



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

MAY 2021 | VOLUME 38, NUMBER 5 | SPRING ISSUE

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Around the Diocese

Spring forward!

by Elizabeth Clyons

Welcoming new ideas at All Saint Catholic School

NORWALK—All Saints Catholic School 6th and 7th graders participated in a “talk tournament” as the culmination of an historical fiction unit, where they worked in book clubs.

For this project, they had to read and discuss a short story. The idea was that whichever group could talk the longest, stay on topic, and not let the discussion be dominated by one person, would win.



Rather than limiting classroom talk and using it solely to check comprehension, discussion is crucial to develop thinking. But effective, collaborative discussion, listening to others with attention and care is a learned skill, and one these middle school students are learning to conquer.

(For more information on the middle school program at All Saints, visit www.allsaintsnorwalk.com.)

Communion Closet offers clothes to those in need

SHELTON—Mallory Doyle, a Junior at St. Joseph High School and a Shelton resident is continuing a Communion Closet that was started by her sister several years ago for the upcoming Communion season. The Communion Closet offers a variety of communion clothing to boys and girls who will be making their First Holy Communion in the spring, who may face a need.

Due to COVID-19, all available items can be viewed virtually on the Facebook Group Page: Communion Closet - Upper Fairfield County/Naugatuck Valley Area.

Each piece is numbered and includes the description and size of the item available.

To make a request, please send a message or email: sjcommunioncloset@gmail.com with the item number and your contact information to arrange for pickup.

Donations of gently used or new dresses, suits, or accessories are being accepted; please contact via messenger or email: sjcommunioncloset@gmail.com to make arrangements.



Honoring Earth Day

NEWTOWN—This past Earth Day, the students at St. Rose were busy with a variety of activities including planting seeds/trees, building robots out of recyclable materials, cleaning up after a simulated oil spill and picking up stray garbage around campus.

Spring Sacraments abound!

‘Tis the season for spring sacraments around the diocese. Both Confirmation and First Communion classes have begun to receive their sacraments!



Naqvi boys are entrepreneurs in the making!

TRUMBULL—Animal lover and St. Catherine of Siena 8th grader Mika’il Naqvi and his younger brother and future SCSS student, Ayaan, are entrepreneurs in the making.

After their beloved dogs had knocked one too many Christmas ornaments off of the family Christmas tree, the boys put their heads together to invent the Ornament Anchor.

The boys have been featured on QVC, Good Morning America, and the Today Show, sharing their invention and bringing awareness to animal shelters and the overwhelming need to support them.

This year, after donating a portion of their profits to animal charities, the boys were selected by the North Shore Animal League to be Student Ambassadors.

SCSS was the first school to partner with them to execute the grassroots project that they developed.

Together with their mother, Mrs. Amanda Naqvi, they are reaching out to other schools in the Diocese to hope that those schools can be a part of their movement and be Shelter Heroes.



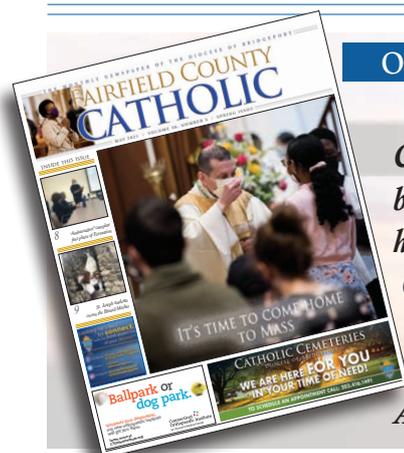
Mobile vaccine clinic visits Blessed Sacrament Parish

BRIDGEPORT—Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport become the third parish in the diocese to host a mobile vaccine clinic, with more than 200 people coming forward to receive the free COVID-19 vaccine in their own neighborhood.

The mobile clinic was sponsored by FEMA, the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, and St. Vincent’s Medical Center/Hartford Healthcare working in partnership with the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Father Joseph “Skip” Karcinski, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, was on hand to greet the staff and some of people of all ages who were vaccinated. He said that he encouraged his parishioners to come forward to protect themselves and others, and he tried to set the example by getting vaccinated in advance and assuring parishioners that it is safe and effective.

“Bringing it to the parish and the neighborhood is a good thing,” he said. “It makes it accessible to them in an environment that they know and trust.”



ON THE COVER

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and the other bishops in Connecticut have invited all Catholics back to Mass beginning May 22.

PHOTOS BY

AMY MORTENSEN

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Latest News

Bishop issues guidelines for the return to Mass

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has announced new guidelines that will remove most COVID-19 restrictions as the faithful return to in-person Mass.

Those who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to wear a mask during Mass, and the Churches will return to full capacity without the need for social distancing.

The new guidelines follow the release of the May 10 letter by Bishop Caggiano, Hartford Archbishop Leonard Blair and Norwich Bishop Michael Cote formally lifting the depensation from Sunday Mass obligation and calling all Catholics in Connecticut back to in-person Mass beginning the weekend of May 22, with the Vigil Mass of the Solemnity of Pentecost.

The loosening of restrictions was made possible by recent developments including new CDC guidelines and Governor Ned Lamont's announcement that vaccinated residents of Connecticut are no longer required to wear masks indoors

after May 19, 2021.

"It is time for us to come home, It is time for us to come together as a family of faith," the bishop said. "The obligation to come to Mass rises and finds its fulfillment in love," said the bishop, who issued detailed revised guidelines for the return to communal worship and the reception of the Eucharist.

Bishop Caggiano said the revised diocesan guidelines are meant to answer the questions of the large number of people who are expected to return to in-person Mass over the coming weeks and to clear up any confusion about what to expect. In a memo to pastors and priests, he outlined the following response:

For those who are fully vaccinated, they are no longer required to wear a mask to attend Mass or any other liturgical or social function held on parish property.

In an abundance of safety, pastors are encouraged to remind those who are fully vaccinated that they are free and welcome to continue to wear masks if they choose to do so.

All those who are not fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks when attending Mass or any other liturgical or social function held on parish property.

The bishop noted that while there is no way for the diocese or a parish to enforce the mask requirement for the unvaccinated, he asked pastors to remind parishioners that this obligation "is borne from our commitment to protect human life, transcends the mandate of the state. It flows from our very belief in the Lord of life, who commands us to protect, defend and respect all human life, from natural conception to natural death."

Among the highlights of the new guidelines, parishioners will no longer have to register for Mass, and all pews will be available for seating because social distancing is no longer required by the state. The congregation will also be able to join in singing.

Communion will only be distributed under one species in the form of the consecrated host and may be received either in the

hand or on the tongue based on the choice of the communicant.

Confessionals may return to full use though proper ventilation is strongly encouraged. Likewise, social distancing will no longer be required at weddings and funerals, and outdoor Masses will be permitted to continue throughout the year.

On the weekend of May 22, the faithful will also notice the return of Church of Missals in the pews, printed bulletins, along with holy items, cards and books. The exchange of the sign of peace is optional. If parishioners exchange of the sign of peace, then it is recommended that the sign of peace must be a non-contact gesture (bow).

In announcing the end to most restrictions, the bishop emphasized that the diocese will not drop its guard of the hard earned progress to protect lives. Churches will be sanitized, He has also made it clear that those who are already sick, who need to quarantine and have other serious health conditions, and their caretakers are excused from the

obligation.

The new guidelines reflect the success of the vaccination effort, which have led to decreasing hospitalizations throughout the state.

All parish or private functions must follow state guidelines, and There are no additional restrictions for these events beyond what the state mandates.

The CDC defines a person fully vaccinated two weeks after the second Moderna or Pfizer shot and 2 weeks after the single Johnson & Johnson shot. It is still recommending wearing masks in crowded indoor settings, specifically buses, planes, hospitals, prisons and homeless shelters, but fully-vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, "except where required by federal, state, local, tribal or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance."

(For the complete list of Mass and sacramental guidelines visit: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/bishop-issues-guidelines-for-the-return-to-mass-2.) ■

Two Ordinations set for the Cathedral this Spring

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—On, Saturday, June 12, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will ordain Deacon Guy Dormévil as a priest for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The Ordination Mass will be celebrated at 11 am at St. Augustine Cathedral.

Guy Dormévil was ordained to the transitional diaconate on June 20, 2020.

Guy Dormévil of Norwalk was born in Haiti to Gustave Dormévil and Angélie Louis Charles, where he was raised along with his 15 siblings. He was married for 29 years to the late Magalie Adolphe, who died from cancer on August 23, 2015. He has two children, Guyvinsky Marcus Dormévil, 29, of Norwalk, Guylenny Bernadette Dormévil, 26, of Marietta, Ga., and grandson, Marcus Alexander Dormévil, of Norwalk.

In 1988, he had to leave his job as an immigration inspector



GUY DORMÉVIL

to take refuge in the U.S. Since his arrival to the U.S., he has worked as a Burger King clerk and manager, a certified nursing assistant, a grocery store produce clerk, and lastly a produce manager for 19 years. He attended college part time and received a certificate of English as a Second Language and an associate degree in Business Administration. He also obtained additional non-degree credits at UCONN and Sacred Heart University.

On August 3, 2016, Bishop Caggiano approved his application to enter St. John Fisher Seminary Residence, where he began pre-Theology studies. A year later he entered Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, in Weston, Mass., where he will continue into his fourth year of Theological Studies this fall.

Guy has been a very active layman in the Roman Catholic Church. His involvement not only included his home parish, but also expanded to both diocesan and national service. He started as a very young altar server, progressed to a youth group leader and then a charismatic prayer group leader. A few of the roles he has exercised at his parish are leader of the liturgical committee, leader of the Haitian Charismatic Prayer Group, eucharistic minister, member of the parish council, a member of the finance board and a parish trustee.

In October 2009, he joyfully

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT— On, Saturday, May 22, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will ordain Colin Lomnitzer as a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The Ordination Mass will be celebrated at 11 am at St. Augustine Cathedral.

Ordination as a transitional deacon is the last step before ordination to the priesthood, which typically occurs a year later after additional pastoral, liturgical and educational preparation.

Colin Lomnitzer is a long-time parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull and current resident of Derby. He is son to Charles Lomnitzer and Sharon Watson and attended elementary and middle school in Trumbull and high school at Fairfield College Preparatory School. He attended Catholic University of America and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Sacred Heart



COLIN LOMNITZER

University in 2018.

Colin is a member of the Knights of Columbus and enjoys playing soccer and golf. Colin served as pro-life committee chair and a resident assistant while attending Catholic University of America and organized and helped to lead the Convivio youth conference for many years. He has been on two mission trips to Lima, Peru, and even spent the summer of 2019 in Lima studying

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

2021 Annual Catholic Appeal

In-pew weekend set to 'close the gap'

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

BRIDGEPORT—The “ARISE” Annual Catholic Appeal now stands at almost \$5.4 million pledged toward its \$8.1 million goal, and there is more than a month left to close the gap, says Joe Gallagher, chief development officer of the diocese.

Gallagher adds there is more heavy lifting to do, but he’s optimistic as a number of factors are coming together to bring the campaign to a successful conclusion by the end of June.

In-pew weekends are scheduled for June 6 and June 13 in most parishes throughout the diocese, with speakers and the ACA video available to offer information, says Gallagher.

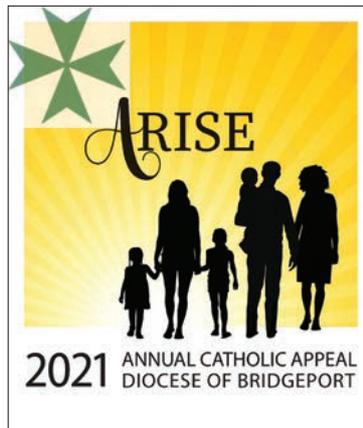
“In-pew weekends are really a call for everyone to come on board and join the more than 9,000 parishioners that have already contributed to the ACA. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has

often spoken about the need for all to participate and to give at whatever level is possible. In-pew weekend is a reminder that we are all in this together and that the ministries and programs the Appeal supports build up the faith of the entire diocese through service, spiritual formation and strengthening of our faith community,” says Gallagher.

If this year’s campaign seems to be quicker, it is because Bishop Caggiano cut five weeks off the usual timeline and has asked that it be wrapped up by the end of June.

Gallagher says the bishop shortened the campaign in recognition of the extraordinary generosity of many during the pandemic year, and with an understanding of the toll the pandemic has taken on everyone and the enthusiasm about moving forward in a year of recovery and renewal.

“During the past year, I have been inspired by those who have given so generously out of the



recognition of the suffering and hardships that others have been experiencing. Now, as we call all the faithful back to Mass and the Eucharist, we have much to celebrate as a family of faith—and with the help of our donors, an opportunity to move forward in renewal,” said the bishop.

Gallagher said the fact that the diocese is already at 66 percent of its goal during an abbreviated campaign is very encouraging

and an indication that people understand and appreciate the role diocesan ministries play in uniting the diocese in service and prayer and how they were able to reach out in the worst of the crisis to feed, counsel and support those most in need.

“After a year we’ve had, I think people can see that the ACA touches every life in our diocese. Some received direct assistance such as food or counseling. Others were able to view Mass online or participate in a rosary and unite in spiritual communion.”

Gallagher says that in the coming weeks his office will continue to follow up with major donors who have traditionally given large leadership gifts to the ACA. His team will also work with parishes that may be struggling to help them reach the goals.

Pam Rittman, director of the ACA, says that one of the positive signs of this year’s campaign has been the increase in new

donors and the increase in individual giving.

“This year so far, we have a total of 2,210 new donors and another 1,900 people who increased their giving,” reports Rittman.

Rittman believes one reason for the positive response to this year’s Appeal is that pastors and parishioners are very pleased with the new incentive sharing program, which enables a parish to direct the funds to an area it raises over goal. “The incentive program has really resonated with parishioners who like the idea that the over goal money can be directed to parish operations, parish ministries, or parishes that are pastorally viable but financially facing hardship,” she says.

Rittman believes that the events of the past year and the suffering caused by the pandemic have created an awareness of the role that only the diocese can play.

“While people have always given generously to their parishes, this year the health crisis has driven the point home that the diocese can reach out in ways that individual parishes cannot. Our parishioners were able to see how we continued programs last year in the midst of COVID-19 and continue to meet the tremendous need; they see their appeal gift in action. It does not matter the size of the gift; whether it’s educating seminarians, providing scholarship money for our students, or serving the most vulnerable, the ACA gives the diocese the reach to bring the gospel message and resources to those in need,” she said.

Rittman says she hopes people will take advantage of the upcoming in-pew weekend to support the appeal. “We know that by this time in the campaign, some people may have lost their envelopes or simply forgotten. We hope that the in-pew will bring them on board as we work together to reach goal and support our overall appeal goal. As always, we are grateful to each and every parishioner.”

(Gifts can be made securely either online on the Annual Catholic Appeal website: 2021ACABridgeport.com, donate page tab or by texting the word, APPEAL to 475.241.7849 on a smartphone or calling 203.416.1470. ACA gifts can be mailed to the Catholic Center at 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606.)

St. Jude lives Gospel message in its Annual Catholic Appeal effort

MONROE—The response of the parishioners of St. Jude Parish in Monroe is emblematic of the hope and generosity of Catholics throughout the diocese who contribute to the appeal, which funds essential ministries, programs and agencies that deliver pastoral care and human services where they are most needed.

It took less than a month after the appeal began on February 27, for St. Jude’s to meet its goal of \$84,600. Parishioners were inspired by the leadership of Father Henry Hoffman, pastor, and his Annual Appeal team, who provided parishioners with an understanding of how important the campaign is in supporting programs, which no single parish can provide on its own.

Father Hoffman began working on a plan in mid-February with Joe Gallagher, chief development officer of the diocese, and Deacon Patrick Toole, episcopal delegate for administration. He later met per-

sonally with the parish’s biggest donors. Then, Gallagher launched the campaign at all the parish’s

leaders at St. Jude. The diocese is very appreciative of how the parish of St. Jude actively and gener-



(l-r) RICH LANE, PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR; Doug and Norma Bissell, ACA co-chairs; Father Henry Hoffman, pastor; Joe Gallagher, chief development officer, Diocese of Bridgeport.

Masses at the end of the month. A comprehensive website was developed to explain the goals and benefits of the appeal.

Gallagher said, “I was honored to be invited by Father Hoffman to help kick off the 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal. I was immediately struck by the strong leadership offered by him and the lay

ously supports the vital ministries, including Catholic Charities, the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund, seminarian formation and care for our retired priests.”

Father Hoffman’s efforts were augmented by those of the other members of the parish ACA team — Rich Lane, parish council president; Norma and Doug Bissell,

co-chairs for the St. Jude appeal; and Deacons John Tuccio and David Flynn. The team launched the appeal in mid-February using the theme of Jesus’ commandment to “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

The co-chairs spoke at every Mass on March 6 and 7, and their message was simple — “Many are in need, many who helped can’t help this year and may need help. We all need to help where we can.”

“Our message was delivered to everyone, including the children,” Norma and Doug Bissell said. “To our adults, we emphasized the online process, and for the children a ‘PENNIES FROM HEAVEN’ bucket was placed in the lobby.

“St. Jude Church is blessed to have wonderful parishioners who are sacrificing to help the ACA and their neighbors in need,” the Bissells said. “We are profoundly thankful to those parishioners who have taken us this far.”

2021 Annual Catholic Appeal



2021 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL
DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

GIFTS TO THE APPEAL HELP MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO:



Provide over
1.3 million meals
each year, **10,000**
counseling sessions
and housing
assistance through
Catholic Charities



Educate and train
8 men for ordination
to the **Permanent**
Diaconate



Award over **\$2.7 million**
in **financial assistance**
for Catholic education
through the Bishop's
Scholarship Fund for
young people across
the Diocese



Care for **74 senior**
priests in their
dignified retirement



Ensure children
and young adults
have opportunities to
participate in religious
education programs



Afford our youth with
meaningful opportunities
to mature as holy and
active members of society
through a wide range of
faith-based programs



Educate and train
23 men for ordination
to priesthood
in our Diocese

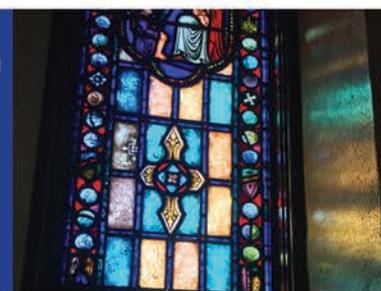


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educational and social
needs of persons with
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The Annual Catholic Appeal provides seed money for the Bishop's "Call to Renewal," which

celebrates

the return to in-person Mass and supports the creation of four pastoral centers focusing on family life, culture and arts, young adult entrepreneurship and evangelization.



The Annual Catholic Appeal assists all people in the Diocese through works of faith and ministry, education and catechesis; and charity and pastoral services throughout Fairfield County.

Please make a gift today at 2021ACABridgeport.com
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For more information please call (203) 416-1470



Cross Catholic Outreach Committed To Stopping “Silent Killer” of Guatemala’s Poor

The devastating consequence of Guatemalan poverty rarely gets covered in the news. Occasionally, the world is told about some act of crime or violence in the country, a symptom of the desperation poverty creates, but we seldom hear about the silent killer tragically impacting Guatemala’s poorest families — malnutrition.

Extreme hunger and the medical hardships it creates impact thousands



of Guatemalans without drawing much attention from the world at large, even though most of the victims are babies and young children. Only local Catholic leaders seem to have found solutions to this crisis, and it is their efforts to provide nutritious food to the poor on a regular basis that have begun to make a difference.

“Malnutrition has a terrible impact on poor children, and this crisis is particularly deadly in Guatemala’s remote, rural regions. There, where families live too far from hospitals or clinics capable of helping them, a serious lack of resources and inadequate food production create the perfect conditions for malnutrition to thrive,” explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a major Catholic charity working with local leaders to find solutions. “Poor mothers are forced to choose which of their children to feed on a given day, and they watch in despair as their sons and daughters weaken, grow gaunt and lose the will to live.”

Cavnar went on to explain the major difference between hunger and malnutrition.

“Most Americans think of hunger as a temporary thing — a pain that will eventually be relieved — and praise God, that’s often the case. A child in the U.S. may go hungry at times, but that hunger isn’t usually a life-threatening issue,” he said. “Guatemalan children showing signs of malnutrition have typically endured hunger for weeks or months on end, and at that point, they begin to manifest signs of mental and physical damage that may become irreversible.”

Stunted growth is one of the most common physical problems Cavnar has seen, and the harm it does to a child’s body is lasting.



In the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu, rural communities are relying on help to obtain the food they need to reduce the risk of malnutrition among children.

“You can imagine the pain this creates for parents. When they are poor and have no food to offer their children, they begin to feel powerless to stop the decline their sons and daughters are experiencing,” Cavnar said. “Travel into rural areas of Guatemala and you will meet many poor mothers who live in despair, feeling they will never be able to provide relief for their suffering little ones without some kind of outside help.”

Thankfully, Church leaders in Guatemala have a heart for the poor and marginalized, and they are working in partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach to distribute food where it is needed most. (see related story on opposite page.)

“Right now, we are developing a feeding outreach in the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu to address the needs of its rural Guatemalan families,” Cavnar said. “These local Catholic leaders were eager to supply food to the vulnerable in their diocese,

but they needed help to put the right programs in place. Cross Catholic Outreach will be involved, of course, and we are hoping and praying American Catholics will want to add their support as well. The more who contribute to this mission of mercy, the more we can accomplish. So we are asking for people to be generous in their response.”

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach food programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01722, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write “Monthly Mission Partner” on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

Cross Catholic Outreach Endorsed by More Than 100 Bishops, Archbishops

Cross Catholic Outreach’s range of relief work to help the poor overseas continues to be recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S. and abroad.

“We’ve received more than 100 endorsements from bishops and archbishops,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. “They’re moved by the fact that we’ve launched outreaches in almost 40 countries and have undertaken a variety of projects — everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless

to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor. The bishops have also been impressed by Cross Catholic Outreach’s direct and meaningful responses to emergency situations, most recently by providing food, medicines and other resources to partners in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala impacted by natural disasters.”

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, supports this mission, writing, “What a joy it is to

be part of the Lord’s redemptive work and to manifest his mercy on Earth by caring for our neighbors in need.”

In addition to praising CCO’s accomplishments, many of the bishops and archbishops are encouraged that pontifical canonical status was conferred on the charity in September 2015, granting it approval as an official Catholic organization. This allows CCO to participate in the mission of the Church and to give a concrete witness to Gospel charity, in collaboration with

the Holy Father.

“Your work with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is a strong endorsement of your partnership with the work of the Universal Church,” Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco said. “By providing hope to the faithful overseas by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, delivering medical relief to the sick and sheltering the homeless, as well as through self-help projects, you are embodying the papal encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.

A “Neighbor in Need” Appeals to American Catholics for Help During Serious Food Crisis

In the department of Suchitepéquez, Guatemala, poor families typically rely on farming for survival, and because their remote villages are isolated, many become very dependent on the success of their local harvest. This becomes a very dangerous gamble in years when nature does not cooperate.

“When harvests are poor, work opportunities and crop yields literally dry up, leading to low household incomes and a critical shortage of food,” explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a respected Catholic charity working in

have begun feeling hopeless. Some have resigned themselves to eating one small meal of tortillas each day, and they are in anguish, seeing their children languishing on the brink of starvation as a result.

Thankfully, Bishop Pablo Vizcaíno and Caritas of the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu have developed a strategic plan to rescue these children and set their families on the path to long-term health through improved nutrition. In partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach, major food shipments will be secured and



the region. “That’s the kind of situation the people are facing now. Their access to food has become very limited and families are suffering as a result.”

When Cavnar encountered this crisis on a visit to Guatemala, it immediately reminded him of a passage in Chapter 16 of the Gospel of Luke, he said.

“There in Luke, Jesus tells a parable about a poor man living on the doorstep of a man with plenty. The poor man’s needs are ignored, though he longs for something simple — just the scraps from the rich man’s table. When both die, the affluent man is rebuked for turning away from a situation he could easily have helped solve. Simply put, he ignores a neighbor in need. I believe we are faced with a modern-day example of that parable today in Guatemala, a country so close to our own.”

Statistics certainly back up Cavnar’s view. Guatemala — less than a three-hour flight from Houston or Miami — has the highest levels of extreme hunger in Latin America or the Caribbean, and the fourth-highest level in the world. With their limited access to employment and educational opportunities, many of the country’s remote indigenous people

distributed to those who need help most.

“The story of Lazarus and the rich man taught us an important lesson about helping a neighbor in need, and we should take it to heart as we consider the suffering going on at our doorstep, there in Guatemala,” Cavnar said. “My team is committed to providing the food these desperate families need, and I’m confident Catholics throughout the U.S. will join our cause by helping to sponsor those shipments. This suffering must end.”

To combat Guatemala’s hunger crisis, Cross Catholic Outreach has a simple but effective plan to deliver scientifically formulated food packets they call Vitafood. This fortified rice product, specifically designed to reverse the effects of child malnutrition, can be packed in large shipping containers and cost-effectively sent to Catholic programs capable of bringing them through customs and effectively delivering them to the families with the greatest need. A single container of Vitafood can make a big impact, according to Cavnar.

“Vitafood is extremely flexible. It is rice or lentil based, and it comes in several different varieties. It can be



The men and women in Guatemala work very hard to provide for their children, but bad weather can destroy their crops and strip away their earnings. At those times, the Church must step in and help.

prepared straight from the package or flavored with additional ingredients to suit local tastes,” he explained. “No matter how it is prepared, its nutritional value remains the same, providing the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, fat and carbohydrates that a child’s hungry body needs. What’s more, because these Vitafood meals are donated to us, we only need to cover shipping costs to deliver the food to our ministry

partner in Guatemala. That means every \$0.15 cents donated can help put 6 nutritious meals in the hands of a family in need.”

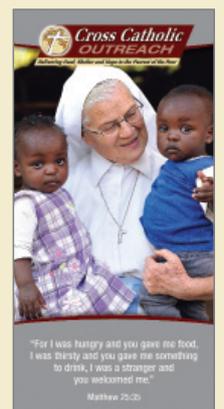
Cavnar’s current goal, he said, is to secure the support of American Catholics to fund the effort.

“The diocese is eager for the help, and we have the logistics settled. What we need now is the support of compassionate Catholics willing to help a neighbor in need.”

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01722, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



Eucharistic Ambassador Program

First phase reflects on faith and friendship

By FATHER MICHAEL NOVAJOSKY

BRIDGEPORT—The first phase of the Diocesan Ambassador Program concluded

on April 29 and ended with a guest. Chris Stefanick, host and contributor for Augustine Institute's The Search, joined the Zoom meeting to give a brief presentation to the partici-

pants and answer a few of their questions.

It was a fun experience to see the person that we had heard and seen on the videos now join us for a live presentation and inter-

action. While each will have his or her own takeaway from the evening, what resonated with me was the insistence by Christ on the importance of friendships. Friendships serve the dual

role of support for the Christian striving to live his or her life well as well as provide the means to bring Christ to those with whom we have relationships and for whom the faith and the Lord Jesus may not have a role at this time. It was a great way to conclude the first phase.

Attention now turns to the second phase, for those who wish to continue to participate. The initial ask at the start was to participate for the first phase, upon which a time of reflection and a decision is required to continue forward into the second and third phases. Having asked and answered a



number of questions posed by The Search (What do you seek? Why a God? Am I saved? Why a Church?), the participants will now focus on at least one of the essential sacraments in the life of the Christian: Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation.

We will utilize the Augustine Institute again and their programs as the core of the program. There will also be option, supplemental opportunities for reflection, small group discussion and prayer, including some opportunities to gather together in person.

This time is one of continual discernment and formation for the participants in preparation for the mission of the ambassador to go out. It has been a wonderful opportunity for me to meet with the faithful from different parishes in the diocese and to experience their excitement, enthusiasm and love for the Lord.

Registration is ongoing for the second phase at this moment, but many have made the decision to continue in the program. In addition, to those who may be reading about the program, we plan to offer another opportunity and round of formation in the fall, so consider the possibility of joining the program at that time. Communication will be made through the parishes and pastors.



SAINT JOSEPH PRAY FOR US

In honor of Saint Joseph the Patron Saint of the Universal Church and in celebration of the dedication of this year as the Year of Saint Joseph, The Diocese of Bridgeport, is teaming up with the Christians of the Holy Land (www.HolyLandDirect.com) headed by Mr. Rami M. Qumsieh, KCHS in presenting the opportunity to own a hand carved olive wood statue of Saint Joseph. **Your statue will be blessed in the Holy Land with an official letter from Bethlehem.**

We pray this statue will increase your devotion to Saint Joseph. He is Humble, Trusting, Obedient, Silent but Strong. Saint Joseph taught Jesus about the dignity of human relations and the sanctity of work. He taught Jesus woodwork, and how to be a man. Saint Joseph died, looking into Jesus' eyes and seeing heaven. Truly as Pope Francis wrote "Fathers are not born but made". Saint Joseph was a Father in the fullest definition. He is an example for us. He provides the inspiration for all men to be like him.

Keeping in mind the suffering of our Catholic and Christian community in the Holy Land, and giving honor to Saint Joseph's profession as a woodworker (carpenter), this olive wood statue will memorialize this Year of Saint Joseph and increase your devotion to him, while helping our faithful Christians in Bethlehem with much needed employment and hope.

These statues are handmade and carved individually. Each piece is unique and no two statues are identical. This is a wonderful gift for Dads, Dads to be and young men. Two available sizes:

- 11 inch Saint Joseph \$120/Per Statue**
- 9 inch Saint Joseph \$90/Per Statue**
- Plus shipping of \$20 flat fee /Per Statue**

Please enclose our Order Form with a check payable **Christians of the Holy Land**. The deadline is **July 8, 2021** aiming to deliver by early Fall 2021. Remember these will be blessed in the Holy Land and this makes this opportunity highly unique.

"Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him" - St. Matthew 1:24

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Year of St. Joseph

Bishop blesses statues at St. Augustine Cathedral

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—On Sunday, May 2, at St. Augustine Cathedral, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated a special Mass to bless two statues generously donated to the diocese.

A beautiful statue, which depicts St. Joseph holding a young Jesus and a bouquet of white lilies, was gifted to the diocese by generous donor, Connie

Von Zwehl, parishioner of St. Pius X in Fairfield. A new statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was also generously donated on behalf of Joseph and Mary Gauci.

In his homily on this special Fifth Sunday of Easter, Bishop Caggiano spoke of his visit to Clonmacnoise, a monastery in Ireland. He described a ritual that the monks engaged in when they lived there: blessing the perimeter of the monastery with

Holy Water, asking the angels to keep that place safe and sacred. Giving context, Bishop Caggiano explained that at the time there were many pagan religions in Ireland, that may not have wanted other religions to be in their midst and live among them.

The bishop likened this time to what Christians are experiencing now, saying that we live in a world that does not always welcome faith, Christ, or even God.



BISHOP BLESSES STATUES of St. Joseph and the Sacred Heart of Jesus generously donated to the diocese during a special Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral.

Outdoor ceremony celebrates Blessed Mother

By KATHY-ANN GOBIN

DANBURY—Dozens of young catechists and their families gathered at the Grotto of Mary outside of St. Joseph Church to honor her with prayers and songs and place beautiful bouquets of vibrant-colored flowers at her feet.

The outdoor ceremony marked the culmination of catechism classes for the youngsters with the tradition of the Crowning of Mary, the Divine Mother of God.

“Thankfully, the Lord gave us a nice day so we could be outside for this,” said Lynn Smierciak, director of Religious Education.

“This is a great turnout especially since we did all Zoom classes,” said Deacon Donald Naiman, as he and his wife, Stephania watched the children and their families gather. The couple taught the second-grade catechists. The religious education program was completely virtual this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The ceremony opened with everyone singing “Immaculate Mary” while the children placed flowers in vases at the foot of the Virgin Mary statue, which was adorned with a crown of flowers.

Following the readings and the close of the ceremony, those gathered prayed a decade of the rosary.

“Try to say one Rosary every day to pray for an end to the pandemic,” Smierciak said, referencing the pope’s recent initiative for a “Marathon of Prayer” for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tradition of reciting the Rosary or the Crowning of Mary in May was one of many tradi-



tions being honored on this day.

“I was raised in the Catholic Church and went to parochial school. We celebrated the May Crowning and I think it’s a wonderful tradition,” said Stacy Brown, who was there with her daughter, Cameron.

“It’s important to look to Mary as the Mother of Jesus for strength especially at this time of the pandemic,” Brown said.

Her daughter Cameron was grateful to be with her classmates.

“It was nice to come and see everyone (in person),” said Cameron, a fourth-grade student who attended classes on Zoom.

Veronica Ramirez and her daughter Chloe, who is in the third grade, also attended the afternoon event. Chloe was wearing a special pendant of the Virgin Mary, a pendant that was given to her mother when she received her First Holy Communion at St. Joseph.

“I used to go to school here,” Veronica said. “It’s nice to come back and reminisce.”

Third-grader Caden Regan and his first-grade brother Carter were also in attendance for the event, bringing with them bright yellow bouquets of flowers.

“It’s important to honor Mary because she was the mother of Jesus,” Caden said, adding that learning about the story of Adam and Eve was one of the most memorable lessons from the program for him.

Deacon Naiman said the lessons learned throughout the program provide a solid foundation for the children to build upon throughout their lives.

“It’s very important because we live at a time of cultural collisions of different values in our society and some of these values aren’t always nurturing,” he said, adding that it is important for everyone to know that they can go to Mary at any time with their needs.

“Mary is there for them,” Naiman said. “It is a very special relationship.”

He explained that this was his reasoning behind wanting to consecrate the diocese when he first became bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport. “To create a safe and sacred perimeter, in which you and I can live and work and pray, and gather each other in strength, so that we may go out, equally as missionaries into a world to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Caggiano said that the process of consecration began at the synod and was completed today.

At the diocesan synod, the bishop consecrated the diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A statue of Mary was placed in the sanctuary of St. Augustine Cathedral at that time, which the bishop explained was the first step of asking the Holy Family itself to be our protector. “Each member of the Holy Family gives us a tool, which we will need to go out into the world to be safe and sacred.”

“Our Lady reminds us that if we are to go out into the world, it must always be Christ first, Christ always first,” the bishop said.

“Under the care of St. Joseph, we consecrate ourselves, because we will need to be reassured in the work that Christ has given us.

So, we ask his prayers and intercession so that we might be faithful, quiet workers to bear Christ into the world,” he continued.

“And so, we consecrate ourselves to the Lord’s Sacred Heart so that we might be His heart in the world. For we are not going to bring people to faith by arguing with them, chastising them, punishing them or judging them. We are going to bring them to the feet of Jesus by loving them.”

In His Sacred Heart, the bishop said, we have every confidence that His victory will be ours.

“I am very grateful for the gift of these two beautiful statues,” the bishop said, thanking Mrs. Von Zwehl and the Grimes family. “For it now can physically remind every person in this diocese under whose care we now live.”

The bishop thanked both donors for their generosity and their faith. “These statues will do us no spiritual good if we do not use them to remind ourselves of what it is the Lord is asking of us.”

“We must pray every day to Our Lady, to St. Joseph and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that we will never falter, that we will never waiver, and with His grace we will not fail,” said the bishop.

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Bishops' Statement on the Eucharist

Welcoming all Catholics back to Mass

May 10, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

We have lived through an extraordinary year filled with personal challenges, fears, and sufferings caused by the pandemic. At the same time, we have been encouraged by the heroism of health care workers and first responders, the creativity of our pastors, and the kindness of neighbors and friends who by their love and service peeled back the darkness which at times threatened to overwhelm us.

Now that there are clear signs the pandemic is loosening its grip on our lives, we come to you with confidence to take the next step in reestablishing our ecclesial life as a community of faith.

You may recall that when COVID-19 first appeared in our state last March, we, the Latin Rite Catholic Bishops of Connecticut, adopted a series of changes to the celebration of Mass designed to protect those who attended from the possible spread of the virus. However, it quickly became evident that those measures were insufficient to protect our people. After consultation and prayer, it was with a heavy heart that we took the extraordinary step of granting a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation in each of our respective dioceses. The intent behind that decision was to protect human life, especially the frailest and most vulnerable in our midst from becoming infected by a disease which many doctors were unsure how best to combat. We wish to express our sincere gratitude for your cooperation in observing the safety protocols

that resulted in no significant viral spread of COVID-19 at any celebration of Mass in our dioceses.

Thankfully, the situation surrounding the pandemic is slowly improving in our state. For example, vaccinations are increasing, and hospitalizations are decreasing throughout the state. The recent decision by Governor Lamont to limit indoor restrictions on public assembly only to the mandatory wearing of masks marks a watershed moment in our year-long struggle against the COVID-19 virus.

Jesus Christ.

Everything that takes place during the Mass offers us a personal encounter with the Crucified and Risen Christ. We hear him speak to us in his Word, reminding us of the Gospel message and the mandate to proclaim it. We see Christ living among the community of the faithful, where He hears our prayers and encourages us in our daily lives. We experience the Lord in the person of the priest, who preaches the Word and offers the Eucharist in which our Lord becomes sacramentally present to us. Most especially, we encounter the Lord

gathered with his apostles in the Upper Room on the night before he died, in part to strengthen the bonds of love they shared in light of the challenges they would later face in their ministry, so too we gather as members of Christ's Mystical Body. In imitation of the Lord's example, we strengthen our bonds of unity and renew our shared mission to bring Christ's message of redemption, forgiveness, and hope to our troubled world.

In a world that has relied upon technology to keep people united in times of profound isolation, some may question the need to

of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value."¹

We are grateful for all those who joined us and our priests for online Mass during the pandemic, and we look forward to welcoming you back in person. At the same time, we encourage our pastors to continue to live stream the celebration of Sunday Mass for the sake of those who legitimately cannot attend Mass in person.

From apostolic times, the community of believers felt a deep desire to gather in-person to celebrate the Lord's Death and Resurrection on Sunday, the eighth day of re-creation and the first day of the week.² The current law of the Church has codified this ancient, ecclesial practice in the following manner:

Sunday, on which by apostolic tradition the paschal mystery is celebrated, must be observed in the universal Church as the primordial holy day of obligation [...] On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass. Moreover, they are to abstain from those works and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord's day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body.³

However, the obligation to gather in person and attend Sunday Mass should never be understood simply as an observance of a legal requirement. Instead, it is the Church's expression of the deep, personal desire that burns in our hearts to come into the presence of the Lord whom we love, who gave His life for our salvation so that we may receive Him as food for our life's journey unto eternal glory.⁴

For who among us does not want to spend time with someone we deeply love? How much have our hearts ached this past year isolated and separated from our family and friends? In those moments, were our hearts not



In light of these positive developments, we believe the time has come to review the importance that full participation at Mass has for the spiritual life of all believers and offer a heartfelt appeal for all Catholics to return to the Sunday celebration of Mass in person.

Our Catholic faith teaches us the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the sacramental celebration in which the Mystery of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection becomes present to us through grace. In other words, Christ's sacrifice on the cross at Calvary, which was offered once for all and atones for the sins of the whole world, is made present to us during the Mass. Personal participation at Mass invites us into the mystery of our salvation in

profoundly through the reception of Holy Communion since it is the crucified and Risen Christ himself we receive.

These moments of our encounter with the Lord during Mass offer us a deeply personal opportunity for spiritual nourishment. By receiving Christ's Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist, the Lord's grace strengthens the daily life we share with him through our personal prayer and works of charity. Holy Communion is the celestial food that enlightens our minds, gives comfort to our hearts, and strengthens our wills to live the Church's mission in word, deeds and manner of life.

Furthermore, when we gather as a community at Sunday Mass, we do so as members of Christ's Mystical Body. Just as the Lord

attend Sunday Mass in person. To answer this question, we can never forget that while Christian discipleship involves a deeply personal relationship with the Lord, it is never a wholly private one. At our baptism, each of us received the Spirit of adoption, transforming us into Temples of the Holy Spirit and members of the one Mystical Body of Christ. The pursuit of holiness in our personal lives requires that we come together as a community of faith so that the Lord can bless, unite, and strengthen our shared hopes, dreams, challenges, and sufferings in service to Him.

This communal transformation occurs uniquely during the celebration of Mass. "In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Bishops' ...

NEW PLACE TO GATHER FROM PAGE 12

burning with a deep longing to see them again face to face? We did not need anyone to tell us we were obliged to seek them, for our love sought them. Similarly, it must be our deep love for Christ that invites us to seek Him in person and by attending Mass, to welcome Him intimately into our lives as food for the journey of life.

Given the reality that the pandemic has not completely subsided, we recognize that some persons may deeply desire to return to Mass in person but are prevented from doing so for legitimate reasons. These reasons include: (1) suffering from serious pre-existing conditions that may make a person more susceptible to falling ill from COVID-19; (2) being ill and homebound or being a caregiver in close contact with someone who is; (3) having tested positive for any contagious disease, including COVID-19; (4) being in quarantine due to exposure to any contagion or residing with someone who is quarantined. For anyone facing these circumstances, please remember that the Lord will never invite you to do something that poses a danger to oneself or others.

Furthermore, considering the fact that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective and that the Church has determined that moral questions regarding their development do not preclude their use, we encourage people very strongly to receive the vaccine for their own safety, for the safety of their family and their communities, and the common good, because the larger propor-

tion of people who get vaccinated, the more quickly will the pandemic subside.

In light of these reflections and with confidence in the Lord's grace and protection, we have decided to end the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation in person in each of our respective dioceses effective Saturday, May 22, 2021, beginning with the Vigil Mass of the Solemnity of Pentecost.

As we take this hopeful step in our recovery from the pandemic, let us pray that the Lord Jesus, in his great mercy, will deepen our appreciation, love, and participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For with our hearts and minds renewed, we will be ready to go out into the world and courageously proclaim the saving message of the Gospel by our words and witness of life.

In the light of Easter joy and with every best wish, we remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Leonard P. Blair
Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford

Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMV
Most Reverend Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMV
Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford

Frank J. Caggiano
Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport

Michael R. Cote
Most Reverend Michael R. Cote
Bishop of Norwich

1 CCC 1368.

2 "By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord's day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3); THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution «On the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum concilium», 106.

3 PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, The Code of Canon Law, ns.1246-1247.

4 "Yet more than as a precept, the observance should be seen as a need rising from the depths of Christian life. It is crucially important that all the faithful should be convinced that they cannot live their faith or share fully in the life of the Christian community unless they take part regularly in the Sunday Eucharistic assembly. The Eucharist is the full realization of the worship which humanity owes to God, and it cannot be compared to any other religious experience.; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter «On Keeping the Lord's Daily Holy Dies Domini, 81»

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Our Lady of Fatima holds candlelight procession on feast day



BRIDGEPORT—On Wednesday, May 12, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano visited Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Bridgeport and participated in a candlelight procession. The procession was held to honor Our Lady of Fatima, who first appeared to three children in 1917. She gave them the message to pray the Rosary daily. More than 300 people participated in the event. It was a beautiful and prayerful evening.

St. Mary Ridgefield parishioners crown Mary

RIDGEFIELD—With the month of May traditionally devoted to Mary, St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield kicked it off with a "May Crowning." Young girls of the parish were invited to bring a flower from their own garden to Mass on Sunday, May 2. The oldest girl at the 10:30 am Mass placed a flower crown on the statue of Mary, followed by a short procession with song.

Afterward, everyone was invited to add their flowers to a vase next to our Blessed Mother and kneel before her

for a moment of prayer.

It was well attended and God blessed the morning with incredibly beautiful weather. The Knights of Columbus constructed a liter to carry the statue for

the procession. The Blessed Mother statue is on the right of the altar in the Nancy Bossidy Rec Center and can be venerated all throughout the month of May.



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

PASTOR

REVEREND IAN JEREMIAH, reappointed as Pastor of Saint Michael the Archangel Parish,

Greenwich. Effective date is July 1 for a term of six years.

REVEREND SHAWN JORDAN, reappointed as Pastor of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish,

Brookfield. Effective date is July 1, for a term of six years.

Reverend Francis T. Hoffmann
Vicar for Clergy, May, 2021

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Editorial



A prayer for our earth

A YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

BY ELIZABETH CLYONS

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

I've always had a great appreciation for the beauty that is found in nature. My dad would never kill any bugs we found in the house (much to the rest of our dismay), but would instead usher them outside in a cup. He knows the name of every bird, can identify a dog breed from miles away, and he even proposed to my mom at the zoo.

I had many a birthday at the Audubon Society, and our summers at the beach are something we hold most dear.

I've realized that one of my stipulations when it comes to putting down roots, is that the water

must be a walkable distance away (I realize that isn't always possible, so I will settle for green space, if need be).

This inclination to appreciate God's creation comes from something deep inside me, and so too does the inclination to preserve and protect this earth we have been gifted stewardship.

"When it comes to safeguarding creation, there is no time to waste—humanity either must live up to its responsibility or continue on a path of self-destruction," Pope Francis said, commemorating Earth Day this year with a video message.

"Global disasters, COVID-19 and the climate all show that we do not have time to wait," that time is ticking and yet, "we have the means to face the challenge," he said.

"Our concern is to see that the environment is cleaner, purer and preserved, and to take care of nature so that it takes care of us," he said, wishing the leaders success and thanking them for deciding to move forward together.

As followers of Christ, we must realize that this earth is a gift from God. It is all His creation.

In Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* he writes:

"Jesus took up the biblical faith in God the Creator, emphasizing a fundamental truth: God is Father (cf. Mt 11:25). In talking with his disciples, Jesus would invite them to recognize the paternal relationship God has with all his creatures. With moving tenderness he would remind them that each one of them is important in God's eyes: 'Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God' (Lk 12:6).

'Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them' (Mt 6:26).

"The Lord was able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world because he himself was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attention full of fondness and wonder. As he made his way throughout the land, he often stopped to contemplate the beauty sown by his Father, and invited his disciples to perceive a divine message in things."

He has entrusted this home to us. When we look out upon the vast ocean, witness a glowing sunset, or cuddle up with our family pet, we get to directly experience His love for us. When we even contemplate our own creation, it should leave us with feelings of reverence for the Creator.

At the conclusion of *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis leaves us with the following prayer:

A prayer for our earth
All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. ■



Faith and the entertainment industry

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

Before I start, let me say in the interests of full disclosure, that I never watch the Oscars. Not this year. Not last year. Not ever and I never will, so I guess in some infinitesimally small way I'm responsible for the record low ratings. What does the future hold for Hollywood when some YouTube channels and TikTok accounts get more viewers than the Tinseltown's biggest night of the year?

Call me a cynic, or maybe I'm just a grouchy old guy, but I don't watch the Golden Globes, the Silver Globes or the Copper Globes either, or any other celebrity awards ceremony.

I suppose I shouldn't judge Hollywood because one of my cardinal rules, taught to me by my father, is "Take your own inventory."

Nevertheless, I've always believed the entertainment industry is in large part responsible for what ails America, which was notoriously described as a "spiritual malaise" by Jimmy Carter more than 40 years ago.

It seems to me that all the moral problems that afflict our country are celebrated in our entertainment—violence, casual sex, greed, immodesty, injustice, cheating, atheism, narcissism and hatred. I should also mention the relentless practice of portraying

people of faith as evil-doers, especially when it comes to Catholics.

Whenever I watch a movie, I know it's only a matter of moments before the villain will appear, wearing a cross, quoting the Bible or committing some atrocity in the shadow of a crucifix. In one particularly repulsive film—rated PG-13 by the way—he was praying the rosary.

For decades, Hollywood has been aggressive in its attack on faith. Gone are the days when movies like "Bells of St. Mary's" and "Going My Way" were produced.

And equally sad, there's a new trend that I call "pop atheism." Some of our most popular celebrities with millions of followers are atheists, including Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Julianne Moore, Johnny Depp, Jodie Foster, Joaquin Phoenix, Andy Serkis, Emma Thompson, Daniel Radcliffe, Keira Knightley, Zac Efron, Rob Reiner, Kevin Bacon and John Malkovich. To name a few.

Atheism has always struck me as sort of simple-minded belief, even though its adherents fancy themselves as intellectuals in the tradition of Bertrand Russell,

Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. They seem to embrace the delusion that proclaims, "Hey, I'm smarter than everyone else," when in reality they're dumber because they never took the time to see the signs, which everywhere proclaim God's glory.

Two millennia ago St. Paul said something that's especially relevant today. In his Letter to the Romans—which should be reissued as a Letter to Hollywood—he said that "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.... Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles." Is Oscar one of those idols?

Countless Americans, many of them young people addicted to social media, practice a sort of 21st century idolatry when it comes to celebrities, who have millions of

"followers." We worship them so much they could start their own religion, and probably would love to.

If you want to understand a society's values, or lack of them, look at its entertainment.

Even a cursory examination of our entertainment, from movies and TV to pop music and video games, shows that in America we are what we watch. Consider that hundreds of studies have shown a correlation between violence in film and TV and social aggression. Since America is such a violent country, shouldn't our legislators endorse gun control on the silver screen?

It's time to recognize our entertainment for what it is and limit the exposure of our children and grandchildren. And it's time to free ourselves from the obsession with the celebrity culture. Don't worship them, pray for them.

Think about this: You may not have your own TV show or a \$53 million mansion in Beverly Hills or 200 million Instagram followers or an international fan club, but you have something infinitely more precious...your faith in God. ■

We Stand With Christ

Our Lady of Fatima 'rejuvenates' its sanctuary

By **JOE PISANI**

WILTON—Father Reginald D. Norman, pastor of Our Lady of Fatima, said his parish is completing a “rejuvenation” of its sanctuary made possible by the We Stand With Christ capital campaign, and he hopes to have it dedicated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano over the summer.

“Our main project in addition to our prayer garden was our sanctuary renewal, which moved the tabernacle to the center where everyone can see it,” said Father Norman, who was co-chair of the diocesan campaign.

He recalls that eight years ago when Bishop Caggiano first visited the parish, he asked why many people couldn't see the tabernacle, which was off to the side. Thus began a movement to make the tabernacle the center of attention, along with a number of modifications that Father Reggie says are fundamental to “the rejuvenation of the sanctuary.”

Some were necessary because of additions to the church, which when it was constructed in 1953 was rectangular but eventually became L-shaped after a section was added. The parish is the spiritual home of 1,700 families in Wilton and was founded in 1942 by 60 families.

Previously, Our Lady of Fatima had a stunning stained glass cross, which drew the attention of the congregation behind the altar.

“That is where our attention went, and not to the tabernacle,” Father said. “So our plan was to get a cross that was more traditional and to move the tabernacle beneath it. We took out the 15-foot stained glass cross and put it in storage, and it will be used in the future for a chapel project.”

The wall where it was located was filled in, and the parish acquired a traditional crucifix from the Pema company in Italy. And now the tabernacle rests on a table beneath it. The place where the tabernacle had been was painted blue and has a statue of the Blessed Mother with a Marian symbol above it.

In addition, an altar made of marbled wood was ordered, which contains a relic, Father said.

Bishop Caggiano will be invited to rededicate and consecrate the altar sometime in early summer.

“He will commission the altar,

especially since we've never had a relic before,” Father said. “I am a purist, which means even if the furniture comes early, we won't use anything until the bishop comes and blesses it.”

The renovations also included refinishing the floors and staining them a darker color, installing handrails in the sanctuary and creating three risers for the choir so they will be able to see. New lighting is among the renovations.

The Celebrant and Deacon have new chairs, which are now situated near the statue of the Blessed Mother, and the existing chairs and kneelers will be refinished to match the altar. The color scheme will be blue and white in honor of Our Lady.

The master plan calls for an upgrade and overhaul of the air conditioning system, along with



the installation of a lavatory near the sacristy.

As an added benefit, Father said, a stained glass image of the

Blessed Trinity in the ceiling will be illuminated from the outside, and it is surrounded by a painting of a blue sky with stars.

The Philip Tai-Lauria Memorial/Prayer Garden was completed last summer in honor of Philip Tai-Laurie, who died in 2018 at age 31, the son of parishioners Elaine and Phil Lauria.

For five years, Father Norman had wanted to create a garden where people could pray and find peace. The garden, which is open to anyone, is anchored by a granite cross that is 35 feet by 21 feet and 3 feet high. A plaque at the end of the cross memorializes parishioners who died on 9/11 in addition to “all the family members lost on 9/11/2001 too numerous to list and too precious to be forgotten.” Families may also honor their loved ones by

putting their names on plaques or pavers in the garden.

Father Norman stressed the importance of the We Stand With Christ capital campaign and said, “It allows churches to do repairs and fix things that have been broken and to make corrections for things that need to be corrected.”

The campaign, which was the most successful in the history of the Diocese of Bridgeport, also created endowments for three foundations in faith, charity and education. This will eventually help alleviate some of the pressure to fundraise for the Annual Catholic Appeal, he said.

“During the pandemic, a lot of good projects were started, and it's really important for us to keep them funded,” he said. “Even people who didn't commit to the campaign before still can now.” ■

FIF launches four new funds

By **JOE PISANI**

BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Faith of the Diocese of Bridgeport has launched four new funds made possible by the We Stand With Christ capital campaign, which will assist residents at Catholic nursing homes, fund programs that support evangelization, promote the work of the St. Catherine Center for Special Needs, and support children with special needs who are enrolled in Catholic schools.

“These funds were made possible by all the people in the diocese who contributed to the We Stand With Christ capital campaign,” said Kelly Weldon, executive director of Foundations in Faith. “These programs are now active because of their generosity and Bishop Frank J. Caggiano's original vision for pastoral care in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is a significant and historical step for our Foundation.”

The four new funds are:

St. Catherine Center Fund for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

This fund provides educational programs for individuals with disabilities and serves

as a centralized resource for the diocesan community. The center strives to foster the educational, spiritual and social well-being of children and adults with disabilities, offering a school, an adult day program and support for inclusion in parishes and Catholic schools.

St. John Bosco Fund for Special Needs Students

This funding will support programs for children with special educational needs in Catholic elementary and high schools.

Lourdes Fund for Spiritual Enrichment in Catholic Nursing Homes

This fund is committed to providing spiritual care for those residents who are at the three nursing homes previously owned by the diocese: St. Joseph Center, St. Camillus Center and St. John Paul II. The fund supports Mass and Communion services, upkeep of onsite chapels, as well as sacramental and pastoral visits to the elderly residents.

St. Therese Fund for Evangelization

This fund will help parishes and schools, as well as ministries, to engage in creative work of sharing the faith. It will support innovative approaches to encourage evangelization.

Foundations in Faith also oversees four previously existing funds—St. John Paul II Fund for Religious Education, St. Charles Borromeo Fund for Seminarians and Vocations, St. John Vianney Fund for Retired Priests, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Fund to Keep Catholic School Tuition Affordable along with the St. Francis Xavier Fund for Missionary Churches, which was launched last year.

“When I began my job at Foundations in Faith, Bishop Caggiano laid out what he wanted pastoral care to look like in the diocese,” Weldon said. “At the time, only four funds had money and were up and running. Back then, we didn't have funds from We Stand With Christ yet. This is the first time we have had funds from the campaign to distribute, and the board made the decision to launch these four funds, which were part of the bishop's vision.”

Weldon said that the funds have already elicited interest from several different groups. She anticipates young adult Catholics will be interested in the St. Therese Fund for Evangelization with the intention of launching an initiative that targets young Catholic professionals.

Weldon, who is also a board

member at St. Catherine Center for Special Needs, believes this fund will help Helen Burland, executive director, in her mission to enhance the dignity of the center's community.

“St. Catherine's provides a loving, nurturing place that helps them be the best they can be,” Weldon said. “Without St. Catherine's, there would be so many lives turned upside down.”

Regarding the Lourdes Fund, she said: “We are committed to providing spiritual guidance at these nursing homes—St. Camillus in Stamford, St. John Paul II in Danbury and St. Joseph in Trumbull. They had a hard time during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are trying to help them manage by providing Masses and confession and counseling for people facing end-of-life decisions.”

Some of their needs are technological. At one of the homes, the sound system in the chapel is inadequate, and the pastoral care staff cannot live-stream Mass to the residents, who are in their rooms because of COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, the homes will require funding to help organize and

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Redemptoris Mater Seminary

Two different paths led to the seminary

By **JOE PISANI**

[Editor's note: The Diocese of Bridgeport observes Vocation Awareness Month in May. The following stories of Christian Siciliani and Sebastian Sanmiguel Lopez of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Stamford, describe the different paths that took them to the same destination.]

STAMFORD—Sebastian Sanmiguel Lopez was his mother's only child. After his parents separated, he lived with Luze Dey and helped her pay the household expenses. She had left the Catholic Church, and throughout his childhood, Sebastian had no spiritual development even though he received the sacraments.

"I didn't grow up in the Church," he recalls. "My father Oscar always tried to talk to me about the Gospel when he called, but I didn't listen because I didn't go to Mass."

Sebastian was raised in Pereira, Risaralda, Colombia. After high school, he began studying business administration at Universidad Católica de Pereira, but during his college years, he drifted further from the faith.

"My friends and society were telling me to have fun, make

money, and I grew up with this mentality," he recalls. "Making money was the goal of my life. I look back and see that for me college was a struggle. You're 18 and everybody is telling you what you have to do to be happy, and you just believe it...even if it's not true. You just hear it and do it, like drinking and partying."

And then, something happened. His best friend was a member of the Neocatechumenal Way, an itinerary of Christian formation in the Church, and he invited Sebastian to a gathering for religious catechesis. He went but left soon afterward and told his friend he didn't understand a single word and thought they were crazy. But despite his reluctance, he returned.

Then, in 2014, he attended an event where people gave personal witness about their faith.

"In the end, I saw all the young people and realized they had something I didn't have. And I wanted to have what they did. I felt this pulling inside me," he recalled.

He returned to the catechesis sessions with the Neocatechumenal Way and eventually realized God was speaking to him.

"The Lord started changing



SEBASTIAN SANMIGUEL LOPEZ

my life, and I had this desire for the Eucharist on Saturday evening at the service," he said. "Which was hard for a guy who liked to party on Saturday night."

Looking back, he says, "My life started to change. During the first months, I was struggling but in the end, I wanted to go."

After graduating from college, he began working at his father's clothing manufacturing company, a business that would one day be his.

However, Sebastian eventually realized the Lord was calling him to something more, and he acknowledged his vocation. Once he said yes to the call, he was chosen to go to Redemptoris



CHRISTIAN SICILIANI

Mater Seminary in Stamford, but even after his decision, there were challenges he had to face.

"My father wanted to retire, and I had to tell him I was leaving the business," Sebastian recalled. "I was supposed to be in charge, but I never told him about my vocation. One day I just went to him and said, 'I'm leaving.' He was frustrated, but in the end he said, 'If you feel the Lord is calling you, go.'"

There was a similar encounter with his mother.

"I was her only child and helped pay the rent, and I had to leave her with everything, and she couldn't afford it," he said.

This troubled him, so he told his instructor, "I am ready to go, but what about my mother?"

He told Sebastian, "Don't be stupid. The same God who will take care of you in the seminary is the same God who will take care of your mother."

When Sebastian went back home, she was anxious about paying the bills, and he told her God would watch over her.

"This is a sign of my calling," he says today. "I was told, 'Take care of God's business and he will take care of yours.'"

Even though Luze Dey was apprehensive, she told her son, "I will miss you so much, but your place is there."

And God did take care of his mother. Every time she thinks she may not be able to make ends meet, she receives what she needs in ways she could not have foreseen, Sebastian said.

He has been at Redemptoris Mater four years and is in his third year of theology.

"I always ask the Lord to grant me humility and to never forget what he has done in my life," he

said. "I thank him for being here because this seminary has given me a chance. Out of my selfishness, the Lord has helped me become a Christian. I am happy to be in the Church, and I am happy to be with the Way."

Learning to accept himself and trust God

For Christian Siciliani, the path to the seminary was one of self-acceptance and developing a deep trust that God was leading him every step of the way ... even when the path seemed uncertain.

A native of Bari, Italy, Christian has been in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary of Bridgeport two years and is studying philosophy at Sacred Heart University. He grew up in a Catholic home, and his parents Giuseppe and Mina and two brothers had been in the Neocatechumenal Way many years. He joined at 14, and at 15 felt a call to the priesthood, but he "projected" too much about what the future and concluded, "No, this can't be for me."

His confusion was compounded by his relationship with his brother. The two often fought, and he ridiculed Christian for being short and chubby as an adolescent.

"He was always making fun of me, and at 16 I didn't accept myself physically and began to suffer depression and decided that a vocation was not for me," he recalled. "Nothing made sense, and when I started to think about the purpose of my life, I didn't have an answer." But then an older woman in the community pulled him aside to discuss his emotional crisis.

"She told me the good news—God loves me just as I am—and that changed everything," Christian said, explaining that it was the devil who was causing his self-doubt. She left him with an ultimatum: "Go home and speak with your parents about everything...or I'm going to."

He talked with them, and they were relieved, including his brother, who gave him the money to attend World Youth Day with Pope Francis in Poland.

Little by little, his depression left and he says, "I saw God working in me."

After high school, he enrolled in the University of Bari to study

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Saint Theresa

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Deacon Gerald M. Lambert — Dr. Aymeric Dupre La Tour, *Interim Music Director*

SCHEDULE 2021

WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 pm
Sunday: 7:30 am | 9:00 am | 10:30 am | 12:15 pm

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Monday-Friday: 8:00 am | 5:30 pm
Saturday: 8:00 am

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Thursday before First Friday: 4:30-5:10 pm
Thursday: 7:00-8:30 pm
Fridays: 7:30-8:00 am and 4:30-5:30 pm
Saturday: 3:30-4:30 pm
Sundays: 1/2 hour before all Masses

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ST. THERESA SCHOOL

St. Theresa School is now accepting applications for the 2021-2022 school year and is transitioning to a classical model of education.

Questions or to arrange a tour of the school contact our Admissions Director, Luciana Corsello at 203.268.3236.



Foundations in Education Fundraiser

\$850,000 for tuition & innovation & leadership

DARIEN—“What a year it has been! We have each suffered personal loss and a collective trauma this past year. Yet amidst the difficulties, we have seen heroism, many beacons of light and great promise of hope,” said Holly Lemoine, executive director of Foundations in Education, who set the upbeat tone for the FIE spring benefit.

“The Virtual Hybrid Spring Benefit” evening was a great success raising over \$850,000, which will assure hundreds of students in diocesan Catholic schools will receive assistance this year.

The evening featured home hosts as well as a few in-person guests at Woodway Country Club in Darien, which served as the communication hub for the live-streamed awards and auction. The night was highlighted by a surprise appearance by Eli Manning, who along with Frank Mara would join one lucky donor on a golf outing for two at Winged Foot!

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano welcomed friends virtually by recognizing honorees and outlining Foundations in Education’s mission of providing tuition assistance for families so they may provide a Catholic education to their children and Innovation and Leadership Grants for teachers to promote innovation in the classroom.

“I am here simply to thank you and ask you to be as generous as you can to allow the mission of Foundations in Education to continue to move forward, because we are about transforming the lives of our students, one student at a time,” said the bishop, who led the gathering in prayer and asked God to bless the foundation’s work to help students reach their potential.

The evening featured recognition of honorees; Dr. Julie McNamara, recognized for her “inspiring leadership and commitment to transforming students and teachers through Catholic Education” and Lynn and Frank Mara recognized for their “extraordinary philanthropy and personal commitment to Catholic Education.”

Tom McInerney, chair of Foundations in Education’s Board of Trustees introduced honoree, Dr. Julie McNamara, president emerita at Albertus Magnus College. Julie is a Foundations in Education Board Member since 2015 and served as president with Albertus Magnus from 1982 until her retirement in



LYNN AND FRANK MARA, 2021 Foundations in Education honorees, joined us virtually to celebrate Catholic education from their home in Greenwich along with Bishop Frank and their family.

2016. Dr. McNamara has also served on the Yale- New Haven Hospital Board of Trustees for 29 years where she continues in her role as vice chair. Julie chairs the Innovation and Leadership Grants Committee for Foundations in Education which awards competitive grants for teachers. In this capacity she continues to influence the quality of education our schools offer.

Barbara Ripp, benefit co-chair, member of Foundations in Education’s Board of Trustees and member of the Scholarship Distribution Committee introduced honorees Lynn and Frank Mara.

In her remarks, Barbara noted the Maras are known in Greenwich

as active community members, contributing volunteers and philanthropists. But what not everyone may know, is just how passionate and supportive they are, as a family, for Catholic education. Lynn has been a member of the gala committee for several years. Her enthusiasm is boundless and her creative ideas are always amazing!

Thanks to Chairman Sponsors Paula & Tom McInerney and Barbara & Peter Ripp, Benefactors Lynn & Frank Mara, Champion Sponsors Kris & Kevin Jandora Chris & Lorraine Wilson, and the group made up of The Dominican Sisters of Peace, Dominican Academy of the City of New York,



2021 HONOREE DR. JULIA MCNAMARA was on-site at Woodway Country Club to accept her award from Bishop Frank Caggiano and Board Chair Thomas E. McInerney.

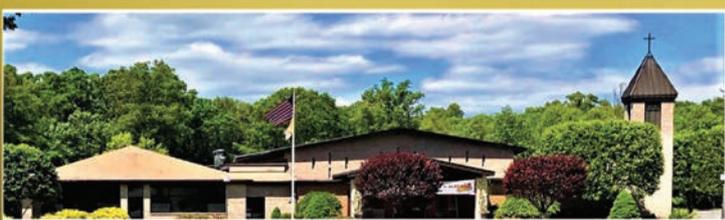


BISHOP FRANK CAGGIANO PICTURED with Virtual Hybrid Benefit co-chairs Xandy Duffy (with husband Jack) and Barbara Ripp (with husband Peter), who helped raise over \$850,000 for Foundations in Education.

and Albertus Magnus College, as well as our Patron Sponsors Susan and Tom McInerney and Becky

and Michael Shea. We are grateful too to our Corporate Partners

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



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Tuesday
8-9pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation
(Community Room)
Wednesday 7-8pm
Saturday 4-5pm

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Vigil Mass
5:15pm

Sunday
7:30am
9am
10:30am
Noon

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Catholic Education

Cardinal Kung Academy announces new principal

STAMFORD— The Cardinal Kung Academy Board of Directors is delighted to announce that Dr. Alexander B. Miller will be joining Cardinal Kung Academy as its new principal effective July 1, 2021.

Dr. Miller comes to us from Fordham University, where he teaches courses in Biblical Studies. He previously taught courses in Classics, Philosophy

and Theology at Notre Dame University, Fordham University, St. John's University, and SUNY Purchase. Dr. Miller is excited to advance the renaissance of classical Catholic education here at Cardinal Kung Academy.

Dr. Miller graduated magna cum laude with a double-major in Philosophy and Theology from Georgetown University. He earned a master's in Early

Christian Studies from the University of Notre Dame and a master's in Christian Near Eastern Studies from The Catholic University of America with a major in Syriac and minor in Coptic. His Ph.D. in Theology is from Fordham University, where he specialized in patristic theology.

Dr. Miller is an active member of the Knights of Columbus



DR. ALEXANDER B. MILLER

and Saints John and Paul Parish in Larchmont. He lives in Westchester County, N.Y. with his wife and two children. Dr. Miller will be succeeding Barbara

Logsdail, our beloved founder, board member, and first principal. Barbara will remain as an active board member of Cardinal Kung Academy. ■

Foundations in Education extends application deadline for new student K-8 tuition assistance

BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Education is pleased to announce they are extending the Bishop's Scholarship Fund application deadline for new K-8 families as long as funds permit. The hope is the extension will boost enrollment and also encourage consideration of Catholic education.

The mission of the Bishop's Scholarship Fund is to help fam-

ilies afford Catholic elementary school tuition in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Now in its 7th year, the fund has awarded nearly \$15 million in assistance to thousands of students attending diocesan schools in Fairfield County who demonstrate financial need.

Last year, an anonymous donor to Foundations in Education (FIE) provided \$1 million in additional funding for

COVID-19 emergency tuition assistance for K-8 families suffering financial hardship from coronavirus-related illness, loss of employment, or loss of business.

Together with this fund, FIE awarded 1,480 students over \$3.5 million in tuition assistance for the 2020-2021 academic year.

"We have a lot of great donors who really believe in the value of Catholic education because they received so much from their own Catholic education or have seen the great work Catholic schools are doing," said Foundations' Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine.

The deadline for new families to apply to the Bishop's Scholarship Fund was April 15 but has since been extended for a limited time, while funding permits.

After witnessing a delay in new student applications last spring due to COVID-19, FIE extended last year's deadline. In doing so, a record high 260 new students applied for assistance.

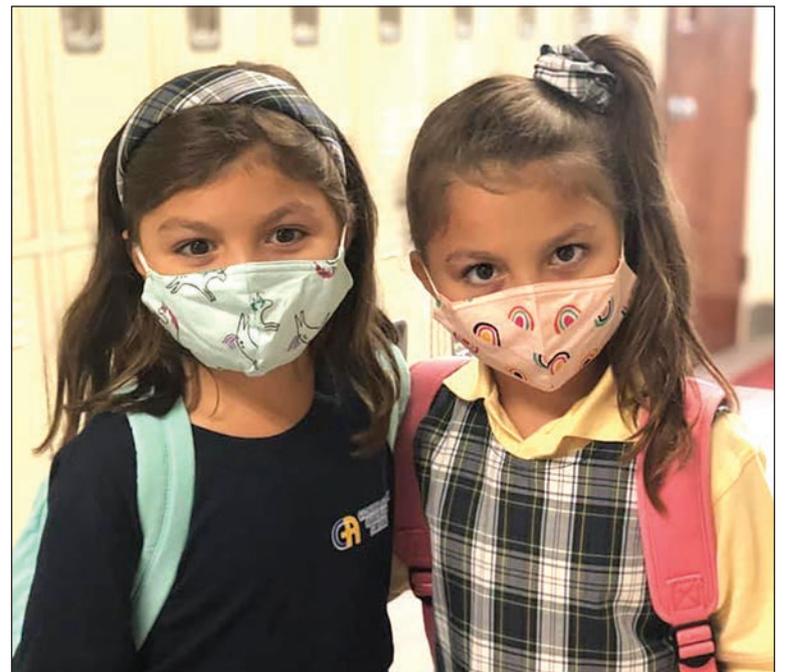
This year, the deadline is being extended as a result of a continued surge of interest from public school families.

FIE's Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine observes, "We saw firsthand the difference Catholic schools make in the lives of students. For the most part our teachers met in person with their students five days a week throughout the year, putting students first. They are our unsung heroes and are instrumental in

delivering an exceptional education to students. Now is a great time to assure your child's academic future by enrolling in one of our Catholic schools."

The application process is streamlined for convenience.

in Ridgefield, Anna O'Rourke, shares, "Our objective this year was to provide a safe, in-person environment for students. Our protocols have been highly effective, with minimal disruption. We see the benefit of in-person



Applicants apply online via the FACTS Grant and Aid application at www.FACTSmgt.com/aid. Schools can assist new families with the application process.

According to the Office of the Superintendent, the nineteen Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport welcomed 1,114 new students in September 2020.

Principal at Saint Mary School

learning, and that is reinforced by parents, as we had 45 new students join us from Kindergarten - Grade 8."

(Bishop's Scholarship Fund tuition assistance is made possible through donors to Foundations in Education. To find out how your tax-deductible gift to FIE can help transform the life of a student, visit: www.foundationsineducation.org/our-children-are-worth-it.) ■



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Cardinal Kung Academy

Student named 'Defender of Faith'

STAMFORD—Isabella Martinez, a junior at Cardinal Kung Academy, has been named recipient of the Cardinal Kung Defender of Faith Award. The award is gifted by Agnes and Joseph Kung, Stamford, to a CKA student exemplifying the life and virtue of Ignatius Cardinal Kung.

Cardinal Kung was a priest and educator for years prior to becoming a bishop of Shanghai. He was named bishop just as Communists were coming to power in the region. The then-bishop was imprisoned for refusing to renounce allegiance to Rome and remained in jail, often



ISABELLA MARTINEZ

solitary confinement, for more than 30 years. He was released from prison and subsequent house arrest for medical reasons

and spent his final years in the Bridgeport diocese.

Agnes Kung, niece to the Cardinal and director of the Cardinal Kung Foundation, addressed the CKA student body on March 12, 2021, "Cardinal Kung loved education. He considered education very important, he loved classical education. He was courageous...study hard and...pray to him!"

Bella was chosen from a pool of student applicants who submitted an essay and personal testimony for review by a school committee. Mrs. Logsdail, principal, had words of praise for the

junior: "Bella is the perfect choice because she displays a commitment to our church through service to others. She has a virtuous reputation of being honest, trustworthy and hardworking and she is tireless in her organization of corporal works of mercy through the Society of Mother Teresa." Others echoed this: "Bella is one

of the most compassionate and kindest people I know," said Marya Grimm, her fellow classmate and friend.

(Cardinal Kung Academy is a diocesan school located in Stamford, Conn., which offers a classical curriculum to grades 7-12. For more information visit: www.cardinalkung-academy.org)

LOMNITZER ORDINATION FROM PAGE 3

Spanish.

Colin's brother Tyler will read the first and second reading, and Father Eric W. Silva will vest him as a deacon. Dignitary priests in attendance will be: Most Reverend James Massa, rector of St. Joseph Seminary; Father William Cleary, vice rector of St. Joseph Seminary; Father Michael Bruno, dean of seminarians, St. Joseph Seminary and Father Matthew Ernest, academic dean/director of liturgy, St. Joseph Seminary. Also in attendance will be Father Matthew Breslin (ADNY), deacon of the word.

Colin will celebrate his first Mass as a deacon on May 23, 11 am, at St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull. Father Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine's

will be the principal celebrant.

"Ever since my family became Catholic at the Easter Vigil in 2005, St. Catherine of Siena became my 'home away from home,'" says Colin. "It was there that I realized that priests were people too." Colin says he grew in devotion to the sacraments, especially confession and the Eucharist. "In addition to learning how to pray, immersing myself in a Catholic environment became very important to me." At Catholic University of America, Colin grew in Catholic friendships, fraternity, intellectuality and spirituality. "Along with the help of the saintly influences of St. Josemaría Escrivá and St. John Henry Newman, Christ's call for me to be His priest became abundantly clear."

DORMÉVIL ORDINATION FROM PAGE 3

and gratefully received the St. Augustine Medal of Service from the Diocese of Bridgeport, while he was serving as a diocesan pastoral council member, with Bishop William E. Lori, presently Archbishop of Baltimore, Maryland. In 2014, at the fourth diocesan synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport, called by Bishop Caggiano, Guy served as delegate of the Haitian Community and St. Joseph Parish. Currently, he is still one of the five members of the Haitian National Charismatic Committee based in New York.

Quincy Réginald Dormévil, Guy's great-nephew, will present the first reading. Mrs. Romelle Thomas Etienne, Guy's niece, will present the second reading in French. Guyvensky and Guylenny Dormévil, Guy's son and daughter, will bring up the gifts. Dignitary priests in attendance will be: Very Rev. Brian Kiely, rector of Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary; Msgr. Joseph Malagrec, chaplain of the Haitian National Renouveau Charismatic Group; Msgr. James A. Mongelluzzo, faculty, Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary and Father Vincent Daily, spiritual director, Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary.

Father Dormévil will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday,

June 13, 4 pm at St. Joseph Church in Norwalk. Msgr. Joseph Malagrec, pastor of Holy Cross Church in N.Y. and chaplain of the Haitian National Renouveau Charismatic Group will be homilist and concelebrant along with Father Edicson Orozco, pastor of St. Joseph Church, Father Gerard Frantz Desruisseaux, episcopal vicar of the Haitian Community, Father Jean Ridley Julien, former chaplain of Haitian/American Center, and Very Rev. Brian Kiely, rector of Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary.

"Since childhood, I have been involved in the Church as an altar boy, a youth group member and leader, a choir member, a prayer group leader and much more..." says Deacon Dormévil. "Due to my involvement in the Church, many people used to call me Father Guy."

From a very young age, it was his dream to be a deacon. "I never thought about being a priest, because I didn't feel worthy of such a great blessing, even though many people believed that it was always my calling," shares Dormévil. "Soon after the death of my wife, many people asked me to consider becoming a priest, including my late wife's mother, who for the second time had asked me, 'Why don't you become a priest?' It was the same question she had asked me the first time I met her, while I was dating my late wife. I regard all these inquiries as signs that the

Lord was preparing me."

When Father John Riviera Gomez, Guy's pastor, asked him to consider the priesthood, Dormévil was able to answer positively in just a few minutes.

"I have never been happier than during my time spent in seminary formation," says Dormévil. "Serving people toward their next step to a better life, through their relationship with God, is a great blessing and honor. God has called me and I pray that His will becomes my will in order to be the best servant, following the example of Jesus Christ who says: 'the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve' (cf. Mark 10:45)."

Dormévil explains that his father wanted his first son to become a priest. "He prayed hard on it, but it didn't happen. Similar to the call that David had, when his father Jesse didn't think he was the one to be anointed king—my Father never considered me, his youngest son, to be the called one. However, becoming a priest thirty-nine years after my father's death, I consider my call as the fruit of his continued prayer in heaven. As such, I ask God to incline my heart according to His will, and I am asking the people of God for their continued prayers for me and for more priestly and religious vocations."

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Sports

All-Staters 3: James, Joseph, Wellington

By DON HARRISON

Connecticut's all-state boys basketball team was launched by the New Haven Register many dribbles ago, in 1949. The name may have changed—it's now GameTime All-State—but the tradition is intact.

Since its creation, most of the Nutmeg State's lionized names have been selected to the annual all-star squads. Norwalk High's Calvin Murphy, a skillful 5-foot-9 guard who was elected to both the Naismith and collegiate basketball halls of fame; Wilbur Cross' Super John Williamson and Masuk's Mike Gminski come readily to mind.

As one might suspect, the Diocese of Bridgeport's high schools have placed a multitude of outstanding players on the all-state basketball teams through the years. Think Kolbe Cathedral's Walter Luckett and Chris Smith. Think Notre Dame's Frank Oleynick and Barry McLeod. Think St. Joseph's Rick DiCicco and Marvin Saddler.

So, no surprise. The 2020-21 GameTime All-State basketball team includes a player from each of the aforementioned diocesan schools:

St. Joseph: Jason James, a 6-foot junior guard who averaged

23.4 points and 6.2 assists per game this winter for the 11-2 Cadets.

Notre Dame: Akim Joseph, a 6-5 senior forward who averaged 17.8 points and 8.0 rebounds per game for the South-West Conference champion Lancers.

Kolbe Cathedral: Daniel Wellington, a 5-7 senior guard who sparked the Cougars to a 14-1 record, averaging 16.8 points, 4.8 assists and four steals per game.

All three of these young men, along with Fairfield Prep's Logan Carey, were also named to the Connecticut High School Coaches Association's 2020-21 All-State team. Carey, a junior guard, led the Jesuits to a 9-1 record during the abbreviated regular season—a season that ended prematurely due to COVID-19 issues.

Carey was a second-team pick on the GameTime All-State team, as were Notre Dame's Andrew Saint-Louis, a 6-foot senior guard, and Kolbe's Tyrell Staples-Santos, a 6-foot junior point guard.

James, who was also voted the FCIAC's Player of the Year, was the principal reason for St. Joe's opening the shortened season with 11 straight victories.

"Jason handles really well, and he's improved his shot the past three years. He's got a nice jump



JASON JAMES
JR., ST. JOSEPH

shot and he can hit the three," says Cadets' coach Kevin Wielk. "He's a great all-around kid."

Wielk, a St. Joe's alumnus, was a senior and a "role player"—his words—on coach Vito Montelli's 1994-95 squad that lost a nail-biter to Ansonia in the CIAC Class-L championship game. This was his third season as the Cadets' coach.

Joseph, Saint-Louis and Rassoul Abakar followed their Trinity Catholic coach, Brian Kriitcher, to Notre Dame following the former school's closing.

All were important contribu-



AKIM JOSEPH
SR., NOTRE DAME

tors to the Lancers' 11-1 record, which was capped by their 72-62 win over previously undefeated Kolbe Cathedral in the SWC title game on March 25. Joseph netted 10 of his game-high 24 points that evening in the decisive final quarter during which Notre Dame rallied from an eight-point deficit.

The versatile Joseph, a native of Haiti, who rebound well and has shown he is capable of sinking three-pointers, is headed to Gettysburg College next fall.

John Pfohl just completed his 19th season as Kolbe's head coach—a tenure interrupted by



DANIEL WELLINGTON
SR., KOLBE CATHEDRAL

nine years away, a period dedicated to watching his four children's athletic endeavors—and he raves over Wellington's accomplishments.

"Daniel's leadership was as good as I've ever had in my 19 years of coaching," he points out. "His growth over four years has been great. He's the fastest and quickest player in our league and maybe in the state."

Wellington, who served as co-captain this season with James Cook, is "a tremendous kid, very respectful. He volunteers at camps over the summer," adds Pfohl. ■

DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT MAY 23—JUNE 19

May		Year
23	Rev. Thomas M. Garrick.....	1955
	Deacon Hans Jakob Gram.....	2010
24	Rev. Mark Grimes.....	2008
25	Rev. Joseph A. Ganley.....	1957
26	Msgr. William Loughlin.....	2014
27	Rev. Joseph F. Sohovich.....	1957
28	Rev. John P. McNerney.....	1969
29	Msgr. John J. Barney.....	1973
	Rev. Harry Holbrook.....	2005
30	Rev. Adelard A. Jalbert.....	1960
31	Rev. Dennis A. Szocs, O.F.M.....	1985
June		Year
1	Rev. Msgr. Jean C. Tetreault.....	2003
2	Rev. Thomas M. Ford.....	1992
3	Rev. Michael F. Blanchard.....	1982
	Rev. Richard J. Grady.....	1993
	Deacon Kenneth Stroud.....	2016
5	Msgr. Peter P. Dora.....	2017
	Msgr. John Hayes.....	1964
6	Rev. Thomas J. Hanley.....	1954
	Msgr. Edward J. Howley.....	2012
7	Rev. James J. Dennis.....	2003
	Deacon Kevin Moore.....	2019
8	Msgr. Bernard S. Scanlon.....	2004
9	Msgr. James G. Lengen.....	1999
	Rev. James J. O'Malley.....	1996
13	Deacon Anthony LaBua.....	1988
14	Msgr. William F. Kearney.....	1974
15	Msgr. John H. Landry.....	1967
19	Rev. Robert S. McBride.....	1982
	Msgr. Frank Wissel.....	2014

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Column: Thomas Hicks



The Torn Curtain

POTPOURRI

By THOMAS H. HICKS

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

During the time of Christ, the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was on 40 acres. The Temple building itself was 150 feet by 150 feet. Within the Temple building was a sacred precinct

holding a sanctuary divided into two parts, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. In the Holy Place was a lampstand made of pure gold, having six flowery branches extending from its sides, three to a side. There was a table that held

the Bread of the Presence, and there was a golden altar of incense (Heb.9:2) on which incense was burned daily to symbolize the prayers of the people rising fragrantly to God.

The Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant which held the Ten commandments received by Moses on Mt. Sinai. On each corner of the Ark was a cherub with outstretched wings. The Ark was regarded as God's throne. The Holy of Holies was regarded as the place of God's presence on earth.

Once each year, the Jewish High Priest sacrificed a ram as a special sin offering for the people and took its blood into the Holy of Holies where he would sprinkle (with his finger) some blood on the Ark cover to make atonement for the people's sins. Only the Jewish High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, and he did so only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

There was a curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Exodus 26:31-33: "Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen... Hang the curtain from clasps. It will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place." The curtain served to separate the people from the Holy of Holies. Believers did not have direct access to the presence of God.

Readers of the Bible are often surprised to learn how much of a blood motif there is in Scripture. The letter to the Hebrews repeatedly draws attention to sacrificial blood. Heb.9:22: "Indeed the law requires that almost everything is purified with blood."

The Letter to the Hebrews emphasizes the sacrificial nature of the Passion and Death of Christ. It teaches that it was the will of God that Jesus should

make the oblation of his body to obtain the removal of the sins that separated humanity from God. Christ's atoning sacrifice supplanted the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant. Heb.10:4: "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." With the sacrifice of Christ, God doesn't just forgive, He forgets. Heb.10:17: "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more." Christ's sacrifice was made for all time; it needed no repetition; the offering was eternal. The work of redemption was finished, completed. The priests of the Old Testament offered sacrifices repeatedly, while Christ offered a single, unique sacrifice valid for all time.

The requirement made by God calling for Christ offering himself as a voluntary self-sacrifice seems to many moderns somewhat primitive, and they wonder if this was the only way the ransom could be paid. The answer seems to be "yes," it was the necessary way.

Luke 27:44 reports that at the moment of Jesus' death the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies "was torn in two." The curtain shielding the Holy of Holies was torn apart signifying that now, by the blood of Christ, we can boldly enter the sanctuary behind the curtain (Heb.6:19). The torn curtain indicates that, thanks to the blood of Jesus, we have open access to God. We can enter with confidence into God's presence.

In times of trial, I make use of these images from Hebrews. I'm now aware of myself as having free access to God. With a firm trust and bold confidence (Heb.10:19) I imagine myself pushing aside the torn curtain and boldly with confidence and gratitude approaching the throne

of God, reassured of God's acceptance. I now have free speech with God. I can speak to Him as a son to a Father, even though I am a sinner. I can speak to Him with all confidence and

without fear, confident this is the way He wants me to come to Him. He wishes me to speak to Him without fear, as His child. There's a mutual understanding. God has a father's understanding of me.

This is part of Hebrews' view of reality. The ransom's been paid by the death of Christ.

Mark 10:45: "For the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many." We now have a right of entry into the Holy of Holies, and what that stands for, namely, we now have access to

God. We can, with confidence go beyond the torn curtain into the sanctuary where the living

God dwells. The sacrifice of Christ has gained the right of entry; the blood of Christ has opened direct access to God. We can approach God with confidence and tell him our concerns. One result of studying Hebrews is you don't look at a crucifix the same way again.

The author of Hebrews stresses that certain behaviors are to accompany passing through the torn curtain. There is to be mutual love, with an emphasis on hospitality. Marriage is to be honored, and the marriage bed kept undefiled by fornicators and adulterers. One's life is to be free from love of money; one is to be content with what one has. One should not forget to do good and to share what one has; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind. Finally, the author asserts "may the God of peace, by the blood of Jesus our Lord, furnish you with all that is good, that you may do his will (Hebrews 13)." ■

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"We are grateful to the very loyal and generous donors who believe so strongly in our mission. We welcome and are equally grateful for the many new benefactors we met

this year through this hybrid virtual event. Your contributions quite literally transform lives! Thank you," Lemoine said.

Board of Trustee Chair Tom McNemey added "we missed not gathering as a community over these past two years, and are eager to see you all again in person next spring. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for continuing your support of our students and teachers. The

enormity of our work has never been more important than it is today. We look forward to seeing you next year and invite you to stay abreast of our good work by visiting foundationsineducation.org. Until we meet again, stay safe and may God bless you."

(To view a video of students interviewed by Bishop Caggiano, which premiered during the fund raising event, visit: www.foundationsineducation.org/foundations-in-education-videos) ■

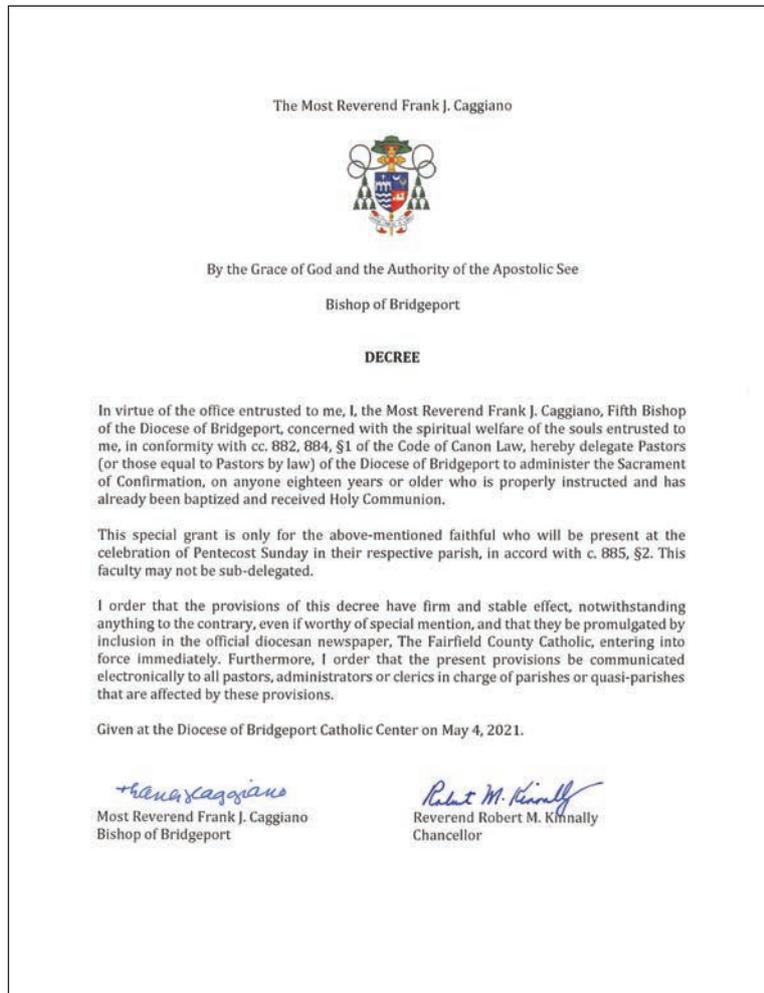
Bishop Issues Decrees

Confirmation and Cathedraticum

BRIDGEPORT—On Tuesday May 4, 2021 Bishop Caggiano issued decrees on the Cathedraticum assessment for parishes and Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday.

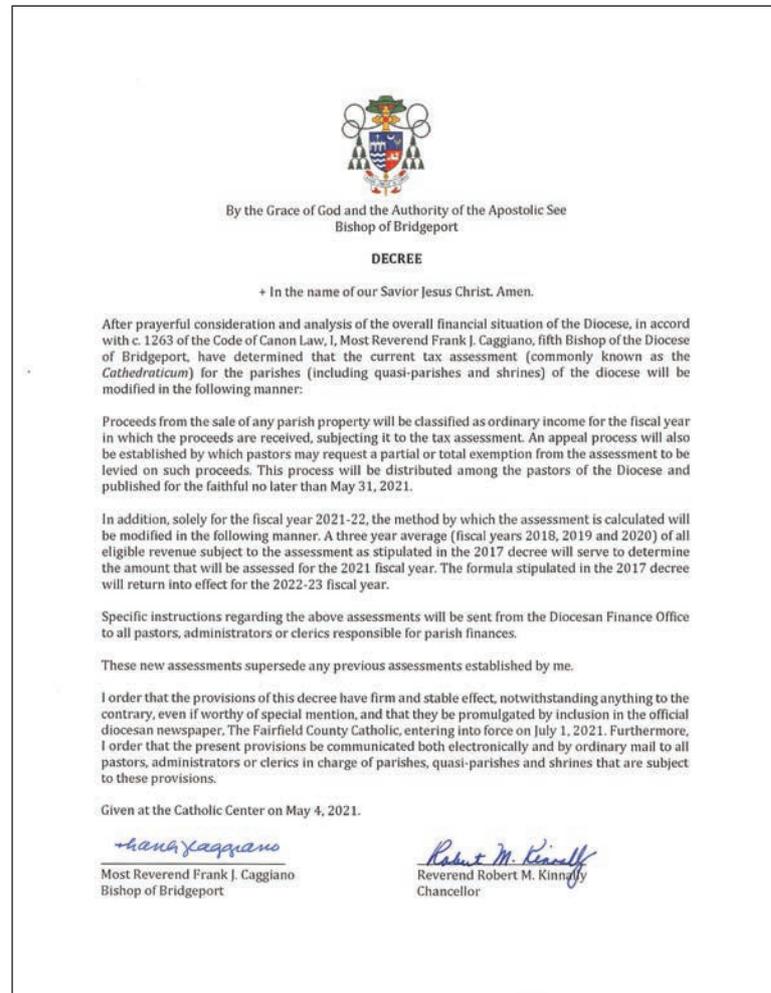
The Cathedraticum decree announces that the current tax assessment (commonly known as the Cathedraticum) for parishes (including quasi-parishes and shrines) of the diocese has been modified in this way: Proceeds from the sale of any parish property will be classified as ordinary income for the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received, subjecting it to the diocesan tax assessment. In addition, solely for the fiscal year 2021-22, the method by which the assessment is calculated will be modified based on a three year average (fiscal years 2018, 2019 and 2020).

The Confirmation decree delegates pastors (or those equal to pastors by law) of the Diocese of Bridgeport to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, on anyone eighteen years or older



who is properly instructed and has already been baptized and received Holy Communion. This special grant is only for

the above-mentioned faithful who will be present at the celebration of Pentecost Sunday in their respective parish, in



accord with c. 885, §2. Visit www.bridgeportdiocese.org/

[bishop-issues-decrees-on-confirmation-and-cathedraticum.](#)

TWO DIFFERENT PATHS FROM PAGE 14

computer science.

"I was resisting the call, and for two years I had an internal struggle," he said. Then, he was given the grace to trust God's plan for him.

"A brother in the Neocatechumenal community named Raffaele had cancer, and he was getting worse," Christian recalled. "We had a celebration for him, and he told us, 'I offered this great suffering, this sickness, for all of you guys. And the way I trust in God, I hope you will trust in God the same way.'"

A few weeks later Raffaele, who was in his 50s, died. While Christian was on retreat, the priest explained, "He died to open your eyes so you will trust in God too."

"I said OK, if God is calling me, I will give it a second chance," he said. At one point while he was in prayer, he

opened the Gospel and came upon the parable in which Jesus said, "Whoever has ears, let them hear."

"I said, 'You gave me all these signs, and I was free to say yes or no,'" and this time he said yes to his vocation. The decision was not without complications. He was in his final year at the university and had a friendship with a girl. However, once he said yes to Christ, the pieces immediately fell into place.

"They asked me, 'Are you willing to go anywhere in the world?' And I said yes." So in October 2019, he came to Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Stamford.

His parents were "super happy" and Christian says his trust in God has increased since that time.

"God is doing a lot of things for me," he said. "Anytime I ask for something, he gives me more and more."

He is in Philosophy 3, and will

begin two years of theology, followed by three years doing missionary work somewhere in the world, two more years of theology, a year of the diaconate and then, he says, "God willing, ordination."

The Redemptoris Mater Diocesan Missionary Seminary of Bridgeport is under the direction of Father Marco Pacciana, the rector, along with Father Giandomenico Flora, the spiritual director. Redemptoris Mater (Mother of the Redeemer) seminaries are under the auspices of the Neocatechumenal Way, a 55-year-old charism in the Church dedicated to Christian formation and the New Evangelization. The seminaries form men as missionaries for the New Evangelization as diocesan priests to serve the local church or in any part of the world the bishop chooses.

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Nuestra Voz

Alfombra de flores guatemalteca en honor a 'Corpus Chirsti'

POR MARICARMEN GODOY

BRIDGEPORT—A un año de la pandemia la primera procesión de la parroquia se realizará este domingo 6 de junio después de la misa de 11:30 am, en la iglesia Saint Mary de Bridgeport, gracias a que un grupo de guatemaltecos decidieron recrear las tradiciones de su país y confeccionar la tradicional alfombra de flores en honor a Corpus Chirsti; como parte del festejo de la reapertura de las iglesias después de vivir la pandemia.

El Padre Rolando Torres, que el pasado 19 de mayo cumplió 14 años de haber sido ordenado sacerdote, párroco de Saint Mary, durante estos meses de pandemia estuvo tomando en consideración las reacciones de sus feligreses y se dio cuenta de que muchos de los que abandonaron por años y meses la iglesia, en estos meses de tribulación empezaron a buscar de Dios y con esto inició una cantidad inusual de bautizos.

De las 70 personas que los protocolos del Estado permitieron a mediados de la pandemia como

el número de ingresos a la iglesia, luego 90 y por varias semanas 140, finalmente, este sábado 22 de mayo las iglesias de Connecticut abrirán sus puertas de par en par a todos sus feligreses.

“Una de las cosas positivas que trajo esta pandemia es que la gente se concientizó de la importancia de la fe y de la iglesia y muchos han venido a buscar el bautismo de sus hijos porque tienen miedo a que los niños se queden huérfanos sin estar bautizados”, dijo el P. Rolando.

Pero, acorde con el sacerdote también las bodas han vuelto a resurgir desde abril y curiosamente han elegido el horario de la misa de 4:30PM del sábado para celebrar las uniones eclesíásticas.

Durante el tiempo de la pandemia la parroquia de Saint Mary vivió dos momentos difíciles a lo que le llamaron “emergencia”. El primero fue cuando un diácono se contagió de COVID-19 y el otro cuando un sacerdote de la Diócesis resultó positivo; por lo tanto, todos los sacerdotes y allegados a la iglesia debieron

tomar el test de COVID-19 para resolver las incógnitas del contagio. “Nadie se contagió pero nos sometimos a una cuarentena obligada”, repuso el P. Rolando.

Con el refrán dicho por el Obispo Frank Caggiani: “hora de regresar a la casa de Dios”, es la forma en cómo la iglesia está tratando de avisar a sus feligreses que los templos y los servicios religiosos empezarán a trabajar públicamente y en su totalidad. Frase que el P. Rolando, quien maneja una parroquia totalmente hispana, le dio un giro de 180 grados luego de ver imágenes sobre las alfombras guatemaltecas preparadas para celebrar la eucaristía (Corpus Chirsti) se dio a la tarea de preparar un proyecto similar en su iglesia.

“Le dije a la familia Castillo: He visto unas lindas alfombras de flores en las iglesias de Guatemala, particularmente en Antigua Guatemala. ¿Creen que podríamos hacer algo parecido?. Y sin ni pensarlo la familia dijo: ¡Sí! y desde ese momento buscaron a otros guatemaltecos de la parroquia e iniciaron la

organización de lo que será, por primera vez en

Connecticut, la puesta de una alfombra de flores para que —en procesión— pise el Sagrario (Fiesta de la Sangre de Cristo)”, quien muy contento invitó a sus fieles a la “Primera procesión después de la pandemia”.

La alfombra guatemalteca está siendo tratada como un tema nacional de primer nivel desde hace dos meses, tal cual como lo preparan los artistas de Antigua Guatemala por Wendy y Mario Castillo, quienes conformaron un comité pro tradiciones guatemaltecas porque saben que esa es una usanza supremamente importante en Guatemala.

La procesión de Corpus Chirsti va a tomar las calles del vecindario de Saint Mary saliendo por Pembroke Street y tomando las calles adyacentes a ésta. Según la tradición guatemalteca la alfombra solo puede ser pisada por el sacerdote quien debe portar en sus manos el Santísimo Sacramento. Las flores para

confeccionar la alfombra deben ser frescas, pero, previo a ser incrustadas, debe existir una base de aserrín con un diseño especial dedicado a la ocasión.

“Los guatemaltecos no me han dejado ver el diseño porque quieren que sea una sorpresa para la parroquia y para mí, pero como he visto las fotos de estas alfombras en Internet, sé que será una grata y bella sorpresa en honor al Cristo en la Eucaristía”, repuso el P. Rolando.

Alfombra que será colocada a la entrada de la iglesia y que será retratada con un drome para que el tapiz pueda ser visto desde cualquier ángulo en todo su esplendor.

Para el domingo 6 de junio, fiesta en que se celebra Corpus Chirsti, la parroquia Saint Mary tiene previsto realizar la misa en español de 8:30 am, luego la misa en inglés de 10 am y la misa de las 11:30 am para luego iniciar la procesión. ■



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FIF FUNDS FROM PAGE 13

train the volunteer staff, which are expected to return to the homes in the near future. The fund will also be able to finance technology that will let residents connect with their families, who have not been allowed admittance because of COVID-19.

“Our elderly have never seen a more difficult time in recent history,” Weldon said. “They have been left isolated from their families, and they have been bound to their rooms with very limited access to church. They also have not being able to receive the Eucharist during the pandemic. This fund will let us provide services they desperately need during this phase of their lives.”

The John Bosco Fund will help provide services for students with special needs who are enrolled in Catholic schools.

“There are many families with special-needs students, and this will better position Catholic schools so they can provide the same level of services as their counterparts in public schools,” Weldon said.

Each fund has a designated advocate on the board of Foundations in Faith. The St. Therese Fund Board Advocate is Paul Cronin; The Lourdes Fund Board Advocate is Lorraine Carrano; the St. Catherine Center Fund Board Advocate is Anthony Minopoli; St. John Bosco advocate is yet to be announced.

“I am truly grateful to our board,” Weldon said. “They are really passionate about this work, and the advocates are willing to understand the needs and respond to them by advocating for grants that will leverage the greatest amount of impact and reflect the mission of the ministry. I am also truly grateful to all those who contribute to We Stand With Christ. Without their generosity, none of this would be possible.”

Weldon urges anyone who would like to donate or support the initiatives of Foundations in Faith to contact her at: kelly.weldon@foundationsinfaith.org. ■

Vocations

A yearning in our hearts for God

By **FATHER CHRIS FORD**

One of the great challenges in evangelization today is the phrase “I am spiritual, but not religious.” Deep inside every heart, there is a yearning for transcendence, to encounter the most profound other. At the same time, many people are content to let distance remain in that relationship and not come to truly know or be known by the God who draws close to humanity.

Thinking about this challenge brings to mind what St. Paul faced when arrived in Athens. There, scripture tells us, he quickly noted the presence of the many statues to various deities that the Athenians had built. Looking to use this as a foundation for evangelization, Paul would begin his speech in Athens with these words: “Men of Athens. I

perceive that you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:22-23).

Whether people consciously realize it or not, the spirituality of today remains a yearning for God. Paul’s speech in Athens tries to seize on this reality and highlights a truth that the Church has always known: the desire for God burns deep in the heart of each and every human person and nothing can truly extinguish that flame. Even if it does not always know exactly how to identify it, the heart is always drawn to the infinite, to the presence of God in its midst.

To awaken this sense that has lain dormant in the heart of

man for so long is the mission of the New Evangelization and, in particular, the priesthood in this age. As much as humanity is yearning for God, God is yearning to reveal Himself to humanity, to answer and fulfill this deepest of all desires. At the heart of this revelation today is the Sacraments. When we celebrate the Mass and offer the Eucharist, we full the desire in the human heart for the presence of another. When we are the instrument of the forgiveness of sins, we fulfill the desire to know that we are loved, even when we are profoundly aware of our own weaknesses.

The Church can never tire of proclaiming Christ, especially as the world cries more and more loudly for his presence. The Gospel places in front of every person a path they are already looking to

take, a path which leads ultimately to a relationship with God, no matter how many twists and turns it may take along the way.

Sometimes, we feel like we need to have all of the answers. Perhaps it is far more important to make sure that we are asking the right questions. The question of God is unavoidable. As it was for Paul, so too the mission of the priest is to place the question of God before peoples’ hearts and minds and invite them to confront it, to invite them to take the first step of faith. Humanity today is in a deep crisis. The yearning that God has written on every heart



FATHER CHRIS FORD

is as strong as ever, yet it is still unfulfilled. But its fulfillment is closer than we think, resting in the very thing the priesthood proclaims: the abiding presence of Jesus Christ among us.



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