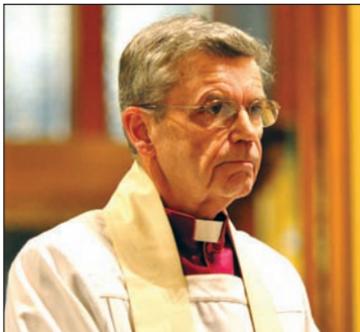




FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

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Welcome back Archbishop Lori

\$1.2 million raised at Inner-City dinner

More than 500 guests attended the Twenty-First Annual Benefit Dinner of The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education to honor Archbishop William E. Lori, enjoy the music of the Midtown Men, and support a wide range of educational and charitable programs.

Peter Cieszko of New Canaan, who co-chaired the benefit along with his wife Jennifer, announced that the annual black-tie event raised \$1.2 million dollars for agencies, institutions and programs throughout Fairfield County.

Five-time Emmy winner and anchor for WNYW "Good Day New York," Dave Price, was master of ceremonies at the event held on October 25.

Archbishop Lori, former Bishop of Bridgeport and past president of The Inner-City Foundation, was

warmly greeted by the gathering and went from table to table to thank those in attendance for their generous support.

The evening featured a concert performance by The Midtown Men—four Stars from the original Broadway cast of "Jersey Boys." In addition, individuals who participate in programs supported by the Inner-City Foundation expressed their gratitude for the help they have received and for the opportunities that have been made available to them.

Audrey and Daniel Dornier, Helen and Dan FitzPatrick, Leah and Alain Lebec, Vilma and Dick Matteis all from Greenwich and Bill Mitchell of Westport, were co-chairs of the Benefit Committee.

Since 1992, the Foundation has awarded more than \$24 million in grants to organizations that provide assistance, including food, clothing, shelter, counseling and education to at-risk and needy children and adults of Fairfield County. In addition to providing scholarship assistance to children attending diocesan schools in Bridgeport, organiza-



WELCOME BACK ARCHBISHOP LORI—Archbishop Lori chats with Charles and Ruth Chiusano of Fairfield. He was warmly greeted by the gathering of 500 men and women at the Inner City Foundation Dinner where he was honored for his leadership of the diocese and tenure as past-president of the Inner City Foundation, which awarded more than \$18 million in grants to 150 agencies and programs under his leadership.

tions receiving grants include the Cardinal Shehan Center, Caroline House, Community Closet, Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Domus Kids, George Washington Carver Center, Homes for the Brave, Homes with Hope, Kids in Crisis,

Liberation Programs, Literacy Volunteers of America, Malta House, McGivney Community Center, Mercy Learning Center, Norma F. Pfriem Breast Cancer Center, Regional YMCA of Western CT, and the Thomas Merton Center.

(For more information about The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education or to make a contribution, visit their website: www.innercity-foundation.org, call 203.416.1363, or write The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606.) ■



WHAT A GREAT EVENING!—Bill Mitchell of Westport, a benefit chair, gets together with Gerritt Graham of Fairfield; Anne & Andrew Graham of Fairfield and Helen FitzPatrick of Greenwich, co-chair.



AN EVENING TO REMEMBER—Edward & Brooke Garden of Greenwich, Daniel & Audrey Dornier of Greenwich, co-chairs, enjoyed the evening, which featured a dazzling performance by the Midtown Men.



ON THE COVER

THANKSGIVING FOOD COLLECTION—Joyce Rubin, Grade 3 teacher in the St. Stephen Parish religious education program, and her students proudly display the gift basket they created to help feed the poor over the holidays. "It gives them the understanding that this is a special time of year," says Lisa Hughes, a parent of four children who participate in the program. Fr. Stephen Gleeson, pastor of St. Stephen's, says the entire parish catches the spirit and the Gospel message. The children will also participate in their annual Advent Toy Collection to help the needy. Photos by Warren Harakal

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Local News

Diocese reaches out to hurricane victims

BRIDGEPORT—In response to those affected by Hurricane Sandy, Msgr. Jerald Doyle, diocesan administrator, asked pastors to hold a special collection for relief efforts.

Funds collected by each parish are being directed to relief efforts presently underway by local organizations and are also being sent to parishes in New York and New Jersey to reach out to those who lost their homes.

"We know that some parishioners experienced significant damage to their homes, while many more struggled with the loss of power and other difficulties throughout the week," said Msgr. Doyle. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected by the storm, and we're grateful for the parishes and individuals who have reached out to others."

Fairfield Beach was particularly hard hit, with five houses tossed into Long Island Sound and many more left uninhabitable by the storm. Residents were without power for over a week and faced a massive clean-up.

Fr. Victor Martin, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish on

the Post Road in downtown Fairfield, said his parish took up a second collection and donated it to the "Neighbor to Neighbor" fund of the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County.

"It looks like a bomb hit parts of the beach and the neighborhood behind it," Fr. Martin said after touring the storm-damaged area.

Fr. Martin, who was nursing a cold after a week without power in the rectory, said that many parishioners have come forward to offers assistance to local families in need. Some parishes have also sent teams of volunteers to assist the most needy storm victims.

Parishioners of St. Matthew Parish in Norwalk sprang into action when their pastor, Msgr. Walter Orłowski, made a plea at weekend Masses following the storm for donations of blankets, coats, food and supplies. The following Monday, Msgr. Orłowski and a team of seven parishioners filled the parish bus with supplies and drove down to St. Thomas Parish on Staten Island.

Overwhelmed by the scope of damage and the great needs, parishioners then secured a large



FAIRFIELD BEACH—A Fairfield Beach home floats out of Pine Creek in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Fairfield was particularly hard hit by the storm surge which inundated the beaches. (PHOTO BY C. KNUTH)

truck and brought emergency relief to Our Lady of Solace Church and a Gospel Assembly Church on Coney Island. The parish teams also helped out in the Rockaways.

"The response was amazing. What we've seen up here on TV is only a piece of the pictures," said Sr. Sally Norcross, pastoral minister at St. Matthew, who participated in the response. "Some people are really in desperate need, and a lot of the areas have been devastated."

Sr. Sally said that blankets and

cleaning supplies, including bleach and disinfectants, were in great demand as people struggled to reclaim their homes from the sand and debris. The parish has since sent some work crews down to help homeowners with the clean-up.

While much diocesan relief was sent to help the areas of highest impact in New York and New Jersey, there are also local needs being met by Catholic Charities in Fairfield County.

Msgr. Doyle said people throughout the diocese can make a donation to Catholic Charities

directly to support its nutrition, counseling and case management programs which are reaching out to families affected by the storm.

"We've seen an increase in our soup kitchens and food pantries," said Michael Tintrup, Catholic Charities vice president. "We also expect to see an increase in counseling, mental health and case management services down the line as the long-term effects of the hurricane are felt."

Robert LeBlanc, director of buildings and grounds for the diocese, said that the initial assessment has turned up minor damage to facilities across the diocese: a tree fell on Queen of Saints Diaconate Retreat Center on the Catholic Center grounds; a stained glass window was blown out of its frame at Merton Center; a portion of the rectory roof at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stamford was damaged; and downed trees caused minor damage in schools and parishes.

(Contributions can be sent to Catholic Charities, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, 06606, or donate online at www.ccfairfield.org.)

O'Connor named McGivney Center executive

BRIDGEPORT—Terry O'Connor has been named executive director of the McGivney Community Center in East Bridgeport. He will also continue to serve as executive director of the Cardinal Shehan Center, a post that he has held for 20 years. Both youth centers are sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport and serve children of all faiths in the inner city.

O'Connor's appointment was unanimously approved by the McGivney Center board, and by Msgr. Jerald Doyle, diocesan administrator.

The McGivney Community Center was founded to provide children with an educational "safe haven" from the dangers of the streets. Its after-school programs include computer literacy, learning center, tutoring, arts and crafts, and health and recreation opportunities.

Anne McCrory, chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport, said the appointment was made

because the McGivney Center is facing financial challenges, and its services are vital to Bridgeport youth.

"At a time when many not-for-profit agencies are challenged to find greater efficiencies and new fund raising sources, we welcome Terry O'Connor's leadership. His fund-raising experience and overall management abilities will help to secure the future of McGivney Center and bring additional resources to the children it serves," she said.

Both the McGivney and Shehan boards will remain active, with Attorney Matt Reale serving as president of the McGivney Community Center and Lori



TERRY O'CONNOR

Charlton, a partner in Audit Services at Deloitte & Touche LL in Stamford, serving as president of the Shehan Center board.

"Having known and worked with Terry O'Connor for over 20 years, we are thrilled to have someone with his experience join our team. He understands our unique spirit and will introduce many new supporters to the McGivney Center as we strengthen our mission in the community," said Reale.

"We look forward to continuing our work with Terry at the Shehan Center while coordinating efforts with McGivney for the benefit of the children of Bridgeport. We believe that this

move allows us to expand the awareness to our surrounding communities of the many challenges facing families all over Bridgeport," said Charlton.

McCrory said there is an affinity between both youth centers with their mix of recreation, social and educational and child development programs. Nearly 300 youth between the ages of 6 and 18 are enrolled in McGivney's after-school, evening and summer programs, while the Cardinal Shehan Center serves more than 1,000 youth from its downtown site.

The McGivney Center is celebrating 20 years of service, while the Cardinal Shehan Center turns 50 this year. Both centers are funded by a mix of grants, special events, program fees, foundation and diocesan support.

O'Connor said that the two agencies have a history of cooperation, with McGivney Center youth using the Cardinal Shehan Center pool and also participat-

ing in the First Tee Golf Program founded by former GE Chairman Jack Welch.

"The last few years have been difficult ones for non-profits, and the McGivney Center has struggled, but this is a great organization that is a unique resource for youth and families in the East Side of the city," said O'Connor. He'll be working the McGivney board to secure new funding sources, build additional support and make building improvements. He also believes that both agencies can share programs that will enrich the lives of youth.

O'Connor said that Alexis Bevins, a nine-year employee, who has served as the interim director since October 2011, was named site director and will oversee day-to-day operations for McGivney.

(The McGivney Community Center is located at 338 Stillman Street on the grounds of St. Charles Borromeo Parish. For more information, call 203.334.1933.)

Local News

Restoring St. Mary, Norwalk

The beloved Mother Church of Norwalk, St. Mary's, has begun the final phase of renovation.

St. Mary Parish was founded by Irish immigrants in 1848. The current church, a prominent Gothic structure built in 1871, dominates one of the city's main thoroughfares and is considered one of Norwalk's architectural gems.

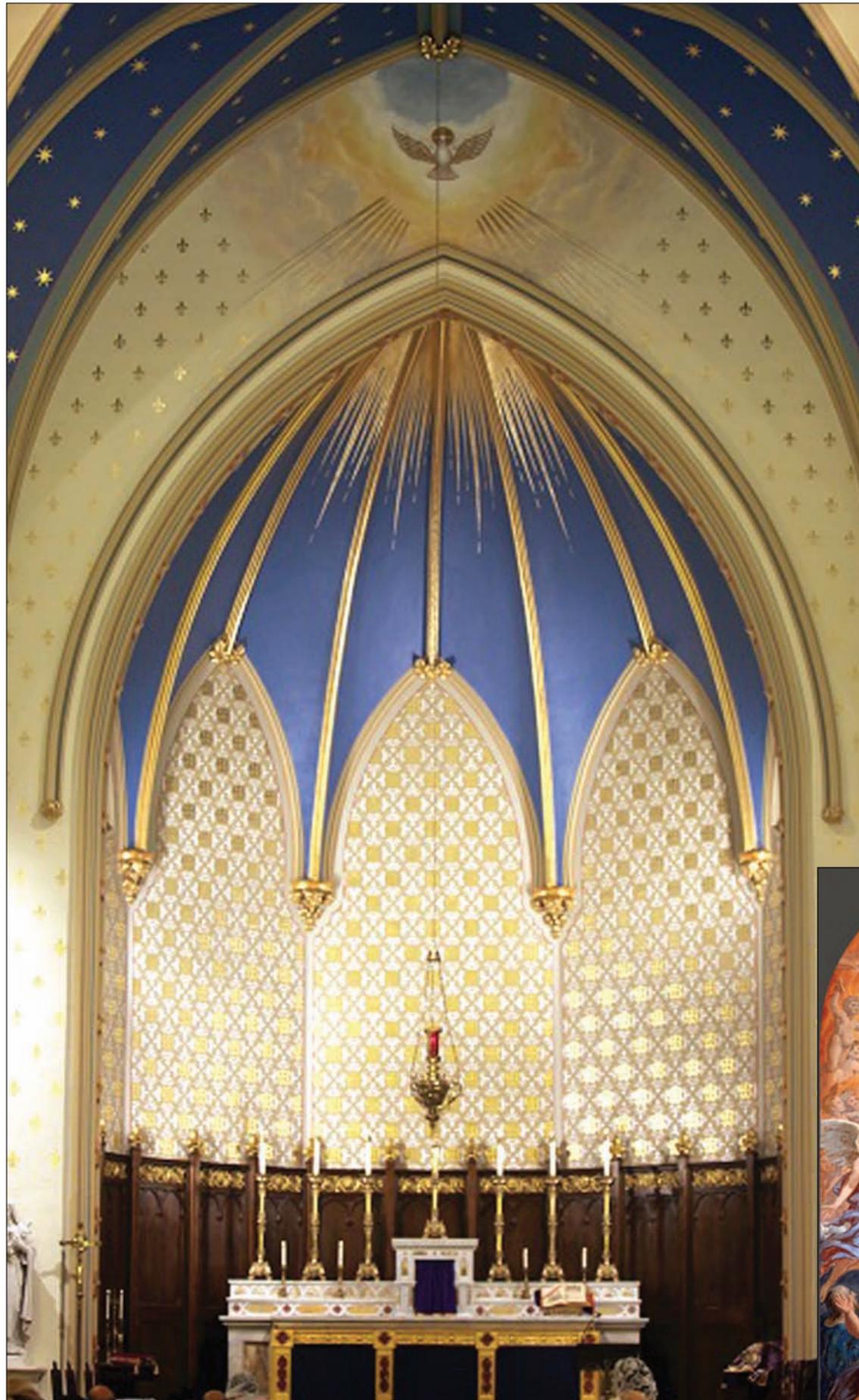
"Over the past three years, the parishioners of St. Mary Church have been generous in support of the construction," says St. Mary's pastor, Fr. Greg Markey. Members of the largely working class parish have already raised \$1.2 million dollars for repairs on the roof and the church's exterior and the renovation of the sanctuary.

Internationally known architect Duncan G. Stroik of the University of Notre Dame was hired to guide the renovation of the church's interior. The first phase of the renovation focused on renewing the sanctuary of the church with custom Italian marble slabs along with a magnificent marble altar rail, pulpit, and baptismal font. The painting of the interior sanctuary and ceiling with a French blue for Our Lady highlighted by gold stars was done by one of the finest church interior painters in the country, John Canning, Inc. This phase also included lighting throughout the church, and a new state-of-the-art sound system built by Pascomb, Inc.

The final phase will see the finishing of the interior, including the addition of a crucifixion scene on a roof beam at the entrance to the sanctuary.

"The grand centerpiece of the renovation will be an oil painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by artist Leonard Porter in the central reredos," Fr. Markey says with justifiable pride. Porter, an American artist noted for his vibrant religious art, is based in New York. He is part of the new liturgical movement for sacred liturgy and liturgical arts. Porter will also paint the crucifixion above the sanctuary.

Over 400 families contributed to the first phases of the renova-



tion. Fr. Markey hopes to raise the remaining \$300,000 to complete the project by having every family in the parish contribute a donation. He's asking families

to consider a gift of \$600 over the coming year. "That comes to \$10 a week," he says, adding "I know that not all the families can pledge that, especially those

facing hardship or an economic setback. However, it is important for the vitality of our parish community that we have

broad participation in this project and that each family makes a pledge that reflects its means and circumstances."

He quotes Pope Benedict XVI, who recently gave a talk on the theology of Church architecture: "When faith celebrated in the liturgy encounters art, it creates a profound harmony because each can and wishes to speak of God, making the invisible visible... *The via pulchritudinis*, the way of beauty, is a privileged and fascinating path on which to approach the Mystery of God."

"By completing this final phase of the renovation," Fr. Markey concludes, "we are linking faith and beauty within the liturgy, and taking that fascinating path where heaven's luminous truth is able to radiate more fully to those who have to come to worship God.

(For more information on St. Mary's renovation or to make a donation, visit the parish website: www.stmarynorwalk.net or call 203.866.5546.)

PAINTED A FRENCH BLUE in honor of Our Lady, the renovated sanctuary of St. Mary's will feature a painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by artist Leonard Porter.



Local News

Catholics called to witness

STAMFORD—The Apostolic Nuncio and the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations urged Catholics to publicly profess their faith in the face of threats to religious liberty and the sanctity of life.

Speaking at the Annual Red Mass of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Bishop Francis A. Chullikatt, Titular Archbishop of Ostra, said that Christians around the world, particularly in the Middle East are being prosecuted, not for committing crimes, but simply for being Christian.

“They are giving their lives on a daily basis to witness the Gospel,” he said from the pulpit of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Stamford, where he concelebrated Mass with St. John’s pastor, Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, and Msgr. Jerald Doyle, diocesan administrator.

“We live in times that challenge our faith and offer clear threats to life,” Archbishop Chullikatt said as he cautioned



Catholics “to resist the temptation to blend into and accept the dominant culture.”

He said that faith is the “greatest gift available to mankind” and that Catholics should “shed the empty promises” of power, possession, and ideology that do not lead to truth or wisdom.

At the annual Red Mass brunch at the Knights of Columbus Hall following the Mass, John Garvey, president of

Catholic University of America, told more than 100 lawyers and legal professionals in attendance that those who work in the government and legislative sector are on the cutting edge of issues where personal belief and public policy often conflict.

He started his talk by mentioning that the relationship between Church and State has become increasingly complicated. He noted that since becoming president of Catholic University, the university has been sued for the transition back to single-sex residency dorms and for not providing Muslim students a space to worship without crucifixes (though they are very pleased and comfortable at Catholic University). Likewise, the university has been affected by the healthcare mandate that would force it to violate Catholic teaching by providing birth control and sterilization services to students.

President Garvey, an expert in constitutional law and the First



ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS A. CHULLIKATT, the Apostolic Nuncio and the permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, urged American Catholics to speak out about abuse of religious liberty in the U.S. and around the world. “We live in times that challenge our faith.” (Left) At the breakfast following Mass, Catholic University President John Garvey said that Catholics who work in government are on the cutting edge where belief and public policy conflict.

Amendment, said that many people today misunderstand the concept of separation of Church and State as formulated to stop the Church from meddling in the State.

“Some might assert that religion is bad for law, like a virus, but they have their principles backward. The reason for the separation is not that religion is bad for government, but government is bad for religions.”

Garvey said the Constitution doesn’t require lawyers “to keep their faith to themselves,” nor is it desirable.

He concluded his talk by reminding lawyers that beyond being zealous advocates on behalf of their clients, they should also work toward healing and forgive-

ness. “We should teach clients that our aim is victory not destruction. The possibility of healing and forgiveness is always there.”

Referring to the last sentence of the Creed, “We confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins,” President Garvey noted that “Baptism is about forgiveness, which unites us with God. Justice is a cardinal virtue, but forgiveness is divine.”

John Garvey was introduced by Attorney Anne McCrory, chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport. She thanked all those in attendance for supporting the work of the Church, by defending the poor and vulnerable, fighting for religious liberty and representing Catholic institutions. ■

Love basis for social action

FAIRFIELD—Catholic Social Teaching leads us “to create social conditions where everyone can flourish to his or her full potential,” said Fr. Rick Ryscavage, S.J., at the seventh annual communion breakfast for business leaders, held at Fairfield University.

In his talk before the election, Fr. Ryscavage, director of the Center for Faith and Public Life at Fairfield University, said that Catholics are not in agreement on how to create those conditions nor does the Church have a political platform.

“Catholic Social Teaching is not a recipe book. It provides guiding principles but not the answers,” he told a gathering of over 150 men and women who attended the Mass and brunch sponsored by Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice (CAPP), a lay-led group that promotes Catholic thought.

Fr. Ryscavage said that by using individual and communal health indicators such as child mortality, homicide, unemployment and numbers of people



who are incarcerated, it is easy to see that there “is a failure of human flourishing in our society.”

He said that the West has successfully separated Church and State over the past 400 years, but as a result “we’ve lost touch with the theological position in political thought,” which formed the basis for much of our civil society.

Referring to abortion and other life issues, he said the Church’s social teaching is based on natural

law and reason and, therefore, can speak to the secular world as well as believers.

He noted that the bishops can be wrong when they advocate specific legislative goals, but they are not wrong in their concerns about religious liberty or the opposition to abortion, “which is the salient social issue in our democracy” and central to our concept of human dignity.

With respect to the political divide in the country, Fr. Ryscavage said that it is not a left/right issue with social justice on one side and respect for life on the other. “That’s a false distinction. Human dignity is integrated with social justice,” he said, noting that Catholics can’t pick or choose from the wholeness of social teaching.

He said that Catholics, who are on both sides of the left/right divide in politics, must work “to restore civility so we can attack our problems, not each other. Catholic Republicans and Catholic

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Local News

Deacons combine faith with family life

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

When Don Ross first entered the Permanent Diaconate Program in the Diocese of Bridgeport at the age of 36, he was surprised by the reaction of some friends and family members.

"The people I thought would encourage me didn't, while others were very supportive. But you don't stop there. You learn to walk through the open door," says 59-year old Ross, who has been an ordained deacon for 18 years. His oldest child, Mark, is now 29 and the baby, Mary Kate, who was six months old when he started his four-year formation, is 22. He proudly reflects that he has been a deacon for half of his married life.

According to Deacon Anthony Detje, director of the diocesan diaconate program, 96 deacons are now at work throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport. Of that number, 90 are married. Most have children and many have grandchildren.

"The younger men really breathe new life into the diaconate and bring fresh ideas to the parishes," says Deacon Detje, who joined the first diocesan class of deacons formation in 1975. He said that for most deacons, the support of their wife and encouragement of their pastor is vital to their success.

Deacon Don Ross's wife, Arlene, was supportive of his vocation from the start. "She's an extraordinary person and very much a woman of Vatican II," says Deacon Ross, who adds that both he and his wife saw the Council's decision to revitalize the role of deacon as a great gift and opportunity in their lives.

Ross, who recently began serving at St. Stephen's Parish in Trumbull after almost ten years at St. Anthony of Padua in Fairfield, maintains a busy life between his role as deacon and post as tax assessor for the town of Fairfield.

"Everyone is challenged in some way through formation. Sometimes I wondered if I was putting too much on my wife or taking time from the kids, but it is a life of many graced moments," he says. "The great strength of the diaconate is that we go through the same things that everyone else does. We have the same problems and challenges and work to find grace in them."



FAMILY TIME—Deacon Rick Scinto, 48, with his family at his home in Sandy Hook. From left, daughter Carolanne, 9; foster child Harlow, 3; and wife Terri, 48.

Forty-two-year-old Jeff Font of Brookfield, who is in his third year of formation, says some people outright discouraged him, and told him he had no right to go ahead with four young children at home.

For Font, a product specialist at Centrix in Shelton, the decision to move ahead with formation three years ago was also an act of personal liberation and happiness. He had thought of becoming a priest while in high school, but at some point realized that he was drawn to marriage and a family. Yet he never lost his sense of ministry.

"I think the balance between family and ministry crosses every man's mind. You really have to sit down with your wife and determine how you are going to do this," says Font, who will be ordained in 2015. "We knew we would have to give something up recreationally and socially, but I think we're closer together as a family emotionally and spiritually, and this has been the biggest blessing in my life."

When Deacon Vincent Gauthier, 46, made the decision to begin formation, it wasn't his growing family that gave him pause, but his career as an investment banker, which took him all over the globe.

"On the same day that I received a letter from Bishop Lori accepting me in the diacon-

ate program, I also found a new job. I took that as a good sign," says Deacon Gauthier, who was ordained in 2008 and now serves at Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish in Stamford.

He began his studies in 2003 when he was 37 years old and the father of five children. Since ordination, he and his wife, Valerie, have had two more children, five-year old Roxanne; and Eloi, who is three.

"Whether you have young kids or not doesn't matter. That's not the point. If the Lord calls you to be a deacon you will be a good deacon, and if you have young children, they are part of who you are. In a sense, every Christian family gives witness to the Lord," he says.

Deacon Richard Scinto, 48, says that the arrival of his first daughter actually brought him into the diaconate program. He was so amazed by the gift of life that it deepened his faith and set him on the course toward ministry.

"I was really a latent Catholic up to that point," says Deacon Scinto, a tool & die maker who works in Bethel, "But when my daughter, Carolanne, came to us, God made his presence known to me."

"My wife Terri and I agreed that we should start going to church," he says, and both went through the RCIA process as parishioners of St. Rose of Lima Parish. They completed their sacraments and quickly became

immersed in the life of the parish. Three years later, he entered the diaconate program and was ordained in May 2012. He now serves as deacon at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield.

Deacon Detje, who was 36 and the father of two when he entered first permanent diaconate formation program of the Diocese of Bridgeport in 1975, tells the new candidates that "they have to set their priorities. It's not easy, but it's doable," he says of the balancing act between family, career and ministry.

Men must be at least 35 years old on the day of their ordination, which means some can start formation as early as 30, because it is now a five-and-a-half-year program. During formation, they give up 11 weekends a year from Friday at 6 pm through Sunday at 5 pm, and they also work one night a week in their parish.

"Many people don't understand that the diaconate is a call from God, not another hobby," Deacon Detje says. "When you hear that call and feel it in your life, you've got to respond. You can't put it off."

(For more information on the Permanent Diaconate Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport, contact Deacon Anthony Detje: 203.416.1451; email: adetje@diobpt.org.)

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World and National News

Cardinal Dolan congratulates President Obama

WASHINGTON—Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, congratulated President Barack Obama, November 7, the day after his re-election as president of the United States. He urged the president to work for the most vulnerable, including unborn, poor, and immigrants:

"In my capacity as president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to express my congratulations on your re-election as president of the United States. The people of our country have again entrusted you with a great responsibility. The Catholic Bishops of the United States offer our prayers that God will give you strength and wisdom to meet the difficult challenges that face America.



CARDINAL DOLAN ENJOYED the company of both Mitt Romney and President Obama at the Al Smith Dinner in New York City.

"In particular, we pray that you will exercise your office to pursue the common good, especially in care of the most vulnerable among us, including the

unborn, the poor, and the immigrant. We will continue to stand in defense of life, marriage, and our first, most cherished liberty, religious freedom. We pray, too, that you will help restore a sense of civility to the public order, so our public conversations may be imbued with respect and charity toward everyone.

"May God bless you and Vice President Biden as you prepare for your second term in service to our country and its citizens."

Few new priests for Ireland

DUBLIN, Ireland—Only 12 men began studies for the priesthood this autumn in Ireland's 26 dioceses—a record low.

"On average, just 50% of men who enter Irish seminaries go on to be ordained," observes Michael Kelly, editor of the *Irish Catholic*. "Based on this year's entry of 12 men remaining steady—if not declining further, as certainly seems possible—approximately 180 Irishmen will be ordained diocesan priests in the next 30 years. At the same time, it is estimated that 1,684 priests will have either died or retired from active ministry in that time-frame."

Kelly also notes that "the Dominican friars are the only part of the Church in Ireland bucking the downward trend in vocations" and that Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin has made controversial remarks on the current seminarians.

"It is not just that the number of candidates is low; it is also that many of those who present are fragile and some are much more traditional than those who went before them," the prelate said earlier this year.

Ted Kennedy's widow opposed assisted-suicide

BOSTON, MA—Victoria Reggie Kennedy, the widow of longtime Senator Ted Kennedy, took a strong stand in opposition to "Proposition 2," a statewide ballot initiative that would have legalized physician-assisted suicide in Massachusetts. The bill was narrowly defeated in November's election.

The proposal "seems harsh and extreme to me," wrote Victoria Kennedy in a column that appeared in the *Cape Cod Times*. "It's not, in my judgment, about death with dignity at all," she wrote, adding the measure stood in stark opposition to her late husband's commitment to providing adequate health care for all citizens.

Proposition 2, Kennedy wrote, is "intended to exclude family members from the actual decision-making process to guard against patients' being pressured to end their lives prematurely." She added that the bill also placed undue weight on a doctor's diag-

nosis that a patient has less than six months to live. Speaking from experience, the Senator's widow notes that when Ted Kennedy's terminal cancer was discovered, he was told he had four to five months to live. "Because that first dire prediction of life expectancy was wrong, I have 15 months of cherished memories," Victoria Kennedy said.

Pope begins catechesis on content of faith

VATICAN CITY— "Christians today often do not even know the central core of their Catholic faith," Pope Benedict XVI observed at his regular public audience on October 17. The Holy Father announced that he was beginning a new series of catechetical talks, dedicated to the content of the faith, for the Year of Faith. He said that the goal of the Year of Faith—and thus of his weekly talks—is "to renew our enthusiasm at believing in Jesus Christ."

With his catecheses over coming months, the Holy Father hopes to help people understand that the faith "is not something extraneous and distant from real life, but the very heart thereof. Faith in a God who is love and who came close to mankind by taking human flesh and giving himself on the cross to save us and open the doors of heaven for us, is a luminous sign that only in love does man's true fullness lie," he said. "Where there is domination, possession and exploitation ... man is impoverished, degraded and disfigured."

The fundamental content of the Christian faith, the Pope said, can be found in the Creed. Those fundamental beliefs, in turn, form the basis for Christian moral life. "It is the Church's duty to trans-

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Carmela A. Dupuis
Executive Director

World and National News

mit the faith, to communicate the Gospel, so that Christian truths may become a light guiding the new cultural transformations, and Christians may be able to give reasons for the hope that is in them.”



ST. KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Pope canonizes two saints from North America

VATICAN CITY—Pope Benedict XVI presided at the canonization of seven new saints, including two from North America—St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American saint, and St. Marianne Cope, who worked with lepers at Molokai—at a Mass celebrated for a congregation of 80,000 people in St. Peter's Square on October 21.

The Pope also canonized St. Jacques Berthieu, a French Jesuit martyr; St. Pedro Calungsod, a Filipino lay catechist and martyr; St. Giovanni Battista Piamarta, an Italian priest; St. Maria del Carmen, a Spanish religious; and St. Anna, a German laywoman.

In his homily the Pope pointed out that by “happy coincidence” the canonizations took place

on World Mission Sunday, as the Church reflects on “how to be evangelizers, called to bear witness and to proclaim the Christian message.” The seven new saints answered that challenge in their own different ways, the Pontiff observed. “They are sons and daughters of the Church who chose a life of service following the Lord.”

The unprecedented canonization of two North American saints in a single day drew thousands of Americans to Rome for the October 21 ceremonies. “This is a great weekend for America in the Vatican,” observed Greg Burke, the Vatican's communications adviser.

Pioneers in adult stem-cell research win Nobel Prize

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The Nobel Prize in Medicine has been awarded to John Gurdon and Shinya Yamanaka, two scientists whose work has centered around adult stem-cell research, which does not involve the destruction of human embryos.

“This technique offers hope of progress in stem-cell research without relying on the unethical destruction of human embryos,” said David Jones, director of the Anscombe Center in Oxford. “The past attempts to clone human embryos and the bizarre experiments to create admixed human-nonhuman embryos have delivered nothing.”

“This is an important milestone in recognizing the key role that non-embryonic stem cells play in the development of new, medical therapies, as alternatives to human embryonic stem cells,” the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European

Community (COMECE) said in a statement.

RI parishes undertake door-to-door evangelization

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island—With the encouragement of Bishop Thomas Tobin and the assistance of the Legion of Mary, six Rhode Island parishes have undertaken door-to-door evangelization efforts.

“In total, these days have resulted in the visitation of about 7,500 homes and conversations with some 3,500 people, with about 370 asking for follow-up, such as requests for visiting the homebound, rides to Mass, information on annulments, or how to have their children baptized,” says William Patenaude, a member of the Diocese of Providence's Committee for Evangelization.

Visitation teams took notes on the needs of those they met. Special teams—either the original visitors, the pastor, a deacon, or parish staff—can then contact anyone who asked for more information. “We can't just knock on doors without committing to whatever follow-up is necessary,” said Bishop Tobin, emphasizing the importance of remaining available to those who need additional contact. “That's like casting seed on dry land; it's offering the promise but not tending and nurturing the growth.”

500 nuns belong to Chinese religious community

TONG YUAN, China—The Fides news agency is reporting that 500 women religious, 80% of whom are “very young,” now belong to the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a community devoted to education and the corporal works of mercy.

Headquartered in the central Chinese city of Xi'an, the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are very active in the six dioceses of Shaan Xi province. The community was founded in 1923 and allowed to reopen in 1980, four years after the death of Mao Zedong.

They run 30 clinics, five kindergartens, a publishing house, a religious clothing and sacred objects. They opened a shelter for AIDS patients and for lepers, and are particularly active in emergencies, such as earthquakes, floods. They also organize regular formation courses for lay people

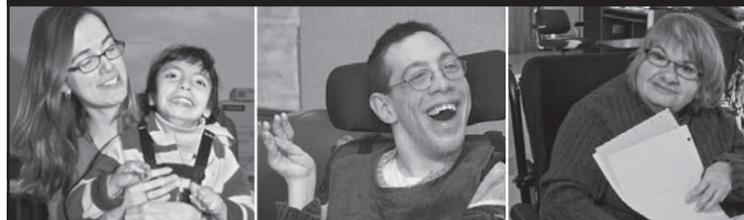
in order to meet the needs of the mission of evangelization.

New Archbishop of Canterbury announced

LONDON, England—Anglican Bishop Justin Welby of Durham has been named the next Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, including the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. former oil-industry executive who

only became a bishop last year, Dr. Welby is viewed as sympathetic toward the “evangelical” wing of the Church of England and has expressed opposition to same-sex marriage, but is regarded as favorably disposed toward the ordination of women as bishops. His stand on those contentious issues would be crucial to his prospects for success as he replaces Dr. Rowan Williams, who is retiring in December. ■

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Local News

Dali Lama calls for world of compassion and peace

DANBURY—"We are all the same, human beings on the same planet," the Dali Lama told a sold-out audience on October 18 at Western Connecticut State University (WestCONN) in Danbury. "Everybody wants a peaceful, happy life."

The Dali Lama, the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism, gave two lectures "The Art of Compassion" and "Advice for Daily Life" at WestCONN as part of the university's Embracing the Challenges of the 21st Century lecture series. One of the world's most respected religious leaders, the Dali Lama describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk. Committed to the promotion of basic human values, fostering inter-religious harmony,

and the welfare of his people in Tibet, the Dali Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

Hundreds of Catholics from the Diocese of Bridgeport were among those attending the Dali Lama's talks. "I think highly of him as a promoter of peace says Monica Wheeler, a member of the pastoral council of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fairfield, who went to the lecture with her husband, Fredric, and daughter, Kristin. "How could you pass up an opportunity to hear a world leader who talks about compassion—instead of economics!"

"The Dali Lama is someone who is in touch with God and wants to proclaim God's message of goodness and peace and happi-

ness," says Fr. Brad Heckathorne, OFM Conv., the chaplain of WestCONN's Neumann Center. "This is the message of Jesus made concrete. It fits in with our notion of peace, our notion of compassion, our notion of forgiveness."

Fr. Brad points out that the Second Vatican Council, which celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, encouraged Catholics to connect to other religions, seeking the value they offer.

"Peace does not mean no problems," the Dali Lama told the assembled crowd, which included not only students but people from as far away as New Jersey and Massachusetts. "It means solving problems without using force. Think more about how to build a peaceful world—that means a more compassion-

ate world." The solution, he said, lies in individuals, not governments. "Do this by an awareness of the needs of others, their right to happiness as equal to your own."

Msgr. Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, was among the many clergy of several denominations to attend the lecture. "This is a clear, simple message, though it's difficult to implement," he says. "It's about individuals—what can I find within myself to create peace in the world. That's what Jesus taught. That's the message of all the great religions."



He points out that, in a world fractured by division—much of it driven by perceived religious differences—there is an even greater need to respect the gifts of each religion. "This is an age in which we need to be together, not pulling apart. Certainly we can't have religion pulling us apart." ■



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Couples celebrate jubilees

TRUMBULL—A total of 5,018 years of marriage were honored when 122 couples from 45 parishes celebrated significant jubilees of 15 years or longer.

The Wedding Jubilee Mass was celebrated on October 14 in St. Theresa Parish. Msgr. Jerald Doyle, diocesan administrator, concelebrated the Mass with Fr. Brian Gannon, St. Theresa's pastor, and priests of the diocese.

The honor of being the longest-married couple went to James and Mary Calderone (center in the photo below), celebrating 70 years of marriage. In a special turn of events, the Calderones were joined at the Jubilee Mass



(PHOTOS BY MIKE DONNARUMMO)

by their daughters and their husbands, Louise and Richard Deenihan (at right), married 45 years, and Barbara and Michael

Hamilton, married 47 years.

The Calderones brought up the offertory gifts, along with Dolores and Sabatino Cortello, celebrating their golden anniversary, Dawn and Mark Ringes, married 25 years, and Rose and Steve Ippolito, honoring their 15th anniversary.

This celebration honored couples whose weddings fell in the second half of the year. A spring celebration is planned for couples who were married between January and June. ■



Local Collaboration

Assumption School begins STEM with SHU

By PAT HENNESSY

"For the mean, we add all these together and divide by the number of quantities," explains Erin Puschak, a junior at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, working at a SMARTboard with sixth-grader Katelyn Pond.

Erin is in the education program at Sacred Heart, specializing in math. She is part of a new collaboration linking Our Lady of the Assumption School in Fairfield and nearby SHU.

"Our advisory board started working with Dr. Seamus Carey, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Sacred Heart, last year," explains Assumption's principal, Gerrie Desio. "We decided to begin with a partnership between their math department and our middle school math program. Once this is in place, we're interested in expanding it to our entire STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program."

Assumption already has a successful STEM program. Sacred Heart University's participation will focus on strengthening the program, both by assisting students who find the material challenging and by offering enrichment to advanced students.

Principal Desio points out that 99% of Assumption's graduates go on to Catholic high schools. Those in the accelerated math program may bypass a year, or even two, of high school math. Those in the general program arrive in high school with a solid groundwork in math. "Over and over I hear from high school principals that our kids come so well

prepared," Desio says with pride.

This new program will enhance that spirit of excellence. It has several components. In the first, twice a week students from the math department at Sacred Heart come to Assumption and work in the classroom. Their role is to assist youngsters who need additional help and to conduct accelerated math work with those who learn at a faster pace.

"The university students won't just help," says Maureen Travers, Assumption's middle school math teacher. "They'll teach a lesson, see what works and what doesn't. Because they're young, they are more high-tech on the SMARTboard. They bring in new techniques to make math more interesting."

The second component of the program, the one Erin and Katelyn are working on this October afternoon, is an after-school tutoring program. Travers pairs Assumption students who need assistance with a tutor from Sacred Heart. The pairing helps both of them.

At the SMARTboard, Katelyn analyzes the mean, median, mode and range of a series of numbers. "I knew it, sort of, but at the same time I kind of was not sure," she says. "I have a test tomorrow. I feel more confident about it now."

Erin, who has already decided to enter the teaching field, finds the experience valuable. "I can figure out what kids have trouble with, and find ways to explain it."

Erin and Katelyn are not the only pair engaged in the tutorial. Eighth-grader Alexander Giannos



EVEN THE MOST DAUNTING MATH CONCEPTS yield their secrets when Assumption School sixth-grader Katelyn Pond gets assistance from Erin Puschak, a junior at Sacred Heart University. The two are taking part in a STEM collaboration linking Our Lady of the Assumption School and SHU.

is diligently converting percentages into fractions, while Amanda Wilkins, a seventh-grader, is working on the order of operations. (For those who took math many years ago, multiplication is done before addition; in the expression $2+3 \times 4$, the answer is 14. Multiply 3×4 first, then add 2.)

"Complicated problems can be extremely daunting," says Amanda's tutor, SHU sophomore Dominique Weigel. "I try to find ways to make it simpler—I wouldn't say easier, because math isn't easy."

Dominique loves math. She isn't sure, though, whether her

path will lead to teaching or to another math-related field. The one-on-one tutoring, as well as her time assisting in Assumption's math classes, will help her with that decision.

For Amanda, there's no question. "Now, when Dominique puts a problem on the board—even a big one—I still get it."

The third component of the collaboration will include a Math Club, with math faculty from Sacred Heart conducting presentations to the Assumption students, and a Math Olympics. The club will fit nicely into Assumption's range of extracurricular activities. The school, which offers pre-K-3 and 4 classes, has a before and after school program. In addition, little ones can enjoy dance classes while older students participate in activities as varied as sports, violin lessons, a Lego program, and band.

"These students may be working on math projects—but at Assumption, they are our projects," says Travers. "We want the best for them. We want to help them succeed."

The collaboration with Sacred Heart University is, for the staff at Assumption, one more way to achieve that goal. ■

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EDITORIAL

Something Different

Thanksgiving. Christmas. New Year's Eve and Day. So much to do, so much to plan for. Black Friday starts Thanksgiving night, and Christmas lights and the tree go up while you nosh on the turkey leftovers. Then someone throws in Advent—please, stop! Enough!

How about something different? Give yourself a pre-Christmas treat this year: go to Confession for Advent. Yeah, that sure sounds different—different and awfully pious!

But Confession at Christmas is not like Confession at Easter (or at your Confirmation, if that was the last time you received the sacrament). The peace of the quiet church, maybe spiced with the warmth of candle wax and the scent of wreaths on the doors, the chance to do something just for yourself, those set the tone for a different kind of experience. You can drop those burdens of anger, resentment, and self-importance at the feet of the priest. At absolution they're gone—less than dust. You're free.

You can greet your family on Christmas morning with an open heart, as well as open arms (yes, it's always family that arouses the best and worst in us, isn't it). At Christmas Mass, you can offer the Sign of Peace and, for once, really feel it. Peace on Earth, and peace in me.

Give it a try.

Much to be thankful for

The St. Augustine Medal of Service recipients highlighted in this issue are the pride and joy of the diocese. The annual prayer service and conferring of medals, held recently at St. Augustine Cathedral in Bridgeport, is a very special moment because it speaks to the best in us and to the blessing of those who lead lives of faith and good works.

This year, Msgr. Jerald A. Doyle, diocesan administrator, presented St. Augustine Medals to 100 men and women, many of them lifetime parishioners, and told them that although they often worked alone, they "did not work in isolation," because they are "building up the Body of Christ."

"Though we may not have been aware of it and perhaps even you did not realize it, you have been building us up, making us stronger, making us more Christ-like," Msgr. Doyle said in praising the medal winners.

It is fitting that the awards are presented before Thanksgiving each year because we owe so much to those who labor in silence and love, who often work alone and unrecognized.

They make our parishes caring, healing and welcoming places. Surely, the depth of their faith, nourished by the gift of the Eucharist, enlarges the meaning of Thanksgiving for the entire human family.

November Storms

How vulnerable we were. The one-two punch of Hurricane Sandy followed by an early season snowstorm sent us reeling. And for a little while, that vulnerability opened us up to each other—neighbors, family members, and strangers. Is it because we realize how helpless we are alone, or how fragile the entire human enterprise is? And that anything short of love and compassion is an impoverished response to the gift or our existence? Many of us lost power, struggled in the dark, slept in the cold, ate poorly and worried. In the blink of an eye, we shuddered through our sudden vulnerability. Those of us who have been through natural and man-made disasters like 9/11 know the feeling; we are initially shocked into openness and generosity, but that spirit fades. Yet, something of the lesson stays with us: no matter how secure our lives may seem, we are always vulnerable in some way, and perhaps that is how it must be before our creator. When the Gospel tells us we must be prepared to lose everything, it speaks to the human condition, but it also offers a fullness that only faith can bring. ■

Prayer in the Days
Before Advent

My brother, Jesus. It happens every year. I think that this will be the year that I have a reflective Advent.

I look forward to Sunday and this new season, Jesus. But all around me are the signs rushing me to Christmas and some kind of celebration that equates spending with love.

I need your help. I want to slow my world down. This year, more than ever, I need Advent, these weeks of reflection and longing for hope in the darkness.

Jesus, this year, help me to have that longing. Help me to feel it in my heart and be aware of the hunger and thirst in my own soul. Deep down, I know there is something missing in my life, but I can't quite reach for it.

I can't get what is missing. I know it is about you, Jesus. You are not missing from my life, but I might be missing the awareness of all of the places you are present there.

Be with me, my dear friend. Guide me in these weeks to what you want to show me this Advent. Help me to be vulnerable enough to ask you to lead me to the place of my own weakness, the very place where I will find you the most deeply embedded in my heart, loving me without limits.

Submitted from
Creighton University
Online Ministries

EDITOR'S CHOICE



GOOD SHEPHERDS—Congratulations to Brendan Fisk and Barnet Phillips, IV, co-founders of Shepherds, Inc., the youth mentoring program that has helped scores of young people across the diocese succeed in high school and go on to college. The dynamic duo received the Business Leadership Award at the recent CAPP breakfast held at Fairfield University.



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

Msgr. Jerald A. Doyle, JCD,
Diocesan Administrator,
has made the following clergy appointments
in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

ADMINISTRATOR

REV. EDWARD MCAULEY, Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Bethel, to Administrator, Saint Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford. Effective date was November 5.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

REV. PAUL D'SOUZA, Diocese of Varanasi, India, to Parochial Vicar, Our Lady of Grace Parish, Stratford. Effective date was October 13.

REV. CHRISTOPHER SAMELE, Parochial Vicar, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Stephen Parish, Trumbull. Effective date was September 18.

CHAPLAIN

REV. WILLIAM PLATT, Chaplain, Saint Mary Hospital, Waterbury, to Chaplain, Saint Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport. Effective date was November 12.

RETIREMENT

REV. GILL BABEU, Pastor, Saint Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford, to retirement. Effective date was November 5.

DEACON

DEACON DAVID SOCHACKI, Deacon, Saint Matthew Parish, Norwalk, to Deacon, Saint Margaret Mary Parish, Shelton. Effective date was October 13.

Rev. Msgr. Kevin Royal, Delegate for Clergy Personnel
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Editorial

Vatican recognizes “Venerable” Fulton J. Sheen



A WOMAN'S VIEW

BY ANTOINETTE BOSCO

Antoinette Bosco is a member of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield.

This summer a news story from the Vatican reported that Pope Benedict XVI had officially approved the “heroic virtues” of the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. This was reported as a major step towards one day declaring him a saint of the Catholic Church. Anyone who watched television back in the decade of the 50’s would remem-

ber this attractive, very human priest who drew us to watch his program that he called “Life is Worth Living.” He would stand there before the cameras, dressed in impressive priestly robes, and preach, always showing a tremendous sense of humor.

I never missed his show because I could brag about how I once got to meet him. That was back in 1945, and I had just start-

ed my studies at the College of St. Rose in Albany, NY. One day, a few of us girls had walked along a downstairs hallway looking for (I don’t remember what) and there in an empty room was sitting this young and gorgeous priest. Of course, we were too shy to start a conversation, but he wasn’t. He smiled and welcomed us.

I don’t remember why he was in Albany, and later I heard he was from Illinois, so I—being a smart college girl—assumed he was on a crucial assignment. A decade and a half later, seeing him on television, I felt very important as I could tell people I had met this television star!

Of course, when I was still in college, I had no way of knowing that one day I was going to be a writer for the Catholic press. I was a pre-med student, hoping to serve the sick as a doctor,

until I had to face the reality, namely that back then, in the late forties, medical schools never accepted women with no financial resources. So I did what I had been doing since I was eight years old: I wrote—specifically choosing to work for the Catholic Press—which brings me back to Archbishop Sheen.

I learned that this television star was very involved in supporting Catholic missions, heading the American branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. What mostly impressed me was learning that he frequently visited prisoners, even those on death row.

Now the Vatican has officially recognized Archbishop Sheen for having (their words) “heroic virtues.” His cause for sainthood was opened ten years ago. What is needed for his beatification is

an authenticated miracle. A recent story in the *New York Times* tells of a reported “miracle” being reviewed by the Vatican, where, after giving birth to a stillborn baby, the mother “prayed repeatedly to Fulton Sheen,” and after 61 minutes, the baby’s heart started beating. Today, the child is a “healthy toddler.”

The cause for Archbishop Sheen’s sainthood is gaining momentum, and as a media person, I am overjoyed and agree with Father Robert Barron—who spreads the Gospel through television—that Archbishop Sheen “is the patron saint of media evangelization.”

I would like to share with you some words given to us by this Christ-lover, Fulton J. Sheen, that I have kept in my Bible for many years—“If you live for Christ, not the slightest moment of your life goes to waste.” Amen! ■

There is darkness before the dawn



A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

We have certainly had a rough ride. Some have had a tougher time than others, but no one in Fairfield County or the Diocese of Bridgeport can claim to have been unaffected by Hurricane Sandy. It has been a true test. Keeping body, mind, and soul together has not been easy.

I truly hope that you and your family remained healthy and safe during the brutal storm and its painful aftermath. For me and my family, the blackout brought some hardships. A week without power meant a refrigerator full of spoiled food. It meant some extra bucks spent on batteries and camping lanterns, and a few frigid nights spent under piles of blankets.

For some reason I found boiling water to do the dishes particu-

larly irksome. On Sunday, day six of the ordeal, the family voted to go out for pizza. I voted for it in part because I just couldn’t face scrubbing pots and pans in the dark. At the restaurant, Patrick, my four-year-old, broke the tension by declaring with heavy eyelids, “I wish I was in bed.”

It was a sentiment I could relate to. After seven days without power, I just wanted to crawl into bed and stay there.

But the storm, and the long days waiting for the lights to come on, also brought some unexpected joys. A week without power meant Daddy stayed home from work. It meant that we could eat together as a family in the evenings. TV wasn’t an option. Instead, we read books together, organized backyard games, and introduced ourselves

to neighbors we hadn’t met yet. These were unexpected blessings and I am truly thankful for them.

Perhaps the greatest challenge was in keeping spirits up. I got up once or twice on the wrong side of the bed. The urge to call and complain about the lack of progress on our street’s damaged utility poles was ever-present. Luckily, my wife was there with gentle reminders to straighten me out. We may not have had hot water, but that was no excuse to lose our minds.

My wife is not an unexpected blessing, but I often don’t deserve her patience.

The week’s privation put me in a reflective mood. I found myself possessed of unexpected gratitude, and not just for the missing modern conveniences that make normal life relatively easy to endure. I was grateful, too, for the struggles and sacrifices of those generations of ancestors I’d never met. I daydreamed about a way of life that used to be. I wondered if I had it in me to live this way all the time.

My grandfathers came to this country to escape real hardships—famine, disease, death. The coffin ships they sailed on weren’t equipped with wifi. These Hennesseys, Nolans, Quinns,

Murphys, and Sullivans had nothing in the way of possessions. Some of them barely had clothes on their backs.

They brought only their faith. How fortunate am I that they did! For some, I suppose, hard times chip away at faith.

For others—for the truly fortunate—faith is strengthened by adversity. My ancestors couldn’t leave me wealth and property, but they left me something of greater value. They left me the tenets of a faith that has for two millennia provided shelter from the storm.

Take away my iPod and my cordless phone. Take away my hot shower and the microwave that warms my coffee. What am I left with? Take away my daily concerns about my appearance. Strip away my fear of failure, my privacy, my sense of humor, and my occasional good cheer. Take all of this stuff and what have I got? What have any of us got?

Faith. That’s it. Faith that we are loved. Faith that we are protected. Faith that we are saved, ultimately, from our earthly

failures and our sins. Faith that when we have lost everything, we still have Him.

Think of how we come into this world—confused and in darkness. Often that’s how we leave it, too. In between, we spend far

“I found boiling water to do the dishes particularly irksome.”

too much of our brief time here worrying about trifles. Like the way I nearly spent my week, stewing over such counter-productive questions as: Why is it taking so long for them to get to my street? Who do I

have to call to get some answers? How come that neighborhood got power and ours didn’t?

I won’t be glad to go through this again. I doubt anyone around here would be. But we must always remember that our true fate is not in the hands of Connecticut Light & Power. Our souls are in the hands of a merciful and loving protector. Even if the lights go out, we have to remember to keep the faith.

For Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12) ■

2012 Saint Augustine Medal of Service CONGRATULATIONS

2012 SAINT AUGUSTINE MEDAL OF SERVICE RECIPIENTS

“Service is the hallmark of a Christian, the true sign of a believer,” Msgr. Jerald A. Doyle, diocesan administrator for the Diocese of Bridgeport, said in his homily before presenting St. Augustine Medals of Service to 100 men and women across the diocese

More than 700 faithful turned out for the annual prayer service and award ceremony, held at St. Augustine Cathedral in downtown Bridgeport.

“Year in and year out you have given generous and constant service to the diocese,” Msgr. Doyle said of the recipients, who were recognized for giving of their time and talents in parishes, schools and charitable works.

Msgr. Doyle thanked the medal winners for the dedication to Christ and the Church. Referring to the day’s reading from Romans 12: 3-8, he told them, “St. Paul tells us we must take what gifts we have and use them to the best of our abilities. Don’t let them be hidden or diminished.”

Many of the medal winners served on parish councils, volunteered to lead youth groups, visited hospitals, worked in soup kitchens, and performed a wide variety of acts including helping with maintenance, cleaning altar linens, leading parish fairs and serving as Eucharistic ministers. (PHOTOS BY MICHELLE BABYAK)



SAINT MARY PARISH, BETHEL: MR. SCOTT SANTIANIELLO – “Scott is a kind and generous man, faith-filled and an inspiration to all. Always giving of his time, talent and treasure, he shares his Catholic faith with all.”
– Father Corey Piccinino, Pastor



OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. MARIA PEDREIRA – “Maria, a long-time parishioner, is now in charge of the vestments for children and people for the candlelight processions and other religious feasts.”
– Father Jose de Brito Alves, Pastor



SAINT ANDREW PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. RICHARD KRUSINSKI – “Rich and Dottie have been long-time members and are active in many ways because of their faith in Jesus and love for the Church. They are an inspirational couple who exemplify stewardship.”
– Father Eugene Szantyr, Pastor



SAINT ANN PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. NORMAN BARNUM – “Both Norm and Pam have been self-sacrificing in their dedication to Saint Ann’s. Their prayers, labor, and deep faith have contributed to every aspect of parish life and even beyond our borders.”
– Father Peter Towsley, Pastor



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. AND MRS. YVES BENOIT – “Frances and Yves are always ready to help whenever the community needs assistance. Their faith and unconditional love for Saint Charles are a blessing among us.”
– Father Edison Orozco, Pastor



SAINT GEORGE PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. WILSON ERAZO – “Wilson has been a great example of generosity in our community and is a faithful minister of communion on Sunday in addition to bringing communion to the sick and elderly.”
– Father Walter Alfredo Frutades, Pastor



SAINT MARGARET SHRINE, BRIDGEPORT: MR. ARMANDO CERQUOZZI – “Mr. Cerquozzi is a proud man of Christian faith who tirelessly gives of himself and asks for nothing. An honest and resourceful man of action, he also volunteers non-stop at the Shrine.”
– Father Alfonso Picone, Rector



SAINT MARY PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. PAULA FUENTES – “Mrs. Fuentes has been enthusiastically involved in all parish activities and functions for many years and is presently coordinating the Ministry of Hospitality.”
– Monsignor Matthew Bernelli, Pastor

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SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MR. TADEUSZ GNIDULA – “In addition to his many ways of faithful witness, Tadeusz has served on the Parish Council and presently assists at Mass and is a Eucharistic Minister.”
– *Father Stefan Morawski, O.F.M. Conv., Pastor*



SAINT PETER PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. LUZ PÉREZ – “Luz, a lifetime parishioner, is always there to serve the parish in every capacity when she is needed and she does it with great generosity and commitment. She helps a great deal in festivals and celebrations.”
– *Monsignor Aniceto Villamide, Pastor*



THE CATHEDRAL PARISH – SAINT AUGUSTINE CATHEDRAL, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. IRENE SKIERSKI – “For her life-long service to our community as a receptionist, and for her excellent example of Catholic life, Irene deserves this honor.”
– *Father Peter Lenox, Administrator*



THE CATHEDRAL PARISH – SAINT PATRICK, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. LUCILLE PICCIRILLO – “Whether organizing the decoration of the church, fundraising, or being active in our Ladies’ Guild, Lucille is well-known for her generosity, patience and faith.”
– *Father Peter Lenox, Administrator*



THE CHURCH OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH, BRIDGEPORT: MRS. ARLENE PARKS – “Arlene is a vital part of the parish who is known for her generosity and care for her brothers and sisters in Christ. She is always the first to volunteer, and is a loving woman of faith.”
– *Father Reggie Norman, Pastor*



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, BROOKFIELD: MR. JOHN MAINHART, SR. – “A former teacher and vice principal at Brookfield High School, this humble and deeply spiritual man has given over much of his retirement to serving the spiritual needs of Saint Joseph Parish.”
– *Father George O’Neill, Pastor*



SAINT MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS PARISH, BROOKFIELD: MR. AND MRS. JAMES BAKER – “They share their talents, time and treasure with the parish for the glory and honor of the Lord. In the name of our parish, I thank them dearly for everything they do.”
– *Father George Sankoorikal, Pastor*



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, DANBURY: MRS. MARIA PEREIRA – “Maria Pereira is one of the Founders of this parish. She helps to organize some of our parish celebrations, and, every year, she is in charge of our Christmas Bazaar.”
– *Father Jose Brito-Martins, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH, DANBURY: MR. OSWALDO CHIN – “As a musician, Oswaldo brings expertise and authority to encourage liturgy while linking others to the action of sacred music. He truly takes care of all of us and our parish.”
– *Father Hector León, Administrator*



SACRED HEART OF JESUS PARISH, DANBURY: MR. GERALD DALY – “Mr. Daly is a lifelong member of Sacred Heart Parish. He is a generous and wise counsel in legal matters. Mr. Daly’s service is an example to us of Gospel faith expressed in charity.”
– *Father Dennis Mason, O.F.M. Conv., Pastor*



SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH, DANBURY: MR. GREGORY WENCEK – “Gregory has been very instrumental in helping to bring Saint Gregory’s into the 21st century age of media. Weekly parish homilies are now available on the internet and iphones for our homebound.”
– *Father Angelo Arrando, Pastor*



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, DANBURY: MR. AND MRS. MARC GRENIER – “Marc and Jeanne Grenier and their extended family have been actively engaged in making Saint Joseph Parish a vibrant community of faith. Both are exemplary in their dedication to the mission of the Parish.”
– *Father Samuel Scott, Pastor*



SAINT PETER PARISH, DANBURY: MR. JOHN EDMOND – “John has been a dedicated sacristan for many years. Active in both the Men’s Society and Community Concerns Committee, John serves both the needs of the parish and the wider community.”
– *Father Gregg Mecca, Pastor*



SAINT JOHN PARISH, DARIEN: MR. AND MRS. PETER WRAY – “Peter and Kris are outstanding in their charity and pastoral zeal. Both have worked with great joy and a most cooperative spirit in the work of evangelization. They live the ideal of Christ’s call to serve.”
– *Monsignor Frank McGrath, Pastor*



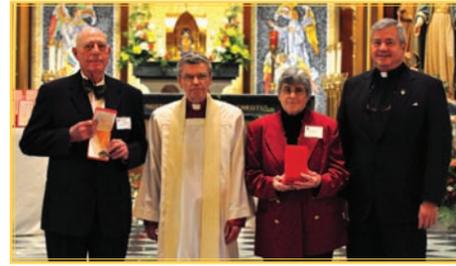
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SAINT THOMAS MORE PARISH, DARIEN: MR. JAMES SULLIVAN – “Jim has been a member of the parish since 1992, serving as an Usher, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Youth Minister, and Member of the Finance Committee. Well done, Jim.” – *Father Paul Murphy, Pastor*



NOTRE DAME PARISH, EASTON: MRS. SHARON STEMME – “Sharon Stemme is a Religious Education teacher, a Lector and Eucharistic Minister. She is very involved in our parish Ladies Council. We are pleased to honor her.” – *Monsignor Thomas Driscoll, P.A., Pastor*



HOLY CROSS PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. PATRICK WALSH – “Both Patrick and Mary have been extremely active in volunteering their time, talent, and energy in many activities. We thank them for their selflessness in giving devotion to God, country, and parish.” – *Father Alfred Pecaric, Pastor*



HOLY FAMILY PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MRS. ANNE CHATLOS – “Anne has been a trustee, coordinator of RCIA, and prayer group leader as well as home-bound visitor and Eucharistic Minister. We pray the good Lord will continue to guide her in all her endeavours.” – *Father Guido Montanaro, Pastor*



OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. ALFRED KARPINSKI – “Al is a faithful and committed Catholic who witnesses to Christ in so many ways by serving as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist and visiting the sick at St. Vincent’s.” – *Father William Quinlan, Administrator*



SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. THOMAS MEYERS – “Tom personifies the faithful disciple of Christ. He is ever-present at morning Mass, usually opening the church and serving as the adult server. Tom is a welcoming face of the parish.” – *Father John Baran, Pastor*



SAINT EMERY PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. ANDREW REPASI – “Taking part in many parish activities, Andrew and Elizabeth have been most supportive of their Hungarian culture and their Catholic faith. They are people one can call upon whenever there is a need.” – *Father Guido Montanaro, Administrator*



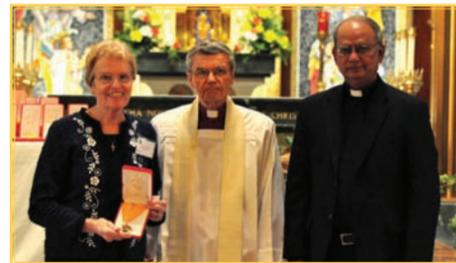
SAINT PIUS X PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MR. ERNEST PIERSON – “Ernie has been a tremendous help in building our new Faith Center Building. He serves as a lay member of the parish corporation and is always available with his accounting expertise.” – *Father Michael Dogali, Pastor*



SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH, FAIRFIELD: MRS. SANDY ZERA – “This Christian woman reaches to all people in their various needs. From her support of our music program to taking care of the altar during the week, Sandy has been a tremendous asset to the parish.” – *Father Victor Martin, Pastor*



SACRED HEART PARISH, GEORGETOWN: MR. AND MRS. JAMES FAGAN – “Jim and Gen are Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and skilled volunteers. Their cheerful spirits and depth of faith are great examples to all of us here at Sacred Heart.” – *Father David Leopold, Pastor*



SACRED HEART PARISH, GREENWICH: MRS. CAROLE WIEMER – “A teacher and Prayer Group leader, Carole graciously accepts life’s challenges and continues on her journey because of her deep faith, love and trust in the Lord and she shares them with all.” – *Father Bose Raja Selvaraj, Pastor*



SAINT AGNES PARISH, GREENWICH: MS. TRECIE FENNEL – “Trecie is a long time devoted member of the parish. She served on the Parish Council, and is a Eucharistic Minister. She devotes many hours weekly to the patients of Nathaniel Witherell Nursing Home.” – *Father James McDevitt, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, GREENWICH: MR. AND MRS. MICHAEL RISPOLI – “Michael and Frances have been very community minded and have helped many individuals in the parish over the years. They are an example of service to everyone.” – *Monsignor Francis Wissel, Pastor*



SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH AND SAINT TIMOTHY CHAPEL, GREENWICH: MR. OWEN DOWD – “Owen Dowd has generously served the parish as a volunteer overseeing the repairs and maintenance of the buildings and grounds.” – *Monsignor J. Peter Cullen, P.A., Pastor*

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SAINT ROCH PARISH, GREENWICH: MR. ROCCO NATALE (POSTHUMOUSLY) AND MRS. JUDY NATALE – “Rocco ‘Skip’ was a lifelong member and served as President of the Parish Council and Chairman of Buildings and Grounds. Judy is the founder of our ‘Knitting Angels’” – *Father Matthew Mauriello, Pastor*



SAINT JUDE PARISH, MONROE: MR. AND MRS. DOUG STEVENS – “Doug and Ellen Stevens chair the ministry for Eucharistic Ministers, maintaining the roster and scheduling the ministers for the Masses. They are always ready to share their time and talent with Saint Jude Parish.” – *Monsignor John Sabia, Pastor*



SAINT ALOYSIUS PARISH, NEW CANAAN: MS. JOAN QUICK – “Joan Quick is a tireless volunteer at Saint Aloysius, where she assists in the Religious Education Program instructing students with special needs. She lives her faith quietly but very effectively.” – *Monsignor William Scheyd, P.A., Pastor*



SAINT EDWARD THE CONFESSOR PARISH, NEW FAIRFIELD: MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM McDERMOTT – “Bill and Doris McDermott have served the parish faithfully for many years. They run the Homefront Project, which gathers workers and supplies to refurbish local homes.” – *Father Nicholas Cirillo, Pastor*



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA PARISH, NEWTOWN: MR. AND MRS. JAMES HEALEY – “Lynda and Jim spend every Sunday at our local nursing home, the day on which many residents are alone. They are a true blessing, especially to those who have no family or friends in the area.” – *Monsignor Robert Weiss, Pastor*



SAINT JEROME PARISH, NORWALK: MR. DONALD PARKS – “Don Parks is one of the quiet heroes at the parish. He has worked behind the scenes for decades as a Eucharistic Minister and sound system volunteer. He is always just a phone call away.” – *Father David Blanchfield, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, NORWALK: MS. PATRICIA WALSH – “A lifelong parishioner, Pat keeps the daily life of the parish running by filling the holy water fonts, changing the votive candles, and much more through her prayerful example. We thank God for her presence.” – *Father Greg Markey, Pastor*



SAINT MATTHEW PARISH, NORWALK: MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH ROMANO – “Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.” These words of Saint Augustine truly reflect the lives of Joseph and Florence Romano.” – *Monsignor Walter Orlowski, Pastor*



SAINT PHILIP PARISH, NORWALK: MR. PAUL SULLIVAN – “Paul is a ‘life-time’ member of our choir and a Cantor. He is also very active in the Men’s and Youth Ministries. His happiness is contagious. He inspires through wit and faith.” – *Father Michael Boccaccio, Pastor*



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH, NORWALK: MR. MICHAEL AMATO – “Michael faithfully serves every day in our St. Vincent de Paul Pantry and makes frequent runs to the food bank to extend Christian hospitality to the needy.” – *Father Robert Crofut, Pastor*



SAINT PATRICK PARISH, REDDING RIDGE: MRS. BETTY LICARIE – “Betty has been a member of the parish for 37 years, involved in many aspects of parish life as a Eucharistic Minister and Parish Council member. It is with great joy that we honor such a vital part of our parish family.” – *Father Joseph Cervero, Pastor*



SAINT ELIZABETH SETON PARISH, RIDGEFIELD: MR. AND MRS. PAUL AGOSTINI – “Paul and Rosana have served the parish in ministries like the Parish Council, Building Committee and Dorothy Day House. They are generous beyond measure in giving of their time and talent.” – *Father Joseph Prince, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, RIDGEFIELD: MR. HARRY KENT – “Harry is a senior choir member, adding his baritone voice to the other voices and in doing so, enhancing parish worship. Harry has been a shining example of the gift of time and talent to our faith community.” – *Monsignor Laurence Bronkiewicz, Pastor*



SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, RIVERSIDE: MR. ROBERT SLOANE – “Robert Sloane assists people in obtaining employment and evaluating their skills through our ‘Support Circle.’ He has been very generous with his time in support of parish activities.” – *Monsignor Alan Detscher, Pastor*



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, SHELTON: MRS. MARY ORAZIETTI – “Mary can be found each Tuesday and Thursday at the parish Adoration Chapel, where she prays for the needs of the parish and anyone who asks for prayers. Mary is a loyal parishioner who lives her faith.” – *Monsignor Christopher Walsh, Pastor*

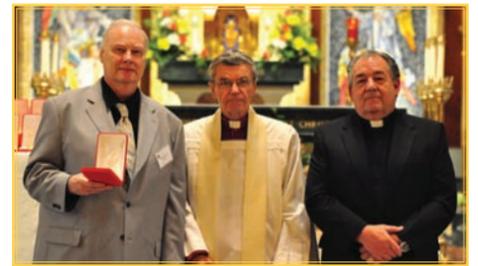


SAINT LAWRENCE PARISH, SHELTON: MRS. CAROL CALANDRA – “For her selfless service, generosity and expertise, Carol is a quiet and steady paradigm of Christian witness.” – *Father Michael Jones, Pastor*

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SAINT MARGARET MARY ALAOCQUE PARISH, SHELTON: MR. AND MRS. RONALD ODDO – “Stacey and Ron have been active parishioners for many years, serving as leaders in the ‘The Walk’ youth group. They are wonderful people and a great gift to the parish family.” – *Father John Stronkowski, Administrator*



HOLY TRINITY PARISH, SHERMAN: MR. JOHN GEORGE AUER – “George is the all-around *chef de maison* for Holy Trinity’s participation in the Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen. His kindness and exuberance in all that he does is a genuine model of selfless giving.” – *Father Alfred Reindeau, Jr., Pastor*



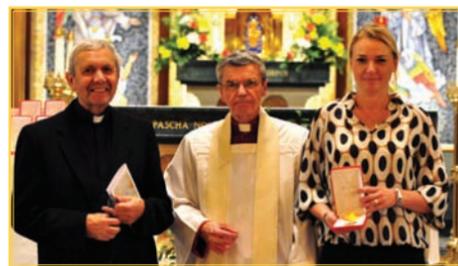
SAINT LADISLAUS PARISH, SOUTH NORWALK: MS. PALMA COLAROSSO – “Palma is our Volunteer Director of Religious Education, St. Ann Society Fund Raising Committees’ Annual Tag Sale organizer, Church Decorations and our ‘Coffee And’ coordinator.” – *Father Michael Bachman, Pastor*



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. TERESA AUGUSTYN – “Teresa is an exemplar of a dedicated volunteer. She takes great care of the beauty of our church and helps in many initiatives around the parish.” – *Father Pawel Hrebenko, Administrator*



HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. LYNDIA NADIN – “Lynda is a Eucharistic Minister who brings communion to the residents of Scofield Manor and volunteers at Greenwich Hospital. She is a gift to Holy Spirit parish.” – *Father Robert Hyl, Pastor*



OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. VALERIE VINCENT – “Valerie has displayed a dedication to the spiritual formation of young girls in our parish for many years. By establishing and moderating a youth club for girls, she’s nurtured seeds of personal virtue.” – *Monsignor Edward Surwilo, Pastor*



SACRED HEART PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. LOUIS SILEO – “Louis Sileo has been a vigilant steward of the parish resources. Committed to living his Catholic Faith, he generously has dedicated hours as Chairman of the Parish Finance Council.” – *Father Richard Futie, Pastor*



SAINT BENEDICT-OUR LADY OF MONTSERRAT PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. MIMMA CALIFANO – “Mimma is a long-time parishioner. She is very active as a trustee and is always generous in helping out when necessary. She is very devoted to the Blessed Mother and Padre Pio.” – *Father Arthur Mollenbauer, Administrator*



SAINT BRIDGET OF IRELAND PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. ALBERT GRIFFITH – “Albert is a devoted parishioner, faithful in serving in any way he can. Always ready to help with any and all activities. He has a good heart and is a devout soul. He served as Lector as well as Eucharistic Minister.” – *Father Gill Babeu, Pastor*



SAINT CECILIA PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. THERESA SIGNORILE – “A loyal parishioner for years, Theresa has been a Eucharistic Minister and a member of our Resurrection Guild, serving funerals for many years and helps set up for Mass almost every morning.” – *Father David Riley, Pastor*



SAINT CLEMENT OF ROME PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. ANTHONY PAGANO (POSTHUMOUSLY) AND MRS. ANN PAGANO – “Ann Pagano and her late husband Tony have been truly humble servants of our parish and worthy of praise. Even during his illness, Tony served the parish.” – *Father Joseph Malloy, Pastor*



SAINT GABRIEL PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. MADELEINE TERENCE – “Madeleine is active in many areas of parish life including St. Gabriel Women’s Group, Youth Group, and Hospitality. She also devotes time by preparing sandwiches for the New Covenant House.” – *Father Cyprian LaPastina, Pastor*



SAINT LEO PARISH, STAMFORD: MRS. ANN HOGAN – “Ann serves as a Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Parish Fair volunteer and Social Concerns Committee member. Ann is a part of all of the spiritual, social, and educational ministries of our parish.” – *Father James Grosso, Pastor*



SAINT MARY PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. GEORGE CONANT – “George grew up in Stamford and attended St. Mary Parochial School. He is a volunteer for all parish activities including the annual parish fair. He is one of our longest attending members.” – *Father Arthur Mollenbauer, Pastor*



SAINT MAURICE PARISH, STAMFORD: MR. AND MRS. THOMAS PIA – “Janet and Tom have been involved in almost every aspect of parish life for 75+ years! As stewards they have both given their time and talents in many ways including service in faith formation and liturgy.” – *Father Albert Pinciario III, Pastor*



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH, STRATFORD: MRS. RITA MCMANUS – “Rita has been a parishioner at Holy Name for most of her life. As a member of the Parish Council, tag sale volunteer and faithful member of the Ladies Guild, she is most worthy of honor.” – *Father Andrew Marus, Pastor*

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OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, STRATFORD: MRS. LINDA SKOWRONSKI – “Linda attends daily Mass, and is a Eucharistic Minister. She leads the parish Bible Study and has assisted in our parish Religious Education Program. She shares her faith and love with enthusiasm.” – *Monsignor Martin P. Ryan, Administrator*



OUR LADY OF PEACE PARISH, STRATFORD: MRS. MARGARET PETERSEN – “Peg Petersen has quietly served as a Religious Education teacher and Social Concerns volunteer for 19 years. Her love for the Lord is shown in her service to His people.” – *Father Richard Murphy, Pastor*



SAINTE JAMES PARISH, STRATFORD: MS. JACQUELINE TOMSCHECK – “Jackie is an Outreach Volunteer to the needy and serves our Liturgical Ministry as an acolyte, Lector and Eucharistic Minister. Jackie is a true and living example of how we are called to love one another.” – *Father Thomas Lynch, Pastor*



SAINTE MARK PARISH, STRATFORD: MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH DONIA – “Joe and Deanne exemplify the virtues of generosity and charity by fully participating in the charitable and liturgical life of the parish. Both are daily communicants and devoted to the Blessed Mother.” – *Father Donald Guglielmi, Pastor*



CHRIST THE KING PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. JAMES MCNAMARA – “Jim is the current Finance Chair, a Eucharistic Minister and Lector, and a choir member. He is thoroughly generous, devoted and committed to his parish.” – *Father Lawrence Carew, Pastor*



SAINTE CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. STEPHEN SABO – “Steve directed the choir for 23 years and has been Saint Catherine’s representative to the Trumbull Interfaith Committee for 25 years.” – *Monsignor Richard Shea, Pastor*



SAINTE STEPHEN PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. PATRICK DITULLIO – “Pat has been a great example to our young people. He has volunteered as a Religious Ed teacher, Youth Project coordinator and Confirmation teacher for 20 years. He is a parish treasure.” – *Father Stephen Gleeson, Pastor*



SAINTE THERESA PARISH, TRUMBULL: MR. AND MRS. JAMES FRISINO – “Jim and Jeanne have been long time members of Saint Theresa’s, giving so much of themselves for the love of their parish through the years.” – *Father Brian Gannon, Pastor*



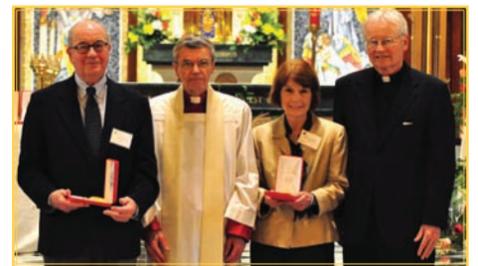
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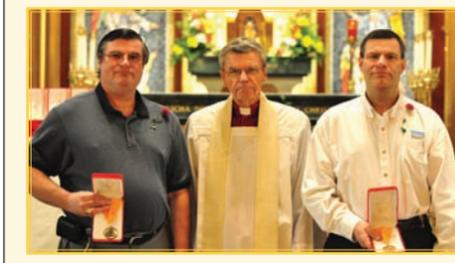
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SAINTE LUKE PARISH, WESTPORT: MR. WILLIAM VALIANT – “Bill is the good and faithful servant, quietly and prayerfully in the background, no matter the event, making sure that the details of hospitality and good order are always in place.” – *Monsignor Andrew Varga, Pastor*



OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH, WILTON: MR. AND MRS. MARTIN KENNEDY – “Marty and Mary are long time members of our parish. They both have led the evening Rosary and First Saturday prayers in our parish. They continue to give endless hours of service to our parish.” – *Father Michael Palmer, Pastor*



DIocese OF BRIDGEPORT: MR. BENEDICT DANIELCZUK – “Ben has been a volunteer, helping to wheel residents to Mass in the Health Care Center since 1975, and a Lector at Mass for years.” – *Reverend George Maslar, OFM Conv., Chaplain of Bridgeport Health Care*



DIocese OF BRIDGEPORT: MR. GEORGE DANIELCZUK – “George has been active at the Health Center for more than 30 years. he has dedicated himself to helping wheel the residents for Mass on Sundays and whenever he can.” – *Reverend George Maslar, OFM Conv., Chaplain of Bridgeport Health Care*



CATHOLIC EDUCATION: MR. R. BRADFORD EVANS – “The students at Saint Raphael School are delighted with the science lab that Mr. Evans’s kindness has made possible. Brad has exceeded all expectations as a member of the School Advisory Board.” – *Dr. Margaret Dames, Superintendent*



CATHOLIC EDUCATION: MR. WALLY HURD – “Wally Hurd has been the president of the All Saints Catholic School Home School Association since 2009. He lives the Gospel values and is always there to do whatever needs to be done.” – *Dr. Margaret Dames, Superintendent*



CATHOLIC CHARITIES: SISTER EILEEN BOFFA – “Sister Eileen is a Sister of Mercy who ministers to the poor and all those who need comfort and support through The Thomas Merton Center. Having Sister Eileen around is a blessing to guest and staff.” – *Al Barber, President*



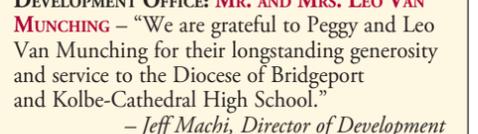
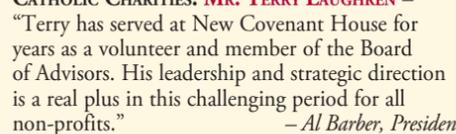
CATHOLIC CHARITIES: DR. ROGER LAGRATTA – “Dr. LaGratta, a retired surgeon, has served the Danbury community and Catholic Charities for more than 25 years. He also reflects the qualities of the medal in his faith and family life.” – *Al Barber, President*



CATHOLIC CHARITIES: MR. TERRY LAUGHREN – “Terry has served at New Covenant House for years as a volunteer and member of the Board of Advisors. His leadership and strategic direction is a real plus in this challenging period for all non-profits.” – *Al Barber, President*



DEVELOPMENT OFFICE: MR. AND MRS. LEO VAN MUNCHING – “We are grateful to Peggy and Leo Van Munching for their longstanding generosity and service to the Diocese of Bridgeport and Kolbe-Cathedral High School.” – *Jeff Machi, Director of Development*



Advent

RCIA Congress helps
Catholics share their faith

By PAT HENNESSY

"Two words sum up the Catholic faith: love, and forgive," said Susan Filan. "Love one another as I have loved you, and forgive others and forgive yourself."

Filan's witness to her path from her Jewish roots to baptism in the Catholic faith at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown was one of the highlights of the RCIA Congress held November 10 at St. Luke Parish in Westport. Over 100 directors of faith formation and religious education teachers attended the congress, the first held in this diocese.

"The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, RCIA, is a great gift to the Church," says Gina Donnarummo, director of adult formation for the diocesan Office for Pastoral Services. Every year, she says, over 250

people come to the diocesan-wide Rite of Election, the last step before receiving the sacraments of initiation during the Easter Vigil. "That's a big number for this small diocese."

Pastoral Services held the Congress as part of the observance of the Year of Faith called by Pope Benedict XVI. "The Year of Faith is about evangelization, sharing our faith and our love of Jesus," says Donnarummo. "We hope to get people inspired, and give parishes the tools they need to do this."

Along with the witness talk by Filan, participants heard a keynote address, "Beyond What Jesus Would Do," by Fr. Ian Jeremiah, parochial vicar at St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan.

"Our lives are all about coming to know our need for Jesus Christ," Fr. Jeremiah said. "We

can give of ourselves because of who we are—a child of God."

Through personal examples, Fr. Jeremiah encouraged participants to understand what it means to be a Christian. It's not by the effort of trying to work out what Jesus would do, he said, but something deeper and more intuitive.

"It means to allow Christ to draw out of us the beautiful music we are all capable of producing," he said. "We are born to new life, baptized into love. We are called to spread the fragrance of Christ in the world."

"This is such a warmhearted ministry," said Janice Jordan, echoing Fr. Jeremiah's thoughts. Jordan is in charge of the RCIA process at Holy Trinity Parish in Sherman, a cozy parish of 250 families tucked into the northern corner of Fairfield County.

"Adults really want to know their faith. Sometimes they'll come to me because their baby is being baptized, and they really want to be part of the faith of their child. They'll say, 'I'm Catholic, but I don't really understand the Mass.' In many ways,



A LIFELONG JOURNEY of exploration led Susan Filan to join the Catholic faith. Her witness at the RCIA Congress held November 10 led to energetic questions from participants. They, in turn, hope to bring the RCIA process back to their parishes. (PHOTO BY MICHELLE BABYAK)

I'm the one who grows in faith because of their search."

To help RCIA coordinators and presenters, workshops followed the opening address and witness talk. The workshops covered ways to handle the needs of children and teens coming into the Church; welcoming people in their first, tentative, contact with RCIA presenters and parish ministers; and best practices and available assistance.

Two priests, Fr. Gustavo Falla, director of the ministry to Spanish-speaking Catholics, and Fr. Bernardo Rodriguez, a former pastor of Nuestra Señora de Montserrat Parish in Stamford who now works in prison ministry, held workshops in Spanish. Hispanics are now the largest single ethnic group among Catholics in Fairfield County.

The tradition of receiving the sacraments, especially Baptism and First Holy Communion, is

strong in the Hispanic heritage, explained Miryam Calle, who heads the RCIA process at St. Mary Parish in Stamford and at nearby St. Benedict-Nuestra Señora de Montserrat Parish. Many adult Catholics are drawn into the RCIA process through their children. "They're enthusiastic about being catechized, learning their faith at the same time as their children."

In any language or tradition, the purpose of the RCIA process is the same. "We're giving Jesus Christ to people, sharing what our faith means to us," said Pam Franco, who is in charge of the RCIA process at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Weston.

"The RCIA process in a parish is a personal invitation. It shows that people care. It can be hard for Catholics to share our faith. Through RCIA, we can say 'join our relationship with our Church and with Jesus Christ.'" ■

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& the entire Faith Formation Team,
for sharing your faith
with our children!
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November 2012

Advent

Sr. Eileen offers ministry of friendship

By PAT HENNESSY

"My purpose was simply to say a kind word, give a gentle look, compassionately hear a person's sorrows," says Sr. Eileen Boffa, RSM.

Following the charism of her order, the Sisters of Mercy, she wanted to work directly with the poor. "I prayed, 'God teach me what to do,'" says Sr. Eileen, who had recently retired from teaching at St. Catherine Academy for special needs children in Fairfield.

God took Sr. Eileen to a street corner in downtown Bridgeport where people tended to hang out. They might be homeless or hungry or merely lonely, looking for a way to exchange a smile with another person.

"It was easy," says Sr. Eileen of her street ministry. "If someone looks alone or lonely, I'll say 'hi' and tell them my name."

Sometimes that exchange is the end of the contact. Other times it may lead to a shared cup of coffee or hot chocolate in a nearby Dunkin Donuts. "We'll talk a little, and I'll ask, 'Have you had breakfast?'" Sr. Eileen's concern for their situation may mean as much to a struggling



"THERE'S A TREMENDOUS NEED to simply spend time with people," says Sr. Eileen Boffa, left, sharing a cheerful conversation with guests at the Thomas Merton Center in Bridgeport. "I'm not looking to get someone housing or solve their problems. I do a lot of listening."

young mother or a man between jobs as the offer of a hot meal on a cold day.

Following God's prompting, Sr. Eileen began dropping in at centers that care for the hungry or homeless, including the Thomas Merton Center for Hospitality, CCAR (the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery), and the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), a program of the Southwest Connecticut Mental Health System. Sometimes she joins the HOT night team, who cruise the lonely streets looking for people who are sleeping outdoors. The team may offer them blankets or—a heartbreaking thought—give them some cardboard as a buffer from the hard cement of the sidewalk.

"There are so many gaps, so many tremendous gaps in the way we can reach people," Sr. Eileen says.

While meeting people on the street remains an important aspect of her ministry, she says that being a regular visitor in the drop-in cen-

ters leads to a higher level of trust.

"There's a tremendous need to simply spend time with people," she says. "I'm not looking to get someone housing or solve their problems. I don't want to be doing things that agencies can take care of. I do a lot of listening. If I can reduce their burdens a little bit, that makes my day."

In some cases, her knowledge of resources can help make a person's life easier. "I met an elderly woman who carried the only utensil she had left—a plastic fork—around with her everywhere. She had no pots or pans in her apartment." A simple phone call connected the woman with help. The father of five children who had been laid off from his job needed a bike so he could go look for jobs. A young mother needed a ride to St. Vincent's Medical Center; a copy of her baby's birth certificate would ensure her a room in a shelter.

"I really feel the presence of God in these folks," says Sr. Eileen. "There's such a simplicity and openness about them. Jesus,

more than any other person, understood that we find God in other people—not on Cloud Nine. God is always present among the poor, the downtrodden, the suffering."

The compassion of Jesus finds full expression at the Thomas Merton Center. The Merton Center draws from the love of the poor embodied in the lives of Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day. "Most people call this a soup kitchen, but it is a House of Hospitality," says Merton's director Mark Grasso. "We spend more time talking about how to treat people than on what to feed them. A lot of our people are not used to being treated with respect."

At places of refuge like the Merton Center, Sr. Eileen looks for those who are lonely, who need someone to talk to or a little extra encouragement to make it through the day.

"She more than sits and talks—she's active," says Rose DeVellis, a Merton Center guest. "She helps a lot of people."

DeVellis, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Bridgeport who started coming to the Merton Center after a hospitalization derailed her life, is a member of its Spirituality Group with Sr. Eileen. "It's been a new beginning, a growth for me," she says. With the encouragement of Sr. Eileen and the Merton staff, she has begun running an art class at the

center. "It's helped me be myself."

"Companionship means a lot," adds her friend Pat, another Merton Center guest. "Having someone to socialize with is as important as having a meal."

Given friendship and encouragement Pat, too, contributes back, working in the kitchen one day each week. "Sr. Eileen is doing is what Jesus would do." ■



**Sacred Heart
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wishes to thank
Carol Bates
and all *our*
Catechists
for echoing
the faith to
the generations.

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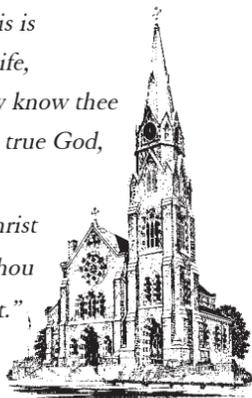
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(John 17:3)



Thanks and blessings



to
our entire
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St. Aloysius
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*With Thanks &
Blessings To Our
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Education Team*



Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton

Advent



GOLF SCORES FOR ST. VINCENT'S COLLEGE—James Bergers, administrator of Lord Chamberlain Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Stratford, and Martin K. Sbriglio, CEO of Ryders Health Management, presented a \$33,000 check to Dr. Martha K. Shouldis, president/CEO of St. Vincent's College at the 2nd Annual St. Vincent's College Golf Tournament held recently at Oronoque Country Club in Stratford. More than 120 players turned out for the event, which raised funds for the expansion of St. Vincent's College, which has seen a dramatic growth in enrollment. "These are exciting times of growth, and we're very grateful for the men and women who came out to support the future of healthcare in our community by investing in the college and its students," Dr. Shouldis said. Within the last few years, enrollment has grown tremendously and there is an urgent need for more classrooms, laboratories, offices and student learning spaces. For enrollment information call 800.873.1013. ■

BASIS FOR SOCIAL ACTION FROM PAGE 5

Democrats can create a bridge the country needs to move forward."

Fr. Ryscavage, who formerly ran the Migration and Refugee Services Office of the United States Catholic Bishops Conference (USCCB), said that all social action must first be motivated by love. "We must love first before we do social justice. It can't be achieved by haters, by those who polarize and those who don't love."

Before the talk by Fr. Ryscavage, CAPP President Bill Fox of Stamford presented the CAPP Business Leadership Award to Brendan Fisk of Fairfield and Barnet Phillips, IV, of Greenwich for their work in co-founding Shepherds, a mentoring program that has helped inner city youth complete high school and go on to college.

Fox said the program created by Fisk and Phillips reflects "the dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity at the core of Catholic Social

Teaching. Since it was founded in 1997, it has helped over 240 students to complete high school and go on to college."

In accepting the award, Barnet Phillips said that then-Bishop Edward Egan (now Cardinal Egan) encouraged him to start the mentoring program, which has helped students at Kolbe-Cathedral High School in Bridgeport and other Catholic high schools.

"These are kids who come from neighborhoods with 55% graduation rate and are at risk of falling through the cracks. In the last six years, we've had 100% of our students go on to high education. Public schools can't say that," said Phillips.

Fisk introduced some former students who are now serving as mentors in the Shepherds program. "I challenge you to reach out to the youth, he said. "You'll find they are going to hold on tight and it's going to make a difference in their lives." ■

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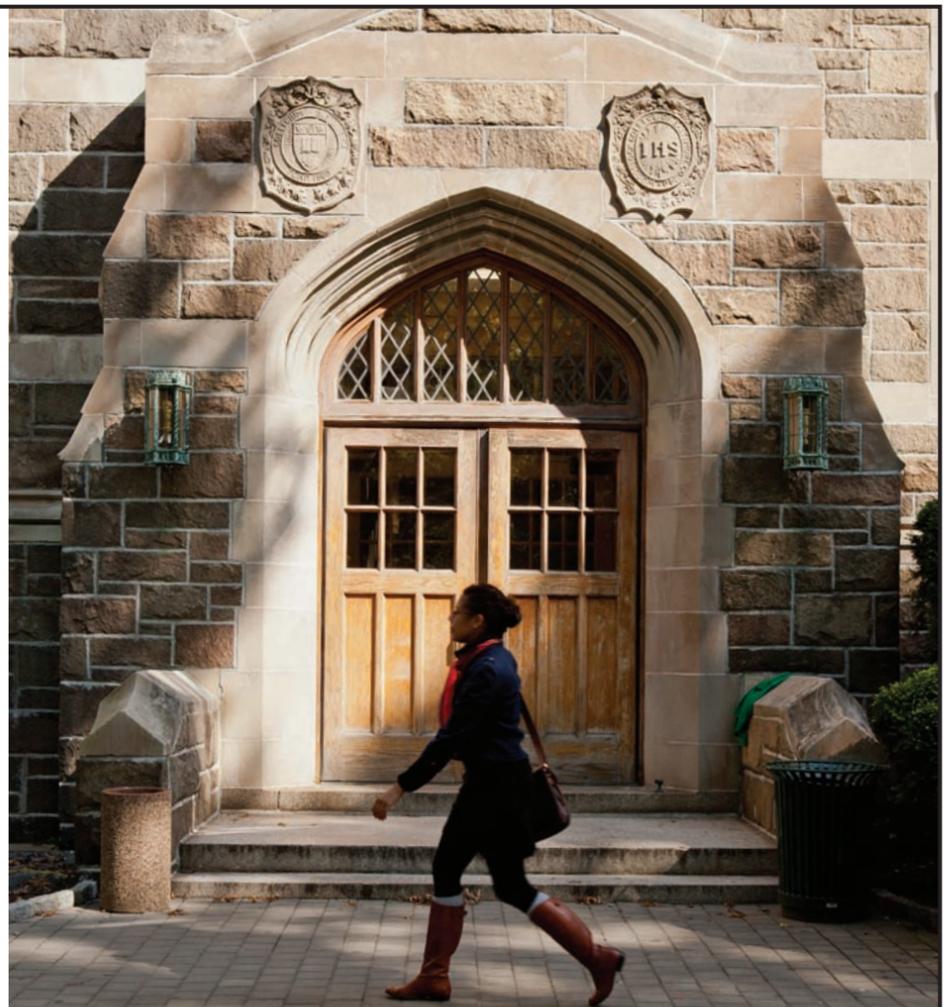
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November 2012

Advent

“Think about Jesus first”

By PAT HENNESSY

“The middle school kids are the hardest ones to buy presents for. They’re too old for toys,” says Liz Harakal, the director of religious education (DRE) at St. Stephen Parish in Trumbull. “I tell my middle school students, ‘Go out and buy something you would want for yourself—something you would wear, something you would like to read. But don’t let Mom and Dan shell out the money for it. Pay for it out of your own money.’”

Every Advent season, the religious education students at St. Stephen’s collect new toys for the Daughters of Charity Rescue Mission in Bridgeport, run by Sr. Theresa Tremblay. “Our goal is not just to give kids information about their faith, important as that is,” says Harakal. “Our goal is to mirror the life of Jesus Christ. We have to learn that our first thought is for others, then ourselves.”

That goal is evident throughout the year, not just at Advent and Christmas. “We have a fantastic program, we really do,” says Fr. Stephen Gleeson, St. Stephen’s pastor. “Liz gets

the parents involved, too. They learn things about their faith they hadn’t known before.”

Harakal, in return, appreciates the support and love of St. Stephen’s families. “It’s wonderful to see the young families all together at the Family Mass. My faith has multiplied ten times over because of the people in this parish.”

The Family Mass, held at 9:30 am the first Sunday of every month, is followed by a community breakfast that lets parents get to know each other. Held from October through April, it sets the welcoming tone of St. Stephen’s religious education program.

“At the breakfast, you’re able to chat with families and meet other people,” says Lisa Hughes. She and her husband, Chris, are the parents of four children, two boys and two girls. “That makes you feel good about where you’re sending your children. Our kids feel like they’re part of a community.”

The entire parish catches the spirit of living out the Gospel message. During November, the Family Mass saw the kickoff for the Thanksgiving food collection. “It makes your heart want

to burst to see the littlest ones,” says Harakal. “They’re hardly big enough to walk, but they’re bringing up a can of soup.”

The food will fill the food pantry of Blessed Sacrament Parish, the center for aid in one of Bridgeport’s poorest sections. This year, in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, the donations are needed more intensely than ever. On November 19, Blessed Sacrament’s Gospel Choir will sing at the 7:30 pm Mass, surrounded by an altar heaped with food.

Another Family Mass marks the first Sunday in Advent. While children in the religious education program bring in toys, St. Stephen’s altar will also be home to a Giving Tree. Over the weeks of Advent, parishioners will surround the tree with practical necessities: pajamas, clothing, hats, sweaters, gloves. “We can get caught up in so many things as Christmas approaches,” says Harakal. “The toy collection and the Giving Tree are a nice way



A SPIRIT OF GIVING brings the Gospel message home to children in the religious education program at St. Stephen Parish. Starting at the Family Mass in November, the kids gather food for needy families. In Advent, the focus will shift to bringing in toys for poor children. (PHOTO BY WARREN HARAKAL)

to sum it up, to remind ourselves that Christmas is truly the birth of Our Lord.”

The highlight of Advent comes during the second week in December, when all the religious education classes will have the chance to take part in a Candlelight Advent Service, with young voices singing the traditional Christmas carols. It’s a beautiful way to sum up the spirit of the season.

“It gives you the atmosphere that this is a special time of year,” says Hughes. “It’s not just reading out of a book. The children

learn about how Jesus was born, and the love he brings to us. You give that love to others; that’s one of the biggest things they’ve learned.”

Hughes recounts with pride an anecdote certain to warm the hearts of Harakal, the priests at St. Stephen’s, and every catechist. Her youngest daughter, Jane, was watching an older brother make his Christmas list. “Christmas is about baby Jesus,” Jane, who is eight, scolded her brother. “There’s nothing wrong with thinking about presents, but you have to think about Jesus first!” ■

VATICAN II FROM PAGE 6

said Baum, who admitted he was saddened by the lack of progress but said he remained hopeful and found strength in his prayer life.

Baum said the Council’s rediscovery of Baptism empowered the laity “to act, to speak and to perform in the Church.” He said the growing number of laymen and women theologians around the world encouraged him. “This is a new phenomenon. We have theologians who are not priests. This did not happen in the 19th century. Lay people have made an enormous contribution.”

Fr. Orsy said Catholics should look upon the new liturgy as an ongoing gift from the Council. “The revival of the liturgy was a success of the Council,” he said, noting that the language adopted after the Council was not a departure from tradition, but a change “that actually brought the Mass closer to the prayers, rites and celebration of the early Church.”

In a question and answer session following the panel discussion, many of those in attendance

asked how they could implement the teaching of the Council.

“Don’t be afraid of change,” Lash told them. Baum said, “We all have different vocations. Do what you can do. The Spirit is with us.”

The three men were honored on the concluding day during Convocation in the University’s Chapel of the Holy Spirit. The three-day celebration culminated with a special concert performance of Mass of the New Light by composer Peter-Anthony Togni, also in the chapel, to commemorate the Council’s 50th anniversary.

Sacred Heart University was founded in 1963, just a year after the opening of the Second Vatican Council—and was the first Roman Catholic institution of higher learning in the United States to be led and staffed by lay people. With its direct historical affiliation with the Council, Sacred Heart has dedicated the year of the Council’s 50th anniversary to honoring its remarkable work and how it radically reshaped the Church. ■



SHARE (Sacred Heart Adult Religious Education) for the Diocese of Bridgeport is a four-year certificate program created through a partnership between Sacred Heart University and the Diocese of Bridgeport. This theology program for adults will help Catholics understand their faith and empower them to put it into action. SHARE has a no-test format. Students can take one or more classes, or complete the entire four-year certificate program from SHU and the Diocese.

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the Scriptures, the clarification of the Trinity as discovered by the Early Church, and our continuing experience of the Trinitarian God in Creation, Liturgy, and the life of prayer.

- 4-week course: Wednesdays, November 28, December 5, 12, 19
- Instructor: Fr. Donald Guglielmi
- \$140

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Sports

At Kolbe-Cathedral, Hodges wins quietly and often

By DON HARRISON

To the basketball cognoscenti, Lisa Hodges' coaching accomplishments at Kolbe-Cathedral, the small Catholic high school overlooking downtown Bridgeport, have flown under the radar.

Yes, her teams have won no fewer than five state championships—in three different classifications—across the past nine seasons. Yes, her career won-lost record of 190-38 computes to a

winning percentage of .833.

And yet when one thinks of Kolbe basketball, two names come immediately to mind: Chris Smith and Walter Lockett.

Smith returned to his alma mater as the boys' coach after three NBA seasons with the Minnesota Timberwolves, four superb seasons at UConn, where he remains the all-time career scorer; and a Kolbe playing career that encompassed multiple honors and championships. The gifted Lockett accumu-

lated points at a sublime 31.2 rate in his four seasons at Kolbe (prior to the merger with the Cathedral girls) and appeared on the cover of "Sports Illustrated" as a college freshman in 1972.

Hodges concedes the point. "It is what it is," she says of her lack of recognition on the local scene.

Hodges is also the business manager at Kolbe, and her office is adjacent to that of the principal, Jo-Anne Jakab. They share a long-time bond, points out



COACHING KC GIRLS HOOPS—Current head coach Lisa Hodges (left) has directed the Cougars to five state titles in the past nine seasons, while Principal Jo-Anne Jakab (right) and her husband, Gary, were co-coaches of KC's first state championship team in 1976-77. Current Director of Athletics Henry Rondon coached the Cougars to another state title in 1999-2000. (PHOTO BY DON HARRISON)

Hodges, a 1981 Kolbe graduate. "Mrs. J was my first gym teacher at Kolbe. She is a great advocate for sports," she says.

Hodges attributes some of her coaching success to what she gleaned from Jakab and two other predecessors: Henry Rondon, now the school's director of athletics, who coached the Cougars to their second state title in 1999-2000, and Dave Hennessy, who both preceded and followed Rondon as head coach. In the late 1980s, three of Hennessy's teams reached the Class S championship game.

"Henry taught me how to visualize on a higher plane than just see the details," Hodges says. "Sometimes you have to let the team go; the players have to have ownership as well. Dave Hennessy is the detail organizer, bent on drills and fundamentals. He also taught me time management."

A 5-foot-8 forward, Lisa Hill Hodges played four seasons at Kolbe and then put basketball aside to earn an accounting degree at Rhode Island College.

She and her husband, Doug, have two daughters. The younger one, Leah, 15, is a sophomore member of Kolbe's 2012-13 team. Lindsay, 17, is a senior and a cheerleader at the school.

Hodges is hoping that Leah—"who is intuitive; she just needs to learn the pace of the game"—will provide some help this winter. The Cougars slipped to a comparatively mediocre 12-10 record last season, in part because of the team's youth.

The current squad will be led by a senior, Jasmyne Fogle, a 5-8 forward who averaged a team-high 15 points per game a year ago. "She is being recruited by Iona and Franklin Pierce," the coach says. Fogle's mother, Yolanda Macklin Fogle, is a Kolbe alumna and a former bas-

ketball player of note.

Three other seniors, Caroline Centeno, Aryn Clayton and Niajeha Green, and a junior point guard, Nakayla Nelson, are viewed as other important ingredients this season. "All of the girls played over the summer on various AAU teams," Hodges says.

Hodges is reluctant to name the greatest player she has coached, or has seen, at Kolbe. But the best team? Easy answer. That was the undefeated 2004-05 squad that capped a perfect 26-0 season by defeating Sacred Heart of Waterbury, 63-49, in the Class S championship game.

"We had five players on that team who were six foot or above, including Erica Beverly, who went on to play for Jen Rizzotti at the University of Hartford and then overseas in Australia and Switzerland," the coach says.

Hodges' teams also captured Class S titles in 2003-04 and 2006-07. When the CIAC used a complicated point system to elevate Kolbe to a higher classification, the Cougars barely blinked and proceeded to win Class L (2007-08) and Class M (2009-10) championships before being returned to Class S for small schools.

Basketball success is just one part of the equation, the coach says. "You've got to use basketball as a stepping stone to get something higher. If you do have the athletic ability to go further, your grades will stop you if you don't study," she explains.

"Two of our All-State players, Antoinette Robinson and Ashley Prim, were salutatorians. Beverly was in the top ten of her class. They epitomize the student-athlete piece."

(Don Harrison is the author of *Hoops in Connecticut: The Nutmeg State's Passion for Basketball*, published by The History Press.)

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November 2012

Youth

An Indian girl looks inside a Catholic world

By ANJALI VASAVADA

Going into my freshman year at Sacred Heart Academy (SHA) in Hamden, there was one question I heard constantly: "If you are Hindu, why are you going to a Catholic school?" It almost became a routine for me to laugh airily and quickly say, "Oh, their science program is magnificent!" Even though SHA's main attractions, in my opinion, were its strong science program and warm environment, that question I was so often asked did end up altering my outlook on the typical "SHA girl life."

I remember the day of the first First Friday Mass. I was petrified, to say the least. I had so many questions: "Why am I kneeling? Who is that guy with the robe on? What do I do when they hand out communion?" After all that stress, I was pleasantly surprised when the hour-long event consisted mostly of singing the catchiest songs, such as "You Are Holy," and reflecting silently in prayer. Now, First Friday Mass is probably one of my favorite things about SHA, after Shirley's cookies, of course.

I often thought that being of a different faith in a Catholic school made me some sort of outcast. I realize religious intol-



erance is a thing of the past, but I was terrified of being judged by others due to my faith. One day in Freshman Theology, it somehow came out that I was Hindu. I expected people to mock me and say something along the lines of me being a crazy cow worshipper, but instead, I was greeted with honest and insightful questions about both my faith and my culture. Some of these questions challenged my knowledge on my own faith, and that excited me.

Although I have grown up in a Hindu household, I was never able to receive a religious education. Because of this, I took it upon myself to become knowledgeable about Hinduism as I passed through Freshmen Theology. I thought that if I were capable of knowing so much about a religion that was not my own, I should have the same capacity of knowledge for my own religion. I distinctly remember reading pages upon pages of *Hinduism for Dummies* and being so mesmerized at the beauty of my religion and its similarities to many other religions in the world.

I credit my increased spirituality and knowledge of Hinduism to SHA. If I had never seen girls at our school who are so deeply connected with Christ, I would not have had the impetus to form a strong bond with Brahma, the supreme Lord in Hinduism.

Religion and spirituality are important in the growth of individuals, but often, people do not use these concepts as bases when evaluating a person. Rather, we

are evaluated on the basis of our actions. We are called to mirror God and act as though the divine light passes through us. What is truly important is having faith and trust in God and to mirror the holy ways that are put forth. This philosophy compels us to be the best people we can possibly be.

(Anjali Vasavada is a junior at Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden. This article, first published in their school newspaper, *Alethea*, was featured in the national edition of *My High School Journalism*.)



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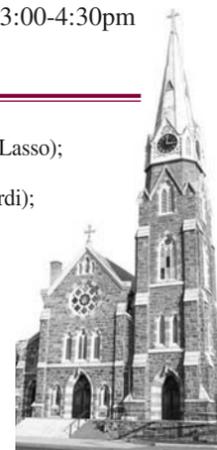
November 25: The Last Sunday after Pentecost: *Messa a 4 voci da Cappella* (1650) (Monteverdi); *Exaudi Domine* (Palestrina); *De profundis* (Sweelinck)

December 2: The First Sunday of Advent: *Missa Conditor alme siderum* (Animuccia); *Ad te Domine levavi* (Scarlatti); *Conditor alme siderum* (plainsong); with the Student Schola

Saturday, December 8, 9:00 a.m.: The Feast of the Immaculate Conception: *Missa super Dixit Maria* (Hassler); *Tota pulchra es* (White); *Ave Maria* (Parsons)

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Obituaries

Msgr. Whalen dies at 72

SHELTON—Msgr. Thomas J. Whalen died on October 27 in Bridgeport Hospital after a long battle with cancer. The pastor of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish in Shelton, Msgr. Whalen was 72 years old.

Thomas Whalen was born in Hartford on October 28, 1941. He attended Catholic elementary and high school, and graduated from St. Mary College in St. Mary, Kentucky. He completed his theological studies at Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, and was ordained by Bishop Walter W. Curtis in St. Augustine

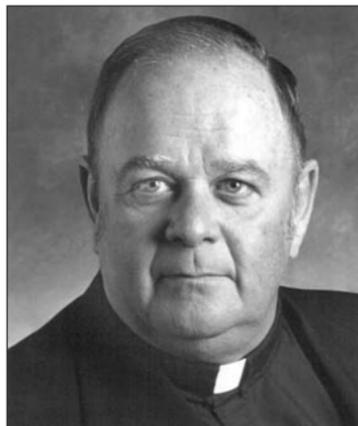
Cathedral on May 20, 1967.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Fairfield. He then became the chaplain at Bridgeport Hospital, with residence at St. Ambrose Parish in Bridgeport, a position he held for 10 years. During that time he was diocesan director of the Apostolate of the Sick, and spiritual moderator of the Bridgeport Area Chapter of the Catholic Physicians' Guild.

"Tom Whalen was like Frank Sinatra—he did it his way," says his good friend, Fr. Robert Crofut, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Norwalk. "His ministry was all about his people, nothing else mattered." Msgr. Whalen had his light side, though. Fr. Crofut describes him as an avid golfer who enjoyed going to the beach, a good steak and lobster.

Msgr. Whalen became pastor of St. Ambrose in 1980. He was named Prelate of Honor, with the title of Monsignor, by Pope John Paul II in 1991.

His final appointment, in November of 1993, was to St.



Margaret Mary. He would serve as pastor there for almost 20 years.

"He touched so many lives," said Fr. Crofut, who celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial for Msgr. Whalen and delivered the homily. It was a tribute to Msgr. Whalen's devotion to his people, Fr. Crofut noted, that so many former parishioners travelled long distances to come to his funeral.

A parish Vigil Mass was celebrated for Msgr. Whalen on November 4. The following morning Fr. Crofut celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Internment followed at Mount St. Benedict Cemetery in Bloomfield.

Sr. Eva Marie



SCRANTON, PA—Sr. Eva Marie Zlotucha, IHM, died on October 15 at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton, PA.

Mary Ann Zlotucha was born in 1937, in Montrose, PA. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1954, and made her final profession of vows in 1960. She received a bachelor of science degree Marywood College in Scranton and a master's in education from the University of Portland, Oregon.

Sr. Eva Marie served as a teacher in Pennsylvania and Oregon before coming to the Diocese of Bridgeport as principal of St. Ambrose Elementary School in Bridgeport in 1971, a position she held until 1980.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sr. Eva Marie at the IHM Center in Scranton on October 18. Interment followed at St. Catherine's Cemetery in Moscow, PA.

Sr. M. McCormack, SSND, dies at 92

WILTON—Sr. Mary McCormack, who taught school for 34 years and spent three decades in administrative ministries, died on October 14 at Lourdes Health Care Center in Wilton. She was 92 years old and had been a professed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 72 years.



Mary Theresa McCormack was born in 1919 in Lynn, MA, to Irish immigrant parents. In 1937, she entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame congregation in Baltimore, MD, and was given the religious name Sr. Mary Lambertine. She professed her final vows in 1946. Sr. Mary earned a bachelor's degree in education from Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore.

Sr. Mary's years of teaching carried her to New York State, Maryland, and Massachusetts. In 1974, she left teaching to begin ministering to the elderly sisters at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton. In 1984, she became a financial secretary at St. Joseph of Yorkville in New York City before returning to Wilton to work in the medical records office of Lourdes Health Care Center. In 1998, she joined the finance office of Notre Dame Child Development Center, then on the grounds of Villa Notre Dame. In 2002, Sr. Mary retired to prayer and presence at Villa Notre Dame.

A Mass of Christian burial was held on October 17 in the chapel at Villa Notre Dame. Burial followed at St. Mary Cemetery in Bethel.

Sr. Mary is survived by her sister, Sr. Marie Elena, SSND, who also lives at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton.

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POR ALEX ARÉVALO

El 21 de Diciembre del 2000, el entonces presidente de Estados Unidos, Bill Clinton, firmo en acto una ley llamada "LIFE Act," o Ley de Equidad para las Familias de Inmigrantes Legales (LIFE por sus siglas en ingles). Esa nueva ley me permitió cumplir el sueño de comenzar una nueva vida. Esta ley se firmo más de diez años de yo haber llegado a Connecticut. Yo llegue en noviembre de 1990 para reunificarme con mis hermanos mayores, que habían huido de la guerra de civil de El Salvador. Ellos, como yo, salieron de El Salvador porque estaban de edad para entrar a un reclutamiento forzoso de cualquier bando del conflicto armado. Al cual peor si gobierno o guerrilla.

Al llegar a Estos Unidos, tenía yo apenas 16 años y mi nueva vida pronto me forzó a trabajar para pagar los gastos de un viaje

que casi me cuesta la vida. Al cruzar fronteras fuimos asaltados con armas de fuego por los que dijeron ser oficiales de migración y luego por los federales de Mexico, me toco dormir una noche en un porqueriza o chiquero de cerdos, me toco tomar más de un aventón colgado en el tren de carga ahora conocido por "La Bestia" y me toco aguantar hambre, frio y sed. Al igual que muchos Centro Americanos que huían la guerra, me toco viajar solo y sin documentos. Fue solo un milagro de nuestro Dios que me permitió llegar con vida a San Diego, California en una noche que se celebraba el Día de Acción de Gracias.

Entre otras, el Acto de Vida (LIFE Act) contiene un número de beneficios diseñados para agilizar los problemas de visas de reunificación familiar y de trabajo. Entre otras cosas, diseño posibilidades adicionales para un grupo pequeño de inmigrantes que no habían podido solucionar su situación legal. El

beneficio que el LIFE Act me dio no fue una amnistía, pero si me dio la oportunidad de de evitar el penalti de un regreso al país de origen para recibir la visa de inmigrante o residencia.

Antes del LIFE Act, en abril del 1997 se hizo efectiva la Ley de Castigo que te castiga no dejándote regresar por 10 años al momento que sales de estados unidos, aun así hayas salido a colectar una visa ya aprobada. En mi caso, significaba regresar a un país que deje debido a la guerra. Mi último recuerdo de El Salvador fue la vos de mi padre que me decía que empacara y siguiera a un hombre desconocido que me iba llegar al Norte con mis hermanos. Sin cuestionarle, fui forzado a cometer un pecado mortal de cruzar fronteras.

Sufrí y sobreviví por más de 11 años como otro más de los 11 millones sin documentos. Con mucho trabajo y sacrificio me gradué de secundaria (high

school) y también con licenciatura de la universidad. Aun así graduado de la universidad no había podido arreglar mi situación legal en los Estados Unidos.

El LIFE Act me dio una vida nueva. Al caminar hacia el edificio de la Corte Federal de Bridgeport este 24 de octubre del 2012, medité en como mi camino se trazo hace de 22 años. Paso a paso camine a tomar mi juramentación de alianza como nuevo ciudadano los Estados Unidos y agradecí a Dios por mi destino. Fue Él que me guio mi destino a conocer a un monseñor, un párroco y un diácono de nuestra iglesia los que me recibieron sin prejuicio por ser indocumentado. Sin casa



NEW CITIZEN Alex Arévalo stands proudly with his wife, Flory, and their children. His column can be found in English on page 28.

me encontré de momento y el diacono Donald Foust, consejero de mi escuela en Norwalk. Me llevo en hacia donde el Padre Paul Merry, párroco de Blessed Sacrament en Bridgeport, quien me llevo donde Papá Frank. (Quien conoce a Monseñor Frank Wissel le llama "Papá" de cariño). Entre por las puertas del Centro Católico por primera vez en 1992 para entrevistar con Papá

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20 Rev. Hugh A. Coffey	1975
21 Msgr. Edwin F. Burke	2004
22 Rev. Stephen J. Panik	1953
Msgr. Joseph N. Murphy	1988
23 Rev. Robert Pohley.....	2006
27 Rev. Myron V. Miller	1961
DECEMBER	YEAR
1 Rev. Michael E. Kearney	1956
Msgr. Alfred J. Sienkiewicz	1996
Robert W. Becker, Permanent Deacon.....	2000
3 Rev. Thomas Gwozdz OFM Conv.	2007
Rev. Joseph A. Pisarcik	1956
4 Msgr. Joseph M. Fitzgerald.....	2005
5 Rev. Vincent J. O'Connor.....	1985
7 George Saulnier, Permanent Deacon.....	1997
8 Rev. Rufin Kuveikas, OFM Conv.	2008
10 Msgr. Bartholomew J. Skelly	1967
Rev. Ambrose Walas, O.F.M. Conv.	1967
Rev. Paul M. Spodnik.....	1976
13 Rev. Alfred E. Russo	2009
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Column



No longer a DREAMer*

GUEST COLUMNIST

BY ALEX ARÉVALO

Alex Arevalo is the immigration counselor at Catholic Charities.

On December 21, 2000, President Clinton signed into law the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act (LIFE Act). It gave me a chance to dream of a new life.

By that time, it was more than 10 years since my arrival in Connecticut. I entered the United States in 1990 to reunite with three of my older brothers, who had fled the civil war of El Salvador before me. They fled because they had, like me, become of age for being drafted by either side fighting in that armed conflict.

I was barely 16, and new life in the U.S required me to work and pay the expenses for a trip that had almost cost my life. I

had been robbed at gunpoint twice by so-called law enforcement in Mexico, forced to spend a night in a pig's corral, hitched a ride on the infamous cargo train now known as "the Beast," and spent days without food and water. Like many who were fleeing civil unrest in Central America at the time, I traveled alone and undocumented. It was only divine intervention that allowed me to reach San Diego, CA, on a Thanksgiving night.

The LIFE Act contained a series of immigration benefits destined to alleviate the backlog of family and work visas. It provided additional possibilities for a small number of immigrants who had been unable to regularize their situations. The main benefit that

LIFE act provided me was not amnesty, but the chance to avoid the penalty that required a mandatory return to the country of origin to collect an "already approved immigrant visa or green card."

Before the LIFE Act, politicians used to say that this "touch back" policy was a fair way of treating those who entered without inspection. But going back does not actually give anyone access to a green card. It simply activates a three to ten year penalty that prevents a prompt return. In my case, it would have meant a return to a country I left due to war.

My last memory of El Salvador was my father's command to pack up and follow some man who would bring me north to find my brothers. Young though I was, either side in that war might have conscripted me. To escape that fate, I was forced to commit the mortal sin of crossing Mexico and the U.S borders.

I suffered over the 10 years I had to survive undocumented. I worked, and while working I achieved high school and college graduation. Yet, even as a college graduate, I had no way to regularize my situation here in the United States.

The LIFE Act gave me new life. As I walked to the Brien McMahon Federal Building in Bridgeport at 10:30 am on October 24 to pledge my oath of citizenship to the United States, I reflected on how "manifest destiny" guided me over the years. I am most grateful, during those years, to a priest, a pastor and deacon of our Church who welcomed me without prejudice back in 1992. Deacon Don Faust handed me to Fr. Paul Merry, then pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport. I walked through the doors of the Catholic Center for the first time in 1993 to interview with Papa Frank Wissel (everyone who knows Msgr. Wissel calls him "Papa") ... saving grace, and everything else is history.

Since that time I have dedicated my life to providing the counsel I did not have when I first arrived and have helped hundreds obtain legal status. As the immigration counselor for Catholic Charities I have helped over 100 immigrants file for naturalization and we have joyfully celebrated their achievement. I continue my commitment to "welcome the stranger in our midst" for

Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Over the years, I have walked my own path to earn my U.S. citizenship. I've waited for over five years for my green card and waited as a green card holder (an alien legally admitted to reside in the United States) for the five years needed to file my application for U.S. citizenship. Almost 22 years since my arrival, and after passing my background check, English and civics requirements and an interview with a citizenship and immigration officer, I was approved to become what I had always dreamed of.

Today I walk with head up high, next my wife who naturalized with me, I am most proud to shout: I'm no longer merely a DREAMer*. I am AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

*"DREAMers" refers to DREAM Act legislation that would allow many young people who arrived before age 16 to earn citizenship and someday, like me, stand tall as American citizens.

(To apply for U.S. citizenship, contact Arévalo at Catholic Charities Immigration Services: 203.416.1306 or 203.416.1311.)

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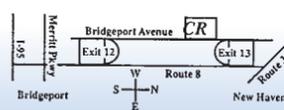
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Column



We die before we die

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

Recently, a 92-year-old Australian priest stated that his journey as a priest has been away from the formalities of titles and trappings in search of the deeper meaning of the Gospels, particularly the paradoxes which run through the Gospels.

I relate to what this elderly priest said. There are so many mysterious sayings of Jesus.

There are many Christian

paradoxes: e.g., poverty is richness, weakness is strength, emptiness is fullness, if anyone wishes to be first, he must become the last and servant of all, Jesus came not to bring peace but the sword, etc. Like that priest, I think a lot about these mysterious statements and about how imperfectly I understand them. However, the hardest of the many hard sayings of Jesus I feel I am beginning to understand. That is the saying about how the grain of wheat must die before it can bring forth a rich harvest.

Jn.12:24-25: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it

dies it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

I consider this Christianity's profoundest and most difficult paradox. It frightens me. The fundamental law of our Christian faith is that we must die if we are to live; we can only gain our life by losing it. And clearly the life that springs from death refers not only to the end of our lives, but also to the many deaths along the way.

I think that Jesus' central wisdom, that losing one's life is the path to finding it, plays out in all our lives over and over again. Our lives are naturally filled with loss and "dying." We don't have to seek them out. Humans are hunted. The Lord's hounds are everywhere. We keep on running, but as Psalm 116:4 states, "they caught me, sorrow and distress." According to Teilhard de Chardin, roughly half the things in life are things we undergo, or which overtake us without warning.

But perhaps we do become really ourselves only by getting away from ourselves. Perhaps we *do* find ourselves by losing ourselves. We must die before

we die. I'm beginning to understand what that means. We die by installments, as life asks us to let go of many things. Eventually, God takes back all He has given.

We become wise through suffering. Indeed, Hebrews 2:10 states that we are "made perfect through suffering." St. Augustine in his Confessions spoke of "the sweet fruit gathered from the bitterness of life." It has been said that personal suffering is the crown of life. Perhaps Jesus implied all this is his paradox about the seed that has to die.

I like a book by Willa Cather titled *My Antonia* with its images of darkness containing light, as if loss were always at the heart of gain, and gain implied in any loss. Many moments of transcendence or revelation in *My Antonia* occur at sunset.

A story is told about a novice approaching a Desert Father named Ammonas and sighing "when I think of everything I still have to acquire." Ammonas replied, "You mean to lose."

A good proportion of the Gospel sayings of Jesus have a stark, demanding tone. There are his words about leaving father

and mother, wife and home, to follow him, about letting the dead bury their own dead, about not looking back after one has put one's hand to the plow, about the rich and the camel trying to pass through the needle's eye, about plucking out one's eye, etc. Recurring efforts are made to rationalize the unyielding firmness of these statements.

We read the Scriptures and have some favorite passages and usually a blind spot for others which are hard to digest. We develop selective listening. We are conveniently deaf to Christ's radical requirements.

How demanding Jesus' teachings can be, and possibly the most demanding is the great paradox that when we lose life, we find it. How this happens in each individual life is impossible to say, this dying before we die. But it is only by self-emptying that we become truly ourselves. Now and then, I have some sense of that.

The Lord seems to make the same point when he teaches that "every branch that bears fruit, the Father purges, that it may bear more fruit" (Jn.15:2). But, O God, tenderly, tenderly. ■

==== NUESTRA VOZ
DE PÁGINA 27 =====

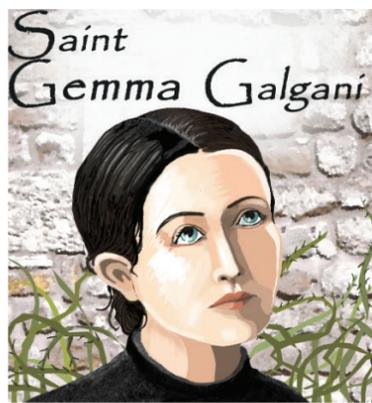
Frank y aquí estoy.

Dedico mi vida a dar el consejo que no tuve yo al llegar a este país y cada año ayudo a muchos a obtener status legal. Como el Consejero de Inmigración para la Caridades Católicas de la Diócesis de Bridgeport he ayudado a casi 100 personas a aplicar para su ciudadanía y hemos celebrado cada su logro con alegría, cumpliendo así mi parte con la escritura de Mateo 25:35. A través de los años he caminado hacia mi propio destino hasta obtener la ciudadanía. Esperé once años sin documentos, cinco en espera de residencia y cinco mas ya con la residencia ya esperando poder aplicar para la ciudadanía.

Después de casi 22 años, después de pasar mi examen para ver si se suficiente inglés, cita con un oficial de inmigración y revisión de mi historial delictivo, puedo decir como los DREAMers* que el LIFE Act me dio nueva vida. Este 24 de octubre, al lado de mi esposa quien también juramento, grito con orgullo y digo: "No soy más un DREAMer, soy lo que siempre fui y soné ser en papel: ¡Un ciudadano más de los Estados Unidos!"

(Alex Arévalo es un representante acreditado para asuntos de la inmigración y trabaja como consejero de inmigrantes para Caridades Católicas). ■

SAINTLY LIVES BY ED WALDRON

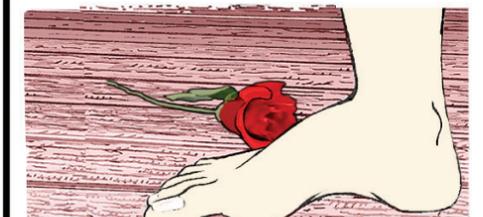


b. 1878 ~ d. 1903

GEMMA WAS DEVOUT AT A YOUNG AGE AND HAD A STRONG DEVOTION TO THE POOR. HOWEVER, AT THE AGE OF 20, BED-RIDDEN AND STRICKEN WITH CHRONIC MENINGITIS, HER LOVE FOR GOD INTENSIFIED. HER MOTHER HAD DIED WHEN SHE WAS 7. HER BROTHER, GINO, DIED WHEN SHE WAS 16, AND HER FATHER, WHO EXPERIENCED FINANCIAL RUIN, DIED OF THROAT CANCER, LEAVING HER ORPHANED AT THE AGE OF 18.



AFTER PRAYING A NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART, GEMMA WAS COMPLETELY HEALED ON THE FIRST FRIDAY OF MARCH, 1899. GEMMA YEARNED TO UNITE HER SUFFERING WITH CHRIST'S PASSION FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.



SHORTLY AFTER THE CURE, SHE BEGAN RECEIVING THE MARKS OF THE STIGMATA. MANY OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE, AND EVEN MEMBERS OF THE PASSIONIST ORDER TO WHICH SHE ASPIRED, CAST DOUBT ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SUPERNATURAL GRACES BESTOWED UPON HER.



GEMMA DIED AT THE AGE OF 25 AFTER OFFERING HERSELF TO JESUS AS A VICTIM FOR THE SALVATION OF OTHERS.



SHE WAS CANONIZED A MERE 37 YEARS AFTER HER DEATH BY POPE PIUS XII.



Bits & Pieces

MISSION BOUTIQUE will be held at St. Mary Parish, Ridgefield, Sat.-Sun., **Nov. 17-18**, from 10 am-2 pm in the Barn, adjacent to the church. Crèches, advent wreaths, icons, books, original Dali etching, jewelry, gifts for the whole family. For more information, call 203.438.6538.

HOLY HOUR AND ADORATION to celebrate the Feast of Christ the King will be held at St. James Parish, Stratford, in the Eucharistic Adoration chapel on Sun., **Nov. 25**, from 2:30-5:30 pm. A social hour will follow. For more information, call Debbie Camp: 203.224.0190.

LADIES NIGHT OUT

DONATE USED BOOKS CDs, DVDs, records and audio books to support St. Lawrence School, Shelton. The gray book donation container, distinguished by its purple and yellow 'Got Books?' signs, is located in the parking lot behind the religious education office. Donations can be made at any time throughout the school year. For more information contact the school office: 203.929.4422.

holiday shopping night and buffet dinner will be hosted at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull, on Fri., **Nov. 30**, from 6-9 pm. Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, includes dinner & dessert, soda & coffee. Chocolate martinis, cosmopolitans, beer and wine are available for purchase. Browse over 25 brand name vendors. For tickets, call Patti Capozzi: 203.371.5371 or patd818@yahoo.com.

"ROCK OUT HUNGER" concert invites the young at heart to a good time for a good cause at the Fairfield Theatre Company on Fri., **Nov. 30**. The gala, with music by The Subscribers, will benefit Bridgeport's Thomas Merton Center. Tickets: \$45. VIP tickets: \$75; includes admission to a cocktail reception from 6:30-8 pm, including a complimentary glass of wine. For more information and for reservations, call the Fairfield Theatre Company: 203.259.1036 or www.fairfield-theatre.org.

FAIRFIELD CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL, held the weekend of **Nov. 30-Dec. 2** at the Burr Homestead, 739 Old Post Rd., Fairfield, will benefit the Cardinal Shehan Center in Bridgeport and the Norma F. Pfiem Breast Care Center in Fairfield. Photos with Santa,

Sing-Along heralds the holiday season



BRIDGEPORT—One of the highlights of the holiday season is the outdoor Community Christmas Carol Sing-Along. The great lawn of St. Margaret Shrine in Bridgeport provides the perfect New England setting for this family favorite.

The sing-along will be held this year on December 16 at 3 pm. The sing-along takes place rain or shine, thanks to the availability of the Circolo Sportivo building across the street. Their building always hosts a free post-sing reception, a welcome addition for bright-cheeked carolers looking for a steaming hot chocolate, coffee, and some tempting pastries.

Anthony Procaccini, who developed the music program at its 2007 inception, will conduct the sing-along.

"Singers volunteer from the local area parishes," says Procaccini. Because the music is either carols or popular songs focused on Christmas, there is no need to hold rehearsals beforehand. "We do a quick run for the singers and brass before the concert begins," Procaccini adds.

The concert is very much a family event. It begins with the singing our National Anthem, and includes a visit by Santa Claus about halfway through.

(Procaccini welcomes carolers who want to volunteer for the sing-along. Anyone interested can contact him at 718.873.7421 or aproccaccini@juno.com.)

gift boutique, designer decorated rooms and trees and wreaths for sale. Admission: \$10 adults; \$5 children and seniors. Festival begins each day at 10 am and ends at 7 pm on **Nov. 30**; 4 pm on **Dec. 1 & 2**. For more information or details of special events, visit www.fairfieldChristmasTreeFestival.org.

HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE will be held at St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Stamford, on Sat., **Dec. 1**, from 9 am-5:30 pm. Over 30 vendors; bake sale items. For more information, call 203.323.6806.

WHITE CHRISTMAS, with a cast of students from Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden, will be performed at the Shubert Theatre in New Haven. Show opens Fri., **Nov. 30**, at 8 pm. There will be two performances on Sat., **Dec. 1**: at 2 and 8 pm. Tickets range from \$10-\$25 and can be purchased at the Shubert box office in downtown New Haven, online at www.shubert.com or www.tickets.com, or at Sacred Heart Academy. For more information, call 203.288.2309.

MASS OF HEALING AND HOPE sponsored by the Charismatic Renewal Office will be offered Mon., **Dec. 3**, at 7:30 pm at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, with Fr. Larry Carew. For more information, call 203.268.8253.

CURSILLO ULTREYA will be held on Thurs., **Dec. 4**, at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilton, at 7:30 pm. For more information, contact Jeanette: jkovacs@snet.net.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT by the CantiamoCHOIR will be held on Fri., **Dec. 7** at Westport Town Hall, 110 Myrtle Ave. 7 pm refreshments; 7:30 concert. Suggested donation: \$15. For more information, visit www.artsforthecommunity.org.

CHRISTMAS FAIR will be held at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Bridgeport, on Sat., **Dec. 8**, from 10 am-5 pm. Food, crafts, raffles and door prizes. Refreshments available. Vendors' tables: \$25. For more information call Rita Hayes: 203.371.1969 or John Soares: 203.579.1864, or email j_antonio45sr@yahoo.com.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets the second Sat. of the month (**Dec. 8**) at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, at 10 a.m. after the 9 am. Pro-Life Mass. For more information, contact Eileen Bianchini: 203.847.5727 or stmarygols@aol.com.

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Provide a Christmas Meal for Two Families \$50.00
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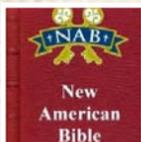


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Breakfast for 300 Guests at Thomas Merton Center \$250.00
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