



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

OCTOBER 2021 | VOLUME 38, NUMBER 9 | AUTUMN ISSUE

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

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## All Souls Day Masses

Tuesday, November 2  
11 am

In Catholic Cemeteries across the diocese  
(see story on page 3)

# Around the Diocese

## Season of Life

by Elizabeth Clyons

### St. Rose Parish celebrates two beloved Sisters

NEWTOWN—The St. Rose of Lima community recently celebrated two cherished women—Sister Thaddeus Rajca, who teaches 6th and 7th-grade religion and is the spiritual coordinator at St. Rose School, and Sister Mary Ellen Genova, who is the St. Rose parish outreach coordinator, helping people in various situations including the homebound and those families planning funerals. “To love and serve the Lord” is at the heart of Sister Thaddeus and Sister Mary Ellen’s ministry.



### Back to School

BETHEL—True to the motto “Where there’s a need, there’s a Knight,” the Knights of Columbus Pavia Council 48 in Bethel were on hand to help out!

When most of the country was sweltering under a triple-digit heat index, the Pavia Knights set out to resurface the playground of St. Mary’s School, refurbish the sports equipment, and replace the building’s fluorescent lights in preparation of the start of the school year.



### St. Greg’s to hold 3rd annual ‘Forest of Fear’

DANBURY—For the third year in a row St. Gregory the Great Parish will be hosting a fun Halloween attraction: Forest of Fear.

The attraction will be available the last three weekends in October:

Friday & Saturday, October 15 & 16,  
rain date Sunday, October 17

Friday & Saturday, October 22 & 23,  
rain date Sunday, October 24

Friday & Saturday, October 29 & 30

5:30-6:30 pm will be a children’s hour,  
while 6:30-9 pm will be the full frightening experience.

St. Gregory the Great Parish is located at 85 Great Plain Rd., Danbury CT 06811.

The first 1,000 guest will receive a

**FOREST OF FEAR**  
St. Gregory the Great Parish

Friday & Saturday, October 15 & 16  
Rain Date: Sunday, October 17

Friday & Saturday, October 22 & 23  
Rain Date: Sunday, October 24

Friday & Saturday, October 29 & 30

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm : Children’s Hour  
6:30 pm - 9:00 pm : Scary

Tickets Purchased at Event Only Admission: \$15.00

Located behind  
St. Gregory the Great School  
85 Great Plain Road  
Danbury, CT 06811

OCTOBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30

\*\*\* The first 1000 guests will receive a free Forest of Fear wristband. \*\*\*

[www.ForestOfFear.org](http://www.ForestOfFear.org)

Please check our website for information, weather updates, directions, and more.

free Forest of Fear wristband.

(For more information, weather updates, directions and more, visit: [www.forest-offear.org](http://www.forest-offear.org))

### Support for those who have lost loved ones

TRUMBULL—Bereavement Support Group for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one will meet at St. Stephen Parish, 6948 Main St., Trumbull. A series of 10 weekly meetings will be held starting Thursday, Sept. 16, from 4-5:30 pm. Those interested must register in advance. For information call the parish office at 203.268.6217.

### St. Anthony’s parishioners ‘clean-up’ well!



FAIRFIELD—The S.A.V.E. (St. Anthony’s Values the Environment) volunteers from St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield recently participated in a beach clean-up along with Save the Sound in celebration of the International Coastal Clean Up Day!

### Magnificat Breakfast set for November 6

TRUMBULL—Magnificat, a ministry to Catholic women, will be holding their fall breakfast on Saturday, November 6, from 9:30 am-12 noon at Tashua Knolls in Trumbull. Tickets are available on Eventbrite for \$25.00. Please purchase tickets by November 1. For more information contact Carol Flynn at: 203.775.3875.

### St. Matthew Parish commemorates 9/11

NORWALK—St. Matthew Parish gathered together to remember those who died at the 4 pm Mass, Saturday, Sept. 11. The 4th-degree members from the St. Matthew Knights of Columbus formed an honor guard with a presentation of the flag of honor containing over 3,000 names, all those who perished on September 11, 2001. The Knights honor guard escorted two young adults/parishioners (Mia Ribellino and Roman Perez) from the Norwalk Public Safety Cadets who unfolded and presented the flag to the congregation after a moment of silence and the playing of taps.



### ON THE COVER

**A DAY OF JOY!**  
Couples celebrating milestone wedding anniversaries gather at St. Matthew Church in Norwalk for the Wedding Jubilee Mass celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano.  
(Photos by Amy Mortensen)

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# Diocesan News

## All Souls Day Masses set for November 2

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

BRIDGEPORT—All Souls Day Mass will be celebrated in six cemeteries throughout the diocese on the morning of Tuesday, November 2, at 11 am. The Masses will be offered for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed. All are welcome to attend.

The Masses were not held last year because of restrictions in the COVID-19 crisis.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be the main celebrant at the All Souls Day Mass held at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull. He will also bless the new mausoleum under construction on the grounds. The Mass will be streamed live on the diocesan Facebook page: [Facebook.com/bridgeportdiocese](https://www.facebook.com/bridgeportdiocese).

November is the month of the

Holy Souls in Purgatory and All Souls Day is a special day in particular during which we pray for those who have died.

“We come here not simply to pray for our sisters and brothers who stay here for a time, a resting place until their resurrection in glory, but we come here to pray for one another as our pilgrimage continues,” the bishop said at the 2019 Mass.

In his homily, which was streamed live on the diocesan Facebook page, Bishop Caggiano noted that: “We do not celebrate Mass everyday here, but on this most special day we come to remember that this ground is holy ground.”

“All of this ground is consecrated, so that all who lie here, lie here only for a time. For we do not believe as Catholic Christians that the day will come



when Christ returns in his glory and the dead will rise from these graves?”

The bishop thanked the pastors and priests who will be celebrating this year’s Masses and encouraged Catholics throughout the diocese to pray that all those who have died may rest in the peace of Christ.

Bishop Caggiano announced

the first outdoor All Souls Mass in 2016, and it has become an annual tradition across the diocese. Thousands of faithful of all ages throughout the diocese have found the Mass a moving and memorable way to pray for the faithfully departed.

Traditionally, Catholics visit cemeteries on All Souls Day to remember the dead and pray for

their souls. During the Masses, the celebrants will remember in a special way all deceased bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated men and women and lay faithful.

The diocese has announced the following locations: St. Peter Cemetery, Danbury; St. Mary-Putnam Cemetery, Greenwich; St. John-St. Mary Cemetery, Norwalk; Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Trumbull; St. Michael Cemetery, Stratford; St. John Cemetery, Darien.

The Masses will be celebrated rain or shine under large outdoor tents. Arrangements and logistics for the day are supported by Catholic Cemeteries.

The diocese maintains sponsors ten active cemeteries in Fairfield County. For information on Catholic Cemeteries, call 203.742.1450 Option 5 or go to [www.ctcemeteries.org](http://www.ctcemeteries.org). ■

## Fairfield U & Diocese move ahead on ‘pathways’

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

FAIRFIELD—Fairfield University is exploring plans for a new academic unit that would offer an associate degree to students from low-income families and underrepresented communities, primarily in the surrounding Bridgeport region.

Fairfield University President Mark R. Nemeč, Ph.D., made the announcement recently and said that the proposed initiative, to be undertaken in partnership with the Diocese of Bridgeport, represents a major step toward increased educational access at a critical moment in our society.

“Building upon the fine work undertaken last year by the President’s Commission on Educational Access, chaired by the former dean of the School of Education and Human Development Robert D. Hannafin, Ph.D., this initiative is designed to improve upward mobility and career trajectory for students not currently served by Fairfield University. The initiative offers a pathway to a four-year degree and lifetime learning,” Dr. Nemeč said. “We believe that Fairfield University can leverage its current position

of strength to build on existing efforts and establish the university as a leader in educational access in our own community.”

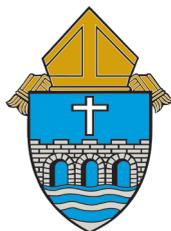
The university will continue to work with the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, the diocesan staff and other community partners to move the project forward.

Bishop Caggiano praised Dr. Nemeč and the leadership of Fairfield University for their commitment and vision, and said he looked forward to the university working out the final details in the coming months.

“I ask for prayers throughout the diocese as the university discerns the details of the initiative. This is a major step in creating access and empowering students to succeed,” he said.

“I believe this initiative will have a major impact on many young people in our region. The partnership with Fairfield sets a model of what a diocese and Catholic institution of higher learning can do together to create opportunity and equity at a time when many people are asking for change and we have an opportunity to make a difference.”

The bishop said the innovative



new plans grew out of the developing partnership with Fairfield University to serve the community. He said that he has long seen the need for such a program and that many students in diocesan and public high schools will have their lives transformed by the initiative.

Dr. Nemeč said the new educational outreach “brings the university and the diocese together to build on the historic achievement of the Catholic Church in contributing to the quality and availability of education in Fairfield County.”

On July 31, the Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Diocese of Bridgeport and Fairfield University announced a strategic partnership to support 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 Jesuit tradition has created some of the greatest colleges in the United States and around the world,” said the bishop. “Fairfield’s willingness to reach out is a major resource that can have an impact on future generations and foster greater inclusion as Fairfield County and the diocese continue to grow more diverse.”

“Our high schools have done a great job in readying students to continue their education, but not all students have the same opportunities or resources. The new associate degree programs will provide the support and encouragement that will make their higher education dreams a reality,” he said.

The partnership with the diocese, “Pathways to Higher Learning,” consists of ongoing projects and joint initiatives, some of which are already underway, to empower students through ongoing learning, mentoring and service opportunities.

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. The university is in the process of developing programs to serve students from Bridgeport through writing, science and engineering camps at the diocese’s Catholic Center in summer 2022.

The diocese and Fairfield University have also worked together on the university’s Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality, which has served many individuals and parishes throughout the diocese. ■

# Annual Catholic Appeal

## ACA unifies the local Church in faith & charity that support human dignity

BRIDGEPORT—With the “Arise” 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) at 97 percent of goal, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has issued a challenge to those who have not given to help bring the campaign over goal.

To date, more than 13,500 people have contributed over \$7.8 million to the 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal.

The bishop said that in addition to the ongoing and often urgent needs funded by the Annual Catholic Appeal, the ACA also “unifies the entire diocese and affirms our communion as one family of faith who look out for one another at a time when unity is more important than ever.”

Bishop Caggiano said the

ACA connects all of the parishes in a campaign that strengthens the voice and outreach of the Church.

“Together, we can do much more than an individual parish can do. By asking all to participate, the Appeal affirms the solidarity and subsidiarity of the Church to support human dignity and uphold Catholic social teaching,” he said.

A total of 15 parishes have chosen to partner with parishes in need through the new Parish Partnership Program introduced as part of the 2021 ACA. This partnership has already raised almost \$400,000 in revenue to support parishes facing financial difficulties. This new model allows parishes to direct 100 percent of the proceeds raised

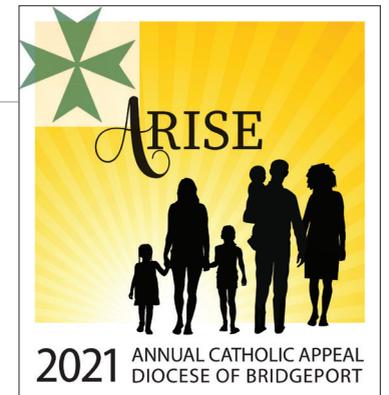
over their goal to an area of their choice. These funds may address a critical need in a particular parish, in a struggling parish, or to a specific mission supported by the Appeal. The program has been received with enthusiasm, with some parishes choosing to help support other pastorally vibrant but financially challenged parishes or directing their funds to their own parish needs, ministries and projects. The bishop said he is particularly heartened by the number of parishes that have gone over goal and by the parishes that chose to designate the overage to sister parishes that are struggling.

“I am deeply grateful for the generosity and willingness to share. It says something very important about the people of

our diocese and their love for the Gospel. I am also encouraged that the partnership effort is going beyond the financial to unite the parishes in shared activities that deepen the bonds between people and the sense of communion of the Church in Fairfield County,” he said.

Joe Gallagher, chief development officer, said a letter has been mailed to 9,000 Catholics who have given over the past several years but have not yet made a gift in 2021.

“The level of generosity has been extraordinary given the challenges and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each new donor who joins the Appeal will bring us that much closer to goal and ensure the diocese has



the resources it needs during a time of recovery and renewal.”

Pamela R. Rittman, director of the ACA, needs to raise an additional \$553,505 to fund the vital ministries supported by the ACA.

“We are grateful for each and every gift received from donors that align with their faith, budget and giving plans. Every gift matters and broader participation is the key to success for the campaign.”

She said 26 parishes have made or exceeded their respective ACA goals and that nine parishes are within 10 percent of their goal.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



## 2021 Arise, Annual Catholic Appeal

**Our Annual Catholic Appeal is almost at goal. I am deeply grateful for all who have given during this challenging time.**

**If you have not made your gift, I need your help to continue to provide for those in need and the ministries of the Diocese of Bridgeport.**

### Your gift:

- **Provides** over 1.3 million meals and 10,000 counseling sessions
- **Awards** over \$2.7 million in financial assistance for Catholic education through the Bishop's Scholarship Fund
- **Educates and trains** 23 men for ordination to the priesthood and eight men to the Permanent Diaconate
- **Advances** religious formation for our youth, young adults, and families.

Through your generosity and prayers, you can be a strong voice for serving others and for renewal.

**I ask you to accept this challenge to close the gap and bring the Appeal to conclusion for all those we serve.**

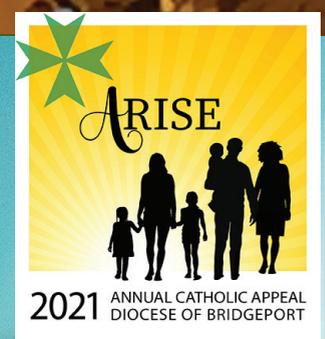
May God bless you for helping to foster the unity and communion of the Church in our diocese.

**Make Your Online Gift Today**

[2021ACABridgeport.com](https://2021ACABridgeport.com)

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# Decree on *Traditionis Custodes*

## Concerning the Implementation of *Traditionis Custodes*

# On the Use of the Roman Liturgy Prior to the Reform of 1970 Within the Diocese of Bridgeport

On July 16, 2021, the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter given *motu proprio* regarding the use of the Roman Liturgy prior to the reform of 1970 in the particular Churches of the Roman Rite. In obedience to the universal law that the Supreme Pontiff has set forth, I, the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, decree what follows as particular law for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

### Preamble

1. Recognizing that there are several groups of the faithful (*cœtus fidelium*) throughout the diocese composed of those rooted in the form of Christian worship which employs the more ancient use (*usus antiquior*) of the Roman Liturgy experienced prior to the reform of 1970, and that certain groups have been attached to such worship for a significant period of time; and
2. Confirming that there is neither widespread dissension nor denial of the validity and the legitimacy of the liturgical reform as established by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council either within these groups of faithful or within the diocese as a whole; and
3. Mindful of the Supreme Pontiff's desire to reaffirm that the bishops are "the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, as well as being the moderators, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the church entrusted to their care"; and

4. Desiring to care for the spiritual welfare and good of the *cœtus fidelium*; and
5. Understanding that it is my exclusive competence to authorize the use of the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 and to regulate all liturgical celebrations in my diocese, as stated in *Traditionis Custodes*

I hereby determine the following:

1. In accordance with canon 87, the Parish of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Bridgeport, and the Parish of Saint Mary in Norwalk are dispensed from the restriction of location found in *Traditionis Custodes*, permitting them to celebrate the Mass according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962, following their respective schedules as established before the issuance of *Traditionis Custodes*. The pastors of these parishes also have permission to celebrate the other sacraments of the Church in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite within their parishes, without any further needed permission
2. Outside of these two parishes, and concerning all other celebrations of the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite which would occur throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport, the following applies:
  - a. All celebrations of Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 will be sponsored as a direct service of my episcopal ministry and remain under my direct supervision. These Masses will be hosted by those parishes in which the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite was celebrated prior to the issuance of *Traditionis Custodes*.
    - i. The schedule of such Masses will remain as existed before the issuance of *Traditionis Custodes*.
    - ii. If a pastor determines that his parish no longer wishes or needs to host the



celebration of Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962, the pastor must inform the Bishop of his decision in writing before the change is finalized.

- b. In cases where the pastor of the parish hosting the celebration of Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 neither has nor wants delegation to celebrate in the *usus antiquior*, the Vicar for Liturgy and Worship will take on the responsibility to ensure that these Masses are properly and reverently celebrated in accordance with the rubrics, employing a rotation of the priests who have been determined by me as qualified (*idoneus*) to celebrate in the *usus antiquior*.
- c. Priests who seek delegation to celebrate Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 shall seek the faculty to do so in writing directly to me. A priest will be granted this faculty provided he has been determined to be *idoneus*, or qualified to celebrate in the *usus antiquior*.
  - i. In order to be deemed as *idoneus*, a priest must:
    1. Not be impeded by Canon Law;
    2. Possess and evidence a basic knowledge of the Latin language so as to pronounce words correctly while understanding their meaning;
    3. Demonstrate facility and competency in the celebration of

the *usus antiquior* of the Mass according to the rubrical directives.

- d. The faculty to celebrate Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 includes:
  - i. Permission to celebrate such a Mass privately at any time;
  - ii. Permission to celebrate such a Mass for the faithful at any approved times;
  - iii. Permission to pray the *Breviarum Romanum* (the Divine Office in the *usus antiquior*) as a means of fulfilling a cleric's obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.
  - iv. Permission to celebrate the *Ordo Ministrandi Sacramentum Pœnitentiæ* (the Sacrament of Penance in the *usus antiquior*) to the faithful who request it.
- e. Priests ordained after July 16, 2021 who wish to celebrate Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 must make a request in writing to me outlining the reasons for his desire to celebrate Mass in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite.
  - i. Such priests must first be determined to be *idoneus* (cf. Article 2c) as per diocesan guidelines.
  - ii. In accordance with the requirements of *Traditionis Custodes*, I will consult the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments before granting any such requests.
- f. If a pastor discovers that there is a stable community within his parish that desires to celebrate in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite, he must make a written petition to me requesting the ability to have such celebrations in his parish, outlining the pastoral considerations that led to the request. If I grant such permission, it will be given in writing.
- g. Concerning the celebration of all other sacraments of the

Church in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite other than the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance: with the exception of those parishes that have received the dispensation of restriction of location as stipulated in Article 1, each celebration will require permission from me to celebrate.

- h. Likewise, deacons ordained after July 16, 2021 who wish to assist as either deacon or subdeacon at Masses celebrated in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite must first obtain permission from me to assist at such Masses. They must also be determined to be *idoneus* in accordance with the prescriptions of Article 2c in order to exercise their ministry.

Given the importance of this period of transition, I will be working directly with the priests who wish to celebrate the Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962. In accordance with the desires of *Traditionis Custodes*, a priest delegate will be assigned to moderate all such activities at a future date.

In order that everything I have decreed be observed in all its parts, anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention, I establish that it be promulgated by way of publication in the *Fairfield County Catholic*, the official newspaper of the Diocese of Bridgeport; entering in force on September 29, 2021, the Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels.

Given at the Catholic Center on September 29, 2021. ■

*Frank J. Caggiano*

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano  
Bishop of Bridgeport

*Robert M. Kinnally*

Reverend Robert M. Kinnally  
Chancellor

# Ambassador Formation

## Dr. Robert McCarty speaks to Ambassadors: ‘Our identity is connected to the community’

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—As a part of phase three of the Ambassador Program, participants were invited to tune-in to three webinars and attend one in-person event.

The men and women of all ages participating in the Ambassador formation initiative were recommended by their pastors and drawn from parishes throughout the diocese. The formation initiative was created to equip parishioners with the knowledge and tools to confidently talk to others about their faith and encourage those that may be disenfranchised from the Catholic Church to reengage with its teachings and spiritual guidance.

The first webinar took place on Saturday, September 11, from 10 am-12 pm and featured speaker Dr. Robert McCarty.

“The big ministry question that parishes and dioceses are asking themselves right now is: will people come back?” McCarty said.

McCarty addressed how pastoral leaders and ambassadors can begin to approach those who are on the edge of the Church. He also discussed the reasons why people are leaving the Church today and what can be done about it.

“You have people who drift away,” McCarty explained, “they just lose touch with the Church. You have people who are damaged, maybe they’ve been hurt by the Church in some way, and you have the dissenters who have some strong issues, who might be angry about Church teaching.”

McCarty explained that people have a spiritual hunger. “They are still looking for a place to connect that fosters their spiritual journey.”

He continued, “People have a hunger for a sense of meaning and purpose—they want life to make sense. They have a hunger for justice. I think at every age people recognize the inequalities, and I think people want life to be fair for everybody. I believe we all have a hunger for the Holy even if we don’t use that language.”

McCarty spoke about the importance of meeting people where they are. “When we are



FEATURED SPEAKER—Dr. Robert McCarty spoke to participants of the diocesan Ambassador Program as part of phase three, which offers three webinars and one in-person event.

willing to be where people are, we are saying their ground is holy ground. Rather than thinking of ministry as what happens when people come to us, we have to develop that missionary attitude that ministry is what happens when we go to them.”

“We got to find those places to spend time to develop relationships with people. It’s about making contact,” McCarty said.

“We need to engage people in conversation about where they are,” he said. “We have to be known to them.”

McCarty posed the question: How do we develop a reputation as we are a welcoming community?

“We are at our best as Catholics when we gather around the Eucharistic table,” said McCarty. “I think it’s critically important to attend to the way we worship on Sunday. The way we celebrate liturgy, the way we sing, the way we preach, and the way we welcome people into the community is critical. So, the first characteristic of an engaged community—how do we pray?”

McCarty explained that one of the facets of being a Catholic is that we are communal. We have a hunger for connection

and belonging. “That’s who we are, we are a communal faith, the good news was given to the community of believers. Why? Because the good news is bigger than any one of us.”

McCarty continued, “our identity is connected to the community. It’s about belonging. We recognize that our community is not only broad in terms of the here and

now, but it’s got depth because it goes back 2,000 years.”

McCarty emphasized the importance of becoming a Church that responds to people’s yearnings and hungers. He identified those yearnings and hunger as: wanting to be known, in a place where one’s true self is nurtured, in a place where one is welcome, a place where it’s free of judgment, a place where one doesn’t fear rejection, where one is free to express struggles, doubts and hopes, and a place where one would be missed if they were gone.

“That whole idea of belonging, I think is exactly what ambassa-

dors are doing,” said McCarty. “It’s to go out and greet people, meet people where they are, and make that kind of contact, foster those kind of connections, and then to introduce them to

**“We are at our best as Catholics when we gather around the Eucharistic table.”**

an experience of Jesus that becomes life changing.”

The next webinar available to ambassadors will

feature Ann Marie Eckert on Listening to Understand and the in-person event will feature Justin Fatica, executive director of Hard as Nails Ministries. There will also be a panel discussion at St. Francis in Weston with Father Joseph Gill, Msgr. Kevin Royal, Sister Mary Ellen Genova and Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., director of safe environments & victim assistance coordinator for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

On Saturday, October 16, a Mass and commission ceremony for diocesan ambassadors participating in the diocesan renewal will be held at 12 noon

at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport as part of the Global Synod on Synodality.

The Mass will celebrate the commitment of almost 200 people from 25 different parishes who responded to the bishop’s call and have completed the Ambassador training program to prepare them go out into the world and welcome all back to the Church.

In Masses held last spring in Bridgeport and in New Fairfield, the bishop said “developing a spirit of perseverance and endurance alongside the desire to witness Christ in a wounded world are the qualities needed to welcome people back to the Church.”

The October 16 commissioning is when they will go out into the community. The bishop said he looks forward to the day when every Catholic home in the diocese will be visited by Ambassadors who will affirm the faithful and welcome people back to the Church.

### About Dr. Robert McCarty

Dr. Bob McCarty is a pastoral ministry consultant and trainer and adjunct faculty at The Catholic University of America and The University of Dallas. He offers consultations, retreats, workshops and training programs in ministry skills and issues internationally. Bob serves as the project coordinator for the Saint Mary’s Press research project, Going, Going, Gone: The Dynamics of Disaffiliation in Young Catholics. His most recent book is Faith Talk: Having Conversations with Young People That Matter! (Saint Mary’s Press 2018). Bob is a volunteer in his parish youth ministry and adult faith formation program at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Fulton, Md. Bob has a doctorate in ministry from the Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana and a master’s degree in Religious Education from LaSalle University.

(For further information on the Ambassador initiative, visit: [www.bridgeportdiocese.org/call-to-renewal](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/call-to-renewal) or [www.formationreimagined.org/ambassadors](http://www.formationreimagined.org/ambassadors))

# Diocesan Budget

## Diocese releases budget

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and the Finance Council of the Diocese of Bridgeport have approved a fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 operating budget with a total of \$22,069,270 in revenues and \$22,312,710 in expenditures, representing a \$243,440 projected deficit.

“The prior year budget adopted for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 also projected a deficit, totaling \$513,703. Last year, as



MICHAEL HANLON CPA

we entered the early stages of the pandemic there was much uncertainty related to revenue sources to support operations and that deficit budget reflected this. Preliminary financial reports for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 project a surplus. This was realized as additional support was received throughout the diocese from our generous donors and budgeted expenses were reduced during this fiscal year,” said Michael Hanlon CPA, chief financial officer (CFO).

Hanlon said the development of this fiscal year budget ending June 30, 2022 was equally as difficult with continued uncertainty related to contribution and other revenue sources.

“Enhanced pastoral and mission related programs to fulfill Bishop Caggiano’s vision need increased funding. Additional staffing for these programs and staff required for administrative support added additional expenses. We hope to be able to manage this budget deficit again this year,” he said.

Our parishes and parishioners also continue to recover from the pandemic as pastors seek to return to full Mass schedules and attendance,” Hanlon said.

“Overall, most parish offertory declined during the pandemic as Masses were suspended.

Offertory is one components of the Cathedraticum tax assessment and this year’s budget is estimated based on this uncertainty,” he said.

The Cathedraticum assessment declined approximately \$350,000 for budgetary purposes. The assessment was modified for this year only, based on a three-year revenue average calculation rather than an annual calculation, to mitigate a much greater decline.

The Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) and Cathedraticum tax are the major sources of revenue for the annual operating budget. The ACA supports diocesan mission related programs including Catholic Education, works of charity and pastoral services, catechesis and evangelization, and clergy (vocations, formation and retired priests). In addition, Cathedraticum, is the traditional assessment on parishes to support the administration and operating costs of the diocese.

The diocese’s obligation to operate with fiscal responsibility and manage the resources continues to be a focus that was established since Bishop Caggiano’s arrival, Hanlon said.

“We are stewards of all funds entrusted to us as we continue fiscally responsible and prudent decision making at all levels of the diocesan management team,” said Hanlon. “Additionally, we continue our practice of financial transparency by outlining our diocesan budget and releasing audited financial statements annually.”

Department leaders submitted their preliminary budgets to finance and after initial review, proposed expenses were adjusted to reduce requested expenses to minimums necessary to functionally operate based on estimated revenue. All departments have been operating under-staffed and this year’s budget adds some much needed positions to support pastoral programs as well as administrative functions.

Positions and additional funding were added to support the bishop’s mission related pastoral programs within the Institute of Catholic Formation, and to

focus on strategic and pastoral planning, campus ministry and vocations.

The diocesan Development Office has received additional investment funding as Chief Development Officer Joseph Gallagher expands development functions to focus on areas of planned giving and major gifts. Success in this area will strengthen the diocese financially for many future years, Hanlon said.

Additional administrative support positions were budgeted within Human Resources, Informational Technology and Facilities departments.

During 2020-2021, Deacon Patrick Toole, secretary of the curia and episcopal delegate for administration, conducted a study related to identifying potential operational efficiencies within the Queen of Clergy priest’s retirement home in Stamford. Following this study, Patrick Leydon was hired as Queen of Clergy’s operations and property manager. Additional efficiencies and savings in operations are expected under his leadership.

During June 2021, the diocese paid the outstanding balance of the Knights of Columbus loan. The original loan was \$15 million and this budget is the first in many years where the diocese does not have related interest expense.

The approved budget projects revenues to increase approximately \$2.2 million to fund increase expenses of \$2.0 million. Projected revenue increases are anticipated within Annual Catholic Appeal contributions offset by expected declines with the Cathedraticum assessment. Additional funding is anticipated based on the development office focus on specific donor designated gifts for programs and other ministries.

The budget estimated some revenue from forgiveness of the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan for pandemic related support. Recently the diocese received notification that its \$2.6 million loan was fully forgiven. This will have a positive effect on this year’s budget deficit.

PPP loans were also received by all our schools and 70 parish-

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

### The Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation

#### Operational Budget — July 2021 to June 2022

##### Revenue

Annual Catholic Appeal	\$8,300,000
Cathedraticum Assessment	5,742,200
Contributions and Bequests	3,540,419
Rental and Other Income	3,049,651
Cemeteries Contribution	1,437,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$22,069,270</b>

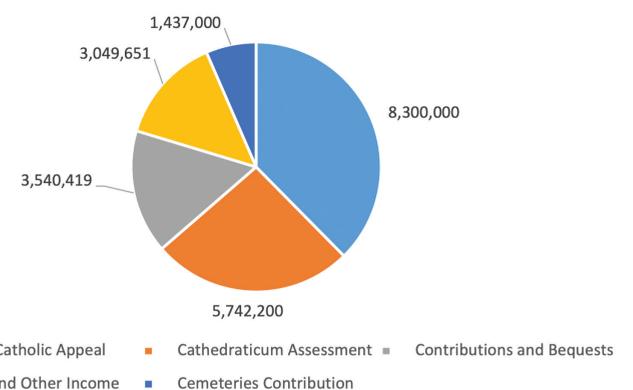
##### Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$11,512,219
Grants and Contributions	4,438,175
Contracted Services	2,325,501
Occupancy and Insurance	887,388
Professional Fees and Services	1,108,670
Travel, Seminars, Dues and Other	922,789
Office, Postage and Printing	847,253
Other Supplies and Expense	270,715
Interest	—
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$22,312,710</b>

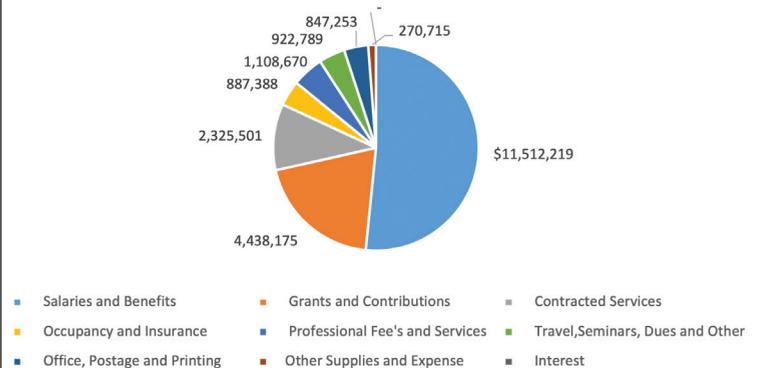
#### DEFICIT FROM OPERATIONS — BEFORE DEPRECIATION

\$(243,440)

#### Operational Budget July 2021-June 2022 Total Budgeted Revenue \$22,069,270



#### Operational Budget July 2021- June 2022 Total Budgeted Expenses \$22,312,710



# Wedding Jubilee Masses

## Couples celebrate milestone anniversaries

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

NORWALK—“As we gather this morning with great joy, to join you in the celebration of your anniversaries of the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony, the entire diocese offers you its warmest congratulations,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano addressed the couples gathered at the annual Wedding Jubilee Mass celebrated at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk.

The Mass honored married couples celebrating 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50+ year wedding anniversaries, and was celebrated in two liturgies in order to accommodate the large number of couples being recognized.

In his homily, Bishop Caggiano spoke about the Wedding Feast at Cana, which was fittingly the Gospel reading for the Mass. “Jesus took the celebration of a marriage to teach something very profound,” the bishop said.

“Whether you realize it or not,” the bishop addressed the couples present, “for all the years you have been together as husband and wife, in good times and in bad, you have been teaching the world what God means when He says I love you.”

The bishop explained that marital love endures, changes season, becomes deeper and more mature over the years. “The recognition is that love is more than an emotion, a choice, and a decision to be one in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, until death, whenever that comes, does us part.”

This love, said the bishop, “glimpses for us the wild and reckless love God has for you and me and for his bride, who is the Church.”

The bishop explained that God wishes to share His whole life with us, in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit; and that love compels us to reflect His life in the world. “In your married life, you are teaching the rest of us what God wants for all of us,” the bishop said.

The bishop acknowledged that love isn’t always easy. “You have seen your share of sacrifices, challenges, disappointments, fears, and sufferings,” he said. “Yet, you are still here; side by side,



CELEBRATING MARRIAGE—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated the Wedding Jubilee Masses at St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk on Saturday, September 25. The Mass was celebrated in two liturgies in order to accommodate the large number of couples being recognized. Couples were able to take photos with the bishop in-between the two Masses.

hand in hand, and heart to heart. Because while God does not promise that our lives will always be easy, he always promises that He will be with us.”

The bishop said that marriage is

a vocation meant to last a lifetime. “God offers a covenant to all His people. He never turns His back and never stops loving us,” said the bishop.

“I cannot imagine how your

hearts must break open with love and joy to see the flesh that the two of you share take life before you,” the bishop commended those who have children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild-

dren. The bishop also spoke to those who don’t have their own natural children, saying, “in the love that you have shared with one another you have opened your homes and hearts to friends and neighbors who are now sisters and brothers, lifelong companions.”

Married love is about giving life, explained the bishop, as is God’s love.

“You are a blessing to the Church, said the bishop, “because you are a living sign of who God is and the beauty, depth, breadth and richness of God’s love in the world.”

The bishop then invited all those celebrating their anniversaries to stand and renew their vows before God and His Church.

At the closing of the Mass, the bishop commented that all together, over 3,000 years of marriage were being celebrated in the church today between the two Masses.

Couples celebrating their milestone anniversaries were able to take photos with the bishop in-between the two Masses. ■

### Wedding Jubilee couples 2021

Bibiana & Alvaro Dedios  
Corrine & Erwin Maurer  
Margaret & Alfred Uva  
Diane & Dn. Thomas Fekete  
Maria & Hector Ortiz  
Caryl & Dn. William Timmel  
Lorene & Deacon Joseph Koletar  
Joan & Henry Gioiella  
Martina & Frank Bria  
Claudette & Donald Perley  
Maria & Steven Politica  
Janet & John McMullen  
Jill & Dennis Maurao  
Kathleen & Richard Tunstall  
Anne & John Gueterman  
Elvira & Harrison Barrett  
Kate & Dave Allsup  
Emilia & Joseph Schiro  
Charlotte & Patrick Gannon  
MaryAnn & Richard Zarnick  
Helen & Joseph Boland  
Carla & Sean Sullivan  
Diana & Alan Supersano  
Diana & Anthony Mazzello  
Dolores & Peter Russell  
Martha & Don Odell  
Dawn & Steven Cioffi  
Claire & Jean Luc Faucher  
Margie & Steve Kish  
Julia & Richard Balas

Janet Storace & Joseph Bonomo  
Lucy & Juan Rodriguez  
Patricia & Frank Torchen  
Maureen & Raymond Brooks  
Patricia & Alexander Koproski  
Deborah & Jeffrey Harrington  
Theresa & John Croffy  
Suanne & Al Latte  
Andre & Simone Pare  
Anne & Roger Lajoie  
Catherine & Robert Fabrizio  
Linda & Michael Johnston  
Mary & Robert Garvey  
Dionelyn & Ernest DeBorja  
Nina & Robert Keane  
Lorraine & Richard Smith  
Fred & Linda Chakar  
Margot & Milan Turk  
Andrea & Stephen Gravereaux  
Christina & Gene Cronin  
Patricia & Kenneth Miller  
Margaret & Ray Borders  
Yvonne & William Marcial  
Frances & Deacon Joseph Cann  
Irena & Stan Dec  
Anita & Thomas Field  
Anne & John Rich  
Susan & Joseph Spain  
Michele Mattera & John Regan  
Camille & Anthony Aiello

Susan & John Kevin Davidson  
Maribel & Mario DiFiore  
Kimberly Norton & William Butler  
Suzanne & Matthew Pacifico  
Gloria & Robert Zanvettor  
Linda & Paul Gargano  
Joann & Thomas Marticek  
Virginia & Mark Harger  
Mayra & Jose Olavarria  
Stephanie & Kevin DeBartolomeo  
Peggy & Michael Tedesco  
Donna & Joseph Rahtelli  
Patricia & Bruce Richards  
Pamela & George Murphy  
Charlene & Edward Prisinzano  
Barbara & Bill Brimmer  
Jacqueline & Joseph Rainone  
Phyllis & Douglas Reid  
Angela & Edmund D’Onofrio  
Donna & Mario Migiano  
Theresa & Robert Cavaliere  
Marie & Donato Piselli  
Elaine & Eugene Ryan  
Ron & Jo-Ann Miller  
Patricia & Joseph Antal  
Shirley & Roger DeCola  
Johanne & Michael Hagan  
Carol & Eugene Kopfmann  
Rosemarie & Anthony Xavier  
Mary & James Florindi

Karen & Jim Pritchard  
Ann & Paul Moeller  
Margaret & Rudy Niedermeier  
Betty & Richard Corona  
Gayle & Thomas Kochan  
Barbara & Henry Crutchley  
Patricia & Patsy Pagliarulo  
Patricia & Olivier Bourgeois  
Louise & Frederick, Jr Miller  
Dolores & Daniel Cunningham  
Roberta & Robert Morton  
Frances & Ivan Capella  
Karen & Gianmarco Marchetti  
Carolyn & Mark Browning  
Mary & Robert Garvey  
Joanne & James Feehley  
Jayne E. & Stanley M., Jr D’Amico  
Marty & Bill McCart  
Mary & Jim Evans  
Cathy & Earl Fish  
Grace & Richard Keller  
Lisa & George Romano  
Dina & Ricardo Mendoza  
Iris Cuellar & Cesar Palancia  
Ali & John Dorn  
Diane & Ken Moran  
Lorelei & Chris Elsberry  
Mary & Eugene Scoran  
JoAnn & Rocco Mancuso  
Heliett & Michael Sanchez  
Janet & Robert DeLuca

# Diocesan Budget

## DIOCESAN BUDGET FROM PAGE 8

es totaling approximately \$14.6 million. All but \$60,000 was forgiven. An additional \$3.0 million in PPP 2 funding was received by several schools who met new eligibility requirements.

“This large infusion of cash allowed our parishes and schools to remain financially solvent during an extremely difficult period. This cash allowed many

of these entities to pay bills to the diocese which include the Cathedra assessments (parishes only), and medical and self-insurance allocations,” Hanlon said.

Contributions and grants allocated from the Annual Catholic Appeal to diocesan mission-related entities represent approximately 19.9 percent of

this budget. These contributions and grants support the missions of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, St. Catherine Academy for Special Needs, the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, the Cardinal Shehan Center and the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund within Foundations in Education. Additionally, these funds support vocations, seminarians and

retired priests.

Salaries and benefits represent approximately 51.6 percent of the overall budget, Hanlon said, noting, “market-rate salary increases have been budgeted for January 1, as our employees are dedicated to their work and are always doing more than expected.” Additional increases were budgeted for diocesan priests who

serve in dual capacities, including parish responsibilities along with additional diocesan assignments or leadership positions on committees.

He said the diocese continues to work to manage and control healthcare related expenses and benefits while providing affordable comprehensive coverage for employees and their families.

“Although we attempt to manage our costs with progressive initiatives, budgeted healthcare benefit costs continue to rise greater than inflation rates annually. The diocese pays 80 percent of employee healthcare costs and 100 percent for our clergy,” he said.

Andrew Schulz, director of real estate and Anne McCrory, chief legal and real estate officer, have continued to identify new areas of revenue sources while overseeing the diocesan property portfolio.

“They continue to do a remarkable job in identifying opportunities to generate alternative sources of revenue from property leases by marketing vacant diocesan owned buildings for use,” he said.

The long-term underfunded liability obligations related to the frozen diocesan lay employee pension plan (frozen since 2008) continue to be a major area of concern and challenge for the diocese.

Although steps have been taken to reduce this underfunded liability based on a strategy developed by the lay pension committee, consisting of finance council members, the long-term pension liability remains one of our largest financial challenge. Additional solutions and funding sources continue to be explored funding sources to fulfill all future pension benefit payments to the pension participants.

In December 2013, Bishop Caggiano took a major step toward financial transparency when he released the audited financial statements for years 2010, 2011 and 2012. Audited financial statements for the subsequent periods ending December 31, 2013 and 2014, as well as financial statements for the periods ending June 30, 2016 through June 30, 2020 have been released annually. All reports can be found online.

(To learn more, visit the diocesan website: [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialreports/](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/financialreports/))



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# 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal

## ‘Little church on the hill’ meets goal

By KATHY-ANN GOBIN

DANBURY—Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, also known as the “little church on the hill,” has met its goal of more than \$32,000 for the 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal.

The congregation of 352 families and growing is playing an instrumental part in meeting the needs of its fellow parishioners and parishioners throughout the diocese and the larger community of the Catholic Church.

“It’s a wonderful feeling knowing people care,” said Nannette Scudiero, chairperson of the Finance Council. Scudiero has recently been appointed a trustee for the church, which takes effect after her council term expires in December.

“I am so honored,” she said of the appointment and of being entrusted to help shepherd the parish’s finances.

She said that people in the parish are committed to its finan-

cial health and also to supporting the many diocesan ministries funded by the Annual Catholic Appeal, which she is pleased to champion.

This year’s theme, “Arise,” highlights the many ways people have risen to the challenge to help others especially those suffering through hardships sustained during the pandemic.

“If you can’t feed your family, that is heartbreaking,” Scudiero said referring to one of the many ministries supported by the ACA. Gifts to the Appeal make it possible to provide over 1.3 million meals each year through Catholic Charities in addition to 10,000 counseling sessions and housing assistance.

The ACA also supports such ministries as financial assistance for Catholic education through the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund and the ongoing work of faith formation.

Education and faith formation are two key areas both Scudiero

and Sacred Heart of Jesus Pastor Father Norm Guilbert agree can lead to a path of fulfillment.

“I am a priest wholly and completely because of the ACA,” Father Guilbert said. “I would not have been able to afford it.”

Father Guilbert said he started his career at Pitney Bowes right after high school because he couldn’t afford the cost of college. As his career progressed and Pitney Bowes offered educational reimbursement to employees, he started to pursue a college education. That education opened his eyes to the priesthood. A thought he first had as a 12-year-old boy to become a priest, could now become reality.

“I’m grateful for having a little bit of world knowledge, so that when I have to counsel people, I might have experienced the same things that are bothering them,”

Father Guilbert said.

Scudiero said her education, although not related to the ACA, was also attained later in life, by going to school part-time while working full-time as the assistant to the CEO of Union Carbide. She later became the assistant to Connecticut State Treasurer Denise Nappier and was promoted to manager for unclaimed properties during her 18-year career with the state.

“You have to keep moving forward,” she said, adding that the support of the ACA helps families to do just that.

Father Guilbert said he is grateful his parishioners have heeded the call to be so giving.

“Do everything that charity calls us to do,” he said. “Honor and follow Christ’s call to love our neighbors as ourselves.”

Gifts can be made securely



NANNETTE SCUDIERO

either on-line on the Annual Catholic Appeal website at [2021ACABridgeport.com](http://2021ACABridgeport.com) donate page tab or by texting the word, APPEAL to 475.241.7849 on a Smart Phone or call 203.416.1470. ACA gifts can be mailed to the Catholic Center at 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606.

### ACA FROM PAGE 4

Rittman said that the funds from the ACA provide over 1.3 million meals and 10,000 counseling sessions; award over \$2.7 million in financial assistance for Catholic education through the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund; educate and train 23 men for ordination to the priesthood and eight men to the Permanent Diaconate; and ensure religious education through faith-based programs.

“Beyond all of that, a pledge to the ACA is a strong voice for serving others and for supporting the renewal efforts outlined by our bishop,” she said.

In a recent video, Bishop Caggiano said that many people have already given generously and he urged others to finish the work.

“Now that school is back in session and parish life is resuming its normal activities again, I come to you for your help to bring the Appeal to a close. We’re almost at our goal, but I need your help to achieve that goal so that the sick may be cared for, the hungry may be fed, those who are in need, particularly in COVID-19, can have the loving touch of God through you and me. If you have not given, please consider a sacrificial gift, help us to get to the goal so that all of us together can do the work that God has given us.”

The bishop said that participation in the ACA is a fundamental response to the invitation to build up the Church on earth.

“The invitation is for all of us, made in God’s image and likeness through the power of grace, to enter into the very life of God, who is Himself a communion in Christian revelation. That invitation reminds us of who we are and reminds us of the bond we share with everyone, of all races, of all religious traditions. It also reminds us of the obligation we have to sustain our common life, even in the respect and care for creation.”

(You may make your pledge online at [www.2021ACABridgeport.com](http://www.2021ACABridgeport.com) and also by texting the word APPEAL to 475.241.7849. Please visit the website to view the 2021 Appeal video and learn more. Thank you for your generosity.)



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## EDITORIAL

## Commissioning Ceremonies

October 16<sup>th</sup> is shaping up to be an important day in the life of the diocese, as Bishop Frank J. Caggiano leads two major commissioning ceremonies.

During the morning, the bishop will be at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston at 9 am to meet with parish delegates who will guide the diocesan response to the *Synod on Synodality*. The global synod was called for by Pope Francis to plan for the future of the Church. The inclusion of laity will represent a permanent change in how the Church conducts the synods, which have been convened every three years since Vatican II. The synod delegates from our diocese will lead the listening process and submit a report to Rome.

At noon on the same day at St. Augustine Cathedral, Bishop Caggiano will commission men and women throughout the diocese who have participated in the Ambassador Formation program. After a year of study, reflection and spiritual growth, the Ambassadors will be commissioned to go out into their parishes and welcome people back to the Church.

The bishop called for Ambassadors in his February 17, 2021 pastoral exhortation, "Let Us Enter the Upper Room with the Lord." At that time, he wrote, "I will need the assistance of co-workers who will not be afraid to go out into their communities to invite people to encounter the Lord and His mercy."

In that spirit, the upcoming ceremonies represent a hopeful moment. We offer our thanks and prayers for all those who have stepped forward to serve in this important and joyful work of renewing the diocese.

## All Souls Day Masses

All Souls Day (November 2) Masses will take on a special meaning this year as people throughout the diocese are invited to gather at Catholic cemeteries for outdoor Mass in remembrance of those whom they have lost.

Last year's Mass was cancelled due to the severity of the COVID-19 crisis, and many missed the opportunity to participate in the solemn and comforting service. The All Souls Day Mass is an invitation to reaffirm our faith and demonstrate our gratitude for those who came before us.

"Even though we are surrounded by the signs of an impending Winter, we come here to remind ourselves that death does not have the final word," the bishop said in the 2019 All Souls Day Mass. "The day will come, when God chooses, when every single person will rise from these graves—and the living and the dead will stand before God the Father and come into the Glory of everlasting life, which means that this feast of All Souls Day is the festival of hope."

Our thanks go to Catholic cemeteries for hosting the All Souls Day Masses and to the pastors and priests who will be celebrating this year's Masses. We encourage all to attend this deeply moving service and to pray that all those who have died may rest in the peace of Christ.

## A Prayer to St. Joseph

In October, the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates Respect Life Month. As part of the observance, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has offered the following prayer to St. Joseph, Defender of Life.

*Dearest St. Joseph, at the word of an angel, you lovingly took Mary into your home. As God's humble servant, you guided the Holy Family on the road to Bethlehem, welcomed Jesus as your own son in the shelter of a manger, and fled far from your homeland for the safety of both Mother and Child.*

*We praise God that as their faithful protector, you never hesitated to sacrifice for those entrusted to you. May your example inspire us also to welcome, cherish, and safeguard God's most precious gift of life.*

*Help us to faithfully commit ourselves to the service and defense of human life—especially where it is vulnerable or threatened. Obtain for us the grace to do the will of God in all things. Amen.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Catechetical Summit

UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano addresses faith formation coordinators and clergy at the Catechetical Summit on August 25, 2021. The summit, hosted by The Institute for Catholic Formation, included an opportunity for parish leaders to hear the results of the catechetical inventory. The inventory, which was part of the initial stage of formation for all catechists and Catholic school teachers, was a self-assessment that asked participants to evaluate their own understanding of Catholic doctrine and their ability to teach the faith to young people. ■



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

## PASTOR

REVEREND JOSEPH CERVERO, from Pastor Sacred Heart-Saint Patrick Parish, Redding, to Pastor of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish, Shelton. Effective date is October 31, 2021 for a term of six years.

## PAROCHIAL VICAR

REVEREND BRENDAN BLAWIE, appointed to Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Ridgefield. Effective date was October 1, 2021.

REVEREND DAMIAN PIELESZ, from Saint Mary

Parish, Ridgefield to Parochial Vicar, the Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist, Stamford.

## RETIREMENT

REVEREND LAWRENCE LARSON, to retirement. Effective date is November 1, 2021. Father will continue to reside at Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield.

## DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIANS

REVEREND JOSEPH MARCELLO, reappointed Director of Seminarians. Effective date is November 4, 2021 for a term of one year.

## OTHER

REVEREND PETER TOWSLEY, returns to ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport as Chaplain of Paradisus Dei and Spiritual Director to the Missionaries of the Family. Effective date was October 1, 2021.

REVEREND MICHAEL CLARK, appointed to Director of the Catholic Cultural Center. Effective date was October 1, 2021.

*Reverend Francis T. Hoffmann  
Vicar for Clergy  
October, 2021*

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**Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano**  
Publisher

**Brian D. Wallace**

Executive Editor bdwallace@diobpt.org

**Elizabeth Clyons**

Writer/Editor elizabeth.clyons@diobpt.org

**Renée Stamatis**

Art Director rstamatis@diobpt.org

**Ralph Lazzaro**

Advertising Manager rlazzaro@diobpt.org

**John Grosso**

Social Media Leader jgrosso@diobpt.org

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## Editorial



## Life goes on

## 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](mailto:elizabeth.clyons@diobpt.org).*

Coming off of the pandemic years, there are certainly things that we used to take for granted that now seem almost miraculous.

I look back and remember my roommate and I celebrating Thanksgiving together, because we were both exposed to COVID-19 and didn't want to infect our families. I remember having a small, outdoor burial as we said goodbye to my grandfather. These were difficult times for many. But we made the very best of every moment, showing the

resilience of humanity, as long as we worked together to keep each other safe. We've shown that despite it all, we can do it.

And life goes on. My cousin recently had a little baby girl, who is a wonderful addition to the family! My sister is engaged, so we are now consumed with dress appointments and flower arrangements and making plans for that much anticipated day. Some of my best friends are also getting married, celebrating new jobs, and making exciting moves.

You don't really realize it when

it's all happening but it's amazing to look back and think that there was a time when we weren't sure if we would be able to have these celebrations again. But people will continue to celebrate love and life and all the things that make it all worthwhile.

There will be burials but there will also be births.

I recently read a book that's theme focused on the reflection of life and death. A quote that stood out to me read, "It's not always about the things you've done or the mistakes you've made. It's about the people, and what we're willing to do for one another. The sacrifices we make."

As the main character reflected on the life he lived, he realized that he was so focused on success that he didn't treat people in his life very well. Luckily, in this fantasy novel, he had the chance to make it all right again.

It really is about the people, isn't it?

That's always a caveat that

comes up for me when I think about the possibility of moving somewhere new and exciting. It sounds nice at the time, and it's fun to imagine travelling to exotic lands, but I feel like I would get there and want to send my family pictures so that they could experience it along with me.

**"The people we love  
tether us in a world  
which is so often  
full of conflict  
and challenges.  
Now more than ever."**

I would want to share it all with the people I love.

For what is life if not to be shared?

The people we love tether us in a world which is so often full

of conflict and challenges. Now more than ever.

The pandemic brought to light a lot of selfishness in people, almost shockingly so. But it also brought to light a lot of love and sacrifice, as we realized that the decisions we made greatly affected others and even the world as a whole. How doing something that made us a little uncomfortable in the moment or for a short amount of time could ensure that life could go on.

That we would be able to once again celebrate weddings and births and all the celebrations of life. We are all connected in our desire for these moments, it is the sacramental thread that runs through us all.

As we welcome a new season, I am wishing you all the joys that life brings, and the realization that through all that we experience as humans, it goes on and we can find many reasons for gratitude—particularly in the voices and presence of those we love. ■



## 'This teaching is difficult'

## SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

My NOAA weather radio said Hurricane Henri was going to come right through our front yard, so we spread sand bags on the street, took down the bird feeders, charged our cell phones, put statues of St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother in our windows, and most important of all, prayed the Rosary...and were miraculously spared.

That morning as the storm approached, we decided to watch Mass live-streamed from a church in Waterbury. The priest talked about the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, which is a stumbling block for many Catholics today just as it was for

disciples after Jesus told them that to have eternal life, they had to eat the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man.

We know what happened next. St. John the Evangelist described one of the saddest occasions of Jesus' ministry:

"When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you?'... Because of this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer went with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You

have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe you are the Holy One of God.'"

I'd rather be with Peter than with those who walked away.

Today, people who don't believe in the Real Presence take Communion and go on their merry way. And many Catholic political leaders who aggressively promote abortion don't see anything wrong with it either.

The priest celebrating Mass had a radical recommendation for anyone who couldn't accept that the Eucharist is really and truly the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus. He urged them not to take Communion but instead come forward for a blessing and pray because, he said, if you ask God with a sincere heart whether it's truly the Body of Christ, he'll answer. God is Truth and will not deceive or confuse.

There are many reasons why two-thirds of Catholics don't believe this fundamental teaching. Some weren't taught it. Others were taught it but consider it far-fetched.

The priest mentioned a woman at a wedding, who took the

Eucharist between her fingers and promptly proceeded to hug everyone in the first row while it was still in her hand. She had no idea.

We live in a secular society that tells us to "follow the science" even though science can be fake. But the Real Presence isn't science or fake. It's a fact of faith that's true.

If as Catholics we don't get this right, nothing else will be right, whether it's a ministry, a social justice cause, faith formation or our personal spiritual growth.

If there was one person who led a life totally centered on the Eucharist, it was St. Teresa of Calcutta, who said, "Unless we believe and see Jesus in the appearance of bread on the altar, we will not be able to see him in the distressing disguise of the poor."

She would not open a Missionary House for the Poor unless there was an Adoration Chapel.

"The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on Earth," she said. "The good news is Jesus is here with us TODAY—Body, Blood, Soul and

Divinity—in the Holy Eucharist. Although Jesus comes to us under the appearance of bread and wine, his presence is as real to us now as he was flesh-and-blood-real to his disciples when he walked this Earth. He can perform miracles, heal us, teach us, and love us. We can talk to him and he can speak to us."

She realized America had lost its moral compass. Only one thing could save it—and it wasn't politics. "What will convert America and save the world?" she said. "My answer is prayer. What we need is for every parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Hours of prayer."

We live in a desperate age, and we all should spend time in Eucharistic adoration, especially Catholic politicians...so Jesus can speak to them heart to heart about the agenda he wants to see.

If you have doubts about the Real Presence, sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament. You'll get all the answers you're looking for... and more.

*(Joe Pisani can be reached at [joepisani@yahoo.com](mailto:joepisani@yahoo.com).)* ■

# Parish News

## ‘Celebrating the Living Light of the world’

By **KATHY-ANN GOBIN**

GREENWICH—The reconsecration of St. Michael the Archangel was celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano marking a festive and joyful occasion to embark on a new chapter in the church’s history.

want this church to be the living light of the world.”

Indeed, the reimagined driveway entrance to the church beckons not only parishioners to the church campus at 469 North Street but also the community to its light-filled entryway and contemplative place of worship

serve as a bright beacon for the worship activities and beyond in this space but also as a primary gathering space for fellowship in this community before and after Mass,” Salvatore said.

Prior to the Mass, the bishop addressed the congregation and explained that the reconsecration Mass would be expressed through the ancient rituals of the church dating back to St. Ambrose to the 4th century of the church’s life.

At the beginning of Mass, the bishop blessed water and sprinkled Holy Water on the congregation, the walls of the church and the altar.

“May God the Father of all mercies dwell in this house of prayer and by the grace of the Holy Water, cleanse us who are the temple where He dwells,” he prayed.

The Lectionary was presented to the bishop, who prayed over it and said, “May the word of God resound always in this building, to open for you the mystery of Christ and to bring about your salvation in the Church.”

Following the anointing of the altar and lighting of incense, Bishop Caggiano prayed: “My dear friends let our prayers rise, oh Lord, like incense in your sight and as this house is filled with a pleasing fragrance so let your church be fragrant with the aroma of Christ.”

The altar was then transformed in appearance and prepared for the sacrifice of the Mass with the adornment of an altar cloth, altar cross, candles and beautiful white floral arrangements.

The barnwood rear wall of the altar was unchanged in the renovation.

“We chose to keep the rear wall (of the altar) because it represented a lot of the simplicity of the original structure,” Stone said. The crucifix adorning the wall also did not change and an important artifact was added to the altar during the Mass.

“Every altar has relics and here in your parish it has been chosen that St. Celcia’s relics, the patron saint of music accompany you in every sacrifice,” Bishop Caggiano said, before the angelic voices of the music ministry and congregation accompanied by the new organ and sound system in the church filled the space with



**BLESSING OF THE ALTAR**—The reconsecration of St. Michael the Archangel in Greenwich was celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano following four years of planning and extensive renovation. (PHOTOS BY MICHELLE BABYAK)



The much-anticipated day followed four years of planning and extensive renovation.

“The church is a building like no other,” Bishop Caggiano said. “It is a sacred space for you and I to offer our heart and mind and will. You and I have come here to bless this beautiful space that has been made possible by your extraordinary generosity and the labor of many,” he added.

The renovation project started with a simple assessment of repairs that were needed at the church including the roof, mechanicals and carpeting. There was also a desire to make additions and previous renovations, over the past five decades, more cohesive.

“Since Jesus Christ is light, I wanted to bring light into the church,” said Pastor Father Ian Jeremiah. “I believe we achieved that in the design of our church. I

where the new entryway arch, is an homage to the arch of the angel’s wing of the church’s patron saint, St. Michael the Archangel, said Sue Stone, a trustee of the church and a member of the building committee.

The We Stand With Christ capital campaign enabled the six-million dollar project to become a reality that includes an expanded community hall and additional meeting space. “There’s a lot more meeting space for ministry activities,” Stone said.

Ryan Salvatore of Ryan Salvatore Architects, who along with Neil Hauck Architects, LLC worked on the renovation project, explained at the beginning of Mass that hours of research ensured that the renovations would reflect the intentions of simplicity and dignity, that the original architect had in mind.

“(The changes) will not only

the antiphon, The Bodies of the Saints.

“It’s a very uniting time because we have been waiting to come back together and now, we have a new space to come back to,” said Stone, adding that opening the church at end of the pandemic is quite meaningful.

“There is lot to be grateful for and to mourn,” she said. “And we are happy to have the space to do that.”

St. Timothy’s Chapel, a part of the St. Michael the Archangel parish community, was also renovated to be handicap accessible. Bishop Caggiano blessed the chapel on the eve of the reconsecration of St. Michael the Archangel.

In addition to the newly renovated spaces, the parish’s website was also updated with a new look and a new logo of St. Michael the Archangel with a sword, shield and wings.

“May this chapter of blessing this sacred space also be a time when you and I put our hands to the blessed plow so that all of our brothers and sisters throughout our diocese and throughout this broken world may find what we have here through our charity, generosity, dedication, prayer, by the offer of service that you or I can give. No Christian can ever be satisfied with simply the community in which he or she lives until the day comes when everyone of every race, language, orientation and way of life, is together in unity and peace to serve the Lord share the prosperity of this world and walk together hand in hand to the glory of everlasting life.”

The bishop instructed the congregation to love each other and bring the world to Jesus Christ. “You have accomplished much,” he said. “We have still much to do together.”

# Young Adults

## Group gathers for faith and fellowship in Stamford

By KATHY-ANN GOBIN

STAMFORD—More than two-dozen young adults gathered in downtown Stamford on a Tuesday night for faith and fellowship.

The monthly gathering for Theology on Tap members and their friends happened just steps away from a bustling downtown area of the Lock City at the Ancient Order of Hibernian Hall.

“It’s nice to hang out with fellow Catholics,” said Catherine Costanzo. “It’s fun and casual.”

She and many others gathered to hear Dr. Patrick Donovan, the director of the Institute for Catholic Formation, speak about the structure of the Church.

Theology on Tap is a speaker series that focuses on a wide range of topics that connect with the lives of young adults. The goal is to keep Christ alive in the lives of young adults in comfortable and welcoming settings, such as local bars or restaurants.

“This sight gives me great hope” Donovan said gesturing to the many young adults who came out for the event. “I’m so grateful that you are here.”

Donovan spoke about his favorite passage in the Bible, Matthew 16:16, “Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,’”

and discussed the importance of Peter’s confession and the strength and conviction of his faith.

“We know the end of the story. We know Easter Sunday follows Good Friday. Peter didn’t,” Donovan said.

“At the end of your life, ultimately, you go to the grave believing, not knowing because if I know it to be true, it’s not faith,” Donovan said.

“If you want to make Peter’s confession your own you have to do what the apostles did,” Donovan said, stressing the importance of prayer, dining together and forgiveness.

It was a message that resonated with the group seeking fellowship together where pizza and beverages flowed as easily as conversation.

“It’s important to stay close to the faith community and fellowship is really important,” said Paul Iannone. Fellow member Scott Hill, agreed.

“You want friends that are involved in Church,” Hill said, adding that he welcomes the opportunity to meet more like-minded people.

“A diocese-wide young adults’ Mass would be nice,” he said. “People would come a long way to find a faith community.”

Attendees, thirsty for the

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP—More than two-dozen young adults gathered in downtown Stamford on a Tuesday night for faith and fellowship.

Word of Christ, were enlightened by a speech steeped in history and punctuated with humor.

“His talk prompted me to think about the future of the Church. How do we as young adults encourage our friends and family to come with us to live like Christ?” pondered Candace Lei, with a group of friends gathered to discuss what they learned during the conversation about faith.

“He (Donovan) is able to connect historic Jesus with today,” said Julia Kononenko. “It makes theology a bit more clear.”



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# Diocesan Blue Mass

## 'We place our trust in your hands'

By EMILY CLARK

RIVERSIDE—To honor the bravery and service of fire fighters, police and emergency personnel, Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general, celebrated the diocesan Blue Mass on September 19 at The Parish of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes in Riverside. Now in its 19th year, the annual Mass coincides with the country's commemoration of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Members of local law enforcement departments, along with the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard, joined Msgr. Powers and concelebrant Father William Platt, pastor of the Riverside church, in a solemn procession as parishioners gathered for the 10:30 am service. "We honor fire fighters, first responders and police here today. I admire you all," said Msgr. Powers, who paid

special tribute to Dan Warzoha, Greenwich's emergency management director and former fire chief, who died in August.

In his homily, Msgr. Powers referenced the reading from the Gospel of Mark, reminding the congregation to rely on God "with childlike trust and humility, for His plan for us is better than anything we could do on our own. We leave it all in God's hands."

"The men and women we honor today understand what childlike trust is. We place our trust in your hands," he continued, nodding toward the police, fire fighters and EMTs from 12 communities in the diocese who were sitting in the front pews.

"Everyone calls you when we are helpless and in danger. We seek your protection, and we are in awe of how you handle your duties, especially over the last 18 months in this pandemic and as

our society has faced challenges we never have before. You remind us of how we are to live as Christians, and we thank you."

After the emergency personnel stood to be recognized and received a lengthy round of applause from the parishioners, Msgr. Powers then asked their family members to stand as a gesture of gratitude to them as well.

Father Platt also addressed the men and women in uniform, saying, "These are the models of service who must serve for the good of all. My dear brothers and sisters, you are the greatest."

In a moving tribute to conclude the Mass, the Honor Guard presented the colors and a trumpeter played "Taps" before the recessional hymn of "America the Beautiful."

Because the diocesan Blue Mass originated to honor lives lost on 9/11, flags with the names of those who perished that day were

draped over an emergency vehicle outside the church for parishioners to view as they gathered in the bright sunshine of a morning so similar to that September day 20 years ago. Father Platt, who was chaplain at Greenwich Hospital in 2001, said he remembered seeing the smoke of lower Manhattan from the hospital's roof.

"It means a great deal to be able to honor all first responders at Mass this year," he said. "We remember the sacrifice of every person and thank them for their service."

James Heavey, chief of police in Greenwich, helped coordinate this event along with Fire Chief Joseph McHugh and members of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes parish. Reflecting on the Mass and the duties he embraces,



Photo by Amy Mortensen

Heavey said, "It's the right calling to serve others. It's empowering to be a person of faith and of service."

## Hibernians help Malta House

STAMFORD—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano recently met with the Ancient Order of Hibernians at their Hall in Stamford on the occasion of their state convention.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians JFK Division 1 of Bridgeport donated 2,500 dollars to Malta House in Norwalk, which provides



support to pregnant mothers. The JFK Division of the AOH presented a check to Bishop Caggiano to support the good work of Malta House.

"The bishop was very nice to be present even with his busy schedule," said Mark Ryan, president of the JFK division. "I truly appreciate him coming."

Division, state and national Hibernians were on hand and enjoyed a picture or two with Bishop Caggiano.

### About Malta House

It is Malta House's mission to promote the dignity of God-given life by providing a nurturing home environment, support services and independent living skills to pregnant and parenting mothers of all faiths and their children.

### About the Ancient Order of Hibernians

The Ancient Order of Hibernians is America's oldest Irish Catholic Fraternal Organization founded concurrently in the coal-mining region of Pennsylvania and New York City in May 1836.

(For more information on Malta House visit: [www.maltahouse.org](http://www.maltahouse.org). For more information on the Ancient Order of Hibernians visit: [www.aoh.com](http://www.aoh.com))

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# Profile: Bob Scinto

## ‘Caring for others’ is the true measure of success

By every measure of worldly success, Bob Scinto is a very successful man. He leads a commercial real estate corporation that has 52 buildings with 4.3 million square feet of office space occupied by financial institutions, corporate headquarters, medical centers and fashionable restaurants. And the centerpiece of his enterprise is a 65-acre campus on Corporate Drive in Shelton.

But Scinto uses a different standard to measure success. When he talks about his life, the discussion quickly turns to the importance of generosity, service, faith, gratitude, laughter and compassion. And without those components, he believes a man or woman can never truly be successful.

By those standards, Robert Daniel Scinto, the founder, CEO and chairman of R.D. Scinto, Inc. is eminently successful. A lifelong Catholic, he has been active in the Diocese of Bridgeport for many years and is on the board of Foundations in Education. And he's well known for his generosity.

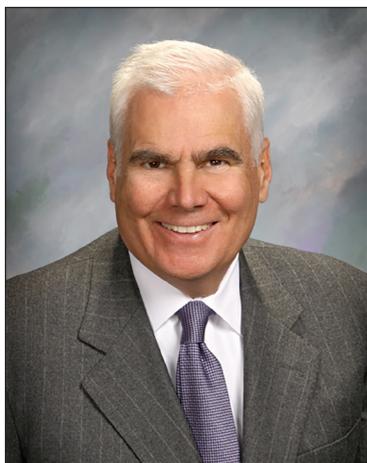
On the desk of his Shelton office, there is a photo of two boys, Sebastian and Gabriel, whose family he befriended with his wife Barbara at 7:30 am Mass at St. James Church in Stratford.

They often sat in the same pew and over time he got to know the family. As a personal gesture, he would send them tickets to events and had his limousine take them to see the Nutcracker ballet in New York City.

Several years ago on his birthday, he received a letter from their mother, which says in part:

“Happy birthday, Mr. Scinto. Thank you for being such a wonderful part of our lives, for opening up your heart to my girls and my boys, for creating memories that we'll never forget, like the trip to the city and then the Nutcracker ballet.... For letting us see the happiness you bring to so many others. Thank you for truly being the face of Jesus and for living the Gospel. You bring a true presence of Christ to us every Sunday. We truly thank God for you and the love you have shown to each of us.”

For Bob Scinto, concern for



ROBERT D. SCINTO

others is the purpose of life.

“It's all about the kind of difference you can make in the lives of people who are less fortunate than you,” he says. “What can you do personally to help that one individual?”

The son of Daniel and Doxie Scinto, he was born into a working class family on the West End of Bridgeport.

When he graduated from Andrew Warde High School, he was reading at the fourth grade level because of dyslexia and a hearing impediment. He couldn't read, so he went to work with his father, who was a plumber, and in many ways a practical philosopher who gave his son an education about the meaning of life.

Many of the lessons he learned about service and compassion, he learned during the five years he worked as a plumber in his father Daniel's business for \$93.50 a week, while attending night classes at Sacred Heart University, where he earned a degree in business administration.

Two of the greatest lessons his father taught him were to be generous and not to be prejudiced, he says. His father often told him about the time he was working in Tennessee and a black man wasn't allowed to get on the bus that took them to the job site, so he had to walk five miles. Witnessing that racism left his father with a “pit in his stomach” that he never forgot.

When Bob was growing up on Hanover Street in Bridgeport, one of his friends in the neighborhood was an African American youth named Brother,

whose family didn't have money to pay for his membership in the YMCA, so Bob's father did.

“My father was not perfect, but he taught me two very important things—not to be prejudiced and to be generous.... My favorite quote from the Bible is “whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers, you did for me.” I think about that all the time.”

Scinto also tells the story of going to Mrs. Monroe's apartment on Steuben Street in Bridgeport to repair a clogged toilet. A common occurrence for a plumber, but it taught him a lesson he retained all his life.

“I still can see the image of the steps to the back door with no glass in the screen door. She had three beautiful little boys and they were crying and in their underpants because they couldn't

use the john,” he recalls. “So as I'm cleaning out the john, Mrs. Monroe was hanging onto my arm while the auger was going up and down, and she kept saying, ‘Thank you, Jesus, for sending me the plumber, thank you, Jesus, for sending me the plumber.’ And I realized that I was doing Jesus' work there.”

That afternoon on Steuben Street planted a seed that nurtured his concept of service to others. “You could even be a plumber and still be doing Jesus' work,” he said.

At this time, he got his start in real estate after doing a rehabilitation of a three-family house in Bridgeport—the first of more than 20 he did between 1971 and 1975.

In 1975, his new company R.D. Scinto built its first apartment house, a 22-unit structure

on French Street in Bridgeport. The second, a 39-unit apartment house was completed in 1979. That same year, he began projects in Shelton, including a State National Bank building. Today, his company owns properties throughout Fairfield County and parts of New Haven County.

But there were serious challenges along the way, and when the market turned in the 1990s, he was confronted with \$62 million in debt. He says he paid off every penny to the banks and contractors because he didn't want to let them down.

There have been many milestones in his life, and one of the most meaningful is his 50-year marriage to Barbara. They celebrated their 50th anniversary on August 7 and have been blessed with four children and 12 grand-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

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# Catholic Schools

## CAB sees record increase in enrollment

BRIDGEPORT—It has been well documented that Catholic school enrollment has been in decline nationwide and many schools are closing. However, there are bright spots that should be celebrated, including here in Bridgeport. Specifically, the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, which educates 900 students on the four elementary school campuses of St. Andrew, St. Ann, St. Augustine and St. Raphael, has seen an enrollment gain of 18 percent versus a year ago. This is particularly noteworthy given national declines of 6.4 percent and even higher declines in larger cities (source: Wall St. Journal).

While the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport at one time had

viewed itself a hidden gem in the city of Bridgeport, seeing a decline in enrollment prior to the pandemic, when COVID-19 hit, its campuses remained open. In fact, the Academy offered remote learning annexes to assist working parents with childcare, provided Chromebooks and/or iPads to every one of its students in need, and even stepped in to help with food insecurity and other crises situations. Clearly, Bridgeport parents took note and sought out the “Something More” the Academy promises in its tagline and offers—something that families are not finding in the Bridgeport Public Schools.

According to John Kennedy,

board member of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport and head of its Marketing and Enrollment Committee, “Our staff and board have initiated sophisticated digital marketing campaigns with targeted messaging, instituted new software to track leads, established broad outreach to other religious communities since over 40 percent of our students are non-Catholic, and approached many generous donors and foundations for financial support. And we did all of this without state legislature support for school choice initiatives like vouchers that have taken hold in other states.”

Catholic school education is alive and well in Bridgeport.

(To see for yourself, visit [www.catholicacademybridgeport.org](http://www.catholicacademybridgeport.org)) ■

## CRS Clubs come to the diocese

BRIDGEPORT—Three diocesan High Schools have officially joined as Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Clubs to support the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency alleviates suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries.

Immaculate High School in Danbury, Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport and Notre Dame High School in Fairfield have all joined the CRS network of clubs. Immaculate High School led the way with 167 students signing up as club members.

Nora Ferreira Aufiero, community engagement manager for Catholic Relief Services, Northeast Mid-Atlantic Region, said she was delighted by the response from the diocese. Additionally, she said there is interest in an adult chapter of the Club and hopes to schedule a Zoom meeting with those who are interested by mid



MEMBERS OF the new CRS Club at Immaculate High School in Danbury.

to late October.

“I believe that CRS Club can be true agents of change and an integral part of the movement to build a better world,” said Aufiero. “Young people have the power, energy and passion to drive real change, and their actions are essential to achieve our vision—God’s vision—of a world free of hunger, violence and injustice.

CRS clubs empower students to contribute in a tangible way to join in the effort to lift millions of people out of poverty while developing leadership skills they can use to continue to be changemakers into the future, she said.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who was named chairman of the International Catholic Relief Agency in 2019, welcomed the news and said that he was proud of the students for their commitment to others and their willingness to become part of the larger CRS community.

“I am grateful to our young people for choosing to become missionary disciples who believe that in Christ we can build a more just and equitable world,” he said.

“The number of those who are impoverished and endangered is staggering. Many persons live in fear and constant anxiety. The needs of minimal sustenance, particularly water, are of paramount importance and invite us to help. CRS reaches out to our global family,” the bishop said.

The bishop said that CRS Clubs across the country are giving students the opportunity to learn about issues of global injustice and involving their school community in impactful actions such as advocacy and fundraising.

Catholic Relief Services is the USCCB agency that provides global humanitarian assistance to those in need in two critical ways: by responding to man-made and natural disasters and providing direct assistance to those in need. Its mission seeks effective ways by which every human person can be assisted to realize his or her full human integral development in an environment that is peaceful and sustainable.

(For more information on student and adult CRS clubs, contact Nora Ferreira Aufiero, Community Engagement Manager | Catholic Relief Services, Northeast Mid-Atlantic Region, Cell: 631.897.9129 | [crs.org](http://crs.org) | [crspanol.org](http://crspanol.org) or visit the website at: [www.crs.org/sites/default/files/crs-club-action-calendar-20-21.pdf](http://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/crs-club-action-calendar-20-21.pdf).) ■

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# Foundation News

## FIFF awards over \$150,000 to diocesan ministries

By ROSE BRENNAN

BRIDGEPORT—June was a busy month for Foundations in Faith but it was also one filled with joy, as the diocese begins to recover from the coronavirus pandemic and return to some semblance of normal.

That was reflected in the foundation's June board meeting. The meeting was celebrated with a dinner, being the first time its members were able to meet in person since the pandemic started.

According to the foundation's director, Kelly Weldon, while the board was able to continue its work over Zoom, there's something special about meeting together in person rather than over a screen, especially when it comes to helping the diocese's pastoral ministries.

"We hadn't seen each other for almost two years," Weldon said. "It's almost like hitting a restart button of sorts, and bringing back some energy and bringing back some social events to the work we're doing. Collaboration and camaraderie are key to building a cohesive team."

But dinner wasn't the only order of business that evening. The Foundations in Faith board also had to decide who among many applicants would receive grants from three of their nine funds for pastoral ministries.

Luckily, due to the success of the We Stand With Christ capital campaign, there were resources available to allocate, resulting in the launch of two other funds. Following the meeting, 17 diocesan ministries received grants from one of the funds the foundation oversees.

The heavy-hitter of the evening was quite clearly the St. John Paul II Fund for Religious Education and Faith Formation. Fourteen parishes received grants from the fund during this cycle, totaling \$87,500.

The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford was lucky enough to receive two grants from the St. John Paul II Fund. One of them provided funding for its Catholic Adventures program, while the other provided 15 half-scholarships for members of its youth group to attend Camp Veritas, a Catholic summer camp. Three of the grants went

to missionary urban parishes. Among them were St. Mary Parish in Stamford, which plans to use the grant to fund a religious education project for its younger members, St. Augustine Cathedral Parish in Bridgeport, which will help start a CCD program and hire a director of religious education, and St. George Parish in Bridgeport, which aims to fund a children's ministry, a children and teen choir and a family catechesis program.

Other recipients of grants from the St. John Paul II Fund included the Holy Vietnamese Martyrs Quasi Parish and St. Ann Church in Bridgeport, Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Fairfield, St. Paul Roman Catholic Church in Greenwich, St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, St. Patrick Church in Redding, Holy Name of Jesus Church in Stratford, Christ the King Parish and St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, and Church of the Assumption in Westport.

Foundations in Faith also provided two grants through its St. Therese Fund for Evangelization, totaling \$33,000 between them.

One of the grants went to the Diocesan Young Adult Council to create a local chapter of Young Catholic Professionals. According to the council, this will be part of a larger effort by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano to create a Young Catholic Pastoral Center for the diocese.

Bishop Caggiano is a part of the second effort the St. Therese Fund helped sponsor. Veritas Catholic Radio is home to a radio show titled "Let Me Be Frank," which stars none other than the bishop himself. The show is now sponsored by Foundations in Faith, complete with funding from the St. Therese Fund.

"The 'Let Me Be Frank' radio show is a great example of our approach as far as being innovative and looking at things differently," Weldon said. "When the idea was put forward that we consider funding the bishop's radio show, we were intrigued. It was a win-win and it was a really neat fit for the fund's mission of evangelization. Supporting Veritas Catholic Radio with such a strong connection to the diocese was a compelling opportunity. And what better connection to

the diocese than the bishop?"

Finally, the St. Catherine Center for Special Needs received a \$33,000 grant through its eponymous fund. The grant went toward providing the center with a new wheelchair-accessible van, as the old one had fallen into disrepair.

According to Weldon, caring for people with disabilities can and should be an essential part of the diocese's pastoral care efforts. And luckily, that sentiment is shared among her colleagues.

"Years ago, bishop and the board felt strongly that our individuals with significant intellectual disabilities needed to be included in pastoral care and support," Weldon said. "We were super excited to provide them with a first-time grant for a handicap-accessible van."

Foundations in Faith's board

will meet again at the end of September. As of right now, the foundation has awarded grants from eight of its nine funds. Last, but certainly not least, is the Lourdes Fund for Pastoral Care at Catholic Nursing Homes, which would provide funding for programs at three Catholic nursing homes within the diocese.

The nursing homes that would benefit from the Lourdes Fund grants would be St. Joseph Center in Trumbull, St. John Paul II Center in Danbury, and St. Camillus Center in Stamford. And according to Weldon, getting grants for them off the ground will be a top priority for Foundations in Faith's board at their September meeting.

"When you launch a fund, it can sometimes be complicated," Weldon said. "When we first reached out to the three Catholic

nursing homes to begin a relationship and engage them in conversations about their needs, we realized that we weren't going to be able to bring them forth in the June meeting. We weren't ready and wanted to do it right. So in September, we will be bringing forward grant requests and recommendations to the board."

This means all nine of Foundation in Faith's funds will soon be active. And to Weldon, that's a dream come true.

"It'll be so exciting to have all nine funds actively funding pastoral care ministries here in the Diocese," Weldon said. "It's been a goal, made possible by the We Stand With Christ campaign, the Foundations in Faith board and, of course, the Holy Spirit."

(To learn more or to donate, visit [foundationsinfaith.org](http://foundationsinfaith.org) or email [kelly.weldon@foundationsinfaith.org](mailto:kelly.weldon@foundationsinfaith.org).) ■



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# Foundations in Education

## FIE welcomes two new board members

BRIDGEPORT— Foundations in Education, Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of two new members to its Board of Trustees. Joining the board are Thomas McDevitt of Wilton and Geoffrey Raker of Greenwich.

“The board is delighted that these two very talented individuals share our dedication to helping more children get access to the benefits of a Catholic education,” remarked Board of Trustees Chair Tom McInerney.

Tom McDevitt is the founder and managing partner of Edgewood Capital Advisors. Prior to founding his company, he held senior real estate capital markets positions at Salomon Brothers, Citibank,

Meenan McDevitt & Co. and Société Générale. A graduate of Harvard College with a master’s in business administration from the Amos Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, McDevitt has served on several nonprofit boards, including A Better Chance of Wilton, Community Nursery School of Wilton, and the Wilton Riding Club. Mr. McDevitt currently serves on the boards of five Neuberger Berman Crossroads Funds and is also a member of the investment committee for La Salle Academy in Providence, R.I. McDevitt and his wife are the parents of three children and reside in Wilton.

“I am honored to join the Foundations in Education board,” commented McDevitt. “The mission of fostering strong Catholic education in our diocese is very important to my wife Lizanne and me. We look forward to contributing to this mission to allow more students to be able to share in the life changing experience of a Catholic education.”

Geoffrey Raker is a partner and head of healthcare investing at Tailwind Capital. Prior to joining Tailwind, his career has included positions with Warburg Pincus in healthcare investing, Morgan Stanley in healthcare banking, and Bain & Company as a strategy consultant in the healthcare field. A graduate of Brown University and the Harvard Business School, Mr. Raker and his family are members of St. Paul Parish in Greenwich. He currently serves as a volunteer for Catholic Charities and Foundations in Faith, and serves on the Board of FC Westchester, a not-for-profit soccer club based in Rye Brook, N.Y. Previously, for eight years, he served on the board of the Carver Center, a community center based in the heart of Port Chester, N.Y. Mr. Raker and his wife have two sons and reside in Greenwich.

“I am thrilled to join the Foundations in Education board,” commented Raker. “While I attended Brown University, my wife, Jill, graduat-



THOMAS McDEVITT



GEOFFREY RAKER

ed from Boston College, and we strongly believe in the importance of a strong Catholic education as a foundation for the youth in our diocese.”

Foundations in Education is the realization of the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano’s vision to support the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to advance Catholic education in Fairfield County. The primary purpose of this non-profit initiative is to support Catholic education by providing tuition assistance for elementary school students and Innovation and Leadership grants for teachers and administrators that promote classroom innovation and professional leadership development and other education-based programs.

“Continuing to build and grow our quality board for Foundations in Education is an ongoing priority for us,” remarked Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director. “Tom and Geoff contin-

ue in our established tradition of excellence and bring wonderfully relevant experience and wisdom to the work of our foundation. We are grateful to them for agreeing to serve on behalf of the thousands of students and hundreds of teachers in our Catholic schools.”

The two new members join the existing Board of Trustees led by Chair Thomas McInerney. Other members include David Cappiello, George Coleman, R. Bradford Evans, Lisa Ferraro Martino, Timothy FitzPatrick, Michael Hanlon, Leslie Lopez, Andrea Maldon, Anne McCrory, Dr. Julia McNamara, Michele Mitola, Joseph Purcell, Bernard Reidy, Barbara Ripp, Gerard Robilotti, Henry Rondon, Robert Scinto, Michael Shea, Jennifer St. Victor-de Pinho, Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, and Holly Doherty-Lemoine, ex officio.

(For more information about Foundations in Education, visit [www.foundationsineducation.org](http://www.foundationsineducation.org))

## KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION GUEST SPEAKER: RABBI ABRAHAM SKORKA

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# Respect for Life

## October is Respect Life Month

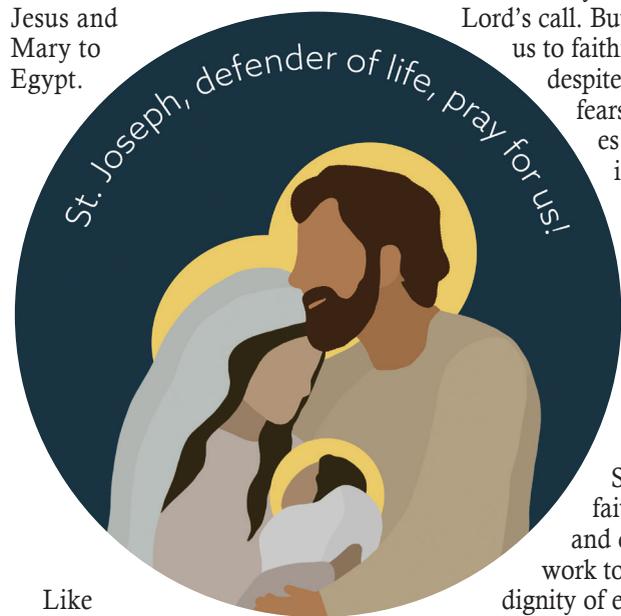
*The following is a statement of Respect for Life Month from Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, chairman U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.*

The month of October brings with it our annual observance of Respect Life Month. As part of the Year of St. Joseph declared by Pope Francis, this year's celebration highlights the example of that great saint.

As the faithful protector of both Jesus and Mary, we find in St. Joseph a profound reminder of our own call to welcome, safeguard, and defend God's precious gift of human life.

Despite the mysterious circumstances surrounding Mary's pregnancy, St. Joseph took her into his home at the word of the angel. He guided their journey to Bethlehem, found shelter, and welcomed the infant Jesus as his son. When Herod threat-

ened the life of the Christ Child, St. Joseph left his homeland behind and fled with Jesus and Mary to Egypt.



Like St. Joseph, we are also called to care for those God has entrusted to us—especially vulnerable mothers and children. We can follow in the footsteps of St. Joseph as protector by advocating against taxpayer-funded abortion, which targets the lives of millions of poor children and their mothers here in the United States. We can imitate his care and provision by helping to start Walking with Moms in Need at our parishes, “walking in the shoes” of mothers experiencing a difficult pregnancy, especially low-income mothers

in our communities.

At times, we may feel uncertain of our ability to answer the Lord's call. But He invites us to faithfully respond, despite our own fears or weaknesses: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9).

May we imitate St. Joseph's faithful trust and courage as we work to uphold the dignity of every human life. St. Joseph, defender of life, pray for us!

*(To learn more about preventing taxpayer-funded abortion, visit [www.notaxpayerabortion.com](http://www.notaxpayerabortion.com). To walk with moms in need through your local parish, go to [www.walkingwithmoms.com](http://www.walkingwithmoms.com).*

*To join in prayer for the intercession of St. Joseph, defender of life, visit [www.respectlife.org/prayer-to-st-joseph](http://www.respectlife.org/prayer-to-st-joseph).)*



**Diocese of Bridgeport Fall 2021 Campaign**—Protect mothers and children by joining this worldwide campaign for an end to abortion. Through prayer, fasting, peaceful vigils and community outreach, 40 Days for Life has inspired more than 1,000,000 volunteers! Please join us at one of the two vigil sites, Bridgeport and Danbury. For Bridgeport information visit, [40daysforlife.com/Bridgeport](http://40daysforlife.com/Bridgeport) or contact [bgrabows@aol.com](mailto:bgrabows@aol.com). For Danbury information visit, [40daysforlife.com/Danbury](http://40daysforlife.com/Danbury) or contact [Danbury40DFL@protonmail.com](mailto:Danbury40DFL@protonmail.com).

**Rosary Coast to Coast**—Join thousands across the nation for the annual Rosary Coast to Coast Rally on Sunday, October 10, 2021 at 4 pm in St. Mary's Cemetery located at 399 North Street in Greenwich. For more information go to [www.rosarycoastto-coast.com](http://www.rosarycoastto-coast.com).

**Jericho March/Eucharistic Procession**—Eucharistic procession and prayer in support of life and an end to abortion will take place on Saturday, October 30 at 3 pm at 44 Main Street in Danbury. For more information call 203.416.1445.

**Men's Day of Healing**—Are you, or a man you know, suffering the loss of a child through abortion? There is help, hope and healing. Come to the next Entering Canaan Men's Day of Prayer and Healing on Saturday, October 16. For more information or to register contact, [lumina@postabortionhelp.org](mailto:lumina@postabortionhelp.org) or 877.586.4621.



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# St. Joseph Statues

## Helping Christians survive in the Holy Land

Rami Qumsieh, who was born in the Holy Land, has had a lifelong ministry of helping Christians there, particularly those in Bethlehem and the surrounding communities who have been suffering economically because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

His goal is to raise awareness of their plight with the St. Joseph Project, through which Christian carvers make statues of the foster father of Jesus out of olive wood during the Year of St. Joseph, proclaimed by Pope Francis. Qumsieh says that sales of the statues benefits Christians and promotes devotion to St. Joseph.

In addition, contributing to the effort lets Catholics stand in solidarity with the Christian Holy Land.

"The pieces are made by Christian Palestinians in the Holy

Land and specially blessed," he says. "No two products are the same and each piece is an original creation."

"It is important to keep in mind the suffering of our Catholic and Christian community in the Holy Land and give honor to St. Joseph's profession as a woodworker," said Qumsieh, founder of the apostolate Christians of the Holy Land. "Catholic Americans aren't aware of the plight of my people. Over there, they don't receive a stimulus check or money from the government. They're on their own, trusting in the Lord."

The Christian communities represent less than 2 percent of the population, and there are an estimated 70,000 of them in the Bethlehem region, he says.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has virtually ended pilgrimages to the Holy Land since March 2020, caused economic hardship for Christians, many of whom made their livelihood as tour guides, translators, merchants and makers of religious items. Qumsieh said that 80 percent of the Christian community works in pilgrimage services.

A committed advocate for them, he says, "This is my life's work. It defines who I have become in my life. My ministry is to build a connection in people's hearts so they understand this Holy Land belongs to them because we have the most evidence that Jesus Christ was here on Earth."

The carvers, themselves, have expressed gratitude for the St.

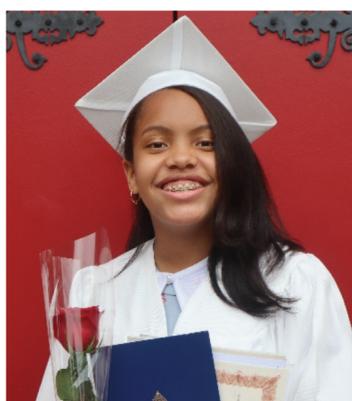


THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH—Rami Qumsieh's goal is to raise awareness of their plight with the St. Joseph Project, through which Christian carvers make statues of the foster father of Jesus out of olive wood.



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Joseph Project, he said, because a majority of families have been out of work for more than a year.

Qumsieh regularly visits parishes throughout the United States to talk about the struggle of the Christian community in the Holy Land and to promote the project.

"I did not have a true devotion to St. Joseph until Pope Francis declared the Year of St. Joseph, and it was like an awakening in my heart," he says. "Then, I started to read about him and get to know what he went through. The man was awesome, truly a wonderful example for us. He accepted God's Will as his will and raised Jesus and protected him and Mary. He was a carpenter who worked with wood and a father who was truly devoted to the Holy Family."

Qumsieh expressed his gratitude for Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in promoting the cause. "He has been incredible; he has been very helpful," he said. "I remain grateful to Bishop Caggiano for never abandoning our Christian Holy Land."

Qumsieh also urges pastors throughout the Diocese of

Bridgeport to participate in the St. Joseph Project by downloading fliers from the website and making them available in church and the parish bulletins. Statues can be delivered as a group order to churches, thereby saving parishioners \$10 on every statue.

Every carved statue of St. Joseph is blessed by Father Issa Hijazeen at the Church of the Nativity and the Church of the Shepherds Town.

"A purchase serves as a spiritual and corporal work of mercy as it employs, feeds and comforts those in need," Qumsieh said. "It also demonstrates solidarity, loyalty and prudence toward the Christian identity of our Holy Land."

He also believes the statues will give honor to St. Joseph's profession as a carpenter and woodworker.

"These olive wood statues will memorialize this Year of St. Joseph and increase devotion to him, while helping our faithful Christians in Bethlehem," he said.

(For further information, visit [www.HolyLandDirect.com](http://www.HolyLandDirect.com) or email Qumsieh at [info@holylanddirect.com](mailto:info@holylanddirect.com).)

# Catholic Men's Conference

## Men gather to share their faith experiences

NEW BRITAIN—More than 500 men from around the state gathered for the 14th annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference on September 25 at New Britain Stadium.

Deacon Rick Lawlor, who is from St. Mary Parish in Ridgefield and on the conference leadership committee, said, "It was a spectacular event. A very busy day with some great speakers. To see so many people gathered together, with guys eager to go to confession and adoration was spiritually fulfilling for me as a deacon. People were coming up to me who just wanted to talk."

The all-day event, which centered on the theme of "The Most Holy Rosary," included well-known speakers, confession, Eucharistic adoration, and a vigil Mass with Archbishop Leonard P. Blair and a homily by Father Elias Mary Mills, FI, the rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Wisconsin.

Catholic author Father Donald Calloway, MIC, who has written several books about the rosary and devotion to St. Joseph, and Dr. Ralph Martin, author and president of Renewal Ministries, were among the speakers.

Deacon Lawlor said, "I learned a lot about the different apparitions around the world over the last 1000 years, and I learned that the Blessed Mother is encouraging people to pray the rosary every day."

Men from the Diocese of Bridgeport, including contingents from St. Mary in Ridgefield and St. Edward the Confessor in New Fairfield, attended the conference.

Deacon Lawlor believes men should share their faith and experiences with one another.

"Men need to talk to other men and share their experiences in life," he said. "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."

Don Mallozzi, chair of the St. Edward Men's Ministry, said: "The Lord was with us in the Blessed Sacrament under clear blue sky with the sun shining brightly over us.... The theme was 'The Most Holy Rosary.' The message was consistent from the four terrific speakers—to pray the rosary daily for peace in the world. This was also the message Mother Mary left in four of her apparitions."

Father James Sullivan, rector of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury and chaplain for the conference, "Men need God, and the conference encouraged them to come together as brothers and worship together in their calling as fathers, single men, priests and religious."

He said the conference was especially important for men coming to faith later in life.

"We have to always look forward," he said. "If a man is coming to faith at a later time, there should be no regret."

Father Sullivan stressed the importance of the holy rosary. "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."

The conference speakers included:

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



MORE THAN 500 men from around the state gathered for the 14th annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference on September 25 at New Britain Stadium.

We Face." He 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."

Dr. Blythe Kaufman is the founder of the Children's Rosary®, an international prayer group movement for children. 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."

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# Obituaries

## Father Joseph Saba, 78

BRIDGEPORT—Father Joseph Saba, who served the diocese as a teacher, chaplain, parochial vicar and pastor died on September 19, 2021. He was 78 years of age.

“Please pray for the repose of the soul of Father Saba and for the consolation of his family,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in announcing Father Saba’s passing. “Let us keep him in our minds and hearts as we commend him to our Lord, and also pray for all of those who are sick and struggling with illness.”

Joseph John Saba, Jr. was born in Port Chester, New York, on April 3, 1943. He was the son of Joseph John Saba and Lucy Gatto Saba.

He was baptized at St. Roch Church in Greenwich Conn. on May 23, 1943. He attended Hamilton Avenue Grammar School in Greenwich, and St. Mary High School, also in Greenwich. He began his college work at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, Conn. and studied philosophy and theology at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, New York.

Father Saba was ordained a deacon in the Chapel of Christ the King Seminary by Most Reverend Bernard J. McLaughlin on April 19, 1969. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Bridgeport by Most Reverend Walter W. Curtis at St.



FATHER JOSEPH SABA

Augustine Cathedral on May 9, 1970.

Following his ordination, his first assignment was as parochial vicar of St. Mary Church in Norwalk. In 1971, he was assigned as a full time member of the faculty of St. Mary High School in Greenwich. Two years later, he was appointed as resident chaplain at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich while continuing his work as spiritual and religion director at St. Mary High School.

Father Saba was released from his ministry in the diocese to serve as a chaplain in the United States Army, a position he held from 1977 until 1995. During these years, he served overseas in Korea and Germany. Here in the United States, he was stationed in Alabama and Louisiana.

Upon his return to the Diocese of Bridgeport, he was assigned to St. Peter Church in Bridgeport, and later St. Andrew in Bridgeport, as a parochial vicar. In 2000, he was appointed the administrator of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Bridgeport, becoming pastor a year later. He retired in 2009.

As per his direction, all services for Father Saba were private. Condolences can be sent to Father Saba’s sister, Kathleen Saba McGoldrick, c/o Joseph Saba 111, 448 Ritch Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830.

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### DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT OCTOBER 10—NOVEMBER 13

OCTOBER	YEAR
14	Msgr. Raymond H. Guidone.....1965
	Msgr. William F. Schultz.....2013
16	Msgr. John V. Horgan Kung.....2009
17	Msgr. Benedict Tighe.....2004
18	Bishop Walter W. Curtis.....1997
19	Rev. Cornelius J. Looney.....1974
22	Msgr. David F. Bannon.....1979
	Deacon Donald Fonseca.....1989
27	Rev. Robert C. Franklin.....1991
	Msgr. Thomas J. Whalen.....2012
28	Deacon John Kucera.....2007
29	Rev. Michael A. D’Elia.....2000
30	Msgr. Leo M. Finn.....1960
31	Rev. Francis D. McKenna.....1989
NOVEMBER	YEAR
3	Msgr. Joseph A. Heffernan.....1989
	Deacon Thomas P. Freibott.....2002
6	Rev. Bernard Dolan.....2010
9	Rev. Stephen A. Grinvalsky.....1972
10	Rev. Gerard C. Mason.....1993
11	Msgr. Victor J. Torres-Frias.....1995
13	Msgr. Alphonse J. V. Fiedorczyk.....1987

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# Sports

## Rebuilt St. Joe's extends football win streak to 26

By DON HARRISON

TRUMBULL—How did Joe Della Vecchia, the esteemed football coach at St. Joseph High School, endure a fall season without the game he cherishes? The COVID-19 pandemic had forced all Connecticut schools to cancel their 2020 football programs.

He didn't hesitate with an answer. "Actually, it was really tough," he responded. "Every fall since I was eight years old, I was either playing or coaching. And we were going to be really good. I felt really bad for the kids who were forced to miss their senior season."

Indeed, the Cadets had won three straight CIAC state titles, and with senior quarterback Jack Wallace—Connecticut's 2019 Gatorade Player of the Year—and senior wide receiver Brady Hutchison leading the returnees, a fourth consecutive state championship was a viable possibility. Alas, we shall never know.

So, let's fast forward to the present. The rebuilt Cadets, sparked by a new quarterback, Matt Morrissey, and co-captain and wide receiver Maxwell Warren, opened the 2021 season with three one-sided victories—extending St. Joe's three-year winning streak to a remarkable 26 games.

Morrissey, a senior who had been Wallace's back-up, has excelled both as a passer (39-62, 62.9%, 570 yards, 7 TDs) and runner (161 yards, 7.3 yards-per-carry, 3 TDs). The quarterback and his twin brother, Mark, a



Senior quarterback Matt Morrissey has excelled both as passer and runner.

starting linebacker, are Della Vecchia's nephews, it should be noted.

Warren, who as a sophomore was in the starting lineup on the undefeated 2019 squad, glittered in the 45-22 road win over Windsor on September 24. On St. Joe's second play from scrimmage, he scored on a 63-yard pass from Morrissey, and he tallied two more touchdowns before halftime. His five TDs lead the squad entering October.

"Like everybody in the state, nobody knew what they had because they hadn't played in a year," Della Vecchia said. "Yes, I'm quite impressed by what we've done so far."

St. Joe's has a knack for finding capable young players to replace the previous year's seniors, and this fall is no exception. The Cadets' new placekicker, Logan Spoelstra, a 5-foot-9 sophomore,

has converted all 18 of his extra-point attempts and booted a 21-yard field goal thus far. He's also a backup linebacker.

Another sophomore, defensive back Ethan Long, recovered a botched punt in the Windsor end zone to cap the victors' scoring that evening.

Junior running back Riley Jordan—"he has great vision," the coach noted—tops St. Joe's in rushing with 273 yards (6.1 yards per carry) and has contributed three touchdowns. In the Cadets' 35-14 victory over Staples in Westport, he provided much of the offense with 100 yards rushing and a pair of TDs.

St. Joe's dominance across the past three seasons has been remarkable. Consider:

2017: 12-1 record, Class S champion

2018: 12-1 record, Class M champion

2019: 13-0 record, Class L champion

Total: 37-2 W-L, 3 state titles

Della Vecchia has a unique perspective on 11 of St. Joe's 15 state championships, too. He was an All-MBIAC running back on the first (1980), an assistant coach to Ed McCarthy on three (1988-89-90), and head coach for the past seven (2009-10, 2013-14, 2017-19).

### Girls Soccer

Girls soccer unbeaten, too. There's another undefeated team on St. Joseph's Trumbull campus: Coach Jack Nogueira's girls soccer. The 2021 Cadets have won their first seven matches and outscored their



Mary Lundregan has sparked the Cadets' girls soccer team to a seamless start.

opponents, 25 goals to three. They've achieved all of this sans All-American forward Maddie Fried, who graduated in June and is now attending, and playing soccer, at Villanova.

Credit much of the current success story to senior midfielder Mary Lundregan, the team captain, who was also selected to the 2020 United Soccer Coaches All-American squad.

"On technical ability, on the

ball, during my 25 years at St. Joe's she's probably our most gifted player," Nogueira says of Lundregan, who has verbally committed to attend Dartmouth.

Lundregan has generated five goals and four assists this season, a close second behind standout freshman Alexa Pino (6 goals, 5 assists). Junior Emily Robinson has performed well in her first season as the Cadets' starting goalie.



Image: Thomas Morlock



To know the character of a community, I need only visit its cemeteries."

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# Column: Thomas Hicks



## Something went wrong

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

**“D**uring his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover, many believed in him when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all. He needed no one to give him testimony about human nature. He was well aware of what people had in them.” (Jn.2:23)

In his famous book *Confessions*, St. Augustine wrote about how children between the ages of 1 and 2, when put together in a play pen, will bite each other, pull each other’s hair, and rob each other’s toys, without regard for the other child’s unhappiness. In this same writing, Augustine tells how he once

stole some pears, not because he was hungry, but because it was exciting to do; it demonstrated “the greedy love of doing wrong for its own sake.”

Augustine used these observations to support his idea that human nature is wounded and inclined to evil. Among early Christians, this conviction of a wounded human nature grew incrementally during the first four centuries. There was a sense that something had gone wrong with human beings. The fifth century Councils of Carthage (419) and Orange (441) adopted the term “Original Sin.” The term was linked to the account in Genesis 3 that told of a primeval event that took place at the beginning of the history of humans. A sin was committed by our first parents, and the whole of history is marked by the original fault. There is an intrinsically wounded human nature. (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church 390).

Pelagius, a contemporary of Augustine, disagreed with Augustine about a wounded human nature, and taught that moral evil is the result of bad example and poor teaching. Children are born innocent and if raised properly, they retain that innocence.

However, many Christian thinkers wondered why is human life so marred by so much hatred, brutality, and tragedy? Why is the created order, brought into being through divine decision and love, warped by evil? Eventually, the Council of Trent in 1563 accepted the theology of Original Sin. Trent went so far as to affirm Original Sin a central truth of Catholic faith. The Council of Trent stated that Adam’s sin “is communicated to all by propagation not by imitation.” In its Decree on Original Sin, Trent held that the Scriptural foundation for the Doctrine of Original Sin was Rom.5:12: “Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin,” and Jn.3:19: “Men love the darkness rather than the light.” Martin Luther and other Reformers also affirmed Original Sin as a central truth of Christian faith.

In Christian tradition, the sin of Adam and Eve is described as “the Fall.” The Catholic teaching is that it caused a defect in human nature. In Luther’s judgment,

Original Sin had corrupted human nature, and humans could do good only with the help of grace.

Put simply, what exactly is the teaching called Original Sin? It states that what is inherited by every human being is not only nature as created, but nature as distorted by sin.

The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries rated human reason as the exclusive source of knowledge and regarded the idea of Original Sin as absolutely absurd. The remedy to the problem of evil is more reason. Even contemporary Catholics are uneasy with the doctrine of Original Sin. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that “the transmission of Original Sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand.” (360).

The idea of Original Sin speaks to my experience of human life. There is a good deal of goodness and beauty to enjoy in this world. But there are all the miseries of the human situation.

All is not well. Evil seems universal and ineradicable. The first creation story says that God made the world, and it was good. Then why is it so difficult? Why does it hurt so much, Why do we die? It is not the way it was meant to be. The “Fall” is real. The world seems overcrowded with lust and crime and unhappy love.

The eminent theologian, Karl Rahner, pointed out that “the wound of sin permeates the whole of life, society and relationships, becoming part of the human reality in which the individual is immersed. Sin is within and without.” As often as Karl Rahner looked into the history of humanity, or even into individual human careers, he was filled with sorrow and even pessimism.

Therese of Lisieux surprisingly said: “Those around me are really good, but there is something, I don’t know what, that repels me.” When Flannery O’Connor was asked about her view of human beings, she answered with one word, “fallen.” I like something else O’Connor said when she was in NYC: “Although you see several people you wish you did know, you see thousands you’re glad you don’t know.” Freud: “I have found little that is ‘good’ about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them are trash.” Teresa of Avila:

“There is no trusting these sons of Adam.” Dostoyevsky: “We are all cripples, every one of us, more or less.” I know a number of men who have said that there are times when “they must get away from people.” Pope Francis: “If you put your trust only in people, you will lose” (address to young men in Turin). If we look for any ultimate security in human commitments or human institutions, we need to be prepared for disappointment

Human nature is also capable of courage, compassion, and integrity. The dark elements are counterbalanced by astonishing acts of compassion, forbearance, and creativity. Still, as many thinkers point out, there is the derailment of Original Sin. Humans tend to be very disappointing—notice the divorce rate.

G.K. Chesterton once noted that the doctrine of Original Sin is one of the few Catholic beliefs that can be confirmed by each day’s headlines. Chesterton wrote: “The Church’s doctrine of Original Sin is the only part of Catholic theology which can be really proved. There is something fundamentally rotten in humanity.” The Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, called Original Sin “empirically verifiable.” Open any newspaper, switch on your television and the symptoms of Original Sin are manifest.

We should not underestimate the wound of Original Sin. The doctrine of Original Sin should not make us cynical about what we can do; but it should make us modest. Finally, there is a quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Ignorance of the fact that humans have a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to errors in the areas of education, politics, social action, and morals” (407). I have never heard a sermon on Original Sin.

According to Roman Catholic theology, only the Blessed Virgin Mary was born without Original Sin and remained undamaged (The Immaculate Conception). The only time Original Sin is mentioned in the liturgy is in the Easter Night Vigil, where it is called “O felix culpa,” the happy fault, the fortunate sin, because it brought us the Savior Christ.

*Had I a mighty gun  
I think I’d shoot the human race.*  
(Emily Dickinson)

### CARING FOR OTHERS FROM PAGE 17

children. All four children, Robert, Amy, Katherine and Dana work with him in R.D. Scinto.

He says there are two secrets to a loving and long marriage—laughter and tender concern.

For Bob Scinto, the secrets to success in business are as elementary as the secrets to success in marriage. He says his company is guided by the Golden Rule and a firm belief in never saying no to a tenant. He also makes it a habit to return every phone call and take time to meet with people who come to his office.

He stresses the importance of education for young people to grow economically, which is why he is on the board of Foundations in Education, an independent non-profit initiative created to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to support Catholic education by supporting innovation, fostering opportunities for the professional development, and providing tuition assistance to families in need.

Their Catholic faith is fundamentally important to Bob and Barbara Scinto, who are members of St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield. He has high praise for the pastor, Father Samuel Kachuba, whom he describes as a “young and enthusiastic priest.”

“His sermons are good and the people are great,” he says. “They have a daily Mass, and my wife likes to go to Mass every day.” He often accompanies her and later they get coffee before he goes to work.

Over the years, he has made enduring friendships with people he has met in church, from St. James to St. Anthony of Padua, where he had great admiration for the late pastor Father John Baran, who he says “was in another league.”

Looking back on his life, he says, “I’m not an intellectual. I was a plumber. I dealt with people on the street. You know, I dealt with rooming house owners.... And I learned things that they don’t teach you at Harvard.”

When asked what the meaning of life is, he promptly responds: “It’s all about what kind of difference you can make in the lives of people who are less fortunate. It’s about what you can personally do for them.”

# Catholic Scouting

## Catholic Scouts fulfill 'duty to God'

NEW CANAAN—Father Robert Kinnally still remembers the years he spent in scouting when he was a member of Christ the King Parish Troop 29 in Yonkers, from the fourth grade until high school.

He remembers the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

And he remembers the Scout Law with the 12 values a scout strives to live by each day. A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent—which means "Be reverent toward God. Be faithful in your religious duties and respect the beliefs of others."

For Father Kinnally, pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport and diocesan scouting chaplain, they integrate perfectly with the Gospel and offer youth a way to practice principles of the Catholic faith in their daily lives.

"The values of scouting intersect very nicely with the Gospel," Father Kinnally says. "And the many outdoor activities, including camping, allow an appreciation of God's creation."

At every meeting, the scouts say the oath, which includes the phrase "to do my duty to God."

"This is a reinforcement of faith formation," Father says. "Scouting is an organization that has God in its midst and offers a very positive human formation—forming good citizens and developing good disciplines. We are very proud of the scouts we have in our diocese."

There is always a religious service connected to a camping activity, and in October and November he will celebrate Mass at camping events in upstate Connecticut.

Father Kinnally praised Bishop Frank J. Caggiano for his support of scouting.

"They will be honoring the bishop because he has been so supportive of the program, which provides an opportunity for faith and human formation, where scouts can learn skills, values and leadership. Every girl and boy is taught to be a lead-

er, and if you stick to the oath and to the law, you learn to be a good human being."

Bishop Caggiano will be honored on November 3 by Connecticut Yankee Council, the Boy Scouts of America for exemplifying ideals, character and leadership synonymous with scouting.

The 26th Annual Lower Fairfield County Good Scout Award Dinner will be held at The Country Club of New Canaan on 95 County Club Road. Bishop Caggiano will deliver the keynote address at the dinner, which is held annually to recognize community leaders for their character and ideals. For more information, contact Joseph Andreo at 203.951.0518 or by email at joseph.andreo@scouting.org or visit [www.ctyankee.org/stamford](http://www.ctyankee.org/stamford).

The bishop has also begun an initiative that will increase the number of parishes in Fairfield County that host a traditional or ScoutReach program in order to get more scouting opportunities in the cities, said Stephen Prostor, chair of the diocesan committee on scouting and also committee chair for Cub Scout Pack 45 and scoutmaster for Scouts BSA Troop 45 at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan.

"Bishop Frank has been very supportive," he says. "This dinner is a way to thank him for his past support and acknowledge support in the future from the Catholic Church. We are looking back to what has been done and looking forward to a renewed effort in the future."

Prostor said that Bishop Caggiano has appointed a scouting chaplain at the diocesan level, created the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting; urged parishes to sponsor scouting units and encouraged Catholic scouts to pursue the Religious Emblem Awards.

In addition, the diocesan effort to launch scouting programs at parishes in inner cities such as Bridgeport will serve the large numbers of at-risk youths. The ScoutReach Program raises money for camping and outdoor activities for scouts in urban and rural areas, Prostor said.

Three years ago, Prostor and Father Kinnally worked together to revive the scouting program

at St. Aloysius Parish, which had been active for 50 years until it was discontinued in that late 1980s. Today, Pack 45 has 14 Cub Scouts and Troop 45 has 11 Scouts.

"Scouting is back at St. A's, and this same thing can be done in other parishes across the diocese and help us engage with families on the faith formation side," he said.

Prostor and the other members of the Diocesan Committee on Scouting are working to create opportunities for Catholic scouts to get together and share in their faith journey in order to strengthen the "duty to God" aspect of scouting, he said.

They have planned different activities during the year, including an Advent Mass at which Catholic scouts will be able to gather together in uniform to celebrate the Eucharist.

"We are trying to promote fellowship and common experiences for scouts from different parishes to meet each other," he said.

In addition to events, the committee is responsible for promoting the Religious Emblem Awards, which encourage faith formation, community service



SCOUT'S HONOR—Bishop Caggiano and Father Robert Kinnally present Stephen Prostor, chair of the diocesan committee on scouting with the Bronze Pelican Award in 2019.

and reinforcing what it means to be Catholic, said Prostor, who also serves as the Catholic Religious Emblem coordinator at his parish. Prostor has been recognized for his service at the council level and also received the Bronze Pelican Award in 2019, which is a diocesan recognition for adults who have made a significant contribution to the spiritual development of Catholic youth in scouting.

Prostor first got involved in scouting six years ago because of

his son Aidan. He was attracted to the program, which combined patriotism, citizenship, community service, leadership, outdoor skills, getting back to nature and a duty to God. He became Den Leader and worked his way up to Cub Master of Pack 70 in New Canaan.

As he tells parents, education involves academics, sports and art, and when you add into that mix the aspects of Scouting, such as "duty to God," you create a

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



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# Catholic Scouting

## Scouts to honor Bishop

NEW CANAAN—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will be honored by Connecticut Yankee Council, the Boy Scouts of America for exemplifying the ideals, character and leadership synonymous with Scouting.

The 26th Annual Lower Fairfield County Good Scout Award Dinner will be held Wednesday, November 3 at The Country Club of New Canaan on 95 County Club Road. Bishop Caggiano will deliver the keynote address at the dinner, which is held annually to recognize community leaders for their character and ideals. The reception will begin at 6 pm followed by dinner and the program at 7 pm.

“The Connecticut Yankee Council, Boy Scouts of America is proud to have the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano as an honoree this year,” said

Joseph Andreo, organizer of the event and director of development/CFO of the Council. “The Lower Fairfield County Good Scout Award Dinner celebrates community leaders who exemplify the Boy Scouts of America’s ideals, values, character and leadership.”

This event recognizes outstanding leaders in the community who through their vocations or avocations serve as exceptional role models for youth, Andreo said.

“Bishop Caggiano has always been a big supporter of scouting, and we are currently working on an initiative that he has encouraged to expand the number of parishes in Fairfield County that host either a traditional or ScoutReach program,” Andreo said. “Through our programs, scouts are building excellent character development and learn-



ing leadership skills, that last a lifetime. Our scouts are taught to be good citizens, appreciate the outdoors, and each rank advancement has a requirement for ‘Duty to God’ as they develop their spiritual values for life.”

(For more information, contact Joseph Andreo at 203.951.0518 or by email at [joseph.andreo@scouting.org](mailto:joseph.andreo@scouting.org) or visit [www.ctyankee.org/stamford](http://www.ctyankee.org/stamford).)

### CATHOLIC SCOUTS FROM PAGE 27

well-rounded adult and a productive citizen.

“The religious emblems are extracurricular awards that are designed and owned by the different religions,” he says. “The scouts are allowed to wear these medals and patches on their uniforms.”

There are 50 different programs across all religions and faiths. The Catholic Church has five awards—two that can be earned by Cub Scouts, two by scouts and a fifth that is earned after completing the other four, and they correspond to the religious education curriculum.

There are workbooks with activities that can be done by the scouts and their parents in addition to group activities, he said. The scouts also meet with the pastor who is supporting them, and each year there is a Catholic award ceremony.

The Light of Christ Religious Emblem is given to Tiger or Wolf Cub Scouts in first to third grade who with their parents’ participation strive to develop a personal friendship with Jesus. The *Parvuli Dei* “Children of God” Religious Emblem is given to those who have completed second grade and strive to discover the presence of God in their daily lives by meeting requirements determined by their parish priest, counselor and family.

The *Ad Altare Dei* “To the Altar of God” Emblem is to help Catholic youth develop a fully Christian way of life in the faith community. The Pope Pius XII Award is designed to help Catholic Scouts understand God’s call in their lives. The Pillars of Faith “Duty to God” Award is given to a scout who has earned all four Catholic Scouting emblems, thereby demonstrating a tremendous commitment to the Catholic faith. ■

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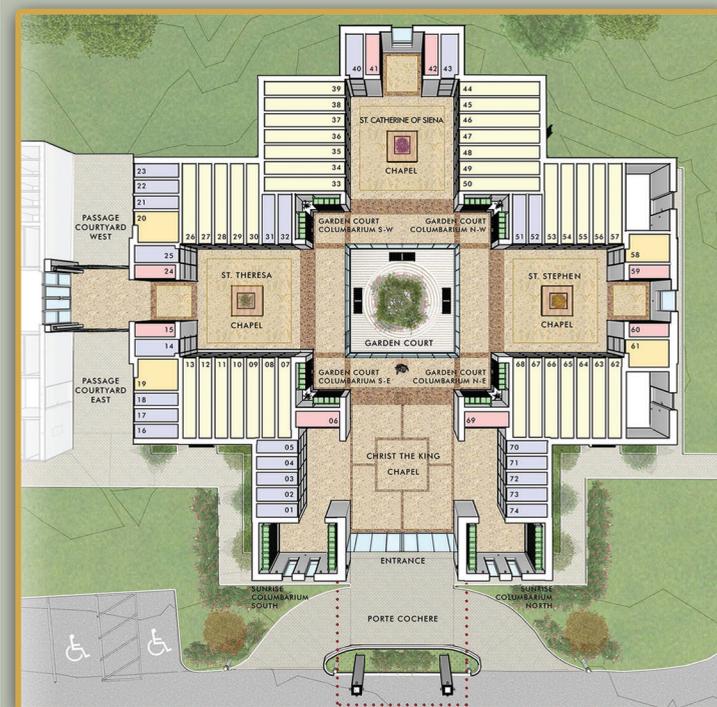
Open House events start in June 2021, on Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm. We will maintain COVID-19 prevention protocols for our mutual protection.

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# Diocesan News

## Lowe's upgrades Shehan Center art room

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT—The Cardinal Shehan Center was a-buzz on an early September morning as volunteers in light blue t-shirts got started on an exciting project.

The Cardinal Shehan Center Art Room was recently selected as one of the 100 impact projects that are the cornerstone of Lowe's 100 Hometowns initiative.

After 100 years of serving communities across America, Lowe's is completing 100 impact projects to celebrate the company's centennial and support worthy initiatives nationwide. The 100 projects span 36 states and will help thousands of families from coast to coast, each of them with a unique story to tell.

The Cardinal Shehan Center was one of over 2,200 applicants and the only one chosen in the state of Connecticut.

The art room was chosen as an area to upgrade so children and families can creatively share their stories. The renovations include additional storage for supplies, wall repairs, painting,



ART ROOM UPGRADE—The Cardinal Shehan Center Art Room was recently selected as one of the 100 impact projects that are the cornerstone of Lowe's 100 Hometowns initiative.

ceiling replacement, installation of new windows, new sink and brighter decorations.

Lowe's volunteers were greeted by Shehan Center Executive Director Lorraine Gibbons and Director of Development Sarah Motti.

"We are so grateful to be one of the applicants selected," said Gibbons, who spoke of her excitement upon finding out the center had been chosen. "This project will have a big impact on

the community," she said.

Gibbons explained that the updated room will provide a state-of-the-art space for children to learn how to express themselves creatively, which is especially necessary as we emerge from the pandemic.

"It's going to make a world of difference," Gibbons said. "When they walk in the doors of the Shehan Center and come to the lower level and see the beautiful space, they're going to be so excited."

The current art space had open shelving and only a small sink for cleaning up. After this two-day project, the art space will include spacious double-sinks and locked cabinets for storing supplies safely.

The new room will also sport a new wall, new window, ceiling tiles and lights.

Steven John Stopkoski, the store manager at Lowe's in Milford, said making the children happy is what the project is all about.

"Just to be able to give back to the kids is what really matters to us," he said. "It's going to inspire

them and show them that there are people in the community who want to see them prosper and grow."

Shehan Center staff provided snacks, coffee and music as volunteers got to work building new shelving units and clearing out supplies currently being stored in the art room.

### About the Cardinal Shehan Center

The Cardinal Shehan Center is a non-profit organization located in Bridgeport, Conn. Since 1962, the Center has served the recreational, educational and social needs of moderate and low-income families and young people of lower Fairfield County, particularly inner-city Bridgeport. Its mission is enriching lives through learning. This is accomplished by offering an After School & Saturday Youth Development Program, Summer Day Camp, various basketball leagues, Sign-Up Programs, Physical Education classes to grammar schools, and alternative education programs. The Center commits itself to offering a clean, safe environment where positive, growth-enhancing opportunities are offered regardless of race or religious affiliation. ■

## Former St. Rose student wins book award

MADRID, Spain—The Foundations of Nature: Metaphysics of Gift for an Integral Ecological Ethic by Michael Dominic Taylor was recently recognized by The Expanded Reason Institute as one of three winners in the research category.

The Expanded Reason Awards recognize exceptional publications and pedagogy which display a fruitful engagement between faith and reason, or what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has called "expanded reason."

Taylor's book, part of Cascade's Veritas series, fits nicely within Benedict's framework of expanded reason. In the book, Taylor grapples with the differences between the technocratic paradigm that reigns supreme

today and a metaphysics of gift. He argues that the popular approaches to ecological, bio-ethical, and other human crises are not working because they fail to examine the problem in its full depth. This depth escapes us because we have abandoned true metaphysical reflection on the whole and substituted it unknowingly for a series of inadequate alternatives. Both the technocratic paradigm that views all of nature mechanistically and its antagonists—the eco-philosophies that argue for the realities of intrinsic value, relationality, and beauty—carry partial truths but are insufficient. This book presents a more radical alternative, rooted in the classical tradition yet fresh and vibrant. The metaphysics of gift, based in the giftedness of existence shared by all, offers a deeper and more sat-

isfying vision of all things that can transform our relationship with nature and touches every aspect of human life: social, political, economic, technical, and ethical.

### About the author

Michael Dominic Taylor is currently teaching at St. Thomas More in New Hampshire and is the general secretary of the Laudato Si Institute in Granada, Spain, where he also taught at the St. Edith Stein seminary. He has a bachelor's degree from the Gregorian in Rome as well as one from Bowdoin College, a master's from the John Paul II Pontifical College in Krakow, Poland, and a doctorate from the Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid. He is a former student of St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown. ■

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# En la fiesta de San Francisco

## Se aboga por los animales en extinción

POR MARICARMEN GODOY

BRIDGEPORT—En el parqueo de la parroquia Santa María el pasado sábado dos de octubre, decenas de familias y sus mascotas se juntaron para recibir una bendición especial en honor a la fiesta de San Francisco de Asís, quien siempre protegió a los animales, ocasión que el Padre Rolando Torres, párroco de la iglesia, aprovechó para pedir mayores cuidados y apoyo del Estado por los animales que están en peligro de extinción.

En la jornada sabatina, el sacerdote de origen puertorriqueño, con su acostumbrado sentido del humor, dio la bienvenida a sus fieles y agradeció a Dios por la bendición especial de que las familias de su parroquia tengan en sus hogares a “animalitos” como mascotas y dijo: “Estamos aquí hoy porque recordamos la

fiesta de San Francisco, quien siempre protegió a los animales y esperamos que nuestros amigos (las mascotas) que siempre han estado con nosotros, porque no hay una criatura más fiel que estos animalitos”.

Enseguida dio un agradecimiento al Altísimo omnipotente y siguiendo el camino de San Francisco leyó la Biblia, el libro de Génesis, capítulo 1 versículo del 20 al 25, donde habla de la creación de los animales de todas las especies. De los animales marinos y de todas las aves. “Y Dios consideró que eran bueno... por eso los bendijo para que sean fructíferos y se multipliquen. Eso sucedió en el quinto día, dijo el P. Rolando.

A manera de reflexión, el P. Rolando habló de cómo hoy más que nunca esa Palabra de Dios se debe realizar para garantizar la vida y el bienestar de los animales que se vuelven parte de la familia



y que los vuelve parte de su vida diaria porque dan protección, cariño y seguridad.

Y enseguida recitó el cántico de la creación del salmo 89. “Bendiga la tierra, bendigan al Señor y exántenle para siempre”. Para luego ofrecer una oración especial, donde pidió al Señor misericordioso que bendigas

con su poder a los animales con cuidado y seguridad y que sigan trayendo alegría a sus familias.

“En tu bendita sabiduría creíste en nuestras mascotas. Con su presencia (ellos) nos ayudan en tiempos difíciles. Hazles guardianes de tu creación. Que nos den alegría y que nos recuerden tu poder. Y en especial recordamos a todas las especies en peligro de extinción para que las cuides. Y que podamos seguir apreciando tu creación. La bendición de Dios todopoderoso, descienda sobre ustedes”, declamó.

Con su acostumbrado sentido del humor, enseguida, el P. Rolando dijo a sus fieles que hay suficiente agua bendita para todos y que no cobrará ni un centavo porque eso es parte del regalo que da su iglesia a sus parroquianos.

“Es hermoso tener a todos nuestros vecinos del East Side de Bridgeport honrando la vida de nuestras mascotas y es una bendición para la iglesia de Santa María lograr realizar esta actividad que recuerda la importancia de nuestros animalitos”, repuso a la prensa el sacerdote.

Deisy Córdova, junto a su familia, acudió a la bendición de las mascotas. Ella, junto a su pequeña hija, acurrucó y amarcó a su perro mientras el P. Rolando lanzaba agua bendita.

Bendecir a las mascotas es una tradición que trasciende en tiempos modernos. A la iglesia de Santa María acudieron desde perros enormes y chihuahueños hasta gatos y un perico, como muestra de la pequeña fauna fue llevada por hombres, mujeres y niños a la iglesia. “Es importante que desde niños sepan tener respeto por los animales y les den un trato digno como nuestros compañeros por nuestro paso en esta vida”, expresó Martha, la madre de un menor mientras cargaba a su hijo en brazos.

Y en efecto, ese es uno de los llamados que hace el Papa Francisco en su encíclica “Laudato Si”, donde se convoca a la humanidad a reconocer la importancia de cuidar y respetar “la casa en común”, que se comparte con todos los seres vivos. ■



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La Diócesis de Bridgeport está buscando algunas parejas dispuestas a acompañar a nuestros novios de habla hispana en su camino de formación matrimonial. La preparación para el matrimonio en español se ayuda de cinco a seis veces al año en persona y durante todo el año en línea. El Instituto de Formación Católica busca parejas que sean católicas en buenos términos y que lleven cinco años o más de matrimonio católico válido. Deben dominar el español y recibir la recomendación de su párroco. Se pagan estipendios a las parejas que pueden animar el día completo de formación unas cuantas veces al año, así como a las que pueden reunirse vía Zoom en línea con las parejas que eligen la formación en línea.

Los interesados deben enviar un correo electrónico a [institute@diobpt.org](mailto:institute@diobpt.org). Las parejas trabajarán durante seis meses con una pareja mentora actual (y recibirán un estipendio durante la formación) antes de tomar el relevo en 2022. ■

# Vocations

## God calls us to trust Him

By **FATHER CHRIS FORD**

I hate traffic. It is always miserable and when I am in it, I begin to realize just how impatient I can be. I remember when I was in college, and I was working as a referee for high school swim meets. Most of them began around 3 or 3:30 pm in southern Fairfield County and lasted around an hour and a half to two hours. Which meant that I was always heading back to New Haven in rush hour traffic on the Merritt Parkway. Each night, I find myself sitting in this sea of brake light, when all I wanted was to get home.

Then, I met Waze. Many of you may be familiar with it by now. (In the interest of full disclosure, I've since switched to Google Maps, but the image still works). Much more than the old school Garmin and Tom-Tom GPS systems, Waze tells you where the traffic is and how to go around the traffic it. Sometimes,

though, it invites us to do something even more difficult: just sit through the traffic, because perhaps it lets up just around the corner and you just can't see it yet. It took a while before Waze proved itself to me. I spent most of the time thinking my own way was better. The more I listened however, the more I learned.

Anytime we are led down unfamiliar roads, it can hard to follow. I know Waze would do that to me all the time. "If I just turn left here,"—nope, Go Right—"But won't that bring me there? I really don't know about that. It seems such an unusual way." How often Waze would tell me to go there anyway! If you're anything like me, this level of trust is hard. I know the roads around my home. I've made this drive hundreds of times. I've faced this decision before. Surely, I know better.

When God calls us to something in life, whatever it is, He is

making a simple request of us: Trust me. That's often easier said than done. Trust is a risk and distrust tries to hold onto us, veiling itself in the guise of safety by leading me back to the familiar. But the familiar way is not always the best way. And when you really think about it, if there is anyone worthy of our trust, wouldn't it be God? The one person who, in the Incarnation of His Son has actually fulfilled every single promise He has ever made?

Every call that God makes, even to the priesthood, is first and foremost a call to life. My first spiritual director used to

remind me of this: to say Yes to the call to priesthood is first and foremost to say Yes to the salvation of your own soul—by working for the salvation of others. Sometimes, the call can demand great things of us, things we don't feel we are capable of living up to. The path forward can seem challenging and daunting, if we can even see it at all. But there's beauty in the truth that no matter the path God is calling us to walk, behind it is always the invitation to draw closer to Him.

Jesus is sent by the Father to reveal the Father's unremitting love and to offer us a way home.



FATHER CHRIS FORD

And there is the essence of trust that makes it possible to say Yes to wherever God might be leading us: the deep inner conviction that, at the end of the day, God wants me to come home. And that, even though they way might be different or unfamiliar, no matter what direction the He (or the GPS) takes me—the destination remains the same. ■

## Two profess Franciscan Secular Order



PHOTO BY JOHN OTIS

FAIRFIELD—Agnes Clarizio, OFS, and Clorinda Gulino, OFS, both parishioners at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, were professed to the Third Secular Order of Franciscans during a Mass on Saturday, September 18, celebrated by Reverend Gene Szantyr at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield.

Agnes and Clorinda waited patiently during the pandemic for their professions since the Rite of Profession had to be in person as was in keeping

with the guidelines of the National Secular Franciscan Fraternity.

Member of The Holy Spirit Secular Franciscan Fraternity, their families and friends celebrated with a lunch after the Mass which made accommodations for COVID-19 precautions. May the Lord bless Agnes and Clorinda in their vocations as Secular Franciscans.

The Holy Spirit Fraternity meets every third Saturday of the month for 9:30 am Mass, fellowship time and a brief business meeting at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 149 South Pine Creek Road, Fairfield. Inquirers to a Secular Franciscan vocation are always welcome. ■

## Cursillo Spiritual advisor

By **JOE PISANI**

BRIDGEPORT—Deacon Dan O'Connor says his life is governed by a simple spiritual principle: "Usually, the Holy Spirit kicks me down the road, rather than I feel like I'm personally motivated to do something."

And so, the Holy Spirit acted again. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano recently named Deacon O'Connor the spiritual advisor of the Cursillo in Christianity Movement in the Diocese of Bridgeport for a five-year appointment, succeeding Deacon Tom Masaryk.

Jim Bruno, the lay director for Cursillo, who nominated him, said, "Dan has been a member of our weekly prayer group since he made his Cursillo weekend, and he brings enthusiasm to his role as Spiritual Advisor to the movement."

Cursillo is an apostolic movement of the Church that was founded in Majorca, Spain, in 1944 by a group of laypeople. "Cursillo" is a Spanish word that means "short course," which refers to the three-day weekend designed to help people learn to live in a "Christ-like manner." The weekend is the beginning of the Cursillo experience, which also involves regular "grouping" with other members for a deeper spiritual experience.

Deacon O'Connor, who is assigned to Holy Name of Jesus Church in Stratford, made his Cursillo weekend in 2004, and even before that time he had joined the weekly Saturday Cursillo prayer group with seven other men in Newtown, where he lives.

"The 'grouping' keeps me there because you have the opportunity to help people understand where they are in life and how they can be better connected to God," he says.

He tells the story of a man who had stopped going to church because he was disenchanted but continued with the weekly grouping sessions.

"I suggested to him, 'Why don't you just bring a box of macaroni to the food drive at church and help somebody,'" he recalled. He saw it as a way to reopen the door a crack, rather than preach.

Cursillo is a lay movement under the auspices of the bishop. As spiritual advisor, Deacon O'Connor will provide discussion points at meetings and respond to questions about the Church or Catholicism, which may arise, he says.

"Cursillo, which is open to other Christian faith groups, is missionary oriented. It's about building the Body of Christ one person at a time," he says. "The people you are going to meet are reasonably nice and they want to become better people."

Deacon O'Connor, who had been assigned to St. Rose of Lima



DEACON DAN O'CONNOR

Church for 11 years, is director of business development for Simulations Plus, Inc., which produces drug development modeling software. He was ordained to the permanent diaconate in 2008 and is married to Dr. Elizabeth Johnston-O'Connor, Ph.D. They have four children and three grandchildren.

A graduate of Trinity College, he has 25 years of experience in marketing and sales of scientific instruments, software and services.

The beauty of Cursillo, Deacon O'Connor says, is that gives him opportunities to pursue what he calls "extemporaneous ministries," or "a ministry right in front of you."

"When you see something, you do something," he says, and thereby give witness to your faith and help others move closer to Christ. ■



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