



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

JULY/AUGUST 2021 | VOLUME 38, NUMBER 7 | SUMMER ISSUE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



8 *Catholic Charities helps the homeless 'Off The Streets'*



25-52 *Second Section: Catholic Cemeteries Guide*

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Around the Diocese

Celebrating Summer & Faith

by Elizabeth Clyons

CAS students honor Army Veteran Dr. Cortland Mehl

STAMFORD—At the end of the school year, the students at The Catholic Academy of Stamford honored Army Veteran Dr. Cortland Mehl by creating thank you cards for him. The original plan was for Mr. Mike to deliver all of the cards to Dr. Mehl at his home. When Mr. Mike went to his house, he found out that Dr. Mehl was in the hospital. Sadly, he passed away shortly afterwards.

Mr. Mike was in contact with his family and provided them with the cards from the CAS students. These cards were on display at Dr. Mehl's service to show the appreciation that the students at The Catholic Academy of Stamford have for him.



Swim Across the Sound to hold 24th annual memorial service

BRIDGEPORT—On Sunday, August 8, 2021, Hartford HealthCare/St. Vincent's Medical Center will host the 24th Annual Memorial Service celebrating the lives of family members and friends who have been lost to cancer. The event will take place at Captain's Cove Seaport in Bridgeport with registration at 8 am and the service from 8:30-9:30 am, open to all, rain or shine. It will consist of a reading of names, musical tributes, inspirational readers and prayers. For information visit SWIMMemorial@hhealth.org or call: 475.210.6393.



New fitness center dedication at Immaculate H.S.

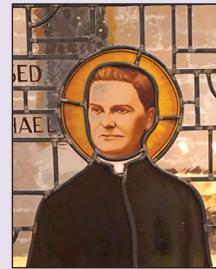
DANBURY—Immaculate High School revealed its new fitness center at a recent dedication ceremony. The center is part of the school's initiative to expand its health and wellness programs for all students. The fitness center project was designed and created by



parents of alumni, Michael Basile, Anthony Rizzo, Jr. and Ross Rizzo and alumnus Ed Kilian III '99. As part of the ribbon-cutting dedication program, Monsignor Robert E. Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church, led with an invocation followed by a blessing of the facility. Chairman of the Board David Cappiello and School President Mary Maloney unveiled the dedication plaque.

St. Catherine to hold first-ever liturgical memorial

TRUMBULL—Friday, August 13, 7 pm will be the first-ever liturgical memorial of Blessed Michael McGivney, the diocesan priest who founded the Knights of Columbus. St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull will celebrate his feast day with a special Mass. A first-class relic of Blessed Michael will be present on the altar, and everyone present will be blessed with the relic.



Summer Social for the kids!

BRIDGEPORT—On Tuesday, August 3, from 4:30-6 pm, roughly 150 people turned out on each of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport's four campuses for their first-ever "Summer Social." Both longtime and newly enrolled families gathered together to enjoy free ice cream, music, games, and giveaways. A surprise was that several alumni even showed up on each campus, from the recently graduated right through sophomores in college.

Acolyte Installation at Holy Spirit Church

STAMFORD—At a recent Mass celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, seminarians from the Diocese of Bridgeport studying at St. Joseph's Seminary and Redemptoris Mater were installed to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte. The Mass was celebrated at Holy Spirit Church in Stamford, concelebrated by Bishop Massa from St. Joseph Seminary and priests from the Diocese of Bridgeport. Mass was followed by a reception hosted by the Serra Club. With each step, these men assume another function of the Church's ministry as they move closer to their ordination to the priesthood.



Lay Dominican Order welcomes new members

TRUMBULL—The Our Lady of Fatima Affiliation of the Saint Mary's Chapter of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic

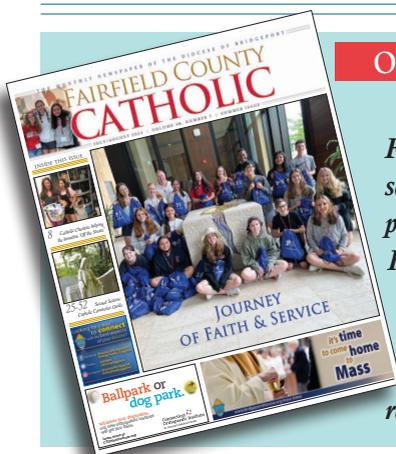


which meets at St. Theresa's Church in Trumbull had a joyous celebration on April 29, 2021, when three new members were received into the fraternity as novices, and four other members advanced in their formation by making a public profession to live by the Rule of the Dominican Laity for three years.



Knights Assembly #100 raises funds for Norwalk PAL

NORWALK—The Knights of Columbus Bishop Fenwick 4th-degree Assembly No. 100 recently hosted its 4th Annual Patriot Dinner on Saturday, July 10 at the St. Ann Club in Norwalk. The dinner raised over \$1,100 for the Norwalk Police Activities League.



ON THE COVER

JOURNEY OF FAITH—Sixteen high school students recently participate in the Sacred Heart University Summer Theology Program—a time apart for charitable work, reflection, and prayer.

CONTENTS

6 **PARISHES CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARIES**
Profiles: St. Aloysius and St. Paul

12 **HOLY NAME PARISH, STAMFORD**
Preserving the church for future generations

13 **ST. CATHERINE CENTER**
Looking to the future

14 **FOUNDATIONS IN EDUCATION**
Transforming Catholic education

16-17 **DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**
Programs and events planned

19 **HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**
Notre Dame, St. Joe's return to the diamond

21 **CHANGES TO THE CODE OF CANON LAW**
An interview with Father Art Mollenauer

25-52 **CATHOLIC CEMETERIES**
Planning a Catholic Funeral



Diocese and Fairfield University

Creating a Pathway to Higher Learning

FAIRFIELD—On the eve of the feast of St. Ignatius (July 31) The Diocese of Bridgeport and Fairfield University—one of 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States—celebrated a strategic partnership that supports pathways to higher education, and a platform for access to the University's resources for the people of the Diocese and the greater Bridgeport community.

The partnership titled "Pathways to Higher Learning," consists of ongoing projects and joint initiatives, some of which are already underway, and others that are in the planning stage, and are expected to be announced more formally later this year.

The project is one of the University's targeted initiatives during the current, special Ignatian year which will extend to July 31, 2022. The year was designated the Ignatian year by the Superior General of the Society Arturo Sosa S.J., and began on May 20, the 500th anniversary of when Ignatius the

soldier was injured by a cannonball in the Battle of Pamplona, a moment that led to Ignatius' conversion and ultimately to his discernment of his spiritual vocation, and hence to the foundation of the Society of Jesus.

"Catholic education has transformed lives in our community and across generations by forming and informing students to lead faithful, productive and fulfilling lives," said The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport. "At a time when we are more aware than ever about the work that needs to be done to make our institutions and opportunities more equal and inclusive as a society, we welcome this partnership with Fairfield University.

The bishop said that Fairfield University's Jesuit tradition of academic excellence and its commitment to reach out to the diverse communities of Fairfield County is a major resource that can help students discover high-

er education opportunities and reach their potential.

Fairfield University President Mark R. Nemecek, PhD said that the University has worked with the Diocese through ongoing learning, mentoring, and service opportunities.

"As a Jesuit Catholic institution, Fairfield University is an expression of an almost 500-year tradition dedicated to the life-transforming power of education. We believe that by working together with community partners such as the Diocese, we can have a significant impact and raise the level of educational access and achievement in our region, and further fulfill our promise as 21st century university."

The Diocese's Catholic Center at 238 Jewett Avenue will serve as a hub for the University's work in Bridgeport and partnership with the Diocese. Current initiatives include The Bridgeport Tuition Grant program, which provides full-tuition scholarships for eligible students whose family

incomes is less than \$50,000 a year; the Community Scholars Program that offers full-tuition scholarships for top-performing students, including those from diocesan schools; and the Aquinas Fellowship Program, which provides tuition support for diocesan teachers to attend graduate programs at Fairfield University.

The University also holds a Financial Aid Night and a College Planning and Preparation Workshop to help families in the diocese plan for and apply to college. Since 2008, through the University's Center for Social Impact, hundreds of University students have worked with diocesan partners such as Caroline House, Catholic schools, and the Thomas Merton Center to support program delivery through community-engaged learning courses and research projects.

Finally, the University is in the process of developing programs to serve students from

Bridgeport next summer, to broaden their access to educational opportunities. The programs currently being explored include locating writing camps, science camps, and engineering camps at the Diocese's Catholic Center in summer 2022.

Among other programs, Fairfield University and the Diocese of Bridgeport have also worked together through Fairfield's Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality, which provides spiritual direction to students and members of the community of all faith, and parishioners throughout the diocese.

More than 2,100 students are currently enrolled in Catholic high schools throughout the diocese, and nearly 5,000 students are enrolled in the 19 elementary and middle schools, and one special needs school. The Diocese also provides religious education to almost 22,000 public school students who are enrolled in the 77 diocesan parishes in Fairfield County. ■

Catholic authors to speak at men's conference

NEW BRITAIN—Bestselling Catholic author Father Donald Calloway, MIC, and Dr. Ralph Martin, author and president of Renewal Ministries, will be among the speakers at the 14th annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference on September 25 at New Britain Stadium.

The all-day event, centered on the theme of "The Most Holy Rosary," will include guest speakers, confession, Eucharistic adoration, a vigil Mass with Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, lunch, exhibitors and an opportunity to share with other men.

"The conference calls all men to witness Christ as husband, fathers and individuals, and that has never been more important," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. "Each year many men from our diocese participate in conference and return to their families and parishes renewed and inspired by the gift of fellowship and the opportunity for spiritual enrichment. It is a reminder of how much we need each other on our journey of faith."

Deacon Rick Lawlor, who is

assigned to St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield, is on the leadership committee for the conference and believes it is fundamental for men to share their faith and experiences with one another.

"Men need to talk to other men and share their experiences in life," he says. "We need to walk with each other and at times carry each other through the difficulties in life, at work, in marriage and in raising children."

He says that sharing with other men of faith who have experienced these challenges is crucial for a man's spiritual

well-being.

"Our secular society wants us to turn from God and think we can do and be anything we want. That's not true, and it's dangerous," he says. "Men in our world are under constant attack, and it is important to nurture our faith with like-minded men."

Father James Sullivan, rector of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury and chaplain for the conference, believes there will be record attendance this year, exceeding the first conference 14 years ago, which attracted 800 men.

"I think this year will surpass that number because people are coming back to church, and I believe the Lord is working through everything," he said. "Men need God, and the conference encourages them to come together as brothers and worship together in their calling as fathers, single men, priests and religious."

He says the conference will deepen their faith and that even for those men who are coming to faith later in life, this will be a wonderful opportunity.

"We have to always look forward," he says. "If a man is coming to faith at a later time, there should be no regret. We encourage everyone; even if a person finds God in his 40s, 50s, 60s or later, it is still a great gift."

Father Sullivan stressed the importance of prayer and the holy rosary, which is the theme of the conference, noting that Father Calloway, one of the keynote speakers, has written several books about the rosary, along with a recent bestseller about consecration to St. Joseph,

which is especially relevant during this Year of St. Joseph, proclaimed by Pope Francis.

"The rosary is the weapon for our times," he said. "It is a meditation on the life of Jesus and Mary, the first and greatest Christian who always points us to Christ. If we can get people to pray the rosary every day, as Our Lady has asked us, it will change the world."

Deacon Lawlor said the doors at the New Britain Stadium will open at 7:30 a.m. and there will be coffee and refreshments. The program officially starts at 8 a.m. with opening remarks, followed by speakers. Tickets are \$45 and include lunch and refreshments.

(For more information, contact Deacon Rick Lawlor at 203.470.8084 or email dnlawlor@diobpt.org)

Speakers will be:
Father Donald Calloway, MIC, a prominent Marian priest, is a well-known conference speaker on Divine Mercy and the Blessed Virgin Mary. He is the

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Parish News

St. Paul celebrates 120 years

By **JOE PISANI**

GREENWICH—More than 50 years ago, after St. Paul Church in Glenville was destroyed in a fire, the parish looked to rebuild on a piece of land it had purchased, and then-Bishop Walter W. Curtis came to discuss plans for the new church.

They had anticipated a traditional architectural structure shaped like a cross, but Bishop Curtis, recently inspired by his participation in the Second Vatican Council, demurred. The mandate of the Council had been clear that there should be more participation by the laity, so the St. Paul community decided, “The church will be round.”

“Round” because the architecture lets parishioners focus on the altar and is reminiscent of the tent, described in the Book of Exodus, that housed the tabernacle during

the years the Jews wandered in the desert, symbolizing God’s presence among his people.

“And so St. Paul’s became a round church,” said Father. Leszek P. Szymaszek, who has



been pastor since 2015. “People know us as the round church on King Street. As St. John says in his Gospel, ‘The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.’ This would bring people to God.”

This year, St. Paul’s celebrates

two special occasions—the 50th anniversary of the consecration of the new church and the 120th anniversary of the founding of the parish.

“For me, it is a very special

place,” Father Szymaszek says. “I am from Poland, and it was started as a Polish parish. A couple of the early priests were even sent to Poland to study the language because they wanted

➤ *CONTINUED ON PAGE 6*

CATHOLIC AUTHORS FROM PAGE 3

editor and author of more than 10 books, including “Consecration to St. Joseph: the Wonders of Our Spiritual Father,” “10 Wonders of the Rosary” and “Champions of the Rosary.”

Ralph Martin is president of Renewal Ministries and host of the weekly Catholic television program “The Choices We Face.” He has a doctorate in theology and is director of the Graduate Theology Programs in the New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Gary Zimak is author of several books, including “Stop Worrying and Start Living,” “From Fear To Faith” and “Give Up Worry For Lent.” He frequently talks at parishes and conferences and is a leading Catholic speaker on the topic of overcoming anxiety.

Dr. Blythe Kaufman is the founder of the Children’s Rosary®, an international prayer group movement for children. She lives in Connecticut and is a wife and mother of three. She is an associate professor at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine and author of “Children’s Rosary: A Prayer Group Movement for Children” and “Child Consecration: To Jesus through Mary—Following in the Spirit of St. Thérèse, the Little Flower.”

Father Elias Mary Mills, a Franciscan of the Immaculate, has traveled extensively as a missionary priest and is currently rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Cross, Wisconsin. He will be guest homilist at the vigil Mass.

Master of Ceremonies **Sam Todzia** is a Catholic husband, father, carpenter, and speaker with a passion to engage young people with the Gospel and a life of faith. He has more than 10 years of experience working with teenagers, including at risk teens and those suffering from mental illnesses. He has a master’s degree in theology from Holy Apostles College and Seminary. ■

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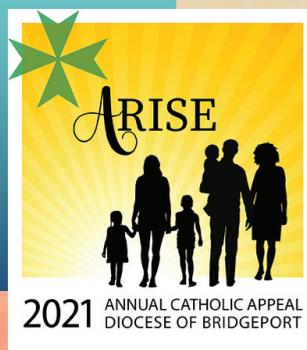
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Parish News

St. Aloysius: 125 years of grace and blessings

By JOE PISANI

NEW CANAAN—At the beginning of the pandemic, Father Rob Kinnally urged his parishioners to pray for protection to their patron, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, an Italian aristocrat who entered the Society of Jesus and died in 1591 at 23, while caring for victims of a plague that swept through Rome.

The parish, which has a strong devotion to St. Aloysius, Our Lady and St. Joseph, had their prayers answered. There was never a transmission of COVID-19 at St. Aloysius during the pandemic and he said, “I give our saints a lot of credit for keeping us safe through this whole thing. We never shut down, and the doors were always open for people to pray.”

Early on, the parish live-streamed its Masses, relying at first on Father David Roman’s iPhone and Facebook. The Masses became so popular that even now, there are many people

from the region and around the world who continue to watch them each week.

From the very beginning, St. Aloysius has been faithful to his parish, which this year celebrates the 125th anniversary since it was founded after a group of Irish Catholics left St. Mary Parish in Norwalk on Long Island Sound and headed into the hill country of New Canaan. Every Sunday, they would make the arduous journey back to Norwalk for Mass, some traveling on foot.

“We pray to St. Aloysius who has given us 125 years of grace and service and all kinds of blessings,” Father Kinnally said.

In 1917, the New Canaan Messenger reported: “The first Irish immigrants...walked to Norwalk to attend Mass. They thought nothing of the hardships entailed in fulfilling their religious duties as is known from reliable testimony; and neither the heat of summer nor the cutting cold

of winter would keep them from setting forth early on a Sunday morning for Norwalk.”

Eventually, Father Kinnally says, a mission parish was established in New Canaan and the priest came as his schedule allowed, to celebrate Mass in private homes and what is now the New Canaan Historical Society Town House. Then, in 1862, the first Catholic Church was built on Forest Street. On June 1, 1896, the New Canaan Mission separated from St. Mary Parish and Father John McMahon was appointed the first pastor of St. Aloysius.

A second church, which is still on the campus, was built and dedicated on July 15, 1917, and 50 years later the current Cherry Street church was dedicated, and the old church became the rectory and parish center.

Father Kinnally, who is in his sixth year as pastor and is chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport, says, “My experience has been



nothing but wonderful. These are very faithful, caring, generous people. It is an amazing community, and I am very proud of what they do. They share with one another and with the larger community. I am very blessed.”

He describes being pastor as a grace-filled experience in the tradition of many previous priests, two of whom are his close friends—Msgr. J. Peter Cullen and Msgr. William J. Scheyd.

“We are very good friends, and I rely on them for history, and they are so supportive of me,” he says. “Among the three of us, there are 37 years of being pastor—Msgr. Cullen with 17 years, Msgr. Scheyd with 14 and me with six.”

The parish has almost 3,000 families, most from New Canaan and some from Northern Westchester, with close to 1,000

children in religious education. Well over 100 people attend the two daily Masses. Father is particularly proud of the parish tithing program by which 10 percent of donations are given to charities identified by parishioners, including hospitals, clinics, ministries of Catholic Charities, schools and missions in South America.

“We are a very large congregation, and I have a great relationship with our other brother and sister pastors in town,” he says. “To the larger community, we offer a sense of parish, that there is life here, that you will find support and that you have people present for you.”

The vibrant parish life has many ministries, including a bereavement program, a Men’s Ministry and Walking With Purpose, along with an active

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

ST. PAUL FROM PAGE 4

to serve the immigrants from the felt company in Glenville. Many Polish families contributed to the construction of the church, and a Polish firm from New Jersey did the windows.”

The parish marks its beginnings from the mid-19th century when the first Catholic in Glenville, which was known as Sherwood Bridge, attended Mass in Greenwich in 1854. Following the English settlers during the colonial period were Irish immigrant farmers who came in the early 1800s and later farmers of Polish heritage, who eventually worked in the American Felt Company’s woolen mills on the banks of the Byram River and were responsible for the growth of the community, according to the parish history.

A priest from Norwalk ministered to the faithful, and Mass was celebrated in private homes. At the turn of the century, Sacred Heart Church was established in East Port Chester, which is now Byram. Glenville became a mission parish, and Father Thomas Finn bought a tract of land from the American Felt Company, where he planned to build a new church.

“The pastor of Sacred Heart

saw the need for a church in another location because of the many Polish people who worked in the felt company so he filed the articles with the state,” Father Szymaszek said.

The groundbreaking took place on June 1, 1902. Construction began on the church on Glenville Street. Dedicated on October 19, 1902, it was a frame building of American Gothic design with a capacity of 250. By 1910, St. Paul’s became a parish and Fr. John Burke, who had been assistant pastor in Byram, was named its pastor. After his ordination he had been sent to Poland to learn the Polish language so he could better minister to his parishioners. Of the 800, nearly two-thirds were Polish.

Father Szymaszek, himself a Polish immigrant, said that by the mid-1950s a tract of land was purchased at King Street and Sherwood Avenue with the intention of building a new church and school because of the growing population in the area. The school was built in 1963. In 1967, a fire seriously damaged the old wooden church and, Father says, “this gave them a push” to move forward.

The groundbreaking for the

round church was held on March 16, 1969 under the pastor Father Boleslaus Rarus, who served the parish for 20 years.

The new church was dedicated fifty years ago on April 18, 1971, and this year Father Szymaszek marked the occasion with a Mass.

“I told people the history, and some of the old-timers remembered the old church,” he said. “One of the last couples who got married there, Joseph and Eleanor Filanowski, were at the Mass.”

Today St. Paul’s has an enrollment of 1400 families, 800 of whom are active in liturgies, church events and parish ministries.

“It is a wonderful community and people are very faithful and attached to their church,” Father Szymaszek said. “It is a growing parish. There are a number of young families, and I have a baptism almost every Sunday and now that COVID-19 is past, several weddings are scheduled.”

Frank and Pat Marino, who have been parishioners since 1991 when they moved here with their three children from the Bronx, describe St. Paul’s as “a very giving parish with so much going on.”

They were drawn to the beau-

tiful round church, where “you really felt you were participating no matter where you sat.” Over the past 30 years, they have been active parishioners, and both have taught religious education.

“When we go to church, we see some of the families of the kids we taught, who are in college now,” Pat said.

“St. Paul’s is like a home—we worship there but we enjoy serving there as well,” said Frank, who is a member of the Parish Council and the Parish Corporation and coordinator of the St. Paul Mercy Volunteers.

During the Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2016, members of the parish wanted to commit themselves to the corporal works of mercy and chose to assist Don Bosco Center in Port Chester. St. Paul volunteers have worked in the food pantry, and with the help of religious education students, began making deliveries to senior housing facilities in the village, providing food for almost 100 seniors.

During the pandemic, those going for lunch at Don Bosco Center increased from 80 to 300 people.

“They were overwhelmed and Fr. Les asked us to raise money,” Frank said. His request to the par-

ish brought in \$25,000, which let them give the center hundreds of pounds of meat and food.

Frank, who coordinates the program and is assisted by Peg Reimer and Lynn Markley, said, “People want to help. They want to do more and practice their faith. They want to be involved in helping others.... Pastors love our parish because people are ready, willing and able to do things, and it makes their jobs much easier. Parish Council President Vincent Miata can’t do enough for the church.”

Longtime parishioner Hope Hirshorn still recalls the day she was praying alone in church shortly after completing her master’s degree in theology at Fordham University. She asked God, “What would you like me to do next?”

Someone came and tapped her on the shoulder and asked if she would help out with the parish RCIA program. She said yes.

Almost ten years later, she has her Ph.D. in systematic theology and is director of the RCIA program, which even during the COVID-19 lockdown had one of its most successful years ever with 11 people entering full communion

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Parish News

Conversation on race continues at St. James

STRATFORD—It began as a simple conversation at St. James Parish about the issue of racism, a conversation at times unsettling but always illuminating, a conversation between people of different faiths and different ethnic groups.

And from that discussion, which focused on the pastoral letter by the U.S. Bishops, “Open Wide Our Hearts,” a group of people from all walks of life gained a deeper understanding of the sin of racism.

The program attracted some 30 participants, who took part in Zoom sessions over seven months. They prayed together, they shared their personal experiences, they meditated and they reflected on topics that sometimes made them uncomfortable. But from that discomfort, they achieved insights into their personal lives and their parish community.

John Burlinson, who teaches Black and Latino students in Bridgeport, is personally familiar with the Civil Rights Movement, and the experience at St. James proved enlightening for him.

“I realized I didn’t really know that much,” he said. “I thought I was well-versed in race relations, but this opened a greater dimension of things I wasn’t aware of.”

During the program, people were able to tell personal stories that involved their families, their time in school and incidents they experienced...along with “the things they did or said that they weren’t proud of,” Burlinson said.

The St. James “Open Wide Our Hearts” series was the result of a Foundations in Faith mini-grant made possible through the St. John Paul II Fund for Faith Formation, said Kelly Weldon, director of Foundations in Faith.

“They requested the funding so they could launch a six-session study on ‘Open Wide Our Hearts,’ the 2018 pastoral letter, which addressed racism as a sin through a Catholic lens,” she said.

For Weldon, St. James Parish was an ideal starting point. “It has beautiful diversity and is made up of many ethnicities and cultures, and they had already begun a discussion on race,” she said.

The materials that were developed for the series are going to be posted on the Diocese’s Leadership Institute resource page so other parishes can borrow them

and initiate their own programs.

“Every parish will have a different experience because they will have a different starting off point,” Weldon said. “They have created a real groundswell of interest and a desire to continue this work. Any anti-racism work is a lifelong journey, and the participants at St. James are committed to continuing.”

She, herself, has been inspired by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano’s desire “to shine a light on the sin of racism.”

“He is one of the very few bishops who at the time were saying that we must all address this issue,” she said. “He also made a call to action and formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Racism.”

One of the first steps he took

was to name Therese LeFever and Angie DeMello, both of whom are St. James parishioners, to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Both women, who originated the St. James program, are involved with CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut), which is committed to engaging in conversations and activities about race and equity.

LeFever said the St. James program attracted people of diverse beliefs—Catholics, Jews, Sikhs, Baptists and even atheists.

“This is a lived experience more than a ‘curriculum,’” she said, adding that future sessions will provide bias training and feature a former St. James parishioner who is a neuroscientist and has done research in the field.

Angie DeMello, who was co-chair of the St. James group, is also active in CONECT and a member of the diocesan Ad Hoc Committee on Racism. She believes their effort was truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

“We put together a leadership team of 10 of us and met and decided on a format,” she recalled. “I am committed to the work I do, and the Holy Spirit is a tremendous facilitator. Our meetings were amazing. I can only tell you it was God’s work being done. It isn’t easy to have this kind of conversation—about how we all played a role in creating this demon of racism.”

The key to moving forward, she says, is having the willingness to accept that we all play a part in

it and mustering the willingness to change and create a culture of inclusion.

“Parishes have to find their own motivations to be able to do something like this,” he said. “It can’t be prescribed. It has to be people in the parish who say, ‘I want to do this thing, and I have people who will join me.’ The Church is definitely looking at the systemic nature of racism, and that’s a good thing.”

Parishes interested in launching their own anti-racism initiative should contact Kelly Weldon at Foundations in Faith: kelly.weldon@foundationinfaith.org. For a full length version of this story with additional interviews, please visit the diocesan website at www.bridgeportdiocese.org. ■

St. Anthony ‘Resurrection Vineyard’ helps to feed the poor

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

FAIRFIELD—You may notice something different when you are walking into Mass at St. Anthony of Padua these days. Six wooden raised beds are nestled on the side lawn, surrounded by protective fencing.

This “Resurrection Vineyard” garden is the product of the hard work of St. Anthony’s Values the Environment (S.A.V.E.), an environmental component of the parish’s social justice committee.

“We thought about doing something ‘actively’ to assist the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport and the people that it serves, and came up with the idea of a parish garden,” explains Dr. Jerry Hemenway, St. Anthony’s parishioner and a member of S.A.V.E. “We started the garden here at St. Anthony’s in a nice space behind the garage on the side of the parking lot facing the sun.”

Hemenway says that about two dozen parishioners, the S.A.V.E. committee and a neighbor have all helped to bring this garden to life.

Bob Goodrich, a member of St. James Parish in Stratford

put together six raised wooden beds and procured a donation of 4-5 yards of nutrient soil.

“Bob is out here all the time, walking his family’s dog and has helped with the fencing, gate and just about everything,” says Hemenway.



“It has been a real community effort, a labor of love,” says Goodrich.

Goodrich says he met a few St. Anthony’s parishioners while volunteering in the area, who mentioned they wanted to build a vegetable garden to give back

to the Merton Center, and he knew just how to help.

“We brought our first yield of tomatoes to the Merton Center on the week of July 12,” says Hemenway,



cucumbers, peppers and squash growing. We also have oregano, basil, onions and several other herbs.”

A generous parishioner recently donated 16 tomato plants to add to the garden, so it is shaping up to be a great harvest!

“We want to thank St. Anthony’s Parish for their wonderful donation of produce, says Bill Colson, director of the Thomas Merton Center. “Donations like that will provide additional nutritional foods for our Eat Smart Pantry families and add to our daily menus. We appreciate such valuable donations and look forward to a continued partnership.”

(For more information, visit: www.stanthonyffld.org) ■

Catholic Charities

'Off The Streets'

By KATHY-ANN GOBIN

DANBURY—The Off The Streets program, focused on getting individuals experiencing homelessness established in stable affordable housing, received numerous donations in July, with the help of St. Mary Church volunteers from Bethel.

The program, founded by former St. Mary Deacon Michael Oles more than 10 years ago, is still going strong in the Greater Danbury area and has expanded to include a chapter in Bridgeport. The program has also been established in several other states including Pennsylvania,

where Deacon Oles now lives.

"This is a wonderful program to directly help people in a permanent way," said Deacon Oles, who admittedly is anxious and eager to establish a chapter in every state. "There's still more work to be done. It requires people to see the face of the homeless Christ in their midst and step up in their own communities to work hand in hand to help the homeless."

The all-volunteer group works with area social service agencies to identify those they can help.

Candidates must have a source of income, such as a job or disability income and Off The Streets will supply the security

deposit directly to the landlord. The organization will deliver furniture and household goods to transform an empty apartment into a home.

"What makes the program so special is that it's so simple," said Beth Davis, one of the volunteers helping to collect the items from donors and temporarily place them in a storage unit.

Items donated include chairs, lamps, dressers and mattresses. The volunteer group has added a special touch by including a laundry basket filled with everyday household items such as napkins, paper towels, laundry detergent, shampoo, toothbrushes and



toothpaste to help people moving into their new home have some of the necessities to get started.

"You kind of reach a point where you know what people need," said Ann Leiss, one of the first volunteers recruited by Deacon Oles. In addition to creating some of the welcome baskets, Ann also cares for the volunteers by bringing them home-baked goodies when they gather for donation collections or other events.

Donations are generally accepted on the first Saturday of every month or are requested when there is a specific need or when the units at the two storage facilities in the Danbury area have space to accommodate more items.

"One thing about the pandemic is that people have been going through their homes, so that's been a bonanza for us," said Joe Simons, who is the administrator for the Off The Streets program and an active volunteer at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House, a soup kitchen and shelter in Danbury, where he and Deacon Oles both volunteered.

When Deacon Oles was asked to speak about homelessness to a group of middle school religious education students, he asked a man named Rodney, who was experiencing homelessness, to join him and share his story with the students.

"It all started with students' desire to get a man experiencing homelessness off the streets," Deacon Oles said.

The students were so moved by Rodney's plight that they sent money to Deacon Oles to help him. Deacon Oles, who was not experienced in securing housing for others, did eventually find an apartment and paid the security deposit with the students' funds. Word soon spread that he could help get people out of homelessness and into housing and he received unsolicited contributions from church groups and individuals to enable him to help more people secure housing and so Off The Streets was born.

"I'm happy so many people are so giving in this area," said Danelle Hill, a Girl Scout troop mom who was with her daughter dropping off welcome baskets to be given to families receiving furniture deliveries.

In the past, the crew of volunteers would gather and load up their personal vehicles to deliver furniture and other items to people in need.

There are about 15 core volunteers and many more may come and go depending on schedules and other commitments.

"Usually, enough people turned out," said Dan Kallberg, a St. Mary parishioner who donated his time to help receive donations and load a truck for delivery that day. "It always has a way of working out."

Recently, they received a box truck from local business, Good Directions, and now can do multiple deliveries in a day. They also no longer have to delay deliveries due to inclement weather.

"Having a truck takes the weather out of the equation," said Simons, adding that most deliveries are on Saturday but they will deliver in the week if enough volunteers are available.

The group has helped about 500 families get "off the streets" and about 80 percent remain housed after a year.

"Our philosophy is everyone deserves a chance," Simons said. "We do not want people to fail."

Many times, people with minimum wage jobs cannot afford the bigger expense of furniture and set-up so Off The Streets steps in to fill those needs.

"We are able to fill in the missing pieces to get people into housing and supplement what the agencies are doing," Simons said.

The work is extremely rewarding. "We get to be there when they move into their place and to see the expressions on their faces when they move in," he said. "It means the world to them and it is so gratifying to us too."

Merton event raises money for the hungry

BRIDGEPORT—The Thomas Merton Center recently wrapped up its spring virtual fundraiser, A Day in the Life of The Thomas Merton Center. Over \$310,000 was raised. This event was held virtually in lieu of the center's usual in-person Celebrity Breakfast but still brought out the Celebrities. Hosted

Marking, Inc. generously matched every dollar raised, helping the program reach its goal of \$300,000. Other sponsors included Ridgefield Thrift, Aquarion and Bank of America. The Thomas Merton Center is a program of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County which operates a day shelter that is the largest soup kitchen and the largest food pantry, the EatSmart Market

Cruz, with her family of four, not only utilizes the food pantry but also helps out in the garden. As Yashira stated, "It is important to have these resources because without them I wouldn't have...I'm trying not to cry...I don't have family here, so to me, they are my family and when I need help they're there."

The Thomas Merton Center is a program of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County which operates a day shelter that is the largest soup kitchen and the largest food pantry, the EatSmart Market Place, in Bridgeport. The program is committed to providing a loving, safe and hopeful community atmosphere that responds to the needs of its guests and residents and respects the dignity of each person. The Thomas Merton Center reflects to the individual and the community our shared responsibility to love and support one another.

(For more information on the Celebrity Breakfast, go to: www.justgiving.com/campaign/adayinthelife or contact Director Bill Colson at: bcolson@ccfc-ct.org. To learn more about the services provided by The Thomas Merton Center visit their webpage at www.themertoncenter.org.)



by Bridgeport native John Ratzenberger providing a voice-over from Pixar Studios in California, the event followed a typical day in the life of TMC dealing with the complex issues of COVID-19 while continuing to provide guests food and groceries.

The event's primary sponsor, Mark Kelly of Safety

Place, in Bridgeport.

The video features staff, volunteers and guests of TMC. Kenneth Graham who was a guest, now gainfully employed and coming into TMC to volunteer his time in the kitchen preparing meals stated, "I found the staff would listen...I feel like I should give back because they were here for me." Yashira

Youth and Young Adults

Teens embark on a ‘Journey’ of faith and service

By EMILY CLARK

FAIRFIELD—For one week early in the summer, sixteen high school students from around the diocese immersed themselves in charitable work, reflection, prayer and instruction as participants in the “Sacred Heart University Journey” Summer Theology Institute. Funded by the Lilly Endowment, this program, now in its fifth and final year, encouraged the youth to become leaders in their parish and community and to discover more about themselves as young Catholics.

The teens gathered each morning on the Sacred Heart campus in Fairfield for breakfast and Mass before embarking on daily programs with themes such as “A Life of Meaning and Purpose” and “God’s Call to Love, Lead and Serve.” Though coming from diverse backgrounds among eight parishes, they bonded through a shared interest in faith and service.

Focusing on the theme of a journey, the adult facilitators and college-age mentors led the teens in experiences highlighting social justice issues, enhanced by small group discussions and journaling about their faith. According to Dr. Patrick Donovan, the executive director of The Leadership Institute and a co-facilitator of this program, an important part of a young person’s journey is understanding what the church tells them and what the church asks of them. “They’re gaining a deeper sense of who they are as young Christians and what is expected of them,” said Donovan. “I’m fascinated by their responses to the



activities and real life issues. They are not choosing from a place of ease but from what is right and what is good.”

Such activities included a financial decision-making simulation, a personality inventory which encouraged collaboration, and theological discussions in a Socratic seminar format, modeled after the Sacred Heart University course “Catholic Intellectual Tradition.” Teens were challenged in the endeavors to consider questions such as what does social justice look like to you, how can you hold yourself accountable, and where did you find God today? It was their thoughtful and honest answers to these complex topics that most impressed co-facilitator and SHU Campus Minister Valerie Kisselback, who identified this group as very open, intentional, and receptive—even from day one.

“They are really interested in their faith and are sharing so deeply with each other,” she said, referencing their concerns about the pandemic and pressures at school. “After hearing about [different speakers’] faith journeys—all the

stories, the twists, the turns—they are learning how to live their own.”

As part of their service component, students put their social justice learning to work one afternoon by making blankets for children in hospitals and shelters, realizing that they could personally affect change and directly impact others. Another day, they filled

130 drawstring bags with necessities such as toothbrushes, socks, tissues and dry cereal which were later delivered to the Bridgeport Rescue Mission. Donovan also encouraged each teen to take a bag or two home with them to give to someone in need, an activity which profoundly impacted sophomore Travis Simon.

“It feels so good to help people who don’t have much, and it gives me a sense of gratification. I didn’t always think about the plight of the homeless, but now I am much more aware of these issues,” he said.

The combination of faith in action and classroom instruction gave junior Adrianna Barbee a better understanding of scripture and how it affects her personally. “I loved reading the Bible and learning more about the Gospels,” she said. “This has all

empowered me on my journey as a young woman to get more involved in my parish.”

In addition to faith exploration and service, participants also had the chance to develop friendships by interacting socially at lunch, during free time, and on a trip one afternoon to The Adventure Park at the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport. Because of these opportunities and the depth of their discussions, Kisselback said, “They have created such a sense of community in just a few short days.”

During the closing ceremony, several students spoke of their similar faith journeys, their shared interests, and their responsibility as young Catholics, the purpose behind the original grant. Donovan then left the teens with a final charge: “Take the grace of God with you and be living icons of Christ.”



7 pm at Holy Name in Stamford

The Young Adult Mass is a great opportunity for people ages 21-40 to worship and celebrate their faith together.

Masses are held on the second Wednesday of each month and socialization follows at “Sign of the Whale.”

For questions or further info contact Bob O’Brien: robrien@diobpt.org



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EDITORIAL

New Norms

On July 16th, 2021, the Memorial of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our Holy Father Pope Francis issued a motu proprio (edict) addressing the practice of celebrating Mass in Latin according to the Roman Missal edited by Pope Saint John XXIII in 1962. The norms contained in the motu proprio significantly restrict the use of the Roman Missal of 1962, and they require individual bishops to approve celebrations of the Tridentine Mass.

In a letter to priests, released on July 19, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano stated that he believes it is important that we retain the celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of 1962 in the Diocese, "provided that future practice is in conformity with the norms of Traditionis Custodes."

Addressing the topic more comprehensively on his recent weekly podcast, the bishop said that at present, five of the 80 parishes in the diocese offer Latin Masses on a regular basis, and those who attend will not see dramatic changes in its availability. The bishop emphasized that the beauty and validity of the Mass are not at issue; however, the supervisory and pastoral role of sponsoring the Latin Mass will return to the bishop.

The bishop indicated that he will take time to consult, draft and promulgate permanent diocesan norms that will address both the pastoral needs of those who have received spiritual nourishment from attending such celebrations of the Mass, while at the same time remaining obedient to the requirements of the law and the wishes of the Holy Father. The interim procedure outlined in his letter applies to all such celebrations scheduled from Wednesday, July 21, 2021 until the Feast of the Archangels, September 29, 2021.

The new permanent norms will be ready for diocesan-wide implementation by the end of September 2021.

To read Bishop Caggiano's letter in its entirety, visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/bishop-issues-interim-guidance-regarding-traditionis-custodes.

On Unity and Humility

In his weekly radio talk and podcast, "Let me be Frank," Bishop Caggiano expressed concern about growing divisions within the Church and our larger society. In particular he discussed the virtual meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which addressed many issues, including the worthiness to receive Holy Communion.

The bishop said that many of the questions brought to the fore in the June gathering have been weighing on his heart for some time. However, he urged that all Catholics work out their differences within a framework of personal humility and Church unity.

As he cautioned against division, the bishop said, "The unity of the church is always a fragile reality because it involves and necessitates a deep, personal humility on the part of every believer to certainly engage in the matters of what we believe, but also to submit to the truth, which is not of our making. It's a false choice to think I can affirm the truth and let the consequences come, even if the Church breaks apart. In my mind that is not doing the work of Jesus."

Referring to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (Chapter 4), he said that the highest priority of a bishop is to teach the truth in love. "When I stand before God, I have to answer for my own salvation and what I have done to help those under my care to live the truth in love for their own salvation. In my mind this is an absolutely essential element because we want the conversion of the world.... We are the ones who are going to be judged on how we govern the church in this moment of great crisis."

The bishop said that we all must examine our consciences when it comes to Eucharistic worthiness. "The Eucharist is the great mystery of our communion with the Lord who is our Savior and Redeemer, and everyone who comes forward must do all in his or her power to receive that Eucharist worthily, certainly without mortal sin."

"Only the Holy Spirit can see the fullness of reality, the fullness of truth raised up for us, the two essential pieces living the truth in love; that is to articulate the truth, unabashedly, courageously, but at the same time, accompanying people in the concrete messiness of their lives."

We encourage our readers to take the time to listen to the Bishop's conversations with Veritas Radio host Steve Lee. During a difficult time it reminds us that we are blessed by his strong leadership—his commitment to speak the truth and his unshakable faith that the Holy Spirit will guide the Church.

(Radio listeners can tune-in to Let Me Be Frank on Wednesdays at noon on WNLK-AM 1350 radio. The podcast is available at: www.veritasatholic.com and the Diocese of Bridgeport website, www.bridgeportdiocese.org.)



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

PASTOR

REVEREND HENRY HOFFMAN, from Pastor, Saint Jude Parish, Monroe, to Pastor, Saint Stephens Parish, Trumbull. Effective date is October 31, 2021 for a term of six years.

CHANCELLOR OFFICE

REVEREND JUAN GABRIEL ACOSTA, appointed Vice-Chancellor for a term of three years.

NEWLY ORDAINED

REVEREND GUY DORMEVIL, newly ordained to the Priesthood for the Diocese of Bridgeport, June 12, 2021, appointed Parochial Vicar, Saint Joseph and Saint Ladislaus Parish, Norwalk, and Priest Moderator of The Quasi-Parish Notre Dame Du Perpetuel Secours in Stamford. Effective date was June 30.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND PHILIP LANH PHAN, from Saint James Parish, Stratford, to Parochial Vicar, Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilton. Effective date was July 1.

RESIDENCE

REVEREND ROBERT BALAN, from Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilton, to Saint Margaret Mary Parish, Shelton. Effective date was June 15.

REVEREND ROGER MCDONOUGH, from Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish, Fairfield, to Saint Paul Parish, Greenwich. Effective date is August 15.

TRIBUNAL

REVEREND WILLIAM QUINLAN, reappointed Promotor of Justice for Contentious and Penal Cases and Judge for the Tribunal of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Effective date was July 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022.

EPISCOPAL CHAPLAIN

REVEREND MARCEL SAINT JEAN, appointed Part Time Episcopal Chaplain, Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport. Effective date was July 1. He remains Part Time Chaplain at Norwalk Hospital.

GRADUATE STUDY

REVEREND MICHAEL NOVAJOSKY, released as Special Assistant to the Bishop, to Catholic University of America to pursue License in Canon Law for a period of two years. Effective date is August 15.

OTHER

REVEREND PETER ADAMSKI, appointed to the Cathedraticum Appeals Review Committee for a term of two years. Effective date was July 1.

REVEREND MICHAEL DUNN, appointed to the Cathedraticum Appeals Review Committee for a term of two years. Effective date was July 1.

REVEREND ROLANDO ARIAS GALVIS, appointed to the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

Effective date is September 1, 2021 for a term of three years.

DEACON GERALD LAMBERT, appointed to the Diocesan Liturgical Commission. Effective date is September 1, 2021 for a term of three years.

REVEREND EDICSON OROZCO, appointed to the Cathedraticum Appeals Review Committee for a term of three years. Effective date was July 1.

REVEREND COREY PICCININO, appointed to the Cathedraticum Appeals Review Committee for a term of three years. Effective date was July 1.

REVEREND DAVID ROMAN, appointed as Diocesan Coordinator of Catholic Relief Services. Effective date is August 1, 2021 for a term of three years.

REVEREND ROLANDO TORRES, appointed to the Cathedraticum Appeals Review Committee for a term of three years. Effective date was July 1.

RETIREMENT

DEACON AUGUSTINE PIERRE-LOUIS, retired from the Diocese of Bridgeport. Effective date was July 12.

DEACON BRADFORD L. SMYTHE, retired from the Diocese of Bridgeport. Effective date was July 12.

Reverend Francis T. Hoffmann
Vicar for Clergy
July/August, 2021

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Editorial



Our week at the beach

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.

It's that time of year again—the family heads to the beach. For one blessed week, we load up our cars with beach chairs, books and sunblock, and make our way to our safe haven on the North Shore of Massachusetts.

Our little cottage has been in my extended family's possession since the year I was born. I

learned to walk in the sand here, the wide-open space perfect for little legs.

This time last year, the house was under construction due to a pipe burst, so this year it has had a bit of a facelift. It was exciting to arrive and see the newly installed floors, new countertops and bright backsplash...almost as if we were seeing it with fresh

eyes. But as we sat around the table playing a round of cards, we were reminded just why this place is so special to us in the first place.

For one week a year, we set everything else aside and focus on spending time with each other. Dad can be found scanning the tide line for special shells and rocks. Mom can be found following the sandpipers' path as they scurry along the shore. My sister and I can be found sunning ourselves on our towels, anticipating our next jump in the brisk surf. Brendan can be found skim-boarding, throwing a frisbee or playing a round of can-jam.

Family and friends come and go throughout the week, quickly acclimating to the time-honored traditions—a cook-out on the deck, a trip to the local seafood

joint...and of course, the outdoor shower.

They learn that a long walk on the beach can lead to some of the most special moments and nuggets of wisdom that will never be forgotten.

Those who stay for longer, get to experience the joys of attending Sunday Mass at Star of the Sea. A beach parish true to its name. Parishioners file in in flip-flops and shorts, getting to Mass early so they can spend the rest of the day in the sun and sand.

The priest, with a heavy Boston accent, keeps his homilies "short and sweet," knowing the congregation will be anticipating reveling in God's beautiful world just outside. A Mass on the beach was attempted...but once everyone got eaten alive by "green-heads," that was the end of that.

Our lives are interwoven with memories of this place...a story of us. And those who get to experience the joy of it get to feel the magic first-hand.

Taking this time to rest and rejuvenate is so important. Jesus knew the value of rest. After long sermons, he would often take time to himself or with his disciples.

After what we have all been through during the coronavirus pandemic, these moments seem more special than ever. There was a time when we didn't get to visit with family and friends. So now, we hold those we love a little closer and savor every moment of rest.

Wishing a blessed summer to all—one full of rest and special moments with family and friends. ■



Body, blood, soul and divinity. The real thing.

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

As I was walking back to my pew after receiving Communion, I spotted a fellow who was holding the host in his hand and staring at it curiously, as if he didn't know what it was or what to do with it. Maybe he wasn't Catholic or maybe he was one of those Catholics who think the Eucharist is just a symbol with the same efficacy as a crust of Wonder Bread.

A disturbing survey by Pew Research in 2019 concluded 70 percent of self-identified Catholics "believe the bread and wine used at Mass are not Jesus but merely symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." (I've often thought that those who believe it's just symbolic shouldn't object to receiving unconsecrated hosts.)

Some 43 percent were

"unaware" of the teaching about the Real Presence and 22 percent knew but didn't believe it. This lack of belief in the fundamental mystery of our faith has consequences that go far beyond whether politicians who promote abortion should be given Communion. At the turn of the millennium, Jesuit theologian John Hardon, whose cause for sainthood is before the Vatican, foresaw dire consequences as a result of unbelief in the Real Presence.

"I believe the center of the Church's crisis in the Western World is the doubt and denial in an ever-widening circle of once-professed Catholics about their faith in the Real Presence," he wrote. "As a result, we see the massive desacralization of the Mass, hidden tabernacles, iconoclasm perpetrated on

Catholic Churches, reduction of hundreds of churches to mere social meeting halls and the casual handling of the Sacred Species. The future of the Catholic Church in one Western country after another is on trial. One thing I have learned is the deepest and most devastating crisis in all the 2000 years of the Church's history is what we are undergoing now.... In one declarative sentence: Without faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, there is no Catholic Church."

Many disbelieve the teaching, and even more just don't care, which is one of the greatest tragedies of our age. When the priest holds up the Eucharist and says, "Body of Christ," he really means it. And when you say "Amen," you're saying you believe it too.

It's time for believers to say prayers of reparation. The Litany of Reparation to Our Eucharistic Lord says in part: "Lord, for so many unworthy communions, we offer you love and reparation. For the infidelity of those who call themselves your friends but betray you, we offer you love and reparation. For the sacrileges which profane your sacrament of love, we offer you love and reparation."

In "The Habit of Being:

Letters of Flannery O'Connor," the celebrated Catholic author recounted a dinner she had with critic Mary McCarthy and their exchange about the Real Presence.

She wrote: "I was once taken by some friends to have dinner

"Many disbelieve the teaching, and even more just don't care, which is one of the greatest tragedies of our age. When the priest holds up the Eucharist and says, 'Body of Christ,' he really means it."

with Mary McCarthy. (She just wrote that book, 'A Charmed Life.')

She departed the Church at 15 and is a Big Intellectual. I hadn't opened my mouth once, there being nothing for me in such company to say. Having me there was like having a dog present who had been trained to say a few words but, overcome with inadequacy, had forgotten them.

"Well, the conversation

turned on the Eucharist, which I, being Catholic, was obviously supposed to defend. She said when she was a child and received the host, she thought of it as the Holy Ghost, He being the most portable person of the Trinity. Now, she thought of it as a symbol.... I then said, in a very shaky voice, 'Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it.' That was all the defense I was capable of, but I realize now that is all I will ever be able to say about it, except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable."

Since the first Holy Thursday when Jesus gave us the Eucharist in the Upper Room, it has been the Sun that illuminates the Church because

Jesus is really present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

If that teaching sounds unreasonable, far-fetched or preposterous to you, remember one thing: Nothing is impossible with God.

And like Flannery O'Connor, we all should say, "The Eucharist is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable."

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

We Stand with Christ

Holy Name parishioners preserve their church

By **JOE PISANI**

STAMFORD—Almost 120 years ago, a group of Polish immigrants came to America settled in south Stamford in their search for spiritual succor, and they founded Holy Name of Jesus Roman Catholic Church, which is today one of the most beautiful in the diocese, so they could worship in their native language.

They originally purchased land on South Street and erected a wooden structure that would be the church, school and convent. By 1922, the parish entered its Golden Age, according to its history. The school was reopened with the arrival of sisters from Reading, Penn., and the pastor decided to begin a building program that would provide “a new church, a new school and a home for the

nuns,” and a nearby home was purchased to serve as a convent.

On April 5, 1925, work began on the new church, and two years later on Easter Sunday the exterior was completed, and parishioners were able to celebrate Mass in the lower church. The years ahead presented challenges; however, despite the stock market crash and the Great Depression, work resumed on the upper portion of Holy Name.

The parish history states, “The progress was slow, but steady. On December 25, 1934, all was in readiness for the first celebration of the first Mass in the completed upper church. On that Christmas Day, the beautiful Romanesque structure seemed a silent manifestation to the Savior. If the parishioners had their way, He would have been born in this magnificent temple instead of a humble stable.”

The splendor of their church

has awed visitors from throughout the diocese and from many other places who have come to visit.

Today, Holy Name Church is led by Pastor Pawel M. Hrebenko, a native of Lubin, Poland, who attended the Salesian Oratory and was nurtured by the Salesian Fathers and Sisters. After high school he went to the Salesian Major Seminary and then decided to come to the United States to serve the Church.

He studied at St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford in 1999 and was later assigned to St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., where he completed his studies with a bachelor’s in sacred theology (from St. Thomas Aquinas University in Rome) and master’s degree in theology. He was ordained in 2004 and celebrated his First Mass at Holy Name Church. He served at sev-



eral other parishes before coming to Holy Name as pastor in 2012.

Holy Name is the second oldest church in Stamford and parishioners have met the challenges with ingenuity and creativity.

Parish Council member Boga Davidson, said, “Our parish is a very old one and we needed a lot of construction and repairs. The situation became grave in January 2019, when a wind-driven storm blew shingles off the roof and caused extensive damage to the interior. A large area of the roof was exposed, and the water penetrated the walls and interior roof, she said.

The repairs to the historic church were made possible by the We Stand With Christ Capital Campaign, Davidson said. She herself understood the roofing business because when she came to the United States from Poland 20 years ago, she began her own construction company, Classic Remodeling of Norwalk, which closed five years ago.

She consulted with Father Hrebenko and other members of the parish council and decided that the most efficacious approach was to replace the entire roof rather than merely repair the damaged area. And while she did not do the work, she established a preliminary outline of what had to be done and then placed the job out to bid and received five bids.

“There was a wide range of prices,” she recalls, “and we as a parish council decided to meet with everyone. They all came in and presented their proposals and we were able to ask questions.”

However, the process was marred by tragedy because the best price came from JP Roofing of Stamford, owned by parishioner Cezary Bartosiewicz.

“I was very surprised by the price he gave us,” Davidson said. “He told us, ‘This is my church. I got married in his church and baptized two of my children here.’ We knew him for 40 years and decided to go with him.”

But shortly before he was about to begin work, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. He got COVID-19 and passed away before he could start.

“I remember that he was in the hospital and said, ‘I will do it. Give me one more day,’” Davidson recalled.

They approached another contractor and were able to work out a deal whereby he charged them for labor while Davidson, through her contacts, was able to get a good price on materials from Metro Roofing Supplies of Stamford. The first order of business was to replace the roof so that no more water would enter and destroy the sanctuary.

The roof was finished in September 2020, and then the interior renovations began, she said.

Father Hrebenko and the parish council are happy because “The roof looks great and there are no more leaks inside the building. We are so happy that We Stand With Christ helped us because we would not have been able to do the work without them.”

And the repairs and renovations have special meaning for the parishioners. As Davidson says, “Those Polish immigrants who came here long ago built one of the most beautiful churches. We have great respect for those people, and we were obligated to do this for future generations. We did it in their memory and out of respect for them...so that future generations will have a place to pray and cultivate their Polish heritage.”



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St. Catherine Center Looking to the future

By VIRGINIA WEIR

FAIRFIELD—Following a multi-year planning process, St. Catherine Center for Special Needs recently announced Building For the Future, a capital campaign to expand programming and double the footprint of its current facility. Designed for 28 students, the Center's current building in Fairfield now serves 42 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities from across Fairfield County.

"This expansion is the most important initiative to happen at the Center since we opened our doors over 20 years ago, and since we moved to our current site in 2007," said Helen Burland, executive director. "Over the years there has been an evolution of expectations of what young people with disabilities can accomplish. Our mission all along has been consistent: to recognize and value each person, and to help them become as independent as possible. We need more space to continue to do that well."

Over 20 years ago, a small group of individuals came together with a vision to create a faith-based educational program that would welcome children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. St. Catherine Academy began in 1999 as a small school with four students occupying two rooms at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport. Four years later, the State approved the Academy as a private special education facility, and the program quickly outgrew its space. In 2007, a new facility was built adjacent to Holy Cross Church in Fairfield with the support of hundreds of donors throughout the Diocese. Classes are small, allowing for individual attention and integrated learning focused on academics, the development of life skills, and vocational experiences.

In 2014, St. Catherine Center for Special Needs was established, comprised of Saint Catherine Academy, a new adult day program for individuals over 21, and an Office of Parish Outreach and Support.

Each day in the state-approved Adult Program includes ADLs (activities of daily living), exercise, and vocational skill building. "Our aim is to offer

opportunities for meaningful, authentic experiences," Burland said. "Independence looks different for each of our young people, but everyone benefits from the relationships they form here." Academy students have the option to continue in the Adult Program after they complete school if the program continues to meet their needs.

Tom and Vicky Reynolds' son Gus was one of the first participants in the Adult Program. "There's a void for young people with special needs after they turn 21," Tom Reynolds said. "We were so thankful to find Saint Catherine's. It's a place that is true to its mission of respecting the dignity of each individual. I always respect what Helen says—don't think about what they can't do, think about what they can. At the Center, they live that every day."

Planning for the expansion began in 2018. After discussing all possible options, the Board of Directors concluded that the best option would be to expand the facility at the current location. "We felt it was important to keep the Academy and Adult programs together," said Charles Chiusano, chairman of the Center's board. "We have invested a substantial amount in improvements to the current building, and shared personnel provides for both economy and important cross-training. The time is right for us to move forward."

A workgroup of individuals from both St. Catherine Center and Holy Cross Church convened in 2019 to discuss the expansion. Monsignor Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, coordinated the collaboration, which resulted in a mutually beneficial agreement in March 2021.

The Center is working with the architectural firm Antinozzi and Associates to finalize the building and renovation plans. Construction is expected to begin in late spring 2022, with the new Center opening in 2023. The addition will more than double the current footprint, from 6,200 square feet to 12,700 square feet. "The planned addition to the current site feels just right," said Steve Donahue, a board member and workgroup participant. "It's a simple and elegant solution."

The \$5M Building For the

Future campaign includes both the physical expansion and the establishment of a reserve to support program expansion and to sustain the Center's mission in the long term. Building plans include a commercial kitchen for a bakery enterprise, a hydroponic garden room for growing micro-greens year-round, and a center courtyard for outdoor activities. A portion of the funds raised will be used to expand programming, such as after-hours gatherings, additional vocational and volunteer opportunities for participants, and a transition program for students to help them prepare for life beyond school.

Burland and members of the Board of Directors have been meeting with individuals to describe the Building For the



Future project and garner support. Just four months into the campaign, almost 80 percent of the funding goal has been received or pledged. "The outpouring of support has been just amazing," she said. "We still have a ways to go, but we are well on our way. I am truly touched at the generosity of the St. Catherine community—parents, families, friends—who have brought us this close to our goal. They understand how important

this project is and the difference it will make to the young people we serve."

(For more information about St. Catherine Center's Building For the Future campaign, visit www.stcatherinecenter.org/future, or contact the Center at info@stcatherinecenter.org or 203.540.5381.)

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Foundations

Foundations in Education celebrates six years

By **THERESA SCIALLO**

BRIDGEPORT—In celebration of its six-year anniversary, Foundations in Education (FIE) wishes to thank donors and friends for their support in advancing its mission of transforming lives through Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

FIE began life as the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, an initiative created by The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, which helped make it possible for more than 1,500 students to attend diocesan Catholic elementary schools in its first year.

Embarking on its seventh year, FIE has awarded more than \$18 million in tuition assistance to thousands of students and families who value Catholic education and more than \$500,000 in Innovation

and Leadership Grants to Catholic School educators.

"We owe such a debt of gratitude to Bishop Caggiano for his courage and vision to launch what is now a beacon of hope for thousands of young Catholic school students, their families, and their teachers," shared FIE Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine, CFRE.

At its inaugural reception, Bishop Caggiano addressed attendees: "This is an historic event in the life of the diocese. You are now partners in a venture that will enable our schools to remain on the cutting edge of innovation in the 21st century."

On July 14, 2015, Foundations in Education became incorporated as a separate 501(c)3 organization which raises funds through-

out the year to provide tuition assistance to diocesan-sponsored Catholic elementary schools to families in need through the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, and to provide funding for competitive grants for teachers and administrators for innovation in education and professional development in leadership.

The founding board of trustees included Bishop Caggiano, Robert Dilenschneider, John Eppolito, R. Bradford Evans, Michael Hanlon, Lawrence Kudlow, Ned Lautenbach, Daniel McCarthy, Anne McCrory, Thomas McInerney, Dr. Julia McNamara, Bernard Reidy, Gerard Robilotti, Joseph Roxe, and Robert Scinto.

Joining the board of trustees since then are David Capiello, George



Coleman, Lisa Ferraro Martino, Timothy FitzPatrick, Leslie Lopez, Andrea Maldon, Michele Mitola, Joseph Purcell, Henry Rondon, Michael Shea, Jennifer St. Victor-de Pinho, Barbara Ripp and Sr. Mary Grace Walsh.

At the recent annual board meeting, Bishop Caggiano thanked the chair, executive director, and all the members of the board for their leadership. "Thank you for your tremendous work in stewardship of the Foundation. In all the years we have worked together, this is one of the shining examples of what we can do together to foster the mission of the Church."

Board Chair Tom McInerney also acknowledged fellow board members for their continuous support of students and teachers, "The enormity of our work has never been more important than it is today."

"We accomplished a lot in our first six years," commented Lemoine. "Now as the foundation looks to the future, the focus is on continuing to develop the extraordinary board of trustees and growing long-term sustainable funding."

"Projecting ahead six years from now, with the rising cost of Catholic education, we would like to grow our endowment significantly to assure a Catholic education is available to all who seek it for their children," Lemoine added.

Foundations in Education is embarking on a strategic planning process to help determine how they can best serve their constituencies in the future. The results will guide the foundation board, staff and donors to best serve schools and their communities in the future.

(To learn more about Foundations in Education, visit www.foundationsineducation.org.)

PREP



Fairfield College Preparatory School is a Jesuit, Catholic school of excellence forming young men of intellectual competence, who possess the conscience to make wise decisions, a compassion for others and a commitment to justice in our global society. Fairfield Prep offers a rigorous academic program for boys in ninth through 12th grade in the Jesuit educational tradition, with an outstanding record of college acceptances and an emphasis on mission in program as well as a full slate of sports and activities. In a community of faith, our students develop their relationship with God and one another.

OPEN HOUSE Sunday, Oct. 3 & Saturday, Nov. 20



FAIRFIELDPREP.ORG

FIE welcomes new board member

BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Education, Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Henry Rondon to its Board of Trustees.



"We are excited to continue to build on a remarkably strong board and welcome Henry's talent and expertise in education to help inform our work going forward. Those who know Henry only had glowing and extremely positive things to say about the value he adds to our work," said Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director of FIE.

Henry Rondon currently serves as assistant executive director of The Connecticut Association of Schools and Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CAS-CIAC). He joined CAS-CIAC in July of 2019 after serving 22 years in education. Rondon is the sports liaison for Cross Country, Indoor Track, Outdoor Track, Ice Hockey, Baseball and Softball for CIAC.

Prior to joining CAS-CIAC, Rondon spent 21 years at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, where he served as a teacher, coach, club moderator, athletic director, dean of students and ultimately principal, a position he held for five years.

Rondon is a New York City native where he attended Cardinal Hayes High School. He is a 1996 graduate of Sacred Heart University where he played both baseball and basketball and earned a master's in Teaching and a sixth-year degree in Administration.

Foundations in Faith

Reaching out to Young Catholic Professionals

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocesan Young Adult Council is extremely grateful to Foundations in Faith for approving its St. Therese grant application for \$20,000 to fund the establishment of a Young Catholic Professionals

Members of the Board of Foundations in Faith approved DYAC's grant application at their June 2021 meeting, providing unwavering support for DYAC/YCP. Foundations in Faith is hopeful that YCP will ignite a

sional are paired with top-level executives for career guidance & "best practices" in faith & business; spiritual guidance—where YCP'ers are connected with priests and other religious to better discern God's hand in their lives and careers; career counseling & more.

The YCP Stamford/Fairfield County Chapter will be formed in close collaboration with the

DYAC and, in the words of Bishop Caggiano, "once operational, can be of great help in a larger initiative to create a Young Catholic Pastoral Center for Entrepreneurship. The Center will invite young adults to address local social needs through the creation of small non-profit corporations that they will manage, affording them both professional business experience, as

well as mentoring in the Catholic faith. It is envisioned that YCP members would assist the work of the Center, in part by accompanying those peers who may not be as active in the practice of their faith. Hence, the proposal is one of evangelization."

YCP thanks both Bishop Caggiano and Foundations in Faith for their support of young adult Catholics in the diocese. ■



(YCP) Chapter in Stamford/Fairfield County.

The Diocesan Young Adult Council (DYAC) was established by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in January 2021. The Council's stated mission is to "assist ministry on behalf of young adults through (1) coordinating communication among existing ministries, (2) creating opportunities for community building among young adults, (3) offering faith formation and leadership training to those who desire it and (4) identifying best practices to evangelize and form young adults in the life of faith."

Bishop Caggiano has been instrumental in leading the growth of the young adult community in the diocese. He recognizes that young adults are the future of the Church and that ministering to them is essential. Through the Diocesan Young Adult Council, he has provided a medium for young adults to voice their opinions/concerns. When the idea of starting a YCP Chapter in Stamford/Fairfield County was raised at one of the monthly DYAC meetings, Bishop Caggiano provided his full support and helped to procure funding by reaching out to Foundations in Faith and asking for financial assistance from the St. Therese Fund for Evangelization.

love for the Catholic Faith in young adults throughout the diocese and encourage young adults to become evangelizers/spreaders of the gospel message whether through involvement at the parish level or through involvement in diocesan-wide initiatives such as the newly formed Pastoral Center for Entrepreneurship and Pastoral Center for Culture.

Young Catholic Professionals (YCP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, founded in 2010, with a mission to challenge, train, and encourage young adults working in various professions to work in witness for Christ. YCP is dedicated to fostering Catholic identity, encouraging community and inspiring a call to action for young Catholics in their 20's and 30's so that they may be empowered to see their workplaces as a natural site for evangelization.

YCP fulfills its purpose through executive speaker series—where top-level Catholic executives are invited to speak and share their professional/faith journeys; networking happy hours—which allow young professionals to enjoy fellowship and learn about YCP in a casual setting; virtue-based panel discussions—focused Q&A and small group discussions about living virtuously in the workplace; executive mentorship—where young profes-

New fund to benefit Catholic Charities

By JOE PISANI

The Catholic Charities of Fairfield County Fund has been established to support the charitable ministries of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Conceived by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and the Board of Trustees of Foundations in Charity, the fund will offer donors the opportunity to support the mission and specific

to support its mission throughout Fairfield County.

Accepting foundational gifts for both current operating and endowment needs, the fund also provides an ideal option for planned giving, McCrory said.

"We have heard from many of our supporters who are giving annual or periodic gifts to the agency now that they also are looking for options to support Catholic Charities after they are gone," she said. "In addition,

of Catholic Charities through operational support or endowment growth.

The new fund will be launched at an August 26 event to be held at the episcopal residence in Trumbull, which will honor Al Barber and his wife Gina for their years of service to Catholic Charities, along with Denis and Britta Nayden for their longtime support of the diocese's charitable mission.



FOUNDATIONS IN CHARITY
IMPROVING LIVES TOGETHER

programs of Catholic Charities now and into the future, according to Anne McCrory, the chair of Foundations in Charity Board. "While we hope to expand our reach to other Catholic mission work in the county, right now we are committed to Catholic Charities, as the scope of what they are doing in our county is extraordinary and truly lives the mission of the Church" says Michael McNulty, a trustee of Foundations in Charity. Foundations in Charity, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, was created in 2018 and has already provided critical operating funds to Catholic Charities

many long-term residents of Fairfield County who are now living elsewhere can use this option to support Catholic Charities in their estate planning. The Catholic Charities of Fairfield County Fund is ideal for these purposes."

"There is a tremendous desire for those planning their estates to ensure the charitable works of the Catholic Church can continue long after we are all gone," said Bishop Caggiano, emphasizing that many of the faithful are looking for a specific way to endow the works of charity into the future. Foundations in Charity will do this by establishing this fund, which allows donors to support the mission and programs

The event is being jointly sponsored by Foundations in Charity and Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, the two organizations which Barber led.

Barber recently announced his retirement as executive director of Foundations in Charity, a position he held since it began two years ago, following 16 years as president of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County.

(For more information about the launch of the Fund and how you can make a gift, go to the Foundations in Charity at www.givecentral.org/appeals-form-registration/acp5f0e2566c9069/user/guest) ■

Leadership Institute

What's Next at The Leadership Institute

Below are some of the events and programs planned for 2021-2022. For complete details and registration information, please visit formationreimagined.org.

Catechetical Summit August 25, 2021

Bishop Caggiano and the team from The Leadership Institute will lead a discussion about how we can reimagine faith formation together. All pastors, parochial vicars, faith formation leaders, youth ministers, and other team members are invited and encouraged to attend.

The Catholic Biblical School September 11 – Orientation

Classes meet Thursday evenings beginning September 23 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

The Archdiocese of Hartford Catholic Biblical School (CBS) has been a kind of “hearing aid” for thousands of adults throughout New England as they engage God’s Word in every book of the Bible. Starting in Fall 2021, the Catholic Biblical School will be meeting in Bridgeport (and maybe Stamford).

There will be two locations available—the Catholic Center (Bridgeport) and Holy Spirit parish in Stamford. Each year of the four-year program runs for 30 weeks. The cost is only \$380, a bit more if you wish to take courses for college credit.

To request an application, please email institute@diobpt.org.

Documents That (Still) Matter Every Second Wednesday – 7:30 pm

Join us once a month to unpack a Church document—from our collective past and present—and learn more about the implications for the faithful of today. Every second Wednesday evening at 7:30 pm, we will gather virtually to learn a bit more.

Each document will be available in advance online and, if we have it, a summary and talking points. Dates, presenters, and topics are as follows:

Dates:

September 8 – Ela Milewska – *Gaudete in domino*
October 13 – Kathi Bonner – *Dei verbum*

November 10 – Joan Kelly – *Lumen gentium*

December 8 –

Father Peter Lenox, SLL, MLM – *Sacrosanctum concilium*

January 12 – Fr. Joseph Gill – *Familiaris Consortio*

February 9 – John Rinaldo – Faithful Citizenship

March 9 – Joan Kelly – *Nostra aetate*

April 13 – Marilyn Santos – *Redemptoris missio*

May 11 – Amy McEntee – *Inter mirifica*

June 8 – Patrick Donovan – *Caritas in veritate*

Best Practices for RCIA Sunday, September 12, 2021 at 2:30 pm

The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), also called the Catechumenate, is a process of initiation into the Catholic Community of Faith for persons who are experiencing a conversion in their lives and seeking either Christian baptism in the Catholic Church or full Communion with the Catholic tradition of Eucharist and Confirmation. This workshop is for parish RCIA teams to discuss best practices, diocesan and canonical policies, and to share resources that parish leaders have found most helpful. Our guide for the afternoon is Lisa Orchen, author and RCIA expert. Pre-registration is required.

Praying with Parish Staff Friday, September 17, 2021 – 9:30 am to 2:00 pm

All receptionists, bookkeepers, secretaries, and other parish staff who work so tirelessly to offer a great first impression for our parishes are invited to join in a day of prayer, food, and conversation about the important role you play in our parish communities.

Face-to-Face Formation for Liturgical Ministers

Sunday, October 17, 2021 – 2:00 pm
Tuesday, January 18, 2022 – 7:30 pm
Saturday, March 5, 2022
(as part of Ministry Day)

If you hope to be a Reader or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at your parish and

you have not yet completed formation, you may do so online. This workshop is for those who would prefer to meet in person and/or do not have a way to complete formation via the online platform. Pre-registration is required, and more details can be found at the Institute website. Please note, this is not a workshop for renewing your mandate; it is only for new liturgical ministers.

Preparation for Convalidation of Marriage

Saturday, October 30, 2021
from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm

There are many couples in our diocese who are married, but not married sacramentally. Those numbers increased during the pandemic. “Convalidation” comes from two Latin words and means that a couple is getting married “with validity.” A convalidation is a celebration of the sacrament of marriage, one of the Church’s seven sacraments, all of which are gifts given to us by Jesus Christ so that we can share in God’s life and grow closer to Him. If you are married civilly, but not sacramentally, and wish to have your marriage elevated to a sacramental marriage, this workshop is for you. Sessions will be in English and Spanish. Please see the website for the required registration material.

Christology 101

November 3, and 4, 2021 –
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
or 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

A two morning or two evening experience with Dr. Patrick Donovan, outlining who the person of Jesus was to his followers and how, by studying the life of Christ, we might make Matthew’s confession of faith (Mt 16:16) our own. Two chances to join. See the institute website for registration information.

Volunteer Management 101

November 3, and 4, 2021 –
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
or 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

What is the secret to inviting, managing, and keeping volunteers? Whether we are talking

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



CELEBRATING *Wedding Anniversaries*

All those celebrating their **25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, or 50+** anniversary are invited to gather at St. Matthew’s parish on

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

at either 10:30 am or 1:00 pm for a Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano.
Space is limited to four guests.

To register, please email the first name of both bride and groom, your email and your wedding date to weddingjubilee@diobpt.org or call Barbara at 203-416-1641.



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Leadership Institute



FAMILY BIBLE CHALLENGE

Family Bible Challenge

Season Ten launches August 15, 2021 and your family is invited to participate. Now with a following of more than 10,000 households, The Family Bible Challenge is in more than a dozen dioceses. Each Sunday, families receive an email with a passage to read and reflection questions to discuss. Then on Thursday, families receive a quiz they can take together to test their knowledge of Scripture and the Catholic faith in general.

Mark your calendars for future seasons:

August 15, 2021 – Season Ten
November 7, 2021 – Season Eleven
February 6, 2022 – Season Twelve
April 24, 2022 – Season Thirteen

WHAT'S NEXT FROM PAGE 16

about catechists, liturgical ministers, or folks to help with the parish picnic, what is the silver bullet when it comes to finding the right people and making sure they know how much we appreciate their assistance? Join us for a workshop to discover best practices and answers to all your volunteer questions.

Best Practices for Sacristans Saturday, January 22, 2022 from 10:00 am to noon

Nearly every Catholic faith community has those quiet volunteers who assist parish clergy to maintain the vessels and vestments for the parish. To help these great people do their ministry effective-

ly, join us for a short workshop to discuss the best practices for sacristans—and allow us to show our appreciation for all you do.

Ministry Day 2022 Saturday, March 5, 2022 – 9:00 am

Looking back, we had no idea how much the world would change when we gathered on

March 7, 2019. Now, back, and better than ever, Ministry Day begins at 9:00 am at All Saints School in Norwalk, with Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano and continues with a wide variety of workshops for you to attend. Come to learn, pray, enjoy the music, or see friends you met two years ago! ■

Calling All Parishes: Form a Reading Group

Get your friends together at your parish and start reading! This year, The Leadership Institute will help parishes get great discounts on books, provide a study and reflection guide, and then invite all those who have participated to join us for lunch and a conversation with the author.

Email institute@diobpt.org to request books. Then be sure to set your own schedule so that your group is finished in advance of the luncheon. If your parish does not form a group, feel free to read the book on your own and join us anyway.

Fall 2021

Real Presence: What Does It Mean and Why Does It Matter?

By Dr. Timothy O'Malley

Deadline to order books:

September 15, 2021

Lunch with the author:

October 15, 2021

Spring 2022

Everyone Leads: How to Revitalize the Catholic Church

By Chris Lowney

Deadline to order books:

January 15, 2022

Lunch with the author:

March 10, 2022

Most Catholics don't believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. Rather, they see the bread and wine of Holy Communion as mere symbols of Christ's body and blood. Is that disbelief just a misunderstanding or is it a blatant rejection of one of the central beliefs of the faith?

In *Real Presence*, University of Notre Dame theologian Timothy P. O'Malley clears up the confusion and shows you how to learn to love God and neighbor through a deeper understanding of the doctrine of real presence.

A 2019 study by the Pew Research Center found that almost seventy percent of Catholics don't believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist.

O'Malley offers a concise introduction to Catholic teaching on real presence and transubstantiation through a biblical, theological, and spiritual account of these doctrines from the early Church to today. He also explores how real presence enables us to see the vulnerability of human life and the dignity of all flesh and blood.

Gather on your own or in your parish and be ready for a conversation with Tim on October 15, 2021. To place an order for books and the discussion guide, please email institute@diobpt.org.

Drawing on decades of leadership experience, bestselling author Chris Lowney examines the profound challenges facing the global Catholic Church, shares real-life stories of Catholics making a difference, and offers practical suggestions for change.

The Catholic Church is suffering its worst decline in five centuries—a precipitous slide that will turn catastrophic unless reversed by fundamental changes in strategy, culture, and leadership style. Even the inspiring leadership of Pope Francis will not reverse the slide without a strategy for action, from the grassroots through the hierarchy. Chris Lowney, a former Jesuit seminarian and business executive who now chairs one of the world's largest Catholic ministries, not only outlines the challenges but also maps the path forward in *Everyone Leads*.

After a bracing review of the church's global struggles Lowney draws on two decades of change-management experience to propose an "EASTeR" strategy of five transformational principles: be entrepreneurial, be accountable, serve, transform, and reach out. These five ideas can catalyze profound change in every parish, in how bishops think, and in the roles laypeople play in leading the church. Filled with real-life examples, *Everyone Leads* outlines strategies that anyone can employ to strengthen the church.

As a former business executive

who lectures globally about leadership, Lowney speaks credibly about the institution's challenges and potential. And, as chair of one of Catholicism's largest hospital systems, he writes "from within" as a Catholic who loves his church and

is committed to seeing it flourish.

Gather on your own in your parish and be ready for a conversation with Chris on March 10, 2022. To place an order for books and the discussion guide, email institute@diobpt.org. ■



The Catholic Biblical School Hearing God's Word in Life and Ministry

Do you ever wish you had a "hearing aid" to clarify God's voice speaking in your heart? Now more than ever, we need the voice of Jesus to speak the words of everlasting life to us and to our world. The Bible is God's Word, and Christians can encounter God's voice more clearly in the Bible by engaging the tools of Scripture study and prayer that the Church finds indispensable for Christian disciples.

The Archdiocese of Hartford Catholic Biblical School (CBS) been a kind of "hearing aid" for thousands of adults throughout New England as they engage God's Word in every book of the Bible. And this fall the Catholic Biblical School will be meeting in Bridgeport!

The CBS Core program is recommended for all who desire to meet the Lord in a deeper way through Sacred Scripture and invites adults to apply who expect to be able to complete the requirements for 2-4 years. Prior experience with Bible study is not required.

The first two years focus on methods of study and praying with Scripture and a comprehensive study of major books of both the Old and New Testaments. The remaining two years cover all other books of the Old and New Testaments (Catholic Bible).

There will be two locations available – the Catholic Center (Bridgeport) and another satellite in Stamford.

- + **September 11 – Orientation (evening)**
- + Thursday evenings beginning **September 23** from 6:30 to 8:30pm
- + Each year of the four-year program runs for 30 weeks.

The cost is only \$380, a bit more if you wish to take courses for college credit.



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Catholic Education

Catholic Academy of Bridgeport receives \$500,000 grant

BRIDGEPORT—The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education recently approved a grant request by the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport for \$500,000 to assist students in need. Recipients of the funds

shall be called “The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education Scholars.”

According to Angela Pohlen, executive director of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, “We are extremely grateful to The Inner-

City Foundation for supporting the work we are doing. This grant helps us make a Christ-centered, academically rigorous education available to as many students as possible regardless of their financial circumstances.”



PICTURED (l-r): John Kreitler, board chair, Catholic Academy of Bridgeport; Pam Pagnani, board member, The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education; Angela Pohlen, executive director, Catholic Academy of Bridgeport; Richard Matteis, board member, The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education; and Dennis Boyd, treasurer, Catholic Academy of Bridgeport.

ST. ALOYSIUS: 125 YEARS FROM PAGE 6

youth ministry and a semi-annual Emmaus Retreat program.

Students at St. Aloysius School, from kindergarten to eighth grade, attend Mass regularly and have opportunities to pray three times a day, he said.

“Our music program is amazing, and there is a strong tradition of good music thanks to Dr. John Michniewicz,” Father said. There are adult, youth and cherub choirs in addition to the StAY Teen Choir & Praise Band.

The teen Mass typically attracts 600 people on Sunday at 5 pm, and members of the senior community often go because they are energized by the young people, Father says. There is also a 6:30 am Mass for teens once a month at which they receive a takeaway breakfast before heading to school.

“We have a lot of folks who do

a lot of amazing things,” he says. “They are important to the life of the Church in a culture that says people are moving away from religion. Our community has shown that you need a personal relationship with Christ and a community relationship with people in prayer. We have to come together in Eucharist. The Lord says to do this, and that’s what we do every day.”

The parish recently embarked on a capital campaign, which it hopes will finance work on aging buildings on the campus, more space for parish ministries, a larger indoor gathering space and an outdoor area.

“It will be a re-imagining of our campus,” Father Kinnally says. “We also want to put a cafe in the middle of the campus, which will be managed throughout the day so people can gather for coffee and a light lunch and provide

coffee for people after Mass. We want a place where people will feel comfortable and can pray the rosary and have outdoor prayer services. It will also be available to the community if, say, they want a room for a meeting or just to sit outside and have lunch.”

This year, the St. Aloysius’ 125th anniversary feast was celebrated on June 19 after the 5 pm Mass with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, followed by a procession and a parish party with music and food.

Marking the occasion, Father Kinnally said in a message to his faith community: “We give thanks to God for 125 years of parish family life under the patronage of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga. From moments of grace in the three different church buildings that have been our spiritual houses over a century and a quarter, we all have some treasured stories of countless prayers said, thousands of candles lit, hundreds of happy brides and grooms walking down the aisle, generations of babies being brought to the baptismal font, the funeral rites for our dear ones, school graduations, First Holy Communion, Confirmations, a First Mass or two, years and years of Christmas pageants, and the hundreds of thousands of Masses that have been offered.

“More than anything, Saint Aloysius Parish has been a place where generations have celebrated the love of Christ that is made present in a community.... One-hundred and twenty-five years after the Vatican approved our desire to name the parish after Aloysius Gonzaga, the young Jesuit seminarian who gave his life in service of the poor and the sick, we pray that we will imitate him in his desire to serve the Lord by serving one another. And then, we pray that one day we will meet all of the Saint Aloysius parishioners from 1896 and beyond in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Each year, the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport educates 850 children in grades pre-K to eighth on four campuses in the city of Bridgeport. Eighty-five percent of its families cannot afford the annual tuition of \$5,150 so the school must annually award more than \$2 million in need-based financial assistance. One-hundred percent of CAB students go on to graduate from high school versus only 70 percent of their Bridgeport Public School counterparts, and 99 percent of CAB alumni attend college or post-secondary school versus

only 25 percent of BPS grads. According to Pohlen, “We achieve better results with fewer resources. Where the state pays over \$14,000 to educate each student to achieve their results, it costs us a little over \$7,000 to produce ours, and we get zero money from the state. That’s why grants like the one from The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education make all the difference to our success.”

Late in 2020, the Inner-City Foundation announced that it would be dissolving after almost 30 years of supporting the needy in Fairfield County.

DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT AUGUST 1—SEPTEMBER 4

AUGUST	YEAR
1	Msgr. Daniel J. Foley 1999
	Msgr. John J. Toomey, P.A. 1992
2	Rev. Patrick V. Lavery 1976
	Msgr. James J. McLaughlin 1985
3	Rev. Francis E. Fenton 1995
4	Msgr. Michael J. Guerin 1981
	Msgr. James F. Leary 1994
5	Msgr. Joseph Kohut 2017
7	Rev. Thomas G. Keeney 1990
9	Msgr. John J. Kennedy, P.A. 1955
	Msgr. Frank C. Dellolio 1983
	Msgr. Richard T. Scully 1988
10	Deacon William Rowe 2013
14	Deacon Gerardo Ramos 2007
15	Msgr. Louis A. DeProfio, P.A. 2018
	Msgr. Edward J. Duffy 1977
16	Rev. Victor E. Piaskowski 1961
18	Rev. Alexander Z. Seregely 1971
20	Rev. Louis Pintye, O.F.M. 2017
21	Rev. John J. Dillon 1959
	Msgr. Thomas P. Guinan 1998
22	Rev. Michael Fay 2009
23	Msgr. Emilio C. Iasiello, P.A. 1969
24	Rev. Nicholas Calabro 2015
25	Rev. Richard Futie 2013
26	Rev. Msgr. Edward Scull 2016
	Lawrence Cardinal Shehan 1984
28	Rev. Vincent E. Finn 1958
	Rev. Edmund C. O’Connell 1973
29	Deacon Ramon Isidro 2006
	Rev. Joseph Linck 2008
SEPTEMBER	YEAR
2	Rev. Msgr. Francis J. Prancus 2000
3	Rev. Msgr. John F. X. Walsh 1967
	Rev. Msgr. Thomas F. Henahan 1998
4	Deacon Matthew Skurat 2013

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Sports

St. Joe's, Notre Dame excel in return to diamond

By **DON HARRISON**

Relying on a veteran power-hitting shortstop and a first-year pitcher, both St. Joseph of Trumbull and Notre Dame-Fairfield approached perfection during the much-anticipated 2021 high school softball season. The COVID-19 pandemic had forced a one-year hiatus.

St. Joe's opened the spring with 16 straight victories en route to an impressive 19-2 record, bowing only to Fairfield Ludlowe, 6-3, in the FCIAAC title game and undefeated Masuk of Monroe, 2-0, in the CIAC Class L state championship game.

Notre Dame posted 20 victories and lost just three times—twice to Masuk by identical 2-1 scores and to Coginchaug Regional of Durham, 5-2, in the Class S state semi-finals. Coginchaug went on to capture the title by routing defending champion Somers, 14-2.

Lancers coach Jeff Bevino seemed pleased with the outcome. “We came into the season with a freshman pitcher (Judy Tarczali), and our only losses were to two state champions,” he pointed out.

Pitching with an upperclassman's poise, Tarczali won 20 games—12 by shutout—and lost thrice, striking out 223 batters in 144 innings and compiling a 1.56

earned run average. She complemented her mound work by batting .450 and was selected to the CHSCA All-State team.

Her St. Joe's counterpart, Lauren Wasikowski, proved just as invaluable. A transfer from Lauralton Hall, Wasikowski assembled a 19-2 won-lost record in her debut with the Cadets, fanned 234 batters in 135 innings and notched a 1.08 ERA. She, too, was a lethal hitter, finishing with a .433 average and four home runs. She was chosen to both the CHSCA and GameTime All-State squads.

It may be difficult to believe, but as a senior, Notre Dame's



MAC STONE-FOLMAR



JUDY TARCZALI



LAUREN WASIKOWSKI



MADDY FITZGERALD

Local Charity Announces \$6 Million in Grant Awards

Inner-City Foundation Awards 43 programs

BRIDGEPORT—The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education will award \$6 million in grants, the charity announced today, providing grants to 43 local Fairfield County programs. The charity announced its plans to dissolve and to distribute its considerable assets earlier this year.

“We wish we could have gone back and given funds to everyone we have supported over the years—about 200 grantees over 30 years,” said Executive Director Karen Barry Schwarz, “but that was not feasible. We looked at those grantees that we regularly supported over the last 10 years or so and chose carefully from a large group of proposals. We're delighted that our donors' funds will be doing good in Fairfield County for many years to come, and in some cases, in perpetuity.”

The Fairfield County programs that will each receive a portion of the \$6 million in funds from The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education in its dissolution include the following:

All Saints Catholic School; Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders; Bridgeport Neighborhoods Together; Bridgeport Rescue Mission; Building One Community; Cardinal Shehan Center; Caroline House; Carver



KOLBE CATHEDRAL High School celebrates receiving a scholarship endowment of \$500,000 from The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education. (l-r) Jane Lafond, rising Kolbe Cathedral High School senior; Dick Matteis, Board Member, The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education; Camille Figliuzzi, Kolbe Cathedral Principal; Pam Pagnani, Board Member, The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education; Eudell Mason, rising Kolbe Cathedral High School senior.

Foundation of Norwalk; Catholic Academy of Bridgeport; Catholic Academy of Stamford; Catholic Charities of Fairfield County Immigration Services; Catholic Charities of Fairfield County Morning Glory Kitchen; Center for Family Justice; Circle of Care for Families of Children with Cancer; Domestic Violence Crisis Center; Domus Foundation; Emerge; Family ReEntry; Foundations in Education; Future 5; HomeFront; Homes with Hope; Inspirica; Junior Achievement of Greater Fairfield County; Kids in Crisis; Kolbe Cathedral High School; Malta House; Mercy Learning Center; New Covenant Center; Open Door Shelter; Pacific House; Person-to-

Person; Sacred Heart University; Shelter of the Cross/Renewal House; Shepherds; St. Catherine Center for Special Needs; St. Joseph Parenting Center; Stamford Public Education Foundation; Sterling House Community Center; Thomas Merton Center; Tiny Miracles Foundation; Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers; Women's Center of Greater Danbury.

For almost three decades, The Inner-City Foundation, with your help, has helped to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and educate those living in poverty in Fairfield County, granting \$38 million to 200 local programs. ■

MacQuarrie “Mac” Stone-Folmar surpassed her remarkable sophomore season accomplishments. The Lancers' All-State shortstop and co-captain tied her own state record by walloping 19 home runs, drove in 54 runs and increased her batting average to an unfathomable .728. Incredibly, she averaged one homer every 4.3 at bats, and her slugging average was in the stratosphere (1.691).

“She's a high honors student, a great leader and a friend to all,” Bevino said of Stone-Folmar, who will continue her softball career at Barry University in Florida. “In the field, she makes plays that others just don't get to. She leads by example, with her work ethic, and she leads with her ability.”

In just two high school seasons encompassing 50 games, Stone-Folmar accumulated 38 homers and 111 RBIs, and her batting average was a surreal .618.

Meanwhile, Madison “Maddy” Fitzgerald completed her three-year career as St. Joe's shortstop with another outstanding season.

The Cadets' co-captain surpassed the school's single-season home run record with 12, batted .468 and drove in 35 runs. She was selected to the All-State teams for the second time.

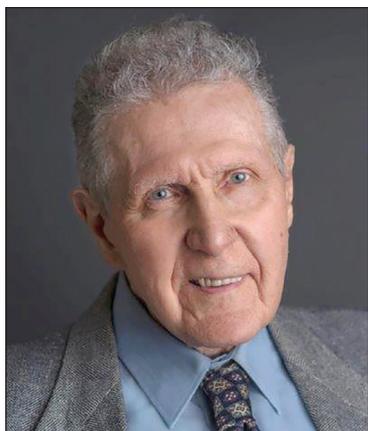
“Maddy is an incredible student of the game,” said St. Joe's coach Jeff Babineau. “We'd lost a season to COVID-19, so as a co-captain she had more kids—freshmen and sophomores—who'd never played a game for us to mentor. It was a challenging year.”

Babineau also noted that, as a freshman, Fitzgerald was an integral part of the Cadets' 2018 Class M state championship team, batting .449.

Fitzgerald, who was also selected to the Coaches' 2021 All-State Academic team, plans to continue playing softball at Bryant University in Rhode Island.

St. Joe's was fortunate to have a third CHSCA All-Stater on its roster this spring, too, in senior co-captain and outfielder Brittany Mairano. Her .479 batting average topped the Cadets. ■

Column: Thomas Hicks



The Achilles Heel

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

“When I found your words, I devoured them; they became my joy and the happiness of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16)

Catholics as a whole have a general ignorance of the Bible.

They have little more than a nodding acquaintance with most of the Bible. It is the Achilles heel of Catholicism; it is the Achilles heel of evangelization.

For Catholics, the Scriptures were a heritage and treasure that was left in the shadows after the

struggles that divided the Church during the Reformation. Reading the Scriptures was officially discouraged in the post Tridentine era (Tridentine = the Council of Trent), mainly owing to the emphasis given to Scripture by the Reformers – Sola Scriptura. In 1692, a religious author named Pasquier Quesnel published a book in which he asserted that “the reading of Sacred Scripture is for everyone.” That comment was condemned as an error by Pope Clement XI (Constitution *Unigenitus Deo Filius*). The Church was worried about Bible Texts being used by “heretics.” Most Catholics simply stopped reading the Bible. On the other hand, Martin Luther told his followers to “think of the Scriptures as the richest of mines which can never be sufficiently explored.”

From the point of view of Protestants, one of the great achievements of the 16th century Reformation was that it put the Bible back into the hands of God’s people. The Bible came to be considered a Protestant book. Among Catholics, the Catechism came to be substituted for the Bible. Catholics were actually discouraged from reading the Bible.

Vatican II called for a return to the Scriptures. It called for Scripture to play a central role in Catholic spirituality, indeed, to be the primary source of Catholic spirituality. It stated that Bible study leads to a deeper and more mature spirituality. The Council spoke of the Scriptures as “the food of the soul,” and called upon Catholic peoples to become “gluttons” for Scripture.”

(*Dei Verbum* Constitution on Divine Revelation).

I love so much of the language in the Bible, its literary power. The American author,

Thomas Wolfe, author of novels such as *You Can’t Go Home Again*, and *Of Time and the River*, wrote this about the Book of Ecclesiastes: “For all that I have ever seen or learned that book (Ecclesiastes) seems to me the noblest, the wisest, and most powerful expression of man’s life upon this earth, also earth’s highest flowering of poetry, eloquence, and truth. I am not given to dogmatic judgments in the matter of literary creation, but if I had to make one, I could only say that Ecclesiastes is the greatest single piece of writing I have ever known. The wisdom in it the most

lasting and profound.”

It can be pointed out that the Bible writers use few adjectives and fewer adverbs. They may have attended a course in creative writing.

One can come up with a provocative list of questions from the Bible:

Mt.16:26: “What does a man profit if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul?”

Gen.4:9: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Jn.3:4: “How can a man be born again when he is old?”

Jn.18:38: “What is truth?”

Eccl.1:3: “What does a man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?”

Lk.10:29: “Who is my neighbor?”

Lk.10:25: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

A college student wrote this: “My college roommate, Nadine, was a Pentecostal. She studied her Bible for an hour faithfully every night after classes and before tackling her other assignments. I marveled at her fidelity to a Book I, a Catholic with 12 years of parochial school behind me, has never opened.”

The Word of God is often self-explanatory. However, parts of Scripture require interpretation. There’s often some necessary spade-work. Biblical scholarship helps with a mature and profound encounter with the Bible. Pope Benedict XVI stated that he wanted us to do more than read the Scriptures. He wanted us to study them, to wrestle with them. We may commit ourselves to sustained study of a particular book, indeed, spend months with a particular book. There’s the proverb “he who desires to eat the kernel must break the shell.” These days we can study with the resources of modern scholarship which enriches and clarifies. It calls for taking some time and discipline.

There are some laborious and boring Biblical books one might rightly skip e.g., Leviticus, Numbers, Chronicles, Kings.

We Catholics are beginning to again become, in some small ways, a Biblical people. A poor Bible Study can be worse than none at all. It is sadly true that most Catholics still have scarcely more than a passing acquaintance with the Bible. One can be surprised to learn that well-educated people are not generally acquainted with even the most famous Bible stories.

A Biblical scholar, Daniel Harrington, wrote: “I find God largely in and through the Bible. It is for me the most important way to know, love, and serve God.” Many of my own happiest personal experiences have taken place in the academic study of the Bible. The Bible never grows wearisome or stale for me. Like Harrington, I find God largely in and through the Bible.

We cannot conduct evangelization well without studying the Bible. There’s a saying by St. Jerome: “A person who is well grounded in Scripture is a bulwark of the church.”

St. Augustine insisted that sanctity involved “soaking yourself in Scripture.”

Thus, many take the view that the church needs a massive Bible education program, and Bible study should be at the center of what we do in our parishes.

(*Mr. Hicks conducts two Zoom Bible Studies. One meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 10 am-Noon. The other meets on the second Thursday of the month from 7-8:30 pm. For information email your name to Thicks@snet.net. The group doesn’t meet during July and August. You will hear from us the first week of September. We are presently studying “The Book of Job.”*)

ST. PAUL FROM PAGE 6

with the Church at the Easter Vigil.

“I am drawn to evangelizing, and there is nothing I love more than to share the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith with adults and help them come to know and love Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist,” she says. “At St. Paul, this takes the form of helping with the RCIA program. When Father Les came to our parish in the fall of 2015, he asked me to be the director of RCIA.”

Hope says, “Being part of the parish has affected my spiritual life in many ways over these last twenty years. Initially, the parish was a place where we would go to worship as a family on Sundays and where my children would receive their sacraments. Over time, as our six children grew and matured, I was able to go from just participating in Sunday Mass to being able to attend daily Mass, and to finally being able share the faith with others through RCIA.”

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Tribunal: Code of Canon Law

Interview with Father Mollenhauer, Judicial Vicar

Editor's Note: In this interview Father Art Mollenhauer, Judicial Vicar and Director of the Diocesan Tribunal, discussed important changes to the Code of Canon Law regarding grave offenses. In particular, he discusses the newly revised Book VI dealing offenses (crimes) and punishments in the Church. It will be promulgated in December of this year.

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

Brian Wallace: Father, I understand that there have been some recent changes to the Code of Canon Law.

Father Mollenhauer: Yes, Brian. In June, the Holy Father mandated the publication of the newly revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law. The Code is made up of seven books. Book VI deals with offenses (crimes) and corresponding punishments in the Catholic Church. For the past twelve years, an appointed committee has been reviewing and updating this book. There has been a general reordering of the canons in this book as well as an update of many of the determined offenses and punishment for those offenses. This newly promulgated book will become law on December 8, 2021.

Brian Wallace: What does this mean practically for the Church?

Father Mollenhauer: What this means for the Church is that what was previously in the Code is now superseded by the provisions of the new canons. Therefore, the new provisions will be the governing law for the whole Church regarding the defined offenses in the new Book VI.

Brian Wallace: Can you briefly explain some of the important changes that Book VI has undergone?

Father Mollenhauer: Sure. The first thing I would highlight is that the new Book VI defines the mission of the Church in safeguarding and promoting the good of the community. The Church does this through its pastoral



FATHER ART MOLLENHAUER

care with Christian Charity, its example of living, its advice and exhortation and -if need be- by the imposition of punishments. The imposition of punishments is done so in so far as they are really necessary for the better maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline and it has in mind the restoration of justice, the reform of the offender and the repair of any scandal. The bishops of the Church, as successors of the Apostles, have a special mission to foster communion and uphold justice in the communities entrusted to them by the Holy Father.

The second thing to keep in mind is that the new Book VI describes the nature of the different types of penalties and punishments that exist in the Church. Book VI also explains how these penalties and punishments are applied to the guilty.

Thirdly, Book VI organizes succinctly the serious offenses in the Church according to some important categories. Those categories are: (1) offenses against the faith and unity of the Church, (2) offenses against Church authorities and in the exercise of duties, (3) offenses against the sacraments, (4) offenses against reputation and the offense of falsehood, (5) offenses against special obligations; and, finally, (6) offenses against human life, dignity and liberty.

Finally, one of the novelties of the new Book VI is that—in some cases—where the application of penalties and punishments were left to the discretion of the disciplining authority, they now become compulsory. A number of serious offenses must be punished by law.

Brian Wallace: That's quite exhaustive. Can you tell us who this affects?

Father Mollenhauer: Well, there is another twist to the new Book VI. Whereas some offenses were only punishable if they were committed by clerics, they are now punishable also when committed by non-clerics. This means that laypersons are also subject to punishment when they commit certain grave offenses detailed in Book VI from the six categories that I mentioned previously.

Brian Wallace: What are some of the differences from the old Book VI?

Father Mollenhauer: One of the major updates is in the area of offenses against Church authorities and in the exercise of duties. As an example, some dioceses, parishes or Church communities have been adversely affected by persons in authority who have been accused of economic malfeasance. The new provisions of the Code determine that those (laypersons as well as clerics) guilty of stealing ecclesiastical goods or prevents proceeds from being received are to be punished. Or persons who unlawfully sell ecclesiastical goods are to be punished.

Another example would be that a person who exercises an office in the name of the Church who requests an offering beyond what is lawfully established, or additional sums, or something for his or her own benefit is to be punished.

A final example would be that someone who abuses ecclesiastical power, or the power of an office or the power of a function (official assigned responsibility) is to be punished according to the gravity of their act. This also applies to someone's culpable negligence.

There are other updates as well. As I mentioned previously, there are many grave offenses that will demand closer attention on behalf of the bishops; they will be required to investigate credible accusations that surface regarding these grave offenses and punish them if a person is found guilty of

infraction of the law.

Brian Wallace: Is there anything else that you think is important to call our attention to?

Father Mollenhauer: I think most canonists agree that the changes and additions to Book VI are something that the Church has needed for some time now and they have been warmly welcomed. They come at a moment of renewal. The Church learns from its errors and mistakes and is also in a

process of conversion and purification. The newly revised Book VI is a step in this renewal.

Of course, if anyone is interested in knowing more about this topic, the Vatican website has the recent news. There, one can find the Vatican press conference and the new Book VI. There is also a link to this news on the Tribunal of Bridgeport webpage: www.dob-tribunal.com.

(Father Mollenhauer is the judicial vicar for the diocese since February 2019.)

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Nuestra Voz

San Pedro se prepara para recibir el voto latino

POR MARICARMEN GODOY

DANBURY—Desde 1974 la parroquia de Saint Peter (San Pedro) ubicada en el pleno centro de la ciudad, no ha cambiado sus estatutos ni su Constitución, por lo que en el Consejo Parroquial no podían ejercer el voto las minorías étnicas representadas por la comunidad hispana ni tampoco Brasil; aunque si participar con sus opiniones. Razón por la que por meses se vienen realizando la redacción de la enmienda a la ley que será sumitada a la parroquia en octubre a su consideración y en abril del 2022 entrar en vigencia.

El Padre Greg Mecca, párroco de la iglesia de San Pedro desde hace 13 años, en una entrevista especial contó que le

preocupaba la ausencia del voto hispano y brasileño en el Consejo Parroquial, la máxima autoridad de la iglesia, porque son ellos quienes toman las decisiones

porque estas comunidades se han multiplicado significativamente y obviamente estas decisiones les afecta directamente.

El padre Greg Mecca aseveró



de cada paso tanto eclesiástico como administrativo y sobretodo

que el trabajo de preparar la revisión de los estatutos (by



laws) inició en marzo de este año y que era necesario revisar la Constitución de la Diócesis para poder realizar la enmienda correspondiente para que dos de los parroquianos de las minorías no solo se sienten en la silla del Consejo, sino que voten.

“No es potestad de la Diócesis el voto hispano. La parroquia tiene autonomía y por eso decidimos empezar este proceso”, dijo al cuestionarlo si es que era necesario la presencia del P. Arthur Crosby Mollenhauer, encargado de los asuntos legales eclesiásticos de la Diócesis de Bridgeport, a la que pertenece la iglesia de San Pedro.

En las próximas semanas la parroquia entrará en la revisión de la última redacción de los estatutos, luego, éstos serán traducidos al inglés y portugués para ser entregados a todos los fieles para que ellos realicen las revisiones y cambios pertinentes, el tiempo prudente de las revisiones durará el mes de octubre e inicios de noviembre.

En febrero del 2022 se procederá a convocar a elecciones para el Consejo Parroquial y la comunidad hispana deberá elegir a varios líderes para las elecciones primarias, pero, previamente los candidatos entregarán una biografía y una fotografía para que los parroquianos los conozcan.

Con el candidato electo, el Consejo tomará posesión e iniciará el trabajo en pleno. Plan que se tiene previsto para entrado el mes de marzo.

Acorde con el registro parroquial, existen inscritos más de 900 familias en la parroquia de San Pedro, de ellas, 400 son de origen hispano y se estima que asisten regularmente entre mil a 1200 personas de origen hispano a la iglesia. De ese número hay 400 niños inscritos en el catecismo que iniciará en septiembre de este año y de ellos, 200 son niños hispanos.

“Con esos datos, el futuro real-

mente está en nuestra comunidad hispana”, repuso Geovanny Chalco, miembro al Consejo en representación de la comunidad hispana, quien cree que por ser nuestra “comunidad invitada”, no se ha podido cristalizar el voto hispano años atrás.

A esto, el P. Greg respondió que la “comunidad hispana no es invitada, que sus miembros están inscritos y son activos dentro de la parroquia y que por tanto nunca han sido considerados invitados. Lo que ha sucedido es que había que cambiar la ley y eso estamos haciendo”, dijo.

En cuanto a la celebración de los bautizos, el P. Greg reconoció que la “comunidad hispana no es invitada, que sus miembros están inscritos y son activos dentro de la parroquia y que por tanto nunca han sido considerados invitados. Lo que ha sucedido es que había que cambiar la ley y eso estamos haciendo”, dijo. En cuanto a la celebración de los bautizos, el P. Greg reconoció que hay muchas familias que cambian la fecha del sacramento debido a que esperan por sus familiares que vienen a la celebración de otros países. “Muchos eligen de padrinos a familiares que residen en otras partes y por asuntos de visa o pasaporte hay cambios constantes de las fechas, pero es mi deber apoyarlos, así es que cambiamos la fecha. Eso significa que los padres de los niños bautizados son inmigrantes y que los niños son de primera generación”, sostuvo. Así lo afirmó también Dago Cardona, maestro de la clase de Bautismo, quien es nativo de Guatemala y recibió el entrenamiento para poder dictar esta clase en la iglesia Nuestra Señora de Montserrat en Stamford.

La mayor parte de miembros de la parroquia son inmigrantes venidos de Ecuador, luego Brasil, seguidos por México, República Dominicana, Colombia, Guatemala y Perú.

El reto de la iglesia de San Pedro este año es contar con un nuevo sacerdote a tiempo completo debido a que el P. Bernardo Rodríguez, que atendía a la comunidad hispana murió a consecuencia del COVID 19.

Si usted vive en Danbury y quiere ser parte de la parroquia San Pedro puede llamar al (203) 743-1048.



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Father Corey Piccinino, *concelebrant*

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Information and prayers regarding the St. Robert Bellarmine Apostolate will be available at the Mass @SaintForDownSyndrome

Vocations

New director of Campus Ministry

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano recently announced that Father Christopher Ford has been named director of Campus Ministry for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The focus of this position is to create a comprehensive plan to provide effective, ongoing opportunities for Catholic formation for all college-age students who are enrolled in all the secular universities and colleges located throughout our diocese.

Father Ford has a background working in student affairs, having spent two years as a residence hall director at Westminster College in New Wilmington, Penn., immediately before he entered seminary.

Father Ford will develop and implement a vision of comprehensive campus ministry that forms

the faith community, appropriates the faith, forms Christian conscience, facilitates personal development, develops Catholic student leadership, and promotes vocations. By establishing relationships with key stakeholders, fostering the presence of the Church in the campus environment, and increasing collaboration between the college communities and local parishes, this pastoral vision will ensure that the faith-based needs of all Catholic students pursuing post-secondary education within the Diocese of Bridgeport are met.

Father Ford will remain in his position of coordinator of the Vocations Team, in addition to this new set of responsibilities.

“I wish to express my sincere thanks to Father Ford for his willingness to assume this new evangelical outreach,” said the bishop.

“I am incredibly excited to return to one of my first passions, working with college students, to begin this new ministry in our diocese,” said Father Ford. “We have had great opportunities to support our Catholic students at WestConn, and it couldn’t be more important to find ways to do the same at all of the colleges in the diocese. It will be

an exciting challenge to work with different parishes and the university communities to build this ministry, but one that I really feel immensely worth it. We have such a great opportunity before us to help more and more young people encounter Jesus Christ, so they can really come to know that He is the one who will fulfill the deepest desires of their hearts and



FATHER CHRIS FORD

I am both humbled and grateful to Bishop Caggiano for developing this vision and inviting me to be a part of it.”

Special Prayer Service set for victims of abuse

BROOKFIELD—A special prayer service for family members and friends of victims of child sexual abuse by clergy and by others will be held at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Church, 138 Candlewood Lake Rd. in Brookfield on Friday, August 27, 6:30 pm. The prayer service is being coordinated by family members of victims together with a community of survivors and the Office of Safe Environments of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Father Shawn Jordan, Father Larry Carew and Deacon Joseph Cann will lead the prayer service.

The service is open to family members of victims and all those who have been impacted by sexual abuse as a minor by clergy and by others. Our community of family members is called HUGS which stands for Hope Understanding Guidance and Support.

We recognize that many victims have not survived and the family members and friends who loved them are forever impacted. We welcome anyone who has lost a loved one who was sexually abused to join us, you are not alone. Counselors, clergy, family members and survivors are available to meet with you immediately following.

If you can’t make the service, please still feel free to still join us at 7:15 pm for a HUGS support group meeting for family members. Join in our conversation or just be present with us and enjoy some light refreshments around the kitchen table.

(For more information or to learn about the victim assistance program or to report sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult by any person from the Church, please contact Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., Victim Assistance Coordinator at office: 203.416.1406 mobile: 203.650.3265 or email: eneil@diobpt.org; or Michael Tintrup, L.C.S.W., Victim Assistance Counselor 203.241.0987 or email: mtintrup@ccfc-ct.org. The State of CT Child Abuse Care-line is 1.800.842.2288.)

Shehan Center to establish Trish Migliore Award

On September 21st, the Cardinal Shehan Center will hold its 18th Annual Women’s Golf Classic. The event will be held at Racebrook Country Club in Orange on Tuesday, September 21st.

Since it began in 2003, the golf classic has catered to the growing interest among professional and philanthropic women to support causes such as the Shehan Center and also engage together on the golf course. All are welcome to participate as the event also provides a “lunch and learn” division for newcomers to the sport. Supported by corporate sponsorships and generous participants, the event supports the educational and recreational programs that the Shehan Center provides to the inner city youth in Bridgeport.

This year, the event will introduce the Trish Lind Migliore Commitment Award. One of the participants in this event for nearly every year since its inception was Trish Lind Migliore. Trish, a resident of Fairfield and parishioner at St Thomas Aquinas, typically joined her close friends for the classic each year. The day became a tradition for them. “We may not have won the event, but I am pretty sure we had the most fun!” said Anne McCrory.

“Trish was supportive of the mission of the Center and so generous in spirit, she helped make the day a special one for anyone who was lucky enough



(l-r) Trish Migliore, Cathy Porter, Anne McCrory and Alice McCrory.

to play with her.”

Sadly, Trish passed away last year from a sudden illness, less than a year after her retirement. Her family and friends have been devastated by her loss. Trish was a dedicated professional, volunteer, wife, mother, daughter, writer and friend to all. “We all miss her contagious laugh and wise counsel. She was a very special person, totally committed to all that she did. Being with her was a pleasure,” shared Cathy Porter, another close friend and part of the Classic foursome.

For this reason, the Shehan Center Women’s Golf Classic Committee and the Board of Directors have established the Trish Lind Migliore Commitment Award in her honor. Each year, the Committee and Board of the Shehan Center will nominate an individual that has demonstrated outstanding and continued commitment to the mission of the Cardinal Shehan Center. In its first year, on September 21st, at the Golf Classic, the Shehan

Center will honor Trish by presenting her with the Commitment Award post-humously.

She had a long career as a corporate attorney in New York City at Vedder, Price, Kaufman & Kammholz, P.C. and was General Counsel of Nine West Holdings and Jones Apparel Group. Trish also served as a member of the Diocesan Finance Council for over three years. “Trish was a valued volunteer on our Finance Council and we were all so pained by her untimely death. However, honoring her legacy with this award rooted in Commitment is a wonderful way to celebrate her legacy” said Bishop Caggiano.

Lorraine Gibbons, the Executive Director of the Cardinal Shehan Center, echoed the praise of Trish and her commitment. “Trish was a long time supporter of our work and mission. We are pleased to not only recognize her, but also create a foundation on which we can celebrate and recognize others who have been so dedicated to our work and mission.”

Located in the heart of Bridgeport, the Shehan Center serves the educational, recreational, cultural, and social needs of moderate and low-income children and families.

(Details on participating in, attending or sponsoring the Golf Classic or the Awards dinner on September 21st can be found at www.shehan.center.org or by calling 203.336.4468.)



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Catholic Cemeteries Guide



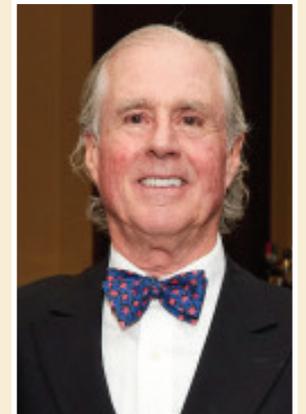
“When a person comes into one of our cemeteries, it should be an inviting, welcoming, prayerful, and respectful place because it is sacred ground... The cemeteries are part of a pastoral mission of the Church and a pastoral outreach to the bereaved. It is important that we re-imagine the whole ministry of bereavement while also preserving the traditional beauty, blessing and sacredness of a Catholic funeral.”

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano

“Catholic cemeteries are about remembrance and honoring the wishes of the Church and of family members. We are committed to providing cemetery property for the sacred religious function of burial. We are also committed to preserving these resting places as beautiful and reflective spaces that celebrate life and the gift of our faith.”

Dean Gestal

Director of Cemeteries



We are pleased to provide this Catholic Cemeteries resource guide to our readers. You will find useful information on the location of Catholic Cemeteries throughout Fairfield County, updates on Catholic Funeral Norms and burial options, profiles of staff and directors, and key contact information to help you find answers to your questions and make your own plans. We encourage you to review this information and consider the importance of pre-need planning, which ensures a Catholic burial and provides peace of mind for you and your family. If you have any questions, please call one of the family advisors listed in this guide.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

27

Tradition and a Vision for the Future

28

Family Advisors Play a Key Role

30

Catholic Cemetery Leadership

32

Leaving a Legacy Through Planned Giving

34-35

Saint Catherine of Siena Mausoleum

38-39

Meet the Team!

40-41

Historic Diocesan Cemeteries

42

Visitor Honors her Parents Memory

44-48

Funeral Home Guide

50

Planning a Catholic Funeral

51

Important Questions and Useful Information

52

Cemetery Locations, Maps, Contacts

Catholic Cemeteries

Cemeteries transition to new governance model

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has issued a decree formally creating a new management and governance structure for diocesan cemeteries.

Under the decree issued on March 25, the cemeteries will transition to a limited liability company with an independent board of directors within the Corporation of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The diocese maintains 14 cemeteries in Fairfield County. The largest and most active include St. Michael in Bridgeport, St. Mary-Putnam in Greenwich, St. John in Darien, St. John-St. Mary in Norwalk, Assumption Greens Farms in Westport, Gate of Heaven in Trumbull, Resurrection in Newtown, Queen of Peace in Stamford and St. Peter in Danbury.

Up until this point the cemeteries have been managed as an operating unit under the Corporation of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The new model is consistent with the governance structure of diocesan schools, Catholic Charities, foundations and other operations.

“As the business of the cemeteries has grown and become more complex, the Diocesan Finance Council has been considering the way to best manage the finances and the management of the diocesan cemeteries in a more responsible and transparent way in order to conform to the best administrative practices,” Bishop Caggiano said.

The bishop said he is grateful to the Diocesan Finance Council, Catholic Cemeteries management and the diocesan finance office for their efforts to prepare for and structure the transition.



“After much deliberation, the Diocesan Finance Council has recommended to me that the best way to structure the cemeteries would be the creation of a limited liability company within the

Corporation of the Diocese of Bridgeport,” the bishop said.

The new structure will improve the stewardship of the cemeteries, bring in additional resources and further engage the talents of the laity who as board members will bring considerable business and management experience to decisions about planning for the future, he said.

In accordance with Canon Law, the bishop will be the administrator of this juridic person. Under civil law, governed by Connecticut Statute Section 34, the bishop will be the appointed manager of the limited liability company and as manager, he will appoint a board of directors who will manage and oversee the operations of the cemeteries.

The membership of the board of directors will be announced as the diocese finalizes the transition to the new governance model.

The Finance Council agreed to the proposed creation of this juridic person unanimously at a special meeting on March 12, 2021, and the diocesan College of Consultors also gave its approval on March 17, 2021.

Dean Gestal, director of Catholic Cemeteries, said that the new management structure represents a new era that will strengthen the mission and ministry of Catholic cemeteries and hopefully will lead to expanded beautification projects and improvements, a higher level of services including newly hired counselors to guide people through the process, and more burial options for families.

For Gestal, who retired after a successful finance career, the cemeteries are a ministry that supports “the sacred religious function of Catholic burial, while reaching out to families by building a closer relationship with our parishes.”

He said that at a time of great change in society, including burial practices, Catholic cemeteries can play an even more important role in memorializing loved ones, bringing families together and reaffirming the importance of Christian burial.

Catholic cemeteries offer many options and services including estate lots to accommodate current and future generations of the same family, special areas on which to construct family mausoleums, entombment in community mausoleums and memorial design services. For those thinking of cremation, cremation graves and columbarium niches are available to accommodate the reverent disposition that the Church desires.

Gestal encourages people to consider “pre-need” planning for themselves and their loved ones, so that decisions do not have to be made when they are dealing with loss and emotional stress.

Pre-planning also gives families more time to visit and select a cemetery, meet with cemetery representatives and review the many burial options available to them.

(For further information about the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport, visit the website: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/cemeteries/home or by phone at: 203.742.1450, option 5.) ■

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Catholic Cemeteries

Tradition and a vision for the future

By **JOE PISANI**

TRUMBULL—Even though Joe McCurdy is in charge of the upkeep and appearance of Catholic cemeteries at 14 locations throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport, one thing he never forgets is that what he and his colleagues do is a ministry.

Under his direction are nine family advisors responsible for bereavement counseling and helping the families of those who have died make some of life's most important decisions for their departed loved ones.

"You really have to be on your toes, and you can never forget that this is a ministry, and you always have to do the right thing to help out families and offer people the best that you can," says McCurdy, who is director of Sales and Marketing.

It is a sentiment echoed by

Dean Gestal, director of Catholic Cemeteries, who says, "At the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport, we are committed to providing cemetery property for the sacred religious function of burial. We are also committed to preserving these resting places as a symbol of our Catholic belief."

At those locations, McCurdy says there has been an ambitious program of rejuvenation and capital improvements in recent years, which included the complete renovation of the cemetery offices and 11 mausoleums, new internal communications technology, the development of a special cemetery software program and data warehouse, and outreach to parishes to educate parishioners about the burial/cemetery options and the importance of "pre-need" planning.

McCurdy, who has worked with Catholic cemeteries for almost four years, said that

Gestal's vision has energized the organization. As a result, there has been a series of new operational procedures that have improved the locations along with hiring of additional family advisers who are available to counsel families at six cemetery offices.

Landscaping was outsourced to a Fortune 500 company, and the cemeteries are cut every week. There are dozens of recently completed projects, including the cleanup and beautification of maintenance areas, replacement of water lines to improve drainage, the installation of several miles of ornamental decorative fence and the acquisition of nine marble religious statues.

One goal is to make the cemeteries a friendly environment that is welcoming to the community, joggers, dog walkers, nature lovers and history enthusiasts. For example, St. Mary/

Putnam Cemetery in Greenwich has applied for designation as an arboretum because of the more than 100 species of trees that can be found there, which have been tagged and identified with plaques that provide their Latin names. Walking tours are also being scheduled.

There is a regular tree maintenance program in place. If a tree is dead and must be removed, a chainsaw artist will come in and create a 10-foot high carving of a woodland creature, such as an eagle.

Because of the growing popularity of cremation, Catholic Cemeteries has also created cremation gardens at some locations. They are semicircle half-moon designs that have rock walls where a plaque with the deceased's name appears above the urn that is placed in an in-ground vault.

More columbaria are being



JOE MCCURDY

built with state-of-the-art decorative designs, McCurdy said. In the new St. Catherine Mausoleum at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull, for example, there will be two rooms with glass-front niches that allow the family to include meaningful mementoes of the deceased, whether they be a pair of knitting needles, reading glasses or rosary beads, so a loved one can be memorialized in a very personal way.

"We've been getting a very good response to some of the innovative things that we have been doing," McCurdy says. "We want to provide charitable, religious cemeteries for the entire faith community." ■

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Playing a Key Role

Cemeteries announces new team of family advisors

BRIDGEPORT—Catholic Cemeteries has a staff of nine Family Advisors assigned to serve at six cemetery office locations throughout Fairfield County.

“The staff is prepared to work with grieving families and to reach out to others interested in advance, pre-need planning,” said Dean Gestal, Director of Catholic Cemeteries. “They are people of great faith and compassion who are eager to serve and to offer guidance.”

Gestal said the team will advise and assist families with immediate (at-need) decisions and future (pre-need) planning. They work in unison with funeral homes to ensure a smooth and respectful interment/entombment process for families. Advisers are also onboard to help families with the memorialization of their loved ones through upright/flush monuments.

“They are a compassionate physical presence on the cemetery grounds to field questions from families, give tours and handle the myriad of daily issues,” said Gestal.

Kevin Nizolek, a senior adviser, represents St. Mary/Putnam Cemetery in Greenwich with more than 30 years of experience directing all aspects of



KEVIN NIZOLEK

cemetery and funeral services. This level of leadership and expertise has allowed him to forge and nurture strong industry relationships, including social and community alliances. Kevin takes great pride in helping families create their personal family legacy, establishing a place of remembrance for future generations. He has a natural gift of cultivating a comfortable environment for grieving families and professionally guide them through the burial, entombment and memorialization processes.

Melanie Szlucha serves in the Greenwich office. Her professional career has encompassed everything from season tickets director

for the Atlanta Symphony to owning a resume writing and job interview coaching business. As a lay Dominican, she has a fervent desire to serve in the Catholic tradition. With an MBA in marketing, she looks forward to educating families about the values and benefits of burial in one of



MELANIE SZLUCHA

the beautiful diocesan cemeteries.

Rosemary Harrigan, a senior adviser, represents the cemeteries in Darien, Stamford, Norwalk and Westport. Rosemary graduated from Sacred Heart University with a bachelor's degree in business management and worked at her family's commercial printing company for many years. She transitioned into her current role several years ago after working in the parish office of St. Joseph



ROSEMARY HARRIGAN

Church. Rosemary finds being an adviser extremely rewarding and fulfilling, knowing that she has helped a grieving family or assisted in establishing a legacy for a family.

Patti Barrientos, a senior adviser, represents St. John/St. Mary Cemeteries in Norwalk, St. John in Darien and Assumption Green Farms in Westport. She was born in Colombia and raised in Stamford and later moved



PATTI BARRIENTOS

to Norwalk, where she and her family have been residents for more than 16 years. Patti and her husband, William, have two daughters, Jessica 18 and Brianna 16. Patti served in the Army and speaks fluent Spanish. She and her family are parishioners at St. Mary of Stamford Parish, where she and her husband are lectors and their daughters are altar servers.

Johannes Garcia serves in the office at St. Peter Cemetery in Danbury. For more than 15 years, Johannes has helped families obtain their Right of Interment in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey Catholic Cemeteries. His background



JOHANNES GARCIA

skills as a chemical engineer and financial professional allowed him to help individual investors and businesses create financial deals. During this time, Johannes felt God calling him in a different direction to serve him in ministry. The pandemic made him realize that everyone's journey on Earth is unique and God asks us to use our talents wisely.

Ed Tamimi, a senior adviser, represents Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull and Resurrection Cemetery in Newtown. He has more than 20 years of sales and customer ser-

vice experience, 13 of them trading in financial markets, funding start-up companies and a local family farm. Caring for his own beloved grandparents in their final days gave him an insight into the importance of counseling and planning. As a way of giving back, he answered a job posting for a cemetery counselor to help people who were going through



ED TAMIMI

similar circumstances. Ed and his family are parishioners of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton.

Catherine Fraleigh is an adviser at St. Michael Cemetery in Stratford. A recent graduate of Lincoln College of New England with a degree in Funeral Service Sciences, she has served in various funeral homes across the state and has counseled families in the difficult decision-making for “at need” cemetery arrangements. During her downtime, she enjoys creating artwork, which she applies to the



CATHERINE FRALEIGH

Cemeteries' monuments and is an avid genealogist. She enjoys working with the people in the Stratford community and educating them in the importance of pre-need funeral planning.

Kathleen Kwiatkowski is an administrative assistant at

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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CEMETERIES ANNOUNCES FROM PAGE 28

St. John Cemetery office in Darien. She brings a great deal of professional experience to her role, having worked at Omega Engineering for more than 30



KATHLEEN KWIATKOWSKI

years in management for customer service, media advertising and global corporate relations. Kathleen is a legacy member of The Shore and Country Club in Norwalk. She and her husband,

Ed, are the parents of two adult children and parishioners of St. Aloysius Parish.

Kara Clegg serves as an administrative assistant for Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull and St. Michael Cemetery in Stratford. A native of Boston, Kara maintains a weekly burial



KARA CLEGG

schedule for all cemeteries, keeps all offices supplied, maintains



JOE NEMCHEK

orders for power washing of monuments, creates and maintains promotional materials and just about anything else that crosses her desk. Kara was the director of religious education at St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, where she is a parishioner before accepting this position. Kara, a mother of two, was a pastry chef and still loves to cook and bake.

Joe Nemchek has more than 20 years of trade show sales and management experience. He has managed and attended events covering many different industries including pharmaceutical manufacturing & packaging, industrial security, law enforcement and

military. Joe is a parishioner at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull and looks forward to presenting the St. Catherine of Siena Mausoleum at Gate of Heaven to his fellow parishioners. "I truly believe that God has a plan for all of us. People who follow the Lord and pray regularly become better and better at reading his signs," he says. "The opportunity to work for the Diocese of Bridgeport was a case of divine intervention in my life. I lost my convention management position due to the pandemic, and the Catholic Cemeteries ministry opportunity presented itself at the right time soon after. There is a certain indescribable satisfaction you feel when you help reunite someone with a deceased loved one or help provide closure for a family. Any time you spend helping a family memorialize their loved one at the cemetery is appreciated more than any other service you could possibly provide them."

Bob Ross was an account



BOB ROSS

manager/sales specialist at Hewlett Packard for more than 30 years before joining Catholic Cemeteries as a family adviser. While at Hewlett Packard, Bob managed accounts ranging in size from small/medium businesses to large global accounts.

Bob sees his role at Catholic Cemeteries as a ministry of transition—to help the deceased transition to the next life and to help the living family members transition to life without their loved one. A graduate of Fairfield University with a bachelor's degree in English, Bob and his family are members of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield.



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Catholic Cemeteries Leadership

Answering the Bishop's call to service

By **JOE PISANI**

BRIDGEPORT—Dean Gestal of Greenwich went from a successful Wall Street career and working with start-ups in the dot.com world to an entirely new challenge—directing the Catholic cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport, in a position he took at the request of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.

Today, he sees his work as a ministry—the stewardship of cemeteries with the mission of helping people when they are the most vulnerable as they confront the death of a loved one or make their own end-of-life decisions.

“That one soul you might help save at the end of life is worth the price of admission,” he says. And it’s a mission he shares with the bishop.

“We help people, we educate them about death and the impor-

tance of a Catholic burial, and we provide opportunities to make their decisions easier,” he said.

“The stewardship of the cemeteries, for me, has been a learning experience,” he says. “What was good a year and a half ago may not be good tomorrow, and we continue to make changes as the opportunities present themselves. Our goal is to make the cemeteries truly the best they can be, and I think our responsibility as advisers and counselors is a crucial one. I know we’re headed in the right direction.”

One of the biggest changes has been to make Catholic cemeteries an LLC with its own charter and an independent governing board that works with the Diocese, he said.

Gestal has worked for some of the most successful firms on Wall Street. He built up the bond department for money manage-

ment pioneer Seth Glickenhau before starting his own firm, Belle Haven Investments. After trading bonds for 40 years, he headed to San Francisco to help several startups in the dot-com world and later moved to Salt Lake City to reorganize his friend’s manufacturing company.

Then, three years ago, Bishop Caggiano called him with another challenge: to use his management and business skills to revitalize the cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

It was, as they say, an offer Gestal couldn’t refuse, and today he is the Director of Catholic Cemeteries. To him, it isn’t a job, it’s a ministry—a ministry to help all Catholics recognize the importance of a church burial.

“I am here because of Bishop Caggiano,” Gestal says. “I enjoy him immensely. He has a great

sense of the secular world and the religious world. We met and he said he needed someone to run the cemeteries, and I told him I was willing to help out the Church any way I could.”

In the time Gestal has been on the job, he has brought on new staff, launched a beautification initiative for the cemeteries, begun a program to stress the importance of planning ahead for death, and started construction on a mausoleum at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull, which will have 600 crypts and 600 niches for cremains.

The diocese maintains 14 cemeteries, nine of which are active. The largest, St. Michael’s, has more than 100 acres. The others are St. Mary-Putnam in Greenwich, St. John in Darien, St. John-St. Mary in Norwalk, Assumption Greens Farms in Westport, Gate of Heaven in Trumbull, Resurrection in Newtown, Queen of Peace in Stamford, and St. Peter in Danbury. There are four inactive historical cemeteries—St. Augustine in Bridgeport, St. James in Bridgeport, St. Mary in Norwalk and Old St. Peter in Danbury.

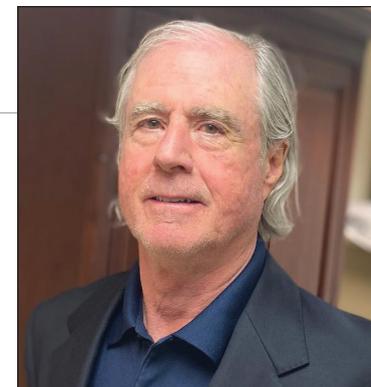
For Gestal, the cemeteries are vital to the 400,000 Catholics in Fairfield County, “bookending” their spiritual lives from baptism to burial, even for those who have fallen away from the faith.

“The Catholic cemeteries are about remembrance and honoring the wishes of the Church and of family members,” he said. “We are committed to providing cemetery property for the sacred religious function of burial. We are also committed to preserving these resting places as a symbol of our Catholic belief.”

Cemeteries are sacred and peaceful places, he says, where we honor the loved ones in our lives who have left us. A Catholic cemetery is a place where we can share memories and show our respect in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Church.

Fundamental to this, is planning.

“None of us wants to focus on death because it’s not a comfortable topic,” Gestal says. “All of my friends are in the same boat as I am. Have we planned for our burials and resting places? Most of us haven’t even though it’s a simple thing to do. Otherwise, it



DEAN GESTAL

becomes a burden we put on our children at a time when they least need it. Our hope is to open people’s minds and crack the door before it becomes a catastrophe or emergency.”

His goal is to bring more people from an “at need” approach, in which families suddenly find themselves responding to a death, to a “pre-need” approach to burial services, which allows them to address the issue ahead of time, avoid anguish and confusion, and be prepared by putting their desires in their last will and testament.

“For us, this is a ministry,” he said. “We have an opportunity to offer these services to all Catholics in Fairfield County. We can help them and answer their questions.”

In recent months, he has added six additional counselors and plans to have two at each active cemetery in the diocese.

“They will be there to meet people when they walk through the door and educate them about what is available and how we can help them make those final decisions,” he said.

Catholic cemeteries offer a range of options. Traditionally, there has been full-body burial in a ground plot or entombed in a mausoleum. Since 1963, cremation has been accepted by the Church, and now about 50 percent of families choose that option. The remains, called “cremains,” are placed in an urn and then laid in a niche, which is located indoors in a mausoleum or outdoors in a structure called a columbarium.

At Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull, a 35-acre site on Daniels Farm Road, the graves have black markers. Cemetery services have installed illuminated glass-front niches for urns at St. Peter’s in Danbury, Gate of Heaven in Trumbull and St. Mary-Putnam in Greenwich. In addition, a growing number of families are choosing to memorialize a loved one by having etchings on the stones that capture the profession or hobbies of the

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 37



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Converting to a Digital Format

A new approach to a traditional need

By **JOE PISANI**

DANBURY—Every day Kenn Devane drives through St. Peter Cemetery to see what’s going on. As CEO and founder of MineTech, a global data analytics firm, he is helping the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Cemeteries convert their operations to a digital format and improve the internal communications system at the six cemetery offices. But for Devane, the work is more than upgrading technology, mining data and developing software.

“On so many occasions I’ve been really taken by the emotional responses of our cemetery staff—they are a special breed,” he says. “I have been in the office doing work with them when someone walks through the door on the worst day of their lives, and they stop what they’re doing

and go take care of that person in a special way. I’ve been very impressed. A complete stranger comes in, sits and cries, and you realize what this is all about and how important it is.”

The family advisors at the cemetery offices love what they do, Devane says. They love helping people at a time when they are in great need.

“They put their own emotions on hold and listen so they can learn about the needs and desires of passed family members and then assist with the arrangements,” Devane said. “We hear a great deal about first responders doing this but nothing about family advisers, who many times must manage the final affairs of those same people.”

What Devane does behind the scenes is foundational to Catholic Cemeteries, which has tradition-

ally been an operation based on paper and files. Now, he is bringing it into the 21st century by upgrading the internal communications technology, creating a new cemetery software program, working on new “pre-need” burial programs and deepening relationships with parishes and funeral homes to help educate the faithful about burial and cemetery options.

Devane has also done work for the diocesan schools, parishes, foundations, charities and the development office to help manage their data needs.

“Dean Gestal, the director of Catholic Cemeteries, has a vision about where he wants to take the cemeteries, and he asked if we could help him bring that plan to life,” Devane said. “We started upgrading the technology, creating the software program

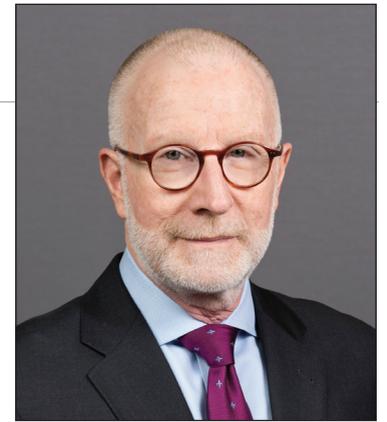
and focusing more on a pre-need approach to funeral planning as opposed to an at-need one (after a loved one passes).”

Gestal, who has a storied career in finance and working with start-ups, said: “Having Kenn aboard has been terrific. He has become an integral part of my team, and his skills really complement what we already have. He has done an incredible job opening the doors here for marketing and outreach.”

With data from the 14 diocesan cemeteries, MineTech is using analytics to help people focus on their pre-need burial needs, which is something all the Catholic faithful must eventually face and manage.

“I like the ability to use my professional skills and apply them to my faith,” Devane said.

The technological overhaul



KENN DEVANE

will benefit the six cemetery offices at St. Mary-Putnam in Greenwich, St. John in Darien, St. John/St. Mary in Norwalk, Gate of Heaven in Trumbull, St. Michael in Stratford and St. Peter in Danbury.

“In 2020, when we started on this project, all the forms were paper,” he said. “Nothing was digital, so we converted them and utilized cloud servers for storage and sharing, as opposed to folders.”

He says pre-need planning for your last days is in many ways

▶ **CONTINUED ON PAGE 36**

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Planned Giving

Catholic values inspire legacy gifts

BRIDGEPORT—Joseph Gallagher, director of Development for the Diocese of Bridgeport, tells the story of a woman who died several months ago and left \$500,000 to further the work of the seminary program of the Diocese of Bridgeport, which she supported throughout her life. It was a greatly appreciated gift that was consistent with her Catholic values and one that she had seriously considered while preparing her will.

Gallagher also tells the story of a Bridgeport woman who passed away, and shortly afterward, he received a call from her son. She was not a wealthy woman, but after her estate was settled, she made sure to leave a gift of \$1,000 to St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Bridgeport, which had been her lifelong church, and \$1,000 to the diocesan food programs for the hungry

and the homeless. For her, too, the gift was consistent with her Catholic values.

“Legacy gifts come in all shapes and sizes,” Gallagher says. “And some of the people who make the biggest legacy gifts are not necessarily the wealthiest people; however, the gifts they leave are consistent with their Catholic values, and it should make all of us ask, ‘What will my legacy be?’”

Among the recipients of these legacy gifts are parishes, diocesan ministries, and the lay-run diocesan foundations for education, faith and charity—Foundations in Education, Foundations in Faith and Foundations in Charity, which advance the Catholic mission throughout Fairfield County.

“We would like people to think that legacy giving applies to everything,” Gallagher says. “For example, \$10,000 can be

incredibly important to the needs of a parish or a Catholic community, and I like to tell pastors that I’m sure they’d be very happy to receive a \$10,000 gift for their youth ministry. It is not just the \$1 million gifts that are impactful.”

The most important first step, he says, is getting the faithful of the diocese to understand the importance of legacy giving and the great benefit it can have promoting the work of the Church in Fairfield County. Some bequests are made to support the broader mission of the Diocese of Bridgeport and the work of the parishes. Others are more specific in their intention, he says, and are directed toward particular programs of Catholic Charities or scholarships for Catholic schools students.

One of the challenges is to ensure that people prepare a will. “More than 60 percent of peo-

ple do not have a will or a proper plan, or if they do, it is very old and not up to date,” Gallagher says. “Our approach has been to give people the right information so they can plan properly. An estate plan will also enable individuals to minimize their tax burden. We always recommend that people consult a tax adviser or financial planner.”

In addition to bequests, another option is to name your preferred organization or parish among the beneficiaries of your 401(k), IRA or annuity. Gallagher notes that the recipient charities will not have to pay taxes on these gifts.

The diocese provides a thorough checklist of considerations to help with estate planning. For more information and to access resources such as the “Will Planning Checklist” and the “Estate Administrator’s Checklist,” visit the Diocese of Bridgeport’s Planned Giving website at www.bridgeportdiocese.plannedgiving.org or contact Gallagher at 203.416.1320 or by email at jgallagher@diobpt.org.

There are many ways to remember the Diocese of Bridgeport or your parish in your estate plans, and you may be surprised to discover how inexpensive and convenient most of them are to accomplish.

Charitable giving does not require great wealth, Gallagher says. What it does require is generosity of spirit—the desire to share what you have for the benefit of others. The ultimate value of your contribution will not be measured in dollars and cents. It will be measured in the difference it makes.

Gallagher cited two examples. One donor has set aside \$208,000 or 3.7 percent of his estate in a trust for Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic school scholarships. Another is leaving 25 percent of the estate to the Diocese of Bridgeport with no restrictions on the gift.

Below are reasons to consider making a planned gift:

Your planned gift can be a “back-up plan.” Naming the Diocese of Bridgeport or your parish as a “contingent beneficiary” in your estate planning means that if some other condition of your plan is not met (such as another beneficiary passing away before

you), the gift goes to the charity.

You can make a gift that costs you nothing. Most gifts through your will, revocable trust, life insurance policy, or retirement account will make a big difference to your parish or the diocese but will not cost you anything while you are alive.

You can choose to benefit charity—or the government. Many planned gifts are offset by savings in federal or state taxes. This is especially true of gifts from an IRA or similar retirement account.

Equally important to legacy giving, is preparing for a proper Catholic burial and reaching out to advisers at Catholic Cemeteries so decisions about funerals and burials can be made in advance.

In September, Gallagher and Dean Gestal, director of Catholic Cemeteries, will begin conducting presentations at parishes throughout the diocese with the pastors, legal estate experts and financial planners to answer questions and provide an overview of what is possible in the legacy giving program.

Gestal cites the importance of “pre-need” planning when it comes to Catholic burials because of the stress and personal anguish that accompany the death of a loved one. Catholic Cemeteries has 11 family advisors in six offices that cover the diocesan cemetery system in 14 locations.

They are responsible for bereavement counseling, sitting down with the families, selling cemetery plots and memorials and many of the other myriad tasks that must be completed when someone dies. Among the tools they use in accomplishing their ministry is a checklist called “83 Decisions in 72 Hours,” which compiles virtually everything that must be done preparing for and following a burial.

The list includes everything from accessing the legal will and military discharge certificates to meeting with the funeral director, planning the wake and reception, choosing music and readings for the Funeral Mass, notifying relatives and friends, selecting flowers and pallbearers and dozens of other decisions most people never think of until they are confronted with a death.

(For more information, visit www.bridgeportdiocese.org/cemeteries) ■



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St. Catherine of Siena Mausoleum

Work progresses at Gate of Heaven Cemetery

By **JOE PISANI**

TRUMBULL—Foundations are in place for the St. Catherine of Siena Mausoleum at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery and construction is expected to be completed by March 2022, according to Paul Jordao, a partner in Northeast Mausoleum of Pennsylvania.

“Now that the weather is broken, things are starting to roll along,” he said. “We are really enthusiastic to be building such a unique mausoleum.”

Jordao, who is a partner in the company with Kevin Fisher, said the design is very modern, and at the center will be a large courtyard garden, landscaping and natural light. It will be enclosed with 10-foot glass panels and the interior will have three skylights to allow more light to enter.

The St. Catherine Mausoleum will have almost 700 crypts and 608 niches for cremains, centered on a bronze life-sized statue of the Risen Christ from Italy.

Dean Gestal, director of Catholic Cemeteries, said, “It will be a beautiful granite building with a glass atrium from the floor to the ceiling in the middle, and

the mausoleum will have three alcoves and be in the shape of a cross. The front of the building will be granite and open glass.”

Jordao said the interior finish will be adonis beige marble with an epoxy terrazzo floor, and the exterior has local natural stone veneer and Giallo Santa Cecilia Granite from Brazil.

At the entrance to the mausoleum will be a magnificent bronze life-sized statue of the Risen Christ, to be sculpted in Italy by Cody Swanson, a recognized sculptor who teaches at the Florence Academy of Art, said Father Joseph Marcello, pastor of the Parish of St. Catherine of Siena. It will be based on Gianlorenzo Bernini’s statue of the risen Christ, which stands atop the tabernacle in St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.

“When families come to this mausoleum for committal services or to visit the tombs of their loved ones, they will be greeted by this statue, and it will remind them very powerfully of the victory of Jesus Christ over death, which is the bedrock of our faith,” Father Marcello said.

A committee headed by Father Marcello and Deacon Patrick Toole, episcopal delegate for

administration of the Diocese of Bridgeport, is conceptualizing religious art for the mausoleum. Among the features that will be incorporated into the building will be panels containing the Beatitudes.

“One aspect of the design that I think will be especially meaningful will be the eight mosaic panels placed in the interior of the mausoleum, which will list the eight Beatitudes,” Father Marcello said. “Back in 2014, Pope Francis said, ‘At the end of the world, we will be judged. And what questions will we be asked there? What will these questions be? What is the protocol by which the judge will evaluate us? We find it in Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew. The Beatitudes...are the questions that we will be asked on Judgement Day. We will not have titles, credit or privileges on which to stake our claims. The Lord will recognize us if, in our turn, we recognized him in the poor, in the hungry, in the indigent and the outcast, in those who suffer and are alone.... This is one of the fundamental criteria for evaluating our Christian life, which Jesus calls us to measure up to every day.’”

Construction of the mausoleum, which is the first the diocese has constructed in 30 years, is being done by Northeast Mausoleum LLC of New Hope, Penn., a general contractor specializing in the cemetery industry.

The mausoleum is divided into four chapels, St. Therese, Christ the King, St. Stephen and St. Catherine. These will be centered around the open-air garden court and four columbariums.

The mausoleum will offer multiple crypt options including singles, tandems, slide-overs and single and double couches. All of the columbarium niches in the mausoleum will be glass.

The mausoleum will be adjacent to the St. Monica Mausoleum, built 25 years ago with 550 crypts and a number of niches, which have all been sold. The current project also entails refurbishing the existing building, which will include a sales office and a portable altar.

Gestal says half of all interment services are cremation but that 75 percent of them do not receive a final resting place and are often kept in homes or dispatched outside instead of in a sacred place.

As a result, Catholic Cemeteries has begun an outreach with bereavement programs to reach people who may have strayed from their faith and are unaware of the rules for a proper Catholic burial.

Most of the niches in the new mausoleum will have a glass front and be lit from the inside, where the urn will reside. They may also be personalized with a place for mementos of the deceased person. In addition, vase holders and picture frames will be available for the shutter fronts of the crypts.

Catholic Cemeteries has been reaching out to parishes because Gestal wants to encourage the faith community to participate in the diocese’s ministry to the families of the deceased.

After the St. Catherine of Siena Mausoleum is completed in the fall, plans will be developed to construct additional mausoleums in Darien, Danbury and then Greenwich, Gestal said. The demand for above-ground burial is growing.

(For more information about the Catherine of Siena Mausoleum or for inquiries, visit stcatherinemaus.com or email info@ctcemeteries.org or call 203.742.1450, option 3.)



Burial Options

Catholic burial after cremation

TRUMBULL—James Abriola, General Manager of Abriola Parkview Funeral Home, still remembers the time a family called him 15 years after their grandmother died and said, “We would like to pick up our grandma’s cremated remains.”

All that time, they had been stored in a safe area, with other cremains that families left behind.

“I’d guess that many funeral homes have cremated remains that have not been retrieved by the families,” Abriola. “I don’t have an explanation about why this happens, but sometimes there may be a rift after the services, and family members can’t decide where they would like them to go, and it’s just easier not to pick them up. In other cases, people are busy, and they leave them at the funeral home and figure they will deal with it at another time.”

However, weeks pass, then months and eventually a year ... and the issue is not resolved. Since 1963, when the Catholic Church began to permit cremation, there have been considerable changes in the way families approach burials. Today, more than 50 percent of the deceased are cremated, which can lead to problems when the issue of interment has not been decided.

“We want to have it resolved ahead of time,” he says. “We try to determine what the plans are for disposition, and there are a number of options, including buying a niche for the urn or burying the cremains at an existing family plot with their loved ones. Years back, there were fewer things to consider. People weren’t cremated. You were buried in the cemetery, and that’s where you ended up.”

Very often, he informs families that they can inter a cremation urn on top of a family member’s grave. It is a great option because you don’t have to purchase a new grave. For example, he says, his father is buried at a local cemetery that would allow his cremation urn to be placed over his father’s casket.

Abriola has also heard of family situations in which parents are practicing Catholics who requested a funeral Mass and burial, but the children eventually disregard their wishes because they don’t think it is important.

“A cemetery is a proper place to reverently keep your loved ones after they die,” Abriola says.

In 2017 the Vatican re-affirmed its 1963 decision that there are valid sanitary, economic and social reasons for cremation. The document from the doctrinal



office teaches that cremation is allowed, so long as it isn’t chosen to deny hope in the resurrection of the body.

However, it cautions families not to have the cremains of their loved ones scattered at sea or kept in urns at home, but properly buried with a Catholic funeral. Ashes should not be divided between family members, “nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects.”

The guidelines instruct Catholics that cremated remains should be kept in a “sacred

place,” such as a church cemetery. They say: “By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body, and intends to show the great dignity of the human person whose body forms part of their identity.”

Dean Gestal, Director of Catholic Cemeteries, says many families don’t realize that if they have an existing plot in a cemetery, even if all of the spaces are

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

Pre-construction pricing



The St. Catherine of Siena Mausoleum Gate of Heaven Cemetery

Trumbull, Connecticut

It has been almost 30 years since the Diocese of Bridgeport built a new mausoleum. As a result, we have a great deal of interest in the new St. Catherine of Siena mausoleum from many families in the Trumbull, Monroe and Shelton Townships.

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Catholic Cemeteries

A personal ministry of praying for the dead and tidying up their graves

By **JOE PISANI**

DARIEN—Linda Lyons spends her mornings walking through the cemetery with her dog Peaches, looking at historic gravestones, visiting deceased family members, picking up discarded coffee cups and waiting for that still small voice of God to direct her to certain headstones, where she feels inspired to say a prayer.

A member of St. John Church in Darien and a lifelong Stamford resident, Linda has pursued her own personal ministry at Queen of Peace and St. John Cemeteries.

"I have always liked cemeteries," she says. "And after my

son Mark died on July 23, 2016, I started to really spend time exploring them and going there for walks with my dog Peaches on a daily basis."

When she worked at Home Depot in Norwalk, she would go out and eat her lunch at St. John/St. Mary Cemetery, and during COVID when certain places were restricted, she would walk through the cemetery and pick up flags that had fallen on the ground and pray for souls.

Her step-father Samuel Van Houten and her step-sister Margaret Van Houten are buried at St. John's on Hoyt Street and Camp Avenue, where she spends

most of her time. (Her mother Emma is buried in her hometown in Maine.)

Linda and Peaches, who is part Maltese and part terrier, set out early in the morning for their walk, stopping to say hello to the maintenance crews, pausing for a prayer to tidy up a neglected grave and examine historical details on a monument.

"As I walk around, I look at the graves and say, 'I know them and I know them,'" she says. "We pass by the police officer section, and it's like visiting old friends, and I'll say hi and make the Sign of the Cross and say, 'I hope you're resting in peace.' I feel close to them all."

Linda recently bought a niche in the mausoleum at St. John's.

"I decided that I didn't have any plans, and I knew I had to do something, so I called them after I saw an insert in Fairfield County Catholic and told them what I wanted," she recalled. Her cremains will be interred in a columbarium in the mausoleum. Now, she jokingly tells her friends, "I've found my niche... I tell them it's my condo unit in Section F, Row B."

She often takes it upon herself to help the maintenance crew and frequently picks up trash and soft drink containers whenever she comes upon them. She will also right a flag on a veteran's grave and even trim around some of the foot stones.

The American flag is very important to her. Over the years, she has bought quite a few of



them and placed them on the graves of Stamford firefighters and veterans.

"It makes me feel good," she says. "I am a helpful person, and I've cleaned a lot of stones. I do it anonymously, especially for some of the veterans who probably have no relatives."

Two years ago she volunteered to place flags on veterans' graves in a cemetery in the South End of Stamford, and more recently she has replaced flags at St. John's that have been frayed and damaged.

"I have a huge bag of flags that I will be taking to the VFW," she says. "Sometimes I've found them in the garbage, where people put them, and I'll take them out because the flag is important to me. A lot of people died for that flag."

Linda is also intrigued by the history she encounters during her walks through St. John's.

"I discovered this whole section of people who died during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic," she said. "Some of their graves

had crude markers made of pipe or wood with handwriting that noted only the day they died ... and they're still there more than a century later. You can find a lot of history in the cemetery."

Linda takes special note of the veterans' gravestones. She has found some from the Spanish-American War, another veteran from the Italian army and a woman who was in the nursing corps. And then, there are the graves of children whose lives ended too soon, such as a little girl born in 1980 who died in 1986 in addition to infants who succumbed during the pandemic. She prays for them all.

For Linda, the cemetery is a special place, a deeply spiritual place.

"I look around and realize that all those people had lives ... maybe not all of them had children or siblings, but they all had a mother and a father, and they had lives," she said. "It's very humbling. We will all be there someday, so we should respect them."

A NEW APPROACH FROM PAGE 31

the same as financial and retirement planning.

"There is an affinity between financial and funeral plans," he says, "Most people do not finish the last chapter of their lives and instead, leave this burden to family members. If you do a will, you obviously thought about what you want to have happen when you pass... but why not complete your plans? You are taking care of your material things but have left yourself literally out of your plans."

For Devane, working with Catholic Cemeteries is more than a project. He tells the story of how he was recently standing in the middle of Gate of Heaven Cemetery, pondering how he wound up in the cemetery business. Then, he heard Taps being played by a military honor guard nearby.

"It made me realize that messages and motivation come to us in many ways, some subtle and some not so much," he said. "My ministry now is to help set up systems so that our diocesan families can understand, plan and contract for their future burial needs while they have time to consider all the available options and discuss them with their loved ones."

Even if only a few more families consider pre-need planning, he says, it will be "mission accomplished." ■

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Catholic Cemeteries

CATHOLIC BURIAL FROM PAGE 35

filled, the cremated remains of three individuals may be placed above an existing in-ground burial, thereby making it possible to unite generations of the same family in one cemetery.

He said Catholic Cemeteries are also working to accommodate those who have a loved one cremated as well as those who may have brought the remains home after a funeral service but have not yet interred them. For example:

- A single grave containing one full casket may accommodate the interment of three additional cremated remains.
- A single grave without any casket may accommodate the interment of four cremated remains.
- Those who prefer above-ground interment now also have the option of illuminated glass-front niches.

“Catholic Cemeteries wishes to offer these opportunities to family members for the respectful burial of their loved ones in order to give effective witness to the importance of Christian burial and belief in the resurrection of the body,” Gestal said.

Joseph McCurdy, Director of Sales and Marketing at Catholic Cemeteries, said that when you buy a plot, it comes with a right of interment and each additional burial requires an additional rite of burial. Costs to inter an urn of cremated remains would include the right of interment, a fee to open the grave and the cost for a PolyCast urn vault in which the urn is placed to protect it.

“This is a good thing because there are financial savings, and you get to stay with your other family members on sacred ground in a Catholic burial.” ■

ANSWERING THE BISHOP'S CALL FROM PAGE 30

deceased.

Many cemetery systems around the nation do an outreach to the parishes, with a focus on bereavement support. Gestal hopes to see parishes create teams that will help families through bereavement-focused groups so that when parents or family members die, the survivors do not find themselves with no emotional and spiritual support.

One of the challenges he faces is reaching a younger generation of Catholics who have fallen away from their faith or for whom religion is less important than it is to their parents.

Gestal believes the construction of the St. Catherine of Siena Mausoleum at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull will allow them to change the thinking of a younger gener-

ation of Catholics so they can memorialize their parents in a respectful way by putting their remains in a sacred place rather than in, say, a closet.

In recent months, he has also launched a major beautification initiative at the diocesan cemeteries.

“To me, cemeteries are a communal place,” he says. “We have opened them up to allow people to walk their dogs on a leash. We are also planning walking tours at the St. Mary-Putnam Cemetery in Greenwich, where we have 100 acres. We want to invite people to come in because it’s a peaceful place with beautiful trees and grounds.”

Gestal, who with his wife Janie, is on the Inner City Foundation board, lives in Greenwich. They have been married 46 years and have four daughters and eight grandchildren. Since

1986, they have been members of the Order of Malta.

Born and raised on Long Island, he moved to Greenwich in 1978. After he graduated from Marist College, he enlisted in the Air Force National Guard and eventually started trading bonds on Wall Street. For ten years, he worked with Seth Glickenhau, where he built up the bond department before starting his own firm. After retiring from trading in 2000, he moved to San Francisco and helped launch start-ups in finance and dot-com. He later ran a company that manufactured carbon fiber wheels for racing bikes in Salt Lake City. In 2012, he returned to Greenwich.

“We have been totally blessed,” he said, reflecting on his life. “Now, my goal is to help the Church any way I can.” ■

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Catholic Cemetery



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St. Mary Cemetery

More than a century of service in Greenwich

By JOE PISANI

GREENWICH—More than a century ago, a news item in the Greenwich Graphic told the tragic story of a woman who died at home shortly after surgery. Her death prompted an outpouring of sympathy from friends and fellow parishioners at St. Mary Church.

“Mrs. Patrick Doran died suddenly at her home Tuesday night of hemorrhage,” the newspaper reported. “A day or two before her death, Mrs. Doran submitted to a surgical operation, which was successful, and she appeared to be getting along nicely until Tuesday evening, when she became prostrated and died at ten o’clock. The funeral service was held at St. Mary’s Church yesterday morning at half-past ten

o’clock. Mrs. Doran had many warm friends in Greenwich, and the large attendance at her funeral attested to the kind regard and respect in which she was held. She leaves a husband and children who have the sympathy of neighbors and a large circle of friends. The internment was in St. Mary’s new cemetery on North Street.”

Mrs. Doran was among the first to be buried at the “new” St. Mary Cemetery, which had been relocated from the parish’s original burial ground on Williams Street, where the first church, a white frame building, was constructed in 1860.

Today, St. Mary/Putnam Cemetery at 399 North Street has provided more than a century of service since it was offi-

cially authorized by the State of Connecticut. It is one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the Diocese of Bridgeport with 80 acres of rolling land in Greenwich, and it is the final resting place, along with the nearby diocesan-owned non-sectarian Putnam Cemetery, for more than 50,000 Catholics and non-Catholics from surrounding communities, including Westchester.

As the number of Catholics increased, the burial ground on Williams and Church Streets could no longer accommodate the parish, which purchased a parcel of land on North Street that belonged to trustee John Maher on June 21, 1899, and was later dedicated by Bishop Tierney.

The cemetery was officially recognized on May 8, 1919, by



an act of the state legislature, according to research provided by Christopher Shields, Curator of Library and Archives of the Greenwich Historical Society. The remains of those interred in the original graveyard and the markers were relocated to the North Street site.

In 1945 by the end of World War II, the bodies of many servicemen and women had come home to Greenwich for burial, and a Crucifixion Monument was erected at the cemetery, honoring the war dead and deceased members of the parish.

During the mid-1980s, the Diocese of Bridgeport purchased the non-sectarian Putnam Cemetery at 35 Parsonage Road, which is the resting place of notable residents such as Victor Borge, author Anya Seton, TV host Bud Collyer, and U.S. Senator Prescott Bush and his wife Dorothy Bush, who were parents of President George H.W. Bush and grandparents of President George W. Bush.

Among those buried at St. Mary Cemetery are George and Ann Brannack Skakel,

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

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St. Michael Cemetery

Serving the diocese for 135 years

By **JOE PISANI**

BRIDGEPORT/
STRATFORD—St. Michael Cemetery opened in 1886, and there is still a gravestone that marks the first burial there, with the weathered and faded lettering that says, “The First Burial in This Cemetery.” And 135 years later, through wars and pandemics and day-to-day life, there are an estimated 200,000 people who have been laid to rest on those 110 acres.

When the cemetery first opened, the plots were laid out systematically by sections with the closest near Stratford Avenue and moving out from there. Today, there are 17 numbered sections bisected by the roadways. However, there is no section 13. A representative of Catholic Cemeteries estimates that 60 percent of the burials are full body and 40 percent are cre-



mations, with cremations becoming the more popular option.

St. Michael's, which averages about 300 burials a year, has two mausoleums, one built in the 1960s and the other in the 1980s. The older, the St. Michael Chapel

mausoleum, was built on the site of the caretaker's house.

Until the 1960s, he lived on the grounds with his family. He had his own crew, which did burials, maintained the landscaping and sold plots.

Records exist for virtually every burial except the first 20 years from 1886 to 1906 because they were stored in a church and were destroyed in a fire.

Most of the earlier gravesites have vertical headstones, but when those plots were no longer available flush markers were used in the pathways. There is also available space in the Garden Mausoleum on the Surf Avenue side, and in the chapel area there are niches to hold cremains.

Among the more well-known people buried there are Fred DeLuca, a businessman and co-founder of the Subway franchise of sandwich shops, and Bridgeport's most famous professional ballplayer, James O'Rourke, one of the first 19th century players who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1945. He is one of 14 pro-baseball players buried at St.

Michael, which is believed to be the highest number of any cemetery in the state.

There is also a special area called the Priests' Circle, where almost 150 priests are buried, including Bishop Walter W. Curtis of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Dominating the center of the circle is a majestic marble and bronze depiction of the crucifixion with the Blessed Mother, St. John and St. Mary Magdalen at the foot of the cross, beneath which is an altar.

According to a published report in the Bridgeport Herald, tragedy struck the cemetery on March 26, 1942, when Second Lieutenant Edward G. Armstrong flew his P39 fighter aircraft on a training flight over Stratford while doing maneuvers when the aircraft's engine quit at 500 feet and crashed into the cemetery. The pilot died instantly, and the plane was demolished. ■

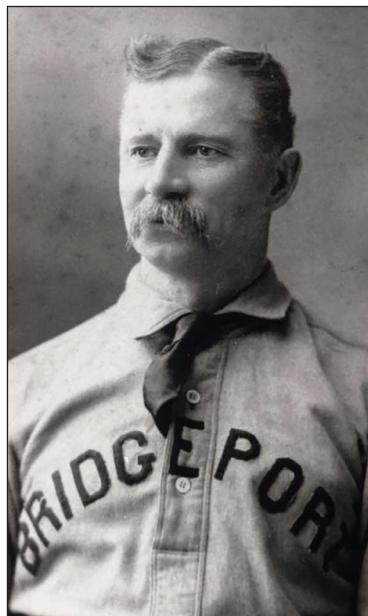
A baseball legend lies in rest at St. Michael's

By **JOE PISANI**

BRIDGEPORT/
STRATFORD—Every year, baseball enthusiasts and historians make a pilgrimage to St. Michael Cemetery in Stratford to pay tribute to the most famous ballplayer to come out of Bridgeport—Jim O'Rourke, one of the first 19th century players inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1945.

James Henry O'Rourke, born September 1, 1850, was a professional ballplayer in the National Association and Major League Baseball, who was primarily a left-fielder. He is one of 14 pro-baseball players buried at St. Michael, which is believed to be the highest number of any cemetery in the state.

A statue of O'Rourke, who later became a lawyer and was known as “Orator Jim” is at Harbor Yards. Born in East Bridgeport, he worked on the family farm and played in the youth league and semi-pro baseball during his early years. He made his professional debut with the Middletown Mansfields in 1872 and joined the National



Association team as a catcher.

After the Mansfields folded, he was offered a contract with the Boston Red Stockings and played with them until 1878. O'Rourke was the first person in the National League to record a base hit on April 22, 1876.

During his career, he also played for the Providence Grays, the Boston Red Caps, the Buffalo Bisons, the New York Giants and the Washington Senators and

managed for several seasons with the Bisons and Senators. In 1880, he was the National League home run leader.

O'Rourke graduated from the Yale School of Law in 1887 and practiced in the city when he wasn't playing ball. According to the Sporting Life, O'Rourke “earned the nickname ‘Orator Jim’ because of his verbosity on the field, his intellect and his law degree—uncommon in a game regarded as a rough immigrant sport at the time.”

He and only 28 other players in baseball history had careers that spanned four decades. Even though he left the major leagues in 1893, he played in the minors until he was more than 50 years old. While he was an executive for a Bridgeport team in the Connecticut league in 1895, O'Rourke hired the first African American minor league ball player.

When O'Rourke was 54, he became the oldest player to take the field in the National League for his final appearance with the New York Giants on September 22, 1904. At 60, he caught a complete game in the minor leagues.

Primarily a left fielder, he also served as catcher and first baseman. His lifetime batting average was .311, and he had 2,643 hits, 62 home runs and 1,208 runs batted in.

Several legends surround O'Rourke, who was the son of Irish immigrants and married to a woman born in Ireland. According to the Sporting Life, he was asked to drop the “O” from his name when he signed with Boston and he reportedly responded, “I would rather die than give up my father's name. A million dollars would not tempt me.”

In addition, it is said that one condition for O'Rourke to sign his first contract with the Mansfields was that management had to get someone to do the chores on the family farm. John O'Rourke, his older brother, and James O'Rourke, his son, also played in the major leagues.

Jim O'Rourke died at 68 on January 8, 1919 in Bridgeport



and was buried at St. Michael Cemetery. Very often, his enthusiasts and fans honor him and keep his memory alive by leaving behind baseballs, balloons, cards, rosaries and even a spatula and wooden spoon at his grave. ■

Visitors

Honoring her parents memory at Gate of Heaven

By JOE PISANI

TRUMBULL—A couple of times a week, Carmen Lopez visits her parents' grave at Gate of Heaven Cemetery to say prayers and care for the flowers she has planted.

"I'll water the flowers, and while I'm there, I meet other people suffering over their loss," she says. "It's comforting for me to be there and say prayers and spend time with my father and mother. I like to go there and make sure everything is nice and neat, the way my parents would like it.... They never neglected

me, and I don't want to neglect them."

The retired Superior Court judge who grew up in Bridgeport is indebted to her parents for the life they gave her. She was two years old when her parents, Gladys and Angel Lopez, relocated to Bridgeport from Puerto Rico.

"My mother was such a good Catholic her whole life," Lopez recalls. "She worked in the church, and as a little girl she would dress the saints to get them ready for Mass on holidays." And when her mother was pregnant, she made a promise to Our Lady

of Mount Carmel that she would name her daughter Carmen.

"My dad was a man ahead of his time," Lopez says. "He was from Puerto Rico, and he believed that women needed to be educated." Because of his inspiration, Carmen earned a law degree and became a Superior Court judge, while her sister Betty Martinez got a master's degree and taught in the Bridgeport Public School system. Her son, Michael Angel Martinez, a graduate of American University, followed in her footsteps and teaches in Milford.

Carmen and her sister grew up



on the East Side of Bridgeport, where Gladys learned to speak English with an Italian accent, Lopez says. The girls went to Catholic schools, first at St. Mary Elementary School and later St. Stephen School and Cathedral High School. Lopez graduated from Sacred Heart University before entering Suffolk Law School in Boston.

She received her First Communion and Confirmation at the old St. Mary Church on Pembroke Street, where she was in church plays and pageants. After fifth grade, the family moved to the West Side and began attending Our Lady of Providence Mission. When nuns came from Spain to help the mission, her parents along with her uncle Johnny Rodriguez and his wife Gloria helped introduce the sisters to the Spanish-speaking community.

Lopez, who is married to Superior Court Judge Dale W. Radcliffe of Trumbull, retired from the judiciary to care for her parents in their later years, both of whom lived in Bridgeport and were parishioners at St. Andrew Church.

Her mother died in November 2016 and was buried at Gate of Heaven Cemetery. Carmen's father eventually moved into her home as his condition worsened, and he lived there for his last two years. He had just turned 93 when he passed away, she said.

"We did everything we could," she recalls. "He lived here with us, and we had caregivers for him, but then his mobility was impacted, and he couldn't walk and was in constant pain."

This past summer, Father Eugene R. Szantyr, a family friend and retired pastor of St. Andrew, celebrated a memorial Mass for Angel Lopez.

Since her parents died, Lopez has been to the cemetery many times. It is a special place for her.

"The service the cemetery gives is not just providing a grave but also providing comfort, understanding and care because you are leaving a loved one there," Lopez says. The staff has been responsive to her concerns over the years, especially when the memorial stone was sinking and needed to be repaired.

She praised Ed Tamimi, a senior adviser with Catholic Cemeteries. "In addition to taking care of my concerns, he was very kind, understanding and comforting regarding the grief that I was experiencing," she said. "There seems to be no doubt that this 'brave new world' imposes added stress on all of us, and it was an unexpected treat to have someone from the business world be as gracious as Ed."

In recent years, retired Judge Lopez has been active in community issues, helping residents in areas such as education, traffic control, tenant issues and water pollution control.

"That was my skill set," she says, "so I donate the skills of writing and preparing arguments to help other people who want to take on those fights."

And during the week, she usually finds herself at Gate of Heaven, where her parents and other family members are buried, praying for them and comforting other people in their loss.

CENTURY OF SERVICE FROM PAGE 40

parents of Ethel Kennedy, U.S. Congressman William L. Tierney and TV personality Jack Lescoulie.

St. Mary/Putnam Cemetery has some of the most beautiful natural settings in town, with a total of 80 acres on rolling hills with woods and wetlands. The peaceful bucolic landscape attracts runners, arborists, bird-watchers and historical tours, according to Joseph McCurdy, director of sales and marketing for Catholic Cemeteries.

"It is a historical place and a very special place," McCurdy says. "I wish I could put into words how beautiful and serene it is there. On an autumn day, the sky is clear blue, and the leaves have brilliant colors. I'm always in awe of the craftsmanship of the headstones and monuments."

One notable example is a private marble mausoleum built in the late 19th century for a prominent resident by six craftsmen who came from Italy and stayed for almost a year until the project was completed, McCurdy said.

More than 50,000 people are buried in St. Mary/Putnam Cemetery and there are approximately 20,000 head stones. McCurdy, who says there are about 300 burials a year, has a crew of four

people to maintain the grounds.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has said, "When a person comes into our cemeteries, it should be an inviting, welcoming, prayerful, respectful place because it is sacred ground."

Toward that goal, McCurdy says, there have been significant improvements and upgrades in recent months. "The Cottage," where the cemetery offices are located, has been completely renovated with new windows, flooring, air conditioning, bathrooms and walkways. What had been a holding area now is the central office, located at the entrance on 35 Parsonage Road.

Areas previously used for recycling have been cleaned up, leveled and seeded. In addition, McCurdy says, the cemetery is applying for recognition as an arboretum because it is home to more than 100 different species of trees, which have been tagged and identified with golden plaques.

"We have identified trees and tagged them and are in the process of the application," McCurdy says. "We have also hired a tree service company that comes in every month and tackles a project of their choice."

If a tree is dead, he explains, a chainsaw artist comes and creates a sculpture with the remaining 10-foot portion. St. Mary/Putnam has an eagle.

Diocesan cemeteries have a long tradition of service to the Catholic community, including non-Catholic spouses, children, parents and other relatives. Christians with a connection to them may also be buried there.

The diocese provides family-service advisers. People are encouraged to speak to an adviser, who can answer questions about the options, financing and Church teachings on burials.

A commemorative history of St. Mary Parish on its 75th anniversary in 1975 pointed to the importance of the cemetery in the life of the faith community.

"The first Catholics to settle in Greenwich in 1845 had come from other countries and they had accepted the challenge of a strange homeland and new lifestyle," it said. "They wanted a place to worship God, and a sanctuary where their infants could be christened, where their children could be confirmed, where their young people could be married...and where their old people could be laid to rest." That mission is the same today.

(For further information, call 203.416.1494 or visit: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/catholic-cemeteries/home)

Catholic Funerals

More important than ever in a COVID World

We are slowly emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Stores are opening up, movie theatres and restaurants are happily receiving guests, and our parishes that had been closed outright or only had minimal numbers of parishioners in attendance are trying to rediscover that sense of community, that identity that characterizes them a family of faith.

Whether COVID-19 ever goes away, or whether we might have to manage it as we do the onset of annual flu season, we are intent on returning to living life as we once knew it, surrounded by close family and friends, and celebrating those important milestones in life that Christians do; baptisms, first communions, confirmations, marriages and yes, celebrating a life lived, marking the passage from death to eternal life.

COVID-19 changed the way we celebrated funerals. We grew

more and more uncomfortable with being in the presence of others, even close family and friends. We hand-sanitized and wore masks, and we sent flowers and wrote notes of support to the ones suffering the loss rather than be in attendance, not that we were permitted to be there anyways. We became in many instances virtual participants. This evolving situation, based on fear of the unknown, created a disconnect in celebrating the Rite of Christian Burial: the Vigil, the Funeral Mass and the Prayers of Committal, and left the family more often than not feeling separated from the wider parish community that traditionally would have been present to support the family with prayers, hospitality and just 'being there.'

It is now more important than ever, at this critical time, to re-embrace and celebrate the

funeral rituals that the Church has gifted to us. Rich in symbolism, they remind us of our Baptism as the door to eternal life, and all three parts involve a gathering of the Christian community. Our collective strength is greatest when we gather together in faith as that is when the Holy Spirit is among us. As Jesus said, "When two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).

That is why the Church prefers we bring the bodies of our deceased loved ones to the church when a funeral Mass is celebrated and to bury them in the blessed ground of the Catholic Cemetery. It is our body that was temple of the Holy Spirit when the person was alive, and was that same body that was nourished at the table of the Eucharist. When we gather for a funeral committal at a Catholic cemetery to say good

bye to a loved one, we witness the coming together of the community of the living and the Community of Saints. We are surrounded by those who have gone before us sharing the same faith as that of our parents and grandparents.

It is perhaps on account of the pandemic that more Catholics are looking at cremation as an option for the first time, as there appears to be a measure of simplicity involved, with fewer numbers of people and a perception of lower expense. One thing is clear, in the midst of all the restrictions and limits placed on those who could or not attend the funeral of a loved one, grief became more complicated and often harder to express in a healthy way. If you are at a stage of life that the pre-planning of your cemetery arrangements is becoming increasingly important, the Catholic Cemeteries of the

Diocese of Bridgeport can assist in many ways to ensure peace of mind, whether you choose to bury the body or opt for cremation. For those preferring above ground entombment, a new mausoleum, St. Catherine of Siena, the first in twenty years, is under construction at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull. Plans for the building of the diocese's first crematorium are in their preliminary stages.

Reach out to your parish priest about how to connect with your local Catholic cemetery or go to bridgeportdiocese.org for further information. Above all, keep connected to your parish, and to the faith we all share as Catholic Christians in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is in celebrating the various rites and rituals available to us that will help to strengthen our faith and help us to emerge ever stronger from these difficult days. ■



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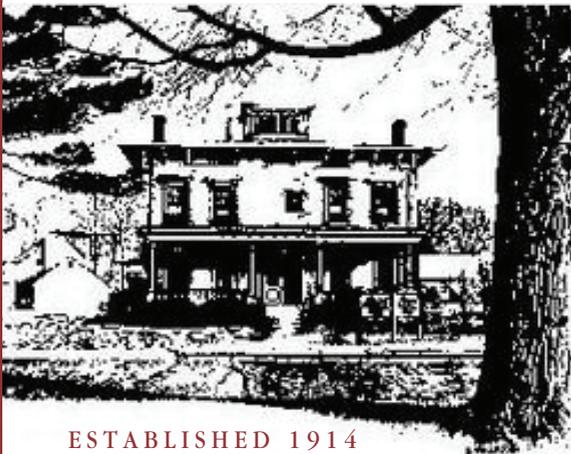


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FUNERAL HOME GUIDE

Diocese of Bridgeport

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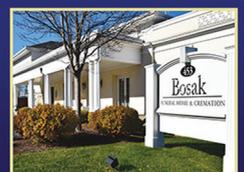
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FUNERAL HOME GUIDE

Diocese of Bridgeport

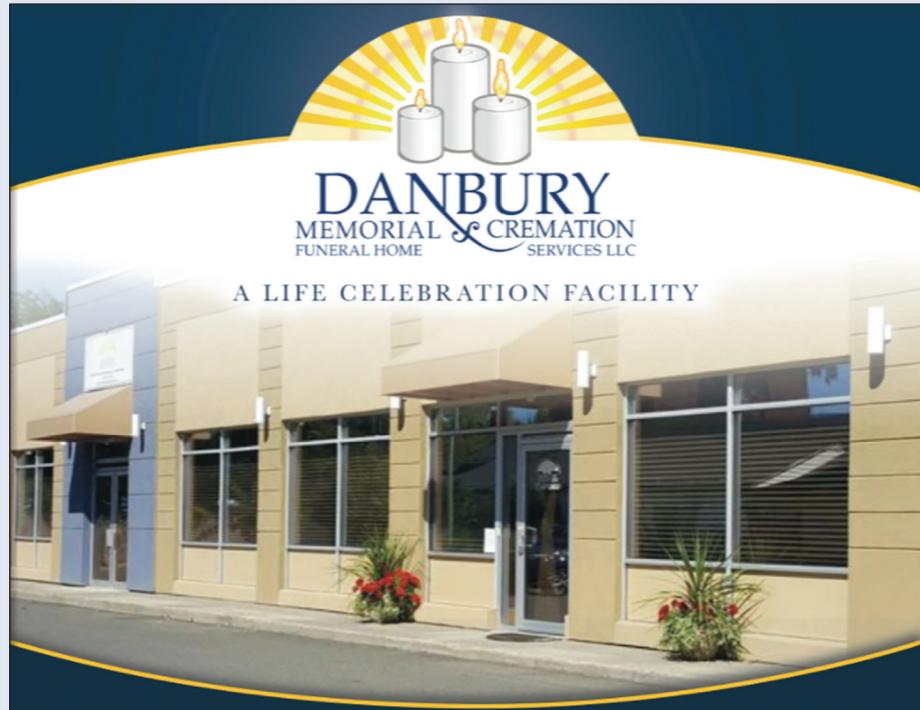


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Catholic Cemeteries

He helped his priest friend even after death

NORWALK—Ten months ago, Chuck Kriewald of St. Mary Church lost one of his cousins to COVID-19 and he helped do her funeral arrangements. While he was at the cemetery, he walked over to the circle where priests are buried and came upon the plot of his friend Msgr. John Sanders and was saddened to see there was no gravestone.

Msgr. Sanders, who was parochial vicar at St. Mary's in Norwalk from 1988 to 2000, when he retired, had a renowned career as trombonist in the Duke Ellington Orchestra before becoming a priest. After retiring, he was a resident of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford, where he died at 93.

"He could really play that trombone, and he used to practice in the

basement of the church," Kriewald recalls. "When I saw that he had no stone, I went to Father John Ringley, our pastor, and discussed the idea of raising money to purchase one. I also consulted with Monsignor William Scheyd who was a friend of Monsignor Sanders."

Kriewald approached about 12 people, and through their generosity, they were able to purchase a monument for Msgr. Sanders, which will be placed on his grave in the priests' circle at St. John/St. Mary Cemetery in Norwalk at the end of July.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Msgr. Sanders played in the Navy Band and earned the rank of Musician Second Class. Returning to New York, he entered the Juilliard School of Music and received a diploma in trombone from the



Orchestral Instrument Department in 1949. After completing his course work at Juilliard, he worked as a trombone player, including playing with the Duke Ellington Orchestra from 1953-1959.

Pursuing his lifelong dream of being a priest, he began his formation at Holy Apostles Seminary in

Cromwell in 1965 and continued at Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Mass. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Walter W. Curtis in Blessed Sacrament Church in Bridgeport on February 10, 1973.

During his years at St. Mary's, he became good friends with Kriewald, who at one point even gave the priest an album by the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

Kriewald regularly helps with the funeral arrangements of parishioners and veterans in his capacity as judge advocate of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Norwalk, and he often collaborates with Patti Barrientos, a senior advisor for Catholic Cemeteries, who is responsible for St. John/St. Mary Cemetery in Norwalk, St. John in Darien, and Assumption Green

Farms in Westport. She also assisted him in selecting the appropriate design for the stone.

"I've always enjoyed working with Patti," Kriewald says. "I couldn't have done Msgr. Sanders' stone without her, and whenever I have a veteran's funeral, I go there and work with her."

She also helped Kriewald arrange for his cousin's burial at Assumption Green Farms Cemetery.

"She led us through the entire process," he says. "I can't say enough regarding her understanding of people."

Kriewald also consults her when there is a veteran's funeral, and sometimes he makes arrangements for as many as two a week. Born and raised in Westport, Kriewald

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 49



Lawrence Funeral Home

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A Catholic Funeral

Planning my father's Funeral

By DR. PATRICK DONOVAN

When my father was diagnosed with cancer just after Christmas several years ago, we knew how the story would end. It's not that we are not people of faith, it's just that we had not seen this movie before. Years before Dad's diagnosis, my brother was diagnosed with the same cancer, at the same hospital, by the same doctor, following the same procedure, with a tumor being discovered in exactly the same place. My brother lasted 18 months. My father was gone in less than six.

A few weeks after his diagnosis, my mother called and asked me to bring the necessary books so that we could plan the funeral. It was a little surreal, but since I had been the one who planned my brother's funeral, I grab the necessary tools and headed to Tennessee.

My father wanted absolutely nothing to do with it. He did not want to talk about his obituary. He did not want to talk about his funeral. He did not want to select readings. He had no interest in selecting music. All he wanted to do was fight. Somehow, this man of extraordinary faith believed that having the conversation about the end of his life was, in a way, surrendering the rest of his life.

Not wanting to belabor the point, I let it go. By the end, when he seemed interested, it was too late. He was too weak to talk and could only nod in agreement with my suggestions. That felt like I was driving the boat, not him. These are my ideas, not his. When no one plans, the loudest voice wins. Nothing in the world prepares a child for the loss of a parent, but I longed for a funeral celebration that was an appropriate memorialization of this giant of a man who

taught me how to pray. The lack of any conversation robbed me of that and it took a while for me to forgive my father for his inability to have that conversation.

I have been in ministry for 30 years. I have sat with families at the very worst of times. I've been with children as we told them that their parents are gone. I've been with parents to tell them did their children never arrived at their destination. Every single opportunity has been an amazing gift. Yet in nearly every case, it would have been a better experience if the people involved had talked openly about the end of their lives. It's not just a matter of faith, it's a matter of practicality.

Here's the truth. We are all going to die. It's that simple. Understanding this truth is the first step to understanding the importance of discussing the end of your life with loved ones. More than just the songs, the readings, the pallbearers, who will share words of remembrance, there are many other items to consider. Do you want extraordinary means used to keep you alive? Who will make decisions about your care if you are incapacitated? Who will handle your finances? These are important conversations that many of us avoid because we cannot grasp the simple truth: we are never getting out of our current situation alive.

For those of us with family members who no longer practice the faith, a funeral is also an opportunity to welcome these loved ones home. By planning ahead, you are able to include family members in conversations that could ultimately lead them to return to the practice of the faith.

Contrary to popular belief, a funeral is not a celebration of the life of the one who has died; it's a celebration of the gift the person's

life was. The nuance is subtle, but important. Misunderstood, a funeral can easily devolve into a fight with a local parish about why Frank Sinatra's, "I Did It My Way" is not an appropriate song for the funeral, but perfect for the gathering of friends following the services. But if we don't understand the purpose of a funeral, and no conversation has been held beforehand, the exchange between the parish and the family become ugly quickly.

The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of his or her sins. The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. We are confident in the conviction that death is not the end. It does it break the bonds of family, friendship, and community that are forged in life. A funeral is an opportunity for the church to intercede on behalf of the person who has died.

In the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church celebrates Christ's Passover from death to life and our participation in this great mystery. The faith of all the baptized is renewed and nourished in this celebration. The intimate connection between the baptism of the Christian into the death and resurrection of Christ and the Eucharistic celebration is one of the main reasons for offering the Mass for the deceased. Every person deserves that kind of celebration.

Asking the tough questions may be a difficult exercise, but trust me, it's not as difficult as a family sitting around having just lost a loved one, wondering out loud what the deceased would have wanted.

Set some time aside at the next family gathering. Make it a family exercise. If your family is anything like mine, it's bound to become the situation filled with laughter, tears, and every emotion in between. It's an opportunity to break open the



DR. PATRICK DONOVAN

Scriptures. It's an opportunity to talk about hymns that move you, inspire you, and bring you closer to the Divine. Having to choose who will make decisions or manage finances can indeed be difficult conversations. But it is better to suffer through a difficult conversation now than to leave loved one to muddle through, or even fight it out, on their own.

When I think back to the days after my father's passing, I remember being frustrated that he hadn't wanted to talk about his funeral celebration. I remember wishing I had pushed the issue just a little bit more. But those were difficult days and no one wanted to admit what was happening. Still, even a brief conversation could have avoided the difficult moments that followed. ■

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PFA

==== PRIEST FRIEND FROM PAGE 48 =====

is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and he is retired from his work in security management with Securitas, the international security services corporation.

In his work with the VFW, he also assisted in the funeral arrangements of Staff Sergeant Louis Doddo, a Norwalk native who entered the U.S. Army in 1941 during World War II.

SSG Doddo served in the Pacific Theater with the 27th Infantry Division and was killed in 1944 in the fierce Battle of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands during a massive Japanese attack. His body was never identified.

He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart Medals along with other citations. Last November, his remains were identified through a DNA match with his great-niece Lorraine Denicola of Norwalk. They were disinterred from Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines and repatriated to the United States this year, where they laid to rest at St. John Cemetery on June 18 with graveside services with full military honors, Kriewald said. ■

Catholic Cemeteries

Planning a Catholic Funeral

Many people who attend a Catholic funeral for the first time will often remark how beautiful it is. Steeped in centuries-old custom and ritual as Catholic funeral rites are, that's understandable.

But the most important aspect about Catholic funerals is that they express the Christian hope in eternal life and the resurrection of the body on the last day. Every component of the Catholic funeral rites should express these fundamental beliefs and hopes. Our funeral rites are not "a celebration of life," as they are referred to sometimes, but a privileged opportunity to return to God the gift of the deceased, hoping to usher them into paradise with the aid of our prayers. Our love for the departed is expressed after death, above all else, in our prayer for them.

When a loved one dies, those left here to ensure their proper and dignified burial can often get bogged down by all the decisions needing to be made. In that case, we often will miss the opportunity to focus on the faith and hope the Catholic funeral rites express. Bereaved family and friends often will have to make many decisions about their loved one's funeral, but often may not be fully prepared to do so. Whenever possible, the Church recommends that the family should be involved in planning the funeral rites—from choices of texts and readings to music and liturgical ministers. They may wish to make decisions on some of these components and not on others. They may leave some or all of the decisions up to the parish staff as well.

This guide is meant to explain the Catholic funeral rites and give some guidance on the decisions that will need to be made—in light of Church teachings—at the time of a loved one's death. It might also be helpful in preparing some notes on our own funeral.

Resources for the Order of Christian Funerals Guiding Principles

While death might seem like the end of the road, Christians believe it is just a beginning. "In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrec-

tion, had broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity" (Order of Christian Funerals (OCF), No. 1). This maxim guides the Christian approach to funerals.

There needs to be direct communication with the parish and funeral home. Usually, funeral homes are fully aware of each parish's expectations and regulations. But it is important to be in communication with the parish directly. Perhaps someone can be appointed within the family to be the point person for this communication, depending on the circumstances.

Burial or Cremation?

One of the first decisions that needs to be made is whether the deceased will be buried or cremated. Cremation is allowed, so long as this option isn't chosen to express anything contrary to Christian hope—particularly the hope in the resurrection of the body. Nonetheless, the Church's tradition recommends burial over cremation. More and more families are opting for cremation today to decrease funeral expenses. But the decision should be based in all the facts, so make sure to compare the costs when discussing options with the funeral director.

In either case, a place of burial needs to be chosen. The Church's preference is that Catholics be buried in the consecrated ground of a Catholic cemetery, but other cemeteries may be chosen. The point is that bodies need to be disposed of in a fitting and dignified way, consonant with the human dignity that should be afforded to everyone, made in the image of God as we are.

Cremains must also be buried—they are not to be placed in the home, spread on land or at sea, etc. This need not be only in a cemetery grave. One popular method to afford cremains their proper respect is to use a columbarium—or niches, akin to mausoleums—which cemeteries and parishes in more frequency are constructing to contain cremains.

It is also preferable that Catholic graves be marked in some way. Although, burial at sea is also permitted—so long as the body or cremains are in

a sealed container (not spread openly)—and a marker might not be possible in these circumstances.

The choice of burial or cremation also will indicate how much of the remainder of the funeral events take place. If burial of the body is chosen, the funeral is often held within a few days. If cremation is chosen, that time could be extended a bit—although it is preferable to celebrate the funeral as soon as possible and not delay it for too long. Also if cremation is chosen, will there still be a viewing of the body and will the body be brought to church for the funeral Mass, or will the body be cremated shortly after death?

(For more information go to: www.bridgeportdiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Article_Planning-and-Understanding-the-Catholic-Funeral.pdf.) ■

Burial Options

- In Ground Burial**
 - Flush/Flat monument
 - Slant Monument
 - Upright
- In Ground Cremation**
 - Cremation Bench
 - Cremation feature
- Community Mausoleum**
- Private Mausoleum**
 - Lawn Crypt
- Community Mausoleum Niches (cremation)**
 - Illuminated
 - Glass front niches
 - Feature niches
- Outdoor Columbarium (cremation)**
 - Private niche features

Monuments

- Upright monuments
- Flush/flat
- Slant
- Ledger Grave Markers
- Memorial Trees
- Memorial Granite Benches
- Statues
- Obelisk



Benefits of Advance/Pre-Need Planning

No one wants to think about it, but the purchase of cemetery property in advance of need, is the smart thing to do! Sometime in the distant future you will be thankful you took care of this important matter now.

While death might seem like the end of the road, Christians believe it is just a beginning. "In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, had broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity" (Order of Christian Funerals (OCF), No. 1). This maxim guides the Christian approach to funerals.

There needs to be direct communication with the parish and funeral home. Usually, funeral homes are fully aware of each parish's expectations and regulations. But it is important to be in communication with the parish directly. Perhaps someone can be appointed within the family to be the point person for this communication, depending on the circumstances.

There are many benefits to planning your own funeral and final arrangements. Here are a few:

You and your loved ones make the decisions around your funeral together, and you do not leave important arrangements to others.

Your children do not have to make difficult decisions regarding your funeral arrangements and are clear in what your wishes are.

You are under normal emotional circumstances when a loved one passes away, which could make decisions more difficult.

You have time to make the right decisions for you and your family.

You can purchase cemetery property out of current income and current prices.

The purchase of cemetery property is an inevitable task.

At a time of need, cemetery property must be paid in full.

You can make your final arrangements now, based on one of the above reasons, or you can wait until you have to decide at a time of great emotional stress, when families can be overwhelmed by options and responsibilities. Our team is always ready to help you. ■



Catholic Cemeteries

Useful Information

From the beginning of the Church, Christian funeral rites and burial have been an important spiritual and pastoral practice. This page is designed to introduce you to the revised funeral norms for the Diocese of Bridgeport and related resources.

Tips to Remember

- There should be direct communication with the parish and funeral home. Perhaps someone can be appointed within the family to be the point person.
- The Church's preference is that Catholics be buried in the consecrated ground of a Catholic cemetery, but other cemeteries may be chosen.
- Cremation is allowed, so long as it isn't chosen to deny hope in the resurrection of the body. The Church's tradition recommends burial over cremation, and remains must also be interred in the ground or a columbarium—not placed in the home or scattered.
- If burial of the body is chosen, the funeral is often held within a few days.
- If Mass is not chosen, a funeral Liturgy of the Word and final commendation of the deceased is celebrated and can be done

in the church, a funeral home, in a chapel at the cemetery or even at the graveside.

- The vigil for the dead is intended to be dedicated to prayer for the deceased.
- It is customary to distribute some kind of remembrance card with a prayer, Scripture passage or holy image.
- A vigil is often a fitting time for those wishing to speak a word in memory or in honor of the deceased.
- Mass of Christian Burial offers a selection of readings, prayers, music and liturgical roles to be chosen and often performed by family members.
- A centuries-old custom is to celebrate a Mass for the deceased on the one-month anniversary of their death, called a Month's Mind Mass.
- It is customary to arrange for Mass intentions for the deceased, perhaps on their birth-

day, anniversary or death date. Visit: www.formationre-imagined.org/funeral-norms

What do we do with the cremated remains after the funeral?

The cremated remains must always be treated with respect, the same respect we attribute to the body. After the funeral they are to be interred or entombed, preferably in a Catholic cemetery, mausoleum or columbarium. The Rite of Committal should accompany this action. They should never be separated or scattered or disposed in any way other than a dignified interment or entombment.

How many interments are permitted in a grave?

- Maximum of three (3) cremations per individual grave lot, with a casket burial. (grave is considered closed)
- Grave without a casket burial, maximum of four (4) cremations may be interred. (grave is considered closed) ■



Does the cemetery have payment plans?

Yes, we have many flexible payment plans for burial lots, crypts, and monuments. The Advisors at the Catholic Cemeteries Office of the Diocese of Bridgeport can answer your questions and assist in planning your future arrangements needs. Contact them at 203.742.1450, option 5 or info@ctcemeteries.org.

Visit www.bridgeportdiocese.org/cemeteries/burial-options.

CONSIDERING IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Who can be buried from the church?

Can those who have died as a result of suicide be buried from the church?

Can someone who has been unable to attend church because of living in a nursing home still be buried from a parish church?

Why does the church not sacramentally anoint bodies after death?

At the time of death, whom do we call to set things in motion?

What are the funeral rites?

Are catholics allowed to be cremated?

Who can read the readings at the funeral Mass?

What music is allowed?

Can we have a eulogy?

Are priests the only ones who can lead the scripture service or the cemetery service?

What do we do with the cremated remains after the funeral?

Can we plan our funeral arrangements months or years in advance?

What is the difference between a funeral Mass and a memorial Mass?

Are funeral Masses allowed in funeral homes?

Why can't we schedule the funeral in the parish when we want it?

Are there some days were funerals are not allowed by the church?

Is there a fee to the church?

Can we include secular songs which the family chooses because they held special significance for the deceased?

Do such songs have a proper place in the funeral liturgy?

Why are we encouraged to pray for the dead?

Can I purchase a grave/crypt before I go to a funeral home?

Once I purchase my grave are there any additional expenses?

Can I purchase my monument from the cemetery directly?

What happens if a loved one passes during winter?

Can I plant flowers on my loved ones grave?

Does the cemetery have payment plans?

Do I need a foundation for my monument?

How many interments are permitted in a grave?

For answers to these and other questions visit www.bridgeportdiocese.org/cemeteries/faqs

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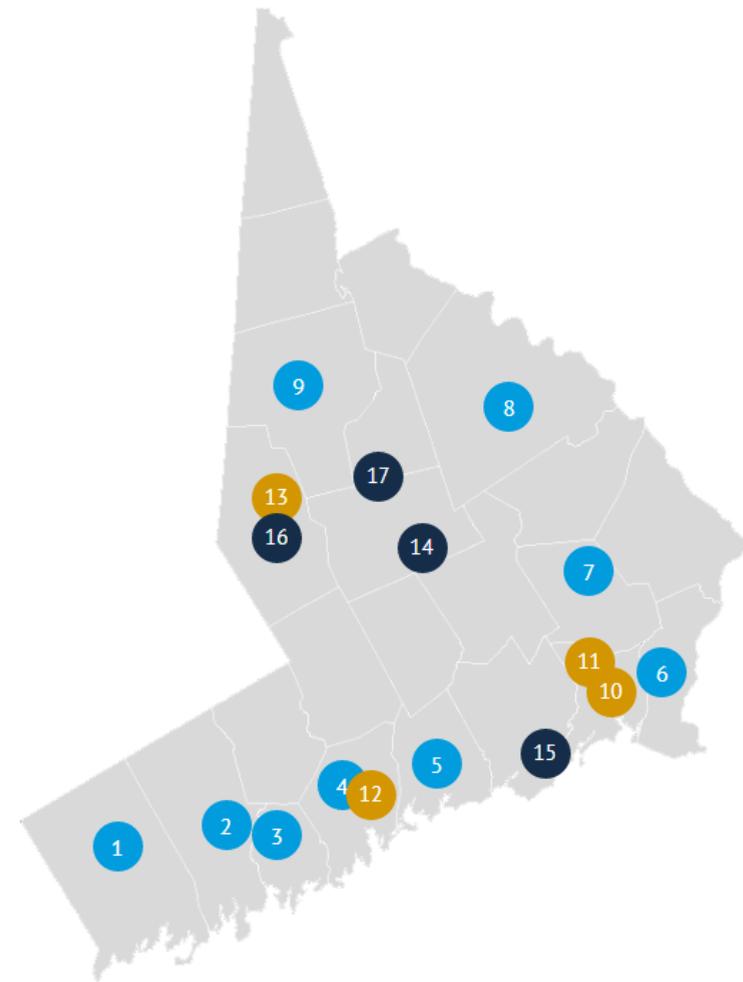
- 1 St Mary - Putnam Cemetery**
399 North Street
Greenwich, CT 06830
(203) 742-1510
- 2 Queen Of Peace Cemetery**
(c/o St John Cemetery/Darien)
124 Rock Rimmon Road
Stamford, CT 06903
(203) 742-1511
- 3 St John Cemetery**
25 Camp Avenue
Darien, CT 06820
(203) 742-1511
- 4 St John - St. Mary Cemetery**
223 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06850
(203) 742-1518
- 5 Assumption Green Farms Assumption Kings Highway**
(c/o St John-St Mary/Norwalk)
73 Green Farms Road
Westport, CT 06880
(203) 742-1518
- 6 St Michael Cemetery**
2205 Stratford Avenue
Bridgeport / Stratford, CT 06615
(203) 742-1459
- 7 Gate Of Heaven Cemetery**
1056 Daniels Farm Road
Trumbull, CT 06611
(203) 742-1520
- 8 Resurrection Cemetery**
(c/o Gate of Heaven/Trumbull)
208 S. Main Street
Newtown, CT 06470
(203) 742-1520
- 9 St Peter Cemetery**
71 Lake Ave Extension
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 742-1504

Historical Cemeteries

- 10 St Augustine Cemetery**
(c/o St. Michael/Stratford)
241 Helen Street
Bridgeport, CT 06608
(203) 742-1459
- 11 St James Cemetery**
(c/o St. Michael/Stratford)
Grove Street
Bridgeport, CT 06608
(203) 742-1459
- 12 St Mary Cemetery**
(c/o St. John-St Mary/Norwalk)
25 Broad Street
Norwalk, CT 06851
(203) 742-1518
- 13 Old St Peter Cemetery**
(c/o St Peter/Danbury)
Sheridan Street
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 742-1504

Parish Cemeteries

- 14 St. Mary Cemetery**
24 Dodgingtown Road
Bethel, CT 06801
- 15 St Thomas Cemetery**
1719 Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
- 16 St Mary Cemetery**
55 Catoonah Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
- 17 St Rose Cemetery**
20 Cherry Street
Sandy Hook, CT 06482



Diocese of Bridgeport | Catholic Cemeteries

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Administrative Office at the Catholic Center
238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606

Phone: (203) 742-1450 Option 4