenging, since peer interaction is essential to such formation.

“There are also increasing difficulties to maintain a philosophy faculty available to train our men in collaboration with Sacred Heart University. Finally, the escalating cost of training our men in our own collegiate formation program cannot be discounted in the current financially challenged situ-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Catholic Charities

Bank of America donates 12,000 masks to Charities

By AMY ZAJAC

FAIRFIELD COUNTY—Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, one of the largest private social service providers in the state of Connecticut, recently received 12,000 masks from Bank of America. The aid continues an innovative partnership that has allowed the agency to provide meals to residents, served through local restaurants in Stamford and Bridgeport. Since the start of the coronavirus, protective personal equipment (PPE) supplies have been low and costs have been high, making it even more challenging for non-profit agencies like Catholic Charities to secure what is required to stay open for business. For an agency like Catholic Charities, closing because masks are not available is simply not an option.

This donation is part of a nationwide effort by Bank of America to immediately distribute nearly four million PPE masks to communities dispropor-

tionately impacted by the coronavirus, including communities of color, and is connected to its \$1 billion, four-year commitment of additional support to help local communities address economic and racial inequality accelerated by a global pandemic. This is in addition to the four million masks the company donated earlier this year in cities across the country.

“Bank of America is committed to working with local partners that keep our families, communities, clients and teammates safe during the health crisis,” said Bill Tommins, Southern Connecticut market president for Bank of America. “Throughout the coronavirus, Bank of America has joined forces with local organizations to address families’ most basic needs. By supplying Catholic Charities with PPE, we’re able to



help them further their mission and continue feeding families, safely, at the same time.”

“If we close, a single mother is unable to pick up groceries to feed her family. Homebound senior citizens do not receive their meals delivered to their home. A person experiencing a crisis related to depression or anxiety cannot connect with their therapist for counseling services,” said Executive Director Mike Donoghue. “Our services are



CATHOLIC CHARITIES of Fairfield County recently received 12,000 masks from Bank of America. (l) Mack Wade, 90, a client of the Homeless Outreach Program in Danbury, is wearing one of the masks donated by Bank of America.

vital in helping the most vulnerable populations in the communities throughout Fairfield County. We meet the most basic needs.”

Since the start of the pandemic, Catholic Charities’ programs and services have continued to thrive but many required the vital PPE in order to remain open. The Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport remained open with a 30–40 percent increase in meal service provided through a grab and go format. The Morning Glory Breakfast Program in Danbury was closed, but provided 4,900 meals to homeless individuals who have been moved from shelters to the Super 8 Motel to ensure social distancing. Room to Grow Preschool in Norwalk reopened September 9 with 109 students in attendance. It was a state mandate for all students and teachers to wear masks throughout the day.

“The masks provided by Bank of America have been a blessing for our staff and clients,” said Bill Colson, director of the Thomas Merton Center. “Many clients were unable to not only find masks, but they also could not afford them. They were at risk. This donation not only helped to protect staff while they served the clients, but it also helped the clients to stay safe while out in the public.”

Catholic Charities’ 36 programs provide services throughout Fairfield County. Combined, they serve over 10,000 individuals in Fairfield County, Connecticut each year.

To learn more about who we are and what we do, visit our website at www.ccfairfield.org or follow us on Facebook (@ccfairfield), Twitter (@ccfairfielddob) and Instagram (@catholiccharitiesdob).

Are you one of the over 15,000 donors to the We Stand With Christ campaign?

Well here’s what you need to know...

- **WHERE ARE WE NOW?** 70 parishes have completed their We Stand With Christ capital campaigns. Nine additional parishes to complete their campaigns in 2020-2021.
- **DISTRIBUTIONS?** \$26.0 million of capital campaign contributions have been distributed to parishes and the three foundations to date as of 6/30/2020 as approved by the We Stand With Christ Board of Directors.
- **HOW CAN YOU HELP?** Choose to fulfill your pledge online to save the costs of mailed remittances. **Payments via credit card and direct debit can be made by visiting www.GiveCentral.org/WSWC.**
- **WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?** The Annual Catholic Appeal, which was included in the first year of each parish’s capital campaign, is currently underway for 2020. The Annual Catholic Appeal goals for the parishes were lowered this year based on the success of We Stand With Christ. Thank you for your continued support!
- **QUESTIONS?** We want to hear from you with any concerns or issues you are experiencing. Contact the campaign at 203.648.9050 or at Campaign@WeStandWithChrist.org.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to this campaign and the many wonderful programs and projects that will benefit from your support!

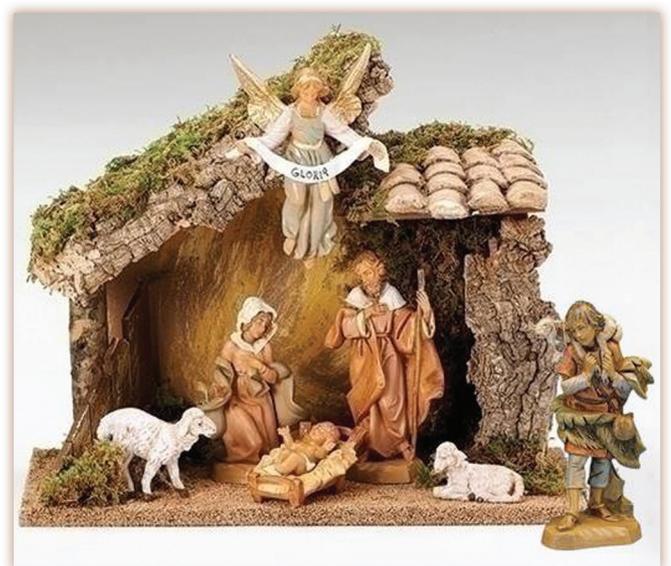
NEW ENGLAND’S LARGEST RELIGIOUS SUPPLY AND GIFT CENTER

PATRICK BAKER & SONS

GREAT NEW SELECTION

Advent Wreaths and Candles, Bibles, Crosses, Jewelry, Nativity Sets, Rosaries, Statues, Memorial Gifts, and so much more (Free Gift Wrap)

A Family Business That Cares
10% off with this ad!



HOURS: Wednesday-Friday 9:00-5:00; Saturday 10:00-3:00; Closed Sundays

1650 West Street Southington, Connecticut 06489 | 800-243-6385 | www.churchgoods.com

Reaching out to Youth

Family Bible Challenge goes national

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—The Leadership Institute's Family Bible Challenge initially gathered more than 2,500 families to engage with Scripture.

Families tuned in from around the diocese as well as from the dioceses of Dallas, Orange, Rochester, Brooklyn and the archdioceses of Newark and New York.

Now...Family Bible Challenge is going national!

In a recent USCCB mailing, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano shared a letter inviting families around the country to participate. The bishop's invitation was sent to more than five hundred thousand subscribers. In the first few hours, more than 2,200 families had subscribed.

"There is a strong desire of people to learn about their faith," said Dr. Patrick Donovan, director of The Leadership Institute. "We want people to open their Bibles. In fact, when we began the FBC last year, we even gave families a Bible if they didn't have one."

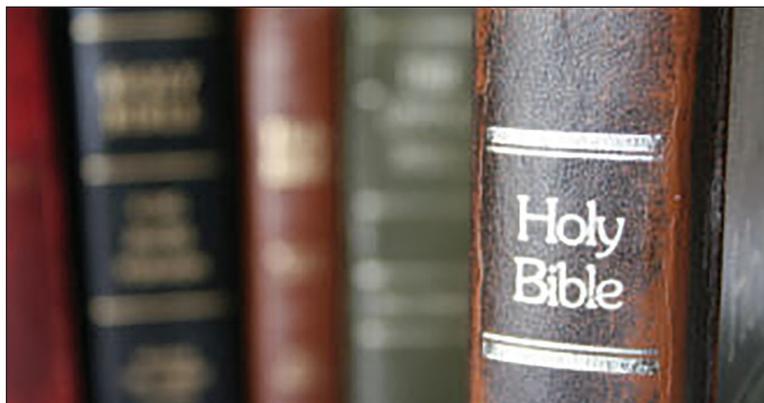
The Family Bible Challenge takes place seasonally, usually three to four times per week. During each challenge, a theme is adopted.

With a goal of engaging both families and individuals in the Bible, The Leadership Institute sends an email each Sunday (in English and Spanish) with a passage to read and discuss. Quizzes on the material follow on Wednesday.

Seasons usually run six to seven weeks and families can join at any time and all reflections and quizzes are archived online for easy access.

The next season began on October 18, 2020 and focused on the beauty of God's many creations. Drawing on passages from Genesis, Psalms, Daniel, Matthew, and St. Paul's letter to the Romans, families were challenged to reflect upon how we care for creation in its many forms.

The Leadership Institute held several trivia nights last spring and slides from those evenings are now available for parishes and schools to use. In addition, the Institute has been



partnering with Catholic high schools to encourage students to assist with writing future questions. Also benefitting from the Family Bible Challenge are religion classes at diocesan elementary schools. To date, the Institute has distributed more than 15,000 Bibles to parishes and schools throughout the diocese.

"St. Jerome tells us that, 'ignorance of Scripture is igno-

rance of Christ,'" reflects Bishop Caggiano. "I would add that amidst all the uncertainty in the world today, Scripture is one place we can find hope."

"I strongly encourage catechists, parents, Catholic school teachers, and my brother priests and bishops to help spread the word about this great resource," said the bishop.

(Visit familybiblechallenge.org to learn more and to sign up.) ■

'Restless Podcast' speaks to youth

By JOE PISANI

More than 1,600 years ago, a proud, brilliant young man who thought he had everything realized he had nothing. He had friends, women, wealth and prestige, and still his heart was restless...because he didn't have God.

That man, Augustine of Hippo, a pagan who became one of the Church's greatest saints, said, "O Lord, our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you."

That spiritual restlessness still afflicts young people today in an age when we look to worldly pleasures and pursuits to satisfy a longing that only God can satisfy, says Father Joseph Gill of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, who with a group of young adults developed a podcast and video series titled "Restless" to bring them closer to God and explore issues that touch their lives in modern society.

"We are reaching out to young people through podcasts and videos because this is their language," Father Gill said.

The Restless project was made possible by a St. John Paul II Fund grant from Foundations in Faith, which is supported by the We Stand With Christ capital campaign. Restless will be broadcast on Veritas Catholic Network at WNLK-AM 1350 radio and be made available as a podcast at www.veritascatholic.com.

Father Gill will moderate discussions with three young people from Stamford and

Greenwich—Lauren Doyle, Diane Kremheller and Javier Tremaria—as they explore such topics as evangelizing in the workplace and navigating the single life with an eye toward marriage. The show is expected

to begin airing this October. They work in the secular world and are respected and well-liked by everybody."

The Restless project is intended to help young adults on their faith journey.

"It could be one avenue

artistic expression. "People are attracted to God through beauty, truth and goodness," Father said. "And we are looking at the way of beauty."

He cited the example of Bishop Robert Barron's series on Catholicism, which he said people watch over and over because of its profound message and captivating cinematography. Rather than having "talking heads," Restless will feature different speakers and stunning video. A young volunteer who is accomplished in videography is editing the series, which will explore topics such as devotion to the Blessed Mother, the importance of confession and the meaning of life.

"It is meant for people who are seekers, people who are hungry and thirsty and want to dip their toe into Catholicism," Father said. "My hope is that it will be used in Confirmation classes and CCD."

The videos will be uploaded to YouTube. In addition, Shalom World TV, a 24-hour television channel that broadcasts Catholic programs, has expressed interest in using the series. The 20 videos, which will be five to seven minutes long, are expected to be completed by spring and begin airing once a week in May.

Kelly Weldon, director of Foundations in Faith, which approved a grant for the project from the St. John Paul II Fund for Religious Education, Youth Ministry and Faith Formation, said, "It is really a great project, and we are super excited about it." ■



to begin airing this October.

The Restless podcast is being recorded every Tuesday night at a studio Veritas set up in the basement at St. John's. When Father Gill first arrived at the Basilica a year and a half ago, he had an idea to start a podcast and spoke to Kremheller, a co-founder of Catholic Adventures Stamford, a group for young adults in their 20s and 30s who have an interest in "building community and fellowship" with other Catholic young adults.

Themes they will explore include Catholics in political life, Catholic dating, how to read the Bible, Christian friendship and incorporating faith into sports.

Father, who acts as moderator, said of his three colleagues, "They are definitely devout, and more than that, they are articulate about their faith and not afraid to share. They are also very 'normal' with real struggles and real

through which the Gospel reaches souls," he said. "And it is meant for those young adult Catholics who want to go deeper into their faith. A lot of faithful young people feel isolated because there are not too many young adult groups in the area."

The podcasts, which will be 30 minutes long, will be available on Veritas and Spotify, a global digital music, podcast and video streaming service.

Steve Lee, president and CEO of Veritas, said he is excited about the new show, particularly at a time when young people are moving away from organized religion.

"Young adults are leaving the Church, and they don't even understand what they're leaving and why," he said. "I met the young adults Father is working with and heard them do a mock show, and I was very impressed."

The Restless video series has as its goal to produce faith-filled

EDITORIAL

In Thanksgiving

Given the year we've had, one might easily be forgiven for asking what we have to celebrate on Thanksgiving. We are reeling after months of a deadly and disruptive pandemic and a contentious election that has divided friends and family members. Yet as people of faith, we must learn to practice gratitude, and as Americans we have much more that unites us than divides us—particularly as we attempt to safely gather round the table for Thanksgiving.

However, the answer to our brokenness and division is more lastingly found in the observance of Advent—which ultimately invites us to unite around a very different table. Writing in *New Seeds of Contemplation* Thomas Merton describes Advent as a graced period of time when a person can choose to abandon all that is not Christ-like in his or her life: "I begin to live in Christ when I come to the 'end' or to the 'limit' of what divides me from my fellow man; when I am willing to step beyond this end, cross the frontier, become a stranger, enter into the wilderness which is not 'myself,' where I do not breathe the air or hear the familiar, comforting racket of my own city, where I am alone and defenseless in the desert of God."

This year more than ever we are in need of Advent and its call to a deeper spirituality: a spirituality found in the grace of emptying ourselves and prayerfully waiting to receive the Light of Christ in our lives. In doing so, we may find what truly unites us—and we will find abundant reasons for praise and personal thanks giving.

A Quiet Anniversary

COVID-19 has derailed many family celebrations of birthdays and other milestones in the last few months, but there's one on the diocesan level we'd be remiss not to mention—however belatedly. On September 19, amid the many challenges facing the Church and society, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano quietly celebrated his 7th Anniversary as Bishop of Bridgeport.

What a remarkable seven years! During that time Bishop Caggiano has spent every day and nearly every hour working to renew the diocese. He has never wavered in his complete transparency on difficult issues, whether it be Church finances, the sexual abuse crisis, parish reconfiguration, Catholic education and most recently the response to the pandemic.

The bishop has led from the front, made the tough decisions—and challenged and inspired us as a family of faith. We are deeply grateful for his unflinching leadership, his authenticity and his courage!

In a recent Facebook entry published on the Feast Day of St. Augustine, the bishop reflected on the joy and responsibility of serving as the 5th Bishop of Bridgeport.

"My heart is filled with deep gratitude to the Lord and Our Lady as I look back on these last seven years in which I have had the privilege to serve as the Bishop of Bridgeport. Today I celebrate the blessings to collaborate with wonderful and dedicated priests, a curial staff that is second to none, lay leaders who are faithful, generous and committed to the faith in a diocese that is rich in beauty and diversity. My ministry continues to be a daily blessing and joy, despite the lingering challenges we continue to face as a Church.

Saint Augustine offers these words of admonition to anyone who holds an office in the Church: "The day I became a bishop, a burden was laid on my shoulders for which it will be no easy task to render an account. The honors I receive are for me an ever present cause of uneasiness. Indeed, it terrifies me to think that I could take more pleasure in the honor attached to my office, which is where its danger lies, rather than in your salvation which ought to be its fruit. This is why being set above you fills me with alarm, whereas being with you gives me comfort. Danger lies in the first; salvation in the second." ■

EDITOR'S CHOICE

The 2020 Catholic Scouting Awards

BRIDGEPORT—The 2020 Catholic Scout Awards Ceremony for the Diocese of Bridgeport was held on Friday September 18, at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the gathering was by invitation only.

The ceremony began with a Scouts' Color Guard and Pledge of Allegiance followed by their scouting promises and oaths.

Father Robert Kinnally, diocesan scouting chaplain and pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, blessed and awarded the scouting medals to young scouts throughout the diocese.

Awards that were distributed included Light of Christ, Ad Altare Dei (To the Altar of God), Parvuli Dei (Children of God), the Pope Pius XI Award, and the Pope Paul VI National Catholic Unit Excellence Award. ■



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

PASTOR

REVEREND SEAN KULACZ, from Parochial Administrator, to Pastor, Holy Family and Saint Emery Parish, Fairfield. Effective date was October 25.

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

REVEREND JAMES BATES, appointed to Parochial Administrator, Saint Maurice Parish, Stamford for a term of one year. Effective date was November 1.

RESIDENCE

REVEREND ERIC SILVA, from Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilton, to Saint Pius X Parish, Fairfield. Effective date was October 1.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND MICHAEL CLARK, from Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown, to Saint Joseph Parish, Danbury. Effective date was October 19.

REVEREND TOMASZ PRZYBYL, from Holy Name of

Jesus Parish, Stamford, to Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown. Effective date was October 19.

REVEREND DAVID FRANKLIN, from Saint Joseph Parish, Danbury, to Saint Aloysius Parish, New Canaan. Effective date was November 1.

PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

REVEREND SAMUEL KACHUBA, appointed to the Presbyteral Council representing the Ordination Group of 0-14 years. Effective date is January 1, 2021 for a term of three years.

REVEREND JOSEPH MARCELLO, appointed to the Presbyteral Council representing the Ordination Group of 15-29 years Effective date is January 1, 2020 for a term of three years.

REVEREND COREY PICCININO, appointed to the Presbyteral Council representing the Ordination Group of 30+ active years Effective date is January 1, 2021 for a term of three years.

REVEREND ROBERT J. CROFUT, appointed to the Presbyteral Council representing the Ordination Group of the Retired. Effective date is January 1, 2021 for a term of three years.

DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIANS

REVEREND JOSEPH MARCELLO, appointed Director of Seminarians. Effective date was November 4 for a term of one year.

RETIREMENT

DEACON JOHN MAHON, from Saint Philip Parish, Norwalk, to retirement. Effective date was October 28.

SABBATICAL

REVEREND SAMUEL SCOTT, will be on Sabbatical. Effective date was October 1 through November 30.

*Reverend Francis T. Hoffmann
Vicar for Clergy
November, 2020*

FAIRFIELD COUNTY
CATHOLICOffice
of Communications
Diocese of Bridgeport

238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606-2892
telephone | 203.416.1461
fax | 203.374.2044
email | fcc@diobpt.org

Web | www.bridgeportdiocese.com
Facebook | BridgeportDiocese
Twitter | @diobpt

USPS no.: 12-117. Periodical postage paid at Bridgeport, CT 06601, and additional mailing offices.

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Publisher

Brian D. Wallace
Executive Editor bdwallace@diobpt.org

Elizabeth Clyons
Writer/Editor elizabeth.clyons@diobpt.org

Renée Stamatis
Art Director rstamatis@diobpt.org

Ralph Lazzaro
Advertising Manager rlazzaro@diobpt.org

John Grosso
Social Media Leader jgrosso@diobpt.org

Ronnie Lazzaro
Copy Editor (Consultant)

Advertise

To place an ad, contact
Ralph Lazzaro: 203.667.1622

Circulation

Every registered Catholic household in Fairfield County is entitled to a subscription. To cancel, change or add an address, please email: fcc@diobpt.org

Annual Subscription Price

\$20 (within diocese)
\$50 (outside diocese)

Postmaster

send address changes to:
Fairfield County Catholic
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606-2892

© Copyright 2020, Diocese of Bridgeport

Editorial



The power of the ‘chosen family’

A YOUNG WOMAN’S VOICE

BY ELIZABETH CLYONS

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

Jesus Himself said “no prophet is accepted in his own town” (Luke 4:24). I have begun to realize this more and more. As I use my voice to speak out against the injustices I see, it is often the people that “knew you when,” that have the biggest problem with it. Perhaps it is our inherent nature to be resistant to change...to seek reliability in our family members, thinking that they are reflections of us instead of whole persons within themselves. Enter: the importance of the “chosen family.”

Jesus’ disciples were his “chosen family.” They traveled together, ministered together, shared conversations both difficult and deep, and became each other’s closest comrades. They had to leave their families behind in pursuit of their purpose, and I’m sure they faced a lot of backlash for this decision. There is power in these close bonds, formed through a shared journey, forged in adversity.

There is great strength in female friendship (don’t worry, there is absolutely a male equivalent

as well, i.e. the “wolf pack,” but I can only speak from my own experience). We need these close friends who will offer us support, cheer us on, and not only validate us but amplify our voices. When I need reassurance, I know that I can turn to my “girl squad,” always and without fail. Some of these women I’ve known since I was in grammar school. We have seen each other through many life changes, through good times and bad, and our support for each other has remained unwavering.

In her book *Becoming*, Michelle Obama writes about the importance of holding these friendships close and cultivating these relationships. “My friends made me whole,” she writes, “as they always have and always will. They gave me a lift anytime I felt down or frustrated.... They grounded me when I felt the pressures of being judged...and they helped me ride out the big unsettling waves that sometimes

hit without notice.”

There are many strong female friendships in the Bible, as well. Mary turns to Elizabeth when she finds out she is pregnant with Jesus, and they share their joy and take care of each other. Ruth refuses to leave her mother-in-law Ruth alone after her husband passes, vowing, “Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay” (Ruth 1:16). The women were the ones who stayed at the foot of the cross as Jesus was crucified. They held each other up and remained strong.

My friends and I have “friendsgiving” every year—a tradition where we all bring dishes and celebrate a Thanksgiving meal together sometime before we all celebrate with our bio-

logical and extended families. It is this time of year that my heart goes out to those who are estranged from their family members, or perhaps they have lost loved ones who were their closest allies. This time of year can often be a harsh reminder of the division they feel within their families, and can cause a lot of anxiety in and around

upcoming gatherings.

My prayer for those people is that they can find support elsewhere—perhaps their “chosen family.” This year has been hard enough, may we practice love and acceptance this season. As Jesus sat and broke bread with his disciples; as he welcomed the outcast, the zealot, the wayward soul. Let us open our hands and our hearts, and set our tables. ■

“There is power in these close bonds, formed through a shared journey, forged in adversity.”



‘Put God first in everything you do’

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

In a public speaking class I teach, I often use famous speeches to demonstrate the power of the spoken word to students. At the top of my list is Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, delivered during the March on Washington in 1963. Then, there’s John F. Kennedy’s 1961 inaugural address and Winston Churchill’s “This Was Their Finest Hour” speech.

I also use a commencement address delivered by actor Denzel Washington at Dillard University in 2016. His message to the graduating class is pretty straightforward: “Put God first. Put God first in everything you do.” It’s one of the most inspiring speeches you’ll ever

hear in an era when commencement addresses are notorious for being bland and boring.

The last time we listened to the Denzel Washington address, one student tracked down a transcript to share with the class. (To hear the speech, go to https://youtu.be/BxY_eJLbflk)

The problem was that God’s name had been deleted throughout the text and replaced by asterisks. Is the name of God so offensive that it has to be censored by high-tech digital vigilantes, who are working tirelessly to make the world safe and secular for the rest of us?

In modern America, it’s dicey to mention God in public,

especially on college campuses or in the workplace. We live in Orwellian times when it’s perfectly acceptable to use foul language and say offensive things, but mentioning God can get you in trouble with the thought police, and before you know it, you’ll be put under surveillance. There’s no free speech if you have to look over your shoulder every time you mention God.

Imagine for a moment that you’re looking down on this sorry planet—somewhat like God, who is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of this piece of rock and its inhabitants. Now, imagine you see countless dimwits who are arguing about why it’s offensive to say “God” because...because why? Because it might anger an atheist? Because a politician or lawyer or journalist or professor says it violates the separation of Church and State? Or because it might “trigger” some unbelievers to cover their ears and run through the streets screaming in terror?

Our parents used to say there were three topics that polite people don’t bring up in conversation—religion, sex and politics.

Someone didn’t get that memo because all you ever hear about nowadays is politics and sex. Religion is the only topic that’s verboten.

A friend of mine recently discussed career opportunities with a student I knew, and they had a Zoom session because of COVID. As it turned out, the young woman, who is from a devout Catholic family, was sitting beneath a crucifix. My friend spotted it and cautioned the young woman about the importance of having a “neutral background” during teleconference interviews. Why? Because people might be offended by Christ on the cross and employers don’t want to hire someone who’s “too religious,” someone who might create problems for the Human Resources department by evangelizing or—heaven help us—mentioning God.

Recently, I had a telehealth session with a doctor who asked me what I do to reduce stress. “I exercise. I meditate. I do some awkward yoga poses,” I responded. “And I...pray.”

There was an awkward

silence. That “pray” idea went over like a lead balloon. The doctor, who had been nodding her head in agreement with everything I said, stopped nodding when I mentioned prayer. It would have been more socially acceptable if I had replied, “I use recreational marijuana.” And I wasn’t sitting under a crucifix.

There’s a war being waged and many of us are trying to ignore it. It’s a war between people who want to remove God from society and those who should stand up for God every chance they get. Each of us has to ask, “Which side am I on?” There’s no sitting on the sidelines anymore.

Never forget what Jesus said: “Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my Father in heaven.” There’s a lesson in those words for all of us who claim to be Christians.

The time has come, as Denzel Washington said, to “Put God first. Put God first in everything you do.” And don’t be afraid to tell people. ■

St. Francis Xavier Fund

Parish gets needed boost

BRIDGEPORT—When the cold started to set in, Father Andris Alexis Moronta, the new parochial administrator of St. George Church, realized he had an urgent crisis to deal with...less than two months on the job. The 60-year-old boiler in the rectory was broken and there was no heat.

So with the help of the Holy Spirit and the assistance of Kelly Weldon, executive director of Foundations in Faith, he set out to deal with one of his first challenges.

"The boiler had been leaking for almost two years and winter was coming. Plus we have a deficit," he said. "I talked to Kelly, and she said, 'Father, don't worry. I will talk to the board and they will try to help you.'" And they did.

The parish is located on Park Avenue just outside of downtown Bridgeport and many of 440 registered families are financial-

ly challenged and struggling to support themselves during the COVID-19 crisis.

Father Alexis applied for a \$10,000 emergency grant from the St. Francis Xavier Fund for financially challenged parishes, which was approved within hours, and the oil-burning boiler was replaced with a new gas boiler. The heat was restored for the rectory staff, Father Alexis and Father Eugene Szantyr, a retired priest in residence.

But there's more to the story of St. George and its relationship with Foundations in Faith, which is funded by the We Stand With Christ capital campaign. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the parish received a \$30,000 grant from the St. Francis Xavier fund for emergency needs, and recently was given a \$2,000 mini-grant so he could provide religious edu-

cation textbooks to students.

"At St. George, we responded with emergency funding in a time of crisis, and then we dealt with a practical and immediate need when they had no heat by providing money for the boiler," Weldon said. "We also took it to the next step to explore an opportunity to help them with their technology and communications system enhancements. To me, this is an example of the Church engaging in social justice, and it gives us an opportunity to really help our brothers and sisters who are struggling by providing a safety net during times of crisis."

In addition to the new boiler, the parish was given a piano by an anonymous donor with the help of the fund.

Joseph Sindelar of New Canaan, vice chair of Foundations in Faith and vice chair of the St.



FOUNDATIONS IN FAITH'S ST. FRANCIS XAVIER FUND provided much-needed relief to St. George Parish in Bridgeport, whose 60-year-old boiler was broken.

Francis Xavier Committee, talked about how the relationship developed with the parish: "St. George started with a request for help with a broken boiler. Next, we realized they needed help funding their CCD books, which led to an opportunity to donate a piano for their music program. And after walking the grounds, we recognized they needed help upgrading their computer systems so we are in the process of assessing their needs and leveraging the work we did with Blessed Sacrament to upgrade their computer infrastructure."

Most recently, Father was informed about the Christmas Star Program at St. Aloysius Parish to provide gifts for their children.

"Seeing Father's excitement and the immediate impact SFX can offer is such a powerful and rewarding experience for the committee," Sindelar said.

The St. Francis Xavier Fund provides support for vibrant parishes facing economic burdens, Weldon said. These parishes are characterized by strong leadership and meaningful ministries; they are in communities that experience inequities in housing, education, healthcare, employment and opportunity. And in 2020, the fund distributed \$230,000 in COVID-19 Emergency Funding to 11 parishes.

Sindelar said, "My passion is to help these parishes. They are parishes that have lost donations through COVID-19, but in general don't have money to fix something like a broken boiler. And it's exciting to see how SFX is connecting with the parishes. There is a groundswell of support developing as we tell our stories to other members of the diocese. A true passion to help these parishes is deepening among a broad group of people, and the key is getting the story out there."

He said the committee is now facing the challenge of

how to get more people in the diocese involved in the mission, and one of our goals is to integrate parish resources and help create cross-fertilization between parishes.

"Every week we continue to make progress in getting across the message of how much need there is out there and as the story is told, more and more people are stepping up to ask how they can be involved," he said.

In his third month on the job, Father Alexis believes all the pieces are beginning to fall into place despite the challenges.

"One of the challenges for me being a priest during the pandemic is trying to have people come to church and have a sense of faith and community," he said.

In future months, he hopes to address the lack of internet in the classrooms and obtain a projector and computer with the help of Foundations in Faith for the students and to help evangelize young adults. Some 95 percent of the parish is Spanish-speaking.

As a seminarian, he did missionary work in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. He was ordained on March 14, 2002 by Cardinal Edward Egan.

Father Alexis is going to be incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport and has served as parochial vicar at the Cathedral Parish, St. Mary-St. Benedict Parish in Stamford, and St. Ann Church in Bridgeport.

"Thanks to Foundations in Faith, I am able to move along with my mission in the parish," he said.

(Kelly Weldon urged Catholics throughout the diocese to support the St. Francis Xavier Fund on Giving Tuesday, December 1, by going to the online donation page accessible through the donate button on the home page of www.foundationsinfaith.org. Anyone interested in getting involved with the committee's work should contact her at kelly.weldon@foundationsinfaith.org.)

PREP



FAIRFIELD PREP, a Jesuit, Catholic school of excellence, believes in educating the whole person. As a college preparatory school, Prep seeks to transform young boys into men of intellectual competence. That means a rigorous, hands-on education where our students learn both inside and outside of the classroom.



Open House 2020

A Virtual Experience

www.FAIRFIELDPREP.ORG/OPENHOUSE2020

Blessed Father Michael McGivney

Knights of Columbus Founder Beatified

NEW HAVEN—The Catholic Church declared Father Michael J. McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus, “blessed.” He is now one step from canonization as a saint.

Father McGivney was given his title through an apostolic letter from Pope Francis that was read by Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, as part of the Mass of Beatification at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford, Connecticut. A tapestry of Father McGivney’s portrait was unveiled in the cathedral sanctuary after the letter was read.

Pope Francis credited Blessed Michael McGivney for his “zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel and generous concern for his brothers and sisters,” that “made him an outstanding witness of Christian solidarity and fraternal assistance.”

The pope concluded that the Connecticut priest “henceforth be given the title blessed.”

The apostolic letter also announced that the liturgical memorial of Father McGivney will be observed annually in the Archdiocese of Hartford on August 13—the day between Father McGivney’s August 12 birth and death on August 14. Votive Masses in honor of Father McGivney can also be celebrated by priests for Knights of Columbus gatherings with the permission of the local bishop on any day when not superseded by another observance on the liturgical calendar.

Afterwards, Hartford Archbishop Leonard Blair offered words of appreciation to the pope.

The coronavirus pandemic necessitated that participation at the Mass was by invitation-only with the faithful able to watch the event on television or online.

Known in his day as a holy parish priest of the then-Diocese of Hartford, Father McGivney labored tirelessly to improve the condition of his 19th-century immigrant community in Connecticut. He founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882 to provide financial support for widows and orphans and to keep Catholic men and their families close to their faith at a time of widespread anti-Catholic bigotry.

The fledgling Knights of Columbus soon became a major

force of evangelization, charity, racial integration and the defense of religious freedom. Today there are 2 million members in more than 16,000 K of C councils located in all 50 U.S. states, Canada, Mexico, and the Philippines, as well as in recently established councils in Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, France and South Korea.

“Nearly a century before the Second Vatican Council, Father McGivney’s vision empowered the laity to serve the Church and their neighbors in a new way—through a greater commitment to charity—and to build effective cooperation between laity and clergy,” said Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. “Today’s beatification serves to encourage that vision of lay leadership and fellowship.”

The Vatican announced on May 27 that Pope Francis approved a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Father McGivney, paving the way to beatification.

The miracle involved the healing of Michael Schachle, now 5-years old, from a fatal case of fetal hydrops, which causes a dangerous accumulation of fluids throughout the body of an unborn child. Michael’s parents, Daniel and Michelle Schachle of Dickson, Tennessee, responded to the seemingly hopeless situation by asking friends, family and Knights to join them in prayer for the intercession of Father McGivney. Michael’s subsequent healing had no medical or scientific explanation. Daniel and Michelle named their son Michael McGivney Schachle in thanksgiving for their son’s survival.

An additional miracle attributed to Father McGivney’s intercession will be required for canonization.

In August, the Knights announced that their Museum in New Haven, Conn, will be transformed into the Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center to serve pilgrims who travel to New Haven to learn about Father McGivney and pray at St. Mary’s Church in New Haven, where Father McGivney’s remains are entombed.

About Father McGivney Born of Irish immigrant parents in 1852 in Waterbury, Connecticut, Father McGivney



was a central figure in the dramatic growth of the Church in the United States in the late 19th century. Ordained in Baltimore in 1877, he ministered to a heavily Irish-American and immigrant community in Connecticut. At a time of anti-Catholic sentiment, he worked tirelessly to offer practical solutions to their many problems—spiritual and temporal alike. With a group of the leading

Catholic men of New Haven, he founded the Knights to provide spiritual support for Catholic men and financial resources for families that had suffered the loss of their breadwinner.

Father McGivney died of pneumonia on August 14, 1890—two days after his 38th birthday—after falling ill amid a pandemic. Recent scientific evidence indicates that the pandemic—like

the current one—may have been caused by a coronavirus.

Known by his contemporaries for his devotion to the faith and his embodiment of the characteristics of the Good Samaritan, Father McGivney remains an important role model for parish priests around the world.

In March 2008, Father McGivney was declared a Venerable Servant of God by Pope Benedict XVI, who during his visit to New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral cited the “remarkable accomplishment of that exemplary American priest, the Venerable Michael McGivney, whose vision and zeal led to the establishment of the Knights of Columbus.”

Two recent books tell the story of Father McGivney and his legacy: *Parish Priest* (2006), his biography; and *The Knights of Columbus: An Illustrated History* (2020).

More information is available at www.FatherMcGivney.org. ■

McGivney Center was named for Blessed’s brothers

By JOE PISANI

At St. Joseph’s Cemetery in Waterbury, three priests were buried with their parents in a grave marked by an 8-foot monument with a magnificent granite cross—Msgr. Patrick J. McGivney, Msgr. John J. McGivney and Venerable Michael J. McGivney, whose remains were moved to the Church of St. Mary in New Haven on the 100th anniversary of the Knights of Columbus, which he founded.

While it is often assumed the McGivney Community Center on the campus of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Bridgeport was named after Father Michael McGivney, who will be beatified on October 31 during a Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford, it is actually named after his two younger brothers, Patrick and John, who played an important role in the history of St. Charles.

The new church was

formed from the northern section of St. Mary parish on the East Side in 1902 to serve Irish immigrants. Father William Lynch, who was named the first pastor, laid the cornerstone for a school in 1903 and began construction on the lower church in 1907.

In 1913, he was succeeded by Msgr. Patrick McGivney, who was responsible for construction of the convent in 1921, and the upper church, which was completed in 1925 at a cost of \$400,000. The impressive Tudor Gothic structure seated 1,400 and had stained glass windows from Bavaria, statues carved from Italian marble, main and side altars, and reproductions of paintings in St. Peter’s Basilica. For 25 years, Msgr. McGivney also served as Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, and during World War I, he visited the battlefields and hospitals in France.

When he died in 1928, his younger brother John succeeded him as pastor and Supreme Chaplain. Msgr. John McGivney,

who served until 1939, was responsible for building the rectory and parish hall, which would eventually become the McGivney Center.

The McGivney brothers were credited with making St. Charles one of the finest parishes in New England with five buildings occupying an entire city block. Today, the parish is one of the most vibrant in the diocese and serves immigrants from various ethnic communities, including Latinos from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, Haitians, Brazilians, Laotians and Vietnamese.

The McGivney Center is now, as it has been since its founding, committed to the community and loyal to its motto, “Kids at McGivney don’t come and go, they come and grow.”

What began as a summer camp program in 1992 for 50 kids now serves more than 400 youth annually; the after-school

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Blessed Father Michael McGivney

Diocesan Faithful join in the celebration

NEW HAVEN—For many years, George Ribellino Jr. of the St. Matthew Knights of Columbus Council 14260, has been praying to Father Michael McGivney...for personal and family intentions, for a cousin who is battling a rare disease and for the priest's canonization.

And so it was a special occasion on October 31, when he and five fellow Knights were asked to serve in an honor guard to celebrate the beatification of this Connecticut parish priest, who founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary Parish in 1882. Now, the Waterbury native who began what would become a worldwide Catholic fraternal organization is one step away from becoming a saint.

The church, where Blessed Father McGivney is interred in a sarcophagus, held a week-end-long festival, and on Saturday morning live-streamed the liturgy of beatification, which was celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford.

Father Jordan Lenaghan, OP, who is in residence at St. Mary's and executive director of University Religious Life at Quinnipiac University, said, "Father McGivney shows us that the Gospel is not ultimately going to be found in abstract ideas, but in concrete interaction with people. He saw the dignity of each human person made in the image and likeness of God in those people who society at the time didn't count as important. I think that is

why he is so important."

Father Lenaghan said he finds it humbling and somewhat overwhelming to serve in the same parish where Blessed Michael McGivney was assistant pastor more than 140 years ago and whose work did so much to change his parish, his city, his state, his country and ultimately the world.

"For 140 years, the Dominicans have been in this place as successors of the work of Father McGivney and the other priests of the Archdiocese of Hartford," he said. "And it's sometimes hard to get my mind around that."

Father McGivney, who is the first U.S. priest to be declared "blessed," died of pneumonia during the Russian Flu pandemic on August 14, 1890 at age 38, while he was pastor of St. Thomas Church in Thomaston.

On a chilly Saturday morning, the faithful—priests, Knights, parishioners and students—from around the state stood outside the neo-Gothic church to watch the Mass of Beatification on a large-screen TV. When the decree declaring Father McGivney blessed was read, applause erupted from the crowd and the church bells began to resound as a massive banner with his image was unveiled above the main entrance of the church.

Afterward, there was a procession into the church with a major relic of Blessed Michael



McGivney—part of his spine—which had been authenticated by the Vatican. It was displayed for veneration in a reliquary at the altar and pilgrims knelt in prayer before it. Bishop John Barres of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y., led pilgrims in the rosary at the tomb of Father McGivney and later celebrated Mass.

The beatification of the Knights' founder was a joyful and deeply personal occasion for many of the faithful in Fairfield County.

Theodore Pacanowski, program director of the Connecticut State Council Knights of Columbus and member of St. Catherine of Siena Council 5806 in Trumbull, said, "For me, it's a once-in-a-lifetime day. I've been a member of the Knights for over 25 years, so I have built up a devotion to Father McGivney and constantly pray to him for

various things...for the family especially during times of sickness, for jobs or our grown kids and their families that they turn out all right."

He said it was especially significant that a parish priest was moving closer to sainthood and would be counted among those towering saints that we sometimes consider holy beyond our imagination.

"We can associate with a parish priest," he said. "Father McGivney was a real, live person, and we can look at the things he did and say to ourselves, 'Gee, maybe I can model my life like that and maybe one of these days, I can be blessed in heaven with him.'"

It was also a personally meaningful day for Steve Giles of Council 185 at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, who has been praying to Father McGivney for almost 15 years. It all began when his job was transferred from Maryland to Norwalk.

"I was at the Basilica in Baltimore, and I prayed that my family would find a great place to live and that we would be in a great parish," he recalled. "And we were fortunate to land at St. Rose because of my prayers to Father McGivney."

Steve, whose father had been a Knight later joined the fraternity.

"I believe strongly in his presence and the graces he has given me through the years to be a good Catholic gentleman," he said. "To me, Father McGivney exemplifies taking care of those in need, he exemplifies compassion, he exemplifies believing in the grace of God so that you will be able to do a lot more than you think you can do ... through prayer."

A Knight for 34 years, Joe Rahtelli is treasurer of the Connecticut State Council and a member of St. Rose of Lima Council 185. "It's an important day for everybody," he said. "We have a strong devotion to Father McGivney and he has always been an important part of our lives."

Emma Ryder of the Parish of St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull is engaged to David St. Hilaire, a fifth-generation Knight and past Grand Knight at St. Mary's. She credits him with inspiring her devotion to Father McGivney.

"We just finished the novena before the beatification, and I am learning more about him," she said. "He has been part of our relationship the whole time."

Next June, the couple will be married at St. Mary's, and Emma says, "We are excited to have a Blessed present for our wedding."

George Ribellino Jr., the Faithful Navigator of Bishop Fenwick Assembly 100, who came with his colleagues to serve as honor guard, said, "We are so honored that they asked us to be part of this great event. I pray to Father McGivney every day. In fact I am praying for his intercession for my cousin who is battling a rare disease. He was not supposed to live past 21 and now he is 29. Father McGivney is a man I admire, and any man who is a Knight should want to be like him."

The festival also had all-night adoration and a prayer vigil, a panel discussion titled, "Father McGivney, a Model for Our Times," a candlelight procession, a family rosary with the testimony of the Schachle family who prayed for a miracle for their unborn son. The miracle that was approved by Pope Francis and led to Father McGivney's beatification involved the healing in utero of their son Mickey, now five, of fetal hydrops, which is an almost always fatal condition. A second miracle is required for Blessed Michael McGivney to be canonized and declared a saint.

On Sunday, Baltimore Archbishop William Lori, Supreme Chaplain of the Knights, and Archbishop Leonard Blair of Hartford celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving at St. Mary's. ■

MC GIVNEY CENTER FROM PAGE 13

program draws students from 20 elementary schools and offers homework assistance, enrichment and recreation.

The summer program serves students, from K-to-8, providing athletic, academic and enrichment activities to stem the "summer learning loss" so that students can return to school well prepared in September.

It all began some 30 years ago, when two men from St. Catherine of Siena Church in Trumbull went on retreat...and discussed how they could make their small part of the world a better place. Tony Forni was a retired GE executive, and Greg

Salmini was president of J.P. Salmini Company in Milford.

Greg listened as Tony told him about the food pantry at St. Charles Church and about an idea he had to help youth on the East Side.

"Tony had looked at the gym at St. Charles, and it was a mess," Greg recalled. "He said, 'Wouldn't it be great to refurbish this building so kids could have a safe place to go?'"

When Tony had an idea, he pursued it with enthusiasm. He and Greg enlisted Stuart Schloss of Paint Products, and approached the pastor, Msgr. Joseph Potter, who gave them the green light. They got a grant from

the state and they hired contractors. In less than a year, the renovations were complete, and they named a director.

Msgr. Potter reached out to his fellow clergy in a letter dated May 22, 1991, which said, "This new McGivney Center, named after two former pastors of St. Charles, was incorporated to serve all the underprivileged of the East Side. St. Charles gymnasium, which has been serving the neighborhood children for the past few years, is now being leased to the McGivney Center for one dollar a year and is currently under renovation with money from a state grant." ■

St. Margaret's Shrine

A refuge for prayer and reflection

By **BRIAN WALLACE**

BRIDGEPORT—St. Margaret Shrine has always been a popular destination during Advent and the Christmas Season, but this year in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, many visitors especially appreciate the outdoor opportunities for prayer and reflection.

Weather permitting, the shrine offers outdoor Mass on Sundays at 11 am and is open each day for visitors. Convenient off-street parking allows easy access to the rustic and reverent grounds of the Shrine, located a minute from the Bridgeport and Fairfield town line.

The natural hillside setting with its stone paths includes many life-sized carved holy stat-

ues embedded in a wide variety of grottos and alcoves that offer beautiful and unexpected opportunities for quiet prayer and petition.

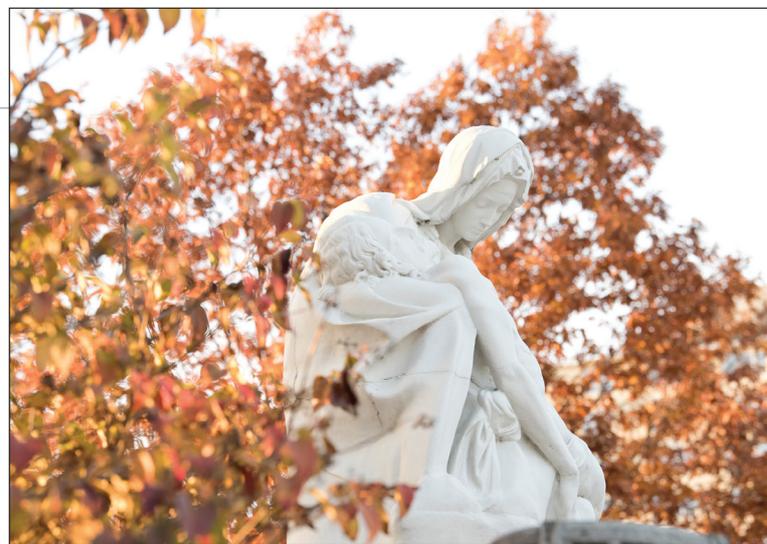
Deacon Don Foust, administrator of the Shrine, says the Bridgeport landmark has been gradually rebuilt and expanded over the past decade and is now a thriving worship community in addition to serving as a diocesan shrine. Father Giandomenioco Flora is rector of the Shrine.

The Shrine's come back is one of the good news stories of the diocese. Renovations and additions in recent years, include outdoor shrines to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of LaVang and St. Pio of Pietrelcina, along with a Veterans Memorial and a power-

ful new memorial to the children who died at Sandy Hook.

Deacon Foust is excited by what will be the newest addition to St. Margaret's, a shrine to the Blessed Father Michael McGivney sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

With the Advent season beginning on November 29 this year, Deacon Faust says that he expects that the Neapolitan "Presepio," or Nativity scene, carved into a hillside cave with figures depicting life in 18th century Naples will once again be very popular with visitors. The nativity scene includes figures depicting everyday life in Naples during the 18th century, from milkmaids to bakers, cobblers to blacksmiths. Each figure, down to the freshly



baked loaves of bread and the butcher's trimmed meats hanging on a rail, is a finely crafted miniature work of art.

"Any person who goes to see a presepio anywhere in the world goes to see the source of our joy—Jesus Christ, our Lord," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, when he blessed the classic Neapolitan Presepio at St. Margaret's Shrine in Bridgeport in 2015.

Deacon Foust says that the new lighting installed at the shrine makes it particularly beau-

tiful at dawn and dusk as people pass by.

"The twilight time is awesome," said Deacon Foust who is deeply grateful to all those who have given generously of their time and resources to revitalize the shrine.

(St. Margaret Shrine is located at 2523 Park Ave. Bridgeport, CT 06604-1402. For information on its daily Mass schedule and visiting the shrine, call: 203.333.9627 or email: saintmargaretshrine@gmail.com. Visit the Website at: stmargaretshrine.org.)

ST JOSEPH
HIGH SCHOOL
INVITES YOU

Maroon & Gold Gala

The Big Night In

VIRTUAL EVENT
NOVEMBER 21, 2020
6:30PM

Maroon & Gold Gala Honorees:



For Leadership

William J Fitzgerald. After twelve years as Head of School, we recognize our recently retired "Dr Fitz", whose tenure transformed our campus as he led with congeniality, transparency, and grace. He has encouraged a tradition of service among our students and staff that has since extended to the global community. His enthusiasm for our mission and vision will forever be valued by those who were lucky enough to work alongside him.



For Community

Patrick '83 & Mary Ellen '83 Donegan P '11, '11, '14, '17, '24. Steadfast supporters of St Joes since they met here as students, the Donegans have continued to stay involved as proud Cadets, along with their five children who attend(ed) St Joes as well. Whether it's volunteering on various committees, or lending a hand whenever they can, the Donegans exemplify faith and family – and St Joes is lucky to call them our own.

The St Joseph High School Gala is a scholarship event that casts a spotlight on the school's strong commitment to community service and leadership. It is a fabulous evening of entertainment and celebration, along with live & silent auctions.

The event is open to public and all proceeds benefit St Joseph High School's Scholarship Fund.

For Tickets, Sponsorships, Donations, and Additional Information, visit sjcadets.org/gala

Parish News

A ministry of charity—religious articles for sale

By JOE PISANI

STAMFORD—When Sharon MacKnight was a young girl growing up in Pawcatuck, Conn., her mother would dress her up in her finest clothes on Sunday morning so she could go to 6 am Mass with her father at St. Michael the Archangel Church. It was the highlight of her week, and years later, the source of many fond memories.

When Sharon made her First Communion, her aunt Marion gave her a statue of Our Lady of Grace, which she still has after 70 years.

“She’s got a few bumps and bruises, but she’s still with me,” Sharon said. “Wherever I’ve lived, from Connecticut to California, she has traveled with me. From the East Coast to the West Coast, and now she’s in my bedroom on my bookcase, watching over me.”

For the past eight years, she has instilled that same love for holy articles in families and young people at St. Mary of Stamford Parish at 566 Elm Street. Each week, as part of her ministry, Sharon sets up a table after Mass and sells rosaries, medals, bracelets, Bibles, spiritual books and statues, many of which she has brought home from pilgrimages to

Marian sites such as Fatima and Lourdes and the Holy Land.

She purchases the items with her own money, sells them and donates all the proceeds to the parish, as an act of love and gratitude.

“This is a way of thanking Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary for watching over me in my professional career and my private life,” Sharon says. “I always wanted to be a wife and mommy, but that wasn’t in the plan. The reason I can do this is I have no family, and I’m a saver. My parents, George and Helen, grew up in the Great Depression, and from the time I was a little girl, I learned to save and that’s what I did.”

“Our parish community is blessed to have a parishioner like Sharon MacKnight. She has consistently given of herself for the benefit of our community,” said Father Gustavo Falla, pastor. “We thank God for Sharon’s commitment and pray that many will be inspired by her dedication.”

He said that Sharon “gives 100 percent” to the parish and also in her work at the Bennett Cancer Center in Stamford.

“At St. Mary’s, which is now officially merged with St. Benedict’s, Sharon is not just the religious goods sales lady, but also the photographer, the shop-

per and the friend.”

After graduating from Stonington High School, Sharon enrolled in Colby Junior College in New London, N.H., and graduated with a bachelor’s degree to become a registered medical technologist.

“Over 48 years, I worked in labs at different hospitals, and the reason I am doing what I am doing now is to thank the Lord for guiding me every day of my life because I dealt with people’s lives every day and helped physicians make the right diagnoses for people,” she says.

During her career, she worked at Hartford Hospital, Mercy Hospital in San Diego, and for 42 years at Stamford Hospital, where she was the supervisor of the hematology department.

Sharon is also the church photographer for the St. Mary-St. Benedict parish, where she has been a member for 35 years.

“When I asked Father Falla if I could bring my religious articles in the back of the church, I had no idea what would happen,” she says. “People coming into church have to walk by me. I sell statues, Rosary beads and Bibles, and I believe I have helped people increase their faith in the Lord. You just can’t imagine. One Sunday alone, I



SHARON MACKNIGHT of St. Mary Parish in Stamford sets up a table after Mass and sells rosaries, medals, bracelets, Bibles, spiritual books and statues, many of which she has brought home from pilgrimages to Marian sites such as Fatima and Lourdes and the Holy Land.

sold five statues of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Lourdes.”

And many of her statues come from pilgrimage sites around the world because Sharon loves to travel and goes often to Portugal, Spain, France and Israel.

“I purchase religious articles wherever I go and donate everything to St. Mary’s,” she said.

She often goes on pilgrimages with Father Arthur C. Mollenhauer, J.C.L., the judicial vicar of the Tribunal of the Diocese of Bridgeport, and assists him in arranging the tours.

“One year ago, I was in Lourdes, France and a few days before that in Fatima, Portugal, and then we traveled to Barcelona and visited Our Lady of Monserrat,” she said. Last February they began a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to cancel a trip to Oberammergau, Germany, to see the famous Passion Play which has been held every decade since 1634.

Over the years, she has developed a clientele among parishioners, many of whom come back and ask if she can find a particular item for them. Each week, she can have up to 20 customers. In addition, she is responsible for a religious articles display at the parish center with items in a glass

case. When people come in during the week, they are able to purchase items through the parish office, which is particularly important since there are no longer any religious stores in the area.

“Sometimes people want something, but don’t have the money yet,” she says, “so I say ‘Take it and give me the money when you can.’ Nobody is going to cheat the Lord. I don’t even write it down because I know when they have the money, they will give it to me. I trust them.”

Spanish Bibles are very popular, along with gifts for First Communion, Confirmation, weddings and birthdays. With Christmas approaching, there will be a selection of nativity scenes and holiday items from the Holy Land.

Very often, little children come up to her table and are mesmerized by the display, especially the statues of the Blessed Mother. They also love the St. Benedict bracelets and rosary beads.

“People often sacrifice to buy things, but it helps the church during the pandemic because collections are down,” she says.

Most importantly, she says, “Religious articles are a way for people to worship Our Lord and honor the Blessed Mother. It encourages them to pray to God, especially during our troubled times.”

Prayer Service honors veterans

STAMFORD—On Tuesday, November 10, The Catholic Academy of Stamford hosted a Veterans Day Prayer Service to honor our nation’s veterans. Attending this ceremony were several local veterans, including those from the Stamford Catholic War Veterans Post and parents and grandparents of students at The Catholic Academy of Stamford.

The prayer service was led by Father John Connaughton and the 8th grade class. During the prayer service, Father John blessed a new flag for the school. At the conclusion of the service, students raised the newly blessed flag and students placed their Veterans Day rocks (which they created in art class) around the flagpole.



Parish News

Kids love St. Greg's 'Forest of Fear'

By KATHY-ANN GOBIN

DANBURY—Wearing masks—both decorative and real—hundreds of people ventured into the woods behind St. Gregory the Great Parish for a socially-distanced night of fear-induced fun.

The second annual "Forest of Fear," a quarter mile wooded trail of the hair-raising unexpected is filled with thrills and shills for all who dare to enter the Great Plain Road Halloween attraction.

"Kids need to have fun," said Pastor Father Michael Dunn, as he greeted visitors arriving on opening night. "It's a big fundraiser, too."

Last year, thousands visited the event which raised about \$20,000 for the parish including scholarships for St. Gregory School. It was such a success, that this year more attractions were added. Father Dunn said they also extended the event by one night and increased the entrance fee to \$15 per person.

"It's very professionally done," said Father Dunn, who worked with Gene McNamara, Bob Novella and Dave Knight to design and develop the Forest of Fear. McNamara is a parishioner and was involved in creating a popular corn maze in the neighboring town of Brookfield, years ago.

Father Dunn said he has fond family memories of Halloween and this is an opportunity to help create those kinds of memories for other families while also benefiting the parish.

"My dad used to take us around as kids to Halloween attractions. I remember how fun

it was as a kid and there's not a lot of fun things for kids to do nowadays with the pandemic," he said.

Father Dunn, who created a similar experience during his time at St. Mary's in Bethel, said the effort is a parish and community collaboration with parish members and community businesses donating money or props to create the spooky experience.

The elaborate wooded trail, which took months to construct, promises to be quite a treat for anyone looking for a safe environment for some Halloween fun.

All safety guidelines and precautions were followed in accordance with the Diocese of Bridgeport.

All volunteers were temperature screened prior to participating in the event and for contact tracing purposes. Protective face coverings are required for all guests and are always worn by all staff.

The event also enforces social distancing, in queue lines as well as inside the Forest of Fear. Groups can walk the trail together, but no groups are combined, and attendees must maintain at least six feet from the group in front of them.

Sanitizing stations are available and there is a separate entrance and exit both decorated with pumpkins carved by students at the school.

"Some people get scared and want to run through the trail, others get scared and freeze in place," said Terry Kennen, a secretary at the school and one of the many volunteers who make the Forest of Fear a success.

Kennen, dressed as a spider



ST. GREG'S FOREST OF FEAR—The second annual "Forest of Fear," a quarter mile wooded trail of the hair-raising unexpected is filled with thrills and shills for all who dare to enter the Great Plain Road Halloween attraction.

greeted guests to the event, reassuring youngsters and their families that the trail is a lot of fun and only gets truly scary when the sun goes down.

During the first hour of the five-night three weekend event, children, some wearing their Halloween best including little princesses, action heroes and monsters and their families or anyone who prefers a "no-scare" experience, are greeted by friendly ghouls and goblins waving and smiling to greet them. Following the children's hour, the trail lives up to its name.

Visitors can expect to walk through a corn maze with scarecrows and gruesome monsters lurking about, find an abandoned cabin with the unexpected inside and, of course, a Forest of Fear would not be complete without a fog-filled graveyard of the unknown. Leaves rustling underfoot, the cackle of a witch in the distance and bone-chilling screams are all a part of the Forest of Fear.

The creativity of illusions with the appropriate accompanying eerie sounds or music will trick the mind during this walk through the

woods. It is quite the treat.

"It's something fun, given the pandemic right now," said John Esposito, Danbury Councilman, who was attending the event with his family.

Father Dunn, who initially greeted visitors as they arrived and who helped create the non-traditional corn maze portion of the trail, vanished to get into costume to play an active part in the Forest of Fear.

Children were huddled together trying to figure out which costumed character was their teacher as they entered the trail with nervous laughter of anticipation.

"We went last year in the kid version, so we thought we'd try something different and go at night," said eighth-grader Holden Hafkimeyer, who was waiting in line with his brother and brother's friend.

Fifth-grader Shayleigh Barrett enjoyed the trail especially the clowns, the corn maze and the one of a kind stuffed animal freaky feature.

"I'm always surprised about the effort," said Shayleigh's mom, Suzanne said. "It's all church members and school members who volunteer their time. It's totally worth bringing the family for Halloween." ■

THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE PRESENTS

SUNDAY FAMILY ROSARY

As we navigate these crazy times, please gather your family and join us in prayer. Want to lead? Sign up for any available Sunday online.

EVERY SUNDAY @ 7:30 PM

FIND THE LINK AND VOLUNTEER ONLINE
WWW.FORMATIONREIMAGINED.ORG

Your Gold For Good, It is back!

Only this time you can do it from the privacy and safety of your home.

Your Gold For Good will come to your house, appraise what you want to sell, pay you and make a separate check to the charity you choose.

We will put money in your pocket and make a donation to the diocesan charity, parish or school of your choice.

With gold and silver on the rise this is a good time to sell your broken and unwanted gold and silver and be glad you did.

Gold is almost at an all-time high!

To schedule an appointment or if you have questions, please call 203.433.1717

All CDC and CT COVID-19 regulations are being followed.

Parish News

At a young age she was drawn to the Church

By JOE PISANI

STAMFORD—When Juanita I. Evans was in elementary school, her friends would always complain, “I gotta go to CCD, I hate to go to CCD, I don’t wanna go to CCD.”

So she asked them what CCD was all about, and they showed her their catechism and she immediately fell in love with it. She read the book and concluded, “I want to go to CCD!” Even though she was Baptist.

Then, as Juanita describes it, her girlfriends hatched a scheme that went something like this: “We can all go together. Our mom will call your mom and say it’s OK, and you can come with us...and then we’ll tell Sister that you’re our cousin from Italy.”

“Fine, let’s do it,” I told them. And I started going with them to catechism class every week at Sacred Heart School,” Juanita said. “They thought it was boring, but I thought it was interesting and kept going.”

Thus began a journey that led her to the Catholic Church, and every step of the way, the Holy Spirit intensified her fervor.

One afternoon, she and her late sister Jean were walking by a Stamford church and she said, “I want to see what’s going on in there.” They followed a woman inside, and the first thing they saw when they entered was an immense mural of the Risen Christ towering above the taber-

nacle in all his majesty and glory.

“I was awestruck,” she said. “I wanted to learn more. I had to see what they were doing.”

Her cousin who was Catholic introduced her to St. John the Evangelist Church on Atlantic Street, and her fascination with the faith increased.

“When I walked into that big church downtown, I was amazed at what I was seeing,” she said. “The Mass started and I was just sitting there—this little elementary school kid—looking around and listening, and then I decided right there, ‘I’m going to be a Catholic.’”

Easier said than done for a child who went to the Baptist church each week with her parents.

“Even though I went there with my family, all the time I wanted to be somewhere else,” she said.

During those early years, she took advantage of every opportunity to learn more about the Catholic faith. She would go inside St. John’s and listen to people praying the rosary. Then, her friend’s mother gave her a set of plastic beads to use.

What began as a fascination at six years old continued for 13 more years. She went on retreats, she read Church history, she studied the sacraments and she became familiar with the saints. She took courses and read the Old Testament, the New Testament and Vatican II documents to acquire as much knowledge as possible.

At one point, she went to Just

Books in Greenwich, looking for a text on Canon Law and the owner told her, “They’re very expensive, but there’s a deacon up the line who is buying a new one and wants to sell his old one.” She bought it as a birthday present to herself. She also treated herself to several catechisms.

“One summer I spent \$500 on books and told the owner, ‘I’m going to be in the poor house’ and he responded, ‘At least you’ll have something to read.’”

During her period of inquiry, she also learned about racism in the Church and how African-American seminarians weren’t allowed to study for the priesthood with white seminarians. And later, when she took a trip through the Southern states, she discovered there were churches for white Catholics and there were churches for black Catholics, which was something she had not encountered in Connecticut.

However, she was inspired by the example of St. Katharine Drexel, the Philadelphia heiress who in 1890 left behind an inheritance of \$7 million to enter the religious life and begin the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, dedicated to working with African Americans and Native Americans. She even visited her convent in Pennsylvania and went on a retreat.

“I said to myself, ‘What a wonderful, rich religion this is—in its history, its love of charitable

works, its hospitals, its orphanages, in everything,’” she said. “There were so many great theologians and saints, and some were just ordinary people who lived their lives in a saintly manner. Many of them were treated badly, but they never gave up their faith, and that’s how I feel about it.”

Juanita eventually entered the RCIA program at St. Paul Church in Glenville, where Father William Platt gave her the sacraments of initiation. The occasion marked a new beginning in her life, and receiving the Eucharist for the first time was a momentous event.

“When I realized exactly what it is, my life changed,” she said. “It’s not just a white host—it’s truly the Body of Christ and the wine is truly the Blood of Christ.”

Very often when she goes into the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, where she is a parishioner, she looks up at a stained glass window depicting the Crucifixion.

“In that window, Christ is being crucified, and there are angels on either side, holding chalices to catch his Precious Blood...that tells you something about our faith,” she says.

Juanita, who had a career as an elementary school teacher in Connecticut and Virginia, today works as a receptionist at the Basilica and is known throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport for her volunteer work. She is a familiar face at diocesan events, from ordi-



JUANITA I. EVANS

nations to liturgical celebrations, and she is always on hand to help out in any way, whether it involves greeting people at the entrance or arranging for overflow parking with the police department.

Father Joseph Gill, the parochial vicar at the Basilica, said, “Rarely have I met someone as dedicated to her job or to her Catholic faith as Juanita. She has given of herself and continues to do so, so that the Church can accomplish its mission. It is a joy working with her!”

“I volunteer because I am glad to be of service,” she says. “I always wanted to work in a church, so I do whatever I’m asked. I enjoy being in the Lord’s House and doing the Lord’s work.”

When she looks back on the journey that led her to the Catholic Church and took her down many roads to where she is today, she says: “I wouldn’t give up my faith for anything. You could not drag me out of here. The only way I’m leaving the Catholic Church is in a box. That’s how strongly I feel about it...and that’s what I tell people who don’t understand what it means to be Catholic.” ■

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. *(make request)* There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee *(three times)*. Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands *(three times)*. Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful. CB

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. *(make request)* There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee *(three times)*. Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands *(three times)*. Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful. CM

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. *(make request)* There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee *(three times)*. Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands *(three times)*. Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful. CS

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. *(make request)* There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee *(three times)*. Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands *(three times)*. Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful. ES

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. *(make request)* There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee *(three times)*. Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands *(three times)*. Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful. JCS

Foundations in Faith

Funding initiatives that work for racial justice

By MEG MCCAFFREY

BRIDGEPORT—To answer Bishop Frank J. Caggiano's call to action, Foundations In Faith is funding three initiatives that are part of its continuing work for racial justice.

The efforts come in response to Bishop Caggiano's stirring call "for people of conscience" to work tirelessly for true change and produce "a real commitment" to effect justice, equality, charity,

understanding, dialogue, respect and peace-making in every corner of our society.

The bishop's words were shared in his June 7, 2020 homily, one delivered as the pandemic further exposed instances of economic inequalities, systemic racism and the dire need for social justice.

"The individuals leading these initiatives are doing great work on this critical call to action and we enthusiastically approved the full funding of their grant requests," said Kelly Weldon,

director of Foundations in Faith, which supports pastoral ministries in the Diocese of Bridgeport. "The intention of these initiatives is to lead to real action and real conversion."

Another key goal is to foster anti-racism training at all levels of faith formation in the Church.

The Leadership Institute was awarded a general operating support grant for \$4,500 to entirely fund one of the initia-

tives, a six-part webinar series, "Conversations About Race," which occurred each Thursday from late July through early September. It engaged not only the faithful in the diocese but people nationwide. Each webinar featured conversations with Roman Catholic Church leaders on how race relations can be improved in our homes, community and the Church.

Each conversation was moderated by the diocesan Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, which the bishop asked

to develop strategic goals and practical steps to combat racism. Members include Ms. Weldon and Dr. Patrick Donovan, director of the Leadership Institute, which offers creative opportunities for ministry personnel to learn more about the Catholic faith and discover new ways to shape the next generation of disciples in Fairfield County.

"It might be easy for us to host an event or webinars like we did and say that's enough," said Dr. Donovan. "But if we really are committed to real change and lifelong learning and formation, we must continue the hard conversations. These problems are not going to disappear overnight. It can't be one and done."

Foundations In Faith also awarded a \$2,000 grant to The Leadership Institute to establish a committee comprised of young people—now called Young Adult Catholics Against Racism—to guide and work in tandem with the Ad Hoc Committee's anti-racism efforts.

The plan is for the young members to gather regularly separate from the Ad Hoc Committee to discuss their perspectives on the current state of race relations, and to in turn offer a strategic vision and practical suggestions

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

"If we are committed to real change, we must continue lifelong learning and the hard conversations."

Unpacking the new Directory for Catechesis

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT— In June 2020, The Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization released a new Directory for Catechesis. The new Directory for Catechesis presents fundamental theological-pastoral principles for the ministry of catechesis while responding to current social conditions and cultural forces that shape the church's communication of the faith.

The Leadership Institute has released great resources and developed a webinar series on the topic.

The directory affirms the presentation of the Catholic faith articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a sound point of reference for instruction while drawing deeply from Scripture and the writings of recent popes, especially Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*.

The video series presented on the Institute's website will provide insights into eight new emphases which the directory proposes.

The first part of the directory is entitled "Catechesis in the evangelizing mission of the Church," and treats the formation of catechists.

The directory points out that in order to be credible witnesses of the faith, catechists have to be "catechized before being catechists." This involves working with gratuitousness, dedication and integrity, according to a missionary spirituality that is an antidote from "sterile pastoral fatigue."

Catechists are also called to be vigilant in performing their specific task "so that absolute protection is guaranteed to every person, particularly to minors and vulnerable person."

The Leadership Institute has developed a series of webinars, led by catechetical experts from around the country, to help members of our diocese learn more about the directory and its implications for teachers, parents, priests and catechists.

Webinar topics will include The Catechetical Process, The Catechetical Community, and a summary and discussion of implications of the directory on the community.

(To join these webinars, please visit: www.formationreimagined.org/new-directory-for-catechesis.)

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. (make request) There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful.

DC

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. (make request) There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful.

GMG

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. (make request) There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful.

LP

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. (make request) There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful.

PAF

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech You from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. (make request) There are none that can withstand Your Power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you. Grateful.

RM



27 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR

Christmas

— 2020 —

THESE ARE INTERESTING TIMES.

Preparing for the coming of the Christ child during a global pandemic brings its own set of challenges. Many families will not be able to gather as usual, and many of those who usually serve others in shelters and on the streets might not be able to do so. That means our own preparation must look different this year too. **Here are twenty-seven ways your family can prepare for the Incarnation.**

1

Be Reconciled.

There is no better way to enter the season of waiting than by healing the relationship between ourselves and God. Though our parishes are only open at limited times, all of them will be offering Reconciliation during Advent.

2

Get Out the Advent Wreath.

Even if you do not have new candles or they are not the right colors, light a candle each evening and say a prayer as a family, asking God to open your mind and hearts to the gift of His Son.



3

Look in the Pantry.

What do you have that others could use? Many families are in need this Christmas. What can you give to others from all that you have?

4

Think Gift Cards.

Since so many are unemployed or underemployed and service agencies are having to change how they serve, consider ordering gift cards online and sending them to agencies that can distribute them appropriately.

5

Get Moving.

It is easy to sit around the house, especially when darkness settles in so early. Exercise releases endorphins and endorphins make you happy. Take a walk as a family. Fill your lungs with fresh air.

6

Make Some Masks.

Look at some online tutorials and see if you can make masks for those who cannot afford to buy them. But make sure you follow instructions so your masks are effective.



7

Celebrate the Feasts of Advent.

Today is the feast of St. Nicholas, a third-century bishop, who was known as a miracle worker and secret giver of gifts. Celebrate by sneaking a treat and a note of appreciation and love into your children's shoes or near their at-home study area.



8

Set Up the Crèche.

Tell the story of the birth of Jesus as you work together to set up the manger scene. For extra fun, keep baby Jesus out of His crib and let the youngest member of the family place Him in the manger on Christmas morning before gifts are opened.



DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE CALENDAR AT: [FORMATIONREIMAGINED.ORG](https://formationreimagined.org)

Foundations in Faith

FUNDING INITIATIVES FROM PAGE 19

for moving forward.

“The pope and bishop feel that young people need to be a part of this important conversation,” Ms. Weldon said. “Young people are much further along than adults are in this dialogue and it’s vital we hear from them.”

Currently, the committee includes thirteen young adults, ages eighteen to twenty-five, from parishes throughout the diocese. They plan to meet via Zoom on Sunday afternoons. Among the materials the committee members have been asked to review are the “Conversations About Race” webinars, and a 2018 pastoral letter, entitled “Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call To Love—A Pastoral Letter Against Racism,” issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The letter emphasizes how “bigotry is a grave sin and is against the dignity of the human person and the divine mandate to love our neighbor as ourselves.”

Susan Baldwin, facilitator of Young Adult Catholics Against Racism, said, “There is a strong passion with our young people who are faith-filled and know that they are called to be advocates for all people suffering on the margins in our communities.”

Their goals include creating an addition to diocesan curriculum teaching in Faith Formation, as well as a producing a directive to be implemented in ministries at the parish level.

“We will keep Christ at the center of our work together,” Baldwin added.

Foundations In Faith awarded a \$2,000 grant for a pilot project taking place at St. James in Stratford, one that will serve as a prototype for other parishes. Entitled “Open Wide Our Hearts—Conversations on Race,” this series of dialogues aims to help people begin the process of prayer, storytelling, self-reflection, and a call to action that will lead parishioners and other communities of faith “to name, claim, and heal the ‘sin of racism’ in our hearts,” according to the grant application.

“Racism is the elephant in the room and we need to make it front and center,” said Angie DeMello, who is serving as co-facilitator with Therese LeFever.

The first session, held via

Zoom, featured twenty people. “It was amazing. People were open and vulnerable,” said DeMello, noting it was a meeting that served as an “examination of

conscience.”

The “Open Wide Our Hearts” pastoral letter serves as a framework for the discussions. More meetings are on the agenda,

which will include frank talks on biases and painful experiences.

“A journey of 1,000 steps begins with one step... our prayer is to live in God’s peace and har-

mony,” said DeMello.

(Young people interested in joining Young Adult Catholics Against Racism should email Institute@diobpt.org.)

When It Comes to All Your Hearing Needs You Want to be Confident You Made the Right Decision.

The Precision Hearing Specialists
Making Clear and Accurate Hearing more affordable for everyone
Celebrating Over 35 Years of Improving the Quality of Life
By Improving the Quality of Your Hearing

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

We Fit 9 of the world leaders in Hearing Technology
Now there are No Limits to what You Can Accomplish
Do it Right the First Time and have no Regrets

- Free Hearing Evaluation Free Consultation
- Free live video Examination of Ear canal and Ear Drum.
- Free ‘Take It Home’ Trial of Latest Technology with No Obligation
- Free Service to our Military Veterans wearing aids received from the V.A.



Specialist David DeFilippo



Could it be Just WAX ?

Your Solution can be virtually Invisible



CALL NOW For Your Appointment at;
Precision Hearing Specialists

203 381-9555

Go To Our Web- site:

www.precisionhearingspecialist.com

See what your neighbor say about their experience
with our approach to Affordable Quality Hearing.

Obituaries

Father Edward 'Whitey' John McCall, 90

BRIDGEPORT—Father Edward "Whitey" John McCall passed away peacefully on September 29, 2020, at home in Remanso, Bahia, Brazil, where he had served God and the people of Brazil as a missionary.

He was born in the Black Rock neighborhood of Bridgeport on April 15, 1929, to Thomas and Julia (Vasse) McCall, and attended St. Ann's Elementary School and Fairfield Prep, where he excelled in sports both as a running back for the football team and as a southpaw first baseman.

After graduating from Prep in 1947, he entered St. Thomas Seminary where he began his studies for the priesthood followed by six more years studying philosophy and theology at St. John's Seminary in Brighton/Boston.

Father Whitey was ordained to the priesthood on February 2, 1955, at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport and assigned as a parish priest to Sacred Heart parish in the south end of the city. He also served as principal of Stamford Catholic High and as chaplain to the Stamford Fire Dept.

After Vatican II, the Diocese of Bridgeport assumed responsibility for the parishes of Remanso and Campo Alegre de Lourdes in the Diocese of Juazeiro deep within the interior of Northeastern Brazil.

In 1965, Father Whitey trav-



eled to Brazil with Father Joseph Potter to lead a diocesan mission in Remanso and Campo Alegre de Lourdes. One of his proudest accomplishments during his time in Brazil was helping to build a dam in the tiny interior town of Malhada, which sustains the townspeople with water to this day.

In accordance with his wishes, Father Whitey was buried in the small village of Aparecida, a 30 minute drive from his home in Remanso, in a church that he helped build. Memorials or donations in his honor will directly support the Creche, an early childcare center in Remanso, where he celebrated Mass at every day for years. Donations/checks may be sent to: Father Joseph Potter c/o Mrs. Virginia Gardner, 110 Aspetuck Trail, Shelton, CT 06484. ■



To place a Novena Prayer Request or for pricing information please call or email

Ralph Lazzaro
203-416-1462
rlazzaro@diobpt.org

Father Roy Henderson, 62

ANSONIA—Father Roy Henderson, age 62, of Ansonia, died on Tuesday, October 20, 2020.

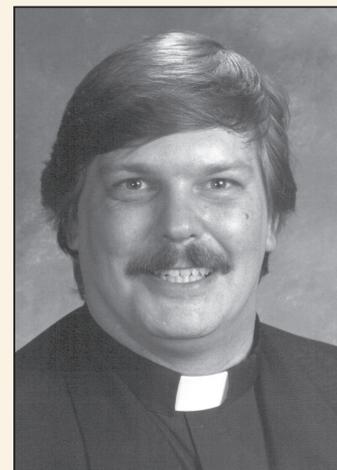
He is remembered by many for his healing ministry, which brought many people throughout the diocese to St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport.

Ordained by the Most Rev. Edward M. Egan at St. Augustine Cathedral in 1990. Father Roy served the Lord as a Roman Catholic priest in the Diocese of Bridgeport for twenty years before taking a personal leave of absence from active ministry in 2010.

Born on November 11, 1957, he was a devoted son to his mother, Claire (d. 2019), and dedicated brother to his younger sister, Lori.

Father Michael Boccaccio celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial on Wednesday, October 28, at Saint James Church, 2110 Main St., Stratford.

Interment followed in Saint Joseph's Cemetery, Stratford.



FATHER ROY HENDERSON

DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT NOVEMBER 15—DECEMBER 12

NOVEMBER

15	Rev. M. Steven Barrett, S.S.	2000
	Rev. John P. Odie	1999
19	Rev. Rocco D. Nadile	1978
20	Rev. Francis J. Fulop	1957
	Rev. John F. Culliton	1967
	Rev. Hugh A. Coffey	1975
21	Msgr. Edwin F. Burke	2004
22	Rev. Stephen J. Panik	1953
	Msgr. Joseph N. Murphy	1988
23	Rev. Carducci D'Amico	2018
	Rev. Robert G. Pohley	2006
26	Deacon Joseph Lawrence Rowan	2013
27	Deacon John Barton	2012
	Rev. Myron V. Miller	1961
28	Deacon Wayne E. Malloy	2011

DECEMBER

1	Deacon Robert W. Becker	2000
	Deacon Salvatore M. Clarizio	2017
	Rev. Michael E. Kearney	1956
	Msgr. Alfred J. Sienkiewicz	1996
3	Rev. Mark Connolly	2019
	Msgr. John E. Gilmartin	2011
	Rev. Thomas Gwozdz, OFM Conv.	2007
	Rev. Joseph A. Pisarcik	1956
4	Msgr. Joseph M. Fitzgerald	2005
5	Rev. Vincent J. O'Connor	1985
7	Deacon George Saulnier	1997
8	Rev. Rufin Kuveikas, OFM Cap.	2008
10	Msgr. Bartholomew J. Skelly	1967
	Rev. Ambrose Walas, OFM Conv.	1967
	Rev. Paul M. Spodnik	1976

FUNERAL GUIDE

NEIL F. HARDING
JOHN J. HARDING

Harding
FUNERAL HOME

203.227.3458
hfh210@optonline.net
www.hardingfuneral.com

210 POST ROAD EAST
WESTPORT, CT 06881

COLLINS FUNERAL HOME

92 EAST AVENUE • NORWALK
866-0747

WILLIAM A. SKIDD WILLIAM G. LAHEY, JR.
WILLIAM R. KELLEY WILLIAM P. SKIDD
ANDREW D. SKIDD

Family owned for four generations



"Quiet Dignity Without Extravagance"

Affordable Direct Cremation
Title XIX Welcome

County Cremation Service

- ✦ Family owned for three generations
- ✦ Handling every detail
- ✦ Call for free informative brochure
- ✦ In home arrangements
- ✦ 203-254-1414 or 800-542-0218
- ✦ Memorial service facility

Sports

Sacred Heart creates Jackie Robinson Scholarship

By DON HARRISON

Jackie Robinson, the indomitable baseball trailblazer and civil rights activist, was welcomed into the Sacred Heart University community in the spring of 1972 when he received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree at Commencement. The citation captured the spirit and the passion of Robinson, stating in part:

“Most men have sympathy for the miseries of their fellow men, far fewer have compassion for them, and it is the rare man indeed who feels for them so deeply that he dedicates himself to their alleviation.”

Fast forward to the evening of October 22, 2020. On a zoom video entitled “SHUand42: A Subway Series Celebration” – which featured the managers of the last New York teams to compete in a Subway World Series as well as the daughter of the Brooklyn Dodgers’ Hall-of-Fame player—the university announced the establishment of the Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarship.

All proceeds from SHUand42 will go to Sacred Heart’s new scholarship program, which will provide four-year grants to students chosen by the Jackie Robinson Foundation following a national application process. So, how much money does the university expect to realize from this venture?

“We’re shooting for the stars, but we’ll settle for the moon,” said Bobby Valentine, the former New York Mets manager who has served as Sacred Heart’s executive director of athletics since



JACKIE ROBINSON, THE BROOKLYN DODGERS’ Hall-of-Fame player and human rights activist was presented an honorary degree by Sacred Heart University President Robert Kidera at Commencement on May 20, 1972. Forty-eight years later, the university has established a scholarship in his name.

2013. “I think we can raise half a million (dollars).”

Valentine was joined on the virtual video by Hall-of-Fame Manager Joe Torre, whose New York Yankees defeated Valentine’s Mets, four games to one, in the 2000 World Series; Hall-of-Fame broadcaster Bob Costas and Harold Reynolds, the former American League second baseman who is now a broadcaster.

They devoted much of the evening to discussing Jackie Robinson’s enduring impact on the game and that memorable week in October 2000 when the upstart Mets came oh-so-close to winning their third World Series, but lost three one-run games and the finale by two. “If we had won one of those early games, the out-

come might have been different,” Valentine noted.

Steve Kerr, coach of the NBA’s Golden State Warriors, was among the celebrity callers and he asked about the logistics for the Subway Series. His question prompted this memory from Valentine:

“The logistics were a nightmare. (Yankees owner George) Steinbrenner didn’t think our visiting clubhouse was good enough, so he brought the Yankees’ furniture over from Yankee Stadium to Shea Stadium.”

The Stamford-born and -bred Valentine, a youthful 70, never saw Robinson play, but he learned much about the struggles Jackie endured as the first black to play in the major leagues in the modern era from one of his teammates --his late father-in-law, Ralph Branca.

The Dodgers’ pitching star during Jackie’s break-in season, Branca won 21 games for the pennant-winning 1947 club. (Jackie was chosen Rookie of the Year after batting .297, scoring 125 runs and topping the National League with 29 stolen bases.)

“Bobby had such a great personal connection to the Jackie Robinson story,” said William Reidy, Sacred Heart’s vice president for advancement. “He received a visual memory through Ralph on what Jackie accom-

plished that year.”

Through their Stamford connections, Valentine has enjoyed a relationship with Jackie’s widow, Rachel Robinson, as well as his daughter, Sharon Robinson. Bobby recalled meeting Jackie “at an event in Stamford and an Oldtimers Day game at Dodger Stadium.”

In her appearance on the

video, Sharon, an author and education consultant for Major League Baseball, said the family “was thrilled” about the scholarship in her father’s name.

“My mom founded the Jackie Robinson Foundation a year after my dad died,” she stated. “My father broke the barriers (of racism), and now young people can get the education they need to break those barriers.”

Torre, who won a National League batting title (.363, 1971) and hit .297 lifetime prior to his 29-year managerial career with the Yankees, Mets and three other clubs, was born and raised in Brooklyn. Somehow, he became a fan of the Dodgers’ dreaded rivals, the New York Giants.

Torre admired Robinson the athlete, but he was a Giants fan and “didn’t like him very much. When I was a youngster, I saw him play many times, but even more memorable I had the chance to shake his hand the year before he passed.”

Just five months after receiving his honorary doctorate from Sacred Heart, Jackie Robinson died at age 53. One wonders if he realized just how far he had carried his race—the human race. ■

St Augustine / St. Johns County Florida

- Ideal for relocation, retirement, 2nd home
- Similar to Fairfield County - Beaches, Boating, Culture, Sports, Golf, etc.
- Multiple housing options - new construction, existing homes, planned communities, 55+ & more



Jenene Karamon, REALTOR®

Jenene.Karamon@exprealty.com
Jenenekaramon.exprealty.com

(904) 501-9912

Proud printers of
Fairfield County Catholic



Please contact us for a FREE consultation,
print samples & quote. We also offer
a simple online quote request form.

205 Spring Hill Road, Trumbull CT 06611

203.261.2548

www.TrumbullPrinting.com

Newspapers • Publications • Shoppers • Catalogs • Magazines • Directories
Coupon Books • College Course Catalogs • Free Standing Inserts
Business and Financial Periodicals • Advertising Supplements

Column: Thomas Hicks



Time had a beginning

POTPOURRI

By THOMAS H. HICKS

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

The general view of physicists is that time started at a specific point about 13.8 billion years ago with the Big Bang. The Big Bang can be considered the “birth” of the universe and the beginning of time as we know it. Matter, energy, space and time began abruptly with the Big Bang. Hence it can be said that time is a creature of God. Aristotle defined time as the measure of change. St. Augustine defined it as a measure of motion.

There can be no discussion of what was going on before the Big Bang, or, specifically, what was God doing before the Big Bang? There was no previous era. We

are dealing with the mysterious idea of eternity.

Augustine reflected on time as a painful affair. Time was the devourer, seeking what it might devour. Time was ever working, never at rest, bringing age upon us all (Confessions, Book One).

There is no conquest over time. No one can defeat time. Time will never relent. Time moves and everything comes to an end. There’s all the brightness and beauty that could not last. How innocently time eats the days – all those lost days.

The Scriptures tell us that the sovereignty of God is over the length of our lives. Job 14:5 states

that “Man’s days are determined; God has decreed the number of our months and has set limits we cannot exceed.” Psalm 139:16 speaks of the “Book of Life” in which “are written all the days that were ordained for humans when none of those days as yet existed.” God is the giver of time and our term of life is fixed by Him. We are allotted a certain period of time in the world. We have an expiration date. Time belongs to God; it is not our own.

Old age is an end product deposited by time. It is the time of the body’s cruel betrayals that bring with them the indignities of old age. We disintegrate slowly. Those who have reached the evening of their lives have to adjust their lives to the limitations of aging. They reach what is called life’s “last lap,” or the “home stretch.”

There’s a haunting sense of passing time. There’s a fear of time. An old person is now well aware of how November grinds darkly on, how November leans toward December, and December slides into Winter. Children

and grandchildren grow and flower, etching mortality even more sharply. The evening is drawing in. There’s a sense of time left. They find the words of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus very meaningful: “Stay with us, Lord. For it is nearly evening. The day is almost over” (Lk24:29).

When he was near ninety, the art critic, Bernard Berenson, said: “I would willingly stand at street corners, hat in hand, begging passers-by to drop their unused minutes in it.”

However, many old people are ready. They have had their fill of life and seek rest from the irritations and agitations of life. There is a “ripeness” for death. There’s a sense of relief that the struggle was over. It’s coming to an end, and that’s all right.

There is a Jewish Midrash that says: “When a fig is gathered at the proper time, it is good. The owner of the fig tree knows when the fruit is ripe for plucking and plucks it. The Holy One knows when the time of the righteous has come.”

Old age brings with it the awareness that so many people you loved are gone. There’s the sudden silence. The world without those loved ones is incomplete. There is no substitute for them. Many elderly people say: “It’s not hard to die when everyone you loved is dead.” Our faith tells us we will find one another again. Many of the elderly feel like one who is waiting and waited for. There is a prayer to the angel Raphael, guide of Tobias, which says “lead us toward those we are waiting to see again, those who are waiting for us, those we are looking for.

The daily dread of all old people is—when will it all stop? How many more chances will I have to welcome the Spring? When will it be my time to be shaken from the tree?

There is the loneliness of age. As we age, we have to “let go” of more and more; one thing after another falls away. One can have the feeling of having outstayed one’s welcome in the world. Many old people often feel superfluous and unwanted. Doubtless, one of the assets of old age is the ability to enjoy being alone. Solitude is frequently the lot of the elderly. So many men, particularly, are left an old man in an empty house. They grow old and grow sad. The old sigh for lost years; weep for the short tomorrows.

Despite it all, most of the elderly regard everyday as a gift, and have a deep gratitude for life; a gratitude for all of life’s blessings.

When I think of dying, I remember my mother bending over my bed, singing in her love-ly, throaty voice, “Close your eyes and you’ll have a surprise. The Sandman is coming. He’s coming, he’s coming.” To hear that voice one second before death is what I hope for.

Let me end with an anecdote about Winston Churchill that can have a religious meaning. Churchill planned his own funeral. He directed that after the final religious benediction a bugler high up in the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral would play “Taps.” Churchill then directed that immediately after the playing of “Taps,” a second bugler, also in the dome would play “Reveille,” the call to get up in the morning.

St. Jude’s Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day. By the ninth day your prayer will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude. CB

St. Jude’s Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day. By the ninth day your prayer will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude. PAF

St. Jude’s Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day. By the ninth day your prayer will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude. MM

St. Jude’s Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day. By the ninth day your prayer will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude. GMG



Tune in every Wednesday at noon to hear Bishop Frank Caggiano’s live show

“let me be frank”

on 1350AM or 103.9 FM

For advertising information please call: Ralph Lazzaro, authorized sales representative 203.416.1462 | Cell 203.667.1622 rlazzaro@diobpt.org



2020 Annual Catholic Appeal

PARISHES STEP UP FOR ACA FROM PAGE 4

"It's not only that we think and care about our own needs in the parish, but our people also stand up to help meet the needs of the people in the universal church," he said. "They are always generous and ready to contribute in any way possible. They are just lovely people."

Father, who was ordained in India and served three years in that country before coming to America, said his parishioners are very active in charitable works and they volunteer regularly at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House in Danbury. They also have an active outreach in the community, collecting coats and clothes for the needy, contributing to food pantries and conducting a Christmas gift drive for Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport.

"They are always looking to help people and extend Christian charity to others," he said.

St. Elizabeth Seton Parish raised more than 82 percent of its goal in the Annual Catholic Appeal. Father said, "I just really want to thank my people for their wonderful love and affirmation of my ministry in the parish and give special thanks to Bishop Caggiano for all he has done."

Despite the limits on Mass attendance and the need to live-stream, Father said that the offertory is holding steady and many people are giving online or through the mail.

Reflecting on the role of the parish priest during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, he said, "We are always there for them. Before every Mass and after every Mass, we greet people.

St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day. By the ninth day your prayer will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude.

SRL

We are present in their lives and always ready to serve them in any way possible."

St. Margaret Mary, Shelton

Father Ciprian Bejan, pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church in Shelton, applauds his parishioners for raising 113 percent of the parish goal in the Annual Catholic Appeal.

"They are very generous; they give generously even though they are not wealthy people," he said. "And they understand the importance of giving."

Father said that he conducted a silent appeal. "With COVID-19 and the restrictions, I didn't really push too much, but I mentioned the appeal to them."

The success was gratifying, and he attributes it to their appreciation and understanding of what the appeal does.

"During the past two years, I mentioned its importance and what we do and how much can happen when we join our resources on the parish level with the diocese," he said. "They were made aware about the good things the Catholic Church does with our money."

He said his parishioners are also very generous with their time in charitable activities and volunteer work in the area.

"We made people aware that

in addition to helping others in need throughout the diocese, they also come back to the parish," he said. "And while COVID-19 has been challenging, with their generosity, we have been able to cover our expenses and parish life continues to move forward without having to worry about the lack of resources."

St. Margaret Shrine, Bridgeport

Deacon Don Faust, administrator of St. Margaret Shrine, said he is constantly overwhelmed by the generosity of those who form the community of faith at the shrine located about a mile from the Catholic Center in Bridgeport. Presently, the Shrine has achieved 99 percent of its goal with nearly a 30 percent participation rate, one of the highest in the diocese.

"They're just unbelievably generous, no matter what we ask for," said Deacon Faust, who is grateful and proud of the response he and Father Giandomenico Flora have received as they've presided over the revival and restoration of the Shrine, which now draws visitors from all over the region.

The deacon is also quick to share credit for the Shrine's high participation rate with super volunteer Angelo Cocco.

"He is just so devoted to the ACA and puts his heart into it. Angelo speaks at all of the Masses, and he is really one of the reasons for our success."

Deacon Faust said that St. Margaret Shrine has developed into a caring and diverse worship community with about 375 people attending Mass each weekend. Masses are held outside when the weather permits and in the Shrine's small chapel.

One other reason for success is the empathy of people for each other and an awareness that many are in need.

"We have a number of people who are suffering, even here at the Shrine. When we determined our goals last year, we allotted additional money for outreach to help with tuitions, gifts cards, and the Food Bank. As a result our people know the importance of the ACA and its ability to reach others throughout the diocese, and they're committed to supporting it."

Pamela S. Rittman, director of the Annual Catholic Appeal for the diocese, said the demand for services increased significantly during the COVID-19 crisis, and it continues today because of job losses, homelessness, the death of loved ones and the need for counseling.

"This is where the Annual

Catholic Appeal is so important," she said. "A gift of \$5, \$20 or larger, no matter the amount, makes a difference."

Rittman said "When we think about Thanksgiving and what we are grateful for and when we look forward to Advent and Christmas in these challenging times, remember there are many people who are in worse situations, who depend on the diocese for their daily meal, for online Masses and prayer services, and for faith and formation programs. Parents of children who receive tuition assistance from the Bishop's Scholarship Fund or who are now in need of funding receive help from the Appeal. It is a vital ministry to assist our parishioners and community as Christ calls us to do so.

Please help Bishop Caggiano assist our neighbors and friends and make a pledge at www.2020ACABridgeport.com, text the word APPEAL to 475.241.7849, or call 203.416.1470 and someone will help you make your special gift. Does your company participate in a matching gift program? Your gift may be doubled or tripled. Please call the Development Office at 203.416.1312 for instructions on how to make the most of your generosity. ■

CATHOLIC PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Law Office of James M. Hughes

Elder Law/TITLE 19/MEDICAID-Planning
Veteran's Benefits - "Aid & Attendance"
Estates/Probate/Real Estate

1432 Post Road, Fairfield, Connecticut 06824
203.256.1977 — hughes_james@sbcglobal.net
www.fairfieldctelderlaw.com

203.377.7908



magtype.com

**Working from Home
Remote Learning**
How is that going?

IT SUPPORT • NETWORKING • WEB DESIGN
PROGRAMMING • MAC & PC COMPUTER SUPPORT

UNITED SEWER & DRAIN CLEANING, INC.

RESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY DRAIN CLEANING

MUNICIPAL • COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL

24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE • LICENSED & INSURED

377-8704

or
1-800-422-3724

Office: 534 Surf Avenue • Stratford

• CATCH BASIN CLEANING
• HIGH VELOCITY WATER JETTING
• LARGE DIAMETER POWER RODDING

• TV PIPE INSPECTION
• AIR TESTING
• JET RODDING
• VACTOR SERVICE



SINCE
1963



**FREE
WINTER STORAGE
of Boat & Patio
Cushions**

When we clean & sanitize them

Norwalk (203) 847-8000
Stamford (203) 327-7471
Stratford (203) 375-3737

www.triplesclean.com

Nuestra Voz

Nuevo servicio en español en 'Sacred Heart' para cumplir con distanciamiento social

POR MARICARMEN GODOY

STAMFORD—La parroquia de Sacred Heart (Sagrado Corazón), ubicada en 37 Schuyler Avenue, en el centro de la ciudad, tomó la iniciativa de aumentar el sábado a las 7 pm una misa más en español, para lograr que los feligreses mantengan la distancia social y sigan fomentando la fe que en estos momentos de pandemia se ha volcado con fuerza.

Con esto, la iglesia tiene dos celebraciones de la Palabra en español, una el sábado a las siete de la noche y la otra, la estipulada en el calendario habitual, el domingo a la una de la tarde. Lo que de acuerdo con el P. Alfonso Picone, párroco de la iglesia, ha dado resultado porque con el aumento de la misa y los grupos de oración, la dinámica parroquial comunitaria ha empezado a despuntar con fuerza, aunque la mayor parte de reuniones se están realizando en el templo principal para cumplir con el distanciamiento social, bajo registraciones previas.

Según el Padre Alfonso, sus feligreses están regresando a la parroquia aunque sigue celebrando muchas misas vía Zoom, incluso, dijo el sacerdote, ha tenido la fortuna de ofrecer misa con participantes de otros países. "En verano murieron en Ecuador los abuelos de una de Judith Pazmiño, una de nuestras feligreses, me sorprendió mucho cuando me pidió que celebrara una misa en su memoria y lo mara-

viloso fue que los participantes, en su mayoría, fueron fieles que no residían en Connecticut sino en varias ciudades ecuatorianas", dijo el sacerdote.

que estaba infectado de COVID y como ya habían sido muchos días sin tratamiento murió después de un par de días.

Otra de las experiencias del

aminadas por las autoridades de Gobierno y también por la Diócesis de Bridgeport, pero con el inicio de la segunda fase que limita la presencia de feligreses a

nando los catecúmenos, por su naturaleza de cantar y alabar con furor alzando los brazos. A ellos les dan la parte del sótano o el templo principal cuando no hay ningún otro grupo operando.

"Están llegando muchos fieles. La gente está regresando. He tenido misas en inglés, italiano y en español muy seguido. En el caso de los italianos solo acuden adultos mayores porque sus hijos solo hablan inglés. En el caso de los hispanos, el aumento de las familias es notorio", repuso el P. Alfonso.

Aunque el Padre Alfonso declaró que no está actuando en forma imprudente y que está tomando todas las precauciones, sin embargo, dijo: "Yo no tengo miedo al COVID-19, yo le tengo miedo a no seguir la voluntad de Dios".

Para reflejar todo el trabajo que la parroquia está emprendiendo en estos tiempos el P. Alfonso escribió en la página web parroquial una carta a sus feligreses pidiéndoles su apoyo: "Últimamente el P. Martín DeMayo y yo hemos estado muy ocupados con bautismos, primeras comuniones, confirmaciones. Todo va bien a pesar de la situación real del Covid-19, necesitamos continuar nuestra misión dentro de nuestras familias, nuestros seres queridos, nuestros amigos y las personas que encontramos todos los días. A pesar de todo, nuestra misión evangelizadora tiene que continuar en nuestros barrios y alrededores". ■



EL MINISTERIO DE BIENVENIDA, la reactivación de los grupos de oración y la nueva misa en español, han sido parte de los nuevos retos de la iglesia del Sagrado Corazón que por estar ubicada en pleno centro de la ciudad, se convierte en el centro de asistencia masiva hispana.

Experiencia como éstas se vienen multiplicando en Perú y Guatemala y en días pasados en Italia tras la muerte de don Marino Picone, su padre, quien tras permanecer dos semanas en el hospital de la región de Sicilia y luego de varios exámenes los médicos NO encontraron COVID-19, pero, cuando se empezó a sentir mal le realizaron nuevos exámenes y descubrieron

Padre Alfonso con pacientes de COVID y sus familiares, ha sido ofrecer misas conectados con las casas funerarias. En esas homilias vía Zoom los servicios fúnebres brindan hasta música. "Lo que hace mucho más emotiva la celebración", dijo.

Durante estos meses de pandemia en la parroquia Sacred Heart el religioso ha tomado todas las precauciones dict-

un cincuenta por ciento, nuevamente, volvió a poner en vigencia los protocolos de distanciamiento social con mayor rigor y el registro previo antes de acudir a cualquier encuentro dentro de la iglesia.

Otro grupo que se ha reactivado es el de la oración. Los martes, miércoles y viernes por la noche estudian y celebrar la Palabra. También están accio-

Polish Aid Home Care Agency

Providing:

Nannies • Homecare
Cooking • Housekeeping
Companions
Live-in services are available



860.229.6611 | fax 860.229.6613

www.polishaidhomecare.com | Polish Aid Homecare LLC

Monday- Friday 10 am-5 pm; Saturday 10 am-2 pm

310 Broad Street, New Britain, Connecticut 06053



Vocations

Celebrating our priests

By **FATHER CHRIS FORD**

When I was growing up, I played quite a bit of Wiffle ball with my friends. No matter long we had been playing, however, in our minds it was always the same scenario: game seven of the World Series, bottom of the ninth, two outs, bases loaded. Whether we were at bat, pitching or in the field, we all had the same desire: to be the hero that won our team the World Series. To become a legend. Even if it wasn't about sports—maybe you had your Oscar acceptance speech tuned to perfection. Whatever it was, it is a desire that many of us feel or have felt deep down inside. The dream to achieve something so remarkable that we will be forever remembered.

But here is the funny thing. If I asked you to, could you name the winning pitcher from game seven of the 1991 World Series? Some of you could, but many probably not. The pitcher is Jack Morris of the Minnesota Twins and it was one of the greatest pitched games in the history of the World Series—10 shutout innings leading his team to a 1-0 victory over the Atlanta Braves to secure the championship. Or, even more recently, could you name this year's winner of the Oscar for

Best Actress? Probably not. (It was Renee Zellweger for her role in *Judy*).

But if I asked you if you knew who St. Peter was? Or St. Francis of Assisi? Or Mother Theresa? I'm sure you could all tell me something about them. You see, the thing that endures the most in this world is not fleeting earthly fame or glory. It is holiness.

Even for priests, holiness must be what defines our lives. There is an old saying that there is no one deader than a dead priest. And, yet, on October 31, the eyes of the Catholic world were fixed on a simple parish priest. Born and raised in Waterbury, Conn., and ministering in New Haven, Blessed Father Michael J. McGivney became the latest son of the American Church to be beatified. As the founder of the Knights of Columbus, Father McGivney's legacy is not one of great earthly fame or fortune. Rather, it is one of seeking out those most in need and ensuring that no one was ever beyond reach of God's divine and merciful love.

Each time I pray it, I am always struck by the last invocation in *The Litany of Humility*: That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should: Jesus, grant me the grace to

desire it. This is the heart of priestly ministry. The path to holiness for a priest must run through the holiness of his people. But, of course, only a truly holy priest can inspire holiness in his people.

Regardless of our state in life, the goal is the same for us all: to become saints and to dwell eternally in the heart of the Father. To accomplish this task is no merely human feat. It is always the result of divine grace, of the action of God in our lives. Whenever we celebrate a saint, certainly we rejoice in such a heroic response to God's love. But, even more, we rejoice at the power of God's mercy to transform a life in such a radical way. That mercy is made available to us most powerfully through the sacraments—which are offered to us through the hands of a priest.

So often, we hear of the failures and falls of priests. What we don't often notice or hear about are the countless good, humble, faithful priests who are simply trying to lead their people to heavenly grace. By cultivating a deep, personal relationship with God themselves, they are able to introduce the people they serve to a relationship with the only thing that is stronger than their own weaknesses or wounds: the merciful love of God. These



good priests may never have their moments of fame or fortune. They may never even be raised to the altar of public veneration

as Canonized saints. But the holiness of their people is their enduring legacy. And no legacy could ever be greater. ■

Father Silva joins Vocations Team

BRIDGEPORT— Father Eric Silva has been named as the newest member of the diocesan vocations team by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

Father Silva was ordained in 2016 and currently serves as the episcopal chaplain for St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, where he has already been an active and committed promoter of priestly vocations.

He is replacing Father Paul Check who will be departing to assume his new role at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wis.

Over the past few months, the diocesan vocations team has been hard at work designing and beginning to implement the vocations framework Foster, Discern, Accompany, that was first shared with the priests throughout the diocese in May. As this work continues, the vocations team has we wanted to give you a brief update on the work and progress of the vocations team.

As the work of the vocations office continues to increase, the vocations team coordinator, Father Christopher Ford, will shift his assignment as parochial vicar at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Danbury from full-time to part-time status. This will allow Father Ford to dedicate more time to vocations work, including the opportunity to visit other parishes on certain weekends to preach and promote vocations.

The vocations team will be visiting parishes to preach and to participate in efforts to promote vocations. For more information email Vocations@diobpt.org. ■

SEMINARIANS TO MOVE FROM PAGE 7

ation that we face as a Church," he said in his letter to priests.

The bishop offered his gratitude to all those who have supported St. John Fisher and diocesan seminarians, both past and current.

"I am especially appreciative of all the work that the rectors have provided the seminarians who were entrusted to their care and for all our faculty, board members and donors who have supported our men during their time at Fisher."

In a letter to donors, the bishop thanked them for their generosity saying that there is an ongoing need for prayers and financial support as the seminarians continue their formation and seek "to grow in virtue and deepen their discernment."

Funds that have been donated and were raised at St. John Fisher events such as the Rector's Dinner will continue to support diocesan seminarians.

The bishop told donors that the decision to move the seminarians to a larger seminary program meets "the conditions we must consider for the appropriate human, spiritual and pastoral formation of the men who will one day minister in the diocese. We must consider both their lies as they enter formation and the challenges of proclaiming the Gospel today."

All current seminarians have been made aware of the decision and will soon travel to St. Charles Borromeo Seminary to meet their new formators and

community. "Please pray for them as they prepare to make this important transition," the bishop said.

Founded in 1989 by Most Rev. Edward M. Egan, the third Bishop of Bridgeport, the St. John Fisher House of discernment was created to provide young men with a place in which they could deepen their relationship with Christ Jesus while discerning a vocation. Since its inception, nearly 100 men have been ordained who spent some time at Fisher during their priestly formation. During its 31 year existence, St. John Fisher House has been located on Daniels Farm Road in Trumbull and its current location of 894 Newfield Avenue in Stamford. ■



HANSEN'S
FLOWER SHOP

Creating Memories Since 1920

Flowers - Fruit and Gourmet Gift Baskets - Plants
Open Sundays

www.hansensflowershop.com

1040 Post Road, Fairfield | 203.255.0461

**Hartford
HealthCare**

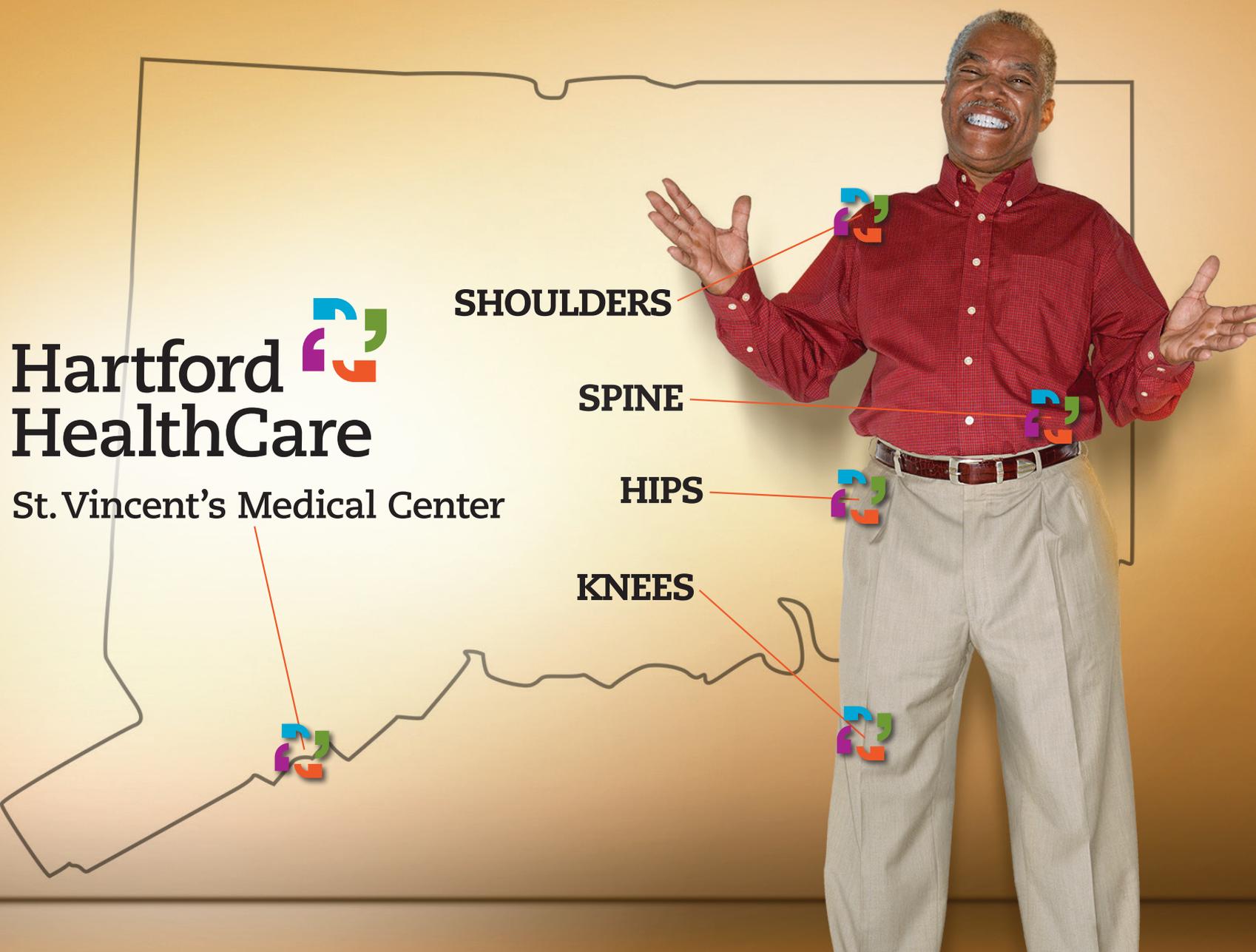
St. Vincent's Medical Center

SHOULDERS

SPINE

HIPS

KNEES



Orthopaedics in all the right places.

Wherever you may need advanced orthopaedic care, there's one place you can find it — at Hartford HealthCare's St. Vincent's Medical Center. We offer acclaimed specialists and the latest procedures, and are now part of the health system that performs the most orthopaedic surgeries in Connecticut. *Learn more at StVincents.org/Ortho.*

**Hartford
HealthCare**

St. Vincent's Medical Center