

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

FEBRUARY 2017 | VOLUME 34, NUMBER 2 | WINTER ISSUE

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

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Teens March for Life

Foundations in Education Save the Date

Thursday, May 11, 2017 6pm
Annual Gala's Proceeds Support Scholarships

Honorees:
George Landegger | Sr. Joan Magnetti, RSCJ | Tony Pavia

Woodway Country Club, Darien, Connecticut
Sponsorships available — Contact Foundations in Education
mdeluca@diobpt.org or call 203.416.1405

Sacred Heart University and the Diocese of Bridgeport present:

THE VISION OF
POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Featuring special guest speaker Archbishop Christophe Pierre,
Papal Nuncio to the United States

Wednesday, February 22, at 7 p.m.
Chapel of the Holy Spirit
Reception to follow

Archbishop Christophe Pierre is a French-born Roman Catholic. He has been an archbishop since 1995 and was recently appointed by Pope Francis as his representative to the United States. Previously, he served as ambassador to Mexico and Haiti.

 Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

 THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
Encounter • Formation • Discipleship

Ministry Formation Workshop

'Re-imagining' formation in the diocese

By **BRIAN D. WALLACE**

More than 177 catechists, youth ministers and others turned out for the first Ministry Formation Day sponsored by the new Diocesan Leadership Institute, and the program won rave reviews from participants.

"Prophets of a Future Not Our Own" was the theme of the

day as part of the "Formation Re-imagined" theme of the Leadership Institute.

With a mix of online talks, live presenters and multiple speakers, the program set the template for new programs provided by the institute.

The day was designed for those who serve in youth ministry, religious education, liturgy and any

parish or school ministry. Topics included praying with young people, reaching out to those on the margins, engaging technology and modern day prophets.

In the evaluation form, participants used words like "riveting, inspiring, informative, and engaging" to describe the day's talks and workshops.

"As the first face-to-face formation following the institute's official launch, I think the faith formation team hit a home run. The day was well received by attendees and we were able to introduce participants to a new way of learning," said Patrick Donovan, director.

Donovan said that by keeping the presentations brief and including a chance to dialogue with the speakers, "those present got a taste of what is in store as the institute takes shape."

Two of the nine presentations were offered via pre-recorded video and one was live-streamed from New Orleans.

"It proved that a great formation day need not involve great expense. Using presenters from within the diocese, which we did for three presentations, allowed us to showcase the hometown experts we have here in Fairfield County," Donovan said.

Rose Talbot-Babey, director of Family Formation, said it was "a terrific day with high energy, great presentations. I felt all those who attended left wanting more. It was a great way to showcase the format of the institute and what students can expect moving forward."

Those in attendance said the day was a revelation and very useful. "It was helpful, interactive, and lively in giving guidance and tips," said Lap Nguyen.

"The day inspired me to speak



the truth and better include youth in my ministry," said Father Luke Suarez, chaplain at Notre Dame High School. "I have worked in situations of crisis and believe the advice of speakers very insightful—something I can use in my ministry."

Jacques Cayer said Father Sam Kachuba's reflection on "Praying with Youth" was challenging and full of useful information.

Susan Socci said the talks on youth gave her "insight into the need to constantly lead and model prayer in young people." In the future, she would love to see other topics explored, including ministry to widows and widowers and a workshop on how grandparents can evangelize.

Janet DiStassio said the workshops gave her many good ideas on how to reach children and "teach them about the importance of a relationship with Jesus through prayer."

"I enjoyed meeting others and discussing what their parishes are doing. The day challenged us on how to engage others in the community," said Tom Cullen, who asked for additional workshops on adult formation.

Many of the women present

were particularly moved by the presentation of Sister Maureen Sullivan, O.P., a Dominican Sister of Hope from New York, who spoke of the prophetic role of the Church.

"I loved hearing from a woman. It touched me as a woman of faith. We are tools of God and prophets by baptism. God will teach me what to say. The talk on prophetic families reminded me of what I am called to be. It also encouraged me to be an authentic witness to the young," said Amy St. Onge.

Jeannie Bisson agreed. "Sister Maureen was so encouraging to all of the laity who serve in Church ministries. Thank God for her vision," she said.

Sue Stone appreciated that many of the talks were anchored in scripture and had a great "understanding of the Church being formed." She also appreciated the "beautiful integration of our Spanish community" and the overall message of engaging others. She said she would like to see future workshops that explore Catholic Social Teaching."

(To learn more about the Diocesan Leadership Institute or to register for future programs, visit www.formationreimagined.org.)

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Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
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Encounter • Formation • Discipleship

ON THE COVER

SAYING "YES" TO LIFE—
Students from Immaculate High School in Danbury were among the hundreds of young people throughout the diocese who joined the March for Life this year in Washington D.C.

Above the Fold: Bishop Caggiano introduces children from St. Theresa School in Trumbull who sang at the recent launch of Foundations in Education.

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Latest News

'State of the Diocese' address

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

The Diocese of Bridgeport is moving into an era where "Synod initiatives are coming to fruition," said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in his State of the Diocese address for the year 2016.

This year's address was recorded at the Sacred Heart University video production studios in the new Martire Business and Communications Center and is available on the diocesan website.

"This is a time when many blessings continue to flow out of the synod," said the bishop, referring to the launch of the Diocesan Leadership Institute, the ongoing parish strategic planning process and the formation of parish planning teams to move parishes forward in areas such as catechesis, liturgy and worship and other areas of need.

This year also saw the expansion and renovation of the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy Residence for retired priests, and the decision to renovate the St. John Fisher Seminary in Stamford.

"The Spirit is moving us to renewal. The Holy Spirit is

powerfully at work in the charities and other initiatives of the diocese," the bishop said. "I am confident our challenges will be resolved if we work together on our way to renewal."

The bishop organized his report into major topics: spiritual life of the diocese; synod update, pastoral life, works of charity and justice, finance and real estate, and communications.

In the 34-minute video presentation through the use of PowerPoint slides and graphs, the bishop provided overall information on census, finances, new initiatives and ongoing challenges.

He reported census figures of 108,000 registered families representing 303,000 individuals. There are a total of 435,000 people who identify as Catholic in Fairfield County but who do not necessarily practice their faith.

He said he was encouraged by the first increase in years in the numbers for Mass attendance, Baptisms and First Holy Communion, but he was concerned with the overall declining numbers of students in religious education and said the diocese "must work to address and

reverse these trends."

A recently completed survey by the Catechetical Task Force found that 45 percent of parishes reported a decreased enrollment for religious education, while 25 percent noted an increase.

The bishop began his talk by focusing on the spiritual renewal in the diocese, which took shape in many ways, including the "Centers of Mercy" and the consecration of the diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which drew more than 1,500 people to St. Augustine Cathedral. It was also streamed live to more than 1,700 viewers.

Likewise, he said he was encouraged by the outreach to young people through the launch of the Catholic Service Corps and the success of the World Youth Day pilgrimage, in which 242 young people and their chaperones travelled to Poland last summer.

"I was never more proud of our youth as I was at World Youth Day," the bishop said, noting that the pilgrimage helped to form young people in the faith and inspire them for years to come.

The diocese also engaged young people through activ-



BISHOP CAGGIANO at Sacred Heart University TV studio in the new Martire Communications Center, where he recorded his "State of the Diocese" address.

ities such as the Diocesan Youth Choir, Convivio, the SHU "Journey," Catholic Underground and CONNected Catholics, he said.

"Unlocking social media" through the use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube has been instrumental in communicating with young people. More than 9,100 people "like" the bishop on Facebook and 3,295 are Twitter followers. The diocesan Facebook page also numbers 5,131 "likes."

In the past year, the diocese also took steps to support priests and new vocations. The diocese began implementing a revised Diaconate Program, established a Council of Religious and announced the new Redemptoris Mater Seminary for missionary priests in association with the Neo-Catechumenate movement.

The bishop said St. John

Fisher now numbers nine seminarians discerning a vocation, and an additional nine seminarians studying in major seminaries.

Steps to support diocesan priests include the initiation of workshops for newly appointed pastors, a retreat for the newly ordained, a healing and support team for priests dealing with addiction issues, and a new Spiritual Direction program offered through the Ignatian Spirituality Institute of Fairfield University.

In his section on finances, the bishop reported that "generally speaking, the financial situation of the diocese is improving. We're close to achieving a balanced budget."

The diocese has made progress in reducing debt, including the loan from the Knights of Columbus, which it expects to be cut by 50 percent by the end

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Bishop establishes new Deanery structure

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has announced plans for a new Deanery structure to assist the bishop and priests in regional planning and decision making, and improve collaboration between parishes.

The bishop signed the decree establishing the new deanery structure for the Diocese of Bridgeport on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. The new structure comes into effect on April 11.

The decree replaces the six Vicariates with nine Deaneries, reconstitutes the membership of the Presbyteral Council and replaces the Assignment Board with the Council of Deans.

"I ask that you join me in prayerful gratitude for this important moment in the history of the diocese. Let us pray that this new deanery structure will, with the Lord's grace, bring about greater fraternity among the clergy and

help parishes to collaborate so that we can serve even more effectively the faithful under our care," said the bishop in making the announcement.

Msgr. Thomas Powers said that in establishing the Deaneries, an effort was made to group them in relative proximity to allow easier access to the Office of Dean and allow deeper inter-parish partnership.

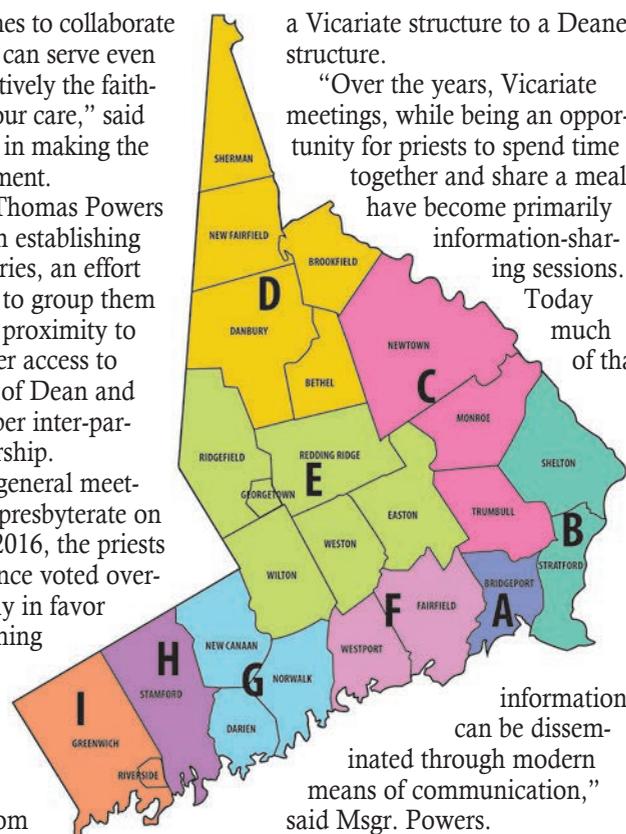
At the general meeting of the presbyterate on April 21, 2016, the priests in attendance voted overwhelmingly in favor of establishing a committee to study the possibility of moving from

a Vicariate structure to a Deanery structure.

"Over the years, Vicariate meetings, while being an opportunity for priests to spend time together and share a meal, have become primarily information-sharing sessions.

Today much of that

information can be disseminated through modern means of communication," said Msgr. Powers.



The Deanery structure is designed to foster greater fraternal support among clergy, regional planning and accountability.

Msgr. Powers said each Deanery takes into account the diversity of pastoral situations in a given region, improves the efficiency and collaboration of organized pastoral initiatives and better provides for the needs of a particular area of the diocese.

The Deanery structure also fosters collaboration among parishes in order to share talent and resources.

As part of the new structure, the bishop will reconstitute the membership of the Presbyteral Council, a "senate" of clergy whose role is to advise the bishop in matters pertaining to the governance and spiritual good of the People of God of the local Church. The council will include the newly established deans, who will be recommended by priests

in each area of the diocese.

The membership of the Presbyteral Council will also include the Episcopal Vicars for the African American community, Haitian community, Brazilian community, Hispanic community and Vietnamese community.

The current Assignment Board will be replaced with the Council of Deans, which will serve as a consultative body to the Bishop of Bridgeport regarding clergy assignments.

"The Deanery structure will enable parishes to serve the faithful of the diocese more effectively and, due to the presence of a Dean, provide fraternal and spiritual support for the priests, especially the newly-ordained,

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Annual Catholic Appeal

'Show charity through action'

By PAT HENNESSY

"For me it was really the kids," says Jessica Carroll, explaining why she and her husband Brian agreed to become lay chairs at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull for the 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal. "They are at the age, nine and ten years old, where we can have substantive conversations about showing charity through action."

"When Father Marcello approached us to be the parish's lay chairs, we not only felt honored, we felt that we were being given additional support for what we were trying to do at home," agrees Brian. "Our parents are very giving. They were a model for us and we want to be a model for our kids."

To assist in helping parishioners understand the goals of the Annual Catholic Appeal and the

ministries and programs it assists, each parish has a lay appeal chair or, in the case of St. Catherine's, a chair couple. "Jessica and Brian are very mindful of the needs of our wider community," says Father Joseph Marcello, explaining his choice for this year's parish chair couple. "I'm grateful for the great enthusiasm and commitment they've shown in their leadership role in our parish's portion of the Annual Catholic Appeal."

The couple has always been grateful for God's gifts and appreciative of the strong community spirit at St. Catherine. "My sister had a stroke a couple of years ago," says Jessica. "We saw the love of the community in the meals that were brought to our house, the prayers, the way people would stop after Mass and ask how she was. We saw firsthand that this is a caring, giving community. When Father Marcello

approached us to be the parish lay couple for the appeal, we were honored."

Even so, the Carrolls took time to sit down with their pastor and learn more about the many services the appeal aids. Although they were strongly connected to the St. Catherine community, they knew less about the breadth and depth of the programs the appeal supports throughout Fairfield County.

"We always knew that the appeal supported good things," says Jessica. "For example, we knew about the Thomas Merton Center and the food pantry, but we weren't aware of how much they were doing. They have a mail room for people who have no other address. They have shower days twice a week for their guests. After they shower, they get clean underwear and socks. Everybody deserves to



BRIAN AND JESSICA CARROLL

feel clean."

"Just learning about things like this makes us feel so very fortunate," adds Brian.

He has already reached out to the community, and is on the board of the Boys and Girls Club in Stamford, but the ministries supported by the appeal turned his attention in a new direction.

"Previously, I would not have thought of the need to have the Queen of Clergy residence for retired priests. Even though our kids went to St. Catherine School, we were unaware of the way the Bishop's Scholarship Fund will make Catholic school

affordable for so many families. In so many ways, all over the diocese, we have learned about the vastness of the appeal. We have a better understanding about where the dollars are going."

"The parish's response to Jessica and Brian's presentation at our weekend Masses was really enthusiastic, on two levels," says Father Marcello. "On the one hand, people really responded to Brian's concrete explanation of where the monies raised by the appeal go, and the good it does, and also they connected with Jessica's personal witness to the

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

WE HAVE ALL BEEN BLESSED BY GOD!

YOUR TALENT IS **GOD'S GIFT TO YOU**. WHAT YOU DO WITH IT IS YOUR **GIFT BACK TO GOD**.

The 2017 Annual Catholic Appeal is a pillar in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Fairfield County every year.

Each year generous donors provide for the spiritual and material needs in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

NOW IS THE TIME YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Commitment Weekend, March 11 & 12 offers the opportunity to personally hand in your pledge card at Mass, or use the envelope included in Fairfield County Catholic to make your gift.

You may also visit 2017ACAbidgeport.com to make a gift.

For more information please visit 2017ACAbidgeport.com or call **203.416.1470**.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.



How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for me?"
- PSALM 116:12



Foundations in Education

Innovation will guide Catholic education

FAIRFIELD—Innovation, investment, and transformation of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport were the focus of the formal launch of Foundations in Education on February 8 at Sacred Heart University.

More than 75 invited guests and diocesan education leaders turned out for the event in the Forum of the Frank and Marisa Martire Business & Communications Center. The new entity, formed by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, is a fully independent philanthropic foundation formed by the bishop to support Catholic schools in the 21st century.

"This is really the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Catholic education in the diocese and for the community," said Bishop Caggiano.

During the program, the St. Theresa School Choir performed three songs, and student Olivia Lieby impressed the adults with a reflection on her love for the school and its ability to bring students together as a family rooted in Gospel values, acceptance, and love for learning.

The bishop said "the genius of Catholic education" was not only its ability to produce excellent academic results but to create lifetime learners who are formed in the faith and bring a strong sense of values to their work in the community.

The bishop said that the new foundation is part of an overall effort including the formation of the Education Commission "to create a roadmap for schools going forward" and the overall strategic planning now underway to preserve and enhance Catholic education.

"We need financial resources going forward to allow the gift of Catholic education to be available to every family. Foundations in Education will be the place where all financial needs can be met," the bishop said.

He added that innovation will be the key to the success of Catholic schools in the future and that the new foundation will add support by making grants to teachers and administrators to explore new curriculum and teaching methods.

Dr. Steven Cheeseman,



LAUNCHING FOUNDATIONS—Children from the youth choir of St. Theresa School in Trumbull performed at the launch of Foundations in Education in the Martire Communications Center of Sacred Heart University. About 100 invited guests and board members turned out for the program, which celebrated Catholic education and the need to expand investment and resources in the future.

diocesan superintendent of schools, said that change in the school system will require investment "that will empower students to take control of their learning" through new pedagogical methods and contemporary learning environments.

Daniel McCarthy, president and CEO of Frontier Communications and a trustee of the new foundation, served as

emcee of the launch program and was joined by other foundation trustees.

McCarthy, a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, said that his four boys all attended Catholic schools from elementary school through college. He praised "the incredible impact" Catholic schools have had on the lives of children and the larger community, particularly in neighborhoods hard hit by job loss and poverty.

During the program, the bishop introduced Holly Doherty-Lemoine of New Canaan, the first executive director of Foundations in Education, Inc. She said Foundations will include the Bishop's Scholarship Fund and funds for innovation and professional development.

(For more information on Foundations in Education, contact Holly Doherty-Lemoine: hlemoine@diobpt.org or 203.416.1405.)

Foundations in Education Board

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, *Acting Chair*

David Cappiello
Robert Dilenschneider
John Eppolito
R. Bradford Evans
Michael Hanlon
Larry Kudlow
Ned Lautenbach
Daniel McCarthy
Anne McCrory

Thomas McInerney
Julia McNamara
Bernard Reidy
Gerard Robilotti
Joseph Roxe
Robert Scinto
Michael Shea
Holly Doherty-Lemoine,
Executive Director

Rite of Election prepares for communion with the Church

FAIRFIELD—As Lent begins, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will welcome over 200 men and women who are on the journey toward full communion with the Catholic Church. The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, the next formal step on that journey, will take place Sunday, March 5, at 3 pm at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Fairfield.

This liturgical rite, traditionally held on the first Sunday of Lent, is part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process. It closes the period of formation and marks the beginning of the period of final preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter.

As Fairfield County Catholic

went to press, 16 parishes had participants taking part in the Rite of Election Ceremony. As has often been true in the past, the combined parish of St. Mary-St. Benedict/Our Lady of Montserrat in Stamford has the highest number of people enrolled in its RCIA program: 110 candidates and 19 catechumens.

During the service, every catechumen (non-baptized person) and candidate (those who were baptized but did not receive further sacraments) will come forward to the altar to be personally greeted by the bishop. They will then sign the "Book of Election," to signify their desire to be received into full communion with the Church.

(For more information regarding RCIA and adult formation, contact Rose Talbot-Babey,



coordinator of Family Faith Formation: 203.416.1648 or rtalbotbabey@diobpt.org)

PLANNING TO BE IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA THIS WINTER?

You are invited to join Bishop Caggiano for an afternoon reunion in Naples.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2017

See you in the Sunshine State!

Please contact Connie Von Zwehl for further details and your personal invitation by email at ccvz@att.net or call 203-216-1608.

March for Life 2017

'A testament to faith and morals'

By **ANDRÉ ESCALEIRA**

What happens when thousands of people come together in the streets of Washington, D.C.? Well, prayer and peaceful advocacy of course! This was the case with the January 27 March for Life, a peaceful protest of the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States. Thousands of people from all over the United States descended on the nation's capital to join in the annual march, peacefully calling for a greater respect for the dignity of human life by specifically protesting said Supreme Court case.

Far from just a one-day event, the March for Life is supported by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., which host multiple liturgies and services in the days leading up to the actual march, to join peaceful protest with prayer.

On the eve of the March for Life, a Vigil Mass for Life was held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, with Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York presiding. In his homily, Cardinal Dolan asked the faithful to reflect on a sanctuary specifically as a place to seek mercy, protection, and grace. Taking the idea of sanctuary further, he said, "The mother's

womb is the prime sanctuary, where the child is to be protected, defended, and cherished."

In the sanctuary of the National Shrine were thousands of faithful gathered to pray with the cardinal and the innumerable bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians and religious who attended the vigil to pray for a greater respect for that prime sanctuary. Following the vigil, the Crypt Chapel of the Basilica remained open for the majority of the night for groups to participate in Eucharistic Adoration.

The following morning, about 20,000 young people, seminarians, religious, priests and bishops gathered at the Verizon Center for a Rally and Mass for Life. Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio for the United States, was in attendance and shared a message of support from Pope Francis, who encouraged the young people saying, "Your prophetic witness is noticed by God and by the Holy Father. I urge you to rediscover the human vocation to love! I ask you to be revolutionary, to rebel against the culture that believes you are incapable of love!"

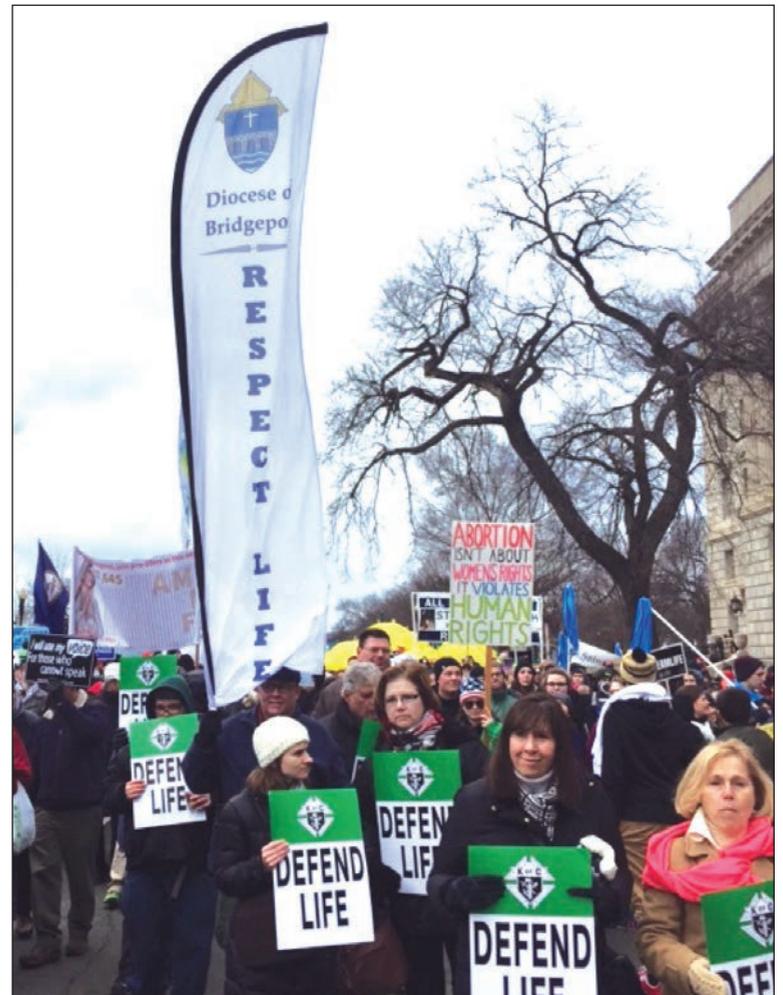
In his homily, Father Conrad Murphy, the parochial vicar of Holy Redeemer Parish in College Park, Md., exhorted the thousands of youth at the Verizon Center to be holy, because "holiness changes the world!" "When we say 'yes' to Jesus, that's when we can be happy," Father

Murphy said, "When we strive to be holy, that's when the world starts to change. God can do so much through your personal holiness, through little you."

The "prophetic witness" mentioned by the Pope was clear in the presence of so many young people striving to live that holiness mentioned by Father Murphy through example. These young people were moved by the experience, calling it one of "passion and happiness," as Sean Duda, a parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull, called it, or an "unbelievable experience, a testament to our faith and morals," in the words of Clare Wagner, a junior at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull. She continued by expressing her hopes that one day "we can come to understand the precious, unique life that God creates from conception."

Drew Mitchell, a freshman at Immaculate High School in Danbury, was taken aback by the number of people marching, standing for life. Drew said that "the March for Life helped me to better understand how significant life is and how people feel called to show that importance."

The march, dedicated to the "precious, unique" gift of life, was characterized by its peaceful character. Thousands of people walked through the streets of Washington, D.C., praying, singing, laughing, and smiling. It was a day of true joy ■



STATE OF THE DIOCESE FROM PAGE 3

of the year. However, the long-term unfunded pension and other post-retirement benefit obligations continue to be a concern and are being addressed, the bishop said.

The diocesan Real Estate Office has helped to improve the financial picture by assessing and prioritizing diocesan properties into "Mission and Non-Mission assets" that can be sold or rented.

Last year, the Real Estate Office completed sales of diocesan properties in Easton, Shelton and Stamford, and also the sale of an affordable housing facility in Bethel, he said.

The diocesan financial picture was also boosted by the success of this year's Annual Catholic Appeal, which went \$900,000 over goal and recorded the highest average gift in the country at \$500 per contributor. More than 24,000 donated to the appeal.

The diocese also moved toward cost savings and greater efficiencies through the work

of the Strategic Planning Commission, which made recommendations in areas such as human resources, information technology, communications and data management, and purchasing.

Among the highlights and achievements in 2016, the bishop reported that Catholic Charities served more than 1.3 million meals to the poor, elderly and homeless and provided 15,000 clinical counseling and case management sessions.

The Safe Environment office completed 16,000 Virtus training for adults, and the diocese also conducted a special healing service for survivors of priest sexual abuse and for racial healing.

The address is available in its entirety online at: www.bridgeportdiocese.com.

(To watch Bishop Caggiano's 2016 State of the Diocese address, visit the website: www.bridgeportdiocese.com. The complete PowerPoint presentation is also available online.) ■

Catholic Cemeteries

CMS to lead diocesan cemeteries

BRIDGEPORT—Bishop Frank J. Caggiano has announced that the Diocese of Bridgeport has signed a management service contract with Catholic Management Services (CMS), a nonprofit organization specializing in providing strategic business planning and professional services that apply best practices to address the funeral, cemetery and administrative needs of the Catholic Church today.

“Our Catholic cemeteries are sacred places because within their consecrated grounds, we commend our loved ones to the Lord,” said Bishop Caggiano. “The new partnership with Catholic Management Services will help us respond to contemporary needs, plan for the future and better serve those who come to them in a time of grief.”

CMS, which is operated under the Diocese of Oakland and headquartered in Pleasanton, Calif., currently serves numerous dioceses across the country. As part of the agreement, CMS will provide an executive director of cemeteries for the diocese and utilize its team of experts in various disciplines to further develop and enhance the growth of cemetery ministries and operations.



CATHOLIC CEMETERIES—The diocese owns and operates nine cemeteries, conducting more than 1,800 interments yearly.

CMS CEO Robert Seelig said that in partnering with the Diocese of Bridgeport, CMS is excited to help further the sacred ministry of our Catholic cemeteries.

“With changes in burial customs that include a significant increase in cremation, the Catholic Church serves a vital role in supporting families as they make difficult end-of-life decisions. With a focus on outreach and education, we’ll be working with funeral directors and parishes to enhance this important ministry for regular church-goers as well as those who may have lost their connection along the way,” said Seelig.

The Diocese of Bridgeport currently owns and operates nine

cemeteries performing over 1,800 interments annually. CMS is providing an interim executive director and the cemetery staff will remain employees of the diocese while functionally reporting to CMS. The new executive director of cemeteries will be hired and trained over the next six months.

Michael Hanlon, CFO for the diocese, said the new partnership will represent collaboration between Catholic Management Services (CMS) and the diocesan cemeteries, “which will guide the Diocese of Bridgeport’s operations toward our vision of a strong, vibrant and growing cemetery ministry serving the Catholic community.”

Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport

St. Michael Cemetery
2205 Stratford Avenue
Stratford, CT 06615

St. Peter Cemetery
71 Lake Avenue Ext.
Danbury, CT 06810

St. John Cemetery
25 Camp Avenue
Darien, CT 06820

St. Mary–Putnam Cemetery
399 North Street-
35 Parsonage Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

Resurrection Cemetery
c/o Gate of Heaven Cemetery
1056 Daniels Farm Road
Trumbull, CT 06611

St. John–St. Mary Cemetery
223 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06850

Queen of Peace Cemetery
c/o St. John Cemetery
25 Camp Avenue
Darien, CT 06820

Gate of Heaven Cemetery
1056 Daniels Farm Road
Trumbull, CT 06611

**Assumption, Greens Farms,
Assumption, Kings Highway**
c/o St. John Cemetery

The administrative office is located at the Catholic Center 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606
Phone: 203.416.1494.

Visit the web page:
[bridgeportdiocese.org/
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America”**

Martin T. Nguyen, Ph.D.
*Associate Professor of Religious Studies and
Faculty Chair for Diversity at Fairfield University*

**Place: GONZAGA AUDITORIUM in Gonzaga Residence
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Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT 06824**

Date: SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2017

Time: 1- 3 PM

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**RSVP by Friday, March 17, 2017 to Sr. Nancy Strillacci,
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Financial News

Diocesan commitment to financial transparency

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport, in the continued practice of full transparency, has released its Consolidated Financial Statements as well as The Faith in the Future Fund, Inc. financial statements for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2016.

“One of Bishop Caggiano’s continued priorities is to provide a clear, transparent and comprehensive account of the finances of the diocese each year to ensure we are good stewards of funds entrusted to us, and we issue these audit reports in that spirit of transparency,” said Michael Hanlon, chief financial officer.

The Diocese of Bridgeport’s consolidated financial statements reported operational revenues, support and other changes totaling \$75.0 million and total expenses from operations before depreciation of \$ 74.4 million, resulting in income from operations before depreciation of approximately \$600,000 for the eighteen-month period ended June 30, 2016.

The audit reports total assets of approximately \$88.0 million, which includes \$38.6 million in property, buildings and equip-

ment, \$9.2 million in beneficial interests in third party trusts, \$8.2 million in investments and \$3.4 million in receivables from related diocesan entities.

Liabilities total approximately \$158.0 million, which include \$130.6 million in underfunded pension and other retirement benefit obligations and \$8.3 million in a note payable to the Knights of Columbus.

Hanlon said the diocesan fiscal policy continues to focus on a strategy of returning the diocese to financial stability and long-term growth and viability. Strategies include the goals of eliminating debt, controlling medical and other benefit costs and developing options related to reducing long-term pension liabilities.

“Last year the diocese initiated many steps to continue our financial turn-around plan and those strategies are starting to reap benefits. Medical insurance benefit cost increases have been controlled and are less than national averages. Certain assets will be sold in the near future to further reduce the Knights of Columbus loan balance and annual interest payments.

Hanlon said strategic school reorganization plans will reduce the medical and insurance burden absorbed by the diocese, while pastoral and strategic planning is on-going within our parishes.

Cemetery operations have been evaluated and a management company has been engaged to provide an executive director and to develop a future strategic vision. And lastly, a committee has been established to formulate options related to the underfunded future pension benefit obligations.

Additionally, many successes have been realized. Initiatives arising from the synod are being implemented and some are partially funded. The \$3.5 million expansion project for The Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy residence for retired priests has been completed. The Bishop Scholarship Fund has awarded over \$2.1 million in scholarship aid. The St. John Fisher Seminary remodeling project has the necessary funds earmarked for a phase one construction project this summer, Hanlon said.

The growth or establishment of various foundations continues to be a priority for Bishop Caggiano, which include The Faith in the Future Fund, Inc., Foundations in Education, Inc., and the establishment of a foundation for Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, all of which will provide much needed support for mission-related activities.

Programs included in the diocesan financial report include the St. John Fisher Seminary, The Queen of Clergy residence, the Newman Center at Western Connecticut State University, Teresian Towers and Carmel Ridge Estates, life use and rental properties for elderly residents, and pastoral care services for residents at nursing homes, formerly owned by diocesan related entities.

Additionally, the diocese directly operates fifteen Catholic cemeteries and publishes the *Fairfield County Catholic*, a monthly publication available to all Catholics in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport.

During 2014 the diocesan Finance Council approved a change in the fiscal year from December 31 to June 30 to align with diocesan parishes, schools and many other diocesan related



MICHAEL HANLON,
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

entities. Therefore the diocesan financial statements are reported for an eighteen-month period ended June 30, 2016, Hanlon said.

Faith in the Future Fund, Inc., a related diocesan entity, is a Connecticut nonprofit, non-stock corporation formed in February 1996. Faith in the Future was established by the late Cardinal Edward M. Egan when he was Bishop of Bridgeport, to raise, manage and disburse funds raised by the Faith in the Future Endowment Campaign of the diocese.

“The purposes of the campaign were to create a permanent endowment to support Catholic education, vocation and seminary education, priests’ residence and retirement fund and diocesan ministries and programs,” Hanlon said.

Faith in the Future goals included ensuring the viability of diocesan elementary and secondary schools; continuing to develop priestly vocations and funding seminary education; providing

appropriate support and facilities for retired clergy and enhancing the religious education programs in its parishes.

The Faith in the Future financial statements report revenues and support totaling \$1.8 million and total expenses of \$1.6 million resulting in an increase of net assets of \$200,000 for the twelve-month period ended June 30, 2016. During this period, \$1,593,000 was distributed for school support, programs and scholarships and other support for vocations, seminary and religious education programs.

Hanlon said some of the biggest challenges the diocese continues to face going forward include funding of care for a growing number of retired priests, assisting schools and parishes to a path to financial stability, and find solutions for long-term pension liabilities.

The Diocese of Bridgeport numbers 420,000 Catholics in 82 parishes throughout Fairfield County. It also educates more than 10,000 children and teens in 34 schools and provides religious education to an additional 36,000 students. Its network of Catholic Charities services sponsor’s 30 programs, including behavioral health services and feeding programs that provide over 1.5 million meals to the poor and elderly. There are also 240 priests, 103 deacons and 343 religious women and men serving in a wide range of ministries.

(The complete audited reports are available online. To learn more, visit the diocesan website: www.bridgeport-diocese.com/financialreports.

DEANERY FROM PAGE 3

newly-appointed pastors and those who may be ill, elderly or in need of special assistance,” Msgr. Powers said.

Deanery A includes the 11 parishes and St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport; Deanery B, the 8 parishes in Stratford and Shelton; Deanery C, the 6 parishes in Trumbull, Monroe, and Newtown; Deanery D, the 11 parishes in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield and Sherman; Deanery E, the 7 parishes in Wilton, Redding, Georgetown, Easton, Weston and Ridgefield; Deanery F, the 9 parishes in Fairfield and Westport; Deanery G, the 10

parishes in New Canaan, Darien and Norwalk; Deanery H, the 12 parishes in Stamford; and Deanery I, the 7 parishes in Greenwich/Riverside.

Each Deanery will eventually be named and dedicated under a Marian title taken from the Litany of Loreto. Priests throughout the diocese will be asked to nominate one to three pastors in their Deanery who could serve as Dean. The tabulation of votes will be sent to the bishop who, after reviewing the nominations, will appoint the nine new Deans. The process will be completed by the middle of March.

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Cathedral Parish

Vietnamese celebrate Têt

BRIDGEPORT—Vietnamese Catholic Community celebrated their Lunar New Year, called “Têt,” in St. Augustine Cathedral on January 29. “Têt” is considered the biggest, most popular and important holiday and festival of the year in Vietnam. This year’s holiday ushered in the Year of the Rooster.

“The celebration started with a ceremony of remembering our ancestors, followed by a Mass,” explained Father Augustine Nguyen, who came originally from Vietnam. The Cathedral Parish is home to Fairfield County’s active and devout Vietnamese community, and Mass is celebrated in Vietnamese every Sunday at 2:30 pm.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano was the main celebrant at the New Year’s Mass. More than ten priests concelebrated with him, including the vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Msgr. Thomas Powers.

“Bishop Caggiano gave a powerful homily, talking about living out the beatitudes and following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ,” said Father Nguyen. “He mentioned the importance of remembering our ancestors, those who had sacrificed and lived out the Beatitudes in their own lives.”

The cathedral was packed, with about 800 people coming



from all over Fairfield County and surrounding towns. Most women came wearing traditional Vietnamese dresses called “áo dài.”

At the end of Mass, Bishop Caggiano blessed 10 couples who are celebrating their anniversaries this year from 15 to 50 years of marriage.

After Mass, all were invited to the gym at Kolbe Cathedral High School on the cathedral campus

to continue the celebration. The afternoon included a variety of typical Vietnamese foods and entertainment including the lively, interactive dragon dance, dances from the youth, kung fu/ karate performances and the singing of traditional Vietnamese New Year songs.

The Mayor of Bridgeport, Joseph Ganim, also came and wished everyone a happy, joyous and prosperous New Year. ■



VIETNAMESE NEW YEAR—Remembering ancestors, celebrating culture, and praising God for the gift of life all came together at the recent observance of Têt, the Vietnamese New Year at St. Augustine Cathedral. Bishop Caggiano celebrated Mass to begin the day-long festivities. It was a day of respect and joy!



ACA
FROM PAGE 4

kindness of our community to her family.”

The greatest praise, though, did not come from pastor or parishioners. As they put their faith into words before the entire parish, praise came from the source that inspired it most of all.

“When we were finished,” Brian recounts, “our son told us that he was so proud to see us up there.”

Encouraged by the praise that mattered most, Brian and Jessica will continue to learn more about the programs supported by the appeal and speak about it whenever they have the chance. “Let’s change lives,” Jessica says, “one person at a time.”

(For more information or to donate to the ACA, contact Pam Rittman: prittman@diobpt.org or 203.416.1479. ■

Saint James Parish

† LENT 2017 †

“Come back to the Lord with all your heart. Leave the past in ashes and turn to God with tears and fasting, for He is slow to anger and ready to forgive.” Joel 2:13

A Day for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesday, March 21 - 9:00 am-10:00 pm
Fr. Tom and Fr. Rogerio will be available for Confession and healing prayer.

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE FOR ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Tuesday, April 11, 7:00 pm

DEVOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

All parishioners are invited to participate in personal stations at anytime.

Stations of the Cross:

Fridays at 7:00 pm in the Church on March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
There will be reserved parking

“The Living Stations of the Cross”:

with the children of St. James School, Friday, April 7, 12:30 and 7:30 pm

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

FOR MEN

Beloved Sons’ Gatherings

Friday, March 3 at 7:30 pm - Parish Center
Saturday, March 18 at 6:45 am

Men’s Communion Breakfast

The Roads to Faith - Guest Speaker - Eddie Perez, Jr.
Sunday, February 26 - Marriott Courtyard, Shelton - \$20/person
7:30 am Eucharist; 9:00 am Buffet breakfast

FOR WOMEN

Lenten Retreat

Saturday, April 1 - Parish Center
8:00 am Eucharist; 9:00 am Retreat

Breaking Bread

Saturday, March 4 - 8:00 am - Parish Center

SILENT TOGETHER: WEEKLY CENTERING PRAYER

Wednesdays - March 1-April 19
7:00-8:00 pm - Parish Center Chapel

PRAYING WITH JULIAN OF NORWICH

Thursdays - March 2-April 6
10:00 am - Parish Center
A six week Lenten retreat. At home reading, prayer and journaling combined with group sharing. Cost of \$20 includes book. Call or stop by Parish Center to register.

TAIZE PRAYER SERVICES

Spend an hour before the Eucharist in silent prayer and the contemplative chanting of the monastic community of Taize, France. Tuesdays, March 7-April 4 from 7:15-8:15 pm in the Parish Center Chapel.

EDITORIAL

A new era for schools

In one remarkable week in early February, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano ushered in a new era in Catholic education in the diocese. The decisions he announced regarding schools in Shelton/Monroe, Stamford and Danbury were the result of almost two years of study and recommendations from advisory board members, parish leaders, and planning groups concerned with Catholic education.

In Stamford and Shelton/Monroe, the bishop announced the formation of a single new elementary school for each region, and he also introduced the "Academy Model," which holds one key to the future of Catholic education in the diocese. Under the model, the diocese will sponsor the schools and their Catholic mission, while the new boards will exercise more control and decision making regarding finances, programs, and operations.

In his meeting with parents, the bishop was consistent in the principles that guided his decisions and his plans for the future:

- The diocese is committed to keeping Catholic education affordable and accessible in every region of Fairfield County
- In areas where schools have consolidated, there are "no winners and losers" in the process. The sites selected for the new campuses will be re-named to reflect the new school communities
- Any teachers displaced as a result of merging schools will have priority for other jobs in the diocesan school system and will be treated with dignity and gratitude for their service
- Passing on Catholic education is a "generational challenge" that must be honored, so that young people will share in the same gift that has formed so many adult Catholics and contributed to the community

While the news has been difficult for many, it is also been reassuring because of the bishop's leadership and the shared vision for the future of schools. Throughout the process, he has led from the front: meeting for months with school leaders and planning boards, attending listening sessions with parents, and consulting with pastors and community leaders. In his intense preparation, transparency and openness, he demonstrated a mastery of the details and discussed the challenges, concerns and opportunities going forward.

A sincere word of gratitude and appreciation must be given to the parents themselves for the deep measure of civility, respect and understanding they brought to these very difficult decisions. The bishop has spoken often about the great sacrifice parents make to put their kids in Catholic schools. No one knows better the love parents have for their children and their schools. He has prayerfully asked parents "to be patient and to be active" by registering their children as soon as possible and serving on the planning committees that will shape the future. "I'm willing to walk with you on this journey to give birth to the new academics, and I hope you are willing to walk with me," he said.

Climate change

Was that thunder or a plow rumbling down the street? In one day last week the weather went from 60 degrees to a blizzard. Or perhaps it's just more of the same. "If you don't like the weather in New England now, just wait a few minutes," Mark Twain quipped from a different century. But that's not what we're exploring here. On the day of the recent storm, Bishop Caggiano wrote on his Facebook page: "For these brief hours, as nature shows her ability to rearrange our normal lives and forces us to slow down and simply watch the snow come down, my heart is filled with gratitude for the beauty of our world and the goodness of our God who offers us peace, silence, beauty and the glow of his grace each day." Storms can remind us of how vulnerable we are, and even of how the intensity of our views and the "climate of opinion" we wrap ourselves in fall short of what really matters—and are perhaps less instructive than watching snow fall. In a time of bad news, fake news, constant news, we should find refuge in the "Good News." It may even be strong enough to unite us, when we often can't agree on anything else. ■

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Launching Foundations in Education



A COMMITMENT TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION—Daniel J. McCarthy, President and CEO of Frontier Communications and a trustee of the new Foundations in Education served as emcee of the recent program and reception to launch Foundations. He was joined by major donors and other civic and business leaders who are serving on the newly named board. McCarthy, a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, said that his four boys all attended Catholic schools from elementary through college. He praised "the incredible impact" Catholic schools have had on the lives of children and the larger commu-

nity, particularly in neighborhoods hard hit by job loss and poverty. The Foundations will

create endowments for innovations, scholarships and professional development. ■



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

VOCATION ADVISORY AND ADMISSION BOARD

The following men have been appointed to the Vocation Advisory and Admission Board:

Reverend John Connaughton
Reverend Reginald Norman
Reverend Jeffrey Couture
Reverend Samuel Kachuba
Reverend Joseph Marcello
Reverend Augustine Nguyen
Reverend John Jairo Perez
Reverend Monsignor Kevin Royal
Reverend Samuel Scott

*Monsignor Thomas W. Powers,
 Vicar General, February, 2017*

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Editorial



Marriage advice from a newlywed

A WOMAN'S VOICE

BY ANNA BISARO

Anna Bisaro is a reporter for the New Haven Register

It only took a couple of days after sharing news with family and friends about our engagement before Matt and I started fielding a steady stream of questions about color palettes, venues and music for the reception. These were things neither of us had thought about when Matt popped the question in August of 2014, but we were suddenly confronted with having to make doz-

ens of choices that have had little to no bearing on our marriage.

The first and easiest decision we made as an engaged couple was what church to get married in. We were lucky enough to meet and get to know each other on a mission trip through the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University. So, choosing that church for our wedding was a no-brainer.

I am grateful that we made the decision to get married in a church. Making that first decision set the tone for our engagement and our first twelve-months-plus of marriage. With a wedding in the Catholic Church, couples are also privy to the pre-marital retreat, which, for Matt and I, was the best thing we did prior to our wedding day.

While retreat experiences vary for every couple, I can honestly say that the time away from flower arrangements and invitation designs was the best time Matt and I shared prior to making our vows in front of 200 of our family and friends.

We were forced to sit and confront issues we had not talked about before and delve deeper into subjects we had only glanced over in the months leading to our engagement. We were

challenged to forgive one another, accept the darker aspects of each other's character and, ultimately, remind ourselves why we wanted to be married in a Catholic Church at all. We decided we wanted to make a covenant with each other, but, more importantly, with God. Recognizing the sanctity and power of the marital sacrament during that retreat is something for which I will forever be thankful.

Not every Catholic couple finds themselves in a church on their wedding day. It may seem I have little experience to rely on, having been married just shy of eight months at this point, but I would encourage any engaged couple to consider making the same choice Matt and I did. On our wedding day we made a covenant with God that is more

sacred than can ever be written about here. While I know that our covenant will be tested in more ways than I can imagine at such an early point in our marriage, I can say with confidence that it was the most important detail, and the thing I cherish most from my wedding day.

I have offered similar advice to every couple I know that has gotten engaged since our retreat. It's the most open I've ever been about my faith. How could I not offer a bit of advice that will prepare people I love for the road ahead—more than any seating chart or wedding band ever will?

NOTE: National Marriage Week USA is celebrated each year February 7-14, and World Marriage Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of February, which was February 12 this year. ■



Love among the artifacts

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

Matthew Hennessey and his family are parishioners of St. Aloysius in New Canaan.

There's nothing like a good flyleaf inscription. What a joy to find a salutation from an old friend inside the cover of a long-forgotten book. But beware. You might just as easily find a shout from the grave or the embers of ill-fated romance.

I bought a used paperback on Amazon. The inscription, from the author, was personalized: "Sarah & David! Chapter 10 is all about you!" Sarah and David must not have liked what they read. They unloaded it to me for \$3.99.

My mother was always after to me to read. She'd tear her hair out trying to get me interested in serious fiction, poetry, murder mysteries—anything other than the Beatles biographies I loved. My mother wanted her kids to

read like she did. To her, books were oxygen. Without them, life lacked breath.

Her imprecations were unsuccessful, at least in the short term. My siblings, however, followed her lead. They developed voracious literary appetites and interests. There was a time when I wondered if maybe my sister Colleen had a problem—book addiction. She's better now.

Even my dad got the book bug. Undiagnosed dyslexia haunted his younger years. He's made up for it in retirement. Some guys spend their ready cash on golf clubs and cigars. My old man pays for nonfiction. He's earned it.

For 27 years I've been lugging around the complete works of Shakespeare that my mother gave me in high school. It's a mon-

ster—all 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and a parcel of narrative poems squeezed onto 1,263 pages of light paper, printed all the way to the margins.

The inscription, in my late mother's hand, reads, "Dear Matt, May all the world always 'be a stage' for your hopes, dreams, and successes. Love, Mom & Dad. Christmas 1990." The seventh anniversary of her death approaches. The sight of her script—so vivid, so alive, so full of breath—gets me every time.

This business of inscribing books is both charming and macabre. People die; books live on. Scrawling a flyleaf is a down payment on immortality. Think of me, it says. Memento mori.

My grandparents on my mother's side were devout Catholics. Sadly, few of their descendants stayed connected to the Church. What went wrong? Was it the rebel spirit of the 1960s? Did the relentless secular tilt of American life corrode the family's ancestral faith?

We'll never know. Whatever the reason, I became one of the last Mass-going Catholics in the family. When my mother died, her sister—my godmother—gifted me a small cache of religious arti-

facts that had been passed down through the generations.

It's a rich inheritance. My gratitude is deep. Included is *The Saint Joseph Children's Missal: An Easy Way of PRAYING THE MASS for Boys and Girls*, by Father H. Hoefer, S. O. Cist.

The tiny volume was once a gift between siblings. Immaculate penmanship commemorates a pregnant moment in the life of both Church and family: "Dear

Barbara, Merry Christmas, Love Pat, 12/25/59."

Some say the sixties didn't start until Kennedy was assassinated, or until the Beatles landed at JFK. In reality, they started a week after my Aunt Pat gave my Aunt Barbara *The Saint Joseph Children's Missal*. In some ways, it was all downhill from there.

"Prayers and Instructions for Youthful Catholics" is a well-preserved mini-book, designed, no doubt, to be tucked into the pocket of a tidy Catholic school

uniform. The inscription: "To dear little Breda in remembrance of her confirmation, May 9th, 1928, at St. Luke's Church. Pray for me, Lovingly, Agnes."

Breda and Agnes were my mother's aunts—my grandmother's sisters, dead these last 30 years. I remember them only as childless old ladies sharing an apartment in Queens. To think: they were once pious little girls.

I know that some Catholics think the sixties and seventies brought an overdue relaxation of the habits of faith embodied by these pre-conciliar books. They may be right. I can only judge the results. In a big Irish Catholic family like mine, the number of Mass-goers is vanishingly small.

I love my family no less for their wandering. I pray, lovingly, that they'll return someday. I wandered once, too. God has a way of reaching out and grabbing you.

His handwriting is all over us. ■

"There was a time when I wondered if maybe my sister Colleen had a problem—book addiction."

Parish News

Father Boccaccio is first senior active priest

By PAT HENNESSY

"I'm delighted and honored to become the first ever SAP for the Diocese of Bridgeport," says Father Michael Boccaccio with his distinctive laugh. "I plan to be active until the Lord calls me home."

Father Boccaccio, 73, has stepped down as pastor of St. Philip Parish in Norwalk. The new category of "Senior Active Priest" (SAP) was established by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano for priests who have reached the age of 73 or 74 who want to continue to serve actively in a parish, although in a reduced capacity, until full retirement at the age of 75.

"This provided for me an opportunity to open an exciting new chapter in my life," Father Boccaccio says. He has become a resident priest at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Stratford and will continue to serve as a judge in the Diocesan Tribunal Office.

A native of Hartford, Father Boccaccio received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Providence College in Rhode Island and completed his theological studies at St. Mary Seminary



FATHER MICHAEL BOCCACCIO in his office in the Diocesan Tribunal.

in Baltimore, Md. He was ordained in 1971 in St. Augustine Cathedral by Bishop Walter W. Curtis.

Prior to being named pastor of St. Philip in 1988, he was parochial vicar at St. Pius X Parish in Fairfield, St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport, and Christ the King Parish in Trumbull. He has also served on the Presbyteral Council.

Father Mike expressed his gratitude for the almost 29 years

he spent with the people of St. Philip's. "Their level of activity highlights for me that the laity prove that the Church is divine. Not the clergy—the laity. Their

involvement and dedication was inspiring. They enriched me and made me a better person and a

from parishioners there. "The parish has a very different mix of people than at St. Philip, but I've already learned that they are equally eager and dedicated to their faith. I'm especially pleased to be working with their

"The icing on the cake for me is that Father Sudhir DSouza was named the new pastor of St. Philip. He's such an excellent priest, and the people already love him."

better priest.

"The icing on the cake for me is that Father Sudhir DSouza was named the new pastor of St. Philip. He's such an excellent priest, and the people already love him."

Father Boccaccio has already celebrated Masses at Our Lady of Peace, and was delighted with the friendly welcome he received

pastor, Father Nick Pavia, and with Father John Punnakunnel. I am really excited to see what comes next."

Among other things, Father Boccaccio will be introducing parishioners at Our Lady of Peace to his favorite Beatitude, one they may have never heard before: "Blessed are they who laugh." ■

Sung Chaplet enriches Adoration at St. Francis

WESTON—"Prayer enriches the faith life of the parish," says Father Michael Dunn, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston. "Without prayer and closeness to Christ we can't do anything."

Over the years, the life of faith at St. Francis has been enriched by Eucharistic Adoration in a side chapel connected to the main church. Every Wednesday, the parish holds Adoration from after the 8 am Mass until eight o'clock at night.

"For our size church we have a lot of faith-filled people," says Father Dunn. "Our Lord in the Eucharist is kept company all day long."

Enriching that experience of sitting in silence in the Lord's presence, on the second Wednesday of every month parishioner Anita Field (shown here) sings the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 pm. Each month has a theme, with the monthly themes included in a bulletin each December. In January, this year began with the inten-



tion of peace for our world. February's intention was for marriage and relationships, and March will be for those persecuted for their faith.

"Anita is strongly devoted to the Divine Mercy," says Father Dunn. "The sung Chaplet is an emotional expression for those who like to spend their time with the Lord through song."

The sung Chaplet of Divine

Mercy lasts approximately 20 minutes. Those wishing to attend do not need to know the chaplet. All that is needed is an openness to God's gifts of grace.

As Sister Faustina heard Jesus say: "My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world... Come, then, with trust to draw graces from this fountain." (Diary, 1485) ■

Courtney



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Trinity Middle School

STEM Innovation Lab

STAMFORD—This past summer, when Principal Abbey Camillery was hired at Trinity Catholic Middle School, there was only one set of Chrome books for her students to use during computer class. She and Craig Pucci, the technology instructor, began researching innovative ways to inspire, engage and empower students within 21st century education.

Parents were thrilled to hear that an Innovation Classroom would be created at the middle school and began to fundraise. The school raised \$11,000 from their fall Walk-a-Thon and the project soon came to fruition.

The new Innovation Lab at Trinity Catholic Middle School is currently equipped with hands-on applications for student to explore: three micro 3D printers, erasable and writable white board

tables, rolling chairs, flat screen TV, Chrome books and new computers.

In addition, the school purchased a brand new Touch Jet Wave projector, new to the industry, which connects to the TV and makes it, or any flat surface, a touch screen. The projector also includes a camera allowing students to hold Skype/Google hangout video conferences. The walls of the lab are painted in bright colors with motivational statements to inspire students' creativity.

"I like the idea of all the new technology we have to use to learn new things," says Michael Bellacicco, a current eighth-grade student.

In addition to the lab, the middle school has recently adopted Project Lead The Way (PLTW) programs that offer a rigorous sci-

ence, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum. PLTW is the nation's leading provider of STEM programs.

The PLTW program engages students in open-ended problem solving; they learn and apply the engineering design process, and use the same industry-leading technology and software as the world's top companies.

"As educators, we must prepare our students for the 21st century workplace," remarks Principal Camillery. "I believe the time to expand our talent pool is now. Middle school is a time of exploration, a time when students are figuring out what they're passionate about today and how that relates to who they'll become tomorrow."

The school can choose from nine different modules with the PLTW program. The seventh and



THE LATEST in technology, like this drill press and table saw, along with a 3-D printer, captures the attention of students at Trinity Middle School in Stamford.

eighth grades are currently running the Flight and Space module where students explore the science behind aeronautics and use their knowledge to design, build and test an airfoil.

"I am excited to be implementing Project Lead the Way in my classes this year," states Pucci. "In this project-based learning model, students will not only learn about the science behind flight and life in space,

but will also learn to work collaboratively to solve problems, two skills that are essential to their future success."

Teachers and students alike are thrilled to be accessing real-world, applied learning experiences that empower them to gain skills they need for the future. "It inspires me to think of new ideas that can help make an impact on the world," exclaims Michael Bellacicco. ■

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Special Report on Elementary Schools

Bishop unveils plans for elementary schools

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

During a whirlwind week in which Bishop Frank J. Caggiano met with parents of Catholic elementary school students in Stamford, Danbury, Brookfield and Shelton, he announced plans that will create a new era of elementary education in the diocese.

A total of nearly one thousand parents and others who support Catholic schools turned out for the meetings, in which the bishop discussed enrollment and financial challenges, presented data and unveiled plans for moving forward.

"I am the spiritual father of every young child in the diocese—that is my apostolic responsibility" said the bishop. At the meeting with parents from the Shelton and Monroe area, he vowed to pass on the gift of Catholic education to the next generation.

"This is all about our children, and we are all partners in passing on this great gift. Our goal is not just that Catholic education survives, but that it prospers and is vibrant," said the bishop.

The changes announced by the bishop included the consolidation of existing schools in Shelton and Stamford into two new schools, and the continuation of strategic planning for schools in the Danbury area.

The plans are the result of a nearly two-year assessment and viability study begun by the Diocesan Education Commission. Additionally, local planning and work groups were formed to assess the schools and make recommendations to the bishop.

The bishop praised planning group members, who were drawn from existing schools and parishes based on their expertise in a wide range of experience in finance, construction, education and planning.

He said he was very moved by the "transformation in thinking" during the planning process in which planning group members

put aside their love for the individual schools in order to do the best thing for the children.

As he spoke to parents throughout the diocese, he said he wanted a plan that "honored the past" and the heritage of Catholic schools but also created a 21st century approach to learning with the latest technology and curriculum.

In both the Stamford and Shelton reconfigurations, the bishop introduced plans for a new independent, diocesan-sponsored governing board and an "academy model."

Under this two-tier structure, the bishop will retain full authority over the schools and their Catholic identity, but he will delegate decisions about operations, finances, facilities, marketing and other concerns to the board of trustees, which will exercise

greater local control. In the Shelton area, pastors will join priests on the board of members in order to strengthen the connection between parishes and

the new school.

During the meetings, the bishop spoke for an hour and then he and Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools, took questions from parents for another 45 minutes. They also stayed on afterward to speak to people individually and listen to concerns.

Parents asked many questions about new class sizes, uniforms, current registration, and the plan for working with faculty members who may not be hired by the new school.

The bishop said that as shepherd of the entire diocese, he will do everything possible to treat people justly and fairly in the transition process.

While the final number of combined faculty will be determined by enrollment, the bishop said that displaced faculty will be given priority interviews as other openings occur in the diocesan system.

The bishop also made it clear



A PLAN FOR A NEW SCHOOL—Bishop Caggiano discusses plans for a new school to serve elementary students in the Shelton/Monroe area. More than 250 parents turned out at the St. Joseph High School auditorium for the presentation.

that he didn't want people to feel like there "were winners and losers" in the process. He said that entirely new schools would be formed in the Shelton and Stamford areas, and he invited parents to serve on committees of the new board and have more input in decisions going forward.

In order to unify the new schools, the bishop invited parents and students to join in a "School Naming Process" by submitting nominations, which will be voted on and announced at the end of March.

He said creation of a single school in both Stamford and Shelton will immediately eliminate the deficit and make more financial resources available. The new schools will keep any surplus income to re-invest in the school, while the diocese will forgive past debts.

The bishop told parents that in the past 15 years, schools throughout the diocese have borrowed over \$24 million to make payroll and cover healthcare costs, and that the deficits have been accelerating in the past five years.

In each of the meetings, the bishop used PowerPoint slides

and graphs to review data on school finances and enrollment and also review larger demographic trends in the diocese,

Shelton-Monroe

In Shelton the bishop announced plans to create a single, new Catholic elementary school for the Shelton-Monroe area.

The new school will be formed on the present St. Lawrence School campus in Huntington by merging students from St. Lawrence, St. Jude School in Monroe and St. Joseph School in Shelton. It is large enough to accommodate all of the students and has room for expansion.

He told parents that the total enrollment of three schools is 377 students, representing a steady decline from a 2012 population of over 600 students. They have also accumulated a combined deficit of more than \$500,000 this year.

"As for the money we now put into deficits, imagine what we could do if we could put that back into our schools and our children," he said.

The bishop said that 65 percent of the students attending the three schools reside in Shelton,

and that 31 percent of the students attending St. Jude School in Monroe also live in Shelton.

Stamford

In Stamford, speaking to 250 parents in the Trinity Catholic High School auditorium, the bishop introduced "Imagine 2020," a plan for Catholic elementary education in Stamford that will create a single, new PreK-Grade 8 elementary school in the town.

The four schools involved in the plan to create a single flagship school are Holy Spirit School, Our Lady Star of the Sea School, St. Cecilia School, and Trinity Catholic Middle School. He said that all of the students currently enrolled in the four schools will have a place in the new school.

Under the plan, students from Holy Spirit School and Our Lady Star of the Sea School will come to St. Cecilia School and Trinity Catholic Middle School beginning in September 2017. Students in PreK-Grade 5 will study on the St. Cecilia campus, and Grades 6-8 will attend classes on the Trinity Middle School campus.

During Phase 1 of the transition, construction will begin at the lower level of Trinity Catholic

Special Report on Elementary Schools



School Planning Process Shelton and Monroe Schools

(St. Jude School-Monroe, St. Joseph and St. Lawrence School-Shelton)

- Three schools merge to become one school
- New school on the current campus of St. Lawrence School opens September 2017 with new name and governance board
- More info: OurNewSchool2017.org



School Planning Process St. Joseph's School - Brookfield

- St. Joseph School-Brookfield will remain open
- School will work to develop strategic plan to address enrollment challenges, including outreach to nearby parishes in Archdiocese of Hartford



School Planning Process Danbury Schools

- All Catholic Schools in Danbury will stay open
- St. Peter School is most diverse
- Total Enrollment in Danbury schools is 890 students
- All three schools are running deficits
- Schools will move forward with strategic plan



School Planning Process Stamford Schools | Imagine 2020

(Holy Spirit, Our Lady Star of the Sea, St. Cecilia and Trinity Catholic Middle School)

2017- Phase 1

- Creation of a single Catholic PreK-Grade 8 elementary school governed by an independent, diocesan sponsored board, initially located on 2 campuses: St. Cecilia (PreK-Grade 5) & TCMS (Grades 6-8)

- Renovations begin on Trinity Catholic High School

2018- Phase 2

- Middle School relocates to new, fully renovated portion of Trinity Catholic High School building
- Renovations begin on Trinity Catholic Middle School building for elementary school and Early Learning Center

2020- Phase 3

- Elementary and Early Learning Center relocates to renovated/built space in current middle school building
- All students PreK-8 will be housed on same campus

High School, which shares the same campus, to reconfigure it as a state-of-the-art middle school. The high school will also benefit from the renovation of its unused third floor into a media center and additional classroom space.

Phase 2 of the plan will begin in the 2018-19 school year with Grades 6-8 moving to the new location within the Trinity High School building. The lower grades will remain at the St. Cecilia campus while construction and renovations begin on the Trinity Middle School building with an estimated completion date of September 2020.

In his summary of the process, the bishop walked parents through data on the current schools, whose enrollment slipped from 750 students in 2011 to 595 students in 2016. The schools also ran a combined \$300,000 deficit this year.

He said creation of a single school will immediately eliminate the deficit and make more financial resources available. It will also hold down tuition costs and reduce current registration fees from \$300 per child to \$200 for an entire family.

Danbury/Brookfield

"If you have come here expecting to hear bad news, I have no bad news to share with you," Bishop Caggiano told an applauding crowd of 150 Catholic school parents and their children at St. Peter Church in downtown Danbury.

The three Danbury schools, St. Peter, St. Gregory the Great, and St. Joseph, along with St. Joseph in Brookfield, each received the same news—that their doors would remain open but that they faced challenges. The bishop told parents that the schools had much work to do to boost enrollment and stabilize finances.

The four schools in the region have a total of 890 students, but enrollment has been gradually declining in three of the schools, and all four are running financial deficits.

St. Peter School parents also received good news when the bishop told them that a donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, has pledged \$150,000 a year for the next five years to help the school

"I want you to be my ambassadors to your community, to your neighbors, to your friends," the bishop said. "I want you to

tell them that St. Peter's is open for their children as well. I want to fill St. Peter School until it is completely full."

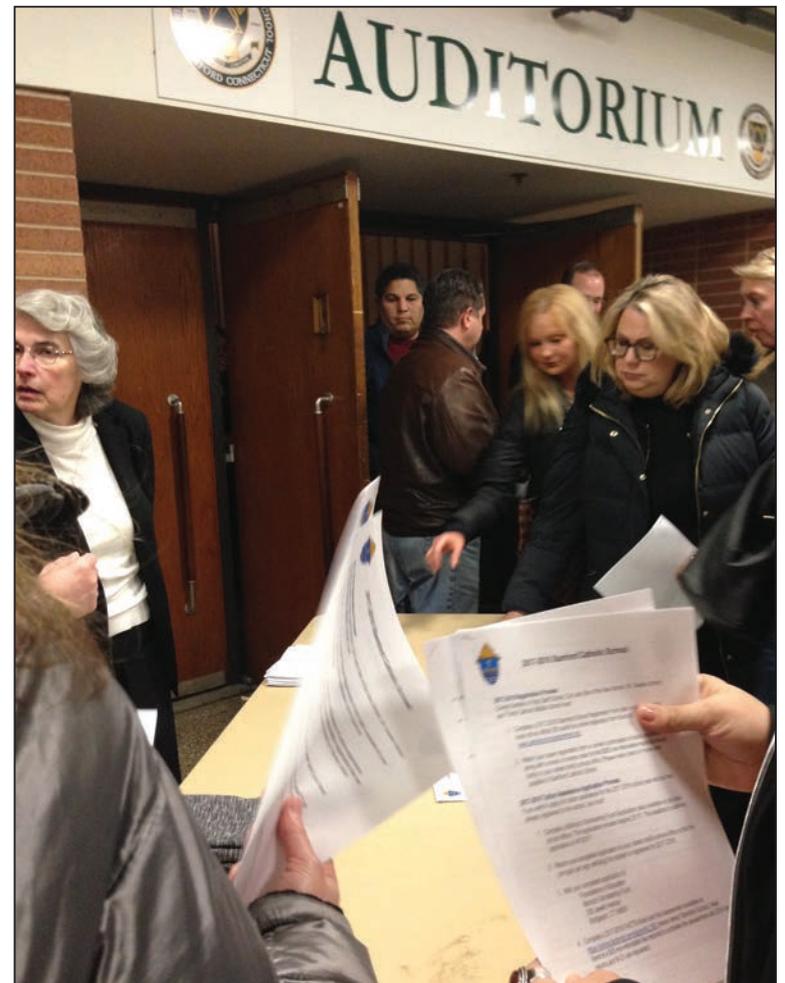
The bishop said that St. Peter's is one of the most ethnically diverse in the diocese and that he is committed to ensuring that the children of recent immigrants share in the same gift. "We come from different lands and speak different languages, and come together as one family of faith," the bishop said. He said that the three Catholic schools in Danbury help to bring the entire community together, and that children of many backgrounds "see each other as brothers and sisters."

Dr. Cheeseman and Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the diocese, met with people at St. Gregory the Great and St. Joseph Schools in Danbury

unique marketing challenges because only 38 percent of the student body comes from Brookfield. The remainder of students travel from New Milford, New Fairfield, Sherman and from Brewster and Wingdale across the New York line and require school bus transportation to assist with enrollment efforts, the bishop said.

At the end of each meeting, parents were given fact sheets of frequently asked questions to help prepare for the transitions. The bishop's talk was also videotaped and placed on the diocesan website along with the PowerPoint presentations. To see them, visit www.bridgeportdiocese.com.

Dr. Cheeseman said that the diocese is planning social events, open houses and cookouts for both students and parents to bring them together and help with the



to deliver the message that the schools have work to do going forward.

At the bishop's final stop, he spoke with parents of St. Joseph School in Brookfield and delivered a similar message.

The enrollment at Saint Joseph has dropped from 205 students in 2012 to 179 today.

The school also has some

transition.

(The diocese has set up a hotline for anyone to call and have their specific questions answered. The number is 203.209.2894. Parents in Shelton and Monroe can visit online to get more information and a link to registration: www.ournewschool2017.org. Stamford parents can download a form from the www.catholic-schoolsstamford.org.)

Lenten Film

Video of the Passion touches the heart

By PAT HENNESSY

“Based on people’s response to my short video on the Stations of the Cross, “Jesus: Walk to Calvary,” I wanted to tell the story of the Passion of Our Lord, from Palm Sunday to Pentecost,” says composer/musician Marlane Tubridy.

Tubridy’s original composition of the Stations of the Cross, which aired in 2013, used the traditional Stations as an opportunity for personal reflection and meditation. It has been shown on the Bridgeport diocesan website, where it received 9,423 viewings, and aired on Catholic TV for the past two years.

Her new short film, *The Greatest Gift*, is a 30-minute spiritual offering which can enhance a shared Lenten experience. “My goal with this film is to offer the possibility of community partici-



pation,” she says. “Parishes could hold an evening of reflection during Lent, using the themes of sacrifice and triumph as a springboard for discussion.”

The Greatest Gift is an original composition from start to finish.

A professionally trained singer and musician, Tubridy majored in both piano and voice at Kent State University in her native Ohio, graduated from Juilliard as a voice major and did graduate study with LaScala in Milan, Italy, with a concentration in opera. She earned a master of arts in theatre from New York University and performed lead roles with the New York Grand Opera with Director Vincent LaSelva.

In the year 2000, Tubridy started the CantiamoCHOIR (“cantiamo” means “let’s sing” in Italian), and she founded and directs Arts for the Community, bringing together musicians and artists to benefit local non-profit organizations. She has been music director at both Notre Dame Parish in Easton and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston.

She takes the part of narrator in this composition. Her husband, Martin, a professional vocalist, sings the words of Jesus. Although the music is clear and contemporary, the compositions reflect Tubridy’s classical background and wide knowledge of Church music over the centuries.

Tubridy had been interested in composition since her undergraduate days, and her experience in theater has added a strong visual component to her repertoire. For *The Greatest Gift*, she viewed literally thousands of paintings, matching the emotions of these masterworks to her original compositions. The joyous tympani and supporting chorus joins in the



“MASTER ARTWORKS make *The Greatest Gift* a visual as well as auditory experience,” says composer/musician Marlane Tubridy, shown above leading a performance of the CantiamoCHOIR in Westport. At left, Caravaggio’s dark energy in “Taking of Christ” echoes the musical lamentation of betrayal it accompanies.

first composition, “The Glorious Entrance into Jerusalem,” are paired with Jean-Leon Gerome’s “L’entrée du Christ à Jerusalem.” The reed instruments lamenting in “Betrayed by Those He Knew,” are accompanied by the passionate Caravaggio “Taking of Christ,” with its intense, dark background.

In the concluding composition, “You, Too, Shall Rise,” the full orchestra proclaims the triumph of the cross with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

“I wanted to use the master artworks so the experience would be visual as well as auditory,” she says. “Music brings joy and touches the heart. The very exercise of listening and looking

at beautiful paintings will take you to a place of reflection and thanksgiving.”

(“*The Greatest Gift*” is available via digital download or a DVD for a minimal fee to cover expenses. A trailer is available on her website: www.faithmusicmedia.com. The film will debut at the Westport Town Hall Auditorium, Friday, March 31, at 7 pm. The evening will include original scripture reading video contemplations with Dr. Thomas Hicks as narrator. The CantiamoCHOIR will present Lenten-themed music. A second event will be held at St. Emery Parish in Fairfield on Friday, April 7, hosted by the Knights of Columbus. For more info, visit www.faithmusicmedia.com.)

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Sisters of the Company of the Savior

Focusing on excellence for girls

By **PAT HENNESSY**

“This is our mission, to educate girls,” says Mother Amelia Lora Tamayo, CS, Superior General of the Company of the Savior. “We have our own way, focusing on the development of the whole person.”

Mother Amelia visited her order’s Bridgeport convent in January, bringing with her the plans for a new school, which the Sisters hope to open by the beginning of the school year, September 2018.

The order’s foundress, Mother Maria Felix, who died in 2001, set the educational template when she opened the first Mater Salvatoris School in Madrid in 1954. Each Mater Salvatoris school, whether in Europe or South America or Africa or—as planned—here in the Diocese of Bridgeport, is a college preparato-

ry school forming young women from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, accompanying them from their early years, leading them to discover their unique talents and awakening in them a desire to form a just society.

“We focus on excellence in education, from technological innovation to artistic and cultural experience, but most of all we want to develop young women with strong core values, women who persevere when confronted with difficulties, women with high ideals, who can fight for a particular good or desire, women who experience the joy and freedom of spiritual life,” says Mother Amelia, enthusiasm strong in her voice.

The Sisters met with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano soon after he was installed. “He was excited about our plan,” says Mother Amelia. “Since then, we have

been speaking with him on a regular basis.”

When Sisters of the Company of the Savior first came to this diocese in the early 1960s, Bishop Walter W. Curtis requested their assistance teaching in parochial schools. They served at the former St. Mary School in the East End of Bridgeport, were at Blessed Sacrament School for 17 years, and most recently taught at St. Peter School. When St. Peter’s was folded into the current Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, the Sisters decided it was time to pursue their original charism, building a Mater Salvatoris School in Fairfield County.

Accompanying Mother Amelia on January’s trip, project director Javier Álvarez showed the Sisters the plans for the new school. In the near future he will be visiting locations throughout Fairfield County to determine a



WITH PLANS MOVING AHEAD, Mother Amelia Lora Tamayo, CS, Superior General of the Company of the Savior (center) and project director Javier Álvarez showed the Sisters of the Company of the Savior in Bridgeport the plans for the new Mater Salvatoris School in Fairfield County.

site that will allow the Sisters to meet their school’s requirements. “Their education calls for contact with nature, and puts a strong emphasis on athletics as part of the girl’s formation,” he says.

“To fulfill that, the Sisters are looking for a site that can accommodate about a 20-acre space.”

“Because we offer a holistic education, accompanying women

▶ *CONTINUED ON PAGE 23*

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Catholic Women

'Commitment to women and community'

By REBECCA VODOLA

MILFORD—"Coming from a large, Italian family, I immediately valued the sense of community at Luralton," said Dr. Antoinette "Toni" Iadarola, who plans to step down as president and head of Luralton Hall in June.

The beloved educator has served as Luralton's president since 2009, and the seven years of her tenure at Luralton have been fruitful ones for the Luralton community.

After she arrived at Luralton and assessed the school's needs, Dr. Iadarola said she "engaged the whole community in creating a campus plan, including the staff and faculty, benefactors, students and parents."

Among her many achievements are the completion of a

new athletic field, a new Cyber Café and a Center for Guidance and College Planning; conversion of the Carriage Barn into the Center for Visual and Performing Arts; classroom renovations incorporating new technology; and record fundraising and enrollment levels.

Dr. Iadarola came to Luralton with decades of experience in education. Prior to her presidency at Luralton, she served as chair of the History Department and coordinator of Women's Studies at St. Joseph College in Connecticut, dean of faculty at the College of Mt. St. Joseph in Ohio, and Provost at Colby-Sawyer in New Hampshire.

Dr. Iadarola planned to retire in 2008 after 16 years as president of Cabrini College, a Catholic college in Radnor, Pa., but "I



WELL DONE MADAME PRESIDENT—Dr. Antoinette "Toni" Iadarola, long time President of Luralton Hall in Milford, plans to step down in Milford after years of serving as a Catholic education leader in colleges and high schools.

flunked retirement the first time," she laughed.

A hallmark of her years as an educator is her unwavering commitment to women's education. She volunteered for women NGOs in Belarus, where she spent nearly a month educating locals. She has also traveled to Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as a volunteer education consultant and volunteered at orphanages in Guyana and Swaziland.

As a part of its Catholic identity, Dr. Iadarola incorporated community service into Luralton's curriculum "with a crucial reflection piece," she said. "We ask our students, 'What

does this mean to you?'"

Vatican II's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity outlines practical application of the laity's "apostolate of evangelization and sanctification." Dr. Iadarola said that she and the Luralton community take that mission seriously.

"For us, that means carrying on the legacy of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy. She was a strong woman who did some unusual things in her time."

Dr. Iadarola's personal commitment to women's Catholic education parallels the mission of Catherine McAuley, who opened the first House of Mercy to shel-

ter and educate women and girls in nineteenth-century Ireland.

The spirit of Catherine McAuley is alive in Dr. Iadarola, a witness to the empowering effect of Catholic education on women. A tangible indicator of this empowerment, she said, is the matriculation ceremony she instituted for freshmen at Luralton.

At the ceremony, she said, the freshmen "come up to the stage and shake my hand, and I notice that sometimes they do not look me in the eye, not always giving me a firm grip, and many of them are very nervous. But when they graduate, and they come up to me once again, they always give me a firm handshake and look me in the eye. They have grown in confidence; they have a better sense of who they are and what they value; they have learned to follow their own goals and not the goals of someone else."

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., the daughter of Italian immigrants, Dr. Iadarola was raised on a farm in Shelton, along with her six siblings. She graduated from St. Joseph College with her bachelor's degree in history and political science, and earned masters' and doctoral degrees in European diplomatic history from Georgetown University.

Dr. Iadarola will serve as president of Luralton Hall through the end of the 2016-2017 academic year. ■



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'Sweet Cases' for foster kids

NORWALK—The St. Ladislaus Youth Group raised funds to help "Together We Rise" and is donating 36 "Sweet Cases" for foster children in Norwalk area.

"In November, we learned that children in the foster care system don't always have something to carry their personal belongings and are given large black garbage bags. The young people wanted to do something to help," said Donna Forcier, DRE and youth minister at St. Ladislaus.

She got in touch with Together We Rise, which is a non-profit organization that



helps facilitate getting duffle bags to local foster children.

"We especially liked the idea that the cases would go to local children and that we would be involved in personalizing the cases and not just donating money," she said.

The next step was to raise enough funds to purchase the Sweet Cases. Each consisted of a duffle bag, a stuffed teddy bear, a blanket, toiletries, a coloring book and crayons.

The Youth Group held a bake sale, and thanks to the generosity of the small but enthusiastic parish they were able to purchase 36 Sweet Cases!

Youth Group members assembled this month to decorate all the duffle bags with positive words of encouragement and fun drawings. They delivered them to a foster care agency in Norwalk. ■

Sacred Heart Academy

SHA senior earns environmental science award

HAMDEN—Abigail Kelly, daughter of Shelton residents Shawn and Tina Kelly and a senior at Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden, was recently awarded the Milton Fisher Scholarship for Innovation and Creativity for her project “A Method to Minimize Disease in West Africa: The Conversion of Fruit Crops into Ethanol for Disinfectant Use.”

This four-year \$20,000 scholarship was given to seven “exceptionally innovative and creative high school juniors, seniors and college freshmen,” who have solved an “artistic, scientific, or technical problem in a new or unusual way,” according to the scholarship committee. Abby, a member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull and a graduate of St. Catherine’s School, was the only rising senior to earn one of the seven scholarships.

Aware of the role that the lack of sanitization plays in spreading disease in Africa, she devised an experiment to convert mangoes and oranges into ethanol using a simple fermentation/distillation process. Additionally she con-

ducted a feasibility study which demonstrated that the countries hardest hit by the Ebola epidemic such as Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia could readily implement her design.

She found that one billion kilograms of damaged, unmarketable fruit could economically be converted to large amounts of effective, ethanol-based disinfectant in already-operating molasses distilleries in the region. From the enormous amount of otherwise-wasted fruit, 250 million bottles of hand sanitizer could be distributed to the 24 million citizens of these West African nations, significantly helping to stem the spread of Ebola and other infectious diseases.

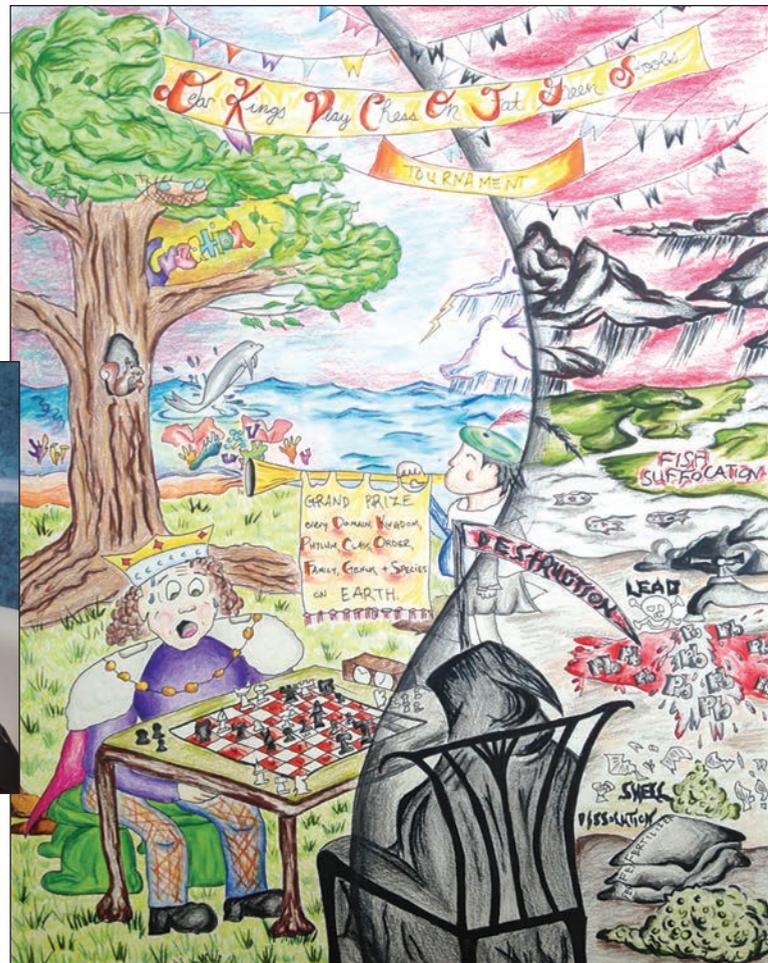
During her junior year, Abigail demonstrated her concern for the environment with an ecological design entered in the G.E.N.I.U.S. Olympiad, an international high school competition about environmental issues. The poster depicts the beauty of nature threatened by man-made destruction. In it, the King sits amidst all of creation, the earth’s natural, life-giving environment.



He is playing chess with the Grim Reaper, whose scythe is empowered with destruction resulting from three man-made threats: ocean acidification from fossil fuel emissions; algal bloom created by excessive fertilization; and the leaching of lead from environmental waste into water systems.

The G.E.N.I.U.S. Olympiad awarded her a silver medal for her concept and execution.

Abigail had studied these threats intensively during middle school and high school, and through science experiments she had identified unique, natural solutions for each. For these



CAPPING SEVERAL YEARS of science awards, Abigail Kelly, a senior at Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden, recently received the Milton Fisher Scholarship for Innovation and Creativity. This past June, she entered a poster design in the G.E.N.I.U.S. Olympiad, an international competition about environmental issues, and earned a silver medal.

discoveries she earned several awards over the last four years at the Connecticut State Science and Engineering Fair, including “Fifth in State, Individual Life Sciences Category;” “Environmental Science Award

Finalist, Connecticut Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions;” and “Finalist, EnergizeCT/eesmarts Sustainable Resources Practice Award.”

The Sacred Heart Academy senior is eager to continue seeking answers to and spreading awareness of environmental concerns in her university years. ■

Happy Anniversary Msgr. Sanders!

STAMFORD—Msgr. John Sanders’ 44th Anniversary Mass and luncheon was celebrated February 10 at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of Clergy Residence in Stamford.

“It was a wonderful day for Msgr. Sanders, who felt blessed to have his close friends and fellow priests join in this celebration,” said Mary Beth Peterson, vice president of human resources for Catholic Charities and a longtime friend of Msgr. Sanders.

Fairfield County Catholic columnist Tom Hicks, who has been a friend of Msgr. Sanders for over 60 years, delivered an eloquent and memorable toast to the native of Harlem and former Duke Ellington band member who became the first African-American priest from the Diocese of Bridgeport:

“John and I have been friends for almost 60 years. I am among



the few people who actually saw John play in the Duke Ellington band. John held down the middle chair in Ellington’s three-man trombone section. It may be hard for many of you here to image this quiet, humble, shy man playing songs with names like ‘I Got It Bad And That Ain’t Good,’ or ‘It Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing,’ and other Ellington classics.

“My 60-year-old friendship with

John has been one of the enduring influences of my life. He has been a loyal friend to me in joy and in sorrow. He never let me down. He has been a companion with whom I count some of the happiest hours of my life. He came into my life and lighted it up.

“John is probably the most guileless person I have ever known. He has a natural incapacity to do or say anything mean. He is incapable of bearing a grudge or of saying anything harsh about anyone. He is always courteous because he knows no other way.

“These qualities enabled him in his priesthood to serve so many so well. He can look back over the 44 years in the priesthood with pride.

“I particularly give thanks to God, who enabled me to walk such a large part of my life with this gentle, humble, wise and kind man. John and I, we two

friends, have made a long journey together, and we are not yet finished. But now John is fighting the long fight against the disabilities of age. We pray for him on this journey.

“Let me end with some words of the poet Yeats:

‘Think where man’s glory most begins and ends.
And say my glory was
I had such a friend.’”

Also recognized at the Mass and luncheon was Msgr. William Scheyd, who was celebrating his 52nd anniversary as a priest and concelebrated Mass with Msgr. Sanders. Msgr. Scheyd retired in December 2016 as pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, where he had served since 2002. The Bridgeport native also served as vicar general of the diocese since 1988. Msgr. Scheyd was instrumental in the expansion of the Queen of Clergy Residence where he now resides. ■

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St. Joseph, Norwalk

Una sola comunidad: hispanos, haitianos y anglosajones

POR MARICARMEN GODOY

El vicario parroquial de origen haitiano, el Padre Frantz Desruisseaux, llamado cariñosamente como el "Padre Frank", que abrió las puertas por primera vez de la Iglesia St. Joseph en Norwalk a sus compatriotas los haitianos en la década de los ochenta, fue claro en decir que St. Joseph (San José) no es una parroquia exclusiva de un grupo étnico sino una "iglesia comunitaria de los hispanos, haitianos y anglosajones".

"Nuestra iglesia fue fundada in 1895 por una mezcla de inmigrantes—Irlandés, Italianos y Húngaros—y nuestra feligreses representan una rica diversidad de fondos étnicos, educacionales y socio-económicos," dice el Padre Jhon Gómez, párroco de St. Joseph. "Mucho ha cambiado durante los años, pero una cosa permanece constante: ayudar a que la gente crezca en su amor a Dios."

La Parroquia de St. Joseph, que es el referente de la comunidad inmigrante recién llegada a Norwalk, afirma este pensa-

miento, porque en los finales de 1900 y albores del siglo XX los religiosos de esta parroquia donaron a la comunidad hispana y afroamericana y caribeña el terreno del llamado South Norwalk Community Center, que hoy está regido por manos hispanas.

Deslindándose en su totalidad de la segregación y unificando a los feligreses del barrio del "SoNo", St. Joseph, ostenta el título de pionera no solo porque es la primera parroquia que acogió a la comunidad hispana, sirviéndola en su lengua vernácula, sino porque también es la primera iglesia que atendió a los haitianos, ofreciéndole sus servicios religiosos y comunitarios en su lengua nativa.

El Padre Frank se reconoce como un "Sacerdote de Milagro", porque a pesar de que su padre abandonó a su madre junto a sus diez hijos, él por ser el hermano mayor pasó a ocupar el puesto de padre de familia y debió trabajar y estudiar desde muy temprana edad para poder ayudar con los gastos de la casa.

Sin embargo su vocación, en

vez de desaparecer, aumentó gracias a que su madre iba todos los días a la iglesia y oraba con profunda convicción porque la vocación de su hijo sea perseverada. Su vida fue siempre de fe y la fuerza de su familia estuvo en la oración. Por eso afirma que sus hermanos todos tienen una carrera profesional y su madre que hoy tiene 96 años goza de buena salud a pesar de que es una anciana.

"Cuando tengo o tenía problemas simplemente voy al Santísimo y le digo: Este problema te lo entrego a ti, sé que tú lo resolverás y yo solo quiero descansar en ti. Ese es el testimonio de fe en mi vida", dice.

Max, Pierre y Jean Marie, que vivían en Bridgeport. Como sacerdote que era, fue a escuchar la misa en la iglesia de Saint Charles Borromeo y un feligrés le presentó a Monseñor Andrew Cusack que en ese momento era Vicario del Ministerio de los Religiosos.

La venida del Padre Frank a Norwalk fue una casualidad del destino, o en palabras del religioso una bendición de Dios



WELCOMING NEWCOMERS, Father Frantz Desruisseaux, parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Norwalk, shows recent arrivals the parish statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a popular Mexican devotion. While the population has changed over the years, St. Joseph, originally opened by a mix of Irish, Italian and Hungarian immigrants, remains a parish dedicated to helping people of all ethnic groups grow in their love of the Lord.

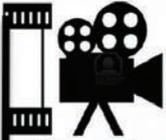
enviaba para él; porque resulta que el sacerdote que en ese momento estudiaba en Canadá vino a visitar a sus hermanos: Max, Pierre y Jean Marie, que vivían en Bridgeport. Como sacerdote que era, fue a escuchar la misa en la Parroquia de St. Charles Borromeo y un feligrés le presentó ante Monseñor Andrew Cusack, que en ese momento era Vicario del Clero. Este sacerdote se interesó en su presencia porque él sabía que su diócesis estaba aumentando la población haitiana y decidió presentarlo ante el Obispo Walter W. Curtis, quien le propuso al Padre Frank que se quede en los Estados Unidos por un par de años.

Su Diócesis de Puerto Príncipe en Haití le dio permiso, y el Padre Frank cino en calidad de "ayudante" a la Diócesis de Bridgeport por un par de años; tiempo que se ha traducido en tres décadas consecutivas, a lo que el religioso responde de buena gana: "Estoy aquí para ayudar a mi comunidad por la

Gloria de Dios. Y qué importa que no esté en Haití o en República Dominicana, si desde San José estoy ayudando a mis hermanos haitianos y a mis hermanos hispanos con el mismo compromiso y servicio como si estuviera en el Caribe".

Como el Padre Frank habla español perfectamente porque viajaba constantemente a la República Dominicana a visitar a su padre, se convirtió, entonces, en el Vicario del Ministerio Haitiano e Hispano. También está completamente cómodo hablando inglés. Obtuvo su bachillerato y licenciatura en derecho canónico en la Universidad St. Paul en Ottawa, Canadá.

Con una sonrisa que nunca se pierde de su rostro, el Padre Frank atiende a sus feligreses en español, inglés, francés y criollo desde la capilla, el despacho parroquial, confesionario. y gimnasio. Les da la bienvenida a St. Joseph en cualquier idioma, y hasta les brinda una taza de te con galletas. ■



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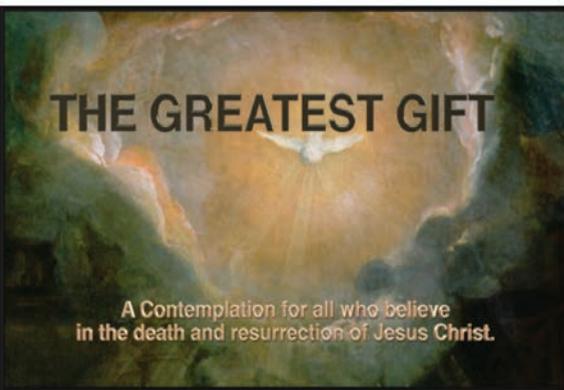


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Catholic Culture

Searching Bridgeport roots of Cardinal O'Connor

By BARRY WALLACE

(This is the second part of a reflection on the Bridgeport and Jewish roots of John Cardinal O'Connor, who served as Archbishop of New York from 1984 until his death in 2000. The Philadelphia-born prelate also served as a Rear Admiral and as Chief of Naval Chaplains.)

It's a mild morning when I greet Rabbi James Prosnit at the entrance to B'nai Israel Cemetery under two old cedar trees growing near the gate.

The rabbi has graciously offered to show me the gravesite of Cardinal O'Connor's Jewish family. A soft-spoken man with a gentle face, Prosnit has been quoted in many of the articles regarding this story. The door from the cardinal's grand residence on Madison Ave. in Manhattan ultimately leads back to this quiet piece of land between a veterinarian hospital and a car dealership.

First the rabbi tells me about the cemetery wedged between the Bridgeport and Fairfield borders on the King's Highway. B'nai Israel began as a burial society when the new congregation bought the property "in the hinterlands of Bridgeport" for the whopping price of \$58.50 in 1859. The original signage still stands above the entrance. Times were difficult then and death was a frequent occurrence among immigrants so it served a practical purpose as well as a starting point for this first Jewish congregation in Fairfield County. The front part is the oldest section and then drops down to the newer lower level that is bordered by the marshes of the Rooster River.

Together we walk over to the simple gravestone of Tina Ruben. Tina was the mother of Devorah Gompel and thus Cardinal O'Connor's grandmother. Prosnit tells me that a group of nuns were recently seen visiting the site. Tina's early death at 30 may account for her daughter Devorah moving away from home. The rabbi imagines an epic novel of



CARDINAL O'CONNOR'S GRANDMOTHER—Just inside the gates of B'nai Israel Cemetery is the grave of Cardinal John O'Connor's grandmother, Tina Ruben, who died at age 30 in 1890. It is believed to be the first and oldest Jewish cemetery in Bridgeport. Tina was the mother of Devorah Gompel, who left Bridgeport after her mother's early death and moved to Philadelphia where she married and gave birth to John O'Connor.

the times could be written about the things we just don't know. There is a sense of antiquity in the sacred ground here and the unbreakable bonds of faith.

We move further into the park, where Rabbi Prosnit shows me the standing stone for Gustave Gompel, the cardinal's Prussian born grandfather. Gustave was shochet for the congregation serving as the kosher

butcher, and also for a short time as rabbi in the 1880s. Rabbi Prosnit speculates that Gustave may have been out of touch with his traditional European ways in the American Reform community.

Among the mysteries of the story is why Devorah converted. We do know that she was baptized in 1908, in the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by

Father William Fitzgerald, thus joining the Jewish and Irish strands of this fascinating story. According to Rabbi Prosnit, intermarriage occasionally happened but was highly unusual. As I stand there I think of the journey of souls in America that leads from a humble Jewish butcher to the highest elevation in the

We stand there trying to intuit the untold story in the winter sunlight. I think of the humble Jewish family memorialized here, and I think of the Irish O'Connors of Philadelphia where Dorothy Gompel was laid to rest in 1971. One of the frequently asked questions about John Cardinal O'Connor is 'Did he know that his mother was Jewish?' Did this account for his empathy with the Jewish people and his deep brotherly friendship with Mayor Ed Koch? There is no evidence that he was aware of his Jewish mother, but I believe that he knew it in his soul. Perhaps we can leave it at this: Cardinal O'Connor was a man of uncommon courage and exuberant energy. Surely he derived this from his dual heritage and was guided by these forces throughout his life.

Before we leave the cemetery I ask the rabbi if it is appropriate for me to place a visitor stone on the grave marker. It's a small polished piece of green Connemara marble that I brought back from Ireland. He helps me steady it on the tiny grave. We stand there silent for a moment lost in the secrets of the past and the inscrutable ways of God.



American Church. A feeling of the mysterious ways of God almost overwhelms me. My head swirls to think that these faiths once tragically divided by hatred and ignorance are joined in this love of two common people!

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Obituary

Father Addison Wright dies at 84

Father Addison George Wright, PSS, died on January 31 of congestive heart failure at the Sulpician retirement community in Catonsville, Md. He was 84 years old.

A Trumbull native, he was born on June 28, 1932, to Addison and Ann Wright. He attended Trumbull Center School and graduated from Fairfield Prep before entering St. Thomas Seminary in Hartford. He completed his seminary studies at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore and took graduate studies in Semitic languages and Scripture at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Father Wright was ordained to the priesthood on May 25, 1957, in St. Mary Church in Bridgeport.

He was released to join the Sulpician Order in 1960 by Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan, first Bishop of Bridgeport.

Father Wright was well known as a biblical scholar and teacher, serving on the faculty of St. Mary Seminary and University from 1963-1968 and again from 1971-1981. He also taught at Fordham University, Catholic University and at Marywood College in Scranton, Pa. Father Wright also served as rector of St. John Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, MI.

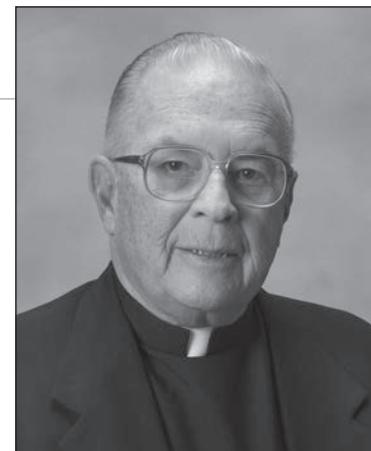
He contributed to a number of Bible-related publications, including the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* and the *New Interpreter's Bible*. For many years he lectured for the training program for lay leaders of Bible study groups for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

"I had him as a theology professor in seminary," says Msgr. Peter Dora. "He was brilliant, filled with enthusiasm and always on the move! He was dramatic in so many ways, and his freshness and dedication had a powerful effect on us."

Msgr. Dora followed his former professor's articles and commentaries through the following decades. In one of life's more surprising twists, the two met again when Msgr. Dora became pastor of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull in 2003. "I found out that Father Wright had returned to his family home in Trumbull in 1981 to care for his ailing father, and retired there in 1999. He was my parishioner!" Msgr. Dora, now retired himself to his home town of Stamford, added, "That's the beauty of time and growth and change."

For the past four months Father Wright had been living at Villa Olier Sulpician retirement community.

His body was brought into St. Mary Seminary chapel in Baltimore on February 6 to lie in state in from 9:30-11:30 am. A Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated in the chapel for Father Wright that same morn-



FATHER ADDISON GEORGE WRIGHT

ing, followed by interment in the Sulpician cemetery. ■

Vatican guidelines on cremation

ROME—The Vatican has re-affirmed that Catholics may be cremated, but says that families should not have their ashes scattered at sea or kept in urns at home.

According to new guidelines from the Vatican's doctrinal office, cremated remains should be kept in a "sacred place" such as a church cemetery. Ashes should not be divided up between family members, "nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects."

The Church has allowed cremation for decades, but the guidelines make clear that the Vatican is concerned that the practice often involves "erroneous ideas about death." Those ideas run the gauntlet from deeply nihilistic to New Age-y—from the belief that death is the definitive end of life to the notion that our bodies fuse with nature or enter another cycle of rebirth.

So, in a sense, the Vatican's new guidelines on cremation aren't really about cremation. The Church's true targets are modern soci-

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

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FEBRUARY

20	Msgr. Andrew J. Hajus	1988
22	Msgr. George B. Curtiss	1982
23	Msgr. Miroslav J. Myschshyn	1980
24	Rev. Joseph E. Russo	1998
	Rev. Walter J. Seekamp	2012
26	Msgr. Henry E. Flanagan	1966

MARCH

1	Rev. Leonard M. Conlon	1976
	Deacon Timothy Sullivan	2015
5	Msgr. John J. Pitonak	1990
8	Rev. Boleslaus Rarus	2005
10	Rev. Raymond H. Stephenson	1990
12	Rev. Martin Hitchcock	2014
	Rev. Leo Suwinski	2005
13	Deacon Joseph L. Cross	2003
14	Rev. Vincent P. Cleary	1989
15	Msgr. Francis J. Sugrue	1977
	Msgr. Edward G. Zibell	1978
	Rev. William J. Galya	1994
17	Rev. Daniel F. Golden	1955
	Msgr. John F. Murcko	1975
	Msgr. Francis X. McGuire	1993
18	Msgr. Donald M. Paolucci	1990
	Rev. John Fay	2006

Sports

Giaquinto persevered, excelled in two sports

By **DON HARRISON**

Perseverance has been the operative word for Nick Giaquinto during his two-pronged athletic career.

In a distant yesterday, football was Giaquinto's game, and he considers himself fortunate to have played in back-to-back Super Bowls with the Washington Redskins. He was a two-time All-Stater at Stratford High School and he excelled at the University of Bridgeport and—after UB discontinued its football program—at the University of Connecticut.

But there were roadblocks along the way, and a man with lesser resolve might not have stayed the course.

This spring, Giaquinto, 61, is beginning his 29th and final season as head baseball coach at Sacred Heart University, a tenure marked by early success at the Division-II level and more recently with four Northeast Conference tournament championships and trips to the NCAA Tournament. He will be relocating to Virginia, where his wife, Barbara, is a faculty member at Old Dominion University in Norfolk.

"I definitely know it's time to leave. I'm very comfortable with that," Giaquinto says. "At the same time, I'll miss the players, the coaches, the athletic department and being part of this growing university."

His 2017 Pioneers are facing an ambitious 57-game schedule, beginning with a mid-February trip to Florida and March games at Seattle and Hawaii. What are



NICK GIAQUINTO

his expectations?

"We have a great group of young men who work their butts off," he responds. "We have a lot of unproven guys who have to step up to starting positions. But if they do well..." His words ended, but the meaning was clear.

Giaquinto's route to the Super Bowl was circuitous, to say the least. There were early high points, such as being selected to the New Haven Register in 1971 and 1972 All-State teams, and garnering a football scholarship at neighboring Bridgeport, then a nationally respected Division-III program.

When UB discontinued its program following Giaquinto's sophomore season, and just one year after being a semi-finalist in the National D-III Tournament, Nick moved on to UConn, where he played two seasons. He still holds the Huskies' single-game rushing record, with 277 yards against Holy Cross in the final game of his career in 1976. (Side

note: UConn lost, 41-40.)

Now, more of that Giaquinto resolve was evident in pro football.

"I got cut by the Giants in 1977 after the first exhibition game, and I was released by the Jets in 1978 after the second exhibition game," he explains. "I ended up playing semi-pro football that year"—at \$50 per game—"for the Eastern Connecticut Sea Raiders."

In 1979, there was a tryout with the Ottawa Rough Riders of the Canadian Football League, but that didn't work. Finally, Coach Don Shula gave him a chance with the Miami Dolphins, and he spent two seasons (1980-81) with the club as a running back and special team player.

Released by the Dolphins, he was picked up by Washington, and that was fortuitous. The 1982 Redskins won the National Football Conference title and defeated the Dolphins, 27-17, in Super Bowl XVII before 103,667 fans in the Rose Bowl. The crowd included his parents, two brothers, a sister and assorted aunts and uncles.

The next year, Coach Joe Gibbs' Redskins reached the Super Bowl again, but fell to the Los Angeles Raiders, 38-9. At age 29, Giaquinto announced his retirement.

"Everybody thought I was nuts (to leave the game), but I wanted to get out in one piece, to live a quality life after football," he says.

That he has. He accepted the coaching position at Sacred Heart in 1988, and his early Pioneer baseball teams were outstanding. The 1992 squad captured the

NCAA New England Regional and advanced to the D-II College World Series in Montgomery, Ala.

Money was scarce for a while, though, as the former commuter school began to construct dormitories and bolster its enrollment. Many of the Pioneers' athletic teams struggled until shortly after Sacred Heart joined the Division-I ranks in 1999.

Giaquinto's team won its first Northeast Regional title in 2006, and also prevailed in 2011, 2012 and 2015.

"Nick Giaquinto has been one of SHU's greatest assets for 29 years and will definitely be missed," said Director of Athletics Bobby Valentine, who described Giaquinto as "one of the finest people I know." ■

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 26, 2017

Matthew 6:24-34

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A: to focus on God first and not worldly things. Words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

NO ONE	CAN SERVE	TWO MASTERS
OTHER	WORRY	WILL EAT
DRINK	YOUR BODY	FOOD
CLOTHING	BIRDS	REAP
HEAVENLY	FATHER	SOLOMON
GRASS	FIELD	OVEN
LITTLE	KINGDOM	TOMORROW

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FOCUSING ON EXCELLENCE FROM PAGE 17

from their early years, we will start the school with the little ones," Mother Amelia says. For that reason, the school can open before building of the entire facility has been completed. "We will grow with the girls. It's a long-term vision."

Álvarez has been working with architects in New York and in Spain, and was able to walk the Sisters through the proposed design of the school. In addition, he will begin to communicate with parents who would be interested in sending their daughters

to Mater Salvatoris.

"Parents need to know that what we offer is something that is completely different from other Catholic schools they have known," concludes Mother Amelia. "We educate the intelligence, we educate the heart, we educate the spirit."

(Anyone interested learning more about Mater Salvatoris Schools can contact Sister Maria at the Sisters of the Company of the Savior, 820 Clinton Avenue, Bridgeport. Phone: 203.368.1875; email: mater.usa@ciasalvador.org.) ■

Column: Thomas Hicks



When the time is ripe

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

I feel uneasy knowing that more than six weeks that make up this year have already passed. The summer now seems so long ago. Sometimes I have a sense that my days are vanishing like smoke.

There's a sadness for so many wonderful times that are over. So many precious and irreplaceable things have come to an end.

I wish I could salvage some years and days from the rush of time; some lost days. Time steals

that which we love. I wanted to keep everyone I loved from leaving. But they kept slipping away. Sometimes I lie awake at night and think of all the people who have come and gone.

God is the giver of time. Time is God's gift to us individually—so many years, so many weeks, so many days. A number of Scripture verses explicitly state this:

Job 14:5: "Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have given him a fixed limit past which he cannot go."

Psalm 139:16: "You saw me before I was born. The days allotted to me have all been recorded

in your book, before any of them came to be."

Our days are numbered. God has set boundaries to our lives. We move from an appointed beginning to appointed end, and year by year our allotment is sliced. We are called to view time as a sacred reality, a gift from God. We all partake of the particular fragment of time we have been given.

John's Gospel records that one of the earliest statements made by Jesus in his public life was,

"My time has not yet come" (Jn.2:5). This was at Cana of Galilee. At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus exclaims: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand." (Mark 1:15).

Jesus spoke of his coming Passion with the words, "The hour has struck" (Mk.14:41); "My time is

close at hand" (Mt.26:45). Jesus was most conscious of the time and the hour. We are meant to think of "our time" or "our hour." Psalm 69:13 speaks of the "acceptable time," referring to a time that is pleasing to God.

In the biblical concept of time, it is a question of ripeness and fullness. There is the time for something to happen, or for some emotion to be felt. We need a sense of time which goes with the concept of "fullness." It involves being in touch with the natural rhythm of life and growth.

In the flowing river of time, there is a hierarchy of times within time; critical points erupt, times of "ripeness." We need a sense that warns us that now is the time. We must not miss the time when it crests. Times of ripeness may not be repeated. We can miss our cues. Jesus rebuked people because they "did not recognize the time of God's visitation to them" (Lk.19:44).

T.S. Eliot said: "We can have

the experience, but miss the meaning."

The times of fullness or ripeness are usually times in life when love wins. At these times of ripeness or fullness there is a sense that a deeper drama is going on behind the surface; there is something transcendent behind and beyond the visible. We may eventually say with Jacob, "God was in this place, and I never knew it" (Genesis28:16). Existence is inhabited by more than we usually see.

These events happen in the lives of all of us. A light seems to break upon us from far away, or perhaps from far within. We know that a certain moment is special. Life is on holy ground. Every now and then we hear the more that runs through

"So we go about our permitted time on this planet, and in the lives of all of us there are occasions when we come upon a time of fullness or ripeness when we meet grace and meet the Lord."

it all. We are to take good care, be on the watch, for these times when we may catch glimpses and hear whispers from beyond the wilderness.

So we go about our permitted time on this planet, and in the lives of all of us there are occasions when we come upon a time of fullness or ripeness when we meet grace and meet the Lord. We may catch a glimpse of what our lives are all about, and maybe even what life is all about.

This idea of ripeness also implies that trying to do something before the ripened time is unwise.

During our earthly allotted time we come to know that time moves and everything comes to an end. The things of time lack full and permanent reality; the world is not ultimately home. We are born for eternity.

Jn.12:35: "Jesus said to them, 'the light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness may not overtake you.'" ■

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Column: Joe Pisani



An anonymous plea: Pray for me!

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

Every morning instead of going to the gym and jogging on the treadmill, I walk around the block before I enter the Chrysler Building. (Actually, I better get back to the treadmill.)

In addition to getting my heart beating in the cardio range and giving me the illusion of a workout, my morning walk is a sociological and spiritual exercise. I take note of popular trends in New York City—Canadian goose down parkas with faux fur collars are in vogue, not to mention tight-fitting suits with high-water pants.

There are also countless young women strutting to work with the self-obsessed “I wanna be a supermodel” look on their faces, along with older men slogging to their jobs, one step closer to

retirement, and the janitorial staff circling the building armed with brooms and dustpans, sweeping up cigarette butts and debris.

However, so many people look unhappy and anxious that seeing them reminds me of a bumper sticker I once saw that said, “No Jesus, no peace.”

As I circled the block last week, I passed a young woman with her cell phone pressed to her ear, sobbing uncontrollably. When I came back around, she was still standing on the corner, talking on the phone and crying, and I heard her plead, “I’m so desperate I don’t know what to do ... pray for me.” So that’s what I did.

Every day as part of my spiritual exercises, I have a regimen I try to follow, from the Rosary to the Divine Office, Mass and var-

ious other devotions. I pray for intentions such as an end to abortion, the conversion of sinners, the souls in purgatory, world peace, and America.

There are also impromptu, random prayers for people I encounter, like the woman on 43rd Street. Sometimes they’re people whose sullen and desperate expressions seem to say, “Pray for me! Please!” even if they don’t realize the answer to their problems is prayer.

Throughout the day, we should offer prayers for people who cross our path—the despairing, the haughty, the rich, the powerful, the poor, the disenfranchised, our friends, our enemies and everyone in between.

Then, there are people who are larger than life, like President Trump, Meryl Streep, Hillary Clinton, Mick Jagger, Madonna and George Soros. We may not think they need prayers, but very often the high and mighty need prayers more than the rest of us because they suffer from pride and success.

Never underestimate the value of praying for strangers—not just desperate prayers for someone waiting for test results or for a couple whose marriage is falling apart, but also prayers for those

who are far from Christ and don’t care and may not want your prayers. In reality, they need them the most.

When you come in contact with people who deny God in their pride and arrogance, pray for them. When you meet people the world has beaten down and have no hope, ask Jesus to help them. If you encounter an angry person on the street, pray that Jesus gives him peace. Whenever you feel inspired to say a prayer for a stranger, do it ... and do it often. When you pass the scene of an accident, say a Hail Mary and ask Jesus to help the victims.

Pray for a bad boss, pray for coworkers, pray for your children’s classmates, pray for the President, not to mention Congress. Most importantly, pray for the person who torments you.

After all, that’s what Jesus meant when he said to pray for those who persecute you, because persecutors can be anywhere—in the workplace or in your home.

Always pray for people who tell you about their anguish and suffering. When you hear a painful story, never hesitate to say,

“I’ll pray for you,” which is one of the best promises you can make because prayer is the most powerful force known to man.

And never forget that Christ hears and answers every prayer, even short petitions like “Lord, help him!” or “Jesus be with that person in her

suffering!”

Pray for as many people as you can, and someday you’ll see the results in heaven, where you’ll meet the people who benefited from your prayers and their gratitude will last for eternity. ■

“Pray for a bad boss, pray for coworkers, pray for your children’s classmates, pray for the President, not to mention Congress.”

CREMATION FROM PAGE 22

eties’ increasingly secular notions about the afterlife and the trivialization of dead bodies, making the departed into mementos for the living instead of temples made in the image and likeness of God.

As cremation has become more popular—nearly half of Americans said they were at least “somewhat likely” to choose cremation upon their death—the Vatican, like other religious institutions, has struggled to keep pace with the trend.

In 1963, the Vatican said burial of deceased bodies should be the norm, but cremation is not “opposed per se to the Christian religion.” But in recent years, “new ideas” contrary to the Catholic faith have become widespread, the Vatican said. The new statement names pantheism (the worship of nature), naturalism (the idea that all truths are

derived from nature, not religion) and nihilism (a deep skepticism about all received truths) as particularly problematic. If cremation is chosen for any of those reasons, the deceased should not receive a Catholic burial, the new guidelines say.

In the United States, cremations have taken on a highly personalized and commercial aspect. Companies offer to load cremains into shotgun shells so that family members can take them on turkey hunts. Nature lovers ask that their ashes be scattered under a favorite tree or inserted into coral reefs. Cremains can be shot into space, or refashioned as diamonds.

Such practices are sacrilegious, the Vatican’s new guidelines say. Catholicism teaches that all people will be resurrected—both body and soul—at the end of days. Cremation does not “prevent God, in his omnipotence,

from raising up the deceased body to new life,” the Vatican says, but it does raise the possibility that the deceased’s body, which the Church teaches is sacred and created by God, will not be properly respected by descendants and relatives.

“By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body, and intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity,” the new guidelines state.

The Vatican makes clear that there are valid sanitary, economic and social reasons for cremation. But burial, the Church says, is the best way to demonstrate “esteem” for the deceased, and cremains can only be kept at home with special permission from a bishop. ■

HONDA

By **Curtiss*Ryan**

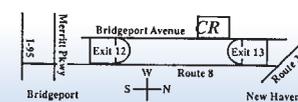
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THE PROPHETS, a Bible study course featuring Thomas Smith from Ascension Press, meets at St. Cecilia Parish, Stamford, Thurs. evenings at 7:15, repeated Fri. mornings at 9:15 in the Parish Center. For more info, contact Vicki Alton: 203.322.8526 or VickiA@optonline.net.

CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS of Greater Danbury (ages 18-35) Ice Skating on Fri., Feb. 24, at 8:30 pm for DJ Skate night at the Danbury Ice Arena, 1 Independence Way, Danbury. For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

CASINO NIGHT to benefit the Shehan Center's After School and Saturday program for K-8 children will be held Sat., Feb. 25, at The Inn at Long Shore in Westport. For more info, call 203.336.4468.

THE GREAT SHEHAN TRIVIA CONTEST: Form a team! Join the fun on Tues., Feb. 28, at the Holiday Inn, 1070 Main St., Bridgeport. For more info and to register, call 203.336.4468.

"AL TALKS THE WALKS:" the 130th communion breakfast of the Knights of Columbus St. Augustine Council

will be held Sunday, **March 5**. Mass at St. Mary Parish, Stamford, 8:30 am; breakfast at 10 am at the Knights Hall, 507 Shippan Ave. Guest speaker: Al Forte, originator of the Pray for Peace Walks. Tickets: \$15; buy tickets before Wed., **March 1**. For more info or for tickets, contact Tom: 203.249.9644, or Al: 203.940.3651.

STAMFORD LENTEN ADULT BIBLE STUDY entitled "The Scriptural Roots of the Sacraments" will be a six-week study held at Trinity High School every Thurs. in Lent, starting **March 2**, from 7-8:30 pm. The study, led by Fr. Joseph Gill, will examine how the sacraments, such as the Eucharist and Reconciliation, are grounded in the Word of God, prefigured in the Old Testament and then coming in fullness in the New. All adults who want to grow in their faith are invited to join us! For more info, contact Fr. Gill at frjosephgill@gmail.com.

FIRST FRIDAY LECTURE SERIES at St. Luke Parish, Westport, continues Fri., **March 3**, at 7:30 pm (wine and cheese reception, 7 pm.) David Bartlett, Ph.D., Lantz Professor Emeritus of the Yale Divinity School, will speak on "Christians and the Roman Empire in the First Century." All are welcome. For more info, call 203.227.7245.

DIVORCED AND SEPARATED Catholics are invited to join "Hearts Renewed," a support group for divorced or separated men and women. Meetings are held in Fairfield on the first and third Fri. of every month (**March 3; March 17**) at 7:30. For more info and for directions, call Bette: 203.338.0503 or Peggy: 203.834.1287.

THE ANNUAL WHITE MASS for doctors, nurses and medical personnel will be celebrated on Sun., **March 26**, by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in **St. Peter Church**, 104 Main St., Danbury. A brunch, gathering and award ceremony will follow the Mass at the Ridgewood Country Club, 119 Franklin Street Ext., Danbury. This year's guest speaker will be Fr. Myles Sheehan, SJ. Fr. Sheehan has recently been appointed assistant to the provincial for Senior Jesuits of the Maryland Province. He currently serves in a similar capacity for the USA Northeast Province. Fr. Sheehan

is a physician with qualifications in internal medicine and geriatrics. Although he no longer actively practices medicine, he continues to be involved in writing and speaking on issues of health care, medical ethics, aging, end of life care and spirituality. Tickets: \$25. For more info and to purchase brunch tickets, contact Janet Davis: jdavis@diobpt.org or 203.416.1636.



TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS is celebrated at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, the first Sun. of each month (**March 5**) at 4 pm. For more info, call the parish: 203.775.5117.

MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE: the Charismatic Renewal Services announces the following special Masses: Mon., **March 6**, at 7 pm at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Fairfield with Fr. Larry Carew; Wed., **March 15**, at 7:30 pm at Sacred Heart Parish, Byram, with Fr. Carew; Mon., **March 20**, at 7:30 pm at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton, with Fr. Ed Nadolny. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.456.5610. NOTE: Change of telephone number for Charismatic Renewal.

ENTRANCE EXAM for Sacred Heart Academy, Hamden, for applicants to grades 9 and 10 will be held Tues., **March 7**, from 9 am-12 noon at the Academy, 265 Benham Street in Hamden. Students must submit the Application for Admission

online at www.sacredhearthamden.org, with \$60 fee, and contact Director of Admission, Elaine Lamboley: 203.288.2309, ext. 307 for an interview.

JOIN IN PRAYING the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for Persecuted Christians from your home/car/office the first Tues. of every month (**March 7**) at 7 pm with a conference phone number. How? Before 7 pm, call 877.216.5269 and type in the pin number 96869.

"NEW DAY" bereavement program at St. Thomas More Parish, Darien, begins Wed., **March 8**, at 7:30 pm in the annex. Meetings continue for 9 consecutive weeks. Trained and certified facilitators who have experienced grief in their own lives conduct the seminar. All are invited. There is no charge, but registration is required. For more info, and for registration, call Lillian Toll: 203.966.9367 or the parish office: 203.655.3303.

MEN'S RETREAT will be held at Holy Family Retreat Center in West Hartford, Fri.-Sun., **March 10-12**. Retreat starts on Fri. at

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Bits and Pieces

6:30 pm. The theme for this year's retreat is "The Light of Simplicity." For more info or to register, go to www.holyfamilyretreat.org.

LENTEN PASTA DINNER AND STATIONS, hosted by Trinity Catholic High School to raise money for a weeklong service trip in Boston, will be held Fri., **March 10** and Fri., **March 24** from 5:30-7:30 pm. Come for some delicious food, donated by Columbus Park Trattoria! We will then celebrate the Stations of the Cross in the chapel at 7:30 pm. The dinners are open to the public. Cost is \$10/person or maximum \$40 /family.

26th ANNUAL AUCTION GALA to benefit St. Joseph

School, Brookfield, will take place Sat., **March 11**, starting at 6 pm in The Amber Room Colonnade in Danbury. The gala will honor Peter Brady, who founded the Handy Dandy Handyman Ministry from St. Joseph Parish 17 years ago. Tickets: \$75/person; \$700 table. For more info and for tickets, go to sjsbrookfield.org. For advertising, contact allyson.kane@gmail.com.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (**March 11**) from 10 am-12 noon, after the 9 am pro-life Mass. For more info, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or stmarygols@aol.com.

60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: Notre Dame High School in Fairfield will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary with a gala celebration on Sat., **March 11**, at Sacred Heart University. For more info on tickets and sponsorships, contact the Notre Dame Advancement Office: tmarzik@notredame.org or 203.372.6521.

WOMEN'S GROUP at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet Mon., **March 13**, at 10 am in the parish hall. In a fun change of pace, they will celebrate St. Patrick's Day and play bingo. For more info, call 203.261.8020.

MOMs+DADs prayer/support group for those with Down Syndrome, their family and friends meets the third Thurs. of every month (**March 16**), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, parish center. For more info, contact strapostolate@optimum.net.

ENCOURAGE apostolate for friends and family of loved ones with same sex attractions or gender ID issues, meets the third Sat. of the month (**March 18**) at 10:30 am and is strictly confidential. For more info contact the Norwalk Chapter: EncourageNorwalk@gmail.com.

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN Holy Spirit Fraternity invites everyone to St. Anthony of Padua Church, 149 South Pine Creek Rd., Fairfield, on Sat., **March 18**, at 9:30 am to celebrate Mass with Fr. Gene Szantyr. Afterwards there will be a social and meeting. For more info, call Pat Heile, OFS: 203.255.8801 or pheile5713@aol.com.

IMMACULATE HIGH

SCHOOL GALA will be held Sat., **April 1**, in the Amber Room Colonnade, 1 Stacey Rd., Danbury, from 6:30-11:30 pm. For more info or for reservations, contact Debbie Basile: dbasile@myimmaculatehs.org, call 203.744.1510, ext. 159.

PASSION AND PURPOSE

event with international speaker and author Matthew Kelly and special musical guest Eliot Morris will be held at St. Paul Parish, Greenwich, on Sat., **April 8**, from 9 am-1:30 pm. Cost of tickets and retreat materials: \$39. For more info, call the parish: 203.531.8741. ■

Students await *The Lion King*

BRIDGEPORT—Excitement buzzes through the halls of St. Raphael Academy in Bridgeport as 52 third graders anticipate their trip to see *The Lion King* on Broadway in April. The children are going thanks to the effort of the Deacons' Wives (DW) Ministry, which assists in a variety of charitable projects throughout the year.

Last year DW Ministries took third graders from St. Raphael's to see the *The Lion King*. After the play, the children were invited backstage to visit with Jim Farrell, St. Joe's Class of 1984, who plays the part of Timon.

The enthusiasm was so intense that DW Ministries decided to make the trip their main charity again this year. The group still needs sponsors for 13 children. The total cost of the trip, including bus, show and lunch at Planet Hollywood, is \$160 per child.

"Every donation counts," says Ilene Ianniello. If a hundred people gave \$20 each, we would meet our goal."

(To make a donation, send a check to DW Ministries, Inc., 11 Greenacres Lane, Trumbull, CT 06611 and write *Lion King* in the memo line. For more info, contact Ilene Ianniello: IFIDI@aol.com.) ■

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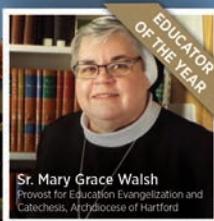
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