



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

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RESPECT LIFE ISSUE

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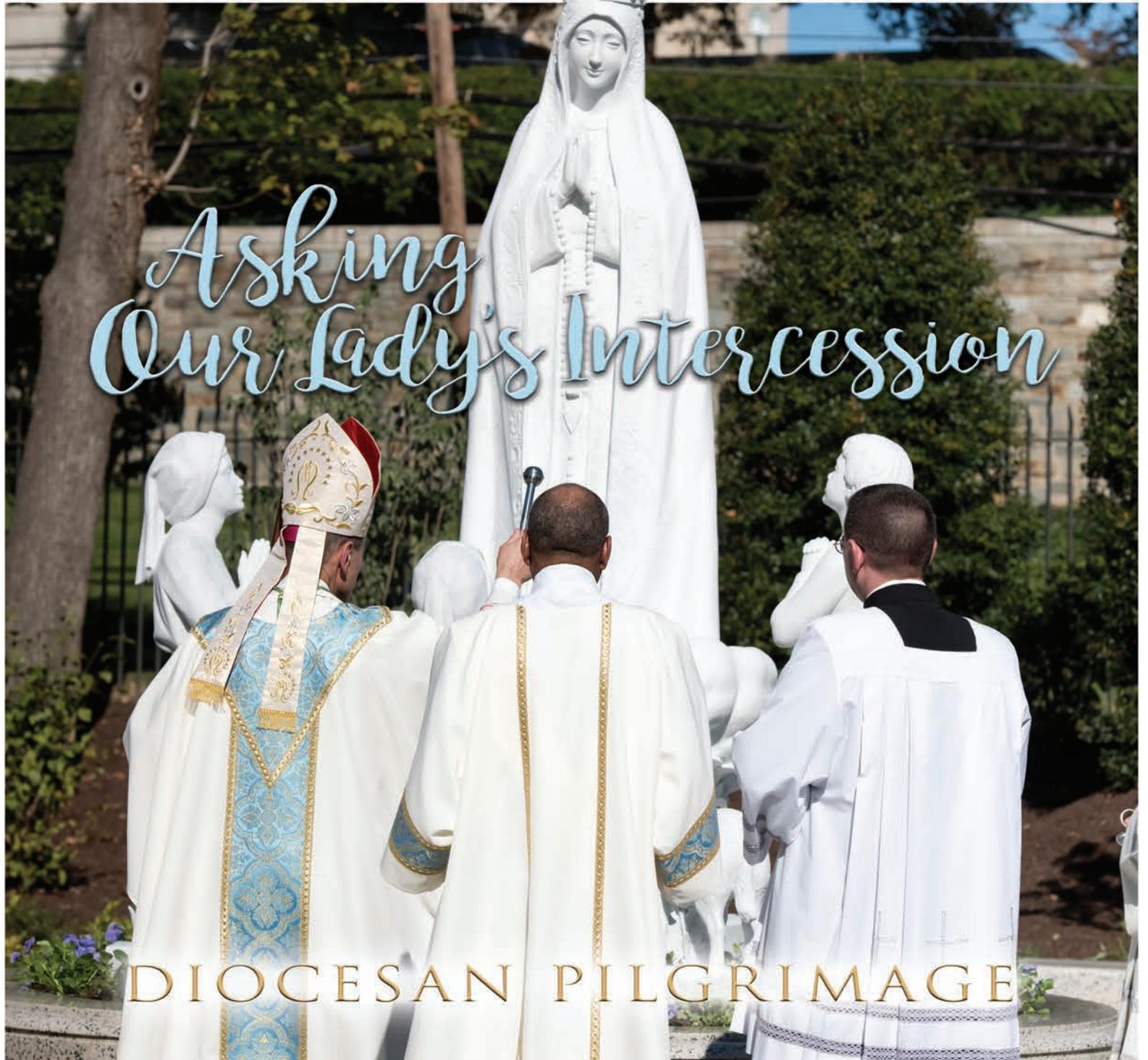
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Diocesan Leadership Institute

Leadership Institute surges ahead

BRIDGEPORT—Energy abounds in the programs arranged by the Leadership Institute for the coming months.

“We hope that the programs and online resources we offer help those who serve in ministry in our diocese to do so with even more energy and enthusiasm,” says Executive Director Patrick Donovan. “The institute’s goal is to create opportunities for people to encounter the person of Jesus Christ. We hope that, from that encounter, the call to be a missionary disciple will be awakened. It then becomes the role of the institute to accompany people on their journey so they, in turn, can walk with others.”

Opening the fall programs, the Leadership Institute hosted a Formation Day and Workshop for all parish and school administrative staff on September 22 at the Catholic Center. The speaker for the day was Mike Patin, an internationally-known Catholic speaker who has motivated audiences across the world for more than three decades.

Susan Baldwin, director of religious education (DRE) at St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport, along with two administrative assistants from St. Andrew’s, went to the workshop. They appreciated the opportunity to meet their counterparts from so many different parishes around the diocese.

“I was amazed at how many people in this diocese are dedicated to service. Coming together like this, we support one another. It reaffirms who we are as Catholics,” Baldwin said.

She came away from the Formation Day with two main concepts. “First and foremost, we are the Ministers of First



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES for an encounter of faith, the Leadership Institute encouraged parishes to re-imagine faith formation during a Formation Day held in September.

Impressions,” she said. “I never thought of myself that way. This is not a job, it’s a ministry.”

The second take-away dovetailed with the first. “Everyone you meet has a story. We have to minister to each new person who comes into the office.”

Quickly following the success of the Formation Day, on September 29, a special evening for married couples, “Fall in Love Again and Again,” gave everyone from newlyweds to those who had celebrated decades together a chance to rejoice in their chosen life. Featured author and national speaker Chris Padgett and his wife, Linda, presented tips for Christ-centered marriages.

Casting a wider net, all who serve in ministry were invited to hear Bishop Frank J. Caggiano’s invitation to lifelong faith formation in *The People of Joy: Formation Day 2017*, held September 30.

At that meeting, after more than 18 months of work, the Catechetical Task Force released its report and encouraged parishes throughout the diocese to re-imagine faith formation.

Beginning with how to prepare parents for the baptism of their infant and moving all the way through welcoming the gift of the senior members in a parish, this day was all about finding what works in faith formation.

The major presentations of the day included Bishop Caggiano’s keynote address, “People of Joy: The Call to Missionary Discipleship.”

The Leadership Institute has a number of longer-term programs in place. Starting in mid-September, they began collecting stories about the way people encounter the person of Jesus Christ. “As these brief stories show, we all encounter Jesus in different ways: through the birth of a child; the loss of a loved one; through nature, music, or even travel. Through joy or sorrow, triumph or tragedy,” Donovan said.

These stories of three to five minutes will be a part of a new series: “From Encounter to Accompaniment.” They will be available on the website: formationreimagined.org/from-encounter-to-accompaniment and, in time, as a podcast. The institute hopes that these stories may help

someone come to experience Jesus, or may help to accompany another on their journey of faith.

“So much is happening in the world these days that take our eyes off God and onto a screen, large and small,” said Donovan. “My hope and prayer is that we can use those screens to communicate the Gospel message, so that those in ministry feel more confident sharing their faith with others.”

Off the screen, the new Bishop’s Lecture Series will offer powerful speakers a few times each year, starting with Sister Miriam James speaking on the Power of Encounter on October 11 at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

Responding to the suggestions of millennial Catholics, a Young Adult Scripture Study program, which will include a week-long pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was designed for young adults in their 20s to fall in love with Scripture through study,

pilgrimage and reflection with a small faith community.

After returning from the pilgrimage in January 2018, the group will continue to meet, pray and study Scripture. Each participant will create a module for the Leadership Institute, so that they can share their experience with others.

St. Andrew’s DRE Sue Baldwin was pleased to learn that, through the Leadership Institute, Bishop Caggiano has arranged to meet with all catechists during the fall for a conversation with him about passing on the faith in engaging ways.

“I am looking forward to more and more and more programs from the Leadership Institute,” said Baldwin. “Feed me—feed my soul!”

(More programs from the Leadership Institute will be available in the near future. Check out formationreimagined.org for additional offerings.)

Priest Conclave

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano is asking for prayers as he and all the priests throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport prepare to gather at the Fifth Convocation of Priests from Sunday, October 15, through Wednesday, October 18. The Convocation, which takes place every three years, will be held this year in Newport, Rhode Island.

The theme of the Convocation is “Of One Heart and Mind: Brothers United in Christ.” The purpose of the three-day meeting is to strengthen the fraternal bonds among the priests and to provide a time of spiritual renewal for them so that they may return with an even greater commitment to service.

Please be aware that Masses will not be celebrated in parishes throughout the diocese from Monday, October 15 through Wednesday, October 18; however, members of the Jesuit Community at Fairfield University and religious order priests will be available for sacramental emergencies.

“Thank you for your prayers and support for this very important event in the lives of our priests and the diocese,” Bishop Caggiano told the faithful.

ON THE COVER

BISHOP CAGGIANO BLESSES the new Rosary Walk and Garden at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. More than 2,000 from the diocese made the one-day pilgrimage. Photo by Amy Mortensenen

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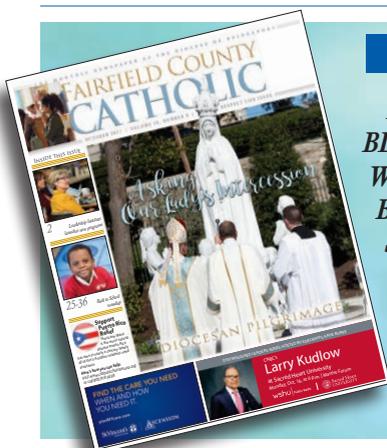
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Latest News

All Souls Day Masses set for Trumbull & Norwalk

TRUMBULL—All Souls Day Masses will be celebrated on November 2 at 11 am at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull and St. John-St. Mary Cemetery in Norwalk.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will celebrate the outdoor Mass at St. John-St. Mary Cemetery, 223 Richards Avenue in Norwalk.

At the same time, Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general of the Diocese of Bridgeport, will celebrate the Mass at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, 1056 Daniels Farm Road in Trumbull.

The Masses will be offered for all the faithful departed souls in the diocese. They are open to the public and will take place rain or shine. Both locations will have chair seating and a large tent.

Bishop Caggiano announced the first outdoor All Souls Mass last year in the hope that it would

become an annual tradition across the diocese. More than 150 people attended the inaugural Mass.

“It is my hope that this special Mass will be celebrated every year and become a new tradition in the Diocese of Bridgeport,” said Bishop Caggiano when he announced the Mass. Plans call for the Mass to be held in a different diocesan cemetery each year.

“These Masses will be offered for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed. Catholics are encouraged that day to pray for all those who died and rest in the peace of Christ,” said Msgr. Powers.

Traditionally, Catholics visit cemeteries on All Souls Day to remember the dead and pray for their souls. During the Masses, the bishop and Msgr. Powers will remember in a special way,



ALL SOULS DAY MASSES—Outdoor All Souls Day Masses will be celebrated on November 2 at 11 am at St. John-St. Mary Cemetery in Norwalk (above) and Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Trumbull. “These Masses will be offered for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed. Catholics are encouraged that day to pray for all those who died and rest in the peace of Christ,” said Msgr. Thomas Powers, vicar general.

all deceased bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated men and women and lay faithful.

The All Souls Day Mass held in Norwalk will be streamed live on the diocesan Facebook page ([Facebook.com/bridgeportdiocese](https://www.facebook.com/bridgeportdiocese)).

Arrangements for the outdoor Masses are supported by Catholic Cemeteries and the Diocesan Real Estate Office.

(The diocese sponsors nine cemeteries around Fairfield County. For information on Catholic Cemeteries, call 203.416.1494.)

Healing Mass set for Victims of Sexual Abuse

BRIDGEPORT—A special Mass for those who have been sexually abused as a minor and for family members, spouses and others who have been impacted by abuse will be held on Sunday, October 29, at 2 pm at St. Anthony of Padua Church, located at 149 South Pine Creek Road in Fairfield.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano will celebrate the Mass, which is the second major event planned and sponsored by the Committee for Healing of Survivors of Sexual Abuse group in association with the diocese. All are welcome to attend.

“Over the past two years we have been moving forward with a number of events,” said Peter Philipp, a member of the survivor’s group. “What we’re trying to do is to bring people together to heal. There are people who have left the Church over this issue. We want the group and its events to be a place of re-entry and a place of belonging, where people can celebrate their baptism.”

Philipp said the Healing Mass is part of an ongoing series of events and resources to reach out to people who suffer from abuse and to



BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO HEAL—The Healing Mass for those who have been sexually abused as a minor is set for Sunday, October 29, 2 pm at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fairfield. In powerful and moving witness, the new “Conversation on Hope and Healing” video (above) explores the full range of feelings, challenges and hopes of those who have suffered from sexual abuse.

foster reconciliation in the Church.

In support of the upcoming Healing Mass and the ongoing work of healing in the diocese, group members have most recently participated in a video project produced at Sacred Heart University in association with the Safe Environments Office of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Posted on the diocesan website and available for viewing (www.bridgeportdiocese.com), the two videos offer a hopeful look at what the group and diocese have done to address victims

and prevent further abuse, but also explore the pain and ongoing suffering victims have felt as they come to terms with abuse in their own lives and work and seek to protect others.

The short video offers a positive look at the reconciliation now under way in the diocese. The longer video, “A Conversation on Hope and Healing,” explores the full range of feelings, challenges and hopes of those who have suffered from sexual abuse.

Appearing in the videos are

James DiVasto, Peggy Fry, Barbara Oleynick and Peter Philipp, all of whom experienced abuse as children and teens.

“We are so grateful to the members of the Committee for Healing for having the courage and commitment to share their stories. Through their honesty, integrity and compassion, they have helped the entire diocese to move forward in a spirit of healing and reconciliation,” said Erin Neil, director of Safe Environments and victims assistance coordinator.

“By sharing their stories, they have helped us to grow in understanding. It is a very hopeful sign for the diocese that they are willing to forgive and to join in our efforts to increase awareness and prevent future abuse,” said Neil.

Over the summer, group members also served as guests on “Thoughts for the Week,” a radio program co-hosted by Father Ray Petrucci and Dorothy Riera. The program, which focused on healing from abuse, was recorded at Sacred Heart University radio studios and aired in August. It will be re-broadcast on October 22 on

stations throughout the state.

The first public event sponsored by the survivor’s group was the Service of Peace, Hope, and Healing for survivors of Clerical Sexual Abuse held at the Egan Chapel of Fairfield University in November 2016. It was an evening of prayer and reconciliation that involved the personal reflection of adult men and women who had experienced clerical abuse.

In addition, the group has sponsored gatherings at the Bridgeport Public Library at their North Branch, 3455 Madison Ave., Bridgeport. This is an opportunity to meet with fellow adult survivors of abuse as a minor together with a diocesan victim assistance coordinator. “You are important to us and we want to know how we may assist you in your journey towards healing,” said Neil.

(If you are an adult survivor of abuse as a minor, and you would like to learn more about this Mass, the upcoming gatherings, and resources that are available in our diocese, contact one of our victim assistance coordinators: Erin Neil, LCSW, 203.650.3265 or Michael Tintrup, LCSW, 203.241.0987.)

Diocesan News

Faithful turn out in large numbers for Pilgrimage

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

“We come here 1,500 strong,” Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said to diocesan pilgrims who gathered around him for the dedication

conflict and in need of peace and reconciliation.

While more than 1,500 people boarded buses in the early pre-dawn hours in Fairfield County for the one-day pilgrimage to the

from the Diocese of Bridgeport to the basilica in more than 15 years.

“Thank you for bringing so many young people with you, and thank you for bringing us hope,” Msgr. Rossi said, nodding

to the 60 members of the Diocesan Youth Choir who were gathered behind the altar to sing throughout the Mass.

The Byzantine Romanesque basilica, which opened in 1959 after decades of construction, is a massive testimony to the faith of the American Catholic Church. It is the largest church in the U.S. and one of the ten largest in the world. More than

“The message of Our Lady of Fatima’s is as important now as it has ever been. We come here to ask for her intercession that she might lead every human heart to answer the question: ‘What is it that you are looking for?’ And we will answer it: ‘We are looking for your son, and lead us to him.’”

Bishop Caggiano

*Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
September 23, 2017*

of the new Rosary Walk and Garden outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on September 23.

The bishop’s words capped another extraordinary moment in the odyssey of prayer and renewal that he has brought to the diocese since his installation in 2013.

Bishop Caggiano had called for the pilgrimage to celebrate the power of prayer and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children in 1917. “That message is just as important now as ever,” he said, noting that the world is still in

basilica, an estimated 500 more faithful from the diocese made their own way to the national landmark to participate in the Solemn Mass.

They were joined by pilgrims from New York City, China and the Philippines for the Mass, which began at 2 pm and drew almost 4,000 people. It was broadcast live on EWTN and was also covered by Catholic TV out of Boston and NET-TV of Brooklyn.

In his greetings before Mass, Basilica Rector Msgr. Walter R. Rossi welcomed those who traveled from the diocese and noted that it was the first pilgrimage

one million people a year make pilgrimages to the site, which shares the campus of Catholic University of America.

During the general intercessions, which were read in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Creole and Portuguese, the refrains from the faithful seemed to ripple through the space on a time delay as they made their way from the front to the back of the huge basilica.

“What are you looking for? What is it that you see?” the bishop said to begin his homily, noting that it was a question that Jesus asked his disciples.

“It is a question that roots



each of our lives, and one we bring to this sacred space,” the bishop said, reassuring worshippers that the Blessed Mother opens a path to the Lord. “We ask her intercession that she may lead every human heart to answer the question.”

The bishop said that those who go on pilgrimage are also “carrying others in their hearts”—often a family member or friend who is struggling spiritually.

He said that those who live entirely by the secular values of materialism and relativism often end up empty and lost with nothing to sustain them. “We bring them to Our Lady so they can ask the questions,” he said, praying that they find love and peace in the answer that, “Christ is the desire of every human heart.”

After Mass, the entire congregation formed a procession to the new Rosary Walk and Garden alongside the main entrance of

the basilica, completing the entire Rosary in the time it took to empty the Church.

“The Rosary is a mirror into the mystery of her son,” the bishop said, praying that the new Rosary Garden “stand as a symbol of hope that the world can find peace, happiness and joy, and that the road will ever lead to Christ.”

“Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us. Pray for the whole world!”

The new garden is meant to be an oasis of beauty and calm and an invitation to pray the Rosary while visiting the shrine. The walkway is a symbolic thread of the Rosary as the path winds its way through five granite arches, each with four mysteries. A sculpture of Christ crucified marks the beginning and end of the path. ■



Malta House, Norwalk

Malta House collaboration with Good Counsel

NORWALK—Malta House, a Fairfield County landmark giving hope to pregnant women for nearly two decades, has entered a collaboration to expand and enhance its help for mothers and their babies.

Malta House opened in Norwalk in 1998 to feed and shelter homeless women from all backgrounds eager to keep their unborn children. In September it officially announced a new partnership that renames the home Good Counsel Malta House of Connecticut.

“We’ve formed a collaboration with Good Counsel maternity homes, already well respected in the tri-state area and beyond, to extend our community’s mission improving the lives of moms and infants,” said Kim Petrone, chair of Malta House.

“Linked with Good Counsel’s network and resources, we’ll be able to provide even greater access to health services, education, job skills and more for expectant and parenting mothers,” Petrone said. “Good Counsel also has the ability to provide care for women with substance abuse and mental



“I’M LEARNING to be a better woman,” said Malta House resident Autumn, “both for myself and for my baby daughter Ameerah.” She is learning parenting skills while also benefiting from the home’s shared care-giving, which allows her time to train to be a dental assistant.

health disorders, ensuring that no woman who seeks our help will ever have to be turned away. This capability is a win-win for Connecticut and our home in support of human dignity and

family stability.”

Good Counsel Malta House of Connecticut brings to seven the number of maternity homes in a widely recognized network that was founded in 1985. Petrone said this new association continues to value the long-standing local support from individuals, civic groups and leaders with a vision of expanding services to more of the state.

“We’ve been the only home of our kind serving Fairfield County,” she said. Ten expectant or parenting moms from a range of difficult backgrounds currently reside at Good Counsel Malta House of Connecticut in a faith-based community with 24/7 staff support.

Christopher Bell, Good Counsel’s co-founder and president, said the new collaboration affirms the goal to help more moms and more babies, unborn and recently born, in the state. The goal has long held true

for residents in Good Counsel homes, which are now located in New York, New Jersey, and Alabama as well.

“Our community model of broad services—motivated by our faith values to help prepare for birth, parenting, career, and future independence for the sake of moms and children alike—is already in place at Good Counsel Malta House of Connecticut,” Bell said.

One of the current residents, Autumn, says she has appreciated the experience of a true home shared by moms, kids and staff mentors. The experience of resources and responsibilities in the Fairfield County home started when she arrived in March, after she and her ill mother were evicted from their apartment.

“My mother and I were living out of our minivan, and I was eight months pregnant and needed help,” Autumn said. “I had not heard of Malta House until

a shelter referred me here, and it has been a true godsend. I have been learning so much about so many things—like budgeting, parenting, and self-respect.”

Autumn gave birth on April 22 to Ameerah, who is now one of nine infants in the caring atmosphere “where everybody pitches in day and night, and no one feels alone,” as Autumn put it. She says she is embracing skills for parenting her new daughter while also benefiting from the home’s shared care-giving, which allows her time to train to be a dental assistant. “I’m learning to be a better woman—both for myself and for Ameerah.”

“When maternity homes come together, more options are created for moms and babies,” Good Counsel president Bell said. He added, “This collaboration brings more people from the margins into the mainstream.”

(See more details at the Good Counsel and Malta House websites.) ■



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BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

Main Celebrant



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Gate of Heaven Cemetery

1056 Daniels Farm Road
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MONSIGNOR THOMAS POWERS

Main Celebrant



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Blue Mass

First Responders unite the nation

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

At a time when the country is divided, First Responders “unite the nation and represent the best of what it means to be an American, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano said at the 16th Annual Blue Mass held on September 10 at St. Matthew Parish.

The Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Caggiano; Father Charles Allen, SJ, of Fairfield University; Msgr. Walter Orłowski, pastor of St. Matthew Parish; and many of the priests who serve as police, fire, and EMS chaplains throughout the diocese.

The bishop said that, at a time when the country is divided, First Responders represent the best of what it means to be an American. “When there is an emergency, you don’t ask if someone is a Republican or Democrat, a liberal or conservative, an English speaker or not, you serve them because they are brothers and sisters in need,” said the bishop.

“You remind us what makes us a great nation, and that what unites us in Christ is greater than what could divide us because of personal differences.”



In remarks thanking uniformed personnel, Bishop Caggiano said that the “Great Prayer of Thanksgiving” at Mass was the appropriate way to recognize the personal sacrifice and bravery of uniformed personnel who “give of themselves sacrificially and generously.”

The annual Blue Mass observance was held on the day Hurricane Irma battered Florida, and the people of the Gulf area and the Caribbean were very much on the minds of the more than 500 in attendance at St. Matthew’s.

“It’s ironic that we gather here on such a beautiful day when



so many people down south are suffering terrible tribulations and their lives are in peril,” said Father Allen, who delivered the homily.

Father Allen, who serves as chaplain of Fairfield Town Emergency Services, said he was happy to see that many churches were serving as sanctuaries.

Reflecting on the Gospel reading, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am,” Father Allen praised the police, fire and EMTs for “watching out for others,” and treating those in harm’s way as brothers and sisters. He said they save lives through their “skill, strength and love.”

This year’s honorees were recognized for acts of bravery, public service and compassion in the line of duty. Honorees include Officer Maryhelen McCarthy from the Patrol Division of the Newtown Police Department; Weston firefighter and EMT Mark Blake; Norwalk Fire Department firefighter George Baez; and Norwalk police officers Anthony DePanfilis, Matthew Nyquist and José Silva.

Blue Mass Honorees

After Mass, Bishop Caggiano and Father Allen recognized Blue Mass honorees for their courage and services to the community. Each officer came forward to



receive a plaque.

Officer Maryhelen McCarthy from the Patrol Division of the Newtown Police Department is a seventeen-year veteran of the Newtown Police Department. Over the years, she has counseled those suffering from the tragedy of the Newtown shootings of 2012, responded to a bomb threat at St. Rose of Lima Church, and most recently led a remembrance a Newtown police officer who died of an illness related to his service at Ground Zero after 9/11.

Weston Volunteer Fire Department EMT Mark Blake is a Life Member of their fire department. He has done a great deal for the Weston Fire / Rescue Team and the town over the years. He has been recognized as Firefighter of the Year and received the Chief and President’s Award. He worked as a logistics officer for the American Red Cross during the 9/11 attack in New York City. He also worked at the L’Ambiance Plaza building collapse in Bridgeport. Mark is the coordinator of Safe Kids of Fairfield County. He has run multiple Safe Kids car seat clinics in Weston.

Norwalk Firefighter George Baez is a ten-year veteran of the Norwalk Fire Department. Prior to his coming to the Norwalk Fire Department he was a twelve-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps, attaining the rank of staff sergeant. During his years in Norwalk he has involved himself with a number of community activities. These include working with the Jefferson School children in their basketball program and at the Briggs/Pathways Academy High School with their Fire Academy Program. He assists

with the City of Norwalk Public Safety Cadet Program.

Firefighter Baez is the lead of the Norwalk Fire Department Honor Guard. He is currently assigned as Deputy Chiefs Aide.

The Norwalk Department of Police Service recognized officers Anthony DePanfilis, Officer Matthew Nyquist and Officer José Silva for their excellent team work and professionalism displayed during an extremely dangerous situation on May 12, 2016.

“The officers demonstrated courage in the face of extreme danger and the use of restraint when confronted by a potentially life threatening adversary. The officers were able to handcuff the suspect and take him to the hospital for evaluation,” said Father Allen.

Officer Anthony DePanfilis was born and raised in Norwalk. He joined the department on February 26, 1999. During his tenure at the Norwalk Police Department, he has served in the Patrol Division, Special Services and in the U.S. Marshals’ Violent Fugitive Task Force. Over the course of his career, Officer DePanfilis has garnered numerous awards, medals and citations including a Police Service Cross, Medal of Merit and four Officer of the Month awards for outstanding and courageous police work.

Officer Matthew Nyquist joined the department on July 25, 2013. He holds a BS degree in criminal justice from the University of Scranton and an MS, also in criminal justice, from Long Island University. Officer Nyquist is currently assigned to the First Platoon.

Officer José Silva joined the Norwalk Police Department on March 26, 2015, after working at Pratt & Whitney-United Technologies, building jet engines for U.S. military fighter planes. He holds a bachelor of science degree in finance from Central Connecticut State University. Officer Silva is originally from the Cape Verde Islands off the northwest coast of Africa and is a native speaker of Cape Verdean Creole and Portuguese. Officer Silva is currently assigned to the First Platoon.

The Blue Mass is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and other generous benefactors throughout Fairfield County. ■

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Respect Life

‘Welcoming the Stranger’

By PAT HENNESSY

When Sister Mary Ellen Burns’ great-grandmother immigrated to this country in the 1860s, the 16-year-old girl faced a lonely, harsh and frightening journey from County Tipperary in Ireland.

She left all that she knew and loved to escape the poverty and political oppression in Ireland. “But as soon as she put her foot on the shore in New York, she was legally present in the United States,” said Sister Mary Ellen.

Sister Mary Ellen, ASCJ, a Yale graduate, worked for 19 years as a legal services lawyer in New York City before founding Apostle Immigrant Services in New Haven. The organization is a recent expression of the mission of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who came to this country over a hundred years ago to work with struggling immigrants in New Haven.

Sister Mary Ellen and Alex Arévalo, immigration counselor for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Bridgeport, spoke at “Welcoming the Stranger,” a social justice lecture on immigration sponsored by the diocesan Council of Religious. It was held at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport on September 26, the day before Pope Francis initiated his “Share the Journey” initiative and a week after the Catholic bishops of Connecticut issued their statement in response to the pending elimination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Alex Arévalo’s description of his passage to the United States speaks to the far different reception of immigrants in today’s America. He, also, was 16 when his father sent him with a stranger on a harrowing journey to the U.S. to escape a violent civil war in his home country of El Salvador. Surviving days without food and suffering violence from robbers, who once put a gun to the boy’s head, he made it to

American soil.

But not to legal protection. “I spent 11 years in limbo, without papers. It was like I wasn’t a person. In high school, I tried to hide my status. I didn’t really see any point to keep going. I wouldn’t be able to get a job after I graduated.”

Thanks to the encouragement and guidance of the late Msgr. Frank Wissel, Arévalo—now a U.S. citizen—was able to graduate college and now is certified to assist more recent immigrants. His office has served people from more than 25 countries. Many are working toward or have become U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, obtained employment

“We can learn about this, we can look at it and ask, ‘What can we do?’ We have to live our faith.”

authorization documents, or applied for family reunification relief.

With the recent cancellation of the DACA program, Arévalo is also working

with 160 DREAMers in this diocese for protection from deportation and removal. DREAMers is a broad name for people who were brought to this country as children and grew up here. He told the group that most of the young people he works with come from local parishes. “With no legal status, they have no Social Security, no work—often not even a drivers’ license. All these possibilities are denied them.”

“Many of these young people would be torn from the only country they have really known and be sent to countries for which they hold no memories,” the bishops’ statement noted. “Many would lose their educational, work and military service opportunities that would make them contributing members of our society.”

The lecture at the Catholic Center, in addition to showing the disparities in this country’s immigration policies, helped to counter misinformation about the immigration process.

“For an employment visa, a specific employer in the U.S. must request the visa for a specif-

ic person and demonstrate that their skill level is needed in that capacity,” said Sister Mary Ellen. “The chances that someone in Africa will know of an American firm needing their skills are slim to none.”

The challenge for a family-based visa is equally daunting. From certain countries, it is nearly impossible. “For a Mexican-born man, now a U.S. citizen, the waiting time to bring his son to this country is over 60 years,” she said.

“This is such an important issue,” said Father Chris Samele, pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Trumbull. “I came here tonight because I’m just as ignorant as anyone about this topic, and I feel that it’s part of my vocation as a priest to learn what I can and make my parishioners aware of it.”

St. Stephen’s is starting a service group in October, and Father Samele plans to take the information he gathered back to them.

“We can learn about this, we can look at it and ask, ‘What can we do?’ We have to live our faith.”

On September 27, the morning following the symposium, Pope Francis welcomed Caritas representatives to officially launch the “Share the Journey” two-year campaign aimed at raising awareness about the plight of migrants. The campaign aims to challenge negative perceptions regarding migrants through websites featuring the stories of individuals and explanations of Church teaching on the culture of encounter.

This is exactly the exploration the “Welcome the Stranger” lecture hoped to begin, and that Father Samele plans to present to his parishioners.

Opening his arms wide in a powerfully symbolic gesture in St. Peter’s Square, Pope Francis said, “Christ urges us to welcome our brothers and sisters with our arms truly open, ready for a sincere embrace, a loving and enveloping embrace.”

(Participating U.S. organizations have launched a website, www.sharejourney.org for ideas and tools for participation in the campaign. To learn more about the Pope’s initiative, go to cnstopstories.com/2017/09/27/share-the-journey-embrace-migrants-refugees-pope-says/ or www.youtube.com/watch/.)



EXPLAINING THE ISSUE and countering misconceptions, Alex Arévalo, immigration counselor for Catholic Charities of the Diocese, and Sister Mary Ellen Burns, ASCJ, founder of Apostle Immigrant Services in New Haven, spoke at “Welcome the Stranger,” a lecture on immigration sponsored by the diocesan Council of Religious.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for October 15, 2017

Matthew 22:1-14

Following is a word search based on the Gospel for the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A: a lesson about being prepared for the call. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

JESUS	WEDDING	HIS SON
READY	BUSINESS	MISTREATED
ENRAGED	TROOPS	DESTROYED
MURDERERS	BURNED	WORTHY
STREETS	FOUND	GUESTS
A MAN	FRIEND	BIND
DARKNESS	TEETH	MANY

GUESTS

G N I D D E W C H D D J
L U F O U N D W D E E O
W R E A D Y O C C S T M
K E D S L R J H U T A M
Y N A M T S O S O R E U
D R J H I S S O N O R R
D A Y T E E T H D Y T D
E G A N N N R R N E S E
N E N I A K O L E D I R
R D S A M R O L I E M E
U U T K A A P A R L T R
B I N D M D S F F M B S

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EDITORIAL

Stretch

Toward the end of September, Pope Francis encouraged the Church to reach out to migrants and refugees through the Share the Journey program. "The Church" means us. No matter how well intentioned we are, most Catholics in Fairfield County don't know any refugees. So how can we start to follow the Pope's initiative?

Maybe sharing, like charity, begins at home. Or at church, or at the grocery store. Once you start thinking that way, there are lots of opportunities to reach out. Actually look at the people whose hand you shake during the Sign of Peace at Mass. Recognize that they are nice folks. Smile. Smile again at the grocery store clerks. They might not be as similar to you and me as the people we stand beside at Mass, but they are good people too.

It is absolutely, scientifically proven—really—that when your face stretches into a smile, your heart stretches, too. Pope Francis is asking us to grow bigger hearts. To get outside our comfort zone. Maybe when we stretch our prayers and hearts at home, we'll be able to stretch out our arms to welcome the stranger when he finally comes our way.

Renewed in Prayer

What a remarkable day for those who traveled to Washington, D.C., on September 23 for Solemn Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the dedication of the new Rosary Walk and Garden!

More than 2,000 faithful from the diocese answered the bishop's call to pilgrimage and prayer. They were young and old, individuals and families. Some parishes, like St. Charles Borromeo in Bridgeport, even filled buses with parishioners who journeyed together.

One highlight of day was the appearance of the Diocesan Youth Choir, which sang throughout the Mass behind the celebrants on the main altar.

"I was delighted and humbled to see so many young people and families from our diocese travel to Washington to pray and celebrate this great day together. Thank you for your sacrifices, witness and joyful celebration of our Catholic faith," said Bishop Caggiano.

At the dedication of the Rosary Walk following Mass, Bishop Caggiano prayed before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. "No matter what challenge you and I face, the Lord will lead us through it, through the intercession of his mother, and as you and I struggling to be disciples, she is our model and guide."

At a time when many people are divided and entangled in contentious social issues, our bishop has shown us the way forward in renewal: he urges us to keep our focus on Christ and the sacraments, to serve others, and to ask the Blessed Mother for help along they way. That is a pilgrimage worth taking.

Lifelong Formation

The need to improve catechesis was foremost in the mind of synod delegates in 2014 and 2015, when they gave it the highest priority in their list of recommendations.

This fall, the Leadership Institute has more than answered that call with the launch of a wide range of programs and online opportunities for people throughout diocese to learn more about their faith and share the gift with others.

The Catechetical Task Force Findings & Recommendations Report, highlighted in this issue, offers a blueprint going forward. The report is a singular call to re-imagine faith formation in the diocese by making it a lifelong journey of encounter and accompaniment within the context of the parish community. It outlines best practices and recommendations for sacramental preparation, effective pastoral ministry, marriage prep and more.

"Everything's on the table," said institute director Patrick Donovan at recent meeting with parish ministers, in which he unveiled the new report. Beginning with the understanding that the classroom model of religious education is no longer enough, the report serves as an invitation to create more welcoming parishes where people "encounter Christ" through communities of faith and service.

In the coming weeks, Bishop Caggiano will continue this "Conversation with Catechists" to discuss the report and outline the path to missionary discipleship "one person at a time."

The Leadership Institute is off to a great start, bringing new energy and vision to the task of lifelong faith formation. To learn more about the exciting and challenging initiatives, visit www.formationreimagined.org. ■

EDITOR'S CHOICE



Congratulations

St. Augustine Medal Award Recipients

The ceremony will be held
Saturday, October 28, 2017
St. Augustine Cathedral
359 Washington Avenue • Bridgeport, CT • 1:30 p.m.



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

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

PASTOR

FATHER JEFFREY W. COUTURE, from temporary Parochial Administrator, Saint Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury, to Pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Weston, Effective date was September 30.

FATHER MICHAEL L. DUNN, from Pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Weston, to Pastor of Saint Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury. Effective date was September 30.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

FATHER JAIME MARIN-CARDONA, from part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Bridgeport and part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Bridgeport, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish, Bridgeport. Effective date was September 30.

DIRECTOR

FATHER MICHAEL A. BOCCACCIO, from Defender of the Bond and Promoter of Justice

for the Tribunal of the Diocese of Bridgeport, to Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies Office in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Effective date was August 31.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

FATHER RAYMOND M. SCHERBA, from Parochial Vicar, Saint Gregory the Great Parish, Danbury, to Part-time Parochial Vicar, Saint Joseph Parish, Danbury and Assistant Chaplain at Danbury Hospital. Effective date was September 30.

FATHER MARCEL SAINT JEAN, from Assistant Chaplain at Danbury Hospital, to Assistant Chaplain at Norwalk Hospital. Effective date was September 30. Father Saint Jean will remain Part-time Chaplain at Saint Joseph's Manor, Trumbull.

RETIREMENT

MONSIGNOR JOSEPH W. PEKAR, from Pastor, Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church, Bridgeport, to retirement. Effective date is October 7. Monsignor Pekar will

reside at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford.

EPISCOPAL DEACON CHAPLAIN

DEACON JOHN D' TARANTO, to Episcopal Deacon Chaplain to Notre Dame High School, Fairfield. Effective date was August 15.

THE FOLLOWING PRIESTS
HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO SERVE
ON THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL:

FATHER FRANCISCO GOMEZ-FRANCO—representing priests ordained 0-14 years

FATHER WILLIAM M. QUINLAN—representing priests ordained 15-29 years

FATHER COREY V. PICCININO—representing priests ordained 30+ years (not retired)

MONSIGNOR WILLIAM J. SCHEYD, P.A.—representing retired priests

*Father Joseph A. Marcello
Vicar for Clergy
October, 2017*

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Editorial



Visiting the Imprisoned

A WOMAN'S VOICE

BY SISTER NANCY STRILLACCI, ASCJ

Sister Nancy Strillacci is the Episcopal Delegate for Religious for the diocesan Office of Clergy and Religious and moderator of the Council of Religious.

Early this year Bishop Frank J. Caggiano asked me if I would like to work in the Bridgeport Correctional Facility on North Avenue. I had been volunteering for eight years doing Communion services, so he knew I had an interest.

I now go in Tuesdays and Wednesdays through the Department of Corrections (DOC) Professional Partnership with the diocese. I am grateful to our bishop and Rev. Charles Williams at the DOC Religious Services Office to have this opportunity.

Why is this work necessary?

First, prison ministry is part of the Catholic Church's fostering a Culture of Life, in which every human is recognized as having God-given dignity. Second, Jesus taught his followers (including us) by his own actions to have a preferential option for the poor and those on the margins of society. Third, one of the corporal works of mercy is visiting the imprisoned.

The U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops emphasized in their 2000 document "Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration" that the Church stands in solidarity with the incarcerated as

members of the social community. It especially stressed the need for community-based substance abuse programs to reduce recidivism and the warehousing of those with addictions in correctional institutions. These would allow addicted persons in treatment to remain in jobs and with families. The bishops also said, "Physical, behavioral and emotional healing happens sooner, and with more lasting effects, if accompanied by spiritual healing."

Bridgeport jail's Chaplains' Office regularly includes Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Islamic chaplains. Imam Nasif Muhammad is the facilitator, having ministered there for 40 years. It has been a pleasure sharing our spiritual lives in professional dialog. They have been more than kind in getting me accustomed to the prison schedule and protocol, although after having volunteered there for years I had the advantage of knowing some of the buildings, correction officers and inmates.

North Avenue is a Category 1-4 male facility with a population of about 800. Many inmates are awaiting their court appearances. Some cannot afford to bond out. Some have already been convicted and are waiting for sentencing. Some, sentenced, soon go to another CT facility, program or half-way house. It is a mixed population of varied ages, races, ethnicities, of first timers and repeat offenders. I make them laugh when I say that ministry there is similar to my former experience as campus minister at a secular university... You never know who will show up at a session and whether you will see them again. But in the jail you have a captive audience! It is very humbling to have Scripture sharing and discussion in groups or conversation with individual prisoners. They share personal stories of poor choices, their faith and insights, and lay out their plans for the future that with God's grace they hope to achieve. It is a privilege to journey with

them, help them deal with their "reality," and encourage them to be free interiorly. I remind them that some on the outside are not free. Inmates are very ordinary people. One could be a neighbor, a work colleague, a relative.

I find it difficult to watch anxious family members of the imprisoned in the lobby, not knowing what to do, in particular if this is their loved one's first "time in." The impact of imprisonment on family members, especially on dependent children, is terrible. Often inmates decline jail visiting to spare loved ones the experience. Some tell their kids on the phone that they are away at school. Re-entry after release can also be worrisome for inmates with few resources on the outside waiting for them.

The Catholic community can urge for prison reform and pray for those in State facilities, their families coping with complicated emotional and financial situations and those who serve and care for the detainees. ■



All are welcome at Norwalk's Little Manger

A DAD'S VIEW

BY MATTHEW HENNESSEY

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

You know what they say about pro-life Catholics. We only care about babies before they are born. Tell it to Chris Bell.

Bell has done more than just about anyone to help women and babies over the last 30 years. Since founding his first crisis pregnancy center in 1985, Bell has seen 1,090 children born at his network of Good Counsel Homes. He now runs seven in four states, providing new mothers shelter and comfort during the hour of their greatest need.

"We take any woman who is pregnant and needs a place to

stay," he told me recently. That's not idle talk. Good Counsel operates a 24-hour hotline and has "an open intake policy. If there are no beds in one house, we will find you a bed in another house."

The average stay is one year. During that time mothers are given job training, help finding an apartment, and parenting classes. Bell estimates that over the course of three decades, he and his colleagues have provided 600,000 nights of shelter to more than 8,000 women and children.

Many of the women who come are mothers already. One in five is an immigrant. Roughly half have had an abortion. Nearly

all are survivors of domestic violence. This is not a feel-good factory. Lives are at stake.

In September, Good Counsel announced a new partnership with an old friend: Norwalk's little manger, Malta House. Bell helped found the 10-bedroom maternity home 20 years ago.

It's a happy homecoming to Fairfield County for Bell. A Long Islander, he graduated from the University of Bridgeport in 1979. He wasn't always the best Catholic in those years, he admits, but he did strike up a fateful friendship with campus chaplain Father Gerry Devore.

Degree in hand, Bell joined Covenant House, the Hell's Kitchen field hospital for homeless youth. He got a street-level look at the life of a vulnerable young woman in the early 1980s.

"I was appalled," he said. "These women needed help and all we could offer them was a night in a welfare hotel. That still happens in New York."

Bell was moved by the despair he witnessed at Covenant House. He felt God calling him to open

a home for pregnant women. He took the idea to his spiritual director, Father Benedict Groeschel, who was well-known in the New York area but years away from becoming an international Catholic celebrity via EWTN. The charismatic Franciscan urged him to go for it. "To my amazement he said, 'I'll help you,'" Bell recalled. "It really sounded to me like God was saying 'I'll help you.'"

The Groeschel connection opened doors for Bell, who headed out on the parish speaking circuit, giving talks and "begging for money." Bell has charisma of his own, and the donations started trickling in. Hoboken was the location of the first Good Counsel Home. Two more opened in 1987, one in Spring Valley, N.Y., and one on Staten Island. A fourth opened in the South Bronx in 1991.

Sometime in the mid-nineties, Bell got a call from his college spiritual director. Father Gerry told him that two Fairfield County Catholics—Hope Carter and Michael O'Rourke—had

come to him with the idea of opening a home for mothers and babies in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

"You guys need to meet Chris Bell," said Father Gerry. They got together in Norwalk at a former convent on East Avenue, across from St. Thomas the Apostle. Bell was impressed—and a little emotional.

"They told me what they wanted to do. They said they thought the Order of Malta would support it and my mouth dropped open," he said. "I was humbled because I felt like I was coming back home to the Bridgeport Diocese. I don't know if I mentioned, but I didn't go to Mass as often I should have at college."

Malta House was born in 1998, and the Order of Malta did support it, though it was up to Bell, O'Rourke, Carter, and scores of volunteers to run the place. Eventually they decided to spin Malta House off from the rest of the Good Counsel network. There wasn't any drama. Sometimes small nonprofits need

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Trumbull

George Weigel to offer talk and book signing

TRUMBULL—George Weigel, *New York Times* best-selling author and St. John Paul II's biographer and personal friend, will visit the parish of St. Catherine of Siena for a talk and book signing on Saturday, October 21.

The event will take place in the McClinch Family Center at St. Catherine's, beginning at 5:30 pm. It is open free of charge to all.

In conjunction with the book signing, a First Class Relic of the still-liquefied blood of St. John Paul II will be present at all Masses at St. Catherine's on Saturday, October 21, and Sunday, October 22. The relic will be available for public veneration following the 10:30 am Mass on Sunday. Mass times are Saturday: 4 pm and 7:15 pm; Sunday: 7:30 am, 9 am, 10:30 am, and 12 noon.

"All Masses during this weekend will be Memorial Masses of St. John Paul II, by special permission of Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport," said Father Joseph Marcello, pastor of St. Catherine. "We're honored and excited that Mr. Weigel's only Connecticut appearance will be at St. Catherine's. This is an event that is open to the entire diocese and we welcome all."

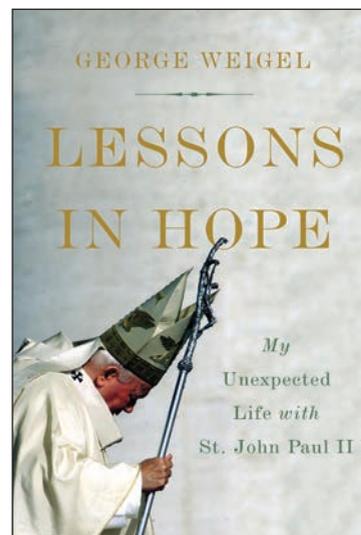
Weigel's book, *Lessons in Hope: My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II* (Basic Books; September 19, 2017), is a book of stories about a saint who bent the course of human history by the biographer who knew him "from the inside."

In this new book, distinguished Catholic scholar George Weigel amplifies his bestselling two-volume biography of John Paul II by offering an album of memories



GEORGE WEIGEL

that reveals the rich personality of the emblematic figure of the second half of the twentieth century and sketches his own journey to becoming the Pope's biographer and friend. Weigel recounts significant encounters with people



who, through their influence and insight, shaped his own perspective on foreign affairs and human rights and, most importantly, his admiration and respect for John Paul II.

The relic of St. John Paul is similar to one displayed at the April 27, 2014, canonization of Pope John Paul in Rome. It consists of a vial of his blood that was entrusted to the Knights of Columbus for the Saint John Paul II National Shrine by his longtime personal secretary

Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Archbishop of Krakow. It is normally housed at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine, which is administered by the Knights in Washington, D.C. The site was designated a national shrine by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It features a 16,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art exhibit on John Paul's life and legacy.

(For more information, visit the St. Catherine website: www.stcathtrumbull.com. or call 203.377.3133.)



The Parish of Saint Catherine of Siena is pleased to present

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MICHAEL HEY

Concert Organist

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Najam, Queen of Clergy chef

George Najam, chef at the Catherine Denis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence, died after being hit by a car on August 16 on the way home from work. He had recently returned from a vacation with his wife, Linda.

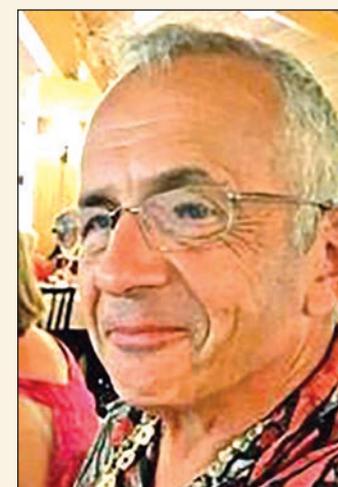
Najam, 68, grew up in Danbury and was a graduate of Danbury High School, Class of '66. He served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War, cooking on several aircraft carriers in the Tonkin Gulf.

He completed his formal education after returning from Vietnam and was a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. Najam had been the executive chef for 25 years

for the Sisters at the Congregation of Notre Dame, then in Ridgefield, before becoming chef to Queen of the Clergy.

The Liturgy of the Resurrection was celebrated for George Najam on August 22 at St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Danbury, with Father Naji Kiwan, pastor, officiating.

Interment followed in St. Peter Cemetery, Danbury.





AN INVITATION TO LIFELONG FORMATION

Diocese of Bridgeport



CATECHETICAL TASK FORCE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A MOMENT OF RENEWAL

My Dear Friends,

In accord with the mandates of the Fourth Diocesan Synod, the Catechetical Task Force was established in October 2015. Over a period of eighteen months, the committee met to recognize the good work happening in faith formation in our parishes and schools and to recommend new models of ministry to achieve the renewal called for in the Synod's instructions.

This is not a moment of judgment in the history of our diocese—but a moment of renewal. What can we do better to bear great fruit? What can we do better together?

Let us pray for the courage to take an honest look at how we communicate the faith with others. Let us pray for the wisdom to see beyond what we have always done and look to what is possible. Finally, let us pray for strength to make changes where change is required.

Only then will we truly be renewed.

Thomas J. Saggiano



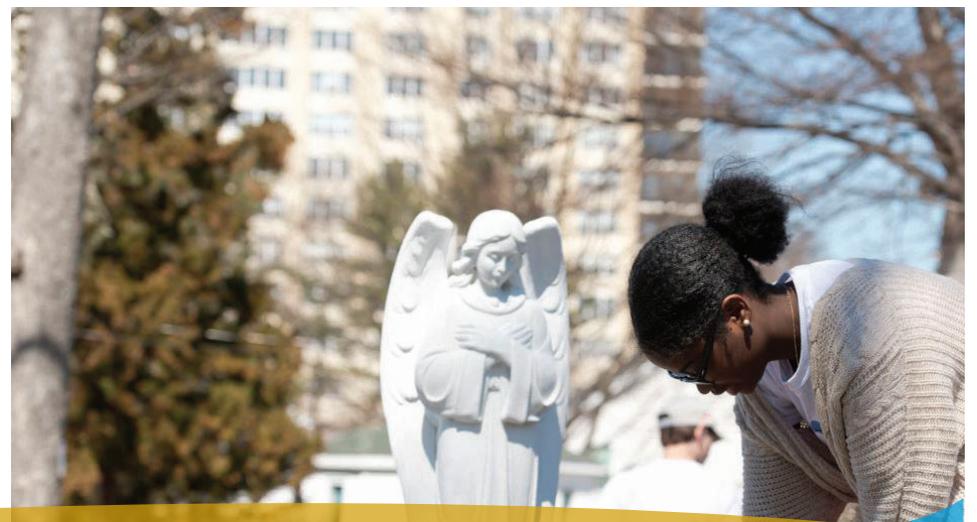
NAMING THE PROBLEM

While it is true that many parishes are doing faith formation well, few parishes have taken faith formation beyond the standard classroom model. For generations, the current model of religious education assumed that the faith of the family unit was alive and well. Religious education, be it in the parish parochial school or in the parish religious education program, was intended to *supplement* the faith practices at home, not replace them. The Task Force recognized several issues:

- The classroom model is not all that effective in helping young people retain the faith, but this is how our buildings and textbooks are structured, so how do we meet that challenge?
- Families have changed over the last several generations. More and more families are what society would name, "nontraditional." The Task Force rejected that term but wanted to be sure to identify the unique living situation that many families face.
- The cultural milieu has changed. Pluralism and relativism reign supreme and facing that reality is on the minds of parents and teachers as they seek new ways to share the faith.
- Life in Fairfield County provides its own challenges. We welcome the very wealthy and the very poor to our parish communities. For some leaders, we must find the balance between attitudes of entitlement among some and the choice to feed a child or educate a child among others.
- Every parish is different. Every family is different. How do we reimagine faith formation while recognizing that one size will never, ever fit everyone?

FINDING THE SOLUTION

If we are to be instruments of change in this world and in the lives of those around us, we must rethink everything. Not our core Catholic beliefs, of course, but how we live and share those beliefs. This goes far beyond the hour many of us spend at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and asks how faith informs our head and motivates our heart. To do this, we have to challenge the culture of the *status quo* that exists in many of our faith communities. Phrases like, "We've always done it this way" and "Why do we have to change?" have no place in this new reality. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon (this) complacent attitude." Indeed, the Holy Father invites "everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities." (EG, 33)



ABOUT CULTURAL DIVERSITY

One of the ways we hope to achieve lifelong formation is to build communities where diversity is welcomed and valued and where the faithful are seen as equal partners in the Gospel message. This is best reflected in the text that follows, which is part of a formation plan offered by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The program is called Intercultural Competencies and will be offered in the Diocese of Bridgeport in the coming months.

Therefore, to serve effectively, parishes might consider:

- Articulating a vision of ministry based on ecclesial integration and inclusion;
- Fostering the inculturation of the Gospel in all cultures;
- Planning with the people, not for the people;
- Broadening your understanding of ministry groups, programs, and structures, and cast a bigger net;
- Empowering people from different cultures and ethnicities into leadership positions.

Source: USCCB, Intercultural Competencies

More resources available online at www.formationreimagined.org

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The Catechetical Task Force Survey was developed to obtain a better understanding of the needs of Directors of Religious Education/Faith Formation throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport.

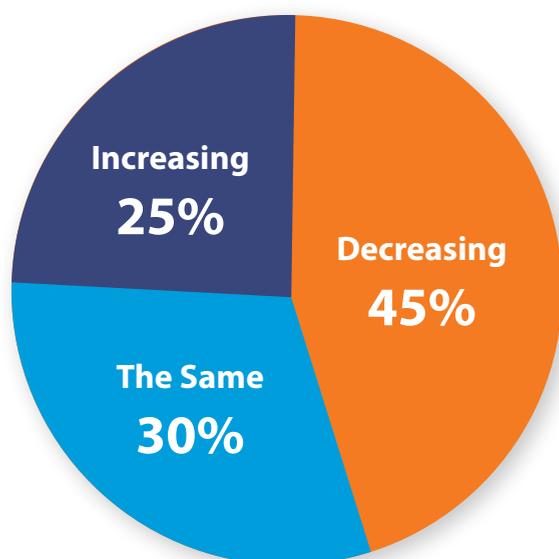
A telephone survey was drafted, reviewed, modified and approved by the CTF. Interviews were conducted via telephone from May to August 2016.

Fifty-six of 78 (72%) parishes participated in the first survey. More than 80% of our parishes were represented in the second survey, conducted in November 2016.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Parishes reflect a wide range of student enrollment at all levels. There are also variances in the types and lengths of programs provided, the curriculum used, etc. In other words, there is no single “persona” to define a “typical” parish.

Nearly twice as many parishes report decreased student enrollment overall (45%) versus those that report an increase (25%).



Where enrollment is increasing, in nearly every case it is due to a direct action by the parish in creating/revising programs or parish clergy taking an active outreach role.

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

- An active, comprehensive ministry to young people enlivens a parish, therefore, more should be done by the diocese to help parishes develop ministry teams that can make this happen
- Parishes that have pre-school ministry are three times more likely to report that these families attend Mass “regularly”
- Revised sacramental guidelines for First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation were requested by more than half of respondents
- The diocese should offer more formation for religious educators, catechists, and youth ministry leaders
- The diocese should create an online community where ministry leaders can share ideas
- The Task Force should make recommendations that allow parishes to tailor suggestions to their own unique realities
- The diocese should offer resources specific to every stage of faith formation
- Improve communication between the diocese and parish leaders
- The Task Force should create indicators and recommendations for parishes to use in assessing and reinvigorating their faith formation efforts

Online you can read more on the following topics in the Lifelong Formation, Catechetical Task Force Findings & Recommendations report:

- This Document’s Framework
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Baptismal Preparation
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Pastoral Ministry: Early Childhood
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Pastoral Ministry: Childhood
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective First Reconciliation Preparation
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective First Communion Preparation
- Indicators for Effective Pastoral Ministry: Early Adolescents
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Pastoral Ministry: Adolescents
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Confirmation Preparation
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Pastoral Ministry: Adults
- A Word About Young Adults / The Wisdom of Age
- Indicators for Effectively Welcoming New Members (RCIA)
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Marriage Preparation
- Indicators/Recommendations for Effective Pastoral Ministry: Families
- Answering the Call
- Expectations



THE PATH TO MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

ENCOUNTER

These are experiences throughout our lives in which we **encounter the person of Jesus Christ**, most often in and through the community of believers. These encounters awaken the gift of faith, which is infused into our souls at baptism and must always be nurtured.

GROWING IN FAITH

Like a flame that must be tended in order to grow, the gift of faith is cultivated in many ways. Participation in the Sacraments, engaging Sacred Scripture, personal prayer, and the personal witness of others help to **deepen one's encounter with the Lord** through the power of grace. Other ways by which the flame of faith can be strengthened include beauty, art, literature, cultural and ethnic celebrations of faith, and works of virtue and goodness.

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

When we know, love, and serve the Lord, when we live out His call to **spread the Good News**, and when we invite others into relationship with the person of Jesus, this is missionary discipleship. It is a lifelong process, always in need of renewal and formation.

WHERE DOES MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP BEGIN?

A lifetime relationship with the Lord in and through the Church that deepens with the passage of time.

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

As our personal encounters with the Lord continue, there will come a time when we are invited by the Church to embrace an explicit faith in Christ. For Saint Peter, this moment of conversion occurred when he answered the question posed by Jesus, "Who do you say that I am?" The call of each disciple is to follow Peter and, with mind, heart, and soul, **affirm faith in Christ and embrace the personal conversion** that such faith demands. Such a confession of faith deepens over time and is strengthened by the community of believers.

COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH

We do not make this journey alone. We recognize that we are members of the **Mystical Body of Christ**. It is a communion that extends through time and space, built upon the witness of the Apostles. It is communion that finds its greatest expression in the Eucharist.

EVANGELIZING CATECHESIS

When we fall in love with the Lord, our hearts desire two things: to **know everything** about Him and to **spend time** with Him. Through catechesis, we deepen our knowledge of the Lord through the study of Sacred Scripture, the Church's Tradition and the truths of our Catholic Faith. We spend time with the Lord through participation in personal and communal prayer, especially the celebration of the Eucharist. By deepening our knowledge and love for the Lord, a deep desire begins to grow in our hearts. It is a desire to share the joy of knowing the Lord with others. We wish to invite others to know and love the Lord as we do. Now, the door to missionary discipleship has begun to open.

ACCOMPANIMENT

Accompaniment includes being both a leader and a follower.

Even as we accompany others, we are strengthened by the faith of those around us.

Parish News

Relics of Padre Pio visit Bridgeport diocese

By **JOSEPH PRONECHEN**

By early morning on Sunday, September 24, people were already arriving at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull to view and venerate the relics of St. Pio of Pietrelcina—beloved Padre Pio. They were open to view an hour before the first Mass at 7:30 am.

As the day progressed, the unusually hot, humid weather didn't deter droves of everyone from ardent Padre Pio devotees to those who were simply in awe of being able to venerate the relics of a well-known saint. The Saint Pio Foundation, the official sponsors of this visit in the United States, brought for display and veneration St. Pio's glove, crusts of his wounds, cotton-gauze with the saint's blood stains, a lock of Padre Pio's hair, a handkerchief soaked with his perspiration only hours before he died, and his friar's mantle. All but the mantle were in exceptionally large reliquaries.

The timing to visit the Diocese of Bridgeport was right because 2017 brings together the 130th anniversary of Padre Pio's birth and 15th anniversary of his canonization.

For two days previously—September 22-23—the relics of Padre Pio were at the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford. Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, the pastor, said that 6,000 people came to venerate the relics during those two days. The fruits were obvious.

"Most people already had an attachment," he said, "and this was strengthened by the great spiritual fruitfulness for the families that came, many whom I have never seen before."

They came to St. John's from long distances. Msgr. DiGiovanni said that all week the parish got calls from people in Texas, Arkansas, the Carolinas, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey. They came from all over Connecticut, too.



There were also seminarians from Yonkers, from the Catskills, and a variety of religious order priests who came with their seminarians. "It was surely great to see," said Msgr. DiGiovanni.

For the three priests at the basilica, "We were all very moved by the presence the relics and the fervor of the people," said Msgr. DiGiovanni.

"For two full days pretty

much, people were constantly coming in," he noted, keeping the lines in the basilica long and full.

Masses were packed. On September 23, "There was standing room only, with 1,400 people at the Mass on the feast day."

Then, on Sunday at the 10:30 am Mass, St. Theresa's, which seats 1,200 comfortably, was nearly completely filled with a spillover into the choir loft. With the relics left front and center in the lower sanctuary, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano celebrated Mass. Concelebrating with him were Father Brian Gannon, the pastor, Father Carl McIntosh and Father Harry Prieto.

During his homily, Bishop Caggiano began by highlighting the words of St. Paul from the second reading, "For to me life is Christ and death is gain."

He remembered those words spoken by his friend Peter, a seminarian knowing he would die before his ordination. The classmates were with him in the hospital room a week before ordination. "Peter recognized he was dying," Bishop Caggiano said. Instead of a vista opening after ordination, there was this instead.

Bishop Caggiano stressed how "God's love is everlasting...God's love is given not for transitory good but for eternal life."

And what God gives is "wildly different between us. But not unfair. He is wildly in love with each one of us."

Turning to the gospel of the laborers being called to work in the vineyard at different hours of the day, then all receiving the same wage, much to the displeasure of the earliest workers who felt unfairly treated because they had labored longer, he noted,

"the laborers were comparing their lives and forgot to look to God, the author of all goodness and love."

The bishop tied a major lesson from the gospel into the life of Padre Pio. "Whatever we receive is meant to be given...To love not expecting in return...To love until everything is given away. That mystery did not escape Padre Pio."

"It is true he wore in his physical body the stigmata of Christ," Bishop Caggiano observed. "More importantly, he was a man who wildly loved everyone he met."

Padre Pio knew that only by presenting the truth could he help "the people entrusted to his care." That was for their healing of body and spirit. The saintly friar founded the state of the art hospital at Pietrelcina.

Padre Pio loved and sacrificed and we're challenged to do the same thing.

"You can't do it on your own," Bishop Caggiano said. Necessary is the power of the Holy Spirit. Plead with Christ: "Help me to do what I cannot do on my own. Help me, Lord, to be your disciple and love to the end."

"And if we, my friends, are willing to do that," affirmed Bishop Caggiano, "Padre Pio is not the only one to be able to work miracles. So will you, and so will I."

After Masses, 3,500 faithful from individuals to families with several children, from tots being carried in their parent's arms to teenagers looking happy to be there, filled St. Theresa's main aisle and continued outside and up to the rear of the church.

Father Gannon saw countless fruits during the day. Among them, he said, "For our own parish, all the volunteers coming together and being so sacrificial and self-giving with their time and having so much joy about it, was a blessing. And the incredible patience and calm of hundreds of people waiting in the heat was another testimony to the faith of people and the thirst for holiness."

Father Gannon also saw a major fruit for priests with this visit. He explained, "Padre Pio is forever a reminder to us priests of the need for personal sanctity and faithfulness to our Lord's teachings." ■

Puerto Rico relief

When Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 20, its 155-mph winds knocked out electricity to the entire island, leaving its 3.4 million people in the dark. The situation could last up to six months, officials said.

"This is an event without precedent," Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello said in a statement. He called for additional assistance as residents deal with not just the loss of power, but a lack of drinkable water, fuel and numerous necessities.

Catholic Charities USA has sent \$1 million in emergency aid to assist Caritas Puerto Rico, the Catholic Charities agency on the island, as it begins the work of recovery, the agency told Catholic News Service on September 27. The national network of Catholic Charities agencies collected the money from thousands of donors across the United States in response to damage done by hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria.

The Knights of Columbus,



based in New Haven, has raised more than \$2.8 million as part of an ongoing national appeal "that builds on the donations and relief work of Knights themselves." In a September 26 news release, the Knights announced that it has donated \$100,000 to Puerto Rico to aid victims of Maria and an additional \$100,000 to Mexico for victims of the earthquakes that have struck that country.

In addition to financial support, it said many Knights have helped to rescue stranded neighbors and provide assistance, which has included the distribution of more than \$720,000 in food, water and other necessities.

"Charity has always been the defining characteristic of the Knights of Columbus, and people—both those in distress and those who want to help—have placed a great deal of trust in us," said Knights' CEO Carl Anderson. "The outpouring of generosity to our appeal by our members and others has been greatly appreciated."

(Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) is the official domestic relief agency of the U.S. Catholic Church. To donate, call 800.919.9338 or visit www.catholiccharitiesusa.org. One hundred percent of funds raised are going to those affected.) ■

Gospel of Life Society

Educating for life

By PAT HENNESSY

“When Eileen Bianchini agreed to head the Gospel of Life Society, her aim was to inform and educate people about Respect Life issues,” said Maureen Ciardiello, director of the Respect Life office of the Diocese of Bridgeport. “She brought in speakers from every spectrum of the Culture of Life.”

Bianchini, who stepped down as director of the Gospel of Life Society after 11 years at the helm, was one of the strongest pro-life voices in Connecticut. In June, she was recognized with an award from the CT Right to Life Conference for her courageous and effective leadership. John Waite, president of CT Right to Life, presented the award at the June Gospel of Life Society meeting.

“Eileen was ahead of the rest of us in recognizing the threat and acted forcefully and effectively to educate both legislators and the public,” said Waite when making the award.

The Gospel of Life Society meets the second Saturday of the month after the 9 am Mass at St. Mary Parish in Norwalk. Members read a section from St. John Paul II’s encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* and to pray for a culture of life. Then, most months, a speaker will address the group on current issues affecting the culture.

“Eileen really brought a whole new facet to the Gospel of Life Society,” said Father Greg Markey, who was pastor of St. Mary’s when the GOLS first made its home there. Father Markey had been looking for a lay leader to take over the GOLS in 2005 and Bianchini, a Third Order Franciscan, generously took on the task.

Education was Bianchini’s goal. Research and information were, and remain, critical to the effectiveness of the Gospel of Life Society. When Bianchini assumed leadership, GOLS evaluations pointed to a lack of critical pro-life education in the state. “So we did more research and decided to have speakers in our meetings,” she wrote in the letter announcing her retirement. “Our search was for critical pro-life educational material that

was fact based, verifiable, and would expose the hidden lies and deceptions.”

“For the ‘Culture of Life,’ you’re trying to build up an understanding of the entire culture—of the dignity of life in all its aspects,” said Father Markey. “Eileen had senators, she had congressman, she invited people involved in the abortion issue and healing in the aftermath of abortion, speakers on Natural Family Planning, end of life issues, suicide, the death penalty.”

Participants in the GOLS have heard from nurses and doctors, professors, parents of children with Down Syndrome, specialists in teenage mental development. “Some were famous nationwide, others were dynamic speakers who most people didn’t even know exist,” said Father Markey.

One critical strength of the Gospel of Life Society is that it brings together parish Respect Life groups, the CT Right to Life Society, and pro-life professionals and elected officials. “One of its goals is to encourage people,” said Father Markey. “It’s discouraging to be the only Pro Life voice. Through the society, parish

groups knew they weren’t alone. The Gospel of Life Society was there to help.”

With the guidance and support of sympathetic local legislators, GOLS members learned to effectively utilize a fact-based approach to persuading CT’s lawmakers on life and family issues. Many times they’re called to respond to urgent legislative issues in Hartford.

A prime example of this was Bianchini’s role on the proposed Physician Assisted Suicide legislation in Connecticut. Her testimony at a CT Public Health Committee hearing, March 30, 2103, included statistics, reports and information from a similar bill passed in Oregon. The report noted, chillingly, that in Oregon, after four years of assisted suicide, there was a decline in end-of-life pain control. Equally distressing, after the Oregon law was enacted, referrals for counseling for fragile patients dropped. That data came from the Oregon Department of Health annual reports.

The Connecticut bill died in committee.

For her part, Bianchini noted



BUILDING UNDERSTANDING—Eileen Bianchini, stepping down as director of the Gospel of Life Society after 11 years, was honored in June to her efforts to build up the Culture of Life. (l-r) John Waite, president of the CT Right to Life Corp.; Eileen Bianchini; Father Richard Cipolla, pastor St. Mary Parish in Norwalk; and John Juhasz, new director of the GOLS.

that that the success of the Gospel of Life was largely the fruit of the membership in their active participation, interest in learning the truth about complex issues and effective use of evidence in persuading others.

As she put it in her last meeting with members as president, “The Gospel of Life is successful because of you. You were given the ball and you ran with it. Please keep it up. Connecticut needs you.”

When she stepped down as director, Bianchini asked one of her long time collaborators, John Juhasz, a St. Mary’s parishioner,

to assume leadership of Gospel of Life Society. “There is a rich roster of speakers for this season,” Juhasz said. “At our October 14 meeting, the speaker will be Measi O’Rourke, executive director St. Joseph’s Parenting Center in Stamford.”

The title of O’Rourke’s talk is “How God Uses Broken Things: Protecting All God’s Children.”

(The Gospel of Life Society meets at St. Mary’s the second Saturday of the month from September through June at 10 am. To be put on the mailing list for future meetings and newsletters, contact John Juhasz: Gospelloflife.stmary@gmail.com.) ■

Healing and Hope

By MAUREEN CIARDIELLO

There are many out there who think that abortion is an unforgivable sin. Our Catholic faith teaches us, instead, that God forgives anyone who is repentant and truly sorry.

Pope Francis put it so beautifully in a statement he made on May 29, 2013, “The Church is the great family of the children of God. Certainly, it has human aspects from the members who comprise it, pastors and faithful. They have defects, imperfections, sins. Even the pope has them—and he has many—but what is beautiful is that when we become aware that we are sinners, we find the mercy of God. God always forgives. Don’t forget this. God always forgives.”

You heard him, right? He said it not once, but twice, “God always forgives.” What

do you need to do in order to be forgiven? Pope Francis said, “When we become aware, we find the mercy of God.”

Where do we find that mercy? First of all, we find it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In confession you meet the Lord in person, through his priest, and he will absolve you of your sin right then and there. That is where your healing journey will begin.

The Lord is always ready to forgive, but healing—particularly from the loss of a child through abortion—is a journey. Women undergo an abortion during a time of crisis, when abortion seems to solve the problem in the moment. In that crisis, women—and men—can’t think about the effects down the road. In the aftermath, they get stuck with the fear and the shame.

Christ is the divine healer. He wants to restore us; he can make us well.

If you need help on your journey, Project Rachel is here to assist you. Project Rachel offers women support through our Days of Prayer and Healing and Hope and Healing weekends, and we can connect you to others who have experienced similar journeys so that you know you’re not on this path alone. Men can also find help through Days of Healing, time dedicated especially for them. In addition, there are many kind and compassionate priests we can connect you to.

We offer support not only for women and men but for siblings as well. Abortion affects the entire family, and can have an impact on other children. When siblings become aware of a parent’s abortion experience, they may say, “Now I understand why

my mother or father reacted the way they did.” “Now I know why mom was so over protective.” “I can see why they were emotionally distant—caught up in their own feelings.”

Sibling retreats are geared for adults over 18.

(If you or someone you know has experienced the wounds of abortion, Project Rachel offers support on your journey to healing. For more information contact the confidential phone line: 203.895.3554 or 203.416.1619 or email projectrachel@diobpt.org.) ■



project rachel
Peace starts here

Obituary

Father Seraphim Rohlman, 52

Father Ralph Seraphim Rohlman, former director of the Propagation of the Faith, died on October 2 in Bridgeport. Father Seraphim was born on July 13, 1965, in Bridgeport, and attended area elementary schools and Central High School.

He was attending the University of Bridgeport on a full music scholarship when he heard a missionary bishop speak in his home parish of St. Dimitrie Romanian Orthodox Church. Inspired by that talk, he prepared for the priesthood in the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church at Saint Herman Theological Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska. While completing his six years of study there he met his future wife, Catherine Anelon. Following Orthodox guidelines, they were married in 1988, before his ordination.

Father Seraphim was ordained to the priesthood on October 5, 1990, at Saint Nicholas Church in Nondalton, Alaska.

During his years in Alaska he traveled throughout the Aleutian island chain and along the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers, performing funerals and marriages, baptizing and celebrating the Divine Liturgy. He founded a hospice program in Anchorage and set up the first chaplaincy program at the Bureau of Indian Affairs hospital there.

His next call was to Hawaii, where he served in a tiny mission parish. He was later sent to Texas to teach at a seminary, and to New Mexico, Montana and Nebraska.

He was received into full communion with the Catholic Church, and was incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport

in 2009. He celebrated his first public Mass in this diocese at St. Theresa Church, Trumbull, on January 2, 2010.

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, Father Seraphim served as director of Community and Prison Outreach. He was assigned in 2012 as parochial vicar at St. Andrew Parish and Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel in Bridgeport. He was appointed director of the Office of the Propagation of the Faith in 2015, a post he held until his recent retirement due to poor health.

Father Seraphim was a talented linguist, able to preach in Native Alaskan languages, Romanian and Slavonic. He was also a trained vocalist and writer of icons.

Father Seraphim was received into St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church on



FATHER RALPH SERAPHIM ROHLMAN

October 5, and a funeral service was celebrated for him that evening. The following morning, the Melkite Rite Divine Liturgy was celebrated, with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano presiding. Father Michael K. Skrocki, pastor of St. Ann Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Danbury, a close friend of Father Rohlman and his

family, was the celebrant.

Father Seraphim is mourned by his wife, Catherine, and their daughter, Evgenia. Condolences may be sent to their address: 40 Tesiny Circle, Bridgeport, CT 06606. Please pray for the repose of the soul of Father Seraphim, and for the consolation of his family. ■

HENNESSY FROM PAGE 9

to step out on their own. Bell and Father Groeschel stayed on the Malta House board of directors.

"Now, a few years have gone by, and the Good Counsel and Malta House boards have decided that we can do better together," said Bell. The rechristened home is Good Counsel Malta House of Connecticut "Hopefully we can grow. We'd like to open another house in the state if we can."

About half of the women who come to Good Counsel Homes leave with a job and an apartment. If that sounds low, remember the open-door policy. Some outfits

turn people away. It boosts the "success rate" in their glossy brochures. Chris Bell won't hear of it. All are welcome; that's his policy.

The cases Bell and his staff take on can be complex. Substance abuse, mental illness, and the long, slow breakdown of the family in urban communities make it more so. Sometimes women leave without saying where they're going. Often they don't come back.

"We obviously can't force people to stay and take the help we offer," Bell told me. But they try.

With God's help they try. ■

FUNERAL GUIDE

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DECEASED CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT OCTOBER 8—NOVEMBER 11

OCTOBER

12	Deacon Michael Wolfer	2013
14	Msgr. Raymond H. Guidone	1965
15	Msgr. William Schultz	2013
16	Msgr. John V. Horgan Kung	2009
17	Msgr. Benedict Tighe	2004
18	Bishop Walter W. Curtis	1997
19	Rev. Cornelius J. Looney	1974
22	Msgr. David F. Bannon	1979
	Rev. Louis Dytkowski	2016
	Deacon Donald Fonseca	1989
27	Rev. Robert C. Franklin	1991
	Msgr. Thomas J. Whalen	2012
28	Deacon John Kucera	2007
29	Rev. Michael A. D'Elia	2000
30	Msgr. Leo M. Finn	1960
31	Rev. Francis D. McKenna	1989

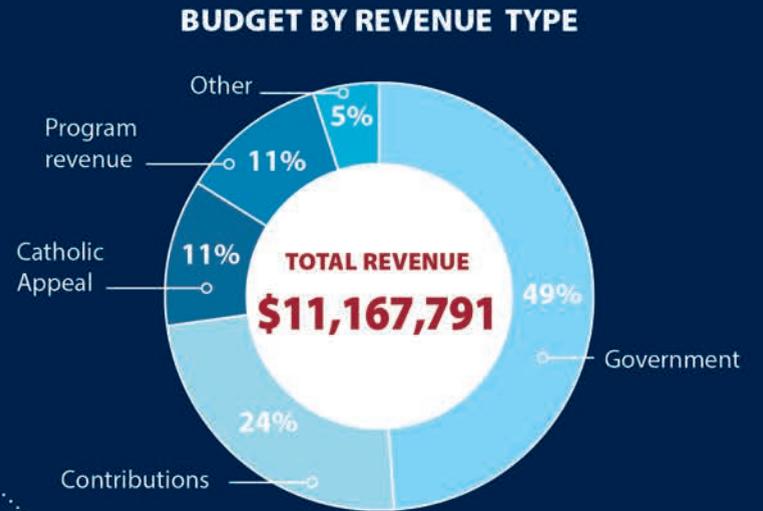
NOVEMBER

3	Msgr. Joseph A. Heffernan	1989
	Deacon Thomas P. Freibott	2002
6	Rev. Bernard Dolan	2010
9	Rev. Stephen A. Grinvalsky	1972
	Deacon Domingo Reverón	2014
10	Rev. Gerard C. Mason	1993
11	Msgr. Victor J. Torres-Frias	1995

2017 2017 2017



COMMUNITY IMPACT SNAPSHOT Catholic Charities of Fairfield County



87 cents
of every dollar directly given to programs and client services

Where is Catholic Charities in the county?
23
towns



10,000+
individuals served

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NOURISHED	SHELTERED	STRENGTHENED
<p>Served 95,760 breakfasts 183,488 lunches 72,207 dinners</p> <p>Welcomed 2,680 individuals to shop in our food pantries</p> <p>Home-delivered 91,375 meals to 175 seniors through our Meals on Wheels service</p> <p>Provided 52,000 lunches at 8 senior centers</p> <p>Collected and donated 800+ turkeys and side dishes to help families with holiday dinners</p>	<p>Case management services provided for 220 homeless or formerly homeless adults and children in 121 federally funded housing units</p> <p>Provided \$416,400 in rental assistance to help clients stay in their homes</p> <p>Secured 45 permanent housing units to assist formerly incarcerated to reintegrate into society</p> <p>Helped over 70 homeless individuals move off the streets into safe housing</p>	<p>Provided 15,000 counseling sessions</p> <p>Educated 134 preschoolers of low income families</p> <p>Collected fully-supplied kindergarten backpacks for 75 preschool graduates</p> <p>Conducted 387 immigration consultations and assisted 22 individuals with obtaining U.S. citizenship</p> <p>Distributed 2,643 donated toys and 1,082 clothing items to 881 individuals during the holidays</p>

What is Catholic Charities of Fairfield County?

For over 100 years, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has mobilized a philosophy of faith in action to provide a broad spectrum of social services to the extended Fairfield County community.

We serve the needy through a multitude of programs that include feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and homebound, strengthening families and individuals, and assisting those on the road to immigration documentation.

Over the last 100 years, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has become one of the largest private family service agencies in Connecticut.

Our goal is to continue to serve Fairfield County for the next 100 years.



Column: Thomas Hicks



The depth of things

POTPOURRI

BY THOMAS H. HICKS

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

Karl Rahner, the major theologian of the 20th century, never offered any traditional “proofs” for the existence of God. He pointed out that God is not an object among objects, and, therefore, is never known in the way that objects are known.

Rahner thought that the way human beings come to the mystery of God involves the fact that there is no human experience from which God is absent. Rahner’s favorite image for God was that of the horizon. God is the horizon behind all things. He is the horizon and the lure. In other words, God is not distant. Indeed, God is inescapable. There is no human experience from which God is absent. God

undergirds all. This is a fascinating idea.

As Rahner saw it, there is always more to our experiences than we might think. Reality is richer and deeper than we generally realize. There is more going on than meets the eye. The human situation can always open out beyond itself. All our experiences can involve an encounter with the mystery of God, with the one in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Rahner states that “the everyday is the place of our encounter with God.” We meet God where we are. There lies beneath the surface a dimension of depth. If we are sensitive enough, we can be grasped by a transcendent real-

ity standing beneath or beyond ordinary events.

The Protestant theologian Paul Tillich speaks of God as “the ground of our being.” God is the ultimate ground to our existence. Tillich, too, would challenge us to keep looking deeper for the hints of something that lies behind or beyond. There is a great mystery that surrounds us. There is another dimension about which we can have moments of illumination. They may be brief, perhaps flickering moments.

Rahner further taught that there are situations in which God clearly comes to the fore. The world opens out. An encounter with transcendence may be quite transparent. He felt that in every life there are special moments like this—sudden, unexpected, breakthrough experiences. Rahner insisted that in every life there are these special moments that catch one by surprise. Here are a few examples:

A man told me of his experience on a night train in the rain. He looked on at wet lonely fields, at lights that shone from scattered houses. Distant thunder rumbled over the drone of the train, and lightning sometimes broke the sky. Small towns with

their neon signs and some street lights gleaming in the wet dark fell away. The man said he felt a “holy sadness” and some yearning for the eternal.

Another man told of the ingredients of an incident that had lodged in his memory. He was standing at a train crossing waiting for the train to pass. He felt the sun, then heard the shriek of the train whistle, felt the vibration of the ground as the cars rushed by, then there was the scent of the breeze combining the smell of the close-by lake and the fresh smell of watered grass. These were the ingredients of what he was willing to call a “transcendental experience.”

One more:

A man in a park heard from a nearby dock the blast of a ferry horn, distant, melancholic, followed by the squabble and cry of sea gulls. There was the shriek of children heading home from school, the sound of a woman’s voice calling, the sound of a bus shifting gears. He had a sense of the transcendent.

Rahner thought in every life there are special moments like these, occasions when the depth breaks through in an exceptional

way. When an interviewer said to Rahner: “I have never had an experience of God,” Rahner retorted, “I don’t believe you, I just don’t accept that. You have had and will have an experience of God, and I am convinced that this is true of every person.”

People can have the experience but miss the meaning, as T.S. Eliot put it. The experience may invite them, but also unsettle them. They turn away from any intense encounter with depth.

People may not want to be aware of their transcendental experiences. Life may be simpler if they ignore them, do not open themselves to them.

Rahner insists that in every life there are the intimations which lure people, some sense of an invisible world which interpenetrates the one we see, some sense of being grasped by something of utmost importance. These are not experiences which are given to some and withheld from others. It is a constant feature of all human beings’ experience, though it is a feature which can be resisted.

Rahner felt that if people do not have at least a vague sense

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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Column: Joe Pisani



The new iconoclasm

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

BY JOE PISANI

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

They're toppling statues of Robert E. Lee in the South, and they're vandalizing statues of Christopher Columbus in New York City. They're removing statues of the Blessed Mother at a Catholic school in California in the cause of inclusiveness, and they're defacing statues of St. Junipero Serra with red paint because they claim he violated the rights of native cultures.

There's also mayhem in Manhattan since Mayor Bill de Blasio formed a committee to determine which statues are politically correct and in keeping with the values of New Yorkers—and Columbus seems to be in the crosshairs. However, this zeal to appease people who feel violated doesn't extend to everyone.

I, too, have been offended many times when public museums in New York City displayed alleged works of art that are an affront to my faith, including a crucifix in a glass of urine and a depiction of the Virgin Mary made with elephant dung. Could the double standard be more apparent? And how often have you read news stories about statues of Our Lady and Jesus being vandalized by tormented souls, Satan worshippers and people who hate the Church?

In some ways, it reminds me of the Taliban and the iconoclasm that followed the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution. Even in Catholic churches, you'll find those who are eager to remove crucifixes because they claim the depiction of Christ suffering on the cross can be upsetting. After Vatican II, some reformers began taking the traditional statuary out of churches in keeping with what they thought was the spirit of the Council.

Here is a true story about a family that did something about it. Back in the 1960s, a woman and her son were driving past a Catholic church in a New England town when they noticed religious statues piled in a dumpster for removal.

They got their pickup truck and in a rescue effort reminiscent of the Great Escape, they loaded them up and drove away with the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Grace, St. Joseph, St. Therese and many others that they saved from certain destruction.

Then, she had a chapel constructed in her backyard, where she kept the statues safe for years, until the day she had to move to an assisted living home and couldn't take them with her. Once again, she devised a plan to

preserve them. She picked up the phone and called every devout Catholic she knew and asked them if they would adopt a statue and give them a safe home, loving home.

Who could deny Our Lord and Our Lady? How many times had they been denied shelter already, in Bethlehem and on the flight into Egypt? And as Jesus once said, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

She called my wife, Sandy, and by the time we got to her home, all of them had been taken—except for a statue of St. Ann with the Blessed Mother and a statue of St. Jude, which were life-sized and made in Italy.

Since Sandy had been adopted and raised by a woman named Ann and since she was born on the feast of St. Jude, we knew we were meant to have them. They stayed in our garage until we found an artist who restored them to their original splendor, and now they occupy a place of honor in our home.

A plate at the base of St. Ann's statue says simply, "Gift of St. Ann's Guild," and over the

"The zeal to deface statues is part of a greater spiritual illness that afflicts our society, which has no respect for the unborn, the frail elderly or the dispossessed and yet believes its iconoclasm is motivated by lofty principles."

years I've often wondered how many thousands of people prayed before Our Lady and her mother, seeking intercession for a family crisis, a grave illness, a troubled marriage or wayward children. So many prayers, so many petitions.

The zeal to deface statues is part of a greater spiritual illness that afflicts our society, which

has no respect for the unborn, the frail elderly or the dispossessed and yet believes its iconoclasm is motivated by lofty principles. Political views, however, are no substitute for moral values.

At least for today, St. Ann and St. Jude are safe in our home, along with many other statues of the saints, of Our Lord and Our Lady. ■

THOMAS HICKS FROM PAGE 18

of the transcendental region of reality to which their experiences are alluding, then it seems pointless to speak to them of the divine at all.

Again, Rahner thought that there are no simple arguments or proofs to help people on the way to God. What there are is a multiplicity of intimations which lure people. Faith ultimately begins with personal experiences of God, with a

sense of transcendence.

Let me add a couple of other thoughts from Rahner. He spoke of how God is especially present in every love and in all gaining of knowledge. He taught that the reality that makes us human is the relationship with God. This relationship with God is the defining feature of who we are as human beings.

Human nature without God is not reality. ■

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Nuestra Voz

Inauguran Capilla de Adoración en Santa María

Por MARICARMEN GODOY

En una ceremonia religiosa llena de fe y piedad, la Parroquia Saint Mary (Santa María) en Bridgeport, con la presencia del Obispo Frank J. Caggiano, inauguró la Capilla de Adoración, que a partir de ese momento se convirtió en un lugar sagrado para orar a los pies del Santísimo.

A las 8:30 de la mañana del 24 de septiembre, el Obispo Caggiano, junto al Padre Rolando Torres, párroco de Santa María y el Padre Frank Gómez, párroco de la Parroquia de San Carlos Borromeo en Bridgeport, concelebraron la Misa.

Dentro del ritual, Monseñor bendijo la Capilla de Adoración al Santísimo Sacramento, una obra que empezó a construirse en mayo del 2017 con un estudio técnico, diseño y recolección de dinero que logró un monto de 50 mil dólares, más decenas de horas trabajadas voluntariamente.

La edificación de la Capilla de Adoración estuvo a cargo de Angel Letona, un constructor hondureño, residente de Stamford, que por pedido del Padre Rolando decidió colaborar en la edificación de la obra. A pesar de que faltó dinero para dar por acabada en su totalidad, él puso gratuitamente la mano de obra junto a otro de sus trabajadores.

“Fue para mí un honor y un privilegio que el Padre Rolando me haya llamado para construir la capilla. Nunca había hecho un trabajo similar dentro de una iglesia, y esa fue realmente una bendición de Dios”, dijo Letona



THE NEWLY-COMPLETED Adoration Chapel at St. Mary Parish in Bridgeport was blessed by Bishop Caggiano, accompanied by Father Rolando Torres, pastor, and Father Frank Gomez (at right) pastor of nearby St. Charles Borromeo Parish. The chapel was completed thanks to the generous donation of time, money and labor by parishioners.

quien, acompañado por su madre, esposa e hijos, acudió a la Misa inaugural de la capilla construida con sus manos. También acudieron cientos de feligreses de origen hispano de la parroquia Santa María.

En la misa, el Obispo Caggiano, en su mensaje durante la homilía no solo agradeció al párroco por haber logrado construir la capilla, sino porque ha podido unir a cientos de vecinos del sector y convocarlos de esta manera para que vivan en comunidad dentro de la parroquia.

El obispo les dijo a los feligreses, quienes aplaudían constantemente, que el día era hermoso y que valía la pena disfrutarlo, y que antes mediten que la inauguración de la capilla es una manera de recordar que Jesús es la piedra angular de la iglesia y que los cimientos de fe de sus miembros deben ser fuerte para poder

vivir armónicamente. Además les pidió que ayuden a la gente de la República Dominicana, Puerto

Rico, Cuba, Texas y Florida que han sido afectados por los huracanes.

Por su parte, el Padre Torres agradeció a todos sus feligreses que donaron tiempo y dinero para que la Capilla de Adoración sea una realidad, y en especial a Angel Letona. Además, agradeció a la comunidad guatemalteca por donar las flores para adornar la iglesia. Pero sobretodo los exhortó a que saquen tiempo durante de su semana de trabajo para que lo dediquen a Dios.

“Tenemos siete días a la semana, 24 horas al día, 168 horas semanales; si creo que es importante que le demos más tiempo al Señor para honrar su gloria. Ahora tenemos una capilla para poder hacerlo. La capilla no es mía. La capilla es nuestra”, dijo. Dentro de los agradecimien-

tos, el Padre Torres reconoció a su compañero, el Padre Frank Gómez de San Carlos, quien estuvo de ayudante del obispo durante la homilía y a la hora que realizó la bendición de la Capilla de Adoración. Así como también agradeció a las monjitas Guardianas del Santísimo, a sus feligreses y en especial al Obispo Caggiano, quien le dio todo el aval para que inicie la construcción de la capilla que nació de una necesidad de orar en forma piadosa dentro de la parroquia.

Como un dato particular, el Padre Rolando agradeció a nombre de la familia Torres la donación de un cáliz que será utilizado durante las misas en la Capilla del Santísimo.

La nueva Capilla de Adoración, está abierta todos los días de 8 am a 10 pm. ■

Ayuda para Puerto Rico

BRIDGEPORT—El Padre Rolando Torres, párroco de la Parroquia de Santa María en Bridgeport, en donde se encuentra una de las comunidades más grandes de puertorriqueños, está uniendo todos los esfuerzos y recursos para ayudar a los hermanos que se encuentran en la Isla del Encanto, Puerto Rico. Su familia, que se encuentra en el área norte (desde San Juan, Vega Alta, Vega Baja y Arecibo), sufrieron muchos daños a causa del Huracán María.

Ademas de las oraciones, el sacerdote confirmó que muchos de sus compañeros sacerdotes le llamaron, solidarizándose con su pueblo y su familia. Sus familiares viven principalmente en el área de Vega Alta y Vega Baja, y muchos de sus primos, tíos y parientes cercanos han perdido sus casas y casi todas sus pertenencias.

Después del devastador paso del Huracán María, el Padre Torres se comunicó con el Padre Tomás González de la Arquidiócesis de San Juan, quien

le contó los pormenores de la situación de Puerto Rico. “Hay muchas áreas que están sin agua, hay muchas áreas que están bastante destruidas y muchas personas que perdieron sus casas”, sostuvo.

El Padre Torres pide que, durante estos días, los fieles visiten la Capilla de Adoración, den un tiempo a Dios y oren por nuestros hermanos y hermanas en necesidad.

(Para mayor información, pueden comunicarse al 203.334.8811) ■

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Bits and Pieces

DAY OF RECOLLECTION for nurses from St. Vincent's and friends will take place at St. Joseph's Manor, Trumbull, on Sat., **Oct. 14**, from 10-am-3 pm in the Adult Day Care Center. Donation: \$10. For more info, call Irma Palko: 203.333.5045 by Wed., **Oct. 11**.

PUBLIC SQUARE ROSARY RALLY to celebrate the 100th Fatima Anniversary will be held in Bridgeport on Sat., **Oct. 14**, at 12 noon at the Old Mill Green, (the intersection of Boston Ave. & East Main St.). For more info, contact Michael Miller: 203.526.7655 or Michael_Miller910@hotmail.com.

GOSPEL OF LIFE SOCIETY meets at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk, the second Sat. of each month (**Oct. 14**) at 10 am. This month's speaker will be Measi O'Rourke of St. Joseph Parenting Center in Stamford. For more info, contact John Juhasz: 203.762.3661 or juhasz-jw@optonline.net.

100TH ANNIVERSARY of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima on will be observed with an outdoor celebration at St. Marguerite Parish, Brookfield, on Sat., **Oct. 14**, at 12 noon. For more info, call 203.775.9254.

DAY RETREAT at the Convent of St. Birgitta, Darien, with Fr. Anthony Mastroeni will take place Sat., **Oct. 14**, from 9-am-3 pm. Cost: \$50, includes breakfast and lunch. For more info, call Erlinda: 203.866.5546, ext. 101, or at 203.919.5976.

TRIBUTE TO NEIL DIAMOND performed by "Simply Diamond" Brian LaBlanc will take place in St. Stephen Parish, Trumbull, on Sat., **Oct. 14**, at 7 pm. Cost: \$15/person. Bring your own snacks and beverage. Coffee and dessert served. For more info and for reservations, call Mary: 203.452.8333.

WINE TASTING with 25+ wines and appetizers hosted by Conte's Package Store will take place at St. Margaret's Shrine, Bridgeport on Sun., **Oct 15**, from 1-5 pm. Donation: \$30/person; \$50 couples; \$20/person for groups of 10 or more. Tickets limited; presale only. Available at Conte's: 203.367.5024; at the Shrine: 203.333.9627; or at www.eventbrite.com/e/wine-tasting-tickets.

INSPIRING EVENING of music, stories and prayer with musician Steve Angrisano will

take place at St. Matthew Parish, Norwalk, on Sun., **Oct. 15**, at 7 pm. Free admission. For more info, contact Valerie Wyman at St. Matthew's: 203.838.3788, ext. 109, or stmattparish@hotmail.com.

KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA will hold their monthly Mass and meeting Sun., **Oct. 15**, at 12 noon at St. George Parish, Bridgeport. For more info, call 203.878.0519.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP EVENING: Firefighter Bill Lavin will speak on "Making a Difference" as a Man of Faith at St. Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown, Sun., **Oct. 15**, at 6:15 pm, following the 5 pm Mass. Refreshments served. No charge. For more info and to register, call the parish: 203.426.1014.

WOMEN'S GROUP at Christ the King Parish, Trumbull, will meet Mon., **Oct. 16**, at 10 am in the parish hall. Guest speaker Megan Murphy will discuss fire prevention. For more info, contact Esther: 203.268.8011.

CRAFT FAIR & BAZAAR for St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Brookfield, is now accepting vendor applications for the Sat., **Nov. 11** fair. Application deadline is Mon., **Oct. 16**. Vendor applications are available at stmarguerite.org.

PETRA AND HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE with Fr. Arthur Mollenhauer will take place

Feb. 19-March 2, 2018. Deposit required by Wed., **Oct. 18**.

For more info, contact Sharon MacKnight: 203.327.1806 or smacknight@optonline.net.

MOMs+DADs prayer/support group for those with Down syndrome, their family and friends meets the third Thurs. of every month (**Oct. 19**), at 7:30 pm at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk. For more info, contact strapostolate@optimum.net.

CALL TO ZION: Heal the wounds of the past through a program of healing and love at St. James Parish, Stratford, Thurs. evenings, 7-9 pm, once a month starting Thurs., **Oct. 19**. Cost: \$40; includes book. For more info and to register, call the parish center: 203.375.5887.

DIVORCED AND SEPARATED Catholics are invited to join "Hearts Renewed." Meetings are held in Fairfield on the first and third Fri. of every month (**Oct. 20; Nov. 3**) at 7:30. For more info and for directions, call Bette: 203.338.0503 or Peggy: 203.834.1287.

MASSES OF HEALING AND HOPE: the Charismatic Renewal Services announces a Mass of Healing and Hope on Mon., **Oct. 23**, at 7 pm at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Fairfield, with Fr. Larry Carew; and Mon., **Nov. 6**, at 7:30 pm at St. Lawrence Parish, Shelton,

with Fr. Carew. For more info, call the Charismatic Renewal Office: 203.456.5610.

HAUNTED GRAVEYARD: Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury, (18-35), will gather on Sat., **Oct. 28**, from 5-10:30 pm at Lake Compounce, 186 Enterprise Dr., Bristol. For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

TOY DRIVE HOSTS needed for Al's Angels. The Angels distribute toys to over 13,000 children battling cancer. The Toy Drive will be held **Nov. 8-Dec. 11**. If you can help, contact Al DiGuido: adiguiddo@yahoo.com.

RAKE n' BAKE: Handy Dandy Handyman has opened volunteer registration for Rake n' Bake 2017, which will take place Sat., **Nov. 11**. The teams will be working on 80 properties. Registration required by Fri., **Nov. 3**: go to www.hdhm.org/rake-n-bake-2017-registration. For more info or for large groups (12 or more), contact Shelia Kuhn: teachsmk@gmail.com or 203.775.3368.

MAGNIFICAT will hold their semi-annual women's breakfast on Sat., **Nov. 11**, at Ethan Allen Inn, Danbury. Registration deadline: Sat., **Nov. 4**. No tickets at the door. For more info, contact Fran Hood: s.m.hood@sbcglobal.net or 203.744.1856.

HOLY HOUR: Catholic Young Adults of Greater

Danbury, (18-35), will gather on Tues., **Nov. 7**, at 6:45 pm for a Praise and Worship Holy Hour at Sacred Heart Parish, Danbury, followed by a social. For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

MASS AND BLESSING for veterans will be celebrated Sat., **Nov. 11**, at 12:15 pm at St. Margaret's Shrine, Bridgeport. For more info, call 203.345.3244.

HARVEST FAIR at St. Luke Parish, Westport, will take place the weekend of **Nov. 11-12**, from 10 am-4 pm. For more info, contact Nancy Pandolfi: 203.259.5816.

HARVEST TABLE to benefit New Covenant Center, Stamford, will take place Sun., **Nov. 12**, from 11 am-2:30 pm at the Hyatt Regency, 1800 East Putnam Ave., Greenwich. Guest speaker Cecily Gans, owner of MainCourse Catering. Admission: \$100 plus one non-perishable food item. For tickets, visit www.501auctions.com/harvesttable.

DISCERNMENT TALK: Catholic Young Adults of Greater Danbury, (18-35), will gather on Tues., **Nov. 14**, at the WCSU Newman Center, 7 8th Ave., Danbury, for a talk by Paul Krenzlok from the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement. For more info, email catholic.ya.danbury@gmail.com.

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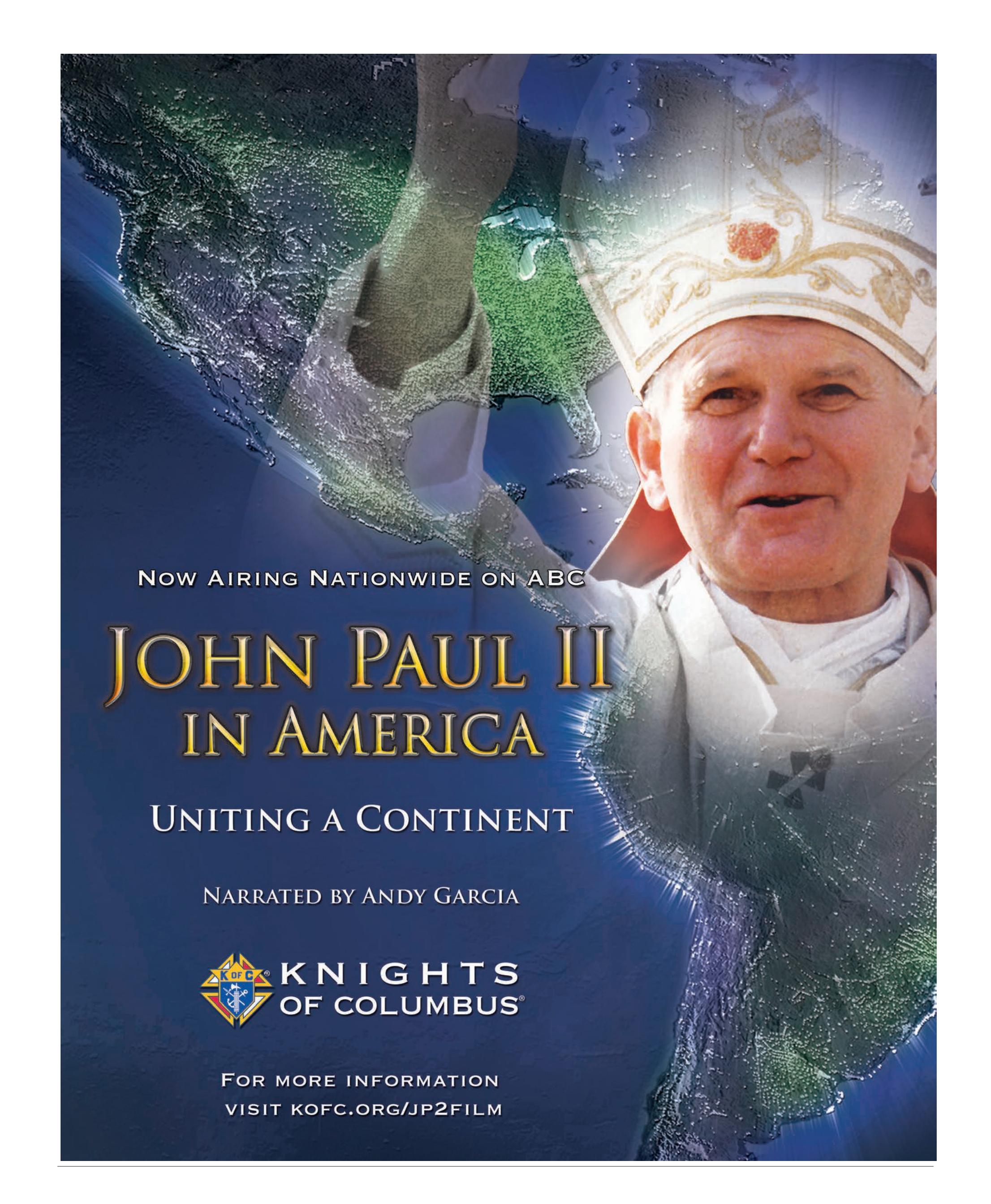
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Back To School 2017

Teachers form students in 'mind and faith'

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Describing teachers as the "spiritual mothers and fathers" of their students, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano told Catholic educators that in addition to building academic skills, they are also forming young people in the faith and values that will guide them over a lifetime.

More than 700 Catholic high school and elementary teachers turned out on September 5 for Convocation 2017 at the Klein Memorial Auditorium in Bridgeport to officially begin the school year.

The program began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano and diocesan school chaplains, and included an address from Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools, and motivational speaker Jonathan Doyle.

Bishop Caggiano said that "teaching is a noble and sublime vocation," and that Catholic schools are "homes" that safeguard children, teaching them how to be lifetime learners, and to "discover values of God and family."

"A Catholic school is a home where the heart of Jesus can be found, and that heart beats in you and me," said the bishop. "Thank you for your witness, your

authenticity and for the hope you give our students in increasingly difficult and conflicted times."

The bishop said that many students may eventually forget the lessons they learn in school, but they always remember their teachers.

"I will work with you to strengthen our schools for the next generations to come," he said.

The bishop said he believed that Catholic schools provide a superior education in "mind, heart, hands and spirit," and invited teachers to join in the renewal of the Church by making schools "authentically and genuinely Catholic."

The Kolbe Cathedral High School Choir, directed by Joe Elbertson, provided music for the Mass. Father Michael Novajosky coordinated the altar servers from St. Joseph High School.

In his yearly address to diocesan educators following the Mass, Dr. Cheeseman expanded on many of the themes mentioned in Bishop Caggiano's homily.

"I don't want Catholic schools to be public schools with religion classes," Dr. Cheeseman said. "We have the freedom to be so much more than that."

Dr. Cheeseman said that



"I DON'T WANT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS to be public schools with religion classes," said Dr. Steven Cheeseman, superintendent of schools. "We have the freedom to be so much more than that." During Convocation 2017, Dr. Cheeseman praised the academic excellence of diocesan schools and added that they "have the opportunity to define their own 'common core—and that core is Christ.'"

Catholic schools have "academic excellence," but also have the opportunity to define their own "common core—and that core is Christ."

He drew applause from teachers when he said that Catholic schools would not use a standard assessment "to judge students, but to help them," and likewise, it would not use standard assessments "to grade teachers, but to inform them."

"I want to put my faith in you, not the standards," he said to the teachers. "You know what it

looks like when a child learns."

Dr. Cheeseman said the diocese will publish its strategic plan for education in October, and that teachers will be asked for their input. He said the strategic plan will address the questions of "What can Catholic education look like in five years and how can we change the landscape of education?"

He also issued a challenge to teachers. "I want you to ask for change and to flood the Foundations in Education office with proposals for innovation

grants and show how creative you can be."

Dr. Cheeseman said he strongly believes that the future of the Catholic classroom is in "blended learning," which personalizes instruction and uses new technology to engage and empower students. "Technology doesn't replace teachers," he said. "It enables teachers to move from 'sage on the stage to guides on the side,' and to be leaders in innovation.

"It's important for all educators to ask, how can I serve? The work is rarely easy, but it's always holy," he said.

The diocesan school system numbers 9,000 students who attend 26 Catholic schools in grades PreK-12 throughout Fairfield County. The diocese sponsors 20 elementary schools, 5 high schools educating 2,400 students, and one special education school serving students with special needs.

Fifty percent of diocesan schools have received the National Blue Ribbon of Excellence and yearly standardized test results show diocesan elementary students exceeding national averages in math and reading.

(For more information, visit www.bridgeportdiocese.org.)

KeyBank Donates \$15,000 to Foundations

BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport announced a donation of \$15,000 by KeyBank Foundation, the nonprofit charitable foundation of KeyCorp, to Foundations in Education, which provides scholarship assistance to students attending Catholic schools in Fairfield County.

The diocese educates more than 9,000 students in its 26 Catholic schools (Grades pre-K to 12) including five high schools, 20 elementary schools on 24 campuses, and one school for students with special needs. More than 60 percent of students in diocesan schools receive financial assistance and 15 percent of students are non-Catholic.



PREPARING CHILDREN for thriving futures—(l-r) Bishop Frank Caggiano; Holly Doherty-Lemoine, executive director of Foundations in Education; Bonnie Geppert and Matt Fair of KeyBank. The KeyBank Foundation donated \$15,000 to Foundations in Education.

"We are very grateful to our friends at KeyBank for their generous support for Foundations in Education," said Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine. "This contribution will provide scholarships so that even more children will benefit from the extraordinary faith filled education that Catholic schools provide. We appreciate the impact KeyBank has made on our children and their families."

Foundations in Education is a nonprofit organization established in July 2015 to promote academic excellence, faith formation and enrollment in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It will

provide more than \$2.5 million this year in scholarships to children who would not otherwise have the means to attend Catholic schools. In addition, Foundation in Education provides funds to support professional development of teachers and administrators to promote innovation in curriculum and leadership development.

"KeyBank Foundation supports organizations that make the communities we serve better places to live, work and attend school," said Matthew Fair, vice president for Key Insurance and Benefits Services, the insurance subsidiary of KeyBank.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Catholic Academy

Students wow at fundraiser for inner-city education

GREENWICH—A recent Catholic Academy of Bridgeport event raised \$150,000 for scholarships.

A gathering of Catholic Academy of Bridgeport supporters and their guests were joined by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano in the upper room of Polpo Restaurant on September 26 for the school's annual fall dinner fundraiser. The academy, which educates more than 945 students on the campuses of St. Andrew, St. Ann, St. Augustine and St. Raphael, needs to raise more than \$2 million annually so it can provide scholarships to the 85 percent of its student population who qualify for such financial assistance.

Catholic Academy Board chair Brad Evans welcomed guests and said he was encouraged that enrollment in the school is

noticeably up for the first time in seven years. He also spoke about important academic innovations being made at the academy, the increased focus on blended learning, and the fact the school was able to have a balanced budget in academic year 2016/2017. "A lot of the success for the year is the result of the people in this room, as well as others who have been so generous in helping us seek academic excellence in an inner-city like Bridgeport, beleaguered with low-performing public schools and dire economics," said Evans.

Executive director of the Catholic Academy, Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, followed Evans' remarks by quoting Mark Twain. "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why,"

she said. "I want to thank all of you who are here tonight and who are faithful donors to our school," she said. "You know the 'why' of your life, the purpose of your life, which is to be in the service of others."

Peppered between courses of chopped salad, penne alla vodka and delicious entrees and desserts were memorable appearances by several students. Kadijah Needham, a top student at Kolbe Cathedral High School



ANNUAL FALL FUNDRAISER— Sister Joan Magnetti, rscj, executive director of Catholic Academy, chats with Frank and Susan Carroll from Greenwich at Polpo Restaurant. The dinner raised \$150,000 for scholarships and showcased some of the talented students who benefit from the generosity of donors.



who would like to be an attorney one day, received a standing ovation when she sang a moving rendition of Kari Jobe's "I Am Not Alone," accompanied on the keyboard by Kolbe music teacher Joe Elbertson.

Later in the evening, Jennifer Melo, an alumna of St. Augustine who currently attends Notre Dame High School and dreams of being a neurosurgeon, spoke from her heart about her time at the Catholic Academy's St. Augustine campus. "St. Augustine not only pushed me to grow spiritually but helped me to grow academically," Melo said. "Every day I left my classroom knowing something new and was more prepared for all the obstacles and hardships I knew high school was going to throw at me. My teachers gave me the knowledge and confidence to do my best, and I knew I could count on them for assistance and guidance."

At one point in her elementary school education, Melo was struggling in math. "My teacher helped me to go from a B- to an A in just one semester," she shared. "I want to thank the donors who made all of this possible. God bless you all for investing in the children of today to improve our future."

Rounding out the evening's speakers was New Canaan resident Jennifer Cieszko, a parishioner of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan, mother to seven children and wife of Peter, a former Catholic Academy of Bridgeport Board member. Cieszko spoke about her family's long tradition of helping those in need while putting a face on them. "That is why my husband and I chose to sponsor a student through the Catholic Academy's Leaders of

Tomorrow program about four years ago," she said.

Leaders of Tomorrow is a program that pairs donors with students in need. Each sponsor contributes \$4,500 toward the cost of a student's tuition for one year, and throughout the school year the sponsor receives report cards and correspondence from their selected student. Launched in 2013 with only eight sponsors, the program today has 53 supporters who sponsor 96 students.

Cieszko also spoke of the importance of educating the next generation of donors while giving them firsthand charitable experiences so they can see the world beyond where they live.

Such opportunities clearly have had an impact on Cieszko's youngest son, Petey, a seventh grader at Saxe Middle School in New Canaan, who joined his mother at the podium. "I like writing letters to Terence, our Leaders of Tomorrow student," said Petey. "He sends us notes, too, and I might even get to meet him this year."

With sincere charm and authenticity, Petey implored guests at Polpo to consider giving to the academy. "I hope all of you here tonight will think about giving a dollar or two to help kids like Terence and others at the Catholic Academy who could really use your help."

Because Ron Rosa and his wife Dominique graciously hosted and underwrote the fall dinner for the fourth year in a row, all donations were fully tax-deductible and the academy was able to raise approximately \$150,000 for the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. The dinner is one of three major fundraisers the academy hosts each year.

(For more information about the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, call 203.362.2990 or go to www.catholicacademybridgeport.org.)

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Foundations in Education

Foundations announces new appointments

BRIDGEPORT—Foundations in Education is pleased to announce the appointment of Theresa Sciallo as associate direc-

Sportini joins Foundations in Education from United Way, where she served for over a decade. “She will lead and man-



TERESA SCIALLO



KAREN SPORTINI

tor for scholarship and grants and Karen Sportini as associate director of development.

Calling them a “dynamic duo,” Executive Director Holly Doherty-Lemoine said that Sciallo and Sportini joined the Foundations in Education team in late September.

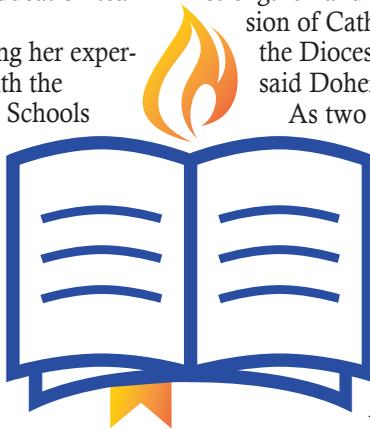
Sciallo will bring her expertise in working with the diocesan Catholic Schools

to Foundations in Education, where she will shepherd and grow the programs of the foundation, including the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund and Innovation and Leadership Grants for faculty and administrators.

“Theresa will also lend her prowess and creativity in marketing to the foundations efforts of growing awareness and brand recognition throughout Fairfield County,” said Doherty-Lemoine.

age a comprehensive development program to help fund the ambitious growth Foundations in Education has planned. She will work to identify and raise the resources that will allow Foundations in Education to strengthen and transform the mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport,” said Doherty-Lemoine.

As two new members join the Foundation’s team, Doherty-Lemoine took time to wish a fond farewell to Marina Deluca, who was the first assistant with foundations and served in that capacity for eight months. “During this time, she exhibited a kind and gentle sprit and patience beyond measure. She was the face and voice of foundations to many of the parents who called with regard to the Bishop Scholarship Fund.”



FOUNDATION FROM PAGE 25

“Foundations in Education is an excellent example of an initiative working hard to create quality educational opportunities for all students and we are excited and honored to have contributed to this worthwhile cause.”

KeyBank Foundation serves to fulfill KeyBank’s purpose “to help clients and communities thrive,” and its mission is “to support organizations and programs

that prepare people for thriving futures.” The foundation’s mission is advanced through three funding priorities—neighbors, education, and workforce—and through community service.

(For information on Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport, visit www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicsschools.org. For information on Foundations in Education, visit www.foundationsineducation.org.)

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Sister Gloria Esposito

'Daughter' becomes grandmother to generations

By BRIAN D. WALLACE

Sister Gloria Esposito has 130 grandchildren and she's still counting—she's expecting her 131st soon in Bolivia.

They're children of the children who grew up in the orphanage she ran at St. Ignatius Home and School in Cochabamba, Bolivia, one of her many assignments as a Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Sister Gloria has served in Bolivia for the past 58 years.

The Bridgeport native, who will be 85 in October, was back in the area over the summer for her annual visit to family and friends.

"I couldn't have done my work without them," she says of the many people who have generously supported her work over

the years.

In particular she's grateful to her classmates from St. Ann School in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. They get together when she comes home, and one of them is Dr. Jim Roach, known to many in the area for his work at St. Vincent's Medical Center.

"We're all very proud of her work," says Dr. Roach, who met Sister Gloria as a first grader at St. Ann's. "We look forward to her visits and reports from Bolivia."

Another member of the St. Ann's group is Dottie Sullivan of Stratford, who also attended Lauralton Hall with Sister Gloria.

"She was a great athlete there," Dottie recalls, "and she surprised us when she said she wanted to enter the convent. We

all took her to the station—it was only supposed to be a year!"

On September 8, 1950, at the age of 18, Gloria Esposito entered the community of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul in Emmetsburg, Maryland.

After finishing her novitiate she began studies there at Saint Joseph's College. When Pope Pius XII asked her province to take on a foreign mission, Sister Gloria volunteered, and six months later, on February 24, 1959, she was sent to Bolivia.

"My father said, 'What have you gone and done now!'" she says. "He was so concerned."

It turns out that it was the adventure of a lifetime and the beginning of a very full life of service in education and service to



CLASS IS IN SESSION—Sister Gloria Esposito (center) and Dr. Jim Roach are joined by other St. Ann School graduates who get together each summer to catch up on Sister Gloria's missionary work in Bolivia and celebrate her life as a Daughter of Charity. The lifelong friendships discovered at St. Ann's have been passed down to their children and grandchildren who support Sister Gloria's work.

orphans and street children.

When Sister Gloria first arrived in Bolivia as a Daughter, the sisters were still wearing the famous and wing-like cornette.

"I went with the cornette and I wore that in the tropics for nine years," she says with a humorous sigh. "It definitely was a bit of trouble—it would melt down on you in the heat, but no one died from it. We all managed. We were with the poor and that was it."

Her first assignment saw her dropped down in the Bolivian jungle.

As a young woman, she taught and eventually ran two schools systems with 50 schools in each. Later in life she opened the St. Ignatius Orphanage, where she has worked for much of the past 28 years.

Sister Gloria says that many of the young people she serves live in unimaginable poverty and uncertainty, but they also have an outsized sense of gratitude for the help they've receive.

"You come back here and people have everything. Down there many people live from day to day. They don't know what tomorrow will bring. They rely on God because there is no security," she says.

Sister Gloria is grateful to Pope Francis for calling international attention to the poor, noting that he has spent his life living and working among them

in Argentina and he understands their struggles. As one who has given her life to helping the poorest of the poor, she is discouraged by the current animosity to migrants and refugees, and she hopes that people will listen to

the teaching of the Holy Father.

Although friends like Dr. Jim Roach are inspired and amazed by here missionary service, Sister Gloria believes she hasn't done anything exceptional. "I don't think I've done great

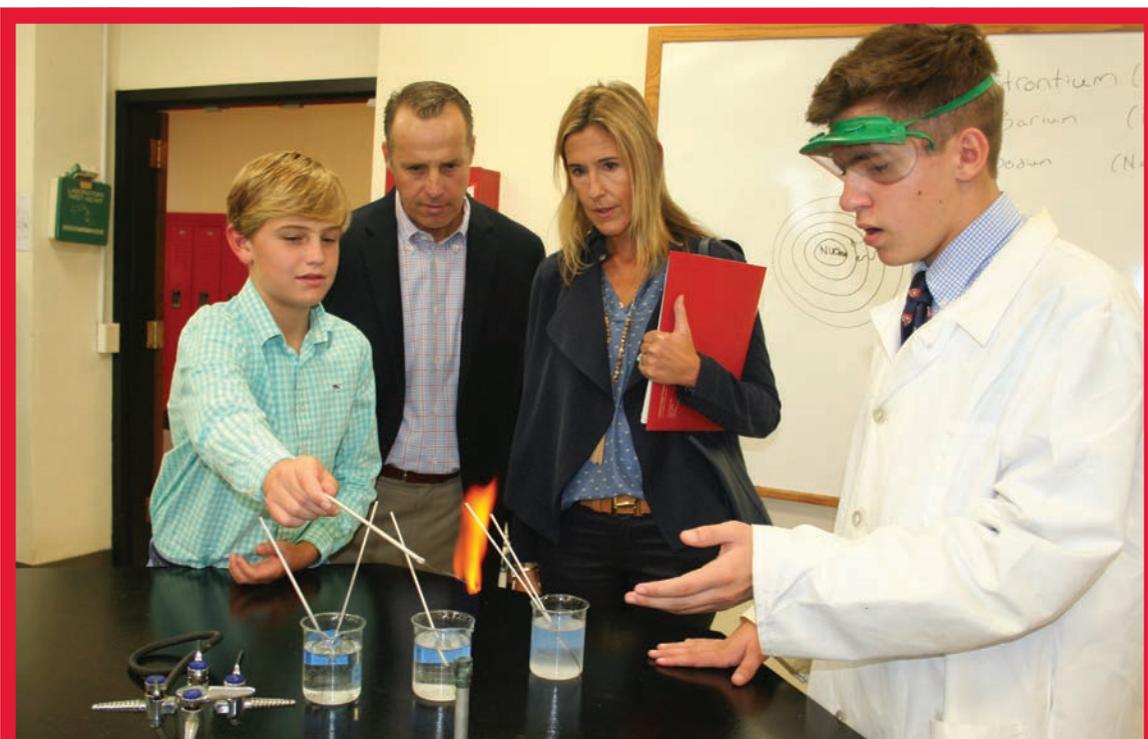
things," she says. "I was very fortunate to be able to live in Bolivia and work with the poor—I was just a Daughter of Charity from Bridgeport."

Only three sisters from the U.S. are still working in her province, but many Bolivian women have joined the sisters in their work. "Women today have so many more choices, and they want to be independent. They want to give a couple of years as volunteers, but don't want to dedicate their lives."

But Sister Gloria has no second thoughts.

"It's a much richer life than I thought. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to have lived with the Bolivians and worked with them. They're good people. I tell them all the time I that I am the privileged one to have been with them."

"It's a much richer life than I thought. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to have lived with the Bolivians and worked with them. They're good people."



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Immaculate High School

Student has interfaith experience in Africa

DANBURY—Over the summer, many Immaculate High School students perform their community service hours by helping local organizations. One senior, Albert “AJ” Vitiello, went beyond his borders, both personal and physical, and travelled half way across the world to help another community with seemingly simple but important needs.

AJ spent three weeks in the village of Anloga, Ghana, literally helping to build a school as well as building minds. During his time in Anloga, situated in the Keta District of the Volta Region, he taught a fifth grade class where students ranged from ages 12-18 years old.

“This made me realize how lucky I am to receive the quality education I am getting and the encouragement from my teachers,” AJ said. “My service also consisted of making bricks for a primary school, and I carved IHS into one of the bricks I made.”

AJ noted that he wore his

Immaculate uniform the first day of class to show the students that Americans wear uniforms too.

Seeing how precarious education is in other parts of the world really opened AJ’s eyes to how fortunate he was to receive a top-notch, modern education in a comfortable, modern school building with some of the best educators in the world. He also was able to see how children from other parts of our world have to live.

The experience strengthened his faith.

“Although my village was mostly Muslim, my class made me a Rosary at the end of the trip, which was really special,” he said. “This strengthened my faith by showing how people from two completely different cultures and backgrounds can come together with God.”

Whenever he had free time, AJ enjoyed hiking to a waterfall, feeding the monkeys and shopping at an African market. But it



FRIENDSHIPS FORM QUICKLY—“This strengthened my faith by showing how people from two completely different cultures and backgrounds can come together with God,” said AJ Vitiello, who spent three weeks in the village of Anloga, Ghana, helping to build a school.

was his time with the Ghanaian students that he enjoyed the

most. “Of all the people I met in Ghana, I’ll probably miss a boy

named Koshi the most. He was twenty years old and severely mentally disabled. He’d hang around our classroom all day and nobody would care, so I started to draw in the mud with him. Although we couldn’t speak to each other, we bonded over these drawings in the sand. He’d give me a big “thumbs up” every time I saw him. He taught me how to communicate without even using words. By the end of the trip, I really connected with him and found it hard to say goodbye.”

AJ bonded with two other boys at the orphanage school, who also opened his eyes, and heart, wider. “Jude was in my fifth grade class. While most students were afraid to answer my questions, Jude always raised his hand. He was fascinated by my camera and asked frequent questions about the United States.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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Room to Grow

Operation Kindergarten Backpack

By ELLEN MCGINNESS

They ranged in age from twelve to twenty-two years old. They attended dozens of different schools. They represented five different parishes.

But they had one common goal. These Catholic middle schoolers, high schoolers and college students came together to execute the first Operation Kindergarten Backpack, collecting and supplying over 80 fully-stocked backpacks for the graduates of Room to Grow Preschools, a program of Catholic Charities.

"I always had this dream of giving backpacks as graduation gifts," explained Nancy Owens, the director of Room to Grow Preschools. "I'm so happy that it became a reality."

After learning of Owens' wish, the marketing department of

Catholic Charities reached out to parochial middle schools and diocesan youth ministry groups to see if they would be willing to collect and donate the backpacks and supplies. The groups



that were approached responded immediately. They were happy to help. Greenwich Catholic School students, St. Rose of Lima Youth Ministry, St. Aloysius Church

Youth Ministry, past and current St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School students, and St. Matthew Parish Youth Faith Formation Group all joined forces to make

sure Operation Kindergarten Backpack came to fruition.

These young volunteers not only collected over 80 new backpacks, folders, crayons, scissors, markers, glue sticks and pencils—but they also neatly assembled the supplies inside the backpacks. Even though the volunteer groups thought the backpacks were great gifts, they thought something was lacking. So they added another special item: handwritten notes that congratulated the little ones on their accomplishment, gave them advice for their academic futures, and wished them the best of luck in kindergarten.

The preschool graduation cere-

mony and backpack presentation took place on August 25 at Room to Grow in Norwalk.

Since this was the first year of Operation Kindergarten Backpack, the backpacks were a surprise gift. After the diplomas were handed out, an unexpected announcement was made: each graduate would be receiving a brand new backpack stuffed with essential kindergarten supplies. The crowd gasped and cheered, the children jumped and hollered—everyone overwhelmed by the thoughtfulness and generosity of the gesture.

When one of the teachers handed a glimmering pink and purple "Frozen" backpack to a bubbly little graduate, the girl beamed with a contagious smile, bounced up and down on her feet and shouted, "Oh thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

Those were the only words needed to prove that the first Operation Kindergarten Backpack was a tremendous success.

(To learn more about Room to Grow Preschools, contact Nancy Owens: nowens@ccfc-ct.org. To donate, contact Bob Donahue: rdonahue@ccfc-ct.org.)



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Courage to Speak

FAIRFIELD—Ginger and Larry Katz, co-founders of the Courage to Speak Foundation will be speaking at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Fairfield, on Thursday, October 19 at 6:30 pm in the parish hall. The foundation was established in an effort to foster open communication about the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse among young people.

Ginger has been inspired to speak out by the untimely death of her son, Ian, from a drug overdose. She will address issues such as warning signs, alcohol and drug prevention, the code of silence and its dangers, addiction and its impact on families, and other important issues. With the number



of drug overdose deaths and substance abuse cases on the rise in Connecticut, many families are affected. If you or someone you know is facing a crisis or wants to be educated, please join us! The presentation is open to parents, students, and community members.

(For more information, visit www.couragetospeak.org. If you have questions, contact Assumption's parish office: 203.333.9065 or info@olaffld.org.)

School News

New technology director named for schools

BRIDGEPORT—"It's all about the kids," says Kathryn Cioffi. "It's about educating students to be digital citizens, giving them the skills they need to succeed." Cioffi is the new director of educational technology and innovation for diocesan Catholic schools.

"She brings a depth and width of experience, both in technology and as a teacher in the Catholic school system," says Dr. Steven Cheeseman, diocesan superintendent of schools. "She is knowledgeable in educational applications, systems and techniques, and can communicate complex technology concepts effectively in non-technical terms."

Cioffi holds her BS degree from Georgetown University and her MA from Fairfield University with a major in computers in edu-

cation. She received her certification in administration from Sacred Heart University. Cioffi is a member of the CECA, Connecticut Educators Computer Association.

She worked in technology and engineering firms, and was a programmer and consultant in residence at Fairfield University before coming to the Catholic Academy in Bridgeport as a computer teacher for grades K-8. During her time there, she was a member of the Website Development and Technology Curriculum Development committees.

"The diocesan school system has a unified curriculum," she explains. "What we want to do is to help schools use technology in the classroom."

The best way to explain how this works, she says, is to com-

pare it to an experience most adults remember from their own school days. "They used to take children into the library and teach them how to search for information using the Dewey Decimal System. Then they could look for information for their reports. Now students search the Internet to get what they need."

The end result is the same: informed knowledge.

Cioffi is quick to point out that parent involvement is always crucial in the educational process. "We want parents to know that we have filters on the school network to protect children. Everything on the network is there for educational purposes."

In addition, the schools ask parents to sign a permission slip allowing their children to use the Internet.



KATHRYN CIOFFI

Cioffi plans to visit each of the diocesan schools to help administrators and teachers with the effective integration of technology. "I want to become a familiar face to them, so that they see me as part of their team," she says.

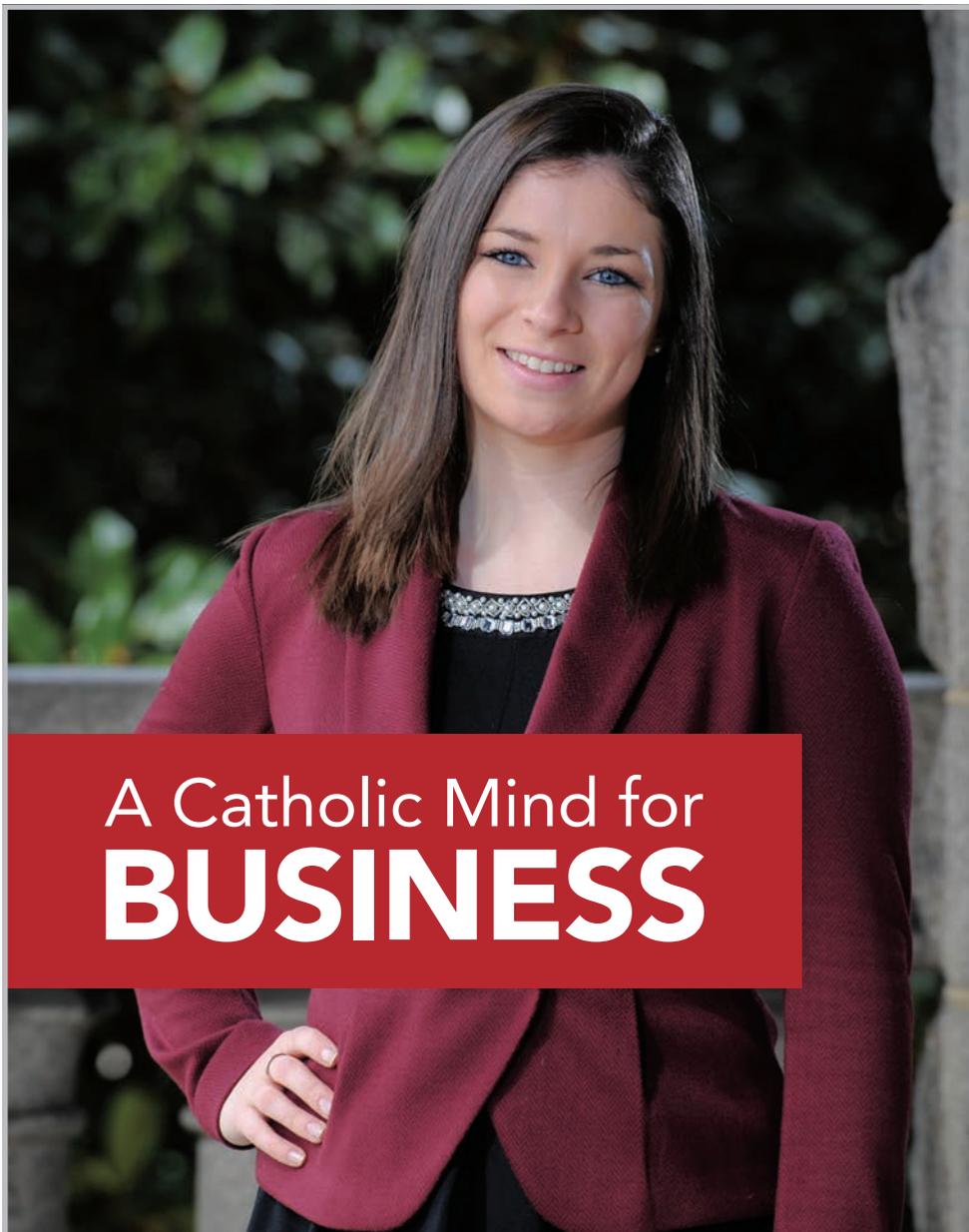
At the present time, she is helping schools implement an integrated student information system by Rediker, so that attendance and grades will all follow the same format. In the future, a parent portal will allow parents to follow homework assignments and other class activities.

"This is a process," she emphasizes. "It will come in phases."

Cioffi has a personal reason for her dedication to excellence in Catholic education. She and her husband, Michael, are members of St. Jude Parish in Monroe. They moved their son from public school into St. Jude School, now part of Holy Trinity in Shelton.

"By putting him in Catholic school, we gave him a firm academic foundation for his future success. He got so much more attention and encouragement there."

As she emphasized from the outset, academics, encouragement and technology all have the same aim: "It's all about the kids." ■



A Catholic Mind for
BUSINESS

Celina intended to major in politics, but her advisor suggested a macroeconomics course, and she soon found herself drawn to other classes in the Busch School of Business and Economics. "I liked solving economics problems," she says. Her professors were challenging, but supportive. "They were really engaging and cared more about us understanding the concepts than giving us a grade." Catholic University empowers students to be global citizens, working to improve the conditions of the world around us by creating opportunities for others.

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Sacred Heart University

Larry Kudlow opens SHU Business Leaders Series

FAIRFIELD—Larry Kudlow, CNBC's senior contributor and host of the nationally syndicated radio program "The Larry Kudlow Show," will be the inaugural guest at Sacred Heart University's Distinguished Business Leaders Series. He will also be available to sign copies of his latest book.

The series will feature leaders in a variety of sectors who have made a significant impact on the business community. It is present-

ed and hosted by Katie Burke, senior strategist and chief of staff at Edelman Financial Services and a member of the SHU Board of Trustees. Co-sponsored by WSHU, the Distinguished Business Leaders Series begins on Monday, October 16, at 6 pm in SHU's Martire Forum. The public is invited.

Kudlow, CEO of Kudlow and Company, LLC, is a prominent free-market, supply-side economist with a storied career spanning four

decades. He previously hosted CNBC's primetime The Kudlow Report, and his current nationally syndicated radio show broadcasts each Saturday from 10 am-1 pm on WABC. He also writes a weekly syndicated column.

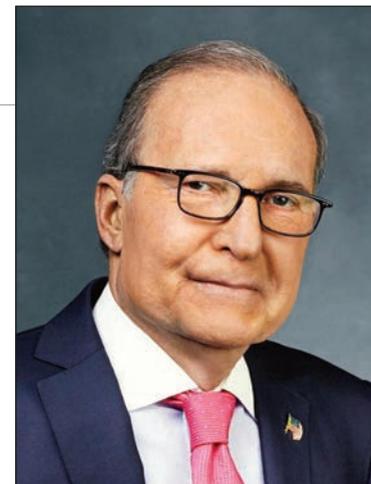
Kudlow was associate director for economics and planning in the Federal Office of Management and Budget during Ronald Reagan's first presidential administration. He also co-authored *JFK and the*

Reagan Revolution: A Secret History of American Prosperity, which describes how President John F. Kennedy pioneered supply-side economics. Kudlow and co-author Brian Domitrovic argue that elements of this fiscal theory—the free-market principles of limited government, low tax rates and a strong dollar—would solve the long economic stagnation of the early 21st century. *Forbes Magazine* calls the book a "fascinating account of the internal battles within John F. Kennedy's administration over cutting taxes and keeping the dollar linked to gold."

Burke is one of the country's leading political and corporate communications strategists, with nearly 20 years of experience at the highest levels of government and business.

"I'm excited to bring this series to Sacred Heart," Burke said. "There is much to learn from the most proven leaders in our organizations and communities, and I am particularly excited to begin with renowned economist Larry Kudlow."

Before rejoining Edelman this year, Burke was CEO of Katie Burke Communications. She also served as executive vice president of marketing and communications at Nielsen, a global information, data and measurement company. In addition, she has



LARRY KUDLOW

been an executive-in-residence and professor of communications at SHU.

In the political arena, Burke was communications director for former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani's presidential campaign and Arnold Schwarzenegger's gubernatorial re-election campaign in California. She was director of television news in the Bush White House and senior spokeswoman and director of broadcast media for the Republican National Committee during the 2004 election cycle. Her career began in Connecticut as a staff member for former U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays.

"Our Distinguished Business Leaders Series is inaugurated with the belief that leadership skills can be learned. We are grateful for the opportunity to engage with these distinguished leaders. I thank Katie Burke for hosting this important series," said SHU President John J. Petillo.

(For more information, contact Tracy Deer-Mirek deer-mirek@sacredheart.edu or 203.371.7751.) ■



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INTERFAITH EXPERIENCE FROM PAGE 29

His enthusiasm about school reminded me of how lucky I am to receive an education at Immaculate," said AJ.

"And then there was Gilbert, a four year-old boy at the orphanage with a rare physical condition that led his mother to believe he was a demon and abandon him. His story made my time playing with him much more meaningful," AJ reminisced, noting that it also made him appreciate his place in the world more.

"Despite their struggles, all three of these students were blessed with knowing their cultural and personal identities. In the U.S., sometimes we are distracted from our identities because of social media or other responsibilities.

Because these children have so few material items, there is nothing to distract them from finding out who they are in the world. The trip as a whole helped me find my place in the world as well."

This was not AJ's first trip out of the country; he travelled with the Diocese of Bridgeport to Poland to celebrate World Youth Day 2016.

Immaculate High School stresses the importance of community service and requires each student to perform at least 25 hours a year. At the end of the 2016-17 school year, IHS students had performed nearly 25,000 hours of community service, most of it in the communities of Fairfield County. ■

Catholic Higher Education

Sacred Heart and Fairfield earn top rankings

Sacred Heart University

Sacred Heart University was ranked one of the most innovative universities as well as one of the best universities in the North, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* newly released guidebook, Best Colleges 2018.

"As one of the fastest growing Catholic universities in the nation, we are pleased to be recognized by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Princeton Review* and many others for the educational excellence we provide," said SHU President John J. Petillo.

Besides being named one of the best universities in the North, SHU also was one of four schools in the North to be recognized as an innovative school. For the past three years, *U.S. News* asks academics participating in its peer assessment survey to name institutions they think are the most innovative for its Most Innovative Schools listing.

According to *U.S. News*, college presidents, provosts and

admissions deans nominate 10 colleges they think are making the most innovative improvements in terms of curriculum, faculty, students, campus life, technology or facilities. *U.S. News* said the ranking is based on the responses to the question.

"Being considered one of the most innovative universities is a result of our mission and careful strategic planning," Petillo said.

Sacred Heart has earned recognition as well from the *Princeton Review*, which recently ranked the university one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduate education and included SHU in its "Best 382 Colleges" guidebook. It also placed SHU on its lists for "Best College Theater" and "Most Engaged in Community Service," each of which comprises only 20 schools from around the country.

Fairfield University

Fairfield University has been named third in the Northern Region in the annual ranking



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

from *U.S. News and World Report*, 2018 Best Colleges ranking. The university is also the only master's degree granting institution in Connecticut within the Northern Region category to make the Top 10.

Schools included in the ranking "provide a full range of undergraduate majors and master's programs." The schools are ranked against their peer groups by region—Fairfield is in the Northern Region, which includes schools from Maine to



Fairfield
UNIVERSITY

Maryland.

Several programs also made the regional and national lists.

Fairfield's Dolan School of Business is on the national list once again for "Best Undergraduate Business Programs."

The undergraduate teaching program is ranked third in the Northern Region, based on faculty who have a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching.

"The rankings that Fairfield continues to achieve are a reflection of the quality of our faculty,

staff and students in the learning environment we create here on campus, as well as the amazing achievements of our alumni," said Mark Nemecek, PhD, president of Fairfield University.

"As Fairfield continues to rise as the modern Jesuit institution, we do so with the confidence that a Fairfield education leads to globally and civically minded individuals who produce strong outcomes after graduation."

The rankings are the latest in a string of accolades for the university. The *New York Times* placed Fairfield University among the top schools in the country that help to sustain "the American Dream." The *Princeton Review* named Fairfield among the top 15 percent of all schools in the country, and Fairfield was included in the ranking of schools considered to have the "Best Quality of Life" and "Happiest Students." ■

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Knights of Columbus Museum

Museum highlights the centenary of World War I

By **JOSEPH PRONECHEN**

In 1917 war was still raging in Europe. The United States had remained out of it, but on April 6, President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany, marking America's entry into World War I.

During this 100th anniversary year, the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven opened a new show titled "World War I: Beyond the Front Lines." It presents a look at what soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) faced in warfare and living conditions, plus how the Knights worked on both the front lines and behind them in many surprising and heroic ways.

Besides being enlistees in the military, the Knights provided the comfort of much-needed recreation centers and through a large corps of military chaplains

who brought the sacraments to soldiers and sailors.

Over 116,000 American men died in the war, including 1,600 Knights. The very first and last officers to die in the war were both Knights—the last a chaplain.

This show presents a quick, broad overview of America's involvement beginning 100 years ago, in which over 17 million military and civilians died in what was billed as the "war to end all wars."

The first gallery has an altar stone from the 13th-century Cathedral Notre-Dame-de Rheims, bombed during the war. Here, too, visitors get an idea of what a typical American "doughboy" looked like in his basic full uniform, from hat to knee breeches and puttees—a strip of cloth wound around the legs for protection and support.

To get a feel of being a dough-



boy, visitors can "participate" by trying on the heavy metal helmets and soldiers' uniform tunics. And they can be challenged trying to lift a facsimile soldier's haversack. Filled with personal effects, field gear and weapons, the doughboy's stuffed haversack weighed up to 100 pounds, but this fac-

simile 40-pound sack is still is a struggle for many to lift.

This exhibit offers plenty of artifacts, from the familiar helmets, different uniforms and gas masks, to unusual equipment like the trench periscope (visitors can try one in the trench warfare gallery) and trench binoculars.

The exhibit also features fascinating objects, especially the shell art. During their free time soldiers would take things like spent artillery shells and fashion them into something religious or artistic—often both. Two items are a crucifix made of several cartridge cases and a holy water font, also formed from bullet cartridges.

Not to forget the folks back home, another gallery has a collection of posters meant to prompt those in the United States to support the boys in the military with messages such as "See Him Through—Help Us to Help the Boys." Some relate directly to the Knights and the amazing work they did in Europe. Their work is brought to light in other galleries.

To begin, the United Service Organizations (USO) was based on what the Knights thought up and practiced with their "huts." The story unfolds in the "K of C Hut" display. Everyone needed rest and recreation from the unrelenting intensity of the war. Besides, with well over one-third of military being Catholic, they needed access to Mass and the sacraments. The Knights of Columbus immediately recognized these needs and began a program of recreation centers that were known as "huts." Their motto was, "Everybody Welcome; Everything Free." A serviceman's race or religion didn't matter. The only requirement was a uniform.

Knights of Columbus workers known as secretaries ran the huts. They were men unqualified for military service because of age or physical limitation, but they wanted to serve in the war effort. They wore Army-like uniforms with a big badge that had "KC" on a red background. Their buttons flashed the "KC" symbol. Quickly they got to be nicknamed "Casey." Visitors get to see a full KC uniform on display.

The Hut gallery has many examples of the items the Caseys gave for free to all servicemen requesting them. There are postcards, handkerchiefs, razors, matchboxes—but not the "original" candy and gum given by the ton, literally. When men couldn't get to the huts and the Caseys, the Caseys went to them, even to the front lines.

This gallery, set up as a typical hut, identifies how the flexible stage would be used for frequent Masses. There is a table acting as a portable altar. On it is a Mass kit with chalice, cruet, small missal and stand. It belonged to Father Charles Conaty who served with the 28 Division in France. He received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Other times, the stage would be used for music and theatrical performances, plus boxing matches, which were very popular. Every hut had player piano so that the men could get together and sing their favorite tunes.

But, most importantly, the stages were used for Mass and Confession.

Just before entering the hut, visitors see a display on Father John DeValles, among the first five Knights of Columbus chaplains to reach France. He often helped rescue wounded soldiers in "No Man's Land" in addition to bringing the sacraments to all.

His helmet, tunic, neck cross, and dress cap help visitors think of the many chaplains bringing sacraments and comfort during a horrific war.

(World War I: Beyond the Front Lines will be on display at the Knights of Columbus Museum, 1 State Street, New Haven, through December 30 2018. The museum is open daily 10 am-5 pm. Free admission; free parking. For more information, visit www.kofcmuseum.org or call 203.865.0400.)

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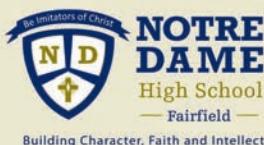
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October 2017

Sports

Lack of size no problem for Mellozzi, Harrison

By **DON HARRISON**

Two of the state's most respected high school football players this season share a bond or two: Both are comparatively small for the positions they play, and both attend Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Introducing Jared Mellozzi of St. Joseph in Trumbull and Doug Harrison of Fairfield Prep.



FAIRFIELD PREP'S Doug Harrison offsets his 5-foot-8, 200-pound frame with power and deceptive speed.

Mellozzi, a senior, stands just 5-foot-10, but he's an exceptional wide receiver who set pass-catching records (101 receptions, 1,522

"He's got terrific hands and focus on the ball," Della Vecchia says. "If I were a college coach, I'd be looking at him." Villanova, Albany and Massachusetts have shown considerable interest thus far.

Harrison, a 5-foot-8, 200-pound junior running back, followed up on his noteworthy sophomore season by rushing for 211 yards and with a pair of touchdowns in the Jesuits' sea-

rushing performance in a 38-15 upset of previously undefeated Shelton underscored his prowess.

"Doug didn't make any all-star teams, probably because he lacked the body of work for the

entire season. But I'd place him among the best in our conference," says Hellstern. ■



ST. JOE'S Jared Mellozzi has made the difficult catch seemingly routine.

yards, 20 TDs) as a junior and was voted to the New Haven Register and Coaches' Class-M All-State first teams.

How does one top that? Well, in the Cadets' 2017 season opener against reigning Class-L state champion New Canaan, Mellozzi snared a pass—between two defenders—from junior quarterback David Summers and turned it into a 43-yard touchdown. That score, coming with some four minutes left to play, transformed a narrow loss into a resounding 38-35 victory.

"As far as the regular season," declares St. Joe's Coach Joe Della Vecchia, "that probably ranks among our top five wins."

Mellozzi, a Shelton resident, gets high marks from his coach.

en route to his sixth straight 100-yard game across two seasons when he tore up his left knee. Prep prevailed, 7-3, but Harrison will miss the remainder of the season and require surgery.

"It was a freak accident... on a broken play. He was trying to make a block," laments Jesuits' Coach Keith Hellstern. "Doug's a good kid. He is very powerful and deceptively fast. We have a great orthopedic group here, and he'll come back next year like new."

Harrison, who commutes to Prep from his Branford home via two Metro-North trains and a school bus, burst onto the scene midway through his sophomore year. On November 4, a remarkable five-touchdown, 334-yard




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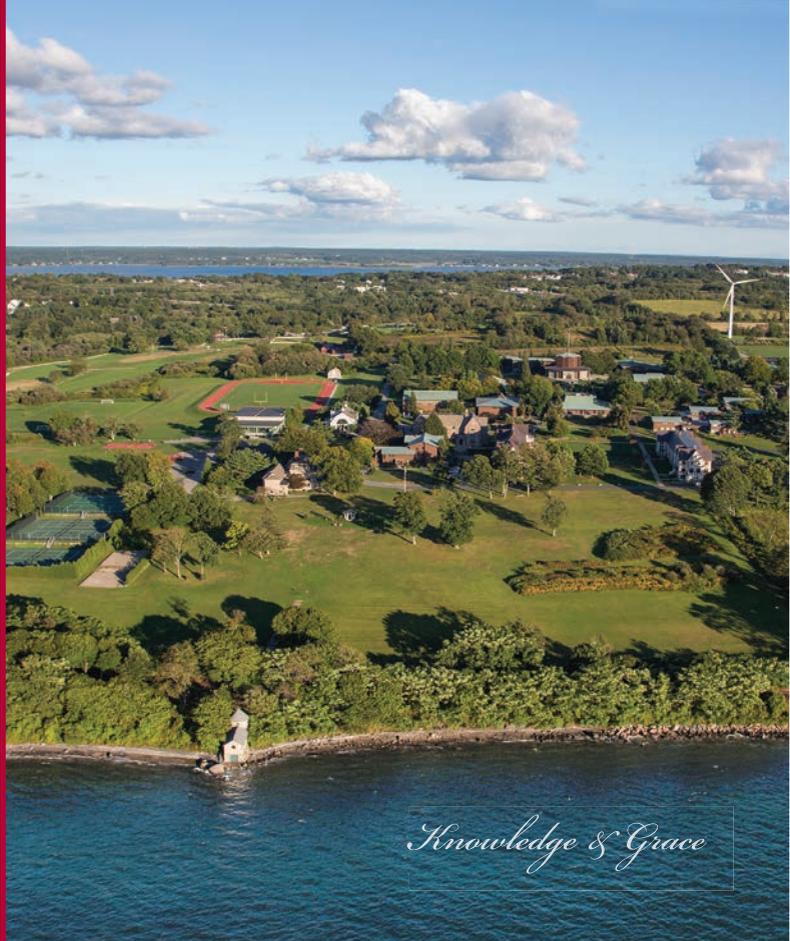
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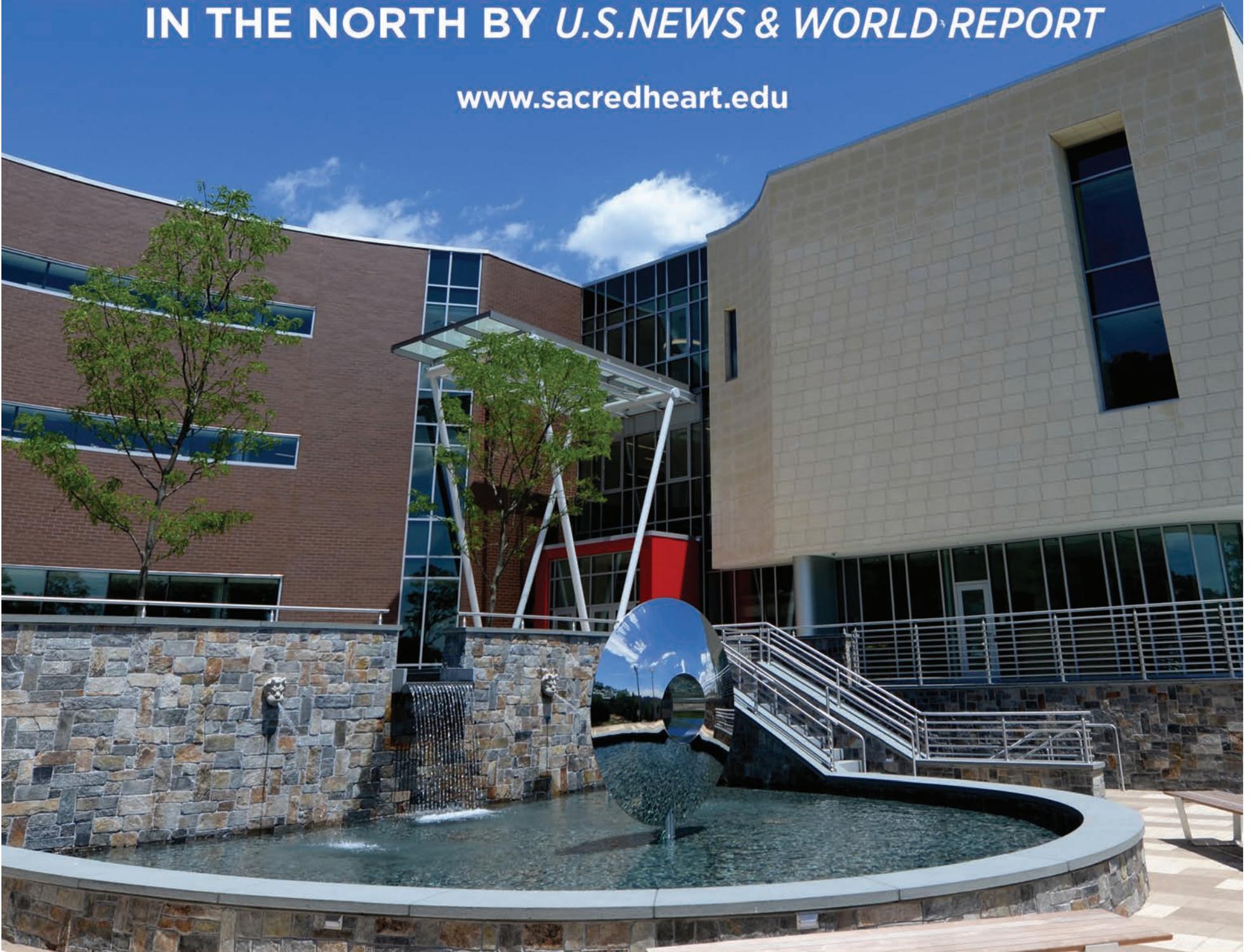
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