



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

digital edition

OCTOBER 2021 | VOLUME 38, NUMBER 9 | AUTUMN ISSUE

Love that endures...



Bishop blesses anniversary couples

Inside this issue



4 *Bishop commissions
Ambassadors*



23 *Young Adults gather
in Stamford*



26 *Father Rolando Torres
blesses the animals*

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)

CONTENTS

2 AROUND THE DIOCESE
Season of Life

5 SYNOD ON SYNODALITY
Delegates named

6 ANNUAL BLUE MASS
Commemorating 9/11

8 2021 ACA
Unifies the Church

10 BISHOP'S DECREE
Regarding the Roman Liturgy

12 AMBASSADOR PROGRAM
Gearing up for commissioning

14 DIOCESAN BUDGET
2021 financial update

22 BOB SCINTO PROFILE
Importance of caring for others

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.



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:

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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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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

www.ForestOfFear.org

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

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 experi-
ence.

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

The first 1,000 guest
will receive a free Forest

of Fear wristband.

(For more information, weather updates, directions and more, visit:
www.forestoffear.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 week-
ly meetings will
be held starting
Thursday, Sept.
16, from 4-5:30
pm. Those inter-
ested must register
in advance. For
information call
the parish office at
203.268.6217.

Around the Diocese

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.



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. 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!

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.



Diocesan News

Ambassadors will go into the world 'with the power of Christ'

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

BRIDGEPORT—"Go out together as brothers and sisters with a listening heart and a heart that doesn't judge. We have the power of Christ," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano during his homily for The Pontifical Mass for the Evangelization of Peoples with the Commissioning of Ambassadors celebrated at the Cathedral on Saturday, October 16.

More than 200 diocesan ambassadors who have been training for a year and a half to welcome people back to the Church were formally commissioned by Bishop Caggiano, who praised them for their participation, dedication, and commitment to the program of diocesan renewal.

He said their "willingness to go out into the world that needs the Lord and is moving in the wrong direction" is important work that can bring healing to those who have left the Church and to people of good will who are seeking meaning in their lives.

In thanking the ambassadors, the bishop told them his hope is that this and other efforts by the Diocese of Bridgeport will lead help the Church into "true pastoral and spiritual renewal."

After what Bishop Caggiano described as a period of "formation and fraternity," the newly commissioned ambassadors were visibly joyous and inspired to begin their ministry on an unseasonably warm day that cleared into bright sunshine as they emerged from the Church.

Readings were delivered in English and Spanish and included St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, "As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!"

Each of the ambassadors received a small cross that was blessed by the bishop during the Mass. "Father of holiness, you willed the cross of your Son to be the source of all blessings, the fount of all grace. Bless these crosses and grant they those who will preach the crucified Christ may themselves strive to be transformed into his image," the bishop prayed.

In the "Prayer of Blessing," the bishop prayed with outstretched hands over the Ambassadors,

"Send your abundant blessing upon them as they embrace this important ministry, and make their work fruitful for their parishes and for our diocese," he prayed. "Make

upon you, enabling you as you go through the world to bring the Good News to the lowly and to heal the brokenhearted," the bishop said as he prayed a the final Solemn



their words the echo of Christ's voice, so that those who hear them may be drawn to obey the Gospel. Fell the hearts of these, your missionaries with the Holy Spirit."

The bishop told the ambassadors that their ministry should not simply stop at the official activities they do to welcome people back to the Church. "It should not just be those extraordinary moments," he said, but also the small moments they share with family and friends.

He told the men and women gathered that their ministry should be infused in every aspect of their lives, "You do it by being you and showing the world who is the center of your life."

The bishop was also quick to note that their work will not be without challenge and suffering as they seek to "be an agent of Christ's healing" in a world that is broken, wounded and burdened with sin.

He assured them that they would never be alone as they witness to the Lord because Christ will always be with them.

"May the Spirit of the Lord be

Blessing over the ambassadors to conclude the commissioning.

Before the recessional hymn, "Go to the World," the bishop thanked the pastors who con-celebrated the Mass with him and other who attended to support their ambassadors. He also thanked Father Mike Novajosky and Dr. Patrick Donovan for leading the ambassador training, and he announced that Deacon John DiTaranto will coordinate the second training cohort scheduled to begin in November.

The beautiful music for the Mass and Commissioning Ceremony was provided by the Cathedral Choir under the leadership of Paul Murray, musical director and organist.

(The next cohort of ambassadors begins early in November. Pastors have been asked to submit the names and email addresses of any new participants. Anyone with questions or those who would have an interest in serving as an ambassador may use the following email address to ambassadors@diobpt.org.)

Diocesan News

Diocesan delegates commissioned to Synod on Synodality

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

WESTON—It was a beautiful fall morning this Saturday, October 16, as Bishop Frank J. Caggiano commissioned synod delegates from around the diocese at a special ceremony at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston.

A breeze rustled through the chosen leaves as delegates, chosen

ambassadors,” said the bishop. “You are going forth to show that someone cares enough to listen.”

That caring, that listening, the bishop explained, is the beginning of healing.

“We are called to bring healing to a broken church, a broken world,” said the bishop.

Deacon Stephen Hodson, dioc-

outside the community of faith.

The bishop made clear that the goals of this synod are to effectively hear the concerns of those around us, to deepen our understanding of who we are as a community in Christ, and to begin the healing process that needs to occur within the Church.

“I am grateful that you are here and willing to take this adventure



by their pastors to represent their parish, filed into the church.

The bishop asked each parish and quasi-parish in the Diocese of Bridgeport to choose four delegates to participate in the diocesan portion of the Global Synod on Synodality announced by Pope Francis in March of this year.

The morning began with a warm welcome, followed by a prayer service.

Addressing those gathered for the commissioning ceremony the bishop said, “You and I will listen attentively to the needs of God’s people and to the Holy Spirit, and to discern what it is the Spirit is speaking to our hearts.”

Bishop Caggiano explained that during this Synod on Synodality, delegates are being called to listen on behalf of the Universal Church, as it is the Holy Father Pope Francis who has called for this synod.

“If this synod is to bear great fruit, we must make it our business to be so receptive to what is being said that the many wounds of God’s people will come to the forefront,” said the bishop.

The bishop referred to the delegates as agents of healing. He said that the delegates are being called to listen to others’ stories, their pain, in a way that offers it back up to God.

Bishop Caggiano mentioned that at noon that same day there would be a commissioning of diocesan Ambassadors, participating in the “Call to Renewal.” “You, too, are

es an delegate to the synod office, presented those who are serving as delegates. Delegates recited the official prayer of the synod.

After the conclusion of the service, delegates made their way to the parish hall for an orientation.

Bishop Caggiano explained the uniqueness of the Synod on Synodality. “Pope Francis is piloting a new methodology on how the synod can be done in the future. It rests on answering the question: who are we as a Church?”

The bishop explained that in all the synods before this one, the bishops would be the one to hear the concerns of their people and bring those concerns to the synod delegation. He explained that that methodology will not change, but the consultation process will. “The Holy Father wants to create a mechanism by which the entire People of God are consulted when a topic is offered,” the bishop said.

Synods will reconvene every two or three years for topics specific for which the Holy Father has discerned he needs to hear the voice of all God’s people.

The bishop told the delegates that Pope Francis wishes for these synods to be conducted in such a way that we are listening to each other and also listening outside of ourselves.

He spoke of the importance of reaching out to even those who are

forward,” he said.

Bishop Caggiano once again introduced Deacon Hodson to address the delegates.

“It is invaluable that we gather together and listen to each other,” deacon said, “To discern the Holy Spirit guiding this endeavor.”

Deacon Hodson explained that each parish is allowed to discern the best ways of enabling a Spirit-led synod experience for parishioners. “It is important that we ask the Holy Spirit to participate,” said the deacon, leading the gathered in singing “Come Holy Ghost.”

Deacon spoke of the different ways parishes can conduct listening sessions and how each parish can tailor gatherings to fit their needs. Between one-on-one sessions, small group gatherings, and a town-hall style meeting, Deacon Hodson explained the advantages and drawbacks of each.

Each local process will conclude in April 2022 with the creation of a diocesan report that will be sent to both the USCCB and the Roman Synod Office. One of the four delegates will be delegated the task of drafting the parish’s report, based on a template that will be provided to by the start of the new year. At this time there will be a closing Mass of Thanksgiving for all the delegates.

(For more information on the Synod on Synodality, please visit: www.synod.va/en.html)

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



Photo by Amy Mortensen

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 sim-

ilar 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, Heavey said, “It’s the right calling to serve others. It’s empowering to be a person of faith and of service.”

Diocesan News

Fairfield U and 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.”

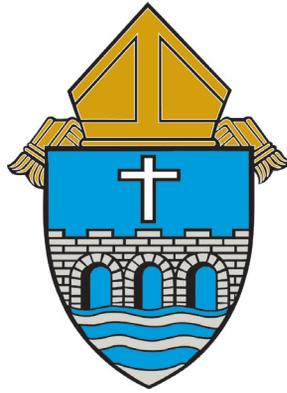
The bishop said the innovative new plans grew out of the developing partnership with Fairfield University to serve the community. He said that he has long seen the need for such a program and that many students in diocesan and public high schools will have their lives transformed by the initiative.

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 and 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

“Together, we can do much more than an individual parish can do... the Appeal affirms the solidarity and subsidiarity of the Church.”

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

▶ *CONTINUED ON PAGE 9*



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
Call 203-416-1470
or Text APPEAL to 475-241-7849



Annual Catholic Appeal

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL FROM PAGE 8

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.”

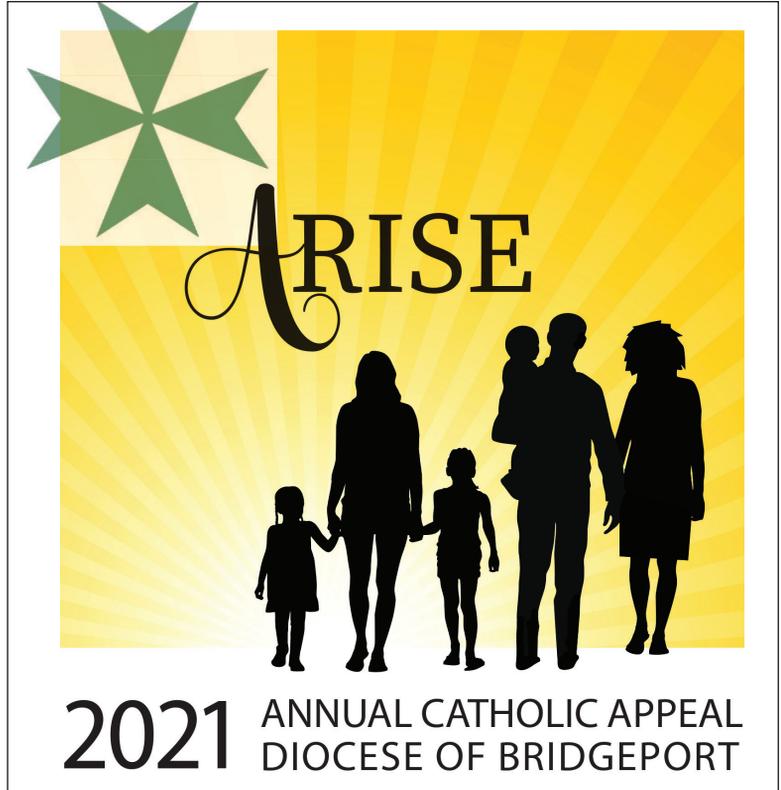
She said 26 parishes have made or exceeded their respective ACA goals and that nine parishes are within 10 percent of their goal.

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.2021ACA-Bridgeport.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.)

Decree: *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 (*cætus 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 *cætus 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.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Decree: *Traditionis Custodes*

DECREE FROM PAGE 10

- 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 Disciple of 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

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

toral 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,

that language.”

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



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.

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 pas-

“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

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

➤ *CONTINUED ON PAGE 13*

Ambassador Formation

AMBASSADOR FORMATION FROM PAGE 12

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 ambassadors 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 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 commissioning 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 commis-

sioning 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 or www.formationreimagined.org/ambassadors)

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Veritas CATHOLIC NETWORK

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 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 component 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 parishes 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.

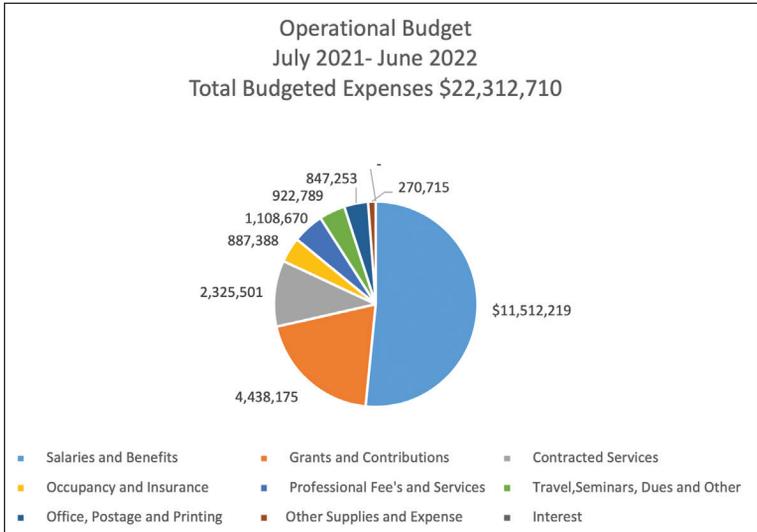
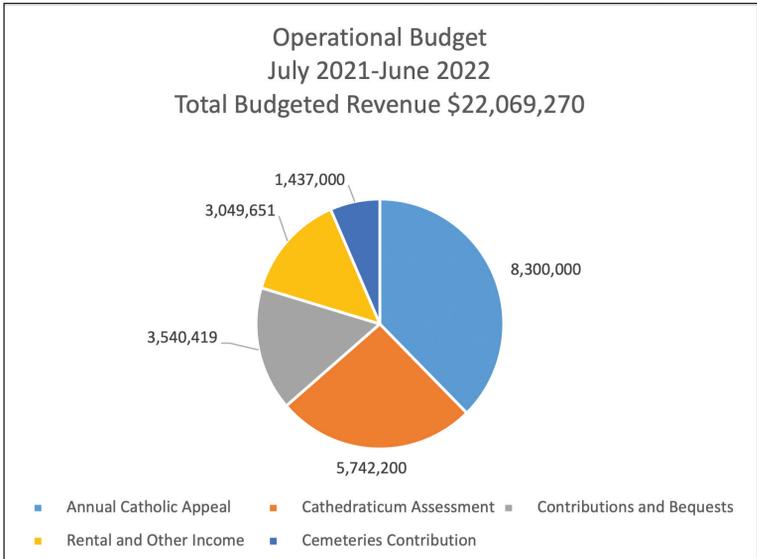
“This large infusion of cash allowed our parishes and schools to remain financially solvent during an extremely difficult period. This cash allowed many of these entities to pay bills to the diocese which include the Cathedraticum assessments (parishes only), and medical and self-insurance allocations,” 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

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Diocesan Budget



The Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation	
<i>Operational Budget — July 2021 to June 2022</i>	
Revenue	
Annual Catholic Appeal	\$8,300,000
Cathedraic Assessment	5,742,200
Contributions and Bequests	3,540,419
Rental and Other Income	3,049,651
Cemeteries Contribution	1,437,000
Total Revenue	\$22,069,270
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	—
Total Expenses	\$22,312,710
DEFICIT FROM OPERATIONS — BEFORE DEPRECIATION	\$(243,440)

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 health-care 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.)

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

band 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 deci-

you are still here; side by side, 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



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.

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 hus-

sion 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,

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-grandchildren. 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

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Wedding Jubilee Masses

COUPLES CELEBRATE FROM PAGE 16

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 | Catherine & Robert Fabrizio | Theresa & Robert Cavaliere |
| Corrine & Erwin Maurer | Linda & Michael Johnston | Marie & Donato Piselli |
| Margaret & Alfred Uva | Mary & Robert Garvey | Elaine & Eugene Ryan |
| Diane & Dn. Thomas Fekete | Dionelyn & Ernest DeBorja | Ron & Jo-Ann Miller |
| Maria & Hector Ortiz | Nina & Robert Keane | Patricia & Joseph Antal |
| Caryl & Dn. William Timmel | Lorraine & Richard Smith | Shirley & Roger DeCola |
| Lorene & Deacon Joseph Koletar | Fred & Linda Chakar | Johanne & Michael Hagan |
| Joan & Henry Gioiella | Margot & Milan Turk | Carol & Eugene Kopfmann |
| Martina & Frank Bria | Andrea & Stephen Gravereaux | Rosemarie & Anthony Xavier |
| Claudette & Donald Perley | Christina & Gene Cronin | Mary & James Florindi |
| Maria & Steven Politica | Patricia & Kenneth Miller | Karen & Jim Pritchard |
| Janet & John McMullen | Margaret & Ray Borders | Ann & Paul Moeller |
| Jill & Dennis Maurao | Yvonne & William Marcial | Margaret & Rudy Niedermeier |
| Kathleen & Richard Tunstall | Frances & Deacon Joseph Cann | Betty & Richard Corona |
| Anne & John Gueterman | Irena & Stan Dec | Gayle & Thomas Kochan |
| Elvira & Harrison Barrett | Anita & Thomas Field | Barbara & Henry Crutchley |
| Kate & Dave Allsup | Anne & John Rich | Patricia & Patsy Pagliarulo |
| Emilia & Joseph Schiro | Susan & Joseph Spain | Patricia & Olivier Bourgeois |
| Charlotte & Patrick Gannon | Michele Mattered & John Regan | Louise & Frederick, Jr Miller |
| MaryAnn & Richard Zarnick | Camille & Anthony Aiello | Dolores & Daniel Cunningham |
| Helen & Joseph Boland | Susan & John Kevin Davidson | Roberta & Robert Morton |
| Carla & Sean Sullivan | Maribel & Mario DiFiore | Frances & Ivan Capella |
| Diana & Alan Supersano | Kimberly Norton & William Butler | Karen & Gianmarco Marchetti |
| Diana & Anthony Mazzello | Suzanne & Matthew Pacifico | Carolyn & Mark Browning |
| Dolores & Peter Russell | Gloria & Robert Zanvetor | Mary & Robert Garvey |
| Martha & Don Odell | Linda & Paul Gargano | Joanne & James Feehley |
| Dawn & Steven Cioffi | Joann & Thomas Marticek | Jayne E. & Stanley M., Jr D'Amico |
| Claire & Jean Luc Faucher | Virginia & Mark Harger | Marty & Bill McCart |
| Margie & Steve Kish | Mayra & Jose Olavarria | Mary & Jim Evans |
| Julia & Richard Balas | Stephanie & Kevin DeBartolomeo | Cathy & Earl Fish |
| Janet Storace & Joseph Bonomo | Peggy & Michael Tedesco | Grace & Richard Keller |
| Lucy & Juan Rodriguez | Donna & Joseph Rahtelli | Lisa & George Romano |
| Patricia & Frank Torchen | Patricia & Bruce Richards | Dina & Ricardo Mendoza |
| Maureen & Raymond Brooks | Pamela & George Murphy | Iris Cuellar & Cesar Palancia |
| Patricia & Alexander Koproski | Charlene & Edward Prisinzano | Ali & John Dorn |
| Deborah & Jeffrey Harrington | Barbara & Bill Brimmer | Diane & Ken Moran |
| Theresa & John Croffy | Jacqueline & Joseph Rainone | Lorelei & Chris Elsberry |
| Suane & Al Latte | Phyllis & Douglas Reid | Mary & Eugene Scoran |
| Andre & Simone Pare | Angela & Edmund D'Onofrio | JoAnn & Rocco Mancuso |
| Anne & Roger Lajoie | Donna & Mario Migiano | Heliett & Michael Sanchez |
| | | Janet & Robert DeLuca |

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 financial 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.



NANNETTE SCUDIERO

“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 either on-line on the Annual Catholic Appeal website at 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.

Editorial

EDITORIAL

Commissioning
Ceremonies

October 16th 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.

CLERGY
APPOINTMENTS

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

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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Editorial



Life continues 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.

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.

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. ■

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. ■



Editorial



‘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.) ■



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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.

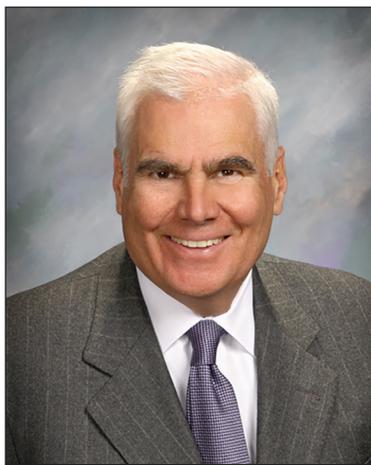
They often sat in the same pew and over time he got to know the family. As a personal gesture, he would send them tickets to events and had his limousine take them to see the Nutcracker ballet in New York City.

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 others is the purpose of life.

“It’s all about the kind of dif-



ROBERT D. SCINTO

ference 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 mile-

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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 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.” ■

BOB SCINTO FROM PAGE 22

stones 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 grandchildren. 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.” ■

Column: Thomas Hicks



Something went wrong

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

“During 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 contempo-

rary 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 secu-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Column: Thomas Hicks

SOMETHING WENT WRONG FROM PAGE 24

urity 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) ■

Upgrades to 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, 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

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



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

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. ■

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

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

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



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

vida y el bienestar de los animales que se vuelven parte de la familia y que los vuelve para 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 exáltenle 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

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 chihuahueros 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 Sii”, 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. ■