



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

APRIL 2018 | VOLUME 35, NUMBER 4 | EASTER/SPRING ISSUE

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



4 *ACA supports Catholic Charities Outreach*



16 *Burland honored for serving special needs youth*

The Catholic Church is absolutely committed to the **safety** of children

[www.bridgeportdiocese.org/safe-environments/welcome/](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/safe-environments/welcome/)



**FIND THE CARE YOU NEED**  
WHEN AND HOW  
YOU NEED IT.

[planMYcare.com](http://planMYcare.com)



**YOUR DEGREE**  
*at your pace*

Sacred Heart University offers flexible part-time, full-time and transfer options designed for your success.



Learn more at: [www.sacredheart.edu/ptadmissions](http://www.sacredheart.edu/ptadmissions)

# Easter bring us the 'Light of Christ'

## 'The Lord is Risen, Alleluia!'

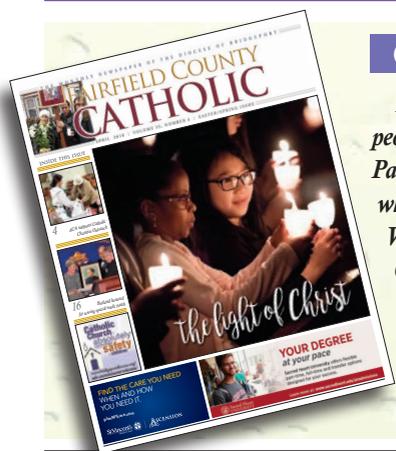
Holy Week is the most sacred and profound moment in the life of the diocese as tens of thousands participate in the Triduum liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter to celebrate the deepest mysteries of our faith.

More than 1,000 turned out for the Good Friday procession through the streets of Stamford and thousands more walked "the Way of the Cross" in a public witness of faith and humility in other cities throughout the diocese. Many more prayed the Stations of the Cross in their parishes and took advantage of Reconciliation Monday to begin Holy Week.

At the Chrism Mass on Wednesday of Holy Week, more than 200 Priests renewed their Priestly Promises before the bishop, who consecrated the holy oils used in the sacraments throughout the year.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano welcomed newcomers to the Church during the Easter Vigil at St. Augustine Cathedral and many more Catechumens and Candidates were welcomed into full communion with the Church in their parishes.

"The great gift of Christianity is Christ and the hope that comes from Easter," the bishop said. "May the new life offered by our Risen Lord abundantly bless you with joy, hope and peace of mind and heart."



### ON THE COVER

**EASTER VIGIL**—Young people from the Cathedral Parish joined hundreds who attended the Easter Vigil celebrated by Bishop Caggiano. The Mass welcomed many new Catholics to the Church  
(PHOTOS BY AMY MORTENSEN)

### CONTENTS

- |    |  |       |   |
|----|--|-------|---|
| 5  | <b>WHITE MASS FOR HEALTHCARE</b><br>Exploring "Faith and Science"      | 12    | <b>GREENWICH CATHOLIC SCHOOL</b><br>New Governance model announced        |
| 7  | <b>LIVING FULLY WHILE DYING</b><br>Father Thomas Lynch co-authors book | 14    | <b>CATHOLIC SERVICE CORPS</b><br>Teaching the Gospel message of service   |
| 8  | <b>CONVERSION STORIES</b><br>Otis Shelton of New Fairfield             | 17    | <b>CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKENDS</b><br>Diocesan schools dominate sports in state |
| 11 | <b>COLUMNIST MATT HENNESSEY</b><br>The Girl Who Cried Moose            | 18-19 | <b>OBITUARIES</b><br>Two beloved priests pass away                        |



# Latest News

## Msgr. Powers to be honored at Rector's Dinner

STAMFORD—Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, will be honored at the St. John Fisher Seminary First Annual Rector's Dinner on Saturday, April 28, at 6 pm at Trinity Catholic High School, 926 Newfield Ave., Stamford.

Tickets for the evening are sold out. A gathering of almost 300 people is expected to launch the first Rector's Dinner sponsored by the seminary.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Father Paul Check, rector of the seminary, are hosting the evening. "We're looking forward to this very special evening that will benefit St. John Fisher Seminary and honor Msgr. Powers," said Bishop Caggiano. "I am deeply grateful for his leadership and his priestly example. Msgr. Powers has influenced many seminarians and we are blessed to honor him in this inaugural event."

Bishop Caggiano said that Msgr. Powers discerned his vocation at St. John Fisher in 1992, and later served as Spiritual Director at the diocesan seminary, which was established by Bishop Edward M. Egan in 1989 to encourage and nurture local



MSGR. THOMAS POWERS, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, will be honored at the inaugural Rector's Dinner later this month in Stamford. The fund raiser to support vocations is sold out.

vocations.

"Priestly formation requires the support and encouragement of many. St. John Fisher Seminary has been a strong presence in the Stamford community and I am grateful for the support of so many people," the bishop said.

"Forming Fishers of Men" is the theme of the evening to benefit the seminary. To date, 92 men who resided at St. John Fisher have been ordained to the priesthood. The seminary is undergo-

ing a 30-month renovation project to improve and expand facilities for future use.

St. John Fisher Seminary is an initiative of the Diocese of Bridgeport to prepare college-aged men and young adults for entrance into major seminary and eventual ordination to the priesthood. Seminarians are able to pursue their undergraduate degrees at Sacred Heart University or Fairfield University while living in community and discerning their vocations.

St. John Fisher Dinner Committee chairs include: Mary and Paul Giordano, Maureen and Brian Hunter, Jennifer Ingallinera, Bridget and Thomas MacDougall, Michael Marchetti, Kathryn and Michael Prendergast, Deacon William Santulli, Joanne Santulli, Carol and Richard Stockley, Theresa and Finbar Sullivan, Kathryn and Steven Tafuro, Susan and Frank Trotta and Terry Wilmot

Msgr. Thomas Powers was raised in Newtown with his three sisters and one brother. He attended St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown and Immaculate High School in Danbury and graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1987 with a B.A. in economics. After graduation, he worked as a financial consultant with Andersen Consulting in New York, and in 1991, spent one year performing volunteer work in Puerto Rico through the Center for Social Concerns of the University of Notre Dame.

In 1992, he entered St. John Fisher, then located in Trumbull, and in 1993, was sent to the Pontifical North American College where he earned a bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology

from the Pontifical Gregorian University and a licentiate from the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. Msgr. Powers was ordained on May 24, 1997, at St. Augustine Cathedral.

After serving as parochial vicar at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull and as the spiritual director of St. John Fisher Seminary and chaplain of Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford, he was assigned as an official in the Congregation for Bishops in Vatican City from 2005-15. During that time, he lived at and served as a spiritual director at the Pontifical North American College.

While in Rome, he was also tapped to be the "English-language voice of the Vatican" during Christmas Midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. In 2015, Bishop Caggiano called Msgr. Powers back to the diocese to serve as vicar general, and to reside at St. John Fisher Seminary so that he could continue to play a role in the formation of seminarians.

(To learn more about St. John Fisher Seminary, visit [www.bridgeportpriest.org](http://www.bridgeportpriest.org).)

## Thousands turned out for Reconciliation Monday

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Thousands across the diocese and the greater New York City area turned out on March 26 for Reconciliation Monday.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano called for participation in Reconciliation Monday to encourage people to experience the healing and blessing of the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession and "to be reconciled to the Lord in advance of Easter."

This year the Diocese of Bridgeport joined the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Brooklyn and Diocese of Rockville Centre in the observance, which may have brought more than 100,000 people in the Metropolitan area to the sacrament.

The invitation to participate



in Reconciliation Monday was created in the joyful spirit of Pope Francis who said, "Now is the time to be reconciled with God. Staying on the path of evil is only a source of sadness."

Priests from 27 churches throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport heard confessions that day from 3-9 pm.

"While this is a new spiritual practice in our diocese,

the observance of Reconciliation Monday has become a tradition in the dioceses adjacent to us for many years. It has grown in popularity in part because every Catholic knows that Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in every Catholic Church," said the bishop, who thanked the priests and all those who participated.

Many people took to diocesan social media to express gratitude for the idea and to share their enthusiastic response to Bishop Caggiano's call for extra Confession hours during Holy Week.

Louise Dunn of Stamford,

who joined many others who came to St. Cecelia Church in Stamford, reported that more than 30 people were in line for confessions when she arrived, but it was one line people didn't mind waiting in.

She was happy to see so many other people eager to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation at 4:30 in the afternoon. "Thank you for the idea and for the priests who made the idea work," she said.

"The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation provides a profound opportunity to be freed from our personal sins and to experience the healing love of Christ for you and me," said Bishop Caggiano. "In terms of spiritual healing, we must never forget that this precious gift is always available, simply for the asking."

# Annual Catholic Appeal

## ACA supports programs of Catholic Charities

By ELLEN MCGINNESS

Among the many programs and ministries it supports, the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, "Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share," assists Catholic Charities, the largest non-government provider of social services in Fairfield County. Rooted in the Catholic philosophy of faith in action, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC) has fed the hungry, sheltered the homeless, strengthened families, and empowered the vulnerable by providing a broad spectrum of social services to the extended Fairfield County community.

Last year, CCFC served over 10,000 people throughout twenty-three towns in the county. That's 10,000 people who may never have received the help they needed were it not for Catholic Charities.

As you most likely know, the government has been reducing funding for almost all nonprofits—Catholic Charities being no

exception. When you give to the Annual Catholic Appeal, you are supporting all of Catholic Charities' programs.

That means your donation is helping house the homeless, you are helping educate preschoolers from lower income families, you are helping immigrants find the way to documentation and you are helping feed the hungry.

For the hungry, CCFC's food programs provide over 1.3 million meals annually through its soup kitchens, food pantries, Morning Glory breakfast program and Senior Nutrition Program. The Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport and New Covenant Center in Stamford provide not only meals but food pantries as well. Last year, these two pantries welcomed over 2,600 individuals to shop for nutritious groceries for their families.

These centers are not only about food. Thomas Merton Center (TMC) offers support groups to help individuals address issues like

abusive relationships or addiction problems, which might be impeding their road to self-sufficiency. TMC also provides case management to assist guests with paying rent, budgeting their finances, and obtaining state and federal benefits. New Covenant Center offers a shower, a laundry room and barber services. NCC also collaborates with other local programs to train individuals in the skills needed to find better jobs and financial independence.

"We have many former and current clients who also volunteer here as their way of saying 'thank you' to New Covenant Center," said John Gutman, the executive director. "One of those is Charo, who came to us from Ecuador many years ago to eat a daily meal. Once Charo learned to become a hair stylist, she returned to New Covenant Center—but not for food. She came back to offer free haircuts to our guests, which she does about 15 times a month."



Catholic Charities' Homeless Outreach Team is always on the move, leading Northern Fairfield County's initiatives for those experiencing homelessness. It is the only program searching the woods, under bridges and in the community for the homeless in the greater Danbury area. The team links these individuals to mental health and substance abuse services, health care access and housing opportunities.

"When we are able to link someone to housing and watch them walk into their apartment for the first time, it is a very emotional experience because we know that we have assisted a person with obtaining stability and enabled him or her to launch into a new phase of their life," said Regional Director Michele Conderino.

What if you came to this country with the hopes of making a better life for your family, but you did not know how to nav-

igate our immigration system? Catholic Charities' Immigration Services is a welcoming place to turn to for those in need of affordable counseling and legal assistance with issues involving family reunification, documentation, U.S. Citizenship and protection of status.

"We help newcomers and the foreign-born population, regardless of race, religion, sex, creed or economic status," explained Immigration Counselor Alex Arevalo. "Our mission is to promote the dignity, self-sufficiency and human potential of these newcomers to our county." Last year alone, CCFC's Immigration Services conducted almost 400 consultations and assisted 22 individuals with obtaining U.S. citizenship.

Imagine if you were a parent who couldn't afford the cost of a preschool education for your children, but wanted them to have a solid foundation before they entered kindergarten. What would you do?

You could turn to Catholic Charities' Room to Grow Preschools (RTG) to meet your needs. Parents pay tuition on a rate based on their income. RTG is not only a preschool for children ages 3-5, but also a daycare for parents who work. Mothers can help support their families, confident that their children are in a nurturing environment.

"Supporting Catholic Charities through the Annual Catholic Appeal is crucial to providing services to those in need and for the most vulnerable," said Bill McLean, chief development officer of the Diocese of Bridgeport. "In addition, many companies will match an appeal gift for Catholic Charities, so the impact can be doubled or tripled and more people can be helped."

Catholic Charities puts faith into action. Supporting Catholic Charities through the Annual Catholic Appeal—what better way to put your own faith into action.

(To donate to the Annual Catholic Appeal, contact Pam Rittman: [prittman@diobpt.org](mailto:prittman@diobpt.org) or 203.416.1470. You may make your gift online at: [www.2018ACABridgeport.com](http://www.2018ACABridgeport.com).)

## HELPING THOSE IN NEED

**The 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal ministries and programs give help and hope to people in need and carry out Christ's mission in the Diocese of Bridgeport.**

Catholic Charities Senior Nutrition Program, Meals on Wheels provided 65,000 meals last year.

Your gift to the **Annual Catholic Appeal** assists the Meals on Wheels program and satisfies the nutritional needs of the homebound elderly and disabled by providing a well-balanced meal and safety check.

Please make your gift the **2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share** today and provide for those in need.



"I deliver to clients that are homebound and those who are not able to take care of themselves and make meals. Being a Meals on Wheels driver allows me to make sure that each client is eating and they're getting the nutrition they need." Shameeka Shavers, Volunteer Meals on Wheels.

To make your gift or for more information, please visit [2018ACABridgeport.com](http://2018ACABridgeport.com), call **203.416.1470**, or text **SHARING** to **50555**.

"It's a tremendous service and I don't know what I'd do without it."  
Carolyn Adams, Meals on Wheels client.



# White Mass for Healthcare Workers

## Faith and science find 'shared life force'

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

"Never walk in a patient's room and leave half of yourself at the door. They need the other half," said orthopedic surgeon and author Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky at the 25th Annual White Mass Breakfast at Woodway Country Club in Darien.

Dr. Dutkowsky, who has dedicated much of his practice to caring for patients with cerebral palsy and other special needs, said every healthcare practitioner has the obligation to know the latest in science and medicine, but also to recognize the role of faith and spirit in healing.

Dr. Dutkowsky is an attending orthopedic surgeon at Bassett Medical Center in upstate New York and an associate clinical professor of orthopedic surgery at Columbia University College of Physicians. He is president of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine.

In one of the most profound and prayerful White Mass talks, Dr. Dutkowsky said that the sacredness of human life and "the shared life force" have the power to connect faith and science and create a new sense of reverence for life. Reflecting on the "contemporary chasm between faith and science," Dr. Dutkowsky said, "The metaphysical dimension of health care is as present as the physical."

The noted medical scientist said that faith and science are different and reasonable "ways of knowing" and that both pathways can connect to bring a new understanding of the human condition.

Dr. Dutkowsky told the breakfast gathering of more than 200 men and women that for him the greatest "cohesion of faith and science is found in the Eucharist," where the body and blood of Christ enter the body, bringing God's love and mercy—his living presence—to us.

He said 1999 was a difficult year for him and also provided a transformational moment in his life and practice. He found himself "discouraged, almost despondent" about the business of healthcare with its red tape, insurances and balance sheets, when an encounter with an elderly patient brought his faith and



BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO, keynote speaker Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky and Dr. Thomas Flynn at the White Mass breakfast held at Woodway Country Club.

medical practice together.

He was working the emergency rotation when he was told that an 85-year old woman from a rural town about 45 minutes away needed surgery for a broken wrist.

It took her and her husband, who suffered from memory loss and confusion, almost three hours to get to the hospital, and when Dr. Dutkowsky first met her, she was disconsolate—not for herself but over her husband.

"I'm afraid I've lost Gordon," she told him, noting that he probably was lost in the parking lot. Dr. Dutkowsky asked security to look for him, and in a short time the couple, who were married 63 years, were reunited at her hospital bed.

As Dr. Dutkowsky was about to begin the procedure the patient said to her husband, "Gordon, come here and hold me tight." That simple human gesture and their love for each other that "transcended age and forgetfulness" powerfully affected Dr. Dutkowsky.

"My soul melted at that moment and something wonderfully profound changed in me," he recalled. "For two decades I had worked tirelessly to develop the skills to treat her," but sensing her full humanity and spirit brought him to "experience faith in the presence of God."

"Faith and science collided" and formed something new in his psyche and in his practice, Dr. Dutkowsky said. "They combined to form some new element to witness the glory of God. I will never get over that experience."

Speaking directly to the healthcare professionals in the audience, Dr. Dutkowsky said, "You bring the image and likeness of a loving God to patients through faith and science."

During the breakfast Bishop Frank J. Caggiano presented the 2018 Father Rufin Compassionate Care Awards to Dr. Patrick Cahill and healthcare volunteer Nathaniel Beckles.

Dr. Cahill, a Stamford obstetrician and gynecologist, was honored for his mission service serving Honduran women and

for his outreach to low-income families in the Stamford area. Nathaniel Beckles was recognized for his service as a volunteer at St. Camillus Health Center in Stamford. He often leads the Rosary for patients in the chapel.

The bishop also presented an honorary award to Dr. Thomas Flynn of New Canaan who approached Bishop Edward Egan twenty-five years ago with the idea of bringing his colleagues together for a White Mass to celebrate their faith and role as healers in the community.

"Dr. Flynn is a pre-eminent physician and a man of great faith who has healed by his skills, his presence and his accompaniment of those who are sick and suffering," the bishop said.

The day began when more than 300 gathered for Mass for at St. Aloysius Church in New Canaan for the White Mass con-celebrated by Bishop Caggiano and several

priests, including those who serve in healthcare settings throughout the diocese.

During his homily, Bishop Caggiano said that many people feel abandoned by God when a loved one "is sick or suffering, and we feel helpless." The bishop said that in the face of suffering, we must learn the "mystery of surrender of ourselves to the present moment, to things we can change and things we cannot. We must do what we can to heal and then accept. In both cases God is present to us."

He thanked all healthcare workers for their sense of ministry as they "face the mystery of suffering everyday" and become "vehicles of God's presence" in their work to bring physical and spiritual healing.

For a transcript of Dr. Joseph Dutkowsky's talk visit: [www.bridgeportdiocese.org/healing-beyond-healthcare/](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/healing-beyond-healthcare/)

## Golf Classic honors Caruso

By ELLEN MCGINNESS

The Catholic Charities/Aetna Golf Classic will take place Monday, June 4, at the Patterson Club in Fairfield. Last year, the event raised \$100,000 for Catholic Charities of Fairfield County (CCFC), making it a principal fundraiser for the agency.

This year, the Aetna Golf Classic will honor the late Judge Dan Caruso, a longtime friend and supporter of CCFC. "We thought it was fitting to honor Judge Caruso with the Catholic Charities Service Award," said Jon Vaccarella, who is chair of the CCFC Board of Directors as well as co-chair of the event with Bill Tommins. "Dan was a man dedicated to his faith as well as to serving others, which made him a perfect choice for this award," Vaccarella explained.

As a probate judge in Fairfield Court, Judge Caruso presided over all adoptions. Catholic Charities' Director of Family Directions Amy Zajac, recalled a touching story about

the well-liked judge. "When there was an adoption that involved a family with older siblings, Dan would allow the siblings to tap his gavel, symbolizing the completion of the adoption," Zajac recounted. "While this might not seem like anything major to the common observer, it was everything to those older children. It brought them into the process and allowed them to feel important at a time when their new baby brother or sister was the star."

The Golf Classic begins with a lunch at 11am, followed by a shotgun start at 12:30 pm. All monies raised will benefit the 30 programs of Catholic Charities, one of the largest private social services agencies in the county. CCFC's programs include soup kitchens and food pantries, immigration services, a food program for the elderly and homebound, homeless outreach and preschools to educate children of lower-income families.

While this year's event will be bittersweet with the passing of Judge Caruso, Catholic Charities' President Al Barber reminisced



this way, "Dan organized a huge food drive for the agency which really made a difference to our food programs. He was welcoming to hundreds of donors and volunteers, making them feel appreciated and recognized for their participation. We want to do the same for Dan by recognizing his support of the agency at this year's Aetna Golf Classic. He took no credit for the service he gave to Catholic Charities and the community at large, but we feel it's important to give Dan credit now."

(For more information or sponsorship details, contact Amy Zajac: 203.416.1336 or [azajac@ccfc-ct.org](mailto:azajac@ccfc-ct.org).)

# Local News

## Students meet donors at Foundations reception

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Foundations in Education recently hosted the Inaugural Leaders of Tomorrow Breakfast Reception at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport.

More than 160 turned out to honor the 49 young students who were selected as “Leaders of Tomorrow.”

Leaders of Tomorrow is a unique program of the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund that provides need-based scholarships to students in Catholic elementary schools who were identified by their principals as students of strong academic standing and good character who possess leadership potential. Donors to the program transform the lives of children through the gift of Catholic education.

The reception brought together



STRONG ACADEMIC STANDING, good character and leadership potential—these traits, amply demonstrated by student Igor Decastro Carvalho of St. Joseph School in Danbury, identify students who qualify for the Leaders of Tomorrow program. Here Igor is joined Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine, sponsor Tom McInerney, Principal Lisa Lanni and Bishop Frank J. Caggiano

students, their families and principals, and the donors who sponsor a portion of their tuitions.

In her opening remarks, Barbara Ripp, the generous spon-

sor of 10 Leaders of Tomorrow, shared her motivation for donating to Foundations in Education: “In Matthew 19, Jesus said ‘Let the little children come to me,

and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.’ He is speaking to all of us in that verse. My husband Peter and I have chosen to help fulfill that command.”

Among the scholarship recipients was Igor Decastro Carvalho, a third grader at St. Joseph School in Danbury, who was accompanied by his mother, Daniela, and his principal, Lisa Lanni.

“I sincerely treasured the opportunity to meet the people that make my son’s education possible as well as celebrate my son’s achievement,” said Daniela. “The generosity of our Catholic community is truly a blessing.”

Principal Lanni added, “Because of the generosity of donors to Foundations in Education, my students are able to further their studies and be

rewarded for their conscientious attitudes and giving spirits.”

There are currently 27 donors sponsoring 49 students in the program who might otherwise be unable to attend Catholic schools.

Foundations in Education is a non-profit initiative created to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport’s ongoing mission to support Catholic education in Fairfield County by supporting innovation in academic and extra-curricular programs, fostering opportunities for the professional development of school leaders and providing tuition assistance to families in need.

*(To learn more about Foundations in Education or to learn how your gift can help transform the lives of Catholic school students, visit the Foundations in Education website: [www.foundationsineducation.org](http://www.foundationsineducation.org).)* ■

## The beginning of a difficult conversation

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

At a recent workshop sponsored by the Leadership Institute, the Diocese of Bridgeport began an important conversation about ministering to young people with question about their own sexual identity and other challenges that may have separated them from the Church.

“We believe this is the first step in understanding the struggle of our young people. To differentiate one’s body from one’s personhood is a notion that is antithetical to our faith tradition,” said Patrick Donovan, executive director of the diocesan Leadership Institute.

Donovan said the workshop explored many issues facing teens while also focusing on authentic Catholic Teaching. “What exactly does the Church teach and why? As those who work with our young people, we cannot share the truth unless we know the truth ourselves,” he said.

The workshop, which drew almost 100 men and women who work with young people around the diocese, was held at the Catholic Center. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano led the gathering in prayer and participated in conversation about difficult issues and

pastoral care challenges.

Roy Petitfils, a therapist, author and internationally recognized expert in understanding and raising teenagers, was the keynote speaker. A therapist at Pax Renewal Center in Lafayette, Louisiana, he has authored a number of popular volumes including *God Wears Running Shoes: Spiritual Reflections for Those Ministering to Young People* (2009).

Other panelists included Father Paul Check, rector of St. John Fisher Seminary and former leader of the international Courage ministry for people with same-sex attraction; Jeanne Hosinski, MD, a graduate from Tufts Medical School and primary healthcare provider; and Jonah, a member of Courage since 2002.

*Fairfield County Catholic* spoke with Roy Petitfils following his presentation:

**In your talk you mentioned that teens suffer from great anxiety. Can you explain that a little more?**

Anxiety rates have doubled in the last ten years for young people. We have an anxiety epidemic in our country, and the anxiety is driving depression.

The question is, how do we as a Church meet and address the



THERAPIST AND AUTHOR Roy Petitfils leads recent workshop at the Catholic Center

spike in adverse mental health issues that families are facing today? Pastoral care also has to respond to the alarming suicide rate among young people who are at heightened risk.

**What’s going on?**

The culture is shifting so quickly, moving so rapidly in this country. We’re being disconnected from so many of our tools and traditional supports.

**Is it the result of pressure from social and national media?**

The level of tolerance in our culture is so high that we have

created an opportunity for young people to question things adults just never questioned. There are fewer boundaries on where we allow our lives to wander. We’ve got a lot of young people who, because it’s on the table, are picking it up and trying it on. Maybe it’s a way for them to stand out or fit in.

**How do you provide pastoral care to teens around gender issues?**

In many ways, we are still afraid to have the conversation, and it’s easy to get into murky situations. The question for our

schools and parishes is, how can we work with young people so they feel safe to ask these difficult questions and they trust that our responses will not be critical?

We must know the truth to be able to speak the truth and we must be willing to listen first, then teach, not criticize. Oftentimes, people confuse listening with agreeing or condoning. It’s not. It’s listening to young people tell their stories.

It’s our opportunity and responsibility as Catholics to find a place at the table we can contribute to this conversation. We must have the ability to listen to other viewpoints. Otherwise, young people walk away.

**Why the need to talk about same-sex attraction?**

The topic is coming up in schools—in classrooms and personal conversations. We need to empower parents to have the awkward conversation about sex. It’s hard work, but it has to be done. Many people conclude the Church hates gay people. We need to share our viewpoint with a pastoral response.

The truth is we have a lot of young people who identify as LGBT and they don’t feel wel-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

# Living Fully While Dying

## After the Diagnosis

By **JOE PISANI**

Almost 50 years ago, when Father Thomas Lynch began his life as a priest, his first assignment was to visit an elderly parishioner who was dying—a man who was angry with God, angry with life ... and angry with the priest.

He had several days of stubble on his face when he hobbled to the door to meet Father and grumbled, “If you’ve come here to give me any of your pious c—, don’t waste your breath.” And their meeting seemed to go downhill from there. He was bitter because his prayers hadn’t been answered, and there was no time left. Father Lynch realized it would be unproductive to tell him about God’s inscrutable will and the redemptive power of suffering.

“But he clearly wanted something from me,” he recalled. “It wasn’t theology. It wasn’t sympathy or false optimism. And it wasn’t formal prayer. He needed to know where God was in all of this.”

Father Lynch listened to his story, anointed him and said he would pray for him, but left feeling that he hadn’t done enough. The man died shortly afterward, and only later did Father Lynch realize what he wanted was “someone to be able to walk in his shoes and to understand what his difficult journey was like.” He needed to talk about what death meant and find meaning in his suffering ... and his life.

It was a lesson that would change how Father Lynch ministered to the suffering and dying throughout his priesthood. Since that time, the longtime pastor of St. James Parish in Stratford has helped several thousand people who were sick and dying and confused. He has officiated at more than 1,500 funerals and counseled not only the dying, but also the grief-stricken and caregivers. And he has captured the wisdom and spiritual insights he gained over the past 46 years in a book titled *After the Diagnosis: A Guide for Living*, which he and award-winning author Barbara Mariconda co-wrote.

“I realized that in order to minister in a meaningful way to the sick and dying, I needed to enter into and really strive to

understand their world, so I took every opportunity to spend time, talk and be real with them,” he said. “As I walked with parishioners, family members and friends, this Path of Suffering became more and more familiar to me.”

His experiences led to an understanding of the transformative power of love, especially during sickness and dying.

Mariconda, who has written many books for adults, young adults and children, said, “In the 21st century, dying is more often than not an elongated process that may stretch out for many years. Since all of us will eventually die, the question is how do we live well while dying? How can we avoid being bullied by the obsessive inner voices of anxiety and fear that leave us self-absorbed and disconnected from the very life we hope to save?”

The book, which took seven years to write, includes cases of men and women who were transformed by love during the process of dying, and it offers practical and spiritual advice for patients, families, friends and caregivers. Most importantly, it centers on the fundamental promise—so contrary to what our society believes—that a person can live joyfully and lovingly despite challenges like sickness, dying and death.

“In a culture where death is seen as the ultimate failure, where suffering is to be avoided at all costs and assisted suicide is increasingly the answer, what is there left to say about end of life issues? And what’s love got to do with it?” Mariconda asks. “Once we recognize that love, suffering, forgiveness and dying emerge from the same inner place, a place of radical surrendering of self, we can begin to view end of life issues differently. If we learn to suffer well, we’ll learn to love well, to forgive others and live. And when we do these things well, we’ll die a joyful death.”

For too many people, the process of dying starts with denial

and ends with resignation, when it should continue through to acceptance—and transformation.

Father Lynch says that a “slice of heaven” can be found on this side of the grave and there’s “a place beyond acceptance. A place of transformation in which we can realize in the fullest, purest way what our life’s purpose has been and what an amazing gift we can entrust to those we’ll leave behind. We can learn to embrace mystery, to understand that our suffering can be transformative. Our legacy can become one of love—pure, powerful and eternal.”

The book goes beyond a discussion of sickness and dying. “It’s really about living and loving along the entire journey,” he said. “Most importantly, it’s about realizing that we can choose the way we live and the way we love through every stage of living, sickness, dying and death.”

Father Lynch, who is a family and marriage counselor, told the story of Phil, a middle-age man diagnosed with gallbladder cancer, which spread to his liver. In four months, his life changed drastically and he was spending

**“The question is how do we live well while dying... If we learn to suffer well, we’ll learn to love well.”**



A GUIDE FOR LIVING—Father Thomas Lynch, Pastor of St. James Parish in Stratford and writer Barbara Mariconda have co-authored, *After the Diagnosis*, a book that explores living fully with illness. They will host book signings on April 28-29 at the parish.

his final weeks at Memorial Sloan Kettering in a hospital bed.

Father Lynch would visit him, and on one occasion even brought him a porterhouse steak and gave him a taste of scotch to lift his spirits. Despite his suffering and seemingly hopeless case, Phil was an inspiration to so many others.

“He made it a point to reach out to everyone in the spirit of love,” Father Lynch recalled. “When his nurses, doctors and caregivers entered the room, Phil would smile, engage them in conversation, ask how their day was going, learn their names and inquire about their families.”

When there was nothing more that could be done, he was released from the hospital and a crowd gathered to say goodbye for the last time. His was an example of a person who can transcend pain and suffering, illness and dying and touch countless lives in the process.

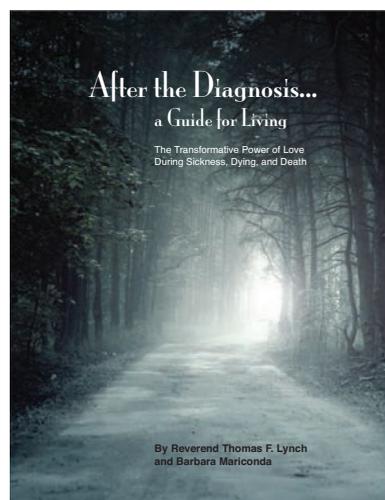
“In many ways, Phil had tilled the fertile field of God’s boundless love,” Father Lynch said. “He was able to access the living and loving presence of God that was in the field of his heart during his final ordeal.”

When the ambulance arrived at his home, the driver said to his wife, “Your husband must be a famous man—I’ve never seen that kind of send-off.”

Father Lynch said that so many people who are suffering and dying are looking for God ... even though God is always with them. They have to be given the opportunity to surrender and be transformed by his divine presence and saving love.

“The greatest lesson is that God is with you and will never abandon you,” he said, “and that he wants to help you stand in the brokenness and frailty of life.”

(For more information, to order the book or to download a free sample, visit [journeyofthesoulbooks.com](http://journeyofthesoulbooks.com).)



“I highly recommend this book for anyone who has received a diagnosis of serious illness and wishes to seek healing and hope. I also commend it to anyone who desires to learn how to live life fully, one day at a time.”

— Most Reverend Frank Caggiano,  
Bishop, Diocese of Bridgeport

Have you or someone you love received a serious diagnosis? Are you a caregiver for a loved one dealing with a serious illness? The challenges of these situations can become overwhelming, the anxieties and pressures a heavy burden to bear. Father Thomas Lynch and co-author Barbara Mariconda have spent the last seven years addressing these issues in their soon-to-be released critically acclaimed book: *After the Diagnosis... a Guide for Living*. Fr. Tom and Barbara share with you the practical strategies and insights that can transform this phase of life that all of us will eventually face.

Join them at their

**Book Launch Signing, and Q&A Session.**

**St. James Parish Hall • 2110 Main Street • Stratford**

### BOOK SIGNINGS

Saturday, April 28th 1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.  
Saturday, April 28th 6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.  
Sunday, April 29th 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Refreshments will be served

For more information go to: [www.journeyofthesoulbooks.com](http://www.journeyofthesoulbooks.com)



# Conversion Stories

## 'The Holy Spirit intervened'

By **JOE PISANI**

Otis Shelton was raised in a small town near Victoria, Texas, in a segregated community with two Southern Baptist churches—one for white folks and one for blacks. This was the world Otis knew as a child growing up during the 1950s.

He received a rigorous Christian education that included Sunday school from 9:30 to 11am, followed by church services until 2 pm.

"I had to go to church every Sunday," he recalls. "There was no pushback on that. I found very positive role models in my parents and the church elders. Most of our families were trying their best to make it in a difficult world. They worked hard to support themselves, so there wasn't much time to relax and no such

thing as a vacation."

Many of his neighbors in the close-knit black community worked on local ranches and picked cotton during the summer. Their Christian faith assured them that despite this difficult life, "Jesus is with us and answers our prayers."

Otis first heard the Word of God from what he calls "old-time preachers who would get fired up and start preaching about our sinful ways and tell us we would go to hell if we didn't change. As a young person, I listened and learned and somehow that message stuck."

During his early teens, his family moved 12 miles away, and he began attending a different church whose pastor had a subtler manner of preaching that disillusioned him.

"I listened for an uplifting message, but there was none, and

I'd walk away asking myself what his message was," he recalled.

Otis' stepfather, Willie, was on the police force and became the first black sergeant in the state, where a black officer wasn't allowed to arrest a white person. He would later be inducted into the Texas Rangers Hall of Fame. A man who lived his principles, Willie was disillusioned when church elders got involved in compromising situations so he left the Baptist church and began attending Mass at St. Mary's parish, which was not segregated.

Otis said his stepfather's example, the principles he lived by and his Catholic faith had a lifelong influence on him. However, when he left home to study chemical engineering at the University of Houston, his religious bearings began to crumble.

"In the early days at the



**LIVING THE GOSEPL**—Retired corporate executive Otis Shelton of New Fairfield shares his story of conversion to the Catholic faith. "The Holy Spirit was reaching out to me," says the native of Victoria, Texas. He and his wife Phyllis are members of St. Edward the Confessor Parish in New Fairfield.

university, I started really questioning my beliefs," he recalled. "One of the philosophers I read was Voltaire, who had a negative influence on me, and slowly I turned into an agnostic." He began questioning everything he had been taught about the Christian faith. Then, the Holy Spirit intervened.

When Otis was a senior, a classmate who was Catholic introduced him to a different way. Otis met his family and was impressed with the values they professed and practiced. As Catholics, they were living the Gospel message that other people only talked about.

Otis would join them for Mass at St. Nicholas Church in Houston, which was an integrated parish. "There I found the messages I had been looking for, which encouraged me to live life according to my Christian values. The Holy Spirit was reaching out to me. I was very impressed with the Catholic Church because it was addressing poverty and education and doing missionary work around the world."

He eventually joined the RCIA process and after six months received the sacraments of initiation and became a Catholic at 22 years old.

"I have been a practicing Catholic over 50 years," he said. "My wife, Phyllis, was a Methodist and she converted shortly after we got married at St. Mary Church in Houston."

While he was in college, Otis worked summers for Union Carbide chemical plants in Texas. Eventually, he joined that company and worked for it from 1967 to 1991, moving to Danbury in 1979. From 1992 to 2013 he was employed by the newly formed Praxair as director of Compliance and Operational Assessment.

He and Phyllis now live in New Fairfield and attend St. Edward the Confessor Church. They have three children and six grandchildren.

"When we moved from Texas to New Fairfield, we were accepted with open arms at St. Edward the Confessor," he recalled. "Racism was never an issue and that's very important to me."

He has been a member of the parish since 1979. Over the years, he has been active in the men's ministry and Knights of Columbus. He served as Grand Knight of the parish council and currently is its chancellor. He is inspired by the history of the Knights in combating racism in America and helping the disadvantaged. Catholics put their faith in action locally and around the world, he says.

Otis, who is also a member of the Strategic Planning Commission that came out of the Fourth Diocesan Synod, attends daily Mass and is a Eucharistic minister.

"I strongly believe in the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ," he said. "It is a very important part of my faith."

He says, reflecting on his dearly-held faith, "The Catholic Church is not just a building, but every one of us together. When we gather each Sunday, I can feel the grace in the church. I strongly believe that we, Christian men and women, through our ministries will make our families, communities and nation a better place."

*(A SERIES ON CONVERSION... The above profile is the first in a series on "conversion" written by Joseph Pisani. Over the coming months, the writer will explore the spiritual path to Catholicism taken by many who experienced profound changes in their lives.)*

## Shepherds is looking for a few good mentors! Could it be YOU?



Shepherds has been changing the lives of students in Connecticut for 20 years by providing mentors and financial sponsors to deserving high school students entering Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport and Notre Dame High School in West Haven.

This fall, we need 20 mentors.  
Our students need YOU!  
Sign up by April 30th.

**20**  
**Shepherds**

*Celebrating 20 Years of*  
Changing Lives... One Student At A Time.



Visit [www.shepherdsmentors.org](http://www.shepherdsmentors.org) or contact Dan McAuliffe, Executive Director at [dmcauliffe@shepherdsmentors.org](mailto:dmcauliffe@shepherdsmentors.org) or at 203-367-4273

# New Covenant Center

## 60 Minutes producer highlights celebrity breakfast

DARIEN—*60 Minutes* has succeeded because it treats news as public service, not simply as a business decision, said CBS News chairman and *60 Minutes* executive producer Jeff Fager at the New Covenant Center Celebrity Breakfast on April 4.

More than 200 turned out at Woodway Country Club in Darien to celebrate the 40th anniversary of New Covenant Center (NCC), which provides more than 600,000 meals yearly to the working poor, elderly and homeless of the greater Stamford area. The event raised \$120,000 to support the NCC mission.

Sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Bridgeport, the inner-city soup kitchen relies on hundreds of interfaith volunteers, along with its small professional staff, to provide nutrition and social services.

In his keynote talk, Fager praised New Convent Center staff and volunteers for the public service they provide and said that

the news media also provide a public service in a democracy.

Fager shared some of the ground rules that have made *60 Minutes* one of the most enduring and trusted news shows in TV history. He said the producers and reporters never talk down to an audience, and they don't rely on audience research to determine topics. Rather, they look to the editors and reporters to tell compelling stories. That may not be "what the audience wants to see, but it's what is important in their lives as Americans."

Fager, who is the author of the book *50 years of 60 Minutes*, said the stories are chosen not because they're interesting, but because they shed light on a larger issue.

He warned that labeling news as "fake news" is corrosive to a democracy and enables people to read or believe only what makes them comfortable or confirms their opinions. "We must be careful not to fall into the trap of labeling news we disagree with as



'fake news,'" Fager said.

During the meeting, J. Randy Salvatore of New Canaan, chief executive of the Stamford-based RMS Companies, was presented the "Founder's Award" for his contribution of pro bono construction management services during construction of NCC's new and expanded building.

"This award was presented in appreciation to Randy Salvatore for helping to make our dream a reality for our current and future generations," said John Gutman, NCC executive director.

The 8,200 square-foot center, completed in 2015, enabled NCC to expand its dining and pantry services, create bath and shower

facilities for homeless guests, and also include space for a laundry room, barber services, job skills training and social programs provided at the soup kitchen to help people become more independent.

Gutman thanked all those who turned out for the breakfast celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Stamford soup kitchen, and said he was optimistic because of the generosity of people and the involvement of youth.

He said the new "Social Night of Service" program has engaged young adults into the multi-generational work of feeding the poor.

Rabbi Jay TelRav of Temple Sinai delivered the invocation and Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, gave the final benediction.

*(New Covenant Center is located at 174 Richmond Hill Ave. in Stamford. Visit online at: [www.new-covenantcenter.org](http://www.new-covenantcenter.org).)*

KOLBE CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Education that engages,  
empowers and transforms!



Accepting Qualified  
Transfer Students Now

TEST & TOUR THURSDAYS AT 8AM

4/19
5/17



Call to register: 203-335-2554  
[www.kolbecaths.org](http://www.kolbecaths.org)  
33 Calhoun Place • Bridgeport, CT

Answer the call.  
It's time.

Pastoral Ministry  
Religious Education  
Pastoral Counseling  
Pastoral Care  
Spirituality  
and more

fordham.edu/gre | 718-817-4800

Courses offered online and on our Bronx campus.  
Financial aid is available.

FORDHAM

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Graduate School of Religion  
and Religious Education

## EDITORIAL

## Easter Challenge

In his Easter message this year, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano reminded us that on Easter Sunday, we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death. "It is the victory of God's love over all that wishes to destroy human life," he said as he emphasized that we must come to Easter by Way of Cross. As we continue to celebrate the Easter Season, we should reflect on the bishop's words:

"Easter challenges us to live lovingly with one another—with our families, our neighbors, and with all those who share our common bond of humanity. We must revitalize our communities of faith so that no one will suffer alone. No one should carry their cross alone. Pope Francis has challenged the whole Church to make our communities, big and small, more credible precisely by growing in love and mercy. Our Easter faith challenges us to put faith in action, and make our witness credible.

"The gift of eternal life that was won on the cross and that we celebrate on Easter is a gift that Jesus wishes to offer to everyone who is willing to accept it. His love is for everyone. His forgiveness is offered to all who turn to him.

"Our challenge is clear. We need to surrender to God's love every day and to recognize that we are not ultimately in charge of our destiny, he is. We are to embrace everyone as he did and love as generously and radically as Jesus does. We need to embrace our sufferings borne for the sake of love and help our neighbor to do the same."

## Thanking Our Priests

Easter brings parish families together in a very special way, and has the power to unite generations through the depth and richness of its liturgies.

It is perhaps also a time when we are most aware of the gift and sacrifices of our priests—all the more poignant for two diocesan parishes that experienced the loss of their pastors as we entered Holy Week this year.

Father John Baran, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua in Fairfield, and Father Andrew Marus, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Stratford, succumbed after leading lives of priestly service and courageously facing their illnesses.

The losses devastated parishioners, but coming as they did during the celebration of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, they also deeply immersed people in the mystery of suffering and our hope in Christ as communities of faith.

In the renewal of priestly promises at the Chrism Mass the bishop asks priests, "Beloved sons, on the anniversary of that day when Christ our Lord conferred his priesthood on his Apostles and on us, are you resolved to renew, in the presence of God's holy people, the promises you once made?"

"I am," answer the 200 priests who stand before him.

Now it's our turn to affirm and support their priestly promises. Our priests give sacrificially throughout the year to bring us the sacraments and create vital parish communities. They add immeasurably to our lives in good times and times of loss and suffering. In the light and hope of Easter, let us remember to pray for them and offers thanks for the blessings they bring to our lives.

## April Galas

With the good weather returning, April is shaping up as a busy and exciting month around the diocese. On April 19, at Woodway Country Club in Darien, Foundations in Education will host its annual gala. In a short time, FIE has done a remarkable job to raise funds for student scholarships, professional education and ongoing innovation in our schools. Friends of Trinity Catholic High School will celebrate at their own gala on Friday April 27 at Giovanni's Water's Edge in Darien, where, among others, Msgr. Walter Orłowski will be honored. The following night, Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, will be recognized at the first Rector's Dinner at Trinity Catholic High School. And Sunday, April 29, is shaping up as a very special kind of celebration when married couples throughout the diocese celebrate at the Wedding Jubilee Mass at St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull. The 3 pm Mass will be followed by the Spring Concert of the Diocesan Youth Choir. For further information on these and other events, visit the calendar at <https://dobcalendar.bridgeportdiocese.org/>.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Matt Helfrich remembers his father with a special gift

Each day Foundations in Education is blessed by a visit from the Catholic Center mail supervisor, Matt Helfrich. Matt has worked at the Catholic Center for 34 years and is known for his dependable mail delivery and the daily joke which he delivers with equal aplomb. Matt also works at an area Stop & Shop, where he has been for 32 years.

One recent afternoon, Matt made a special delivery to Foundations in the form of a personal donation in memory of his father, former superintendent of diocesan Catholic schools, Bernard "Bernie" Helfrich. Mr. Helfrich served as superintendent for 23 years.

Matt takes delight in his unsolicited contribution to Foundations in Education explaining, "Catholic education is very important to me. I had a little extra money set aside, so here's my check."

Matt's work ethic, great sense of humor and commitment to Catholic education are treasured gifts to Foundations in Education.



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

## PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

FATHER MICHAEL A. BOCCACCIO, to temporary Parochial Administrator of Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, Fairfield. Effective date was March 19. Father Boccaccio will remain Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies Office for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

## PAROCHIAL VICAR

FATHER OTONIEL LIZCANO, from part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Joseph Parish, Norwalk and part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Ladislaus Parish, Norwalk to full-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Joseph Parish, Norwalk. Effective date was April 2.

## RESIDENCE

FATHER MARIUSZ M.

OLBRYNS, from residing at Saint Charles Borromeo Rectory, Bridgeport, to reside at Holy Name of Jesus Rectory, Stratford. Effective date was April 2. Father Olbrys will remain Parochial Administrator of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Stratford.

FATHER CHURCHILL PENN, from residing at Saint Charles Borromeo Rectory, Bridgeport, to reside at Holy Name of Jesus Rectory, Stratford. Effective date was April 2. Father Penn will remain part-time Parochial Vicar of Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Bridgeport, and Assistant Chaplain to Bridgeport Hospital.

## RETIREMENT

DEACON GERALD F. SABOL, from diaconal ministry at Notre

Dame of Easton Parish, Easton, to retirement. Effective date was April 16.

## PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

FATHER JOSEPH A. MARCELLO, Pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, and Vicar for Clergy, has been appointed to serve on the Presbyteral Council. Effective date was March 16.

## DIACONAL COUNCIL

FATHER JOSEPH A. MARCELLO, Pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, and Vicar for Clergy, has been appointed to serve on the Diaconal Council. Effective date was March 16.

*Father Joseph A. Marcello  
Vicar for Clergy, April, 2018*

FAIRFIELD COUNTY  
CATHOLICOffice  
of Communications  
Diocese of Bridgeport

238 Jewett Avenue  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606-2892  
telephone | 203.416.1461  
fax | 203.374.2044  
email | [fcc@diobpt.org](mailto:fcc@diobpt.org)

Web | [www.bridgeportdiocese.com](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com)  
Facebook | [BridgeportDiocese](https://www.facebook.com/BridgeportDiocese)  
Twitter | [@diobpt](https://twitter.com/diobpt)

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

**Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano**  
Publisher

**Brian D. Wallace**  
Executive Editor [bdwallace@diobpt.org](mailto:bdwallace@diobpt.org)

**Pat Hennessy**  
Managing Editor [phennessy@diobpt.org](mailto:phennessy@diobpt.org)

**Renée Stamatis**  
Art Director [rstamatis@diobpt.org](mailto:rstamatis@diobpt.org)

**Ralph Lazzaro**  
Advertising Manager [rlazzaro@diobpt.org](mailto:rlazzaro@diobpt.org)

**Brian A. Wallace**  
Graphic Designer [bwallace@diobpt.org](mailto:bwallace@diobpt.org)

**John Grosso**  
Social Media Leader [jgrosso@diobpt.org](mailto:jgrosso@diobpt.org)

**Ronnie Lazzaro**  
Copy Editor (Consultant)

## Advertise

To place an ad, contact  
Ralph Lazzaro: 203.667.1622

## Circulation

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

## Annual Subscription Price

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

## Postmaster

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

© Copyright 2018, Diocese of Bridgeport

# Editorial



## Resurrection Moments

### A WOMAN'S VOICE

BY DEBRA TOMASELLI

*Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Florida. She can be reached at dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com*

“There’s a resurrection,” Father Tom said. “There’s always a resurrection.”

Years ago, he delivered this hopeful message at a Good Friday service. Now I know what he meant.

Back then, I needed a resurrection. Long after the death of my younger brother, I remained

entombed in darkness, sadness and depression. It’s just how it was.

When a friend suggested I get help, I bristled. Why was she trying to “fix” me? She had no idea what I was going through. She’d never had a death in her family. What did she know?

Undaunted, she mailed a copy of the book, *The Courage to Grieve*, by Judy Tatelbaum, to me. What was she thinking? I threw it

across the room.

But something made me pick it up and start reading. As I read about anger, and the pivotal role it plays in grief, I felt smug. Nope, I didn’t identify with any of those emotions. I’m right, I thought. I’m not angry at the deceased. I don’t need help. I really wasn’t angry. How could anyone harbor anger against my younger brother, Jim, who didn’t have an ounce of aggression in his body?

Later, I kept reading. If you can’t identify with anger, the author recommends addressing the deceased with this phrase, “I wish.”

Immediately, a torrent of regrets gushed forth. I wish you hadn’t died so young. I wish you had been healthy. I wish you had a job, a wife, a family, a car, a driver’s license. I wish I didn’t miss you so much... It was as if

someone had unlocked the dark tomb of misery inside me, allowing it to begin to escape. Sobs racked my body.

Finally, the book said that you know you’re recovering from grief when you can begin to see something good come out of the tragedy. That sounds crazy, I thought.

It took time, but the resurrection came.

Eventually, instead of seeking sympathy for my loss, I helped others struggling with a significant death, offering understanding and consolation. Instead of regretting lost opportunities with Jim, I discovered simple, fun ways of expressing my love for my family and friends. Instead of questioning God, I worked to alleviate the suffering of those around me, by feeding the homeless, donating household items,

and making charitable contributions. An increased prayer life, along with efforts to exhibit kindness and generosity, became my first priorities.

With the help of God, my sorrow turned to joy.

The more I shared, the better I felt. The more I sought Jesus’ presence in my life, the more I learned to trust in his ways. Love, peace, hope, and happiness replaced anxiety, frustration and sadness. Indeed, thankfulness consumes me for the God who made a way to reveal that his peace transcends even the incomprehensible circumstances of this world.

We’re not so far from the events that took place some two thousand years ago. Some circumstances are difficult to understand. Sorrow may surround us, but there’s a resurrection. There’s always a resurrection. ■



## The Girl Who Cried Moose

### A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

*Matthew Hennessey and his family are parishioners of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stamford.*

New Hampshire, as my mother-in-law told me recently, has five seasons: summer, winter, fall, spring—and mud.

The tourists come in October, to see the leaves change color. They come again in February, to ski the White Mountains. The Hennesseys come in early April to see the mud.

April is “off season” in the Granite State. The slopes are melting, the trees are leafless, and the lakes ice-bound, but the mud is in full bloom. If you enjoy boots that sink to the ankles and splatter marks up the back of your pant leg, come to New Hampshire around Easter.

Spending time with my mother-in-law is, of course, the real reason for our visits. She and my late father-in-law moved up from New York City 15 years

ago, before any grandchildren came along. They built a beautiful, sturdy house in the woody shadow of Mt. Kearsarge. It’s a great spot.

It’s also really remote. Rafters of wild turkeys block traffic, such as it is, on partially paved back roads. Black bears sometimes amble through the yard, looking to nibble on the buried contents of grandma’s compost heap. And then there is the mud. Thick, deep, and of exceedingly high quality, this ain’t rain-shower garden mud. This is mud for real. Primordial. Wild.

The Hennesseys are not rural people. The rhythms of life are out of sync with our urban-suburban heartbeats. I like the fresh air, but the quiet makes me nervous. I like to see the stars at night, but I could lose the oppressive solitude.

Some people think death and

menace lurk down dark inner-city alleyways. I feel my mortality most keenly when I’m alone in the piney woods, surrounded and spied on by who-knows-who with who-knows-what on its mind. In these moments, I can’t resist composing my own obituary. He died doing what he hated: sliding down a deep ravine.

My mother-in-law has gone native. She says not to be afraid of black bears. She says they are high-strung and a little dumb. Also, she says, they can’t see anything that isn’t right in front of their noses. She says that they’re more afraid of us than we are of them.

She can speak for herself.

I’ve heard that the way to behave around a black bear is to make yourself appear as big as possible. Put your hands above your head and make a growling noise. That way the short-sighted bear will think you are a meaner, bigger, badder old bear and ske-daddle back to his den.

I’d like to speak with someone who’s actually experimented with this technique in the field. I have a feeling it’s one of those theories that looks good on paper. Less so when you’re knee deep in high-quality mud and your lizard brain is commanding you to run for your life.

For what it’s worth, the cor-

rect strategy for dealing with a grizzly bear is the exact opposite. You are supposed to play dead. That way the fish-and-berry fed grizz, who only maims humans for the sport of it, will tire of scraping your face with his five-inch razor claws and tumble on about his business.

I’m dumb and a little high-strung myself, so I can easily imagine getting the bear business backward in the heat of the moment.

Easter in New Hampshire is not so bad if the sun shines. When the sun dips behind a cloud or the late winter sky throws down a slushy mix of rain and snow, our Granite State getaways become interior affairs. We play every card game, board game, and head game we can find.

Our Sally, who is five, has lately been experimenting with the “made you look” game. She picked it up from her older brother, who is far more sophisticated than she when it comes to the timeless art of sibling manipulation. Try as she might, she just can’t get him—or anyone else—to take the bait.

“Oh no, here comes an alien!” she says, pointing over your shoulder. You feel bad for the child, so you play along.

“Where?” you say, looking up from your newspaper with mock alarm.

“Made you look,” she says. Yes you did, you clever child you. You sure made me look.

Then, one evening, while you are chatting with your wife at grandma’s kitchen table, Sally comes rushing in.

“There’s a moose in the yard!” she yelps, pointing to the window overlooking the driveway.

“Oh my goodness, really?” you reply, trying desperately to mask the cynicism and detachment that years of urban sophistication have imprinted on your soul. Only when you hear your mother-in-law exhale in alarm and say “Oh my goodness” with just a little more vocal wonder than she could possibly fake do you yourself rise and rush to the window.

There, in the driveway, stands the most amazing creature, a young female moose in a wilderness face-off with your parked Honda Odyssey. The whole family gapes in wonder for a sustained moment before the moose turns and galumphs back into the forest.

The next morning grandma and Sally pull on their boots and go hand-in-hand to look for the moose’s footprints in the mud and you remember, as if you could possibly forget, exactly why you come to New Hampshire during the off season. ■

# Greenwich Catholic

## New governance model

GREENWICH—Greenwich Catholic School is pleased to announce its transition to a new governance structure.

Known as an “academy” model, the new governance formation will foster greater engagement to ensure the vitality and viability of Greenwich Catholic School (GCS) for generations to come. This step forward is in alignment with the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools’ recently published strategic plan.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano stated, “One of the central tenets of the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools: Transforming Our Future, is the empowerment of laity on school boards and greater ownership in the running of schools by local school communities. I share this vision for Catholic education in our diocese and am eager to witness Greenwich Catholic School’s bright future unfold.”

As an academy, GCS will remain under the auspices of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Governance is assumed by a two-tiered board comprised of members and directors who work together in concert to strengthen and advance the school’s mission.

The bishop and his appointed clergy serve as the members. They ensure the Catholic identity of the school remains paramount and appoint the directors. The Board of Directors consists of laity and has official authority and fiduciary control, which will allow GCS to determine its

of finance, facilities, marketing, and education. In continued partnership with the Diocese of Bridgeport and the new Board of Directors, I will remain focused on curriculum and instruction, and setting our students on a path to success.” Kopas went on to promise, “Greenwich Catholic

School will remain rooted in faith, surrounded by community and committed to excellence.”

Although the new governance model represents a major change relative to the

authority of the board, the board will continue to demonstrate a commitment to the Catholic faith.

The chair of the Strategic Planning committee of the current School Advisory Board, Mario Gaztambide, said, “GCS now has the distinction of being the first established diocesan elementary school to move from the School Advisory Board

**“Although the new governance model represents a major change relative to the authority of the board, the board will continue to demonstrate a commitment to the Catholic faith.”**

strategic direction and allocation of resources. The Board of Directors, who will be appointed by the bishop, will assume their new level of responsibility for Greenwich Catholic School on July 1, 2018.

Principal Patrice Kopas explained, “GCS will benefit from the new governance structure by drawing upon community members’ expertise in the areas



TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE—Empowering the laity and the school boards they serve on is one of the major goals of the diocesan Strategic Plan for education.

format to that of an academy model. Transitioning to the new model will allow GCS to retain and attract highly qualified and talented educators who will live the mission and guide students to achieve their full potential.”

Under the new structure, the diocese will reserve certain privileges, such as approval of the members of the Board of Directors, guardianship of the school’s Catholic mission and ownership of the property. The

Board of Directors will monitor and evaluate the operation of the school and evaluate, approve and revise as needed school policies and ensure the policies are implemented in accordance with GCS’s mission and the policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

*(GCS is a co-educational Catholic school serving students in Grades Pre-K-8 and is located on a 38-acre campus at 471 North St. in Greenwich. For more information or to schedule a tour, visit [gcsct.org](http://gcsct.org).)*

### DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FROM PAGE 6

come by the Church. Do we want to hear them or not? Do we want to welcome them or not? These young people will never know the truth of God’s love if we dismiss them.

#### What do we need to know about teens and gender?

Adolescence is a time of emerging identity. There is also more gender fluidity. It’s not uncommon for young people to experience same-sex attraction, but for most of them it’s a phase; 80 percent of children who present with gender dysphoria (identity) will resolve the issue. They will go back to their God-given gender and allow puberty to work itself out.

That’s why it’s important that we have this conversation. In fact, there may be many different conversations based on the development of the individual. The reality is they change. We know the brain is changing. They just don’t have the capacity. That’s why we ask them to hold the identity gently. This is important for parents, too. Listen. Talk to professionals. Try not to react to a situation that is so fluid.

More young people are

#### identifying as “Nones” when asked about their faith. What is the impact?

There is a correlation between the rise in disaffiliation and in mental health. The sacraments, religious belief and spirituality are affective coping mechanisms for mental health. Prayer and having a purpose are incredibly helpful. So many people have jettisoned it. It’s very fair to say we have a crisis of spirituality.

Existential depression is escalating with teens, and it’s a logical consequence of people in crisis who can’t find a way to believe in God. They need to know that they come from someone and are destined to be in a relationship with him for eternity.

*(In October and November 2017, Bishop Caggiano met with catechists from parishes throughout the diocese. He spoke about the tough issues facing young people today, including the rise of anxiety. A transcript and video of the bishop’s presentation can be found at [www.formationreimagined.org/a-catechist-conversation-2/](http://www.formationreimagined.org/a-catechist-conversation-2/).)*

*(The Leadership Institute will be hosting a series of webinars with Roy Petitfils on May 2 and 9. For more information and to join in the discussion, visit [www.formationreimagined.org](http://www.formationreimagined.org).)*

## ST MARGARET SHRINE

a diocesan shrine

### The “Original” Italian FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY June 8th, 9th, 10th at St. Margaret Shrine



Friday, June 8th - 6 pm to 11 pm

Saturday, June 9th - 2 pm to 11 pm

Sunday, June 10th - 12 noon to 10 pm

Special Outdoor St. Anthony Mass  
and Procession Sunday, 11 am

Rides and Games  
Daily Live Entertainment and Raffle  
Italian Food Specialties  
with our famous Pizza Fritta

2523 Park Ave, Bpt 203-333-9627 SaintMargaretShrine@gmail.com

Masses: Mon-Sat 8:15am, Sat Vigil 4pm, Sunday 8, 9:30 (Italian), 11am

Come for a visit, tour, retreat, or day of prayer.

# St. Joseph School, Brookfield

## Parents support new school model

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

More than 80 students have registered to attend St. Joseph School Brookfield in the fall, according to Dr. Steven Cheeseman, diocesan

finances and other activities. "This group of people has worked incredibly hard, giving countless hours over the last five weeks," Dr. Cheeseman said as he thanked members for

held on January 18. At that time, the bishop said that parents would play a key role in the process and the diocese would be transparent in its communications.

Since that time a taskforce of parents and educators, assisted by sub-committees of parents, began studying the multi-age model, visiting other schools and working to shape it to the needs of St. Joseph students.

Rather than traditional classrooms, the multi-age model calls for groupings of four or five students into larger "bands."

Band sizes will not exceed 24 students. The new grouping, as determined by the leadership taskforce, calls for Pre-K (ages 3 and 4); K-2; grades 3-4; grades 5-6; and grades 7-8.

Dr. Cheeseman said that while the school will introduce a new education model, it would also enhance and strengthen its Catholic identity.

Dr. Cheeseman said that by adopting the new model, the school will benefit from a balanced budget.

"A donor commitment of \$250,000 for the next two years has been offered to assist us with moving forward with supporting the needs of the new academic model and for marketing and admissions

activities," he told the parents.

A Five-Year Strategic Plan is in the process of being developed and will be shared with the school community in September 2018.

The taskforce set the new

Tuition and Fee Schedule 2018-19 K through 8 students at \$5,895 per student. New family registration began on April 1.

(For more information, visit [www.sjsbrookfield.org](http://www.sjsbrookfield.org).)



superintendent of schools.

"We're very encouraged by the response and the affirmation parents have given to the new school model that the bishop introduced," he said. Dr. Cheeseman expects the number of students to grow as parents continue to register their children for Pre-K through 8th grade.

"The bishop charged us with creating a school that is authentically Catholic, academically excellent, and financially viable," Dr. Cheeseman said. "And we believe this model does all three."

The new model will change the name of the school to St. Joseph Catholic Academy of Brookfield, consistent with other school reorganizations in the diocese. The new governance model will include a Board of Directors, a Head of School and Director of Education, Dr. Cheeseman said.

Immaculate High School President Mary Maloney has agreed to serve as Head of School. She will also continue to lead the high school.

Current plans call for eight full-time teachers and nine part-time teaching aides and other employees to serve the estimated 80-100 students who will return in the fall.

After weeks of intense study and planning, Dr. Cheeseman and St. Joseph School Taskforce members unveiled plans for the new school model at a meeting attended by parents and educators on March 8 at St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield.

Throughout the evening, taskforce members offered presentations on all aspects of the plan, including classroom organization, technology,

their enthusiasm and passion for the project, which will give the school "a fresh start."

Dr. Cheeseman told parents that the multi-age plan is "not experimental," and that it has been gradually taking hold in many private and public schools, including schools in the area, since the 1990s. It will also be adopted in other schools throughout the diocese.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano had introduced the plan for the transition of St. Joseph School into the new blended learning and "multi-age" model at a meeting concerning the future of the school

**St. Joseph Catholic Academy**  
Brookfield, CT - 203.775.2774 - [www.sjsbrookfield.org](http://www.sjsbrookfield.org)  
*Developing One Child at a Time*

**Your Child's Educational Journey Begins with SJCA**

St. Joseph School, Brookfield is proud to announce the new St. Joseph Catholic Academy, offering personalized, blended learning beginning in our renowned preschool program.

We invite you to see what is new and exciting about our NEASC accredited program.

Private tours are available by appointment. Please call 203.775.2774 to schedule.

**ENROLL TODAY**  
<https://www.sjsbrookfield.org/admissions>

## CATHOLIC PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

**Law Office of James M. Hughes**  
Elder Law/TITLE 19/MEDICAID-Planning  
Veteran's Benefits - "Aid & Attendance"  
Estates/Probate/Real Estate

1432 Post Road, Fairfield, Connecticut 06824  
203.256.1977 — [hughes\\_james@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hughes_james@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.fairfieldctelderlaw.com](http://www.fairfieldctelderlaw.com)

**UNITED SEWER & DRAIN CLEANING, INC.**

**RESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY DRAIN CLEANING**  
**MUNICIPAL • COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL**  
24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE • LICENSED & INSURED

**377-8704**  
OR  
**1-800-422-3724**  
Office: 534 Surf Avenue • Stratford

- CATCH BASIN CLEANING
- HIGH VELOCITY WATER JETTING
- LARGE DIAMETER POWER RODDING
- TV PIPE INSPECTION
- AIR TESTING
- JET RODDING
- VACTOR SERVICE

MasterCard  
VISA

**PARISH WEB DESIGN PACKAGES**

- Mobile Friendly
- Accept Donations
- Management Tools
- SEO Ready

Visit: [Magtype.com](http://Magtype.com)  
special pricing for non-profits

SINCE 1963

**TRIPLE S**

**SPRING CLEANING**  
Carpets - Drapery  
Rugs - Upholstery  
Grout, Tile & Stone

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

[www.triplesclean.com](http://www.triplesclean.com)

# Catholic Service Corps

## Teaching young people Gospel message of service

By JOE PISANI

Jessica Nayden, program coordinator for the diocesan Catholic Service Corps, still remembers the summer she led a group of young people on a mission to Everett, Massachusetts, to work on a home that had fallen into disrepair. The task seemed to be a simple one—scrape the deck, replace broken wood and apply generous coats of paint.

But what at first looked like a routine project took the group a lot longer than they anticipated because they ran into an unexpected twist—and it had nothing to do with home repair. It had to do with human repair.

The owner, Regina, was in her 80s and suffered from what St. Mother Teresa called the “most terrible poverty” of our age—she was lonely. Painting the deck became secondary to something more important.

“It was almost impossible to do work at her house because she wanted so much to tell young people about herself and hear about their lives,” Nayden

recalled. “Each day, we spent hours just talking.” And that was a good thing.

As part of their activities with the Catholic Heart Work Camp, whose motto is “Love, Serve, Connect,” there was prayer and discussion at lunch that centered on the question, “Where did you see God today?”

Regina wanted to take part in that discussion. The peculiar thing, they realized, is that once you start to look, Christ keeps popping up everywhere in likely—and unlikely—places.

Nayden, 30, emphasizes the need for Catholic service to center on prayer and reflection, and as coordinator of the Catholic Service Corps, she understands the importance of bringing Christ to the needy ... and finding Christ in the needy.

The mission of the corps, which was formed as a result of the Diocesan Synod, is “to foster Catholic identity by uniting young people to be the face of Christ in service to others.” It is the same Christ, who after washing the disciples’ feet on Holy Thursday,

said, “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

The corps is open to young people in the diocese, who are urged to participate in events and service projects and prayerfully reflect on them. As part of the Office of Faith Formation, the corps offers resources and opportunities to parishes, schools and individuals.

“So many people don’t know what the Catholic Church does to help people,” Nayden says. “They don’t know the good things the Church is doing, and they don’t know the good things that young people are doing.”

As coordinator, she works with youth ministers, pastors, directors of religious education, and schools. Her work has included overseeing the distribution of rice bowls for Catholic Relief Services, helping to collect food and toys for Al’s Angels and organizing the Diocesan Service Challenge last October, which involved a day of service. Eleven different groups, including St. Catherine of Siena



JESSICA NAYDEN, COORDINATOR of the Catholic Service Corps (with husband Rob and baby Leo) “Many people don’t know the good things the Church is doing and they don’t know the good things that youth are doing.”

School in Trumbull, Notre Dame High School in Fairfield and St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport, undertook service projects in their communities.

“We’re serving as part of our faith,” she says. “It isn’t just about feeling good; it’s about seeing Christ in a person and being Christ to that person.”

She is quick to point out that service work doesn’t always come with an emotional high. “Sometimes it can be difficult and uncomfortable.”

While she was a teacher at St. Joseph High School, she chaperoned a group of students on an Appalachian service project that required them to do bathroom and porch repairs on a decrepit home.

“The woman who lived there was a hoarder, and for the students it was like ‘Whoa, we’ve never seen anything like this before.’” Young people often can be thrust into unfamiliar circumstances that require adapting and patience.

“Instead of having a great experience and leaving with happy photos, you sometimes leave wondering, ‘Did I make a difference at all?’” she said. “For example, in the Midnight Runs to New York City, you often have to give that person to God and do what you believe Christ wants you to do, whether it’s providing a meal or a smile.”

One of the primary purposes of service, Nayden says, is to affirm the dignity of the person you are helping, even those who are hoarders, homeless or suffer some other infirmity or condition. “Everyone deserves to be treated as a beloved son or daughter of God, regardless of their circumstances,” she says.

Young people are naturally drawn to service, and many do so as part of their requirements for Confirmation, college applications or high school groups. There are opportunities to do volunteer work at soup kitchens and food pantries, clothing and book drives, visits to senior centers, mentoring children,

helping the homeless, walkathons and Bible camps.

The upcoming Catholic Relief Services FoodFast will take place May 6 from 11 am to 8 pm at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull to help young Catholics understand the reality of world hunger by going hungry and learn about how they can take a stand against global poverty. For more information, visit [www.catholicservicecorps.org](http://www.catholicservicecorps.org).

The corps has a calendar of events and some 30 opportunities in which young people may participate. It also helps parishes and schools throughout the diocese with the work they’re doing, and has partnered with St. Joseph High School, St. Philip Parish in Norwalk and Sacred Heart Parish in Greenwich, where a filmmaking class developed promotional videos for the corps.

Nayden also cited the work of the St. Aloysius Parish, New Canaan, youth group, which is committed to helping children and seniors. Members traveled to Kentucky and brought Christmas stockings to people around the holiday.

“It’s eye-opening to see that kind of poverty in our country,” she said, “and it makes you feel blessed for what you have, especially when you see the joy little kids get just to receive a toothbrush.”

Nayden grew up in Brookfield and was a member of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, where she was introduced to community service by assisting in Vacation Bible School and parish events.

“I knew I wanted to serve the Church in some way,” she said. After graduating from Brookfield High School, she entered Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, where she studied theology and English. Her experiences working with young people have led her to appreciate the importance of service in bringing them to Christ. Once that happens, they can bring Christ to others, one person at a time. ■



**A complete line of:**  
Communion Supplies,  
White Communion Ties and Gloves,  
Veils, Communion Kits,  
Rosary Beads, Plaques

**Gifts for every age:**  
Baptismal Gifts, Confirmation Gifts,  
Bibles, Missals, Crucifixes, Statues,  
Candles, Jewelry, Greeting Cards,  
Books, Pictures (Free Gift Wrap)

**PATRICK  
BAKER  
& SONS**

New England’s Largest  
and Most Complete Religious Supply and Gift Center

**HOURS:**  
Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30; Saturday 10:00-3:00; Closed Sundays

1650 West Street Southington, Connecticut 06489 | 800-243-6385 | [www.churchgoods.com](http://www.churchgoods.com)

# Catholic Schools

## Diocese honors outstanding teachers

FAIRFIELD—On March 11, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Cheeseman hosted a celebratory Mass and breakfast for Catholic school educators, giving special honor to those who have given 20, 30 and 40+ years.

The educators and administrators all joined to celebrate Mass at the Egan Chapel at Fairfield University, followed by a reception in the Dogwood Room. Teachers and principals enjoyed breakfast together, followed by a presentation of service awards.

Both Bishop Caggiano and Dr. Cheeseman gave congratulatory remarks, and were grateful for the opportunity to thank the educators in person.

“Without you, our mission of Catholic education is not possible,” said Dr. Cheeseman. “Your dedication and service in answering Christ’s call makes a

difference in every one of our student’s lives.”

*The following were awarded for 20, 30 and 40+ years of service:*

### 20 Years

St. Peter School, Valerie Boyle; Trinity Catholic HS, John Casey; Notre Dame HS, Radley Manzo; St. Raphael Academy, Maida Mayernick; Notre Dame HS, Susan McGowan; Immaculate HS, Marie Proverb; St. Joseph, Brookfield, Diane Thompson; St. Joseph HS, Joseph Tyszkiewicz; Notre Dame HS, Michael Winkler

### 30 Years

St. James, Carolyn Agoglia; The Catholic Academy of Stamford, Michelle DeRubeis; St. Thomas Aquinas, Joan Driggs; St. Joseph, Danbury, Joanne Kimmel; St. Peter, Jo Ann Lounsbury; St. Thomas Aquinas, Joanne Parrella; Immaculate HS, Nanci Stockmann



CONGRATULATIONS! Along with Bishop Caggiano, (l-r) Superintendent Dr. Steven Cheeseman and Trinity Catholic Assistant Principal Christine Wagner congratulate the longest-serving honoree, 49 Years, Ernie Bourcier of Trinity Catholic High School.

### 40 Years

St. Joseph HS, Thomas Collins; Immaculate HS, Kevin

Dunleavy; Immaculate HS, Joseph Muchanski; Trinity Catholic HS, Tracy Nichols;

Kolbe Cathedral HS, Debbie Pietras; Notre Dame HS, Sherrie Zembrzuski

### Over 40 Years

The Catholic Academy Stamford Upper School, Maureen Belford, 41 years; All Saints, Katharine Simoes, 41 years; Kolbe Cathedral HS, Joanne Jakab, 42 years; St. Theresa School, Angela Licursi, 43 years; St. Joseph HS, Patrick Pardee, 43 years; St. Theresa School, Donna Gombar, 44 years; St. Joseph HS, Patricia Hayes, 44 years; St. Joseph HS, Karl Valois, 44 years; St. Theresa School, Marianna Hutvagner, 45 years; Trinity Catholic HS, Thomas Kriz, 45 years; Trinity Catholic HS, William McAndrews, 45 Years; Trinity Catholic HS, Ernie Bourcier, 49 years

## SHU Horizons

FAIRFIELD—Horizons at Sacred Heart University has received a grant of \$25,000 from Fairfield County’s Community Foundation (FCCF) to support development of its year-round STEM and reading curriculums.

Horizons at SHU helps underprivileged children from Bridgeport overcome the phenomenon known as summer learning loss, in which students who have fewer opportunities for enrichment and intellectual stimulation each summer retain less of what they learned in school than their peers whose families can afford such activities. Children coming into the program already are reading below grade level. With a 4-to-1 student-teacher ratio, Horizons teaches them skills for academic success and empowers them to reach their full potential.

“Horizons is so grateful for the support of the Fairfield County’s Community Foundation. This support enables Horizons at SHU to continue to serve more than 150 youngsters with opportunities to develop their reading and math skills, their social and emotional intelligence, and their confidence. Through active and engaged learning, the program helps youngsters avoid a ‘summer slide’ in literacy and numeration skills, gain confidence as swimmers and in other physical activities, and in artistic pursuits. The youngsters thrive, grow and become better selves thanks to this support,” says Tom Forget, faculty liaison for the Horizons at SHU program.

Fairfield County’s Community Foundation promotes philanthropy as a means to create change in Fairfield County, focusing on innovative and collaborative solutions to critical issues affecting the region.

*(For more information on the Horizons affiliate at Sacred Heart, visit [www.horizonsatshu.org](http://www.horizonsatshu.org). For more on Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, visit [www.fccfoundation.org](http://www.fccfoundation.org).)*

Create a  
secure future  
while building up  
the Church



Fr. Fredy Angel  
2015-2016 Lumen Christi Award Recipient

### A Catholic Extension Charitable Gift Annuity offers you:

- Fixed annuity payments for life
- Immediate and future tax benefits
- A payment schedule tailored to meet your needs

Age	Annual Payout Rate
60-64	4.4 - 4.6%
65-69	4.7 - 5.0%
70-74	5.1 - 5.7%
75-79	5.8 - 6.6%
80-84	6.8 - 7.6%
85-89	7.8 - 8.7%
90+	9%

CATHOLIC  EXTENSION

For a personalized proposal, contact Betty Assell at 800-842-7804 or [bassell@catholicextension.org](mailto:bassell@catholicextension.org). Visit [www.catholicextension.org/annuities](http://www.catholicextension.org/annuities)

# St. Catherine Academy

## Helen Burland receives McGivney award

PLANTSVILLE—The Forty-Third Annual Connecticut State Council of the Knights of Columbus Venerable Father Michael McGivney Award was presented to Helen Burland, executive director of St. Catherine Center for Special Needs on March 25 at the AquaTurf Club in Plantsville.

Established in 1975 by the Connecticut State Council to honor the ideals of the Knight's founder, Venerable Father McGivney, this award recognizes individuals who throughout their lives have made significant humanitarian, civic and social contributions to their state, Church or country. Knights Councils from all over the state were represented at this annual event.

Archbishop Daniel Cronin, Archbishop Emeritus of Hartford, offered the invocation as Knights and their guests, totaling over 400, gathered in fellowship. Steve Bacon, State Deputy intro-

duced Burland as a "champion for people with disabilities" and acknowledged her "leadership in the establishment of St. Catherine Center for Special Needs and continued growth of St. Catherine Academy. The need to provide quality programming for the most vulnerable among us is easy to overlook. Burland and her team are committed to this and is a reminder to all of us that this is an important mission."

Although Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was unable to attend, he sent his acknowledgement for Burland. "I give thanks to God for your long and dedicated service to the individuals that you provide service for and their families," he said in his message.

In her acceptance, Burland thanked the Knights for their support of the mission of St. Catherine Academy and St. Catherine Center. "You were with



"A CHAMPION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES"—Helen Burland, executive director of St. Catherine Center for Special Needs, received the Father Michael McGivney Award, given annually to a person who has made significant contributions to their state, Church or country.

us from the start," she commented. "You set up an endowment scholarship to help in the early years assisting families who wanted their children with disabilities to have access to a faith based

education. You serve on our board; you have led committees; you have been there year after year with proceeds from Tootsie Roll Drives that fund music and art, community activities and ser-

vice projects. You have painted our halls and classrooms, raked our leaves, cleaned out our gutters; and every year, you have come with a sack full of Christmas gifts, dressed as Santa, bringing cheer and hope to our students and families. We have seen the transformative power of service at St. Catherine's every day."

Burland shared comments from Pat Gorman, a current staff member who is also an active Knight in his parish council. "My employment experience at St. Catherine's has been a journey of accompanying young adults with disabilities. I thought initially that I was going to do for them; but instead I discovered that I am doing with them. I have found this job has given me daily moments of charity. The young people that I serve teach me daily about honesty, patience and

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

# SHU JOURNEY

A six-day on-campus summer experience of faith education, self-discovery and enjoyment for high school youth

Learn more at [www.sacredheart.edu/shujourney](http://www.sacredheart.edu/shujourney)



Sacred Heart  
UNIVERSITY

## Sports

## For diocesan teams, it was championship weekend

By DON HARRISON

The third weekend of March 2018 became a high-water mark for high school athletics in the Diocese of Bridgeport. No fewer than three teams from area Catholic schools—Notre Dame-Fairfield, Kolbe Cathedral and Immaculate—captured state basketball titles, while a fourth, Fairfield Prep, claimed a state championship in hockey.

Notre Dame, sparked by two All-State players, seniors Tyler Bourne and Noreaga Davis, put an exclamation point on the Lancers' first undefeated (27-0) and state championship season by upending Sacred Heart of Waterbury, 65-60, in the CIAC Division I title game at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville on March 18.

"We had a group of focused kids who lived in the moment," said Chris Watts, who has amassed a 52-2 record in two seasons as Notre Dame coach. "I told them we're writing an historical book. Every day you are writing school history. After we got to 20-and-0, we began to write state history."

The 5-foot-8 Bourne, who was selected State Player of the Year by the *New Haven Register*, scored 30 points against the defending state champion Hearts, 21 of which came in the decisive second half. Bourne averaged 25.2 points in four state tournament games. Davis supplied 14 points and took down 12 rebounds against Sacred Heart.

Earlier that Sunday, Kolbe Cathedral put the finishing touches on its transformation from doormat to champion by defeating Rocky Hill, 55-40, in the Division IV state final. One day earlier Immaculate of

Danbury earned its second state title in three years by overwhelming Amity Regional, 53-34, in Division II.

On the ice, top-seeded Fairfield Prep rallied with three goals in the final period to stun second-seeded Greenwich, 4-2, in the CIAC Division I championship game on March 17 before a capacity crowd at Yale's Ingalls Rink. It was Prep's 17th state hockey title—the last 10 coming during current head coach Matt Sather's tenure.

Notre Dame's rich athletic history embraces a multitude of state championships in baseball, ice hockey, football and girls' soccer, but not in boys' basketball until this season. The 1964-65 Lancers, coached by the late Alvin Clinkscales, took an undefeated record into the Class L state title game but came up short against unbeaten Hillhouse, 57-51.

This year's championship team, coached by Watts, came oh-so-close to falling short in its quest for the state title. Against Danbury in the quarter-finals, the Lancers entered

the fourth quarter trailing by 21 points. Yes, a seemingly insurmountable 21 points. Somehow, Notre Dame regained its poise, came roaring back to tie the game and prevailed in overtime, 76-70. "Huge hearts. Nobody quit," an emotional Watts said. "We had a point guard who's battling an ankle sprain step up big. Guys just stepped up big for each other."

The coach was alluding to Bourne, who scored 26 of his season-high 32 points during the final quarter and overtime. Josh Reaves, who will be the lone returning starter next season, matched his teammate with a memorable 32-point night.

Kolbe Cathedral, once a small-school basketball powerhouse, had fallen to the depths following John Pfohl's resignation as coach in 2008. "I made the decision that it was time to watch my three

girls and son play basketball," he said. "To me, that was more important than coaching."

He returned to the helm this winter—on the heels of a 1-19 season—and guided the Cougars to a 21-6 record and their third state title under his reign. Anthony Senior, a Division IV All-State guard whose class year is identical to his surname, was the pacesetter for the turnaround most of the season. He scored a game-high 18 points against Rocky Hill.

Nelson Mingachos, the coach behind Immaculate of Danbury's recent state championships in boys basketball and girls soccer, directed the Mustangs to their third state title across the past seven seasons.

Despite an undersized lineup—no starter taller than 5-11—the 2017-18 Mustangs assembled a 22-5 record. Junior Quinn Guth

connected on four of five three-pointers en route to a team-high 18 points in the victory over Amity, but on other nights, Isaiah Payton, Jack Woods, Ronan

Doherty or Mike Basile would provide much of the scoring. Basile, a 5-11 senior, was selected to the Division II All-State second team.

Fairfield Prep has been a dominant force in Connecticut high school hockey since the late 1970s. Sather's 2017-18 squad ranks among the school's best, winning 22 games versus one tie and two losses. No fewer than three Jesuit seniors, goalie John McGee, defenseman Cole Casl and forward Skyler Celotto, were chosen to the Division I All-State team.

Sather, who was a sophomore member of Prep's 1990-91 state champs, recalls wondering about this season's eventual state champions: "Do they want to be superstars or do they want to be team players? By January, these guys didn't even blink. They were motivated." ■



IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL CELEBRATES its 2018 CIAC Division II state basketball title.



KOLBE CATHEDRAL CELEBRATES its third CIAC state basketball title under coach John Pfohl.



NOTRE DAME-FAIRFIELD CELEBRATES its first CIAC state basketball championship and undefeated season.



FAIRFIELD PREP CELEBRATES its 2018 CIAC Division I hockey championship.



NOTRE DAME-FAIRFIELD ALL-STATE GUARD Tyler Bourne scored a game-high 30 points in the Lancers' 65-60 Division I title game victory over Sacred Heart-Waterbury at the Mohegan Sun Arena.

# St. Anthony of Padua

## Father John Baran, 59

Father John P. Baran, 59, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, died and entered eternal life on March 24 in Bridgeport Hospital just before the beginning of Holy Week.

Hundreds filled the church on a Wednesday afternoon to celebrate his life and pray for the soul of Father Baran, who served as pastor of St. Anthony of Padua since 2002.

In a moving homily at the Mass of Christian Burial, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said that in his final suffering Father Baran sought to find Christ anew "in the cracks of life" and in unfamiliar and difficult places.

The bishop described his bedside visit to Father Baran as "an unexpected moment of great

grace" and a glimpse into Father John's courage and insight as a homilist. "He turned to me and said, 'Bishop, why is it that we want to find God where he was and find it so hard to find him in the present where he is now?'"

Noting there was "much sorrow and much grief" in the parish, the bishop said we all must learn to surrender to suffering. "Father John knew our lives are not about us, but about Jesus, and we must learn to surrender them every day. Christ will not abandon us."

John Baran was born in Derby, grew up in Shelton, and was a graduate of St. Joseph High School in Trumbull. He received his bachelor's degree from Fairfield University and

completed his theological studies at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Mass.

He served as a transitional deacon at St. Joseph Parish in South Norwalk, and was ordained to the priesthood on June 30, 1984, by Bishop Walter W. Curtis in St. Augustine Cathedral. He was parochial vicar at St. Joseph's from 1984-94 and at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Fairfield from 1994-2002.

"He was a good listener, with a quick wit and a mischievous twinkle in his eye, bringing humor to situations that might not have been bearable without it," said Eleanor Sauers, director of religious education at St. Anthony, in a tribute at his



funeral Mass.

"To those of us who were privileged to share John's last days, he became an icon of the suffering Christ, a personification of the Paschal Mystery. His suffering was profound, as were the insights and the wisdom that suffering elicited. John Baran taught us how to live—with truth, with passion, with joy and laughter, and with a keen sense of the something more beneath it all. And he taught us how to die...

valiantly, heroically resisting until the time when surrender to the Mystery who is our God becomes inevitable, and in fact desirable."

Father Baran was received into St. Anthony on March 27, where a Taizé Prayer Service was held at 7:30 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 28. Bishop Caggiano was the principal celebrant and homilist.

Interment followed at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull. ■

## FUNERAL GUIDE

**NEIL F. HARDING**  
Director/Owner

*Harding*

FUNERAL HOME

203/227-3458  
FAX 203/227-1420

210 POST ROAD EAST  
WESTPORT, CT 06881

### COLLINS FUNERAL HOME

92 EAST AVENUE • NORWALK  
866-0747

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

Family owned for four generations

PRE-NEED FUNERAL PLANNING



MATTHEW K. MURPHY,  
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

267 GREENWICH AVENUE  
GREENWICH, CT 06830  
203-869-0315



*"Quiet Dignity Without Extravagance"*

*Affordable Direct Cremation  
Title XIX Welcome*

**County Cremation Service**

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

### DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT: APRIL 15—MAY 19

#### APRIL

16	Rev. Edwin F. Agonis, O.F.M.Conv. ....	1998
17	Rev. Robert J. Usenza .....	2016
18	Rev. John E. Hanning .....	1959
19	Rev. Philip J. O'Farrell.....	1992
20	Rev. Martin J. O'Connor.....	1988
23	Rev. Vincent P. Bodnar .....	1988
25	Msgr. William A. Nagle .....	2013
29	Rev. Joseph F. Cleary .....	1971
	Rev. Andrew Dube .....	2006
	Rev. Austin R. Saunders .....	1986

#### MAY

1	Rev. Gregory J. Huminski .....	2010
2	Msgr. James F. Murphy .....	1958
3	Msgr. Michael J. Carnicke, P.A.....	1980
9	Rev. John B. Fonseca.....	2002
10	Rev. Robert J. Hyl.....	2015
16	Rev. Alfred J. Bietighofer .....	2002
17	Rev. Miroslav L. Sultus .....	1992
18	Msgr. Charles B. Ratajczak, O.F.M.....	1957
19	Rev. William H. Sullivan .....	1980

# Holy Name of Jesus

## Father Andrew Marus, 72

Father Andrew G. Marus, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Stratford, died on March 26, at New York Community Hospital in Brooklyn at the age of 72.

A native of Bridgeport, Father Marus attended St. John Nepomucene School in Bridgeport and Notre Dame High School in Fairfield. He graduated from St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore in 1971.

He was ordained by Bishop Walter W. Curtis on May 15, 1971, at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport.

Father Marus served first as parochial vicar at St. Peter Parish in Danbury from 1971-74, and then at St. Thomas

the Apostle Parish in Norwalk from 1974-78. He was a member of the faculty at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull from 1978-80. He also served as parochial

vicar at St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton and St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport, becoming temporary administrator at St. Andrew in 1988.

Father Marus was named pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Bridgeport in 1995.

"When he came in, the first thing people asked of him was 'Fix our church!'" recalled Deacon Bill Bissenden, who

had been ordained a deacon and began serving at St. Patrick's the previous year.

The venerable church, completed in 1913, had suffered a fire in 1954 with extensive damage to the lower church. A leak in the roof weakened the plaster, which was crumbling from the walls and ceiling.

Father Marus was up to the challenge. He raised funds, hired contractors and encouraged parishioners to pitch in. Together they restored St. Patrick Church to its former glory.

The work was completed at a perfect time. The newly-renovated church welcomed Bishop William E. Lori for the Vesper

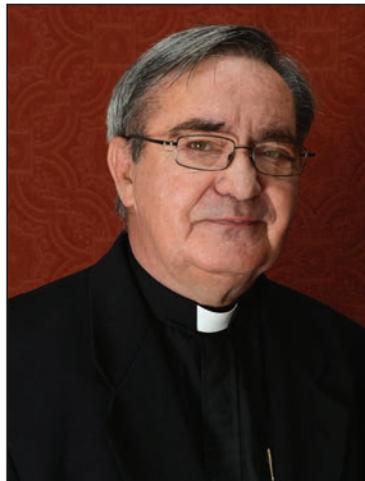
Service on March 18 before his installation as Fourth Bishop of Bridgeport on March 19, 2001.

Even more important to parishioners was Father Marus' open, friendly manner and sense

of humor. "He had an open lunch time," said Deacon Bissenden.

"Coffee was always on and people could stop in for conversation. One of his favorite topics was the lives of the saints. He'd pick the saint of the day and start talking with enthusiasm. His secretary, Barbara, would roll her eyes like 'Oh, here we go again!'"

Father Marus was appointed pastor of Holy Name of Jesus



FATHER ANDREW G. MARUS

Parish in Stratford on August 2, 2003. More than simply an appointment, it was a homecoming of sorts; his parents had been long-time parishioners at Holy Name. He was happy to call it his home, too.

Father Marus had spent a one-year sabbatical at the University of Notre Dame. He had become an avid fan of ND football and traveled annually to games. He also was a fan of the NY Giants and Yankees. His love of travel included annual trips to Walt Disney World.

His survivors include his sister, Mary Ann Marus of Stratford, and his cousin Marianne Chedister and her husband, James, of Trumbull.

The body of Father Marus was received into Holy Name Church on April 2. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, who also gave the homily. Interment followed at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull.

**"One of his favorite topics was the lives of the saints. He'd pick the saint of the day and start talking with enthusiasm."**



**CREATING MEMORIES SINCE 1920**

Family owned & operated  
Open Sundays

www.HansensFlowerShop.com  
1040 Post Road, Fairfield  
**(203) 255-0461**



### Catholic Pilgrimage to Ireland

Join Father Russell Kennedy  
Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Middletown, Connecticut

June 3-12 ~ 10 days

\$3449.00 per person, round trip from JFK

For more information, please call Fr. Kennedy at 860-334-8925

### Polish Aid Home Care Agency

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



860.229.6611 | fax 860.229.6613  
www.polishaidhomecare.com | Polish Aid Homecare LLC

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

310 Broad Street, New Britain, Connecticut 06053

# WORLD WAR I

BEYOND THE FRONT LINES

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MUSEUM

Commemorating 100 years since the 'Great War'

1 State Street, New Haven • 203-865-0400 • kofcmuseum.org • Free admission & parking



# Column: Thomas Hicks



## Better than a gold mine

### POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

**Y**ou may have tangible wealth untold; Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.

*Richer than I you can never be— I had a Mother who read to me.* (Strickland Gillian, “The Reading Mother”)

There is the magic hour when a child first knows it can read printed words. Hopefully, books become the child’s friends. However, these days one can see many kids strung out on seven hours of TV a day, who can hardly read, and look on reading as some sort of boring assignment. One of the most dramatic and frightening changes in students from the time I was in college is that not many of them read for

enjoyment or for their own interest. Reading is no longer one of the ways they spend leisure time. Students brought up with a facility for electronic media have a distaste for reading.

Technology has made students more knowledgeable, but less well-read. Now they know a lot, but they don’t have wiser knowledge. In an age of short attention spans, literary appreciation is a luxury that the majority of students seem to feel they can live without.

Literary critic, writer and teacher Harold Bloom has seen the erosion of reading. He writes: “A childhood spent watching television yields to an adolescence with a computer and iPhone... reading falls apart.”

Reading has fallen upon hard

times. There is a bleak assessment of the state of reading in America. Overall, there is the shrinking pool of American readers. Some critics go so far as to suggest there is something in the American character these days that is even hostile to the act of reading. Americans prize sociability and community. Any turning away from human contact is suspect. Reading is a solo activity. For a reader, solitude and a good book are regarded as among the best of all. Other people are a distraction.

It is probably true to say that famous writers don’t mean a thing to nine-tenths of the population.

Finn Murphy, a long-haul trucker and avid reader, who wrote a book titled *Long Haul*, states that from his work he can tell that readers are a dwindling minority. He writes that: “Back in earlier days every house would have 50 to 100 book cartons to move—now there are two. It’s a huge cultural change... Dens don’t have those built in bookcases anymore... and there are 72 inch screens where there used to be paintings hanging.”

A great English teacher found me when I was a teenager. There was the part he played in my teenage collusion with writer Thomas Wolfe. The impact of Wolfe’s writing on me was so visceral that I mark the reading of *Look Homeward Angel* as one of pivotal events of my life—the beauty of the language. With

that English teacher as a guide, I developed a passion for the power of carefully crafted words. It is the one fire of youth that never went out.

The first teacher who makes the arrangement of words on a page an exciting affair is giving a student a better gift than a gold mine.

I can still react with astonishment before the wonder of word order in Cervantes and Updike; so much so that I can relate to something Anna Quindlen wrote in her book *How Reading Changed My Life*: “Why should anyone aspire to be president of the United States or of General Motors if they could write like D.H. Lawrence instead?” (p.57). In the same book Quindlen also writes “even now I like reading a book more than I like looking after my own children.”

It still seems to me that books are the supreme decoration of a room. And something Pat Conroy wrote seems true: “Reading and prayer are both acts of worship to me” (*My Reading Life*, p.320).

For me, one of life’s great blessings is to settle down with a book on a wintry evening, or to read on a covered porch with the sound of rain coming down on the porch roof.

One can be transformed by language. There is the power of words to make things happen—the right words in the right rhythms. There was a time when we were invigorated by words:

“nothing to fear but fear itself,” “nothing to offer but blood, sweat, tears, and toil,” “that government of the people, for the people, and by the people shall not perish from the earth.” Now we are urged to action (or inaction) by political polls, employment figures, the Dow Jones averages, the trillions of national debt, etc.

I think Walker Percy was probably right when he said that “the role of literature at the present time, its success or failure, may be more critical than the combined efforts of NASA, Cal Tech, and MIT” (*Signposts in a Strange Land*, p. 306).

HELEN BURLAND

FROM PAGE 16

love. God has truly blessed this Christian community.”

In her closing comments, Burland invited the audience to “become engaged; consider mentoring a person with a disability in the community; help your parish become welcoming to all; lead your council to adopt an area group home or volunteer with Best Buddies or Special Olympics.” She reminded the audience that “you need no special training; no special talent; all you need is an open mind and heart. We are ordinary people doing extraordinary things.”

(For more information about St. Catherine Center, visit [www.stcatherinecenter.org](http://www.stcatherinecenter.org) and [www.stacatherineacademy.org](http://www.stacatherineacademy.org).)

Proud printers of  
Fairfield County Catholic



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

205 Spring Hill Road, Trumbull CT 06611  
203.261.2548

[www.TrumbullPrinting.com](http://www.TrumbullPrinting.com)

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



**14<sup>th</sup> Annual Medicine, Bioethics, and Spirituality Conference**

**MAY 10-11:** Sister Ângela de Fátima Coelho, MD, postulator for the causes of Sts. Jacinta and Francisco, will be the keynote speaker at the conference hosted by Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. Visit us at [www.thedivinemercy.org/worcester](http://www.thedivinemercy.org/worcester) or call 1-800-462-7426.

# Column: Joe Pisani



## Topic: Life everlasting ... in Hollywood?

### SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

I was watching a science fiction movie recently about an alien from a faraway planet, who supposedly knew more than we earthlings. He was trying to console a little boy whose father died, so he mustered as much sympathy as creatures from outer space can muster—like Dr. Spock, he had no emotions—and told the boy not to feel bad because nothing is wasted in the universe.

This, I suppose, meant his father would get recycled in a cosmic way like plastic bottles and mixed paper. We live, we die, we become compost, and all those vitamins, minerals and nutrients help a patch of ragweed grow big and strong and cause allergy problems for countless sufferers. Is that a consolation?

Crazy as it sounds, the idea that the universe uses and reuses us is one that secularists and scientists often embrace instead of the Christian concept of immortality. I prefer the traditionalist view: We live, we die, we live forever in heaven. We're created in the image and likeness of God, so we're more than fertilizer for the universe's greenhouse.

The movie upset me, but not as much as a frightening article

in *National Geographic* that had nothing to do with melting ice caps or killer asteroids. The headline said, "Transhumanists believe in a future of human immortality."

The story told about 56 dead people who were freeze-dried and hanging upside down in liquid nitrogen in a Russian warehouse, where they'll stay until technology is developed that will revive them so they can relive forever ... on Earth. There are also cats, dogs, a chinchilla and a few human heads in storage. The idea is as tragic as cloning.

"Cryonics," as this pseudo-science is called, has become a hit with celebrities like Larry King, Paris Hilton and Simon Cowell, who plan to have their bodies preserved so they can be defrosted decades from now.

As my late mother, who never got a degree from MIT, often said: "They're so smart they're stupid." They don't believe in God and everlasting life, but they believe in the preposterous pursuit of eternal life in Hollywood and St. Barts.

It reminded me of Ray Bradbury's novella, "Somewhere a Band Is Playing," about a news-

paper reporter who leaves behind his fiancée and friends to join his new lover and her colleagues, who are hundreds of years old and living peacefully in a secret Arizona location.

I suppose anything is believable in a society that puts more credence in the Twilight vampire series and the Living Dead zombie apocalypse than in the Christian teaching on life after death.

Here's my personal, unscientific theory: We were made in the image and likeness of God with immortal souls. The earth, which is a temporary residence, is passing away. We were made to spend eternity with God in heaven. We were made to achieve salvation and help as many other souls as possible achieve salvation ... so let's get down to business.

In his encyclical "*Spe Salvi*," ("Saved in Hope"), Pope Benedict XVI put his finger on

the problem: "The question arises: Do we really want to live eternally? Perhaps many people do not find the prospect of eternal life attractive. What they desire is not eternal life at all, but this present life, for which faith in eternal life seems something of an impediment. To continue living forever—endlessly—appears more like a curse than a gift. Death, admittedly, one would wish to postpone for as long as possible. But to live always, without end—this can only be monotonous and ultimately unbearable."

The term "eternal life" is frightening, Benedict says, because it suggests the interminable and "makes us think of the life that very often brings more toil than satisfaction, so that while on the one hand we desire it, on the other hand we do not want it.

"However, eternity is not an unending succession of days

on the calendar," he says, "but something more like the supreme moment of satisfaction, in which totality embraces us and we embrace totality. It would be like plunging into the ocean of infinite love and joy, a moment in which time—the before and after—no longer exists."

OK, that's a little deep for me. I suppose we'll never fully grasp eternity until we experience it, but it's certainly worth living (and dying) for ... and it's infinitely better than being freeze-dried and stored in a warehouse. The truth is that heaven, not earth, is our true home, where every sacrifice and all our suffering will be rewarded.

This is the message of Christ's life, death and resurrection. It's the message of Easter. You see, the "transhumanists" don't realize death has already been conquered.

Independent Senior Living Communities in Trumbull, Connecticut

Perhaps the greatest joy in retiring is knowing you can live life to its fullest.



Teresian Towers and Carmel Ridge provide Seniors age 60+ with everything you value; convenience, freedom, privacy and peace-of-mind. Our friendly communities, located on the grounds of St. Joseph's Center, offer residents a variety of social activities to engage in, as well as worry-free maintenance allowing residents to spend more time doing the things they enjoy.

#### Amenities

- 24-hour emergency maintenance
- 24-hour emergency medical monitoring
- On-site management
- Bus for weekly shopping
- Parks, beaches and nearby golfing
- Optional meal plan
- Community room
- Library
- On-site chapel
- Social Events



Call today for more information, 203-261-2229 in Connecticut, or 1-800-852-3866 out of state.

Inquire about our rentals, starting from \$1,150 per month.

## Teresian Towers & Carmel Ridge

6454 Main Street  
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

Owned and managed by the Diocese of Bridgeport.



## ProximoTravel

Pilgrimages for Catholics and people of all faiths

Prices starting at \$2,499 ~ with Airfare Included in this price from anywhere in the USA

Several trips to different destinations: the Holy Land; Italy; France, Portugal, & Spain; Poland; Medjugorje, Lourdes, & Fatima; Ireland & Scotland; England; Austria, Germany, & Switzerland; Greece & Turkey; El Camino de Santiago; Budapest; Prague; Our Lady of Guadalupe; Colombia; Brazil; Argentina; Domestic Destinations; etc...

We also specialize in custom trips for Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

Call us 24/7  
Hablamos Espanol

855-842-8001  
508-340-9370

www.proximotravel.com  
anthony@proximotravel.com

# Nuestra Voz

## Sacerdotes colombianos hacen labor pastoral

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

Casi 1.500 personas hispanas acuden semanalmente a una de las tres misas en español de los casi 18.000 feligreses que están registrados en la Parroquia de Saint Mary, ubicada en 51 Elm Street, que aglutina a parroquianos anglosajones, afro-americanos e hispanos de Stamford y sus alrededores que también acuden a la Parroquia de St. Benedict-Nuestra Señora de Montserrat.

Para atender a la feligresía, en

su mayoría latina, existen tres sacerdotes nativos de Colombia que hacen la labor pastoral, el Padre Gustavo Falla, el Padre Montoya y hace unos meses después de haber sido ordenado, el Padre Abelardo Vásquez, que además es uno de los más jóvenes sacerdotes de la Diócesis de Bridgeport.

Gladys Villeda, una de las mujeres líderes y comprometidas, corrobora que el trabajo de los sacerdotes es “inmejorable” y que le dan a su parroquia un sentido de pertenencia y unas ganas

inmensas de colaborar en todo.

“Acudo a todo lo que la parroquia me necesita. Al grupo de Oración, al Ministerio de Bienvenida, a la Hermandad del Señor de Esquipulas, patrono de Guatemala y venerado en nuestra iglesia”, dice la Señora Villeda, vecina de la parroquia y feligrés de Santa María desde hace casi 20 años desde que llegó junto con su familia desde su natal Guatemala.

En la homilía del domingo a las siete de la noche después de conmemorar la Pascua, el Padre Abelardo Vásquez predicó sobre el perdón de los pecados y la infinita misericordia de Dios, impuesto en su visita a los apóstoles después de su Resurrección.

Este pasaje del Evangelio de San Juan, analizado por el sacerdote, puso en sus feligreses a prueba su fe porque reflexionó sobre la reacción del Apóstol Tomás que no estuvo presente en la primera aparición de Jesús y no creyó en el misterio de la Resurrección. A abordó también sobre el miedo que causó los Apóstoles retirar de la vista ante el venido del Espíritu Santa a Pentecostés.

Por eso, el sacerdote se refirió al papel de la iglesia de fomentar la espiritualidad aun cuando la esperanza desfallezca. “Nuestro papel es acompañar a nuestra comunidad a través de la fe a todos los que nos necesitan, incluyendo a los que sufren por ser inmigrantes”, dijo, refiriéndose a cómo en estos momentos están siendo tratados por parte del ICE—los Soñadores, los que



FATHER JOSÉ ABELARDO VÁSQUEZ, ORDAINED to the priesthood last year, is one of three Colombian priests serving St. Mary and St. Benedict-Our Lady of Montserrat parish in Stamford. The combined parishes, home to an ethnically diverse population, offer the largest number of Spanish-language Masses in the Stamford area.

tienen orden de deportación y los que buscan una oportunidad para legalizar su estatus migratorio.

El Padre Vásquez indicó sentirse acogido, a igual que sus otros hermanos, por la Diócesis de Bridgeport, que ante el aumento de la inmigración latinoamericana la iglesia abrió las puertas a una nueva ola de sacerdotes, particularmente de Colombia. “El Obispo Caggiano ha acogido a personas internacionales como nosotros por necesidades pastorales”, expresó.

Por eso, como trabajo de la pastoral hispana, el Padre Gustavo Falla que es el director de Asuntos Hispánicos de la Diócesis y el pastor de esta parroquia, está trabajando diariamente con sus feligreses y sus hermanos sacerdotes en el V Encuentro, un espacio de reflexión local y nacional para tratar los próximos

pasos de la pastoral hispana en los Estados Unidos.

El Padre Vásquez es el encargado de la educación católica de sus feligreses, por eso como parte de los mensajes a la comunidad durante la misa, dijo a sus fieles que necesita el apoyo de los padres de familia porque para terminar el año quiere lograr 40 monaguillos más para que haya un total de 100.

E invitó a los jóvenes a que se inscriban al grupo parroquial que por el momento tiene 50 miembros, pero intenta aumentar el número, a igual que el de los grupos de oración, los ministerios de bienvenida, de música y de liturgia.

“Trabajamos y oramos por nuestros feligreses y compartimos nuestras celebraciones. Hacemos lo que podamos acompañarlos en la fe, los apoyamos. Oramos por ellos, esa es nuestra labor”.



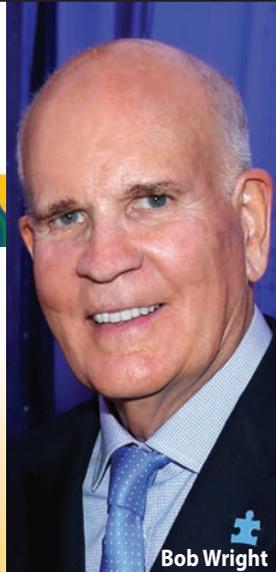
PLEASE JOIN US!

**THOMAS MERTON CENTER  
CELEBRITY BREAKFAST**

**Wednesday, May 23, 2018  
7:30am - 9:00am  
Holiday Inn Bridgeport**

Keynote Speaker:  
**Bob Wright, former Vice Chairman of  
General Electric and President of NBC**

If you are interested in sponsoring a table or attending the event, please contact Sabine Kuczo at 203.367.9036 or skuczo@ccfc-ct.org.



**Bob Wright**



# HONDA

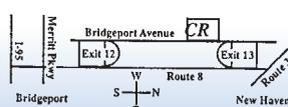
By **Curtiss\*Ryan**

www.curtissryan.com



**ONE OF CT'S LARGEST VOLUME HONDA DEALERS**  
**CT'S FIRST ESTABLISHED HONDA DEALER • APRIL 1973**

- Open All Day Saturday for Service & Parts
- Senior Citizen Discount



333 Bridgeport Ave • Shelton  
M-Th 9am-9pm • Fri 9am-6pm • Sat 9am-5pm

CALL CURTISS RYAN AT

**1-800-523-4190**

**203-929-1484**

**NEW & USED VEHICLES • SALES • SERVICE • PARTS • BODY SHOP**



**SAVE THE DATE**

**2018 CATHOLIC CHARITIES/  
AETNA GOLF CLASSIC**

AN EVENT OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY  
HONORING CATHOLIC CHARITIES' FRIEND & SUPPORTER THE LATE DAN CARUSO

**JUNE 4, 2018**

**THE PATTERSON CLUB**  
1118 CROSS HIGHWAY  
FAIRFIELD, CT 06824



# Bits and Pieces

**WOMEN'S GROUP** at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet Mon., **April 16**, at 10 am in the parish hall. Attorney Matthew Realle will speak on "Estate Planning, a common sense guide for the future." All are welcome. For more info, call Esther: 203.268.8011.

**LECTIO DIVINA WORKSHOP** sponsored by the Centering Prayer Group of St. Paul Parish, Greenwich, will be presented by Diane Harkin, Wed., **April 18**, from 7-9 pm. Registration opens at 6:30 pm. Coffee, tea and cookies will be served. Donation: \$20. For more info or to register, email Monica Lenci: mlenci@aol.com

**MOMs+DADs** prayer/support group for those with Down Syndrome, their family and friends meets the third Thurs. of every month (**April 19**), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk. For more info, contact strapostolate@optimum.net. A dial-in number connects those who can't make it personally. Dial 515.604.9636, access code 341308.

**"COME AND SEE"** if you are being called to a vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order. The Secular Franciscan Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Church, Fairfield, on Sat., **April 21**, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass with Msgr. Ernest Esposito and Sat., **May 19**, at 9:30 am with Fr. Norm Guilbert, Jr. Social and meeting follow. For more info, call Pat Heile, OFS: 203.255.8801, or pheile5713@aol.com.

**BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY** support group meets at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton. Next session is Sun., **April 22**, at 11 am, continuing on the second Sun. of each month (**May 13, June 10**). For more info, call 203.929.8499.

**PRAYER BREAKFAST:** Magnificat, a Ministry to Catholic Women, invites you to a prayer breakfast Sat., **May 5**, from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at Tashua Knolls Golf Club, Trumbull. Guest speaker Fr. Jeffrey Couture will speak on "Walking with the Lord, a Young Man's Journey to Priesthood" Cost \$25; pre-register by Sat., **April 21**. No tickets will be sold at the door. For more info, call Fran Hood: 203.744.1856, or email magnificatthmi@gmail. Invitation available on diocesan website under Woman's Ministry.

**MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE:** Charismatic Renewal Services announces Masses of Healing and Hope: Mon., **April 23**, at 7 pm at Our Lady of Assumption Church, Fairfield, with Fr. Larry Carew; Wed., **May 16**, at 7 pm at St. Marguerite Church, Brookfield, with Fr. Carew; and Mon., **May 21**, at 7:30 pm at St. Lawrence Church, Shelton, with Fr. Carew. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.456.5610.

**PILGRIMAGE TO QUEBEC CITY** and the Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré for her feast day will be led by Fr. Peter Smolik, pastor of Star of the Sea Parish in Stamford. The pilgrimage, held **July 24-27**, will include a tour of Quebec City, a St. Lawrence River Cruise and Feast Day Mass and candlelight procession at the Shrine. Cost: \$1056/pp double occupancy. Motorcoach departs Our Lady, Star of the Sea. Deposit: \$400 needed by Tues., **April 24**; final payment by Tues., **June 5**. For reservations, contact Mary Sabato: 914.714.5806 or mar-yts0718@gmail.com.

**DAY WITH MARY:** held by the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate at St. Theresa Parish, Trumbull, Sat., **April 28**, from 8:30 am-3 pm. Talks, Confession, Adoration and Mass. For more info, contact Emily Florio: 203.508.0034.

**TAG SALE** will be held at St. Mary Parish, Stamford, Sat., **April 28**, from 9 am-3 pm. Household goods, lawn items, tools, costume jewelry. New religious articles; bake sale. For more info, contact Sharon Macknight: smacknight@optonline.net or 203.327.1806.

**CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS** of Greater Danbury (18-35) will gather on Tues., **May 1**, at 6:45 pm for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, followed by a social at a local eatery. For more info, check their Facebook page or email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

**MERCY LEARNING CENTER** in Bridgeport, a literacy center for women, offers the National External Diploma Program, (NEDP), a web-based high school diploma that is flexible, self-directed and rigorous, preparing you for work or college. Monthly information sessions are held the first

Friday of each month (**May 4; June 1**), at 11 am, at the Mercy Learning Center, 637 Park Ave., Bridgeport. These sessions outline the criteria needed to enter the program, a general overview of the NEDP and the next steps to enrollment. For more info, call Lynn Davies: 203.334.6699.

**GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY** meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (**May 12**) at 10 am following the 9 am Respect Life Mass. For more info, contact John Juhasz: 203.762.3661, or juhaszjw@optonline.net.

**RETREAT DAY** for Busy Women: "Lord I Believe, Help My Lack of Trust." Sat., **June 2**, 9 am-3:30 pm, at the Convent of St. Birgitta, 4 Runkenhage Rd., Darien. Directed by Fran Fraleigh Karpiej, OFS, of Sharing Christ Ministry. Cost: \$60; includes hot lunch served by the Birgittine Sisters. Registration required before Sat., **May 19**. For more info or to register,

contact Fran: paxjc@aol.com or 203.452.7040.

**GOLF OUTING** sponsored by St. Mary Parish, Bethel, will be held on Wed., **May 23**, at Richter Park, Danbury, with a 12 noon shotgun start with lunch and beverages, followed immediately by dinner at the Cafe on the Green. Fee: \$175; includes two meals and prizes. For more info and reservations, contact Tim Lavelle: 203.515.1801.

**ST. ANTHONY FEAST** at St. Margaret Shrine, 2523 Park Ave., Bridgeport starts Fri., **June 8**, from 6-11 pm, and continues Sat., **June 9**, 2-11 pm and Sun., **June 10**, from 12 noon-10 pm. Join us for delicious Italian food and family friendly fun. Daily

entertainment, rides and a raffle. On Sun., **June 10**, we will have our Special Outdoor Mass at 11 am followed by a procession in honor of St. Anthony. For more info, contact the Shrine: 203.333.9627.

**SPIRITUAL JOURNEY** to Jordan, the Holy Land and Dubai with Fr. Marcel Saint Jean: Sun., **Sept. 23**-Sat., **Oct. 6**. Price: \$3,899 includes airline tickets, all taxes, hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, sightseeing, tips for guides and transportation to JFK. For more info and for reservations, contact Fr. Marcel Saint Jean at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull: 203.434.7208, or 203.268.8695, or marcelsaintjean@gmail.com. ■

## Mass for the Unborn Rededication of Memorial to the Unborn

Gate of Heaven Cemetery  
Daniel's Farm Road, Trumbull, Connecticut  
Saturday May 5th at 9:00 am

Please join Msgr. Dariusz Zielonka and the Knights of Columbus  
in praying for the Souls of the Unborn



## The Miracle of Fatima Musical

May 13-October 14

Produced by The Miracle of Fatima Production Company

Captivating Multimedia Live Production

(800) 641-0914

www.fatima100yrs.com

Beginning this May 13th, we are transforming Saint Andrew Church  
into a mesmerizing performance space.

We welcome you in to relive the events that took place  
in Fatima, Portugal 1917- events that made world news.

Performances will continue every other Sunday, 3 and 7 pm until October 14th.

There are two special shows on October 13th at 12 noon and 7pm.



## **Don't let pain slow you down this summer**

### **Get outside and get back in the game**

#### **St. Vincent's Hernia Center**

- Minimally invasive repair
- Be seen quickly
- No hospital stay
- Faster recovery, less down-time
- Less pain, smaller scars

**Call to schedule  
or learn more:  
877-493-5024**

