

Catholic **TRANSCRIPT**

JUNE 2017

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ARCHBISHOP'S DESK

A new Pentecost
in Connecticut

PG. 4

SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Practicing the
Little Way

PG. 8

IN THE KNOW WITH FATHER JOE

What does it really
mean to be blessed?

PG. 12



*A man for
all ages:*

Catholic speaker rekindles faith
no matter the setting

■ **“A Singing Church — A Praying Church”** is the title of a music ministers’ evening retreat with Passionist Father David Cinquegrani that is scheduled to run from 6 to 9 p.m. on **June 6** and be repeated at the same time on **June 7** at Holy Family Retreat Center in West Hartford. It is open to all people who are interested in music ministry. The evening will include a supper, presentation with singing, reflection and a celebration of the Mass. The offering is \$30 for members of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and \$40 for others. It is free for members of the clergy. Information is available at 860.760.9705 or www.holyfamilyretreat.org.

■ The archdiocesan Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry will host its eighth **Bishop Peter Rosazza Social Justice Conference, “Rooted in Faith: One Family Under God,”** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on **June 10** at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield (check-in begins at 8). Keynote addresses will be given by Ruth Rosenbaum, founder and executive director of the Center for Reflection, Education and Action in Hartford, and Father Joseph Donnelly, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Southbury. Twelve workshops will be offered. For information, call 860.242.5573, ext. 2688, or visit catholicsocialjustice.org/social-justice-conference.html.

■ Iconographer Marek Czarnecki will give a lecture, titled **“Iconography, Holy History and Holy Tradition,”** at 7 p.m. on **June 11** at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. It is free and open to the public. Czarnecki is a Connecticut iconographer and liturgical artist whose studio, Seraphic Restorations, is in Meriden. He studied with the Russian Orthodox iconographer Ksenia Pokrovsky and has been writing icons for 25 years. For information, contact marekstudio4b@hotmail.com or 203.238.7553.

■ **“Mouthy Women of the New Testament,”** a two-part program about outspoken women in Church history, will be presented from 7 to 9 p.m. on **June 7** and **June 14** at Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center in Farmington. The story of the Canaanite woman’s encounter with Jesus contains a powerful message for women today: that speaking up for what really matters can be transformative. This two-part series will offer attendees an opportunity to get in touch with their own wisdom and experience, and to reflect on some “mouthy” women of Church history, such as St. Catherine of Siena. Each program costs \$25. Optional dinners served at 6 cost \$15. Joan Kennedy will present the program. Registration by a week in advance is recommended. Call 860.677.8519 or email olcretreat@sbcglobal.net.

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■ **The Franciscan Sports Banquet and Silent Auction** will take place from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. on **June 6** at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville. Proceeds will benefit the Franciscan Life Center and Franciscan Home Care and Hospice Care. This year’s honorees and the awards they will receive are Donald “Dee” Rowe, advisor to athletics at the University of Connecticut, St. Francis Award; Suzy Whaley, vice president of the PGA of America, St. Clare Award; Michael Cavanaugh, head hockey coach at the University of Connecticut, Jim Calhoun Community Service Award; and Rich Coppola, Fox 61 sports director, Dean of Sports Award. Special recognition will be given to Special Olympics Connecticut athletes and the Sacred Heart High School boys’ basketball team. Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Reynolds will be presented with the Mother Shaun Appreciation Award. The emcees will be Al Terzi, host of “The Real Story” on Fox 61, and Tony Terzi, Fox 61 reporter. Silent auction items will include a signed Tom Brady jersey and Ryder Cup tee flag signed by the U.S. 2016 Olympics golf team. Information is available at 203.237.8084, www.flcenter.org or franciscanhc.org.

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■ COVER PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH





A NEW PENTECOST in Connecticut

“To live is to change; and to be perfect is to have changed often.”
This favorite saying of Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman offers some timely wisdom as we implement a pastoral plan for the Archdiocese of Hartford. Some individuals will no doubt be upset, hurt or alienated as a result of change, and I regret that deeply and keep them in my prayers. But many more will make the transition in a positive spirit, either welcoming or being welcomed into newly configured parish communities. That is as it should be, since we are all one family of Catholic faith in this local Church of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

The whole point of developing and implementing a comprehensive plan, as we have done, is so that parishes do not have to live under a cloud of uncertainty. Now that the changes have been announced, I believe that the archdiocese is in a much better position to provide pastoral care in the coming years, notwithstanding fewer priests. It is my hope that all our parishes will grow and thrive.

How does a parish grow and thrive?

When I was a boy in the 1950s and early 1960s, if you were Catholic, chances were very strong that you sent your children to Catholic school, went to Mass every Sunday and were catechized by the *Baltimore Catechism*. The number of practicing Catholics in our country was so great that the Church had no need to go to the people; the people came to the Church. There were many converts

to Catholicism, especially at the time of marriage. When it came to spreading the Catholic faith, most Catholics only thought of faraway mission lands.

Within the Church, a sense of Catholic identity that was once taken for granted has been greatly weakened. Meatless Fridays; the rosary and benediction; wearing the scapular; traditions surrounding Christmas, Lent and Easter; not to mention the strength of family life and moral teachings — these things are, in many cases, not even known, much less practiced, by a great number of today's Catholics. All these things were expressions of a strong and coherent identity, a Catholic life lived according to the Gospel.

For millions of people, nothing has really replaced that sense of identity. It now has become urgent to bring the Catholic faith to our own backyard, among our family,

neighbors and friends and in the workplace, community, our schools and nation. Our country is filled with people who have no church, have drifted away from church or are alienated from church. The word “nuns” used to mean religious sisters; now “nones” refers to the growing number of people who, when asked about their religion, say they belong to “none.”

For a parish to grow and thrive, the challenge is for every parishioner to realize that being Catholic also means being evangelical, a missionary, a witness for the faith. Jesus says, “Go and make disciples of all the nations.” St. Paul exclaims, “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.” And St. Peter writes: “Should anyone ask you the reason for this hope of yours, be ever ready to reply, but speak gently and respectfully.”

Almost 60 years ago, Pope St. John XXIII envisioned the Second Vatican Council as a new Pentecost in our time. Pentecost was the day on which the Holy Spirit first came down upon the Church with power in the form of tongues of flame. The apostles, locked in the Upper Room out of fear, were emboldened to go out and preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, as Jesus had commanded them.

The mission that each of us has by baptism and confirmation is to bear witness to Christ in truth and charity, and to invite others to our shared communion of faith and sacramental life. For divine help in fulfilling this mission, I ask that you participate in the novena that was announced last month and is published at www.archdioceseofhartford.org and www.catholictranscript.org; that is, nine days of prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit leading up to Pentecost Sunday on June 4.

May our heart's desire be for a new Pentecost in our time, in our archdiocese, in our world. God bless you. †



**ARCHBISHOP
LEONARD P.
BLAIR**

*is the 13th
bishop of
the Catholic
Archdiocese of
Hartford*

UN NUEVO PENTECOSTÉS en Connecticut

“**V**ivir es cambiar; y ser perfecto es haber cambiado con frecuencia”. Esta frase favorita del Beato Cardenal John Henry Newman nos ofrece oportuna sabiduría en este momento que implementamos un plan pastoral para la Arquidiócesis de Hartford. Algunas personas, sin duda, se sentirán muy incomodas, heridas o alienadas como resultado del cambio, lo lamento profundamente y les tengo presentes en mis oraciones. Pero muchos más harán la transición en un espíritu positivo, ya sea dando la bienvenida o siendo recibidos en las comunidades parroquiales recién configuradas. Así es como debe ser, ya que todos somos una familia de fe católica en esta iglesia local de la Arquidiócesis de Hartford.

El propósito de desarrollar y ejecutar un plan integral, como hemos hecho, es para que las parroquias no tengan que vivir bajo una nube de incertidumbre. Ahora que los cambios han sido anunciados, creo que la archidiócesis está en una posición mucho mejor para proporcionar atención pastoral en los próximos años, a pesar de que hay menos sacerdotes. Espero que todas nuestras parroquias crezcan y prosperen.

¿Cómo crece y prospera una parroquia?

Cuando yo era un niño en los años 50 y principios de los 60, si usted era católico, eran muy fuertes las probabilidades de que usted enviara a sus niños a la escuela católica, fuera a Misa cada domingo y usara el *Catecismo de Baltimore*. El número de católicos practicantes en nuestro país era tan grande que la Iglesia no tenía necesidad de ir al pueblo; el pueblo venía a la Iglesia. Había muchos conversos al catolicismo, especialmente en el momento del matrimonio. Cuando se trataba de difundir la fe católica, la mayoría de los católicos sólo pensaban en tierras de misión lejanas.

En la Iglesia, el sentido de identidad católica que se daba por hecho, hoy se ha debilitado mucho. Viernes sin carne; el rosario y la bendición; el uso de escapularios; las tradiciones que rodean la Navidad, la Cuaresma y la Pascua, sin mencionar la fuerza de la vida familiar y las enseñanzas morales — estas cosas son, en muchos casos, ni siquiera conocidas, mucho menos practicadas por un gran número de católicos de hoy. Todas estas cosas eran expresiones de una identidad fuerte y coherente, una vida católica vivida según el Evangelio.

Para millones de personas, nada ha reemplazado realmente ese sentido de identidad. Hoy en día es urgente que llevemos la fe

católica a nuestros propios barrios, entre nuestra familia, vecinos y amigos, en el lugar de trabajo, la comunidad, nuestras escuelas y la nación. Nuestro país está lleno de personas que no tienen iglesia, se han alejado de la iglesia o no se sientan bienvenidos en la iglesia. La palabra en inglés “nuns” (monjas) solía significar religiosas; ahora “nones” se refiere al creciente número de personas que, cuando se les pregunta acerca de su religión, dicen que pertenecen a “ninguna”.

Para que una parroquia crezca y prospere, el desafío es que cada feligrés se dé cuenta de que ser católico también significa ser evangélico, un misionero, un testigo de la fe. Jesús dice: “Vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones”. San Pablo exclama: “¡Ay de mí, si no predico el Evangelio!” Y San Pedro escribe: “Estén siempre listos para responder si alguien les preguntará por el motivo de su esperanza, pero háganlo con suavidad y respeto”.

Hace casi 60 años, el Papa Juan XXIII imaginó el Concilio Vaticano II como un nuevo Pentecostés en nuestro tiempo. Pentecostés fue el día en que el Espíritu Santo descendió por primera vez sobre la Iglesia con poder en forma de lenguas de fuego. Los apóstoles, encerrados en el aposento alto por temor, se animaron a salir y predicar el Evangelio hasta los confines de la tierra como Jesús les había mandado.

La misión que cada uno de nosotros tiene por el bautismo y la confirmación es dar testimonio de Cristo en la verdad y la caridad, e invitar a otros a nuestra comunión compartida de fe y vida sacramental. Para la ayuda divina en el cumplimiento de esta misión, les pido que participen en la novena que fue anunciada y publicada el mes pasado, es decir, nueve días de oración por el don del Espíritu Santo que conduce al Domingo de Pentecostés el 4 de junio.

Que el deseo de nuestros corazones sea que tengamos un nuevo Pentecostés en nuestro tiempo, en nuestra archidiócesis, en nuestro mundo. Dios les bendiga. †



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GETTY IMAGES

A FAMILY'S MUSINGS ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD

offered by a mom and four kids

Some years ago, a lively dinnertime conversation about the priesthood led to a discussion about what makes for a really good priest. Here, edited for teenage slang, kindergartner lisp and excited rants, is what emerged.

HOW TO MAKE A GREAT PRIEST

1. Pray without ceasing. The effectiveness of your priesthood rests upon your intimacy with God.
2. Get away regularly for vacations and retreats. It's one of the best investments you can make in your priesthood.
3. Shave before Mass (13-year-old).
4. Tithe. It's easier to live on nine-tenths of your income than it is to live on ten-tenths.
5. Don't be discouraged by uninspiring priests around you. Like marriage, your priesthood does not have to be monotonous. God did not design mediocrity. We did.
6. Doing God's work creates fertile ground for selfishness, so go to confession often.
7. A priest should try to do a good homily that is interesting, with stuff we'd want to hear about and that we don't already know about (six-year-old). Yeah, 6.)

8. Tell the story of your call to the priesthood frequently. This will remind you why you said "yes" to God, which, in turn, will keep daily annoyances in perspective.
9. Practice forgiveness. The more you practice, the better you get.
10. Exercise. You'll feel better, live longer and be able to have seconds on dessert.
11. Be thankful for what you have (8-year-old).
12. Don't get caught up in power plays. If submission is appropriate, submit. If speaking your mind in love is called for, do so. God wants priests to be beacons of light in a desperate world; don't jeopardize this for the sake of pride.
13. Keep your face clean (8-year-old).
14. Laugh a lot. It's good for the blood pressure, increases longevity and it's one of God's best gifts to his people.
15. Don't sweat the small stuff. Save your energy for matters of eternal significance.
16. In a typical day, you're called upon to console the bereaved, work wizardry with finances and bring peace to contentious meetings, while simultaneously fielding complaints about everything from a priest's foreign accent to the temperature in the church. Only someone very holy can navigate these waters with joy, so ask God to make you holy, whatever the cost.

17. Spend time with your friends. It puts you in a good mood. Priests need other people to tell their troubles to and share their joy. People need other people (11-year-old).
18. Most lay people think you have no problems and can be in two places at once. Debunk these myths. The truth is good for everyone.
19. Always have children in your life. Their faith is refreshing and they keep us humble. Children are God's way of saying that the world should go on.
20. Take a day off every week, whether you can afford the time or not. The 8-year-old explained it best: "God doesn't like cranky priests."
21. Expect seasons of your priesthood, just like seasons of life. If you go through a dry patch, even one that lasts a long time, don't despair. If God can breathe new life into us, he can do the same for your priesthood.
22. God called you by name into the priesthood, and you are an incredible gift to us. If you ever forget, read this again.
23. The 11-year-old's sage advice sums it up: "Spend a lot of time with Jesus. Make sure to pray every day. That's what makes a great priest." †



M. REGINA CRAM is a writer, speaker and author. She and her husband live in Glastonbury and have four children and seven grandchildren.

No time for Jesus

Emma's father was ecstatic. He was a proud man — proud of his daughter and proud of her achievements. He was convinced she would be awarded a Fulbright Scholarship someday and, who knows, possibly a Nobel Prize in the Something-or-Other category.



JOE PISANI of Orange is a writer whose work has appeared in Catholic publications nationwide. He and his wife Sandy have four daughters.

She wasn't even 13, but had already won national recognition for her work with *Odyssey of the Mind*. She was also an extremely talented dancer who took lessons in ballet, jazz, hip hop and ballroom. Then, there was the piano and the violin, or maybe it was the cello. Soccer was a passion, not to mention softball. In fact, there was so much she was doing that my brain was starting to throb listening to him talk about her accomplishments.

Emma was a fortunate young woman — except for one thing. And it was a very big thing. This wasn't simply a case of over-involvement, which is an affliction many children suffer nowadays. This was a case of disordered priorities because, you

see, church and catechism classes weren't on the activities calendar posted on their refrigerator.

Her family no longer went to Mass, and I had to wonder, "Did God become irrelevant?" Or had all the extracurricular activities forced the family to forget God in the pursuit of success and honors they thought would get her into a good college someday? Centuries ago, Thomas Aquinas identified the pursuit of prestige as one of the major obstacles to God.

Unfortunately, they don't give out trophies and awards for spiritual development, although when I was in third grade, I

knew my *Baltimore Catechism* cold, word for word, and, as a reward, Sister Mary Joseph gave me a glow-in-the-dark plastic baby Jesus, which I still take out every Christmas to display prominently and proudly on the mantel.

And I still remember who made me. (God made me.) And equally important: "Q. Why did God make you? A. God made me to know him, to love him and to serve him in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next." Those are simple lessons Emma hasn't learned.

Our priorities quickly become disoriented when God isn't at the top of the list. One of my friends who hasn't been to Mass in a year tells me that Jesus understands all the work she has to do and the commitments she has to keep with her elderly mother and the activities her two sons are involved in, including several sports, music and Latin competitions. Jesus understands?

We're all familiar with the phenomenon of the kid who goes to Catholic school and Mass until college comes along and his spiritual life ends. Today, however, an increasing number of young people don't even know the basics because parents think other things are more important.

Another of my friends takes her daughter to all kinds of anti-Trump protests, which has become a popular pastime for them. They, too, stopped attending Mass and religious instructions a long time ago. I told her the solutions lie in the tabernacle, not in the White House or political movements.

It's very simple. When children don't get instruction in their faith and can't turn to God because they have no relationship, they look elsewhere for the answers to life and to the longing that only God can satisfy. They turn to pleasure, possessions, sex, drugs, recognition and all the other opiates that dull our spiritual longing.

You've seen the statistics. For the most part, the Millennial Generation does not identify with formal faith. There are many reasons, but, in the end, I suspect it's because, as parents, we placed more importance on worldly ambition and success than on Christ. The *Odyssey of the Mind* is a wonderful thing, but we should never forget the odyssey of the soul. †



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PRACTICING

the Little Way

“Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it for *love*.”



ANNA JONES
is a writer who lives in New Haven. She and her husband are members of the St. Thomas More Chapel and Center Community at Yale University.

This quote, from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, is written in blue ink on a small square of paper at my desk at work. I tacked it up a few months ago, next to another quote that I had heard on the radio around the same time: “The grass is always greener where you water it.”

I’ll leave that second quote for another column.

Before reading about St. Thérèse of Lisieux, I had never really felt any kind of connection with any saints. When asked recently who my favorite saint was by someone teaching a religion class for young kids, I didn’t have a good answer. Granted, much of that is my fault for not being terribly educated about our many saints — other than the saint I chose for confirmation, St. Angela Merici, founder of the Ursuline order — but some of it is also

feeling a great distance between them and me. How can I be as virtuous or brave as the great martyrs of our faith history? I’m not holy enough to perform miracles.

But that’s what I love most about St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Her way, “the Little Way,” is an inspiration I can grab onto in my own search for holiness and, hopefully, my ultimate journey to heaven.

I pulled that quote on my desk from *The Way of Trust and Love*, a retreat guide written by Father Jacques Philippe that leads the reader through St. Thérèse of Lisieux’s writings chapter by chapter each night, exploring the ways she tried to live out God’s call to holiness in her very short life. It’s a goal she said is achievable to all because God does not present challenges we cannot meet.

She chose the Little Way.

“So I have always stayed little, having no other occupation than that of picking flowers, the flowers of love and sacrifice, and offering them to God for his pleasure,” she wrote.

Never at any point when reading about this young woman, who has been recognized as a saint even though she only lived to age 24, did I feel intimidated by her or her strides toward holiness. I should have been, probably, given her intense spirituality and knowing I have a long way to go before reaching that myself. She did become a nun at 15.

Rather, I found her Little Way so inspiring — albeit more difficult than it sounds — and something I wanted to think more about every day. Hence, the quote made it onto the desk divider at work.

Perhaps my favorite part about St. Thérèse of Lisieux’s Little Way is her recognition that we are not perfect and that we will make mistakes on the journey to holiness, but if we stay humble (or little), we won’t have as far to fall.

“[Being little] means not being discouraged by our faults, because children often fall over, but they are so little they don’t hurt themselves badly.” †

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What do they do?

SHE SAYS:
His mother is too involved in our parenting

I love my mother-in-law, but ever since we had a baby, she's driving me crazy. She is constantly telling me how often he should be fed, how long he should sleep and how long I should let him cry before picking him up. Matt just tells me to ignore her, but he is not the one dealing with the daily drop-in visits and nagging. And I'm afraid it's going to get worse as our son gets older. I want him to tell her to back off.

HE SAYS:
Mom just wants to help

I know Jenny is having a difficult time — but Mom just wants to help and be involved. I don't understand why Jenny can't let Mom's comments roll off her back. I'm not comfortable telling my mother she shouldn't give advice.



Matt needs to make it clear to his mom and Jenny that his primary allegiance is to his wife. God's ancient command is unambiguous: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body." (Gn. 2:24)

Of course, "leaving" his mother and "clinging" to Jenny doesn't mean Matt needs to be disloyal to his mom. It just means his concern for harmony and happiness within his new family must come before his concern for harmony and happiness with his mother. Here's a way it can be achieved for everyone.

Matt's mom may not know how Jenny is feeling, and so she might need a heads-up. Moreover, she needs to have clear limits set. Who should do it? Even if Matt doesn't get it about Jenny's feelings, it's nevertheless his duty, both as her husband and as his mother's son, to talk to his mom. Only if Matt either cannot or will not — in which case he and Jenny have even bigger problems — should Jenny initiate.

It could go something like this: "Mom, we appreciate your love and concern for our son, but for the sake of our family we need you to make some changes.

"First, please, no more uninvited drop-ins. We'll definitely schedule get-togethers with you, like walks with the baby, coffee and so forth. But we need the freedom to set limits to these visits.

"Second, you're a good mom, but Jenny's also good mom, and so we need you to give her and us the deference and the space we need to take care of our son as we see fit. We will welcome your parenting input, but only when we ask for it." (Note the repeated use of the words, "we" and "us.")

Once you've laid these boundaries down, you don't need to justify or explain them. It could help to come up with a couple of polite phrases to deploy, repeatedly if necessary, like "Thanks, mom, but we're doing it differently." If she persists, politely end the conversation. She may initially huff and puff, but she's likely to eventually figure it out and comply, much to everyone's greater happiness, including hers. †



STEVE AND BRIDGET PATTON
hold master's degrees in theology and counseling and serve as family life ministers for the Diocese of Sacramento.

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SUMMERTIME ... VOLUNTEER OR PAID POSITION?

BY CYNTHIA KAAN

Sometimes, parents and teens disagree about how to spend the lazy summer months. Kids may see that time as an opportunity to explore an interest area, while parents understandably might be looking for their child to start bringing in some cash. What to do?

Following are some thoughts to consider as you discuss this together:

- **Experience matters.** If the volunteer position is in an area of interest for a future career, this type of experience would be invaluable.
- **Faith formation matters.** If the position is one that will expose you to other Catholics who are living their faith in the “real world,” this will help create a heart for Jesus in all things.
- **Financial responsibility matters.** Is it possible to volunteer as well as have a part-time job? It may be a sizable sacrifice of time between the two, but it would certainly be a memorable summer!
- **Family responsibility matters.** What about helping out in ways that are not financial? Extra chores? No new clothes or nights out? You might have to make some sacrifices.

Parents, you’ve clearly done an amazing job of modeling volunteer work. And kids, kudos to you for wanting to spend your summer volunteering rather than hanging out at the beach or the mall. †



Joseph F. Carabetta, Jr.

Welcoming Joseph F. Carabetta, Jr. to The Hartford Bishops’ Foundation Board

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair is pleased to announce the appointment of Joseph F. Carabetta, Jr., Director, The Hartford Bishops’ Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Carabetta is Vice President of Carabetta Organizations. He is second generation in the company which stands among the most active private real estate companies in the US, specializing in the acquisition, development, construction and management of high quality affordable housing nationwide. He is President of Integrated Construction Services, a general contracting firm which he started in 1993. Mr. Carabetta is a parishioner of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Meriden, CT.

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*What does it
really mean to be*
BLESSED?

Q:

Dear Father Joe:
After a natural disaster, I hear people who were saved talking about how they were “blessed.” Does that mean the people who died were not? Should we be using that word that way?

A. This is a tough question, because the answer more or less depends on the person's intent when they say it. Let me share with you an incorrect way to use the word "blessed" and then an understanding of it.

Some people use the word blessed to indicate comfort, financial success, etc. This is simply wrong. Having our desires met does not mean we have been favored by God in some special way. Despite what some televangelists would tell you, God does not reward faith with worldly goods or even health.

Church history is full of stories about beautiful and holy men and women who suffered outrageous physical and emotional pain but who considered themselves blessed because they were sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. Many saints lived in poverty but felt blessed because they were poor, as Jesus was poor. In answer to those televangelists, I can assure you that there is no rational or true standard that would look at the life Jesus lived and call it financially successful.

So, if being blessed is not about our circumstances, what is it about? It's about our attitude, our spiritual state. For example, when my mother died, a number of people came up to me at the funeral to say, "Don't cry — your mother is with our Lord in heaven." My response: "I'm not crying for her, I'm crying for me. Because I'll miss my mother." Now, don't get me wrong — I also felt blessed in that moment, because I do know my mother is in heaven, and I know that I am loved by Jesus, and that he was with me in that moment. Remember, tears are not the result of a lack of faith but an abundance of love.

In the New Testament, when you see Jesus say the word "blessed" in your English translation, he is using the word *eudaemonia*. This is from the Greek for "good" and "spirit" and is often translated as meaning "human flourishing." Jesus is saying that people

of good spirit are blessed. There are long and complicated discussions about this in Greek philosophy, as well, that talk about blessings coming with virtue. If you've got a few days to spare, you can find out more!

Often, when folks say they've been 'blessed,' they really mean circumstances have occurred that make them happy. Back to the natural disaster: Certainly, the person who was spared is "blessed," but so is the person who lost everything. He or she may not be happy — because earthly happiness means our circumstances prompted an emotion.

Don't confuse happy and blessed — I would suggest that when you and I say that we are blessed, we should be referring to our inner state. That is, we should be referring to our conviction that we are loved by God, and that, whatever our circumstances or situations, we are confident that Christ will bring victory.

We know we are loved and saved by Christ and that

this knowledge transcends any pain we may be experiencing. Or, it may be that we are in a place that we are simply striving to fully understand and embrace that conviction. It is then that we are blessed.

When you are feeling overwhelmed with grief or pain, you might want to turn to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, and his mighty words ringing down through the centuries:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This has given me strength and comfort in adversity — I hope it does for you. Enjoy another day in God's presence. †



FATHER JOE KRUPP

is a former comedy writer who is now a Catholic priest.
 @Joeinblack



Victor J. Dowling, Jr.

Welcoming Victor J. Dowling, Jr. to The Hartford Bishops' Foundation Board

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair is pleased to announce the appointment of Victor J. Dowling, Jr., Director, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Dowling is a Partner and Attorney in the law firm of Dowling and Dowling located in Simsbury, CT. He is a board member of the Malta House of Care, Inc., St. Francis Foundation and Medical Aid to Haiti. He is a Knight of Malta, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Mr. Dowling received a bachelor's degree from Boston College and Juris Doctor from Western New England College. Mr. Dowling is a parishioner and trustee of St. Timothy Church in West Hartford, CT.

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■ Pope Francis confesses as he leads a penitential service in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

What do you say when ...

SOMEONE ASKS WHY WE HAVE TO CONFESS OUR SINS TO A PRIEST?

In 2017, Theology 101 is focusing on the topic of evangelization. Specifically, the task is to offer some ways of approaching various questions Catholics may encounter from coworkers, family and friends regarding the practice of the faith. Of course, we must remember that nothing can replace the power of witnessing to the Good News through our own actions and words, combined with our willingness to accompany others on their faith journey.

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QUESTION:

What do I say when people ask me why we have to confess our sins to a priest? They want to know why we can't go directly to God.

Healing the whole person

■ Often, the best way to engage this kind of question is to ask a question of your own that will help to ground your eventual response in shared experiences. For example, you might ask the questioner if he or she has ever known people who wanted to avoid visiting the doctor when they were ill, or the dentist no matter how much their tooth hurt? Perhaps such people might have reasoned with themselves, "God knows what is wrong with me. I can go directly to God, who can heal me should it be his will. After all, it is God alone who

can heal anyway."

While this is certainly true, people might actually be avoiding healing because they are really scared of going to the doctor for fear of the pain of the treatment and what it might mean for their life. This fear keeps them from acknowledging the truth that, while God can directly heal them, God is offering to heal their physical bodies precisely through the vocation of the physician and all those in the medical profession — because this is what they need as human beings, a body and a soul.

REUTERS

DOUG CULP

is the CAO and secretary for pastoral life for the Diocese of Lexington, Ky. He holds an MA in theology from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.



And so why a priest?

■ If you can get the questioner reflecting on this experience, you can then begin addressing the question. You can point out that, as in the case of healing a physical ailment, only God can forgive sins. However, in the same way that God offers healing to the body through the physician, God forgives us (heals us and restores us to communion) precisely through the vocation of the priesthood — because this is what we need as human beings: a soul and a body.

Jesus Christ, by virtue of his divine authority, has given this power to some to exercise in his name because of his desire that the Church be “sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood.” (CCC 1442) To this end, Jesus entrusted the power of the absolution of sins to his apostles. This power passed principally to the bishops, who are the successors of the apostles and the visible head of a particular Church. Priests, who are a bishop’s collaborators, are able to exercise this power in Jesus’ name “to the extent that they have received the commission either from their bishop (or religious superior) or the pope, according to the law of the Church.” (CCC 1462)

That for which we were made

■ The motivation for this is not based on any need God has, but our needs given our reality and destiny. For instance, the first paragraph of the prologue to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us that God created us freely and out of love for eternal life in communion with God. In other words, we are made for communion with the Blessed Trinity. The implication is clear: If we were made for communion, then we will only be whole (healed) if we live in harmony with this end.

One way we have come to understand

what this means practically is by using the image of the mystical body of Christ. Christ, who is in perfect communion with the Father, is the head of his body, the Church. The Church, to be healthy or whole, must remain in communion with Christ, her head. She can only do this because of the indwelling Spirit, who is in perfect communion with the Son and the Father. Finally, each of the members of the Church are called to remain in communion with the Church through the same power of the Spirit, who carries the Church into communion with the Son and the Father.

The problem of sin

■ Sin, of course, is a rupture of the communion with God and each other to which we are all called. For sure, sin breaks our personal communion with God. Consequently, going directly to God for forgiveness of sin is good and should always be encouraged.

However, at the same time, sin damages our communion with the Church, thereby impacting the body’s communion with her head. This is because sin never is simply personal in its impact. Sin always has a social consequence as well. Consequently, the healing of this rupture requires both reconciliation with God and Christ’s body, the Church. Hence, our need for the sacrament of reconciliation, which expresses and accomplishes liturgically this forgiveness of God and reconciliation with the Church.

In other words, try explaining it like this: We must be careful that our going directly to God for the forgiveness of our sins does not become a way of our avoiding responsibility for the damage caused by our sinfulness — of keeping our sin secret and in the dark so as not to be discovered, as though this somehow erases the very real consequences of sin. †



Francis X. Hursey

Welcoming Francis X. Hursey to The Hartford Bishops’ Foundation Board

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair is pleased to announce the appointment of Francis X. Hursey, Director, The Hartford Bishops’ Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Hursey is Founder and President of On Site Gas Systems, Inc. in Newington, CT. Mr. Hursey received a bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Hartford and a master’s degree in Business Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is a scientist and former NASA team engineer and helped develop one of the first oxygen concentrators for home use. Mr. Hursey is a parishioner at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in West Hartford, CT.

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A photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a dark t-shirt, speaking into a microphone. He is gesturing with his right hand near his face. The entire image is overlaid with a teal color. The title text is in a yellow, cursive font.

A man for all ages:

Catholic speaker rekindles faith
no matter the setting

Story by Mary Chalupsky

Ever since Bryan Mercier shed his all-black Ninja clothing in college to follow Christ, he has devoted his life to spreading his faith as an impassioned Catholic speaker and retreat leader who focuses on Catholic teens and adults.

“I try to bring the message of hope and love to people; to bring the Catholic faith, and make it relevant to teens today,” he said from his home in Milford, where he, with the help of his wife Katherine, coordinates the St. Mary Parish Youth Ministry to “help teens develop a deep, unshakable faith in God and a vibrant, real relationship with him.”



Among his goals is to help teens and young adults learn, love and live their Catholic faith. “I want them to become excited about their faith and to live it out every day after confirmation as something that’s part of their life,” said the evangelist and apologist, who at age 42 could pass for a decade younger.

Today, his time is consumed by leading confirmation group and Catholic school retreats; presenting parish missions, seminars and workshops; talking to students at Catholic colleges and universities and, recently, at Theology on Tap and Catholic Underground gatherings of millennials; speaking at men’s conferences and at other regional and national conferences; and broadcasting on national TV and radio programs, including EWTN’s “Life on the Rock.” He also is a substitute teacher at the high school level. “It keeps me relevant to teens with everything they’re going through today,” he said.

If that isn’t enough, for the past 10 years, Mercier has led 30 people in a Bible study in his home. He runs a ministry team called The R.O.C.K. (Revival Of Catholic Kids) Group. He also recently published his first book,

“I love seeing people’s lives change. It’s really the desire of my heart to help them be all God wants them to be.”

— BRYAN MERCIER

wouldn’t have left the Church,” he said about the easy-to-understand book that answers questions on the existence of God and other questions of faith.

“I love it,” he said about his ministry. “I’m actually

writing three more books as we speak because I know how much joy, peace and fulfillment my faith has brought to my life and to the lives of others. I love seeing people’s lives change. It’s really the desire of my heart to help them be all God wants them to be.”

It wasn’t always so. A cradle Catholic born in Walpole, Mass., he was the oldest of six children and said he had low self-esteem, was bullied in high school and was angry.

“I had a lot of difficult times growing up at home and in school,” he recalled. “That’s why I think I’m so successful, because I can relate to teens and understand what they’re going through.”

His mother decided to send him to Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. He arrived depressed, angry and garbed in his trademark black threads. And



Mercier’s first book, *Why Do You Believe in God?* is available on Amazon or at conferences.





CATHOLIC UNDERGROUND

Bryan Mercier runs Catholic Underground in Connecticut, a program for young adults (18 to 39) who gather for faith-sharing, prayer, friendship and community. It meets

at 7:30 p.m. on the third Saturday of every month at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell.

“There are a lot of young adult and Bible study groups in parishes throughout the state,” said Mercier. “This is one where we bring them all together once a month to form a bigger community.

“We do an hour of adoration and then gather to meet, socialize and share our faith,” he said. “As the world gets darker and more anti-religious, we need to come together and be closer as a Church and a community to build each other up,” he said. “It’s more important now than ever.”

when friendly, energetic students swarmed him to help unload the back of his station wagon, he was thrown off guard by their easy selflessness. It was a turning point and the beginning of his conversion.

“I needed to be healed,” recalled Mercier, who talks with the rapid-fire pace of someone whose mind has already skipped to the next series of thoughts.

One day, he was sitting in the middle of a field under a huge 150-foot steel cross and cried out to God.

“I told him that I wanted to heal people the way he had healed me, to help people the way he had helped me and to bring great love and joy to as many

people as I possibly could,” he states in his conversion story on his website (www.catholicbryan.org). “I wanted to help others experience the abundant love and fulfillment that I had received, which completely transformed my life for the better.”

The problem with young people in the Church today, he said, is that “kids are told they’re supposed to be part of the Church and follow God, but they can’t see how God or the Church is relevant in their lives because they’re not taught that.

“Every church should have a youth group, but they don’t invest the money,” Mercier said. “We really need to reach teens where they’re at, and that takes a special gift.

“We need to ask questions like, ‘Tell me why you don’t believe. ... Why don’t you like church? Tell me what doubts and concerns you have about God, and let’s talk about that.’ But no one asks them those questions,” he lamented. “I find that by speaking to them one-on-one and creating a picture for them,

“As the world gets darker and more anti-religious, we need to come together and be closer as a Church and a community to build each other up. It’s more important now than ever.”

— BRYAN MERCIER



PHOTOS: Bryan Mercier with Catholic Underground in Cromwell, at top and left center; with Revival of Catholic Kids (R.O.C.K.) ministry team, at right center; and at Theology on Tap Torrington gathering, at bottom.

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James A. Manafort, Jr.

Welcoming James A. Manafort, Jr. to The Hartford Bishops' Foundation Board

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair is pleased to announce the appointment of James A. Manafort, Jr., Director, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Manafort is President of Manafort Brothers, Inc., a family owned construction company located in Plainville, CT and President of the Manafort Family Foundation, Inc. He is a corporator at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, a board member of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, a board member of the Plainville Community Food Pantry and serves as a trustee of Oak Hill. Mr. Manafort is a parishioner at St. Patrick Church in Farmington, CT.

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that they're much more willing to embrace that God is approachable, he's lovable and he desires to have a relationship with them."

Sue Loin, a member of St. Casimir Parish in Terryville, has known Mercier since her son was his roommate at Steubenville.

"Bryan is so intelligent," she said. "He's just phenomenal, bubbling over; and when he's talking to the kids, he really gets them engaged ... really holds their attention."

St. Mary's Deacon John Hoffman spoke along the same lines. "Bryan has a lot of energy; and his enthusiasm for his faith makes [the faith] more attractive to the young people," he said, noting that the youth group encourages teens to live their faith, go to church and increase their love for God.

Years after graduation,

Mercier providentially took over the R.O.C.K. Group ministry that Mrs. Loin had founded with her husband.

"I asked him one day years ago to get up and talk at one of our retreats," recalled Loin. "But he became the star. Not only is he intelligent, but he has such a funny way of putting it out to the teens. And he can talk on almost any topic.

"If you've ever heard Bryan's conversion story," she continued, "you'll know that the hand of God has always been all over him."

"I find that by speaking to them one-on-one and creating a picture for them, that they're much more willing to embrace that God is approachable, he's lovable and he desires to have a relationship with them."

— BRYAN MERCIER

When he arrived at Steubenville, "here was this Ninja teenager, all dressed in black," she recalled. "He felt that everyone hated him so he hated them back.

"But Bryan gave himself over to God and said, 'God, use me however you want,'" she said. "He had this gift of being able to stand up in front of people and talk, and now he's using it to do all this speaking.

"And we need people like him," she went on. "Just look at our churches and how many kids we don't see. After confirmation, we don't see them anymore."

In addition to speaking at events that come by word-of-mouth, Mercier also receives invitations through the Catholic Speakers Bureau, CMG Booking and the Catholic Speaking Association.

Jennifer Romano has been a member of his Bible study group for the past 10 years. "He's a very thoughtful person, a very good listener. He can ask you a question that is thought-provoking and then lead you through self-discovery to form your own conclusion in a very positive, non-judgmental way," Romano said.

Plus, he is "so engaging, really able to target his audience and is very fast-talking," she said about his style. "He just pulls from so much experience and knowledge ... and is able to draw these amazing conclusions and make them relevant to your life."

Mercier, who holds a master's degree in theology from Holy Apostles College in Cromwell, is clearly passionate about his call to minister to young people in the Church.

"A lot of people say that youth are the future of the Church, he said. "But we have a saying: They're not the future, they're the now." †



LEARN MORE

Visit Bryan's website at www.catholicbryan.org





Team uses multimedia to draw parishioners more deeply into the liturgy

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHELLEY WOLF

It's the first Sunday in Lent and two jumbo viewing screens, positioned to the right and left of the altar, are filled with sound and imagery at St. Dominic Parish in Southington.

Hidden away in a control room in the choir loft, Adam Saviano, age 13, sits at the helm controlling dual projectors, while Tom Murray, 70, operates a video camera trained on the altar. Harry Richard, 58, sits nearby, offering guidance.

The three take direction from brief scripts provided by the parish Liturgy Committee.

Right on cue, in place of the homily, Saviano runs the Archbishop's Annual Appeal video.

Later in the Mass, Murray activates "Camera 1" on a tripod for a "live capture" of a young woman in the sanctuary as she signs her name in the parish book of names for the rite of sending. The young Saviano projects the signing live on-screen.

Then, before the final blessing, Saviano runs a two-minute video titled "Go Into the Desert This Lent." The video invites parishioners to wander into the desert, like Moses and Jesus, to be alone with God in prayer.

After the Mass, Richard shuts off all the equipment. It's a wrap — the end of

another successful session by the St. Dominic Media Team.

Ahead of its time

The team has been in service at St. Dominic's for nearly 15 years. To reinforce the Gospel message, its members use cameras and projectors to show multimedia presentations and to capture special Masses live on-screen.

The media team has evolved over the years, but its mission remains the same. The team continues to enhance the liturgy by engaging parishioners in the Mass, by creating a stronger sense of community and by assisting the pastor in catechesis.

"When I came here, it was already established by Father Henry Frescadore," explained Father Ronald May, the current pastor. "I pretty much followed it, too. It's a good vision.

"For Advent and Lent, we show some kind of video. Sometimes, there's just a background image on-screen while I preach," Father May explained. "For the Easter Vigil, we have a screen outside display the fire ceremony inside. On

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Kevin J. O'Connor

Welcoming Kevin J. O'Connor to The Hartford Bishops' Foundation Board

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair is pleased to announce the appointment of Kevin J. O'Connor, Director, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation, Inc.

Mr. O'Connor is Managing Director and General Counsel for Point72 Asset Management. Prior to joining Point72, he served as Vice President of Global Ethics & Compliance at UTC and prior to UTC he was a partner and chair of the law firm Bracewell & Giuliani. Mr. O'Connor received his BA from the University of Notre Dame, with honors, and graduated with high honors from the University of Connecticut School of Law. Mr. O'Connor is a parishioner at St. Timothy Church in West Hartford, CT.

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Palm Sunday, we have people process all around the church. We just put it on screen and the kids love it.”

Leeanne Frisina, coordinator of the media team, said the Media Ministry is great for a large parish, such as St. Dominic, which serves 2,200 families. It helps improve visibility and engagement by capturing the entire liturgy for major holidays and sacraments for all to see.

Special services are projected live on the two screens in the main church, plus on a third screen in an attached parish hall, where overflow parishioners are seated. “Before,” Frisina said, “we just used to open the doors and they couldn’t engage.”

Mary Ann Plourde, the parish’s lay liturgy minister, said better visibility for all equals deeper catechesis.

“Before, at the Easter Vigil, if we had an opportunity to have a baby baptized, no one could see that — all the joy, the anointing and Father pouring the water over the child’s head,” Plourde said. “Now they can.”

The team and its technology

Media team members use up to three cameras to capture Masses live on-screen. They also show prepared multimedia presentations. All of their work is orchestrated from the control room, which resembles a TV station’s control room.

All presentations begin with Plourde and the Liturgy Committee. The liturgy team develops themes and ideas that correspond to the liturgy. Then Frisina obtains related video or images from outside sources, along with the legal permission to use them. Or she assembles words and images into original presentations.

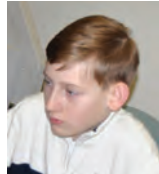
Parishioners contribute many of the photos used, such as close-ups of the parish icons and seasonal decorations.

Then the media team takes over. Frisina likens the team to a group of stage hands. “Our goal is to remain behind the scenes and help enhance the liturgy. If we do our jobs right, no one knows we’re there,” she stressed.

Frisina’s media team includes 11 volunteers — three of them teens. Ten are male and one is female. “I’d love to see some young women,” Frisina said.

Engaging the next generation

The media team helps to focus all parishioners’ attention on the liturgy, but the team itself has a unique appeal for young people.



Adam Saviano, who ran the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal video, said he joined the team last fall after reading a request for volunteers in the Sunday bulletin.

A seventh-grader at Watkinson School in West Hartford, he likes the mix of technical and creative in all things, including computer programming, videos and art.

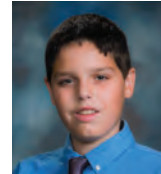
“The media team is friendly, and it’s just fun to load the cameras and press the buttons,” he said. “Tom Murray trained me in the camera. He’s a good teacher. Also, Harry [Richard] taught me the controls for the equipment.”

“It’s a good program. It kind of prepares you to work at a news station — to be the camera man or the person who presses the buttons.”

The most challenging thing about it, he admitted, is the pressure. “You’re presenting in front of all the people and if you make a mistake, you make a mistake,” he said. Once, he pressed a wrong video

button, but was able to quickly correct the situation.

This particular Sunday, there were no problems, despite the fact that he had to



project two videos and one live feed.

“It was good, smooth,” he said.

Shane Domian,

15, a sophomore at

Southington High School, also joined the team this year. “I really like technology,” he said, “and I saw all the videos at church and was wondering how to get into it.”

When he spotted the call for volunteers in the bulletin, he saw his chance. “I like that it’s simple once you get the routine down and you can easily control the projectors,” he said, but the camera work is much more challenging.

Participating in the Mass, Domian said, has given him a new appreciation for all that goes into it. “It’s just given me more background on the Church,”



he explained, “and how everything works.”

Erik Kryzanski, 18,

a senior at Southington High, will head for Central Connecticut State University in New Britain after graduating



Tom Murray, media team member and retired IBM electrical engineer, assists Adam Saviano in projecting a video right before the close of Mass.

Leeanne Frisina
MEDIA TEAM COORDINATOR

At the turn of the century, Father Henry Frescadore, then pastor of St. Dominic Parish, put forth a vision he called "Parish of the Future." The aim was to create a parish to meet the changing tempo and needs of the 21st century.

Leeanne Frisina, now 50, began around that time as a part-time office assistant. Today, she is in a unique full-time position as coordinator of the Parish Information and Communications Center, manager of information technology and coordinator of the media team.

Over the years, as the technology demands of her job grew, she grew with it, gaining her certification in information technology. "If it has a plug, they call me," she said.

In 2004, a donation from several parishioners and one primary donor allowed the parish to purchase its current media equipment. The media team was born and she became its leader.

She researched the media team concept, which she said is popular

in other regions of the country. She also reassured parishioners that there would be no commercial advertising at Mass.

"We're sensitive that this is a Mass, not a production. We are here to assist and aid," she stressed.

"We are not about putting on a show. It's all about being here in community to pray."

As media team coordinator, she said, she had the honor of crawling on her hands and knees, running cables through the choir loft, to set up the system. She is also responsible for equipment

maintenance, team member scheduling and recruitment. Frisina works directly with the lay liturgy minister and the Liturgy Committee to assemble their ideas and content into multimedia presentations. She also tests the final media creations to ensure they will run smoothly.

Then media team members project the final results.

"I'm part of a great team," Frisina said. "I love what we do. I think it's a wonderful way to engage parishioners."



Leeanne Frisina, media team coordinator, says, "We try very hard to call every person to active participation."

this month.

Two years ago, he expressed an interest in helping out with the Nativity play and was directed to the media team, which captures the event live. "I've always had a fascination with film and media," he confessed.

"During the play, I was up in the choir loft filming the whole thing," he said. "Anything I captured on camera was shown on-screen and gave anyone watching the play a better view.

"The camera work is not difficult, but it requires some skill. You can't be too fidgety, and everything has to be in sync with the other camera operators," he said. "So you have to play your role and

play it well."

In retrospect, Kryzanski said he now sees the volunteer work as a bit of a calling. "God calls on everyone to help other people and organizations," he said. "I guess he's called on me to help out and participate to make the Mass and the Nativity play more interactive."

He said the experience is helping him to come into his own as a more active member in his parish. "The media team has allowed me to serve a bigger role at St. Dominic Church," he said. "It has allowed me a greater understanding that I can have a big impact on the parish and get closer to God." †



James D. Wehr

Welcoming James D. Wehr to The Hartford Bishops' Foundation Board

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair is pleased to announce the appointment of James D. Wehr, Director, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Wehr is the retired President and Chief Executive Officer of The Phoenix Companies, Inc. in Hartford, CT. He joined Phoenix in 1981 and held various positions until his retirement upon the merger of the company with Nassau Re in June 2016. Mr. Wehr is a graduate of Fairfield University, where he serves on the Board of Trustees, and received his MBA from the University of Connecticut. Mr. Wehr is a parishioner at St. Margaret Mary Church in South Windsor, CT.

LEADING THE WAY

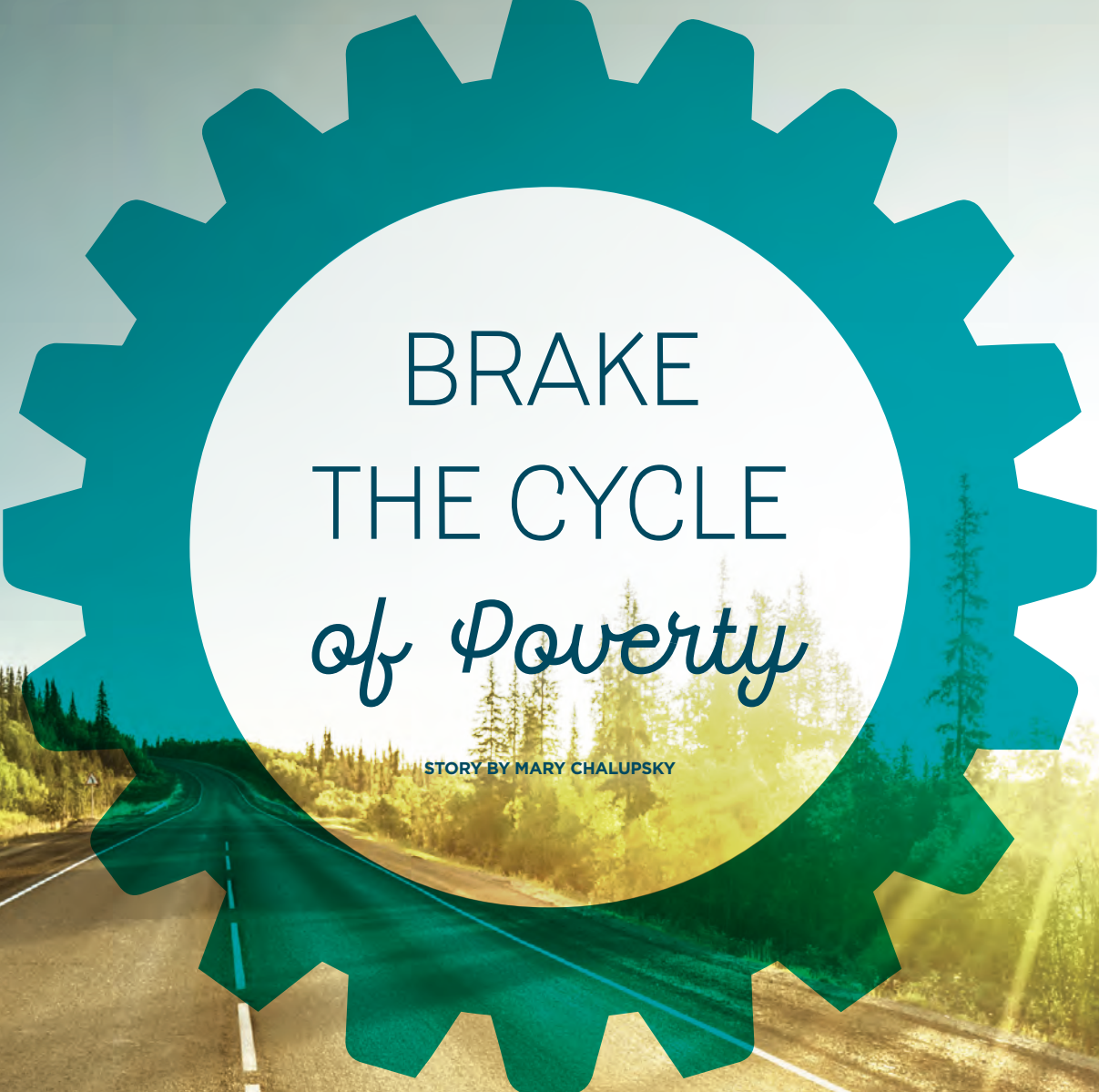
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BRAKE
THE CYCLE
of Poverty

STORY BY MARY CHALUPSKY

They're all 15 years older now, but what began as a bike ride to the nation's capital in 2003 has become an annual mission for three men from St. Bridget Parish in Manchester, who once again will pedal some 300 miles through the Archdiocese of Hartford and beyond June 24-29.

John Ryan, Lou Terzo and Bob King will again pedal away as part of a Brake the Cycle of Poverty ride through Connecticut to talk about their passion: ending poverty.

“We ride to spread the message about poverty, that it’s huge, it’s anti-Christian and it’s something that Jesus commanded us to address,” said John Ryan, pastoral associate at St. Bridget Parish. “We’re one of the richest countries in the world and there’s something like 45 million people, or 14 percent of all Americans, who live below the poverty line. That’s ridiculous.

“So we try to spread the word so that people become aware of the problem,” he continued. “It’s important to change the system, and it takes many people to do that. Plus, it’s part of our Catholic-Christian calling.”

Brake the Cycle riders schedule a five-day trek, riding during the day and stopping in the evening at a parish, homeless shelter or soup kitchen, according to organizer Lou Terzo. They share a meal, attend Mass, give a presentation, stay overnight at a host parish or home and pedal on the next morning after breakfast for the next leg of their journey.



The Brake the Cycle of Poverty riders don’t accept donations. Instead, they ask people to PEDAL, which stands for participate, educate, dedicate, advocate and love.

The group stops at the offices of U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal and U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy every year during the ride.

Among parish stops this year are St. Mary in Branford and possibly St. Ann in Avon and St. Margaret Mary in South Windsor.

“Every year, we get re-motivated by the people we meet along the way or the clients at the shelter,” Terzo said. “It could be you or me. We think about a third of the country lives paycheck to paycheck. Poverty is something that people just don’t get. So we feel we have to be a voice for those who don’t have a voice. Someone has to speak for the less fortunate. That’s why we do it, and it’s life-changing.”

Terzo credits a 30-week JustFaith seminar he took through the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Social Justice Ministry as his turning point. “It changed my mind-set as far as social justice is concerned,” he said. “It’s something that we, as Catholics, are called to do, to act out what Jesus wants us to do.”

One story stands out for him.

“We were on our first ride, to D.C., about 15 miles into our ride ... and I tell people now that I met Jesus on that ride,” he said.

“We had just left Hartford going to Wethersfield, and I saw this cyclist on the side,” he continued. “I just breezed right by him, but he pedaled up to me and said, ‘Hey, what are you guys doing?’ I shouted back, ‘We’re going to D.C., doing a ride for poverty.’ And he said, ‘Well, then you’re doing this for me.’ I said,



“Picture from 2016 ride. Visit to Connecticut Food Bank. They provide food to so many food insecure people in our state.”



“Last day of our ride — police escort in Madison. Thank you Officer Strickand! Safe back in Manchester. Another life changing-week!”

‘Are you crazy?’ I noticed he had two plastic bags on his handle bars and had been collecting empty bottles; and it shocked me. I was embarrassed. He yelled back, ‘Hey, what’s your name?’ I said, ‘Lou; what’s yours?’ And he said, ‘Matthew.’ I was stunned. Matthew 25 is the Gospel we use every time in our presentation.”

Fellow rider Bob King is equally invested in the annual effort and in advocacy, which he believes is the solution to poverty.

“It’s been in my blood now since 2003,” he said. “I do it because there’s no other solution to poverty in our society — not government, church or another large institution — that’s going to solve it. But what will solve it is if we put people together like in Matthew 25, and bring about change by doing it for the least of our brethren.”

He said the Brake the Cycle riders encounter poor people during their trips. “It makes you uneasy initially, but we let them know that we’re advocates, that we are as poor in some areas of our lives as they are.” †

➔ To encourage other parishes and groups to get involved in Catholic social justice ministry, the St. Bridget Social Justice Ministry created a booklet, “Parish Social Justice Ministry: A Framework,” that is available at their talks or by contacting John Ryan at Ryan@saintbridget.com or at 860.643.2403, ext. 14.



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1.7-mile procession
marks merger of

ST. JUSTIN, ST. MICHAEL PARISHES

Palm Sunday Mass began at 10 a.m. at St. Michael Church on Clark Street. It ended in mid-afternoon at St. Justin Church on Blue Hills Avenue. As they left St. Michael's for the last time, hundreds of parishioners from both communities sang and waved palm branches in a bittersweet procession along the streets of Hartford and merged into St. Justin-St. Michael Parish.



Father Emmanuel Ihemedu, carrying the monstrance, prepares to lead the procession up the steps and into St. Justin Church.

Father Emmanuel Ihemedu, pastor of both parishes while they were linked, is now pastor of the merged parish. Holding aloft the Real Presence in a golden monstrance under a canopy carried by Knights of Peter Claver, he said, "I'm emotional, an emotional mix of sadness and joy, but also optimistic. And I'm hopeful that everything is going to work out well because it is not by my might or power; it is only by God's grace. And we know that his grace is sufficient for us."

Palm Sunday Mass is already one of the longest in the liturgical calendar, with a 20-minute reading of the Passion from Matthew's Gospel and the blessing and distribution of palm branches. Add hand-clapping music directed by Donna L. Shears; Caribbean dancing; revival-style guest homilist Father Celsus Marcellus Auguiste; and the long walk to Blue Hills Avenue for Benediction, and the historic Mass became a four-hour celebration.

Father Ihemedu was not surprised that the parishioners never seemed to lose energy as the celebration went on. "They keep me going. Sometimes I come to church with low energy, and the moment I walk into church I'm excited. I'm excited because I have them," he said.

Manuel J. ("Joey") Arango, a longtime St. Michael parishioner and member of its Pastoral Planning Committee, said before Mass, "I spoke with Father, and I told him I didn't know if I would be able to come here for this Mass," knowing how hard it would be to leave the familiar church building. But he added, "In the history of the Church, this is to be expected. Our communities shrink, and we go on the way we have to. It's God that we are looking for, so whatever environment we find him in, then we accept that and hopefully everything will work fine for us."

This was echoed in Father Auguiste's rousing homily, when he said parishioners

must "turn the page" and look forward to "the day after."

Father Auguiste is pastor of Our Lady of La Soie Parish in Dominica. "This church building does not define you," he said. "You define this church building. This church building is a Catholic church because the people are Catholics."

Angeline Kelly, a St. Justin parishioner since 1978, said during the procession, "It's wonderful, united, powerful and epic. It's emotional for some, but I believe that in the end it will be a great venture."

Augustine James, another St. Justin parishioner, said he built the handicap ramps at both churches. Of the merger, he said, "I guess we don't have enough people for both churches, so now we all join together and I think it's a great move."

Lynnette Colon was visiting from Newington to provide support to the multi-ethnic parish communities. She said, "I think it was a powerful Mass showing unity between two communities that are open to hope, and so I think it's a wonderful testament of the faith."

Vernette Townsend, co-chair of the Pastoral Planning Committee at the merged parish, said leaving her St. Michael building where she was baptized was difficult. "The sweet part is that we know each other," she said. "The bitter part is that we have to close the doors of one of them."

She added, "There is a sadness in my heart and it does hurt [to leave] this building. ... You develop a love relationship with it. There are memories here. However, the spiritual side of me is extremely joyful, because I do believe we need to get away from maintaining beautiful, beautiful buildings. That is not what our faith is about."

In deciding which building to keep, the committee took into account the larger capacity of St. Justin's, its better parking arrangements, a better rectory and potentially useful auxiliary buildings, she said.

Kay Taylor-Brooks, co-chair of the committee and a member of St. Justin Parish, said, "We sympathize with the



“WHAT I’M HOPING FOR IS THAT WE WILL BE A THRIVING CHURCH AGAIN. ... AS WE PUT OUR FAITH INTO PRACTICE, WE PUT THE REST INTO GOD’S HANDS. HE HAS NEVER FAILED US.”

— FATHER EMMANUEL IHEMEDU

St. Michael people who are losing their building, to the point where Father even runs a grief support group for them.”

From her point of view as a seasoned churchgoer at St. Justin’s, she said, “I’m looking forward to the future. I’m excited about joining with St. Michael’s, because we know them already. We’re family already anyway, because we’ve been [linked] with them for so long and we’ve

done so many things together over the years. ... It’s like a family that’s been living across town and now they’re coming to live with you, so I’m excited about the potential.”

Father Ihemedu said no decisions have been made regarding the future of the now-closed St. Michael building on Clark Street.

“What I’m hoping for is that we will be a thriving church again,” he said. “We will

put to use all our resources and invest in evangelization and washing each other’s feet, as our Lord will do this week, and living out the Gospel not by what we say but by what we do. ... As we put our faith into practice, we put the rest into God’s hands. He has never failed us.”

Deacon Ernest Scrivani is the director of the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Planning. Two days after the procession, he said that the merger is especially noteworthy. “It is a community-directed merger. People prayed together, strategized together and eventually formed a group called the Faithful Ten who took responsibility for leading their communities through the change,” he said. “They took ownership of their future, led the change successfully and are looking forward to an abundant harvest of blessings.” †

PHOTOS:

1. View from the choir loft at St. Michael Church of Father Emmanuel Ihemedu in center aisle and the congregations from St. Michael and St. Justin parishes in the pews.

2. St. Justin Church.

3. Vernetta Townsend and Dan Huer at the lectern at St. Michael Church.

4. Father Ihemedu, left, kneels before the Blessed Sacrament at St. Michael’s with Wilston Hippolyte and Mainz Musengi.

5. Father Ihemedu speaks during the Palm Sunday Mass at St. Michael’s.

6. Father Ihemedu receives the gifts during the eucharistic liturgy.

7. Ervin Morgan hands out palms to those in the pews at St. Michael’s.

8. Volunteers move through St. Michael Church distributing palm fronds to the congregation.

9. After the procession from one church to the other, members of both parishes celebrate their new parish

family at a reception at St. Justin’s.

10. Father Ihemedu converses near a sign celebrating “One family in Christ.”

11. Shawnee Baldwin, in foreground, and others in the combined congregation help themselves to food at the reception.



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IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Two men named to lead East Catholic High School

■ **MANCHESTER** — Thomas Maynard, interim principal and chief administrator of East Catholic High School, has been appointed as the new head of school, while Ryan Hinton has been named as the school's new principal, both positions effective July 1.

Susan Perillo will remain in her role as vice principal.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools Dr. Michael Griffin made the announcement on April 7 at a meeting with the school's board members, Search Committee members and faculty.

The school's administrative structure formerly comprised a president/chief administrator and two vice principals, Griffin said. There now will be a head of school, principal and vice principal.

"This structure is more suited to the needs of East Catholic at this time," said Griffin. "The head of school will oversee all aspects of the school and will be regularly engaged with the school community, but in this structure, he will be better able to devote more time and efforts to institutional functions, such as finances, advancement, alumni, strategic planning, board initiatives and marketing." The principal will report to the head of school and will have a primary role in leading the day-to-day functions of the school, he stated.

Maynard first joined East Catholic as vice principal in 2015. Prior to that, he served as principal of St. Mary Magdalene School in Oakville for five years. From 2004 to 2010, he was the principal of St. Mary School in Newington. A graduate of Amherst College, Maynard holds a master's degree and a sixth-year certificate in educational leadership from Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) and a certificate in Catholic school leadership from Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport.

He is a member of the 2015 doctoral cohort at CCSU. His resume includes public school education and experience in the world of business.

He is an active member of the Church of the Incarnation in Wethersfield, where he has served as chair of the

Pastoral Council and Right-To-Life committee, lector and extraordinary minister of holy Communion.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve a faith community at East Catholic that was begun by the Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur and built on a foundation of excellence, faith, hope and love," Maynard said.

Hinton holds master's degrees in education and educational administration from the University of Notre Dame. He was a religion teacher at East Catholic High School from 2007 to 2013, when he

took the position of assistant director of the Office of Religious Education and Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Hartford. In 2015, he was named director of the archdiocese's Office of Family Life. Hinton is the state chaplain assistant for the Army National Guard and is an active member of St. Patrick-St. Anthony Parish in Hartford.



THOMAS
MAYNARD



RYAN HINTON



**Most Rev. Leonard P. Blair, STD,
has made the following
appointments:**

■ **Rev. Michael T. Casey:**
Appointed parochial vicar,
Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish,
Hartford, effective March 13, 2017.

■ **Rev. Carlos A. Piedrahita:**
Appointed parochial vicar,
Basilica of the Immaculate
Conception Parish, Waterbury,
effective March 13, 2017.

— REV. RYAN M. LERNER,
CHANCELLOR, APRIL 7, 2017

Priest appointed as chaplain of annual Catholic Men's Conference



■ Connecticut's Catholic bishops have appointed Father James M. Sullivan, pastor of Assumption Parish in Ansonia, as the priest chaplain of the Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference.

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford made the appointment on April 18 in conjunction with Bishops Frank J. Caggiano of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Michael R. Cote of the Diocese of Norwich and Peter Paul Chomnycky of the Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of Stamford.

The 10th annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference will be held on Saturday, October 21, at St. Paul Catholic High School in Bristol. It will offer spiritual enrichment to men of all ages by providing an opportunity to hear dynamic Catholic speakers and meet Catholic leaders and to take part in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the sacrament of reconciliation, both of which will be offered throughout the day. The conference will close with a vigil Mass at which Archbishop Blair will deliver the homily.

After his ordination in 2014, Father Sullivan was appointed parochial vicar of the Torrington cluster of parishes, which includes St. Francis of Assisi, St. Peter, Sacred Heart and St. Mary. He was also the parish principal of St. Francis-St.

Peter School, where he organized a charity bike ride, "Our Father's Ride," to raise money for Catholic school education. A year and a half later, he was assigned as the administrator of Assumption Parish in Ansonia, which also has a school. He is a member of the Presbyteral Council, which assists the archbishop in the pastoral governance of the Church in Hartford.

Father Sullivan has attended the Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference for several years, as both a participant and a presenter. He said he believes it offers men valuable information and educational tools that they can use to become better role models for their families.

Speakers at the 2017 conference will be Bishop Caggiano; Tim Staples, director of apologetics and evangelization at Catholic Answers; Raymond Arroyo, managing editor and lead anchor for EWTN News and "The World Over Live," and a *New York Times* best-selling author; Jim Wahlberg, executive director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation; and Father Glenn Sudano, one of the original eight founders of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

To learn more, visit www.ctcatholicmen.org or call 860.484.7950. To contact the conference directly, email ctcatholicmensconference@gmail.com or call 860.484.7950.

Lauralton Hall appoints new president



■ Elizabeth Miller has been appointed as the next president and head of Lauralton Hall, a college-prep, all-girls school in Milford. Miller succeeds Antoinette Iadarola, who will retire at the end of the academic year in June.

Miller recently returned to the United States after working for a year in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) opening a new school, the GEMS Nations Academy. Prior to that, she served as head of school at Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School, an independent, Catholic pre-K through grade 12 school in St. Louis with an all-girls upper school.

"The Search Committee reviewed a strong field of candidates for this position and we are delighted to have selected an outstanding individual to lead Lauralton Hall into its next phase of educating young women in the Mercy tradition," said Trudy A. Dickneider, '64, board chair.

The board was impressed with Miller's stellar accomplishments as a leader in independent education, according to a press release. Her career began at Pace Academy in Atlanta, where she taught history, public speaking and journalism. She entered administration while at Pace and was recognized with four national independent school education awards. She later moved on to be upper school head at Hutchison School, an all-girls independent school in Memphis, where she was chosen as the state's Administrator of the Year by the Tennessee Scholastic Press Association.

Obituaries:



■ **Father J. Clifford Grise**, a priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport, died on March 25 at the Jerome Home in New Britain. He was born on Oct. 14, 1919, in Southington, the son of the late David J. and Mary (Flynn) Grise. He attended Southington schools and then studied at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield

and St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. He was ordained to the priesthood on March 17, 1945, in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford by the late Archbishop Henry J. O'Brien.

■ **Sister Mary Olivia (Mary Brigid) Murray**, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, West Hartford, died at Monsignor Bojnowski Manor in New Britain on March 1 at age 103. Sister Olivia worked at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield for a number of years and then was the sacristan in the chapel at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. When she retired to the provincial house of her community, Sister Olivia continued as sacristan.

■ **Sister Elizabeth O'Hare** of the Sisters of Mercy died on April 14 at St. Mary Home in West Hartford. She was academic dean and assistant professor of psychology at what is now the University of St. Joseph in West Hartford. She then was executive director of St. Agnes Home and Lourdes Family Center in West Hartford before going into clinical practice in New York and, later, West Virginia. In 1998, Sister Elizabeth returned to Connecticut and completed her ministerial service as adjunct psychology professor at Hartford Seminary.



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