

Catholic TRANSCRIPT

APRIL 2018

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THINGS TO DO

■ An interactive **confirmation retreat** will be presented from 2 to 6 p.m. on **April 8** at Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center in Farmington. The offering is \$35. Group rates are available. The program includes dinner. The presenter is Shawee Baldwin, who was the coordinator of youth and young adult ministry at the Archdiocese of Hartford for 20 years. Information is available at www.ourladyofcalvary.net/event/confirmation-retreat/2018-03-18.



■ The Catholic Cemeteries Association will present a **Dignity of Life Seminar**, providing educational and resource information about elder and end-of-life care, at 1 and 7 p.m. on **April 12** at St. Peter Church Hall of St. John Paul the Great Parish in Torrington. The panel also will discuss the topics of burial, funerals, estate planning and long-term care. A Q&A session will follow. Information is available at 203.780.8418 or bgode@ccacem.org.

■ Frassati New Haven will host a **Frassati Night** from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on **April 14** at St. Mary Church, 5 Hillhouse Ave., New Haven. Held on the second Sunday of each month, the evening includes adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a short reflection and the opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation, as well as socializing. Frassati New Haven is a fellowship of Catholics (and interested non-Catholics) in their 20s and 30s who gather to worship, grow in their faith, serve those in need and build bonds of friendship. Information is available at www.frassatinewhaven.org. The group also will host **Frassati on Tap**, a night of discussion about the faith, at 6 p.m. on April 15 at Stony Creek Brewery, 5 Indian Neck Rd., Branford.



■ The winter series of Holy Hours for Vocations will continue with a **Holy Hour with Father Michael Casey**, vocation director, at 7 p.m. on **April 16** at St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish at 1 E. Main St., Thomaston. After prayer for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, a “coffee-and” reception will provide a setting for socialization. Information is available at www.hartfordpriest.com.

■ The Archdiocese of Hartford’s Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry will offer **informational events for the Catholic Relief Services Parish Ambassadors Corps (CRS PAC)**. Parish ambassadors, parishioners with a passion for global solidarity, encourage their parishes to respond to Catholic social teaching by engaging their fellow parishioners to participate in Catholic Relied Services’ Operation Rice Bowl and at least two other global solidarity initiatives annually. This leadership development and spiritual formation opportunity will offer hands-on training in skills for effective parish engagement. The informational events will be held at 7 p.m. on **April 17** at St. Ann Church, 501 Naugatuck Ave., Milford; 9:30 a.m. on **April 21** at St. Thomas Seminary, 467 Bloomfield Ave., Bloomfield; and 7 p.m. on **April 26**, at Holy Angels Church, 585 Main St., Meriden.

‘COME AND FOLLOW ME’

Are you following Archbishop Blair and the Archdiocese of Hartford on social media?

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FOR MORE LOCAL NEWS

visit www.catholictranscript.org

■ St. Patrick Church at 110 Main St. in Farmington will sponsor a **seven-week program** designed for both inactive Catholics who wish to explore returning to the Church and for active Catholics who wish to learn more about the faith. The faith will be discussed in a relaxed environment with an opportunity to address particular issues. The seven sessions, which will be led by a team of parishioners, will be held on Thursdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. from **April 19 to May 31** in the basement church hall at St. Patrick. Registration and information are available from David Edwards at 860.41.2536 or eugeneedwards@sbcglobal.net.

■ **Catholic Underground Connecticut** will meet from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. on **April 21** at Holy Apostles College and Seminary, 33 Prospect Hill Rd., Cromwell. Information is available at catholicbryan@yahoo.com. Catholic Underground is a group of young adults from all around Connecticut gathering once a month to pray and experience Catholic culture and fellowship. Information is available at www.catholicundergroundct.com.

■ The ninth **CT Walks for Haiti walk-a-thon and Haitian Festival** will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on **April 21**. The annual walk through West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square attracts hundreds of supporters. The festival and 2.5-mile walk kick off at 10:30 a.m. at St. Peter Claver Parish Center in West Hartford. There will be crafts, music, children’s activities and Haitian food. The silent auction will feature gift cards from local businesses, hand-crafted items, event tickets and more. Meteorologist Joe Furey will return as the emcee. The event takes place rain or shine. The walk starts at noon. CT Walks For Haiti Inc. is a 501(c)(3) all-volunteer organization. Proceeds from the event go directly as grants to the following charities: Camp Hispaniola, Haitian Health Foundation, Haitian Humanitarian Network, Medical Aid to Haiti, Operation Unisson and Outreach to Haiti. They provide medical, nutritional and educational services to vulnerable populations. Information is available at www.ctwalksforhaiti.org or from Nancy Pelletier at 860.803.6270.

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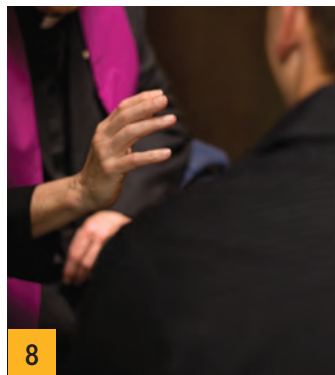
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Sunday,

'A SACRAMENT OF EASTER'

May the crucified and risen Christ fill your life with light and joy! As St. Paul says: “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ... But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

(1 Cor 15:17, 20) So, let us rejoice with confidence!

What we read in the Gospel and what we celebrate at the liturgy from one season to another are not simply a historical remembrance of things past. Scripture and the mysteries of redemption are living realities here and now because the risen Christ is alive and active. Having passed outside of space and time (something impossible for us to comprehend), Jesus is always simply “present” in both dimensions. Easter is “today” every bit as much as it was 2,000 years ago.

Even in time, our observance of Easter is more than a once-a-year occurrence. From the earliest centuries, Christians have recognized that every first day of the week — every Sunday — is a little Easter. St. Augustine says Sunday is “a sacrament of Easter.” And St. Jerome writes: “Sunday is the day of the resurrection, it is the day of Christians, it is our day.”

“It is our day,” and yet it is increasingly evident that we Christians are abandoning what is ours in the relentless drive toward a secular society. The observance of every Sunday by faithful attendance at Mass, refraining from unnecessary business and servile work, making it a day for parish and family — all these things are no longer part of the lifestyle of many who consider themselves Catholic.

The earliest Christians observed Sunday at all costs even though it was a secular workday in the Ancient World. Sometimes they paid with their lives. To the



**ARCHBISHOP
LEONARD P.
BLAIR**

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

Roman authorities, the martyrs of Abitina in North Africa said: “Without fear of any kind we have celebrated the Lord’s Supper, because it cannot be missed; that is our law. ... We cannot live without the Lord’s Supper.”

“We cannot live without the Lord’s Supper.” To find this kind of faith on a vast scale today one must turn to places like Africa and Asia, where the Church is growing by leaps and bounds, and where people walk miles and spend the whole day to celebrate Sunday. One thinks, too, of people under Communist persecution who often paid a very heavy price to “keep holy the Lord’s Day.”

And us? I leave it for each of us to examine our conscience and to ponder where we are headed as a Church and as a nation in which a majority of the population considers itself Christian. We estimate that less than 25 percent of registered Catholics in the Archdiocese of Hartford are at Mass on any given Sunday. This is consistent with various estimates of Mass attendance throughout the United States.

Sunday Mass is a fulfillment of the Third Commandment (“Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day”). The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* explains: “Sunday observance fulfills the interior law inscribed in the human heart to render God visible and public worship as a sign of radical dependence upon God and as gratitude for all the blessings we have received.” And the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states the traditional teaching: “Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin” unless excused for a serious reason such as illness. (CCC 2181)

Let me conclude by offering for your personal (and family) reflection the following discussion questions taken directly from the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (p. 369):

- *What is your Sunday like? How can it become a balance of worship, restful reflection and personal spiritual renewal? What pressures make this a challenge for you, and what can you do about them? How does Sunday Mass enrich your life, your relationships and the rest of your week?*
- *What can be done to free up poor people from unfair working practices that deprive them of the gift of the Christian Sunday? How can families reverse the trend sponsored by those who schedule athletic events for children and young people on Sunday morning?*
- *How does consumerism eat away at the Christian ideals of Sunday? What are ways that family gatherings could again become a regular feature of Sunday life?*

May the risen Christ renew us as members of his Body, the Church, not just on Easter Sunday, but every Sunday — “until he comes again.” †

Domingo, 'UN SACRAMENTO DE PASCUA'

¡Que Cristo crucificado y resucitado llene sus vidas de luz y alegría! Como dice San Pablo: “Y si Cristo no resucitó, de nada les sirve su fe: ustedes siguen en sus pecados. ... Pero no, Cristo resucitó de entre los muertos, siendo el primero y primicia de los que se durmieron”. (1 Cor 15:17, 20) ¡Así que regocijémonos con confianza!

Lo que leemos en el Evangelio y lo que celebramos de un tiempo litúrgico a otro no es simplemente un recuerdo histórico de las cosas pasadas. Las Escrituras y los misterios de la redención son realidades vivientes aquí y ahora porque el Cristo resucitado está vivo y activo. Al haber pasado fuera del espacio y del tiempo (algo imposible de comprender para nosotros), Jesús siempre está simplemente “presente” en ambas dimensiones. La Pascua es “hoy” tanto como lo era hace 2,000 años.

Incluso a lo largo del tiempo, nuestra observancia de la Pascua es más que una ocurrencia de una vez al año. Desde los primeros siglos, los cristianos han reconocido que cada primer día de la semana — todos los domingos — es una Pascua pequeña. San Agustín dice que el domingo es “un sacramento de la Pascua”. Y San Jerónimo escribe: “El domingo es el día de la resurrección, es el día de los cristianos, es nuestro día”.

“Es nuestro día” y, sin embargo, es cada vez más evidente que nosotros, los cristianos, estamos abandonando lo que es nuestro siguiendo el implacable impulso hacia una sociedad secular. La observancia de cada domingo a través de la asistencia fiel a la Misa, absteniéndose de negocios innecesarios y trabajo servil, convirtiéndolo en un día para la parroquia y la familia — todas estas cosas ya no son parte del estilo de vida de muchos que se consideran católicos.

Los primeros cristianos observaron el domingo a toda costa a pesar de que era un día de trabajo secular en el mundo antiguo. A veces pagaban con sus vidas. Para las autoridades romanas, los mártires de Abitinia en África del Norte dijeron: “Sin temor de ningún tipo hemos celebrado la Cena del Señor, porque no se la puede perder; esa es nuestra ley ... No podemos vivir sin la Cena del Señor”.

“No podemos vivir sin la Cena del Señor”. Para encontrar este tipo de fe a gran escala hoy en día uno debe

recurrir a lugares como África y Asia, donde la Iglesia crece a pasos agigantados, y donde la gente camina millas y gasta todo el día para celebrar el domingo. También podemos pensar en personas bajo persecución comunista que a menudo pagaron un precio muy alto por “mantener santo el Día del Señor”.

¿Y nosotros? Dejo a cada uno que examine su conciencia y reflexione sobre hacia dónde nos dirigimos como Iglesia y como nación aquí, donde la mayoría de la población se considera cristiana. Estimamos que menos del 25 por ciento de los católicos registrados en la Arquidiócesis de Hartford están en Misa cualquier domingo. Esto es consistente con varias estimaciones de asistencia a Misa en todos los Estados Unidos.

La Misa Dominical es un cumplimiento del Tercer Mandamiento (“El día séptimo es día de descanso para el Señor, tu Dios”). El *Catecismo Católico para Adultos de los Estados Unidos* explica: “La Eucaristía del domingo fundamenta y confirma toda la práctica cristiana. Por eso los fieles están obligados a participar en la Eucaristía los días de precepto, a no ser que estén excusados por una razón seria ... o dispensados por su propio párroco”. El *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* reafirma la enseñanza tradicional: “Los que deliberadamente faltan a esta obligación cometen un pecado grave” a menos que sean excusados por una razón seria como enfermedad o el cuidado de niños pequeños, por ejemplo. (CIC 2181)

Permítanme concluir ofreciendo para su reflexión personal (y familiar) las siguientes preguntas para el diálogo tomadas directamente del *Catecismo Católico de los Estados Unidos para Adultos* (páginas 391-392):

- ¿Qué haces los domingos? ¿Cómo pueden ser días en los que equilibres el culto, la reflexión tranquila y la renovación espiritual personal? ¿Qué presiones hacen que esto sea un reto para ti y que puedes hacer al respecto? ¿Cómo enriquece la Misa dominical tu vida, tus relaciones y el resto de tu semana?
- ¿Qué se puede hacer para liberar a la gente pobre de prácticas laborales injustas que los privan del don del domingo cristiano? ¿Qué pueden hacer las familias para cambiar la tendencia de organizar los domingos por la mañana actividades deportivas para niños y jóvenes?
- ¿Cómo el consumismo erosiona los ideales cristianos del domingo? ¿Qué se podría hacer para que el tiempo en familia volviese a ser de nuevo algo habitual los domingos?

Que el Cristo resucitado nos renueve como miembros de su Cuerpo, la Iglesia, no solo el Domingo de Pascua sino todos los domingos — “hasta que vuelva”. †



**EL ARZOBISPO
LEONARD P.
BLAIR**
es el décimo
tercer
obispo de la
Arquidiócesis
Católica de
Hartford.

Archdiocese prepares to welcome 250 NEW MEMBERS at Easter Vigil

About 250 adults of all ages reached a milestone along the way to entering into the Roman Catholic Church within the Archdiocese of Hartford.

The 250 catechumens and candidates, representing nearly 50 parishes in the archdiocese, were presented to Archbishop Leonard P. Blair during the combined rite of election and call to continuing conversion, which was celebrated Feb. 18, the First Sunday of Lent, at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford.

Each year, people are presented to the archbishop at the cathedral before taking their final steps to being received into the Catholic Church on Holy Saturday during the Easter Vigil Mass. As members of Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programs, many have been studying the *Catholic Catechism for Adults* in preparation for the sacraments of initiation.

“Catechumens” are those who have not been baptized in any faith tradition and are preparing for full initiation into the Catholic Church through the sacraments of baptism, the holy Eucharist and confirmation.

“Candidates” are those who have already been baptized, either into the Catholic faith or into another Christian tradition, but are seeking to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church through the holy Eucharist and confirmation.

In his homily, Archbishop Blair spoke directly to the catechumens, making the connection between the waters of the great flood in the time of Noah and the waters of baptism that they will receive at the Easter Vigil Mass.

“Baptism is an outward sign,” the

archbishop said, but “the outward sign has to be matched by a personal commitment on our part, by a heartfelt desire, by an act of faith, by resolve to do what Jesus requires, what Jesus asks us to do, what Jesus commands. What does Jesus ask? That we repent and believe.”

Those who have been baptized have entered the ark of the righteous, the archbishop said. “But here’s where Lent comes in. We have to remember that we all continue to be human and we all continue to be subject to the human condition. We are all frail and we are all weak.

“St. Augustine understood this very well, that we are saved and yet we continue to be sinners,” Archbishop Blair said.

With the Holy Spirit, we have already begun to be like God, but “the old Adam is still within us.”

The pilgrimage of the Christian life, the archbishop said, is to grow ever more like Christ and less like Adam and Eve. “Lent is meant to be a start and a hopeful reminder,” he said, “of the great spiritual battle that rages in the world and in human hearts until the end of time.”

Archbishop Blair also shared Pope Francis’ Lenten message for this year by quoting Jesus in the Gospel of

BY SHELLEY
WOLF

Matthew: “Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold.” (Mt 24:12) Jesus cautions that amid great trials, false prophets will lead people astray, and the love that is the core of the Gospel will grow cold in the hearts of many.

In our own time, faith and morals are undermined with such ferocity, the archbishop said, that “to be baptized today and be a person of faith requires commitment and it requires courage.”

Quoting Pope Francis, the archbishop noted that the Church offers both “the often bitter medicine of the truth” and “in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting.”

Prayer shines a bright light on what we’re really like and the truth of what we need to be, the archbishop

explained. Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister. Finally, fasting revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger.

Following the homily, Father James A. Shanley, episcopal vicar of the Northern Vicariate and rector of the cathedral, presented the catechumens to the archbishop during

the rite of election. As their names were called, signifying they were “chosen in Christ,” the catechumens stood and were affirmed by their godparents and the entire assembly. They declared their intention to enter fully into the life of the Church through baptism, were invited to the altar to “enroll” or sign their names in the Book of the Elect and were referred to thereafter as “the elect.”

During the call to continuing conversion, Father Shanley presented the candidates to the archbishop. As

“

I’m here because I want to follow the road to God and be like him, follow his orders, his rules and be a good human being. I feel like I need to change my life, do better and grow.

”

— RICARDO ORDOMEZ

their names were called, they stood in the pews and were affirmed by their sponsors and the assembly.

People of all ages participated in the liturgy, including many young adults who were open to sharing their faith journey.

Brandy Pavano, age 25, of St. Paul Parish in Kensington, is a candidate whose next steps are to receive the Eucharist and confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Raised a Lutheran, she was exposed to the Catholic faith through her husband Michael, who is now her sponsor.

She considered converting to Catholicism last August, just around the time she experienced problems in her pregnancy. She had reason to believe she might miscarry, she said, but was comforted by “the Blessed Mother” in a dream, then was told by her doctor the next day that she had a viable pregnancy.

“I was thinking about it before, but that’s what confirmed for me that I was making the right decision,” said Brandy, who expects to deliver her first child April 5, just a few days after the March 31 Easter Vigil.

Her husband Michael added, “I was always understanding of Brandy, whether she converted or not. But now we love sharing our faith together and we go to Mass together. And we look forward to raising our son Daniel as a Catholic, when he comes.”

Licia Spina, 27, of St. Timothy Parish in West Hartford, is also a candidate who is working toward the sacraments of holy Communion and confirmation. She said her father is an atheist, while her mother is a Catholic. “They wanted me to formulate my own beliefs,” she explained. “Ultimately, I decided this is the faith I choose. I want to be part of a parish. I’m glad this happened because it forced me to choose.”

Eleanor Lecours is a member of St. Timothy’s RCIA team and is Spina’s sponsor. “Licia is a very deep, reflective young woman who came to



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

▲ Sponsors place their right hands on the shoulders of catechumens who are writing their names in the Book of the Elect during the combined rite of election and call to continuing conversion on Feb. 18 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford. About 250 adults were presented to Archbishop Leonard P. Blair before taking their final steps toward being received into the Roman Catholic Church at Easter Vigil Masses.

us searching for something deeper,” Lecours said, “and when she came to St. Timothy’s, she felt a real sense of welcome. It’s been a privilege to be her sponsor.”

Ricardo Ordomez, 32, of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Meriden, said he was baptized as a child in Peru but wants to receive the Eucharist and make his confirmation. His sponsor could not attend, so an entire row of parishioners from St. Rose sat in the pew behind him as stand-ins for his sponsor.

“I’m here because I want to follow the road to God and be like him, follow his orders, his rules and be a good human being,” he said. “I feel like I need to change my life, do better and grow.”

Nicole Perone, archdiocesan director of adult faith formation, helped coordinate the liturgy and instructed participants in English. Ana Maria Hernandez Alstrum, archdiocesan director of Hispanic catechesis, also coordinated and instructed them in Spanish.

Perone said she is always touched to see people visibly demonstrating their commitment to the faith.

“It gets me every time to see adults choosing the Catholic faith,” she said “because, as a cradle Catholic, you don’t always think about it [this way]. So when you get to see adults here in all different stages of their lives with their families, coming to this point, I think it’s really profound.” †

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A lawyer goes to confession

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. While it technically has been more than a year since my last confession, in violation of Code of Canon Law (*Codex Iuris Canonici*, hereinafter *CIC*) § 989, there are a number of mitigating factors related to this delay, which will be detailed in a separate confession at a mutually convenient time and date. What is to follow is a non-exhaustive list of mortal and venial sins that I may have committed since my last confession. As a significant period of time has passed since my last confession, this list is offered in the spirit of reconciliation and as a representation of the character and nature of some of my recollected sins within the applicable timeframe aforementioned.

Moreover, nothing contained in the list to follow is intended to be an admission of guilt, except for the sole and limited purpose of admitting guilt as the “penitent” seeking “salvific remedy,” as referenced in *CIC* § 987. Moreover, by accepting this confession, you are hereby agreeing and acknowledging that you are a legitimately approved confessor, per *CIC* § 991, and are acting in good faith and in the spirit of fair dealing throughout the course of this confession.

Confession is hard for everyone, but it can be really hard for a criminal defense lawyer. My natural inclination, perhaps like yours, is to minimize, rationalize and explain “bad” behavior. After three years of learning to “think like a lawyer” in law school and years of practicing law in downtown Hartford, it is simply how I’m wired. I will tell my client privately, where circumstances merit, that they need to use their arrest and prosecution to internalize and address some underlying issue they’re experiencing. They need to take ownership of their own frailties and failings to find a way to a better tomorrow and, in the process, a favorable resolution of their court case. At the same time, I am at work justifying their conduct, developing a seemingly reasonable explanation for it and minimizing their responsibility for it as much possible, in light of his or her life circumstances.

It’s hard to shut off that part of myself when it is time to call in my own chickens to roost, so to say. It is hard to not seek to defend myself. It’s hard to not rationalize and explain my own failings, spiritual and otherwise. It’s hard to make a good and sincere examination of my own conscience, and to humbly, sincerely and contritely bring my failings and misdeeds to my confessor. Often, in preparing for confession, I find myself doing a (less exaggerated)

form of the legalese nonsense in the sidebar at left. My mind races to find a way to say as little as possible without sacrificing the meaning, so that I can squeak through with a technically sufficient and encompassing report to my priest. I seek to make it as impersonal, removed and bland as possible.

However, as we all know and feel, these justifications and avoidance tactics miss the point of actual repentance. The practice of confession, the penitential rite, comes from Jesus’ teaching to his apostles on the evening of Easter. “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.’” (Jn 20:21-23) Like the apostles of old, their spiritual descendants, the priests, of this and every diocese, are not mind readers. They must be told what you wish to confess before God and for what you seek forgiveness.



CODY GUARNIERI

is a criminal defense lawyer with a Hartford law firm and is a member of St. Patrick-St. Anthony Parish in Hartford.

There are many ways to examine your conscience and discern what to confess. My preference is not to think of every conceivable way I may have broken God’s rules, to the most excruciatingly small and immaterial detail. That method is more prone to the self-rationalization process. Instead, I ask myself a much broader question: God has given me a purpose through my vocations (husband, father, lawyer, new evangelist)

and directs me go out into the world, each day, to play my part in the unfolding drama of the world. At the same time, God asks that I love him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and love my neighbor as myself. (Mk 12:30-31) How am I doing? How can I do better? †

Resurrection *hope*

Tough times will arrive for every person, every family. And when those challenges come, only your faith will carry you.



THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST FRESCO BY ANTON SCHMIDT, 1745.

I walked into the church that Tuesday with a heart heavy and a sad spirit.

We had lost dear little Anna, a fellow parishioner, barely 9 years old, who died after nine difficult months suffering with leukemia. As we grieved that morning, we prayed, we sang, we shared Scripture and we shared the Eucharist, the meal of life.

Then her grandfather made his way to the microphone. He wanted to share little Anna's favorite Bible story with us.

He noted how the family always found it odd that Anna never let anyone read this story to her. She always insisted on reading it aloud herself, even though she was just 9.

■ *Once he told them to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the gift he would send them. That gift would be the Holy Spirit. He would live in them and guide them. He would be a Comforter to them. Jesus wanted them to tell everyone on earth that he had died for them. He told them to teach and to baptize those who believed.*

After Jesus said this, he was taken up to heaven right in front of their eyes. A cloud hid him from their sight and two angels, who looked like men dressed in white, came and stood beside them.

The angels said, "Why are you looking up in the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up into heaven will come back some day in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

We also believe that he will come again.

As Anna's grandfather finished reading this story, his eyes welled with tears. He told us that each time Anna had read this passage to him, when she was finished, her eyes looked directly at him. At first, she looked with questioning eyes. Her eyes then turned into knowing eyes.

She knew. Little Anna knew. She really, really knew.

As her grandfather shared this experience with us, at that moment, the air in the church was so thick I could barely see. I could not move. Frankly, I was transfixed. At that moment, all around me was a cloud; the place was filled with the glory of God.

A little 9-year-old girl, speaking through her grandfather, had reminded me. In fact, Anna had reminded all of us. Jesus will live in us and comfort us. And he will indeed come again.

Little Anna taught us powerfully. In life's toughest moments, our faith will make all the difference. God alone will see us through.

And every family needs to know that. †

DR. ALLEN R. HUNT
is a senior advisor for
Dynamic Catholic Institute.



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A patron saint for THE UNWANTED

Above the mirror in my bedroom is a photo a friend gave me that I look at every night when I say my prayers. It's the face of a woman born blind, hunchbacked and lame; a woman born into nobility, but whose family abandoned her as a child to beg on the streets.



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

It's the face of a 700-year-old woman whose incorrupt body lies at the base of an altar in the Church of St. Dominic in Castello, Italy. A woman whose sanctity moved thousands of people to come to her funeral when she died at 33 years old and whose intercession has led to an estimated 200 miracles over the centuries.

I first learned about Blessed Margaret of Castello five years ago when my friend who is a lay Dominican gave me a novena booklet to her because my birthday, April 13, is her feast day.

"Little Margaret," as she was called, was born into a family of wealth and privilege in a castle near Perugia, Italy, in 1287. She was born to parents who wanted a son to carry on their noble ancestry ... but instead God gave them a daughter who was blind, lame and deformed. Today, in an era of pre-natal testing and eugenic abortion, Little Margaret likely would never be born.

As a result, she has come to be known as the patron of the "unwanted." In modern America, the "unwanted" have many different faces. They're the unborn, the incurably ill, the handicapped, the elderly, the poor and the dispossessed. And they have one thing in common: Their dignity as human beings is denied, and their right to life is threatened by a society that does not value the weak and infirm.

In America, alone, 1.2 million babies are aborted each year — more than 20 percent of all pregnancies. St. John Paul II in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life* wrote, "Eugenic abortion is justified in public opinion on the basis of a mentality that accepts life only under certain conditions and rejects it when it is affected by any limitation, handicap or illness. ... It is possible to speak in a certain sense of a war of the powerful against the weak: A life that would require greater acceptance, love and care is

considered useless, or held to be an intolerable burden, and is therefore rejected. A person who, because of illness, handicap or, more simply, just by existing, compromises the well-being or lifestyle of those who are more favored, tends to be looked upon as an enemy to be resisted or eliminated."



Such was the case of Little Margaret, whose existence compromised the proud self-image of her family. She was a

scandal to her parents because she was a hunchbacked dwarf, and they were determined to hide her. At 6 years old, she was evicted from the castle and imprisoned for 13 years in a tiny cell next to a chapel in the forest.

When she was 19, her parents brought her to Castello, hoping for a miraculous cure, but there was none. They abandoned her in the church, and for a year she had to beg on the streets until the townspeople took her in.

Despite her infirmities, she was intelligent and full of goodness, and she loved God with a fervor that inspired those she met. She eventually became a lay Dominican and spent her remaining years visiting prisoners, educating children, caring for the sick and poor and comforting the dying. Although her personal pain was great, she brought joy and love to those who suffered from the same affliction as she did — they were "unwanted."

St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, "There is a much greater and much more painful hunger than the hunger for bread: the hunger for love, the feeling of being wanted, to be somebody to somebody. The feeling of being unwanted, unloved, rejected. That's a very great hunger and a very great poverty."

Little Margaret died at 33. In 1609, she was declared blessed, and her incorrupt body lies in the Church of St. Dominic. Over the centuries, her story has inspired countless people, and her life offers a telling lesson for our age: A child who had no value to her parents had inestimable value to God. And through her, God did great things. †

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Will we become angels when we go to heaven?



DEAR FATHER JOE:
I've heard a lot of things and seen a lot of pictures about heaven and I wonder if that is what it will be like. Will there be mansions and streets of gold, and will we become angels?

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A: This is such an important issue for all of us — death affects all of us indirectly and will obviously affect all of us personally at some point. We try, as a Church and even in society, to describe the ideas of death, resurrection and heaven because that is important to us. Heaven is our goal. But if we forget our goal, we get lost.

I'm going to use Scripture and our tradition to answer these questions, with a lot of help from Dr. Peter Kreeft, my favorite philosopher and a guy who has written a lot about heaven. If you type "heaven" and his name into Google, you'll find numerous helpful articles on this topic. So, with that in mind, let's dive right in.

First things first: Do we become angels when we die?

Short answer? No.

It's become popular in our culture to say, "Heaven gained another angel" when someone dies. I imagine this is

just an expression we use and, in that regard, it can come across as harmless. However, I do want to point out that, as humans, we most certainly do not become angels when we die. We humans are unique in creation and have a special dignity. It seems to me that thinking that we have to change from human to something else in order to enter heaven can inadvertently have a lot of

negative consequences, philosophically and theologically. I won't burden us with those issues now, as that would probably take up more room than I have.

The key is this: As humans, you and



**FATHER JOE
KRUPP**

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

“... God is infinite. We never come to the end of exploring him.”

I are totally different creatures than angels. Probably the most distinctive difference between us and angels is that we are body/soul unities, whereas angels are pure spirit. If we make it to heaven, we will join the angels there, but we will join them as humans.

So, what kind of humans?

If we look at Scripture, we see that what happens after our death is laid out for us.

When we die, our souls leave our bodies to face judgment and, at that point, the body begins to decay.

This judgment will result in our going to heaven or hell, with the understanding that, technically, purgatory is not separate from heaven.

At some point known only to God, Christ will return and, when that happens, our bodies will be raised and restored, and then will rejoin our souls wherever they are. (As an interesting side note, many Catholic cemeteries bury people so that, when their bodies rise up at Christ's second coming, they will be facing east!)

Since we were created as body/soul unities, we will experience heaven or hell as body/soul unities.

So, what will that experience be? What will make heaven heavenly?

This is something that, for more than 2,000 years, Christians have tried to describe and, frankly, I don't feel a lot of hope that I can do that better than most of them. The key is to think of it this way: All we can do is use imagery we know to express something that cannot be described.

My favorite image of heaven comes from St. John in the Book of Revelation. In it, he gives us images of people in heaven waving palm branches. Why is that? Why palm branches? They symbolize the scriptural account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem: In heaven, we are celebrating the King who conquered sin and death.

The key is this: The defining characteristic in heaven is ecstasy and the word itself gives us a sense of what

heaven will be. When we look at the word “ecstasy,” we learn that it comes to us from the Greek word *ekstasis*, which means “standing outside oneself.”

We have hints and whispers of heaven and hell in our everyday life; the more selfish we are, the more selfish we act, the more miserable we get. We have seen people who live only for what they want and their ability to make life horrible for themselves and for everyone around them.

We have also all seen and experienced the wonder of selflessness. As counterintuitive as it is, when we live for God, when we live for others, we find a deep joy, a sense that goes beyond anything we can account for on our own.

I think this is what Jesus means when he tells us that we find our lives when we lose them. Christ, who knows our nature, who knows our hearts, knows that they “never rest until they rest in [God].” In heaven, we will be outside ourselves focused on what and who really matters: God.

I want to close with a quote from Peter Kreeft. When he was asked if we will be bored in heaven, his answer blew me away in its beauty and simplicity. He said:

■ *“We won't be bored because we are with God, and God is infinite. We never come to the end of exploring him. He is new every day.*

We won't be bored because we are with God, and God is eternal. Time does not pass (a condition for boredom); it just is. All time is present in eternity, as all the events of the plot are present in an author's mind. There is no waiting.

We won't be bored because we are with God, and God is love. Even on earth, the only people who are never bored are lovers.”

Brothers and sisters, God has given us the hope of heaven. May we respond to his mercy and his call to holiness, so that we can live that hope with integrity and joy! †

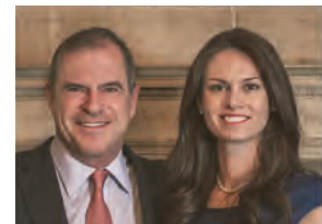
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A: I suspect when most Catholics think about the effects of baptism, the first thing that comes to mind is that baptism washes away original sin. And this is indeed true. By the sacrament of baptism, original sin — our sharing in that first sin of Adam and Eve that we all inherit as “sons of Adam and daughters of Eve” — is cleansed. For those baptized later in life, after the age of reason, not only is original sin cleansed but also forgiven are all of the sins they have committed throughout their entire lives until that moment.

But that is only the beginning! At the moment of our baptism, there is a series of extraordinary changes that takes place within us. These changes transform our lives and our future in a beautiful way.

We are reborn of water and the Holy Spirit. When Jesus first told his followers that they must be “born again,” some took him literally and were quite confused. But he was speaking not of a second physical birth, but the spiritual rebirth that comes through baptism. In our physical birth, we are given the gift of life; in the rebirth that is baptism, we are given new life in the Holy Spirit. At the moment of our baptism, the Holy Spirit comes upon us and dwells within us. We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us as we begin to live the Christian life.

We are adopted into a divine family. We become an adopted child of the Heavenly Father. We become a part of the divine “family life” shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As such, we can live in the assurance



DOMINICAN FATHER JOHN PAUL WALKER
is pastor of St. Mary Parish in New Haven.

that whatever challenges we face in life, we have a loving Father in heaven who cares for us and looks upon us as a beloved child.

We enter the Church. Through our baptism, we are incorporated into the living body of Christ, which is the Church. We become part of the universal Catholic Church, which encompasses believers from every nation on earth and every believer who has ever lived from the time of the apostles until the end of the world. On the smaller scale, we become part of the church family that is the parish where we receive the sacrament.

We receive a destiny. Our baptism sets our feet firmly on a road — and the end of that road is heaven. From the moment of our creation, but even more so from the moment

of our “re-creation” in baptism, we are earmarked for one fate: to spend eternity with God in heaven. That road that leads to heaven is a narrow one, as Jesus himself taught us, and through the mystery of free will we all have the power to make choices in life that reject that destiny and put us on the path to eternal damnation instead. But in baptism, the Church fixes our eyes on the eternal life of heaven and gives us the grace we need to travel that “narrow road” that leads to union with God.

The sacramental life of the Church is opened to us. Baptism is the first sacrament, and in order to validly receive any of the other sacraments of the Church, we must first be baptized. In that sense, we can say that baptism is the gateway to all of the other sacraments. At the moment we are baptized, those gates are opened to us and remain open the rest of our lives.

We receive a vocation. Our baptism does not immediately reveal to us the specifics of whether we are called to live the married life, serve as a priest or nun, and so forth. But what we receive is the vocation — the calling — to be holy. We are invited to be a living saint in the world today. This “universal call to holiness” marks the life of every baptized believer. And we know that whenever God calls us to something, he gives us the grace to fulfill that calling.

As we reflect on this beautiful sacrament during this Easter season, may the Lord inspire us more and more to live out fully all that came to us at our own baptism, so that we might glorify the Lord by our lives and help many more people come to know our Savior, Jesus Christ. †

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Proceeds from this year’s Hartford Bishops’ Foundation Gala will support the Foundation’s *Forward with Faith* campaign, which will be kicked off at the October 28 Gala. The primary beneficiary of the event this year will be **Catholic Charities ... Champions in Service to Others!**



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In Rocky Hill, a parish is

BORN

and

REBORN

Father George M. Couturier, pastor of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, with churchgoers at St. Elizabeth Seton Church in Rocky Hill.



FORMER MISSION, NOW MERGED WITH ORIGINAL PARISH, BUILDS ITS FAITH COMMUNITY

In the 1980s, the first members of St. Elizabeth Seton Church built a parish, a mission of the larger St. James Church in town, without a handbook.

Now, more than three decades after St. Elizabeth Seton Parish's birth, the church has merged back with St. James, part of a consolidation of parishes, the largest in the history of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

St. Elizabeth Seton again is faced with the challenge of building without a step-by-step guide. But this time, the goal is different: a rebirth as a cohesive faith community joined with St. James under a new name: St. Josephine Bakhita Parish.

The formation of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish comes with plenty of challenges: merging two churches or parishes with dramatically different cultures and worship styles; getting beyond the politics and an "Us and Them" mentality; and combining ministries so St. Josephine Bakhita acts as one parish. A rebirth as a unified parish

also will depend on growing enrollment in times when church attendance is falling and an increasing number of millennials describe themselves as "spiritual" but "not religious."

Father George M. Couturier, pastor of St. Josephine Bakhita, said the key to the merger ultimately will rest with the two communities' understanding and valuing their backgrounds. As simple as it sounds, members of each church must take the time to get to know each other, essential to building bridges between the two communities, he said.

"It's appreciating each other's differences and appreciating what you might be able to learn from each other so that it opens up a new vista for your growth spiritually," Father Couturier said. "So, I'm optimistic, but getting there might be tough. It might be bumpy."

St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James are not alone in dealing with change. Last year, the archdiocese announced a restructuring plan that reduced the number of parishes to 127 from 212, with 144 parishes involved in mergers,

**STORY BY
KENNETH R.
GOSSELIN/**

*Special to the
Transcript*

**PHOTOGRAPHY
BY TOM
DZIMIAN**



Couple participates in eucharistic liturgy at St. Elizabeth Seton Church.

"In the midst of all the visioning and decision-making, regular prayer as a team and with our community was our foundation."

— GAIL THIBAudeau BELLUCCI

including St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James. Twenty-six church buildings closed and several are now up for sale.

The idea behind the consolidation is to spark a new resurgence in Catholicism, fostering more engagement among the faithful and renewing a sense of mission.

St. Josephine Bakhita is pushing ahead with its combination. And while many of the changes so far are internal — the biggest being which building gets which weekend Masses — the merger is being observed closely by the wider faith community in Rocky Hill, and it is lending support and inspiration.

In a recent homily, Father Couturier shared that the pastor of the local Congregational church, Craig Cowing, painted an icon of St. Josephine Bakhita as a gift to the merging churches as a sign of unity and prayer.

"He said, 'George, I'm praying for your two communities in Rocky Hill that if you can't do it, none of us can. If we can't find unity, we're all in trouble as Christians.'"

The icon, painted over several months, is a true source of encouragement, Father Couturier said.

"It's just an unbelievable tribute of his commitment from his community for us in our progress getting to the deeper part of our lives, the truth, the way of Christ that unites us," Father Couturier said.

ROOTED IN NEW CONCEPT

St. Elizabeth Seton was established as a mission in anticipation of a growing local Catholic population and with the idea of trying something new.

The new church — largely designed and built by the labor of its members — was assigned non-traditional leadership by Archbishop John F. Whealon. St. Elizabeth Seton was led by a collaborative team of: a priest, Father Robert Burbank; a deacon, Richard L. Santello; and a lay minister, Gail Thibaudeau Bellucci, who now is the archdiocese's assistant director of pastoral services. The worship space on Brook Street also looked different from St. James: natural wood, clear glass behind the sanctuary and chairs with no kneelers.

"There was no template for starting a new parish," Bellucci recalled. "And if there was a handbook for building a parish plant, we didn't have that, either. We relied on the archdiocese, the pastoral experience of Father Burbank, Deacon Santello, my own exuberance and, most importantly, on prayer."





Bellucci added: “In the midst of all the visioning and decision-making, regular prayer as a team and with our community was our foundation.”

St. Josephine Bakhita is now in the midst of a similar, though more structured, strategic planning process for developing a vision for the new community. Already, specific goals and timetables are being established, and how the process unfolds is being watched by the archdiocese as a possible model for other church mergers.

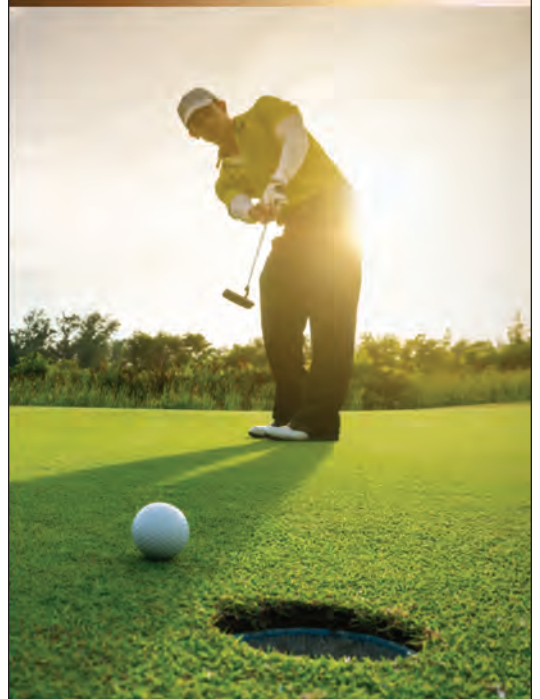
From its earliest days, members of St. Elizabeth Seton were encouraged to greet others at Mass, even worshippers they didn’t know — an attribute that helped shape the church’s culture.

And although the team approach morphed into a more traditional structure with a priest at the helm, some say it was the welcoming environment that was critical in drawing members from dozens of zip codes in the greater Hartford area.

1. The building of St. Elizabeth Seton Church.
2. The collaborative team assigned to lead St. Elizabeth Seton: Father Robert Burbank, left; Deacon Richard L. Santello and Gail Thibaudeau Bellucci.
3. Mom and son during homily at St. James Church.
4. Tom Cosker with daughter singing during Offertory at St. Elizabeth Seton Church.
5. Procession into St. James at start of Mass.

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DIFFERENT PARISH CULTURES

Culture is tricky to define because it often exists in a gray area.

During strategic planning sessions last fall, parishioners at both St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James said their communities were welcoming. They also said they considered their respective parishes to be focused on prayer and social outreach.

“Certainly, I think there are more folks at St. James who have a more traditional and conservative approach to Catholicism and how they worship than how they are at St. Elizabeth Seton,” Michael Camilleri, a member of the merger Steering Committee, said. “I think you see it in different ways, in some of the small ways.”

Camilleri pointed to the arrival for Sunday Mass at St. Elizabeth Seton, where people tend to socialize and enjoy each other’s company. There aren’t — even at the 7:30 a.m. Mass — many people sitting, praying the rosary or quietly in prayer.

“At St. James, it’s a very different story,” Camilleri, a parishioner at St. Elizabeth Seton since its inception, said. “You see a lot more of that happening, and you can see how that’s an adjustment for folks going between communities.”

Father Couturier said the cultures of the two churches are, to some extent, influenced by their architectural styles.

“The intimacy level, being able to be subtle with music at St. Elizabeth Seton, where at St. James everything has to be bigger because it’s a huge building, a very different flavor. It lends itself to high church.”

▼ Father Couturier explains the Gospel to children and blesses them before dismissing them for Bible study at St. Elizabeth Seton Church.



MERGING IDENTITIES

Change, at least initially, has left many parishioners wrestling with what they see as a loss of identity.

“But they really are not,” Kathy Alexander, a member at St. James for nearly three decades, said. “They’re strengthening it. And I think that the obstacle is showing people. It’s not going to happen overnight.”

Alexander, who for years has headed the scheduling of extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at St. James, said combining liturgical ministries at St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James could make for a big step forward, helping parishioners to become comfortable in both buildings.

“We’re doing a little bit with the music now,” Alexander said. “I think that’s a step we can all take and not just stay siloed in each location.”

Alexander added: “I asked my husband what he thought and he still sees people saying ‘Us and Them,’ and that’s what we have to work on. It’s not us against each other. We are St. Josephine Bakhita.”

Father Couturier also points to a successful combined parish picnic last fall, with established committees at St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James learning to work with each other.

Faith formation has taken the first step in combining, merging confirmation preparation; and the two music directors got together early to plan a combined Easter Vigil celebration.

Father Couturier said he expects the initial transition to take three years. Even then, transformation will continue, as it has in the larger Roman Catholic Church for thousands of years.

The success of merging will determine if both the St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James buildings ultimately remain open. The archdiocese is clear that it expects more consolidation in the future.

“If we can make this merger work, and if we can have our parishes both grow, then yes, I think that becomes a very realistic answer,” Camilleri said. “But if we don’t grow, if we stay stagnant or if we shrink because people aren’t happy, then it’s almost inevitable that one of these buildings has to close.”

Camilleri said the destiny of the combined parish is within the community’s control.

“If we can make this — the same way that when the mission of St. James was able to grow this incredible community from nothing and a really prosperous, booming church with people coming from all over the state to come to this community — if we can do that with this merged parish, we won’t be talking about, OK, we can just barely fill two Masses at each church. We’re going to say, OK, we’ve got to figure out how to have more Masses because we’re filling it to the brim.” †



1



2



3

1. Sisters and their mom listen to a homily at St. James Church.
2. Father Couturier greets worshippers after Mass at St. Elizabeth Seton Church.
3. Confirmation candidates with food donations on display after Mass at St. James.
4. Father and son at St. Elizabeth Seton.
5. Owner and service dog at start of Mass at St. Elizabeth Seton.



4



5

*"It's not us
against each
other. We are
St. Josephine
Bakhita."*

— KATHY ALEXANDER

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Archbishop Leonard P. Blair greets guests at an appeal dinner in Glastonbury.



PHOTO BY SHELLEY WOLF

Catholics live out the Gospel through the Archbishop's Annual Appeal



The 2018 Archbishop's Annual Appeal is under way. The theme of this year's appeal — "Our Faith, Our Future" — will highlight the Archdiocese of Hartford's emphasis on building a vibrant community of faith, starting with children and families.

STORY BY
SHELLEY WOLF
AND MARY
CHALUPSKY

During the first months of the year, Archbishop Leonard P. Blair was on the road, attending 13 events throughout the archdiocese to thank local Catholics for giving generously to last year's appeal and to request their kind support for this year's campaign. Funds raised annually by the appeal are crucial in supporting archdiocesan offices, archdiocesan ministries and the Church's many charitable works.

Last year's appeal, with the theme of "Moved by Mercy," raised more than \$10.5 million, surpassing the goal of \$10 million.

More specifically, donors pledged more than \$10,505,000. Of that amount, 31 percent went to Catholic Charities and other works of mercy. An additional 10 percent, or more than \$1 million, went to the popular Vicariate Outreach Program, which distributes funds to 245

local organizations and charities in Hartford, New Haven and Litchfield counties.

At several of the dinners, donors shared their enthusiasm for giving to the appeal and noted the particular ministries and charities they especially enjoy supporting.

■ "I love the Malta van," said Rick Madej, a parishioner at St. Dunstan Parish in [Glastonbury](#). He attended an appeal dinner with his wife Kathy.

Kathy Madej was even more enthusiastic than her husband. "We like the Archbishop's Annual Appeal because it's so broad-based — the health care, the Catholic education, the immigrants — that we feel our money is so well spent," she said. "And we support the mission of the Church in general."

She said she also enjoyed participating in the dinner event



itself. “It makes you proud to be Catholic,” she said. “All these people are giving and you feel the community.”

■ Peter Simcik and his wife Margaret of **Berlin** attended a dinner in place of his mother, Helen Simcik, who gives annually, but was unable to attend herself. Simcik said his mother likes to support the archdiocese’s radio and television ministries. “She likes the music on WJMJ,” he said. “She also watches the daily Mass every day at 10 a.m.”

■ “I prefer to see it spent on children,” said Majorie Emerick of St. Edmund Campion Parish in **East Hartford**. She said she particularly likes to see the donations

go to religious education in the archdiocese and to needy children through Catholic Charities.

■ Tina Kohut of **South Windsor** attended a function with her husband, Joe, and son Justin, who was home from college on a break. “I love the food pantries,” she said. “I’m from North American Martyrs Parish of East Hartford and each of our churches has a food pantry. My second choice would be the Malta van.”

She added that she found the entire evening to be very inspiring. “We see the video in church,” she said, “but somehow [by attending the event] it sinks in a little bit more how much this helps.”

“The AAA empowers people. ... It gives people the tools and ability to support these areas, and helps us become better followers of the faith.”

— JANET BREZEZINSKI

■ “I don’t favor any one charity over the other,” said Norm Saucier of Divine Providence Parish in **New Britain**. “I like everything they do and I think the archdiocese has good thoughts about what to do with the money.”

■ Father Thomas J. Sas, pastor of St. John Fisher Parish in **Marlborough**, favors the Vicariate Outreach Program and the many charities it supports within local communities.

Father Sas ticked off his favorites: “The Marlborough Food Bank — people from our parish are very involved with that organization. AHM Youth and Family Services in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough — they have a support program for children and families. Catholic





Worker House
— I say Mass
there once a
year.”

Father Sas
said he also
likes to see funds go to the Malta
House of Care, which operates the
Malta van. “I think it’s important to
serve the health of the poor people
and the unchurched,” he added.



■ “I believe in it — I believe in the
appeal that supports the Catholic
Church, our priests, Catholic
education and so many other great
causes. If we don’t, who will?” asked
Theresa DiGiovanna, parishioner
at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in
Oxford, who attended a dinner with
her husband, Matthew.

“I have five children and 12
grandchildren, and I want to set a
good example for them,” she said.
“The Archbishop’s Appeal gives to
people who really need this kind of
support.”

■ Tim Viega attends St. Teresa
of Avila Church in **Woodbury/**
Bethlehem. “I like to get involved
in activities that build a sense of
community and love,” he said. “The
video spoke of supporting youth who
are struggling with drugs. I have a
cousin whose son died of a heroin
overdose. So it strikes a chord when
it hits close to home and makes you
want to help out.”

■ “It’s an important way of giving
back ... of feeding the hungry
and helping with so many other
important causes,” said Phillip

**“I believe in
the appeal
that supports
the Catholic
Church, our
priests,
Catholic
education
and so many
other great
causes.
If we don’t,
who will?”**

— THERESA
DIGIOVANNA

Brezezinski of Sacred Heart Parish
in **Southbury**. His wife Janet added,
“The AAA empowers people, whether
it’s for food, shelter or other needs.
“It gives people the tools and ability
to support these areas, and helps us
become better followers of the faith.”

■ Jill Pustola, a member of Prince of
Peace Parish in **Woodbury**, who
was at a dinner with her husband
Stephen, said, “We’re proud to be
part of the appeal that helps all the
people in need. We love Carolyn’s
Place, the Malta van, Catholic school
and helping our priests of all ages
because we need vocations.”

■ Maura Pauli of St. Francis Xavier
Parish in **New Milford**, accompanied
by husband Fredrick, said the dinner
was an opportunity for them to
learn this year’s appeal theme and
which agencies are supported by the
campaign. “The funds that are raised
go directly to help people in need
— no middle man — and that’s
important to us.”

■ Deacon Roland Miller of St.
Francis Xavier in **New Milford** said
he and his wife Mary have attended
the dinners since they started. “We
always hope they give to Carolyn’s
Place; that’s my favorite,” said Mary.
“Plus, the agencies that feed the poor,
and also our Catholic schools.”

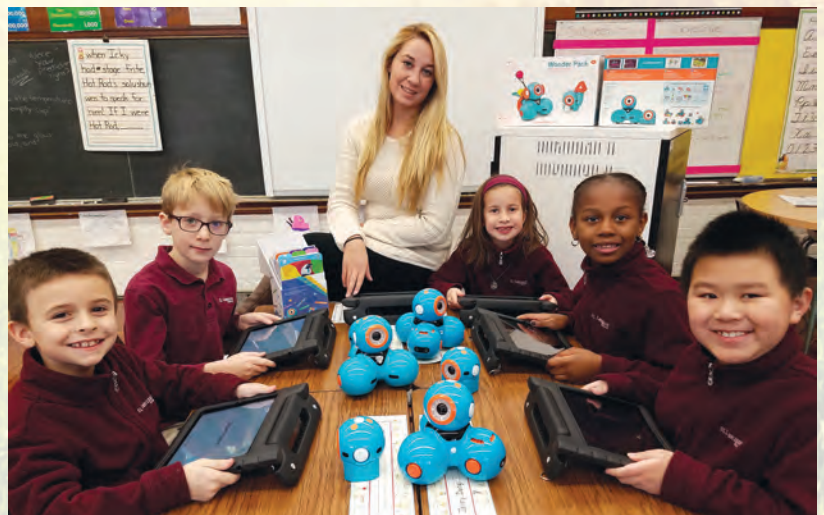
■ “It’s so nice to see where we stand
in the archdiocese with the funds that
have been raised through the appeal,”
said Douglas Corwin, who attended
with his wife Cate from St. Louis de
Montfort Parish in **Litchfield**. “It’s
nice to see how people benefit from
the appeal and hear the back stories
behind the giving. It makes it more
personal; and we look forward to
seeing the video and hearing the
archbishop.”

“I especially like to support mental
health and programs for people who
have lost their jobs,” added Cate, who
serves as bookkeeper at the parish.
“It’s something that can happen to
any one of us.”

■ “We appreciate what is done
through the appeal,” said Bill
Sullivan of St. Thomas the Apostle in
Oxford, who attended a dinner with
his wife Mary. “Catholic schools and
the poor are our two top priorities.”

Tina Poet, coordinator for the
Archbishop’s Annual Appeal,
remarked on the donors after
meeting them in person at several
events.

“The kindness and generosity of
the faithful of the Archdiocese of
Hartford never cease to amaze me,”
Poet said. “I truly believe that the
people of the archdiocese live the
teaching of the Gospel, which is to
help thy neighbor.” †



Family matters in Catholic Charities program

PREKINDERGARTEN READINESS PROGRAM HAS GIVEN A BOOST TO THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN

As far as Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford is concerned, giving children a good start in life is a family affair.

Every day, some 315 children in Hartford, New Haven, Meriden and Waterbury benefit from the School Readiness Program, a dynamic prekindergarten initiative launched just over 20 years ago by Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities, a not-for-profit agency serving people of all faiths in Hartford, Litchfield and New Haven counties, aims to promote the dignity of every person, family and community in a way that maximizes human potential, self-sufficiency and richness of diversity. It employs about 450 people and has a budget in excess of \$24 million.

The seven centers, which are licensed by the state and open year-round, daily serve up breakfast and lunch along with a full curriculum of lessons in subjects ranging from math and science to getting along with others.

“The purpose of our work is to prepare young children for success,” said Tiffany Hall, director of child and family development programs for Catholic Charities. “When we send these children off to kindergarten, we know they are ready.”

That’s not something that can be taken for granted in the communities the program serves, which face the challenges that come with high poverty rates and a lack of resources in everything from employment to public services. Across the state and the country, children from those communities typically fare worse in school than their peers in more affluent cities and towns.

“Our kids are getting the support and education they need to close the achievement gap,” Hall said, noting that the program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, certifying that it meets

the highest standards in the field. “If children don’t get that support at the beginning, they never catch up.”

It’s particularly critical for young children like those in the program: at five of the six readiness program centers, the children are ages 3 to 5, with Waterbury also enrolling infants and toddlers. According to a landmark study by University of Kansas researchers, the bulk of the most important brain development occurs before the age of 5.

That’s important because of the voluminous evidence that children who aren’t at the appropriate reading level by the time they reach third grade are significantly more likely to drop out of school and be convicted of committing a crime.

But Hall and the teachers and family specialists who staff the program understand that it takes more than a high-quality program to help children succeed. Parents, she said, are the “first and most important teachers” of their children.


Children, after all, can only spend so much time in prekindergarten or school during the day, and that’s where the program’s holistic, family-centered approach comes in.

The program offers parenting education, along with help in everything from applying for jobs to setting up payment plans for past-due utility bills.

“We start out from the proposition that every parent wants the best for their children,” Hall said. “People sometimes say, ‘Oh, these parents don’t care. They don’t read to their children or anything like that.’ But if you don’t know where your next meal is coming from, you’re not worried about reading a book to your child. You’re worried about feeding your child.”

It’s something Janett Cerna, a family specialist at the Meriden center, understands well. Sometimes, helping a child succeed means helping parents understand how they can solve problems in their lives, she said.

Recently, the mother of a young girl at the Meriden

 **THE PROGRAM OFFERS PARENTING EDUCATION, ALONG WITH HELP IN EVERYTHING FROM APPLYING FOR JOBS TO SETTING UP PAYMENT PLANS FOR PAST-DUE UTILITY BILLS.**

STORY BY TOM BREEN

Special to the Transcript

Children at Catholic Charities Child Development Center in Waterbury gather for a group photo.



center came in agitated because the family’s heat had been shut off. When Cerna tried to work with the woman to find a way to solve the problem, she said, the toll of previous disappointments was evident in her response.

“She had just given up,” Cerna said. “That’s the hardest part, when you see someone who just doesn’t know what to do, and is feeling this deep despair.”

Instead of shrugging her shoulders and moving on, Cerna persuaded the woman to accompany her to the office of the gas company, where they were able to get the family’s heat turned back on.

The experience — not just of solving a problem, but of having someone care enough to help — proved to be transformative.

“Ever since, when she brings her child in, she has a completely different attitude” and is planning to go back to school to earn her high school degree, Cerna said.

Making that kind of connection with the whole family is

“ Our kids are getting the support and education they need to close the achievement gap. ... If children don’t get that support at the beginning, they never catch up. ”

— TIFFANY HALL

essential for the success of the child, said Destiny Ramos, the director of the school readiness center at SS. Cyril and Methodius in Hartford.

“That’s the most gratifying part, honestly, building those relationships with parents and children,” she said.

Relative stability at home means the children who come to the center are able to focus on the activities that give them a head start on kindergarten. At the SS. Cyril and Methodius Center, that includes a strong focus on reading, with a library area in every classroom and a curriculum that starts with the very basics.

“When they come in at 3 years old, it’s literally teaching them how to hold a book, how to turn the pages,” she said. “Then when you see them grow and develop, and by the time they’re 5 and making connections between the pictures and words, it’s such a good experience.”

As convincing as the statistics on early childhood education are, those are the kinds of moments that can’t be captured by even the most rigorous measurement. Hall said the program regularly enrolls younger siblings and neighbors as the word from families spreads, and that older children occasionally come back to praise the experiences they had.

“At the risk of dating myself, a student who I taught in one of the centers is now getting ready to graduate college at the top of his class and go on to medical school,” Hall said. “That’s a great feeling.” †

Early childhood services locations

■ **Centro San Jose**
Child Development Center
290 Grand Ave.,
New Haven

■ **Child Development Center**
790 Grand Ave.,
New Haven

■ **Child Development Center**
965 S. Main St., Suite 2,
Waterbury

■ **Child Development Center**
81 Akron St., Meriden

■ **Paraiso Infantil**
45 Wadsworth St., Hartford

■ **SS. Cyril and Methodius Child Development Center**
45 Groton St., Hartford

■ **St. Stanislaus**
Child Development Center
81 Akron St., Meriden

Popular devotion will be celebrated at **DIVINE MERCY PARISH IN HAMDEN**

STORY BY
MARY CHALUPSKY
HARTFORD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
AARON JOSEPH



St. Stephen Church



The procession left
Bushnell Park



St. Rita Church



The faithful carried
the Divine Mercy image
in the procession.

▶ This year's archdiocesan Divine Mercy celebration will be in Hamden at Divine Mercy Parish, beginning with a procession from St. Stephen Church to St. Rita Church. All other photos depict the archdiocese's April 2016 Divine Mercy observance in Hartford, which began with a procession from Bushnell Park to the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

Appropriately reflecting its new name, Divine Mercy Parish in Hamden is the designated parish in the Archdiocese of Hartford to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 8 with Archbishop Leonard P. Blair officiating.

A procession will step off at 2 p.m. from St. Stephen Church at 400 Ridge Rd. for the 1.1-mile walk to St. Rita Church at 1620 Whitney Ave. Those who can't make the walk may go directly to St. Rita Church, where confession will be offered beginning at 2.

"We're excited that the archbishop is coming, and excited to be part of this archdiocesan event now that our two churches have been combined as Divine Mercy Parish," said its pastor, Father Joseph DiSciaccia.

"It's all downhill," he laughed about the trajectory of the walk.



Hundreds walked through the streets
of Hartford to the cathedral.



Father DiSciaccia said that on Tuesdays during Lent, parishioners will offer presentations on the Divine Mercy devotion that will alternate between both churches. Talks will include background material about the devotion, as well as St. Faustina’s understanding of the devotion and the chaplet that she wrote about in her diary.

He explained that several parishioners have completed a retreat “that will serve as the basis for their witness to the Divine Mercy devotions.” Written by Father Michael Gaitley, director of evangelization for the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception and director of formation for the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy, “Consoling the Heart of Jesus” is described as a do-it-yourself retreat that combines the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius with the teachings of Saints Thérèse of Lisieux, Faustina Kowalska and Louis de Montfort.

“Our parishioners are really eager to host this event,” said Father DiSciaccia. “They’ve been planning and preparing for it, and we hope to be able to sing the chaplet.”

The service is open to everyone. A reception will follow the service in the parish’s Donnelly Parish Center Hall.

The archdiocese held a Divine Mercy Sunday celebration in 2016 as the high point of its marking of the Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis. About 1,500 faithful walked in a procession from Bushnell Park to the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford for an afternoon service led by Archbishop Blair.

Behind a police motorcade, those gathered at the pavilion

“
Our parishioners are really eager to host this event. They’ve been planning and preparing for it, and we hope to be able to sing the chaplet.”

— FATHER JOSEPH DISCIACCIA

then braved the wind and walked reverently but joyfully up the center of Farmington Avenue to the cathedral. Deacon Ernest Scrivani and Father Michael A. Ruminski, organizers of the event, were out in front, followed by cross bearers, Knights of Columbus, Archbishop Blair and hundreds of pilgrims, all bundled up in hats and scarves.

Men carried aloft the Divine Mercy image of Jesus, surrounded by white lilies, while all walked in unison to “How Great Thou Art,” played by the Sons of Portugal Band. Hundreds of others in attendance waited at the cathedral, where the bells pealed to beckon the faithful.

Proclaimed in 2000 by the late St. John Paul II, Divine Mercy Sunday marks the end of the Divine Mercy Novena, which begins every year on Good Friday. The Divine Mercy Novena was revealed to St. Faustina by Jesus on Good Friday 1937, when he dictated the prayers to her that make up the novena. The Divine Mercy Novena is often combined with the Divine Mercy Chaplet, which is also commonly prayed on Divine Mercy Sunday.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is also prayed throughout the year, especially at 3 p.m., the time when Christ died on the Cross. As recorded in the diary of St. Faustina, the faithful who participate in Divine Mercy Sunday receive extraordinary promises of grace from Jesus himself — that anyone who goes to confession within eight days of the feast day and receives holy Communion on that day will obtain total forgiveness of all sins and avoid punishment. †



Obituaries

■ **DEACON ROBERT J. BRUNELL SR.**, 81, of New Haven, died on Jan. 25, 2018.

He was born in Meriden on Jan. 19, 1937. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in English and philosophy from Fairfield University. He also attended the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind.

He was the first person to be ordained to the permanent diaconate for the Archdiocese of Hartford, on Feb. 4, 1973, by Archbishop John F. Whealon. He ministered to the parishes of St. Francis Cabrini in North Haven, St. Aedan in New Haven, St. Brendan in New Haven, Blessed Sacrament in Hamden and Ascension in Hamden.

Deacon Brunell taught Latin and English in the New Haven and Southington school districts, and in 1971 was elected president of the Connecticut State Federation of Teachers, (AFT, AFL/CIO). He later was hired by the United Federation of Teachers, (AFT, AFL/CIO) as coordinator of organization and assistant to the president. He served for more than 35 years as the director of scientific affairs for the Connecticut State Medical Society. Also, he was a member of the executive team that spearheaded the founding of several important and successful organizations, including the Connecticut Peer Review Organization, the Connecticut Medical Insurance Company, the Connecticut State Medical Society Independent Practice Association and MD Health Plan.

He was a member of San Salvador Council No. 1, Knights of Columbus, and John Barry Assembly No. 97, Knights of Columbus.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 30 in Blessed Sacrament Church in Hamden. Interment followed in St. Lawrence Cemetery in West Haven.

He is survived by his wife of 54

years, Phyllis Lupone Brunell; four children, Mary Pursell (Thomas), Gloria Ybarra (Ernesto), Phyllis Lobo (David), and Robert J. Brunell II; five grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews, cousins and friends. He was the brother of Gloria F. Brunell, Ph.D., Raymond W. Brunell Jr., Bellerose Carney Chrzanowski and Cristle Lonergan.



■ **FATHER DANIEL JOSEPH KARPIEJ**, 87, died on Jan. 27, 2018, at Monsignor Bojnowski Manor in New Britain.

Born on April 13, 1930, he was the son of the late Dominic and Anna (Ruszewicz) Karpiej. He studied at New Britain Senior High School and St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield and went on to major seminary formation at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Md., where he completed studies in 1959.

He was ordained to the priesthood at St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in Hartford by Auxiliary Bishop John F. Hackett on May 7, 1959. He served as an assistant in the parishes of Holy Cross Church in New Britain, St. Francis Xavier in New Milford, St. Stanislaus in Bristol, St. Francis in Naugatuck, St. Joseph in Meriden, the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, St. James in Manchester, St. James in Rocky Hill and Holy Cross in New Britain.

In July 1989, Father Karpiej was appointed pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish in Waterbury, then of St. Casimir in Terryville from 1993 to 1999 and finally of SS. Peter and Paul in Wallingford from 1999 to 2004. He was pastor emeritus at SS. Peter and Paul from March of 2004 until he entered senior priest status in June 2007, and then resided at the Archbishop Cronin Residence in Bloomfield.

He is survived by his brother, Henry Karpiej (Joyce) of Naples, Fla., and his sister, Florence of Windsor, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair presided at a Mass of Christian Burial on Jan. 31 at Holy Cross Church in New Britain. Interment at Sacred Heart Cemetery followed.

■ **SISTER MARY LOUISE ROULEAU**, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, West Hartford, 77, died at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford on Feb. 4, 2018.

She was born in Woonsocket, R.I., on July 21, 1940, entered her order on Aug. 31, 1962, and professed her final vows on Aug. 8, 1970. She earned a bachelor's degree from Good Counsel College in White Plains, N.Y., and taught science at Sacred Heart Academy in Stamford and St. Paul Catholic High School in Bristol. In 1977, she became a home care/community outreach worker at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury and then worked in geriatric outreach at Mount Sinai Hospital. In 1989, Sister Mary Louise served in Vredenburgh, Ala., working as part of the Edmundite Fathers' mission in a small rural town and creating a children's garden.

In 1997, Sister Mary Louise returned to the Hartford area and became a pastoral associate at Holy Trinity Parish. She created a peace garden at Jubilee House in Hartford's south end, a Sisters of St. Joseph ministry.

Sister Mary Louise was predeceased by her brother, and sister Eugene Rouleau Teresa Saltmeris. She is survived by her religious community; two sisters, Pauline Woods and Frances Coeur of California; a niece and a nephew.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Feb. 9 in Sedgwick Cedars Chapel in West Hartford. Burial followed in the Sisters of St. Joseph Cemetery in West Hartford.

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The Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair, STD, has made the following priest and deacon appointments:

Very Reverend John J. Georgia: reappointed pastor of Resurrection Parish, Wallingford, effective Jan. 11, 2018, for a six-year term.

Reverend William Agyemang: from parochial vicar of Annunciation Parish, Newington, to pastor of North American Martyrs Parish, East Hartford, effective Feb. 12, 2018, for a six-year term.

Reverend Jerzy Auguscik, OFM, Conv.: from administrator of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, New Britain to parochial vicar of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, Thomaston, effective Feb. 12, 2018.

Reverend Michael S. Galasso: appointed chaplain of Connecticut Hospice, Branford, effective Feb. 1, 2018, for a three-year term.

Reverend Paul J. Halovatch: senior priest* status, effective Feb. 1, 2018.

Reverend Diego A. Jimenez: appointed spiritual advisor for the Spanish-language Cursillo Movement for the Archdiocese of Hartford, effective Feb. 1, 2018, in addition to duties as pastor of All Saints Parish, Waterbury.

Reverend Robert P. Roy: from pastor of North American Martyrs Parish, East Hartford, to pastor of St. Michael Parish, New Haven, effective Feb. 12, 2018, for a six-year term.

Reverend Raymond S. Smialowski: from pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish, Bristol, to pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Plainville, effective Feb. 12, 2018, for a six year-term.

Reverend Tomasz Sztuber: from parochial vicar of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, Thomaston to pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish, Bristol, effective Feb. 12, 2018, for a six-year term.

Reverend Carlos M. Zapata: appointed spiritual advisor for the English- and Portuguese-language Cursillo Movements for the Archdiocese of Hartford, effective Feb. 1, 2018, in addition to duties as parochial vicar of St. John Paul the Great Parish, Torrington.

Reverend Albert Forlano: renewal of priestly faculties** until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 25, 2018.

Reverend Joseph Khoueiry: renewal of priestly faculties** until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 18, 2018.

Reverend Augustine A. Mangalath: renewal of priestly faculties** until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Dec. 21, 2017.

Reverend James A. Shanley: appointed executive director of communications and public relations in addition to duties as rector, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, and episcopal vicar, Northern Vicariate, effective Feb. 8, 2018.

Reverend Monsignor Stephen Adu-Kwaning: renewal of priestly faculties** until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Feb. 16, 2018.

Reverend Thomas Coughlin, O.P. Miss: renewal of priestly faculties** until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 29, 2018.

Reverend Joseph Mauritzen: granted priestly faculties** until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Feb. 9, 2018.

Reverend Michael T. Casey: from parochial vicar of Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, to pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, New Britain, and chaplain of Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, effective Feb. 6, 2018, for a six-year term, in addition to duties as director of vocations for Archdiocese of Hartford.

Deacon Ernest Scrivani: appointed executive director of pastoral services, effective Feb. 8, 2018.

Deacon James E. Hickey, Jr.: senior status,* effective Jan. 30, 2018.

Deacon Domenic N. Stolfi: senior status,* effective Feb. 1, 2018.

— REVEREND RYAN M. LERNER,
CHANCELLOR, FEB. 9, 2018

** Because deacons and priests have received the sacrament of holy orders and therefore never retire in the canonical sense, the term "senior" priest or deacon describes their status.*

*** Clergy who are not incardinated in the Archdiocese of Hartford must request permission from the archbishop to minister here; that is, they request faculties.*

Foundress of Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus moves closer to beatification

■ Pope Francis has approved a miracle that clears the path to beatification for Mother Clelia Merloni, foundress of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The order announced in a press release that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints had voted unanimously on Jan. 9 to affirm the miracle attributed to Mother Clelia and that, on Jan. 27, Pope Francis cleared the path to her beatification by approving that miracle.

The United States Province of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is located in Hamden.

Sister Clare Millea, former superior general for the worldwide congregation and current director of the archdiocese's Office of Faith and Culture, said, "For 12 years, I visited all of the communities and ministries of the Apostles in many countries throughout the world and I was always impressed by the many people who were speaking about Mother Clelia, and not just sisters but lay people, priests and so on. It was wonderful to see the love and inspiration she brought to so many with her story. So I was overjoyed to find out that she will now belong to the universal Church and can stand as an example of a beautiful way of holiness by expressing the heart of Jesus to others."

The approval by Pope Francis was the final phase of the process

recognizing the miracle under examination by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The miracle took place in Brazil in 1951 when a Brazilian doctor, Pedro Ângelo de Oliveira Filho, was stricken suddenly by a progressive form of paralysis known as Guillain-Barré syndrome. The Holy See originally opened Mother Clelia's cause for canonization in 1988. Pope Francis declared her Venerable Clelia Merloni on Dec. 21, 2016.



Clelia Merloni was born in Forli, Italy, on March 10, 1861. Although she came from an elite and wealthy family, she was attracted to prayer and solitude at an early age. She responded generously to God's call by choosing consecrated religious life.

On May 30, 1894, Mother Clelia founded the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, sending sisters to the Americas at the turn of the last century. For the holiness needed to be able to fulfill God's will and to lead the sisters, Mother Clelia sustained many years of difficult trials, profound humiliations and unspeakable sorrows. Her life was consumed in daily kindnesses and sacrifices for the needs of others and for the growth of the congregation.

Mother Clelia died in Rome on Nov. 21, 1930. Her remains were placed in the generalate chapel after her body was exhumed in 1945 and found to be incorrupt.

Several Catholic schools to adopt STREAM model for 2018

■ The Archdiocese of Hartford has announced that three of its parish elementary schools will adopt the STREAM instructional model for the 2018-19 academic year.

They are St. Aedan-St. Brendan School in New Haven, which will become the Catholic Academy of New Haven; St. Mary School in Branford and Our Lady of Mercy School in Madison, which will be called East Shoreline Catholic Academy; and St. Mary and Blessed Sacrament schools in Waterbury, which will be called the Catholic Academy of Waterbury.

Father Robert A. Morgewicz of St. Aedan and St. Brendan made the announcement about the school his parish sponsors in a letter to families in February that described the benefits of a STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math) curriculum.

He assured families that the academy will retain its Catholic authenticity.

"STREAM fields are the largest job

growth segment in the 21st century, yet there is already a shortage of workers to satisfy this job growth. The STREAM curriculum will help prepare students for successful careers as they join the workforce. Students from STREAM programs also outperform their peers in the areas of math, science and literacy," Father Morgewicz wrote.

STREAM instruction is endorsed by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), and is designed to enhance teaching of subject areas such as mathematics and science by incorporating technology and engineering into the traditional curriculum and creating an interdisciplinary experience for students.

"The transitioning of St. Aedan and St. Brendan School into the Catholic Academy of New Haven is being undertaken to usher the school into a new stage of technology, while continuing the strong tradition of faith and the arts," said Sister Mary Grace Walsh, archdiocesan provost for education, evangelization and catechesis. The creation of Branford's East Shoreline Catholic Academy was



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announced in January.

The changes followed an assessment of each school in areas that, depending on the school circumstances, included enrollment, financial viability, geographic sustainability of Catholic education and school leadership, according to a press release. Final decisions were made after consultation with respective pastors and parish lay leaders at each school, and the archdiocesan Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis.

The East Shoreline Catholic Academy will continue to be supported by St. Margaret Parish in Madison, St. George Parish in Guilford and St. John Bosco Parish in Branford as the successor school of Our Lady of Mercy.

In December, it was announced that Catholic Academy of Waterbury, a STREAM model and heritage school of St. Mary and Blessed Sacrament Schools in Waterbury, will open in September 2018 at the site of the current Blessed Sacrament School at 386 Robinwood Rd.



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