

Catholic TRANSCRIPT

MAY 2018

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How my faith was
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INMATE
DISCOVERS

*passion and
purpose*

THROUGH
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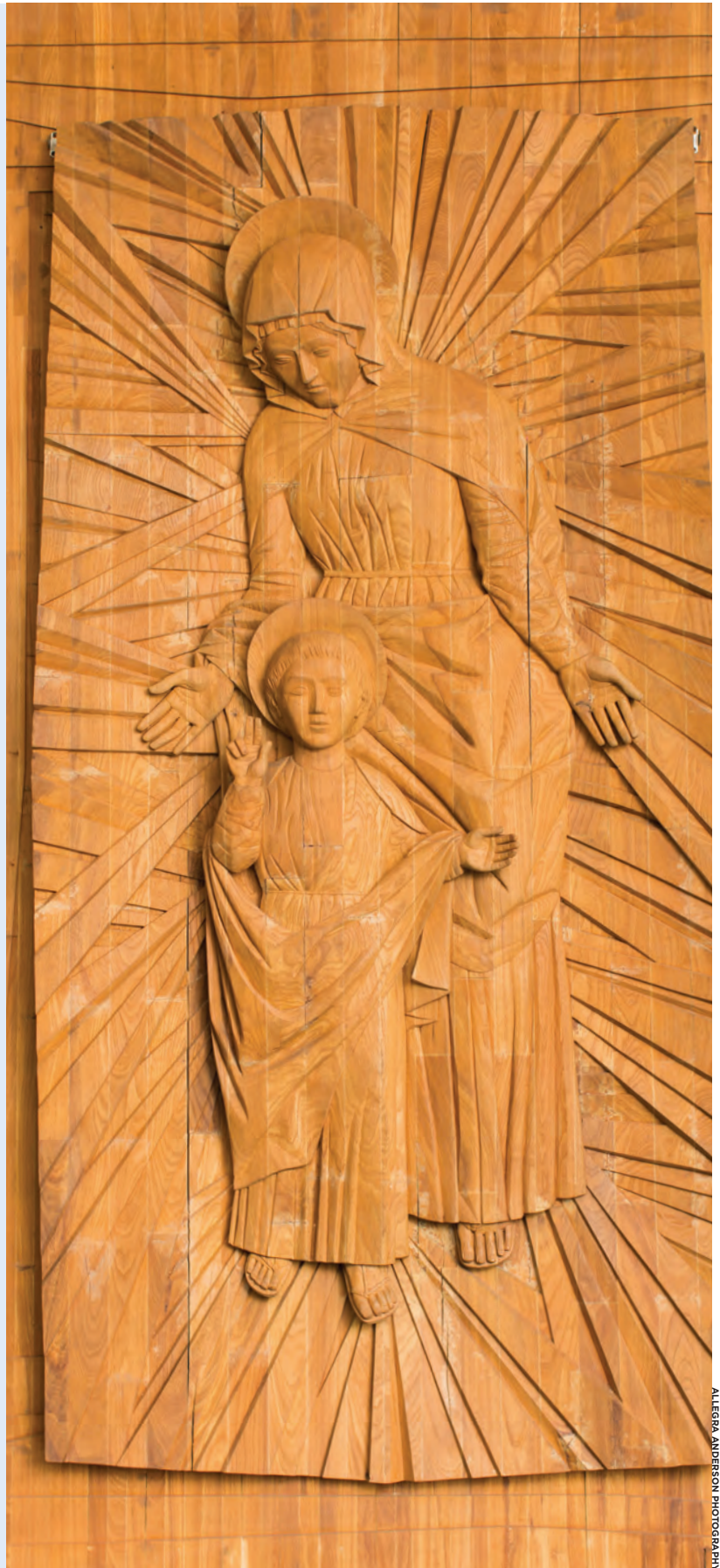
Act of entrustment

We come before you, Mary our Mother, asking you to place under your protective mantle this local church of the Archdiocese of Hartford. Like you, the Church's first and most perfect member, we too stand at the foot of the cross as witnesses to what human sinfulness is capable of inflicting on the body of Christ.

As your Son crushed the head of the ancient serpent who is the father of lies, so now intercede for us with God, that our archdiocese may be delivered from all evil and be preserved in holiness and truth. By your prayers hasten the coming of the justice and mercy of God.

Watch over us all — clergy, religious and laity — with maternal care, so that as members of one family of faith our bonds of communion may grow stronger, our love for one another and for our neighbor deeper, the practice of our faith more devout, our witness to Christ more heroic, for the sake of our mission to be salt and light for the world. We entrust our archdiocese to you, Mary, Mother of the Church. Amen. †

► Cathedral of St. Joseph:
lower side altar reredos



ALLEGRA ANDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Congregants gather around the newly crowned statue of Our Lady on Mother's Day, May 14, 2017, in Hartford.



PHOTO BY BOB MULLEN

Mary:

MOTHER OF GOD, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

As I grow older and look back at my life, like all of us, I have much for which to be grateful. I realize just how blessed I have been with the opportunities that have been given to me by the Church from my seminary days until now, including the years I lived in Rome. I have had many opportunities to experience different countries and languages. And any Catholic who travels broadly will know just how universal our Catholic Church is, and how it is possible to be at Mass or a shrine overseas and to feel at home spiritually with people of different lands and nations.



ARCHBISHOP LEONARD P. BLAIR
is the 13th bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford.

Our unifying bond, of course, is the Lordship of Jesus and our membership in his body by faith and baptism. But inseparably linked to this is the motherhood of Mary and her unique and abiding role in the mystery of salvation. When Jesus said “behold your mother” to the beloved disciple John at the foot of the cross, his words were meant not for John alone, but for every disciple until the end of time. And so wherever the Church is in the world, Mary is venerated under various titles of honor and devotion.

At the Annunciation, Mary became the mother of the Incarnate Word and gave him human flesh. Now we are the members of Christ’s body and we receive his flesh and blood in the holy Eucharist. It is the same body and blood Mary gave him that we now share. Spiritually, therefore, she is our mother, too, in the most profound, salvific and intimate way imaginable.

At the beginning of her son’s public ministry at the wedding feast at Cana, Mary pointed to him and said: “Do whatever he tells you.” And after he had ascended into heaven, she was with the apostles in the Upper Room before Pentecost, imploring the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. This same fervent prayer on her part is at work today and until the end of time. St. Louis de Montfort wrote, “[I]t is through Mary that the salvation of the world began, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated.” Who better than she can show us the way to live a life in the Holy Spirit, a life of faith, hope and love?

During the five years I worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State, I and some other American priests offered daily morning Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica. One of the altars we used was adorned with an image of Mary with the Latin inscription *Mater Ecclesiae* (Mother of the Church). It had been erected by Blessed (soon to be Saint) Pope Paul VI, who had officially bestowed this title upon Mary in 1964 during the Second Vatican Council. Pope Francis has now designated the Monday after Pentecost Sunday as a liturgical memorial in honor of “Mary, Mother of the Church” to be observed annually at the Masses celebrated on that day.

As archbishop of Hartford, I have been renewing annually the consecration of our archdiocese to Mary by offering a public “prayer of entrustment,” at the ordination liturgy for our new priests, and I will do so again on June 23 this year. However, I am eager to have as many people as possible join me in reciting this prayer, which I also say privately every day. I offer it to the faithful of the archdiocese in the hope that as we face the opportunities and the challenges of missionary discipleship in our time, we may be protected from evil and strengthened in the practice of our faith at the intercession of the Mother of God. †

“
She is our mother, too, in the most profound, salvific and intimate way imaginable.”
”



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

Maria:

MADRE DE DIOS, MADRE DE LA IGLESIA

A medida que envejezco y miro mi vida en retrospectiva, al igual que todos, tengo mucho por lo que estar agradecido. Me doy cuenta de cuan bendecido he sido al recibir las oportunidades que me ha brindado la Iglesia desde mis días de seminario hasta ahora, incluyendo los años que viví en Roma. He tenido muchas oportunidades de experimentar diferentes países e idiomas. Y cualquier católico que viaje ampliamente sabrá cuán universal es nuestra Iglesia Católica, y cómo es posible que aunque uno esté en el extranjero al ir a Misa o a un santuario, uno se siente en casa espiritualmente con personas de diferentes países y naciones.



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

Nuestro vínculo unificador, por supuesto, es el Señorío de Jesús y nuestra membresía en su cuerpo por la fe y el bautismo. Pero inseparablemente ligado a esto está la maternidad de María y su papel único y permanente en el misterio de la salvación. Cuando Jesús dijo “he aquí a tu madre” al discípulo amado Juan al pie de la cruz, sus palabras no fueron para Juan solo, sino para cada discípulo hasta el fin de los tiempos. Y así, donde sea que la Iglesia esté en el mundo, María es venerada bajo varios títulos de honor y devoción.

En la Anunciación, María se convirtió en la madre del Verbo Encarnado y le dio un cuerpo humano. Ahora somos los miembros del cuerpo de Cristo y recibimos su carne y sangre en la santa Eucaristía. Es el mismo cuerpo y sangre que María le dio y que ahora compartimos. Espiritualmente, por lo tanto, ella es también nuestra madre, de la manera más profunda, salvífica e íntima imaginable.

Al comienzo del ministerio público de su hijo en la fiesta de bodas en Caná, María lo señaló y les dijo: “Hagan lo que él les diga”. Y después de que él ascendió al cielo, ella estaba con los apóstoles en el Cenáculo antes de Pentecostés, implorando el regalo prometido del Espíritu Santo. Esta misma oración ferviente sigue estando presente en ella, hoy y hasta el final de los tiempos. San Luis de Montfort escribió, “[Es] a través de María que comenzó la salvación del mundo, y por medio de María, que debe ser consumada”. ¿Quién mejor que ella puede mostrarnos la manera de vivir una vida en el Espíritu Santo, una vida de fe, esperanza y amor?

Durante los cinco años que trabajé en la Secretaría de Estado de la Santa Sede, algunos sacerdotes estadounidenses y yo ofrecimos Misa matutina todos los días en la Basílica de San Pedro. Uno de los altares que usamos estaba adornado con una imagen de María con la inscripción latina *Mater Ecclesiae* (Madre de la Iglesia). Había sido erigida por el Beato Papa Pablo VI, que pronto será Santo, y quien había otorgado oficialmente este título a María en 1964 durante el Concilio Vaticano II. El Papa Francisco ha designado el lunes después del Domingo de Pentecostés como un memorial litúrgico en honor a “María, Madre de la Iglesia” que se observará anualmente en las Misas celebradas ese día.

Como arzobispo de Hartford, he estado renovando anualmente la consagración de nuestra Arquidiócesis a María. Y lo he hecho ofreciendo una oración pública para encomendar en la liturgia de ordenación a nuestros nuevos sacerdotes, y lo haré nuevamente el 23 de junio de este año. Sin embargo, tengo mucho interés en que la mayor cantidad posible de personas se unan a mí para recitar esta oración, que también digo en privado todos los días. Le ofrezco esta oración a los fieles de la arquidiócesis con la esperanza de que al enfrentar las oportunidades y los desafíos del discipulado misionero en nuestro tiempo, podamos ser protegidos del mal y fortalecidos en la práctica de nuestra fe a través de la intercesión de la Madre de Dios. †



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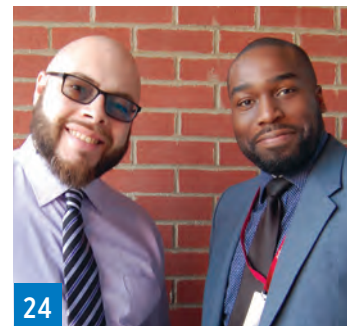
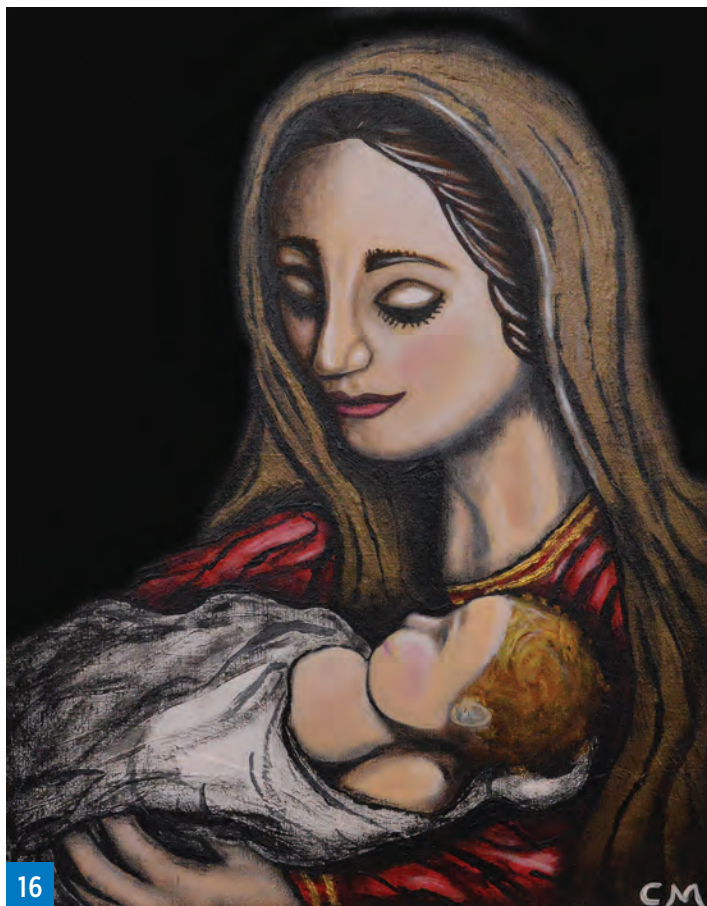
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What do you add to the Mass?

Everyone wants to belong to a dynamic parish. It's amazing, isn't it? Even people who never go to Mass still want to belong to a dynamic parish. Of course, if you stop and ask most people what it means to be a dynamic parish, they don't really have many specific ideas. It's like they aren't sure what a dynamic parish looks like, but they'll know it when they see it.

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On the other hand, specific complaints about parishes aren't difficult to find.

The music is lifeless. The homilies are boring. The people are mean. There isn't enough parking. The donuts after Mass are stale. There isn't enough programming for old people. There isn't enough programming

for young people. There are too many programs. You get the picture.

But there is a question that isn't being asked nearly enough:

What are you doing to make your parish thrive?

I mean, it's a natural question, right? You're going to belong to a parish, and you're going to want to belong to a dynamic parish, so what will your contribution be?

Maybe you've never thought about your contribution before. That's OK. How do you contribute to your parish? Are you helping your parish thrive? Consider this for a moment: If every member at your parish contributed at the same level as you are, what would your parish be like?

One of the main ways you contribute to your parish is through your presence. Your presence at Mass is a huge contribution. But what do you bring to the Mass? Do you bring your attention, your enthusiasm and your expectation? Do you anticipate God's voice and respond with your whole heart? Or do you go out of obligation, simply going through the motions?

If you feel like perhaps your contribution at Mass could be a little better, remember: Our lives change when our habits change.

Consider your habits around the Mass. What rituals do you have when it comes to attending Mass?

How do you dress? What time do you arrive? Where do you sit? Do you respond out loud, just move your lips, respond in your mind, or zone out? What do you do before Mass? What do you do after Mass?

Now is a great time to sit down and

consider your rituals surrounding the Mass.

A few years back, my wife and I decided we needed to improve our rituals surrounding the Mass. We were having more kids and they were getting older, so Mass was just plain getting difficult for our family.

So we decided to change a few things.

First, we began reading the Gospel readings in the car on the way to Mass. My wife would read, and the kids would quietly listen in the back. This would help them get focused for what was to come.

Second, we began sitting in the first few pews of the church. This isn't for everyone, but for us it made a huge difference. The kids could actually see what was going on and paid more attention.

Third, we began getting donuts after church. We wanted to create a sense of excitement around Sunday morning and the Mass. Now, the kids know that every Sunday we are going to go to Mass and get donuts as a special treat for the family. We don't use this as a reward for good behavior or a punishment for bad behavior. It's just part of the routine.

Fourth, we ask the kids every Sunday morning at the donut shop, what God said to them during the Mass. Over time, the kids began to expect God to say something to them at Mass. They listened and paid attention. After Mass, at the donut shop, they wanted to share what they had heard that week.

And we write it down in our Mass journal each week so we can look back at it later.

These four rituals surrounding our Sunday Mass experience have changed everything for our family.

Like everything else in life, things are going to change over time. As the seasons of our lives change, the rituals should change, too. The rituals I just described are great for my current season of life. They are very different than our rituals five years ago, and I'm sure our rituals five years from now will be very different too. And that's OK. It's not about doing a certain thing at Mass. It's about being able to contribute everything you've got. †



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WHEN WE'RE ANGRY WITH GOD

I hadn't seen Kevin since we worked together on the night shift at a newspaper in New York more than 25 years ago.

When we met for lunch, he talked about his career, his job hunt, our mutual friends and his life. He had met a charming woman, they dated, they married and they had a daughter.

The little girl, whom he loved dearly, was a special needs child, and his wife, who was very successful in her profession, was away on business a lot. He ignored his suspicions that she was having an affair, but when their daughter was less than a year old, she left them both, and he had to struggle through a bitter divorce. He concluded his painful story with the comment, "At least, I didn't lose my faith ... I'm not angry with God."

When something goes wrong in our lives, God is often charged with the offense. The One we need the most is the one we blame the most. "God, how could you let this happen?" or "God, I never want to talk to you again!" And so on.

Over the years, I've lost count of the times I've been angry with God for something I thought he should have prevented, resolved or handled better — I didn't get the promotion, I didn't get the girl, I didn't get the recognition, someone was sick, someone died. Whether it was minute or monumental, God often took

the blame. My thinking went something like, "God, after all I did for you ..."

(Fill in the blank.) If I were Kevin, I would probably have said, "God, why didn't you stop her from leaving? How am I going to take care of my daughter alone?"

I suspect many people who claim to be atheists are angry with God for something that happened in their lives, which hurt them terribly. I once knew a man who spent a lifetime angry with God because his wife died and left him alone. His pain was compounded by his anger. Even though he never wanted to talk to God again, I'm sure God was always there, pleading for him to come back and trying to ease his pain, which only God's love can do.

When I was young and got angry with God, I assumed he was responding, "Go ahead, behave like that ... you'll be sorry!"

When, in fact, God was saying, "Don't be angry. I know it hurts. I'm always with you."

God is an infinitely loving and caring parent, constantly watching over a world of people who behave like toddlers prone to temper tantrums and angry outbursts. Nevertheless, he is always calling us back from our resentment and pain, to heal our wounds and offer us hope.

Several months ago, I attended a Mass of Remembrance at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown and sat behind a family who had

lost a 6-year-old daughter in the shooting at Sandy Hook School five years ago. I had to admit to myself that I never could have endured their pain, and I

knew with absolute certainty I would have been angry with God, the world and just about anyone else I could think of.

It's easy to forget that God isn't the cause of our pain — he's the source of our healing.

It's easy to blame God for the consequences of our free will, but while we sputter and spew, God's busy picking up the pieces, often without our realizing, and making all things new from the mess that we or someone else created.

Despite our anger, God waits for us to return, loving us and forgiving us, just like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, who when confronted by his resentful and jealous older son, didn't respond, "You ungrateful lout ... after all I did for you!" Instead, he tried to console him with the reassuring words, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours."

Anger destroys our spiritual life, anger hinders forgiveness and anger impedes love. What's the antidote? Prayer and quiet time in front of the tabernacle, talking to God and emptying our hearts of resentment and grief. Only that will heal us.

As we were about to leave, Kevin ended his story. He told me that after all the hurt and pain, he found a woman who loves him and loves his daughter. I couldn't help but think that was God at work. †



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

WORLD WAR I

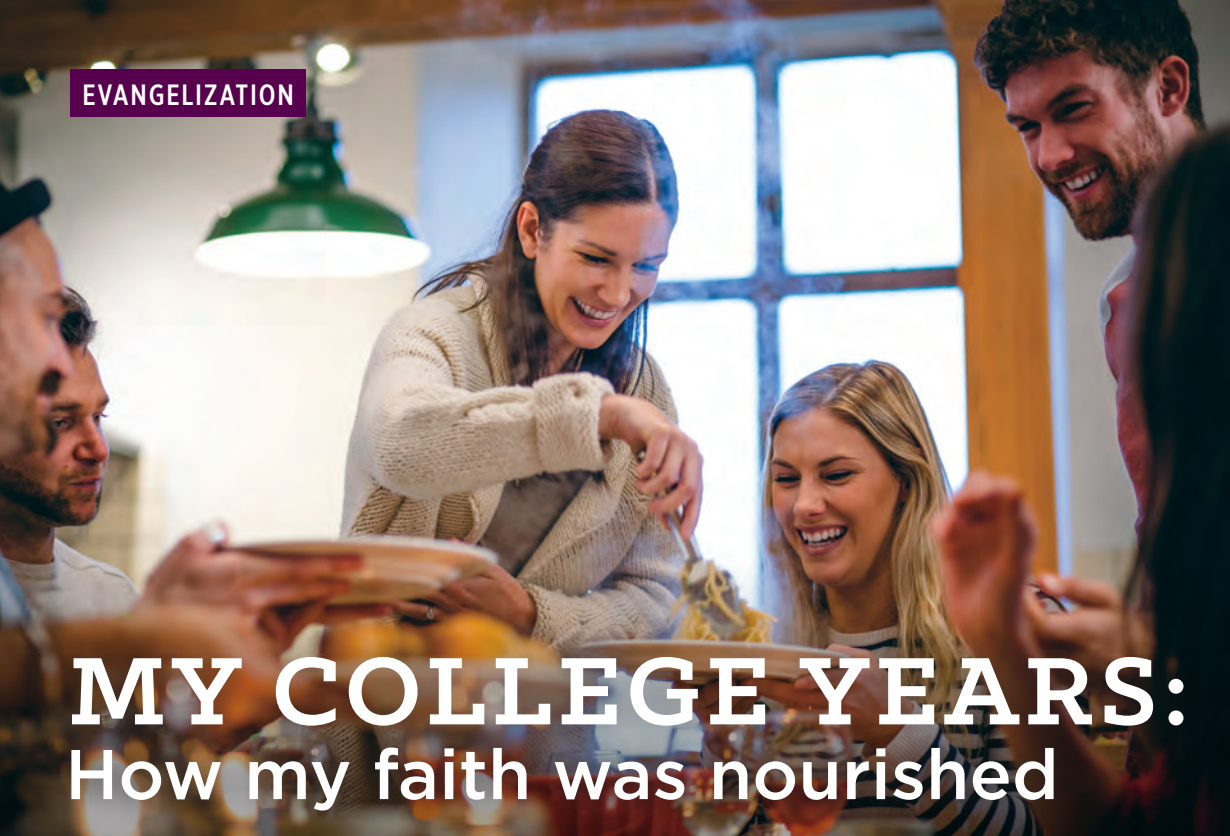
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MY COLLEGE YEARS: How my faith was nourished

was dumped into the enormous pot of boiling water and we would cut up the peppers and cukes for the salad. Finally, we made the Kool-Aid, nearly crunchy with sugary mix, just how college students like it.

More important than the work, Father Larry and I, and sometimes others, talked. We talked about the tunes on the oldies station playing from the ancient radio — the size of a suitcase — on top

of the refrigerator. We talked about life in college, what we were learning and what we might want to do with our lives. We talked about books we were reading and events in the news. No matter what we talked about, the conversation always seemed so easy and Father Larry was always genuinely interested and engaged. We talked about life; about how things were and how things should be.

Then the crowd would arrive in time for grace and the weekly pasta dinner. Some (if not many) of the same faces would be seen again on Sunday night in the library for Mass. Father Larry's sermons were always educational, informative and wholly relevant to the group of college students he preached to. My first adult foray into examining biblical passages in a critical way, considering historical context, textual nuance and genre, were sparked by Father Larry's homilies. My parents noted my renewed religious interest after a few years of my friendship with Father Larry.

For me, Father Larry, who is the Catholic campus chaplain at Eastern, embodies the greatest form of evangelization: the simple and unassuming way that he lives his

would arrive at the Office of Campus Ministry around 4 p.m. every Thursday, barring finals week. Despite the formal title, the office is actually a beautiful Victorian home right at the edge of the campus of Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic. The house is Gothic revival in style, but with a welcoming color palate of earth tones and an inviting wrap-around veranda. College students, including one of my best buddies, could rent apartments on the top two floors of the lovely house. The first floor is home to the director of campus ministry, a wonderful library of religious and secular classics, a kitchen and dining and sitting areas.

Every Thursday, I would ring the doorbell, be shown into the home by Very Rev. Laurence LaPointe, also known as Father Larry, or one of the house's tenants and would eagerly get to work. First, the giant plywood

painting of Snoopy would be secured to the veranda, signaling that a feast would soon begin. Then the bread was brought in, sliced and buttered, with garlic copiously applied before it went into the oven. Next the pasta



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faith and brings others into God's light without proselytizing.

Pope St. John Paul II said, "All who believe in Christ should feel, as an integral part of their faith, an apostolic concern to pass on to others its light and joy. This concern must become, as it were, a hunger and thirst to make the Lord known, given the vastness of the non-Christian world." In some respects, a college campus can be a microcosm of a non-Christian world for many. In that world, there are those like Father Larry who figuratively (and sometimes literally) satisfy a hunger and a thirst in searching college students.

My college experience prepared me for the study of law; a career practicing criminal and civil litigation; to be a well-rounded, liberal-minded thinker (at least I like to believe); and, above all, to keep and live the faith. The most remarkable part is that Father Larry passed on the light and joy of Christ by his welcoming

“
All who believe in Christ should feel, as an integral part of their faith, an apostolic concern to pass on to others its light and joy.
 ”

— POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

and tender presence, his thoughtful conversation, his deep sense of knowing and compassion. Father Larry is the kind of person who makes you feel like a better kind of person, too. Father Larry's invitation to the warmth and light of Christ was his weekly reminder at Mass that on Thursday night at the campus ministry building, the best garlic bread west of Rome would be served. It was and it is.

The pasta dinners and intimate Masses at Eastern had been taking place under Father Larry's direction for decades before I was a student, and undoubtedly have continued in the years since. While I miss both, there is no going back. The end of one chapter is the beginning of another. Nevertheless, I have asked Father Larry to take the show on the road, officiating at my marriage and baptizing my firstborn. Who was a similar evangelizing figure in your life? Who might someday say that you were a Father Larry to them? †



EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Archdiocese of Hartford has made campus ministry one of four areas of special attention for the 2018 Archbishop's Annual Appeal, as featured in the AAA video. The March issue of *Catholic Transcript* magazine contained a story about the Archdiocese of Hartford's Catholic Campus Ministry Center for the students of the University of Hartford. The new center is supported by the Archbishop's Annual Appeal, which also is a major supporter of campus ministries at various colleges and universities throughout the archdiocese.

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THE MAN IN THE RED EYEGLASSES

A family member is beatified

STORY BY
BARBARA JEAN
DALY HORELL

“This is the feast, the victory of our God!” Music filled Detroit’s Ford Field, proclaiming God’s triumph in the life of Blessed Solanus Casey, a Capuchin Franciscan priest. The voices of 66,000 singers greeted the procession of Capuchins and cardinals, the rich and the learned, as well as the healed and the beloved poor. It was Nov. 18, 2017; the joy bounced off the domed ceiling at the beatification rite for this self-effacing American man who was humbled by circumstances of birth and who bore humiliations by choice, in faith.

I was privileged, as a descendant of Father Solanus’ sister Genevieve, to have a floor seat at Ford Field as this humble friar was exalted in a victory so rare that it took a sold-out NFL stadium to contain it. Young adults in the crowd sported eyeglasses with bright red frames in honor of Blessed Solanus’ trademark red-rimmed spectacles.

I reflected on the life of Father Solanus and what his beatification means to me.

A “simplex” priest who was granted only limited priestly faculties; a “lesser-friar” of St. Francis; a man of limited education — Father Solanus lived in the poverty of his vocation and was often ill. Many of us would sink toward depression under the limitations Father Solanus accepted with thanksgiving. What many would view as defeat, Father Solanus joyfully embraced as sanctifying humiliation. For Solanus, humiliation became the doorway to Christ’s victory and

power in his 20th century American life. The story of Blessed Solanus is the story of Jesus of Nazareth, who, humiliated, condemned and executed, rose victorious over the great enemy of us all: death itself.

The beatification of Father Solanus officially proclaims him to be alive with Christ Jesus in heaven and thus able to intercede for those on earth who seek his prayers. For 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide, the greatest victory is to be canonized a saint. Blessed Solanus is one step from that greatest of victories.

In our wealthy nation, Christians often forget that Christ usually is most victorious in the life of the humblest among us.

“I think Father’s humility is a sign of the Gospel truth that God works through the little ones,” said Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron. “St. Paul says, ‘We’re just vessels of clay so that God can be glorified.’ Father’s life, to my mind, is proof that the New Testament didn’t end when the

books were finished being written, but they continue today.”

To me, the red-framed eyeglasses represent the paradox of Christ’s living victorious through the eyes and heart and voice of Blessed Solanus Casey. The fact that Solanus saw poorly without glasses reminds us that he was weak. By human standards, he needed help in many ways. Weakened in childhood by the diphtheria from which two of his sisters died and by a painful skin disease that never would be cured, the real “failing” that plagued Blessed Solanus as a young man was his inability to master priestly studies. His seminary studies were offered only in what were for him



▶ Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of the Archdiocese of Hartford’s Catholic Biblical School, left, is pictured with Paula Medina Zarate, whose miraculous cure was recognized by Pope Francis to advance Father Solanus’ cause for canonization.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BARBARA JEAN DALY HORELL

FATHER SOLANUS CASEY

One day in 1929, during the Great Depression, the poverty-stricken residents of Detroit began lining up outside St. Bonaventure Monastery — hungry and desperate. Father Solanus Casey, a Capuchin priest at the monastery, answered their call for help, telling the other friars, “They are hungry; get them some soup and sandwiches.” That day, the hungry and poor of Detroit felt comfort for the first time in months thanks to Father Solanus Casey, a beloved figure in the city

whose compassion knew no bounds.

Father Solanus Casey, who spent 22 years at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit feeding the poor, praying for healing for the sick, and bringing a sense of peace and compassion to countless others, met the requirements for beatification and was named “blessed” in a Mass at Ford Field in Detroit on Nov. 18, 2017. The next step is sainthood.

When Father Solanus arrived in Detroit in 1924,

the tortuous languages of Latin and German. He never succeeded in a way that satisfied his superiors, so he was ordained, but never allowed to exercise full priestly ministries.

Blessed Solanus's weakness proved to be the doorway through which Christ came to reside in him. Solanus may not have seen the world clearly, but he registered with mystical understanding the plight of many of the least among us. Never allowed to preach a formal sermon or to hear confessions, Blessed Solanus was in residence, for about half a century, to answer the door at monastery offices on the streets of New York and Detroit. Ordinary folks rang the doorbell, sometimes for 18 hours a day, to talk with the one they called "the holy priest."

The paradox of Blessed Solanus' red glasses is the paradox of the Gospel. Despite poor vision, Solanus saw with mystical insight into the heart of Christ, joining it in his own person to the hearts of the downtrodden, as evidenced by a thousand "favors" that came about through his intercession. Not distracted by the American dream of success, Solanus saw the sick and the poor, the wealthy and the strong, the powerful and the uneducated, all with the eyes of his Savior. In 21st-century terms, Solanus became a kind of superconductor of Jesus' healing, consoling and teaching.

Of all the favors reported, Pope Francis recognizes the miraculous 2012 healing of a Panamanian woman, Paula Medina Zarate, who

he was already known as a beloved doorkeeper from his 20-year ministry at monasteries in the New York City area. Throughout his many years of ministry in New York and Detroit, Father Solanus was greatly sought after as a counselor, and for his blessings of the sick. Many felt his blessing brought about a cure for their illness. All who came to him were consoled by his counsel and his serenity.

Father Solanus died in Detroit in 1957. During his life and after his death, Father Solanus was known for his

“
Will we once
again find words
to console and
strengthen one
another in trials?
”

— BARBARA JEAN
DALY HORELL

ONE PHOTO/LEE KOVALSKY, COURTESY MICHIGAN CATHOLIC

▲ Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, concelebrates the beatification Mass of Blessed Solanus Casey on Nov. 18, 2017, at Ford Field in Detroit. At least 60,000 attended the beatification of the Capuchin Franciscan friar.

had a congenital, incurable skin condition. Fifty-five years after Solanus' death, Zarate prayed for a long list of others' intentions and for herself at the friar's tomb. Even before rising from her knees, Zarate experienced instantaneous and visible relief from her skin condition.

How could it be that an encounter between a dead man and a hurting woman could result in a beatification? The answer, of course, lies in the way Blessed Solanus lived his life. At a young age, Blessed Solanus relinquished all self-serving dreams he might have had and obediently listened only for the plan of Christ in his life. This obedient holiness is itself a miracle and a victory in today's America. But it is also "the one thing needed" (Lk 10:42) of baptized Catholics that we most often neglect.

healing touch, and for the power of his intercessory prayers. Because of this, Father Gerald Walker, provincial minister of the Detroit Capuchins, initiated the first step to sainthood for Solanus after his death: He sent a report detailing Father Solanus' life to the general superiors in Rome. In 1995, he was declared "Venerable" by Pope St. John Paul II. In May 2017, Pope Francis issued a decree confirming a miracle as a result of Venerable Solanus' intercession, announcing the plan for his beatification. ■

Can we learn from Blessed Solanus to pay faithful attention to Jesus' presence wherever we find him? With a firm belief in our own unworthy weakness, can we wear the red eye-glasses of humility, taking our eyes off of ourselves? Can we hold our so-called strengths lightly, depending not on ourselves, but on God and our neighbor? Father Solanus called religion "the happy science of our relationship with and dependence on God and our neighbor."

By sharing the humble vision of Blessed Solanus, will today's faithful reinvigorate our faith on Solanus' blessed terms? Will we once again find words to console and strengthen one another in trials? Might we, like Blessed Solanus, look through the "red glasses" and conform our lives to the victory of our God? †

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HOW CAN I HELP ... ?



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who is now a Catholic priest.*

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the day, and prayer resources.

F **aitiful readers** — many of the
questions I get begin with these four
words: How can I help ...?

It's a wonderful thing to get a message that
basically reads: "I want to help someone!" As
a priest, I am touched that so many people
want to help their brothers and sisters.

So, I'm going to answer a couple of these
questions with one simple caveat: No matter
what type of problem someone has, the first
and most important step is to pray for them
and pray that God will guide you in your
response. With that, let's get right to it!

Q

**HOW CAN I HELP ...
my friends whose marriage is falling apart?**

It's a tough thing to watch a marriage falling apart, and I feel deeply blessed by knowing that you want to help people in that situation.

Obviously, there are times when divorce is not only allowed, but necessary for the safety of one spouse or the couple's children. Generally, common sense will dictate understanding those situations where there is no other recourse, such as abusive relationships. Outside of those, I would urge you to see it as your duty to help this couple fight for their marriage — to help them address the issue/issues together with prayer and a professional in order to preserve the sacrament.

Share stories of times when you and your spouse struggled. Remind

them of the times when things were better, pray with them, encourage them to remember what they loved about their husband or wife, offer to help with the kids when they go to marriage counseling or even when they simply need time together as a couple. These are great ways to help people whose marriages are struggling.

Beyond that, there is an excellent program called Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vie). If you type that into Google, you'll see how to sign up. I have sent struggling couples to this program and it was extremely helpful. Besides this, there are other excellent options out there that your diocese may be able to tell you about. ■

Q

**HOW CAN I HELP ...
my priest, who always seems so harried?**

As a priest, let me say this: Bless you for asking! A priest's life is a blessed but busy one. I find it to be a life that is filled with pressure. As a result, I have a lot of ideas here that can help, beyond prayer.

First, I'd encourage you to be supportive. Everyone is an expert on how the priest should be, what he should be doing, etc. Don't be that person. In the immortal words of my dad, "You don't know what you don't know." Trust that he is doing his best. Trust that he loves God until he does something to take that trust away.

Second, let him pray before Mass and be present to people after. Don't hang out in the sacristy before Mass

to have a conversation unless you are doing a ministry. Personally, I know that asking me to remember something before or after Mass is generally a bad idea. Call the secretary and let him/her know what you want during the week, rather than try to get him to remember something after a busy Sunday.

Be sure to let him know when you or someone you love is in the hospital. Don't assume he knows or that someone will tell him; people get very hurt when the priest doesn't come see them, but the priest can't do what he doesn't know.

Best thing? Don't gossip. Ever. You'll add years onto your priest's life. †

Here for all of us.



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ISTOCK



Why do Catholics pray to *Mary and the saints?*

A: I remember visiting a Protestant couple I had befriended during my seminary years at their home in Maryland one evening. As dinner was winding down, one of them asked me, “So why do you Catholics pray to Mary and the saints? Shouldn’t they go directly to Jesus?”

This is a common concern of our Protestant brothers and sisters. I looked around their living room and noted many family pictures hanging on the walls, spanning generations. I asked them why these pictures

were meaningful to them. The couple said that these were the people they loved and cared about the most. They entrusted their deceased relatives and friends to God’s mercy and they prayed for their children and grandchildren to have healthy and blessed lives.

I replied that this is a perfectly sensible thing for a Christian disciple to do — and it is why it is perfectly sensible to have statues and pictures of Mary and the saints in our churches and homes. They are important members of our family of faith, family related by

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blood, the precious blood of Jesus. Just as we turn to fellow Christians to ask them to pray for us, we turn in a special way to our Blessed Mother Mary and the canonized saints of the Church for their intercession and guidance as we make our pilgrim way in this life. This sharing of spiritual goods flows from our baptism into the mystical body of Christ, the Church. It is why we profess in the creed our belief in “the communion of the saints.”

It is important to understand that, as Catholics, we don't worship Mary or the saints; worship is due to God alone. Instead, we honor them with special devotion because of their example of faithfulness to God's will in their lives and their place worshipping God in eternity. Just as the moon reflects the sunlight, Mary and the saints reflect God's grace and love in their own unique, beautiful ways. The power of their good example and intercessory prayers spurs us to join them in heaven.

We venerate Mary precisely because of her unique relationship to Jesus and her complete openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “Mary's role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it.” (CCC #964) Her motherhood in the order of grace inspires all generations to call her blessed (cf. Lk 1:48) and, as poor sinners, to seek her prayers now and at the hour of our death.

Mary always wants to lead us to her son. She is powerful precisely because she knows her total dependence on God's Providence and grace. The saints imitated her fiat, her trusting “yes” to God in the obedience of faith. Like them,

we, too, are invited to surrender our lives to God in our time and place.

The power of Mary's intercession is evident even from the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. When our Lord performs his first miracle at the wedding of Cana, it is through Mary's intercession after she brings the needs

of the newlywed couple to her son and then tells the servants at the banquet, “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn 2:5) Wonderful things result every time we heed Mary's sage advice and strive to do whatever Jesus tells us.

How is God calling each of us to reflect his light in the particular circumstances of our lives? It would be rather intimidating to strive to answer this call on our own. Thank God for the gift of our Blessed Mother and the saints who accompany us on our

journey of discipleship.

So, instead of saying that we Catholics pray “to” Mary and the saints, perhaps it is better to say that we pray “through” them or “with” them to our Triune God. They are our models in virtue and intercessors in prayer. Like a good corner in the boxing ring, we find this great cloud of witnesses coaching us, encouraging us, binding up our wounds with their prayers, refreshing us with their good example and cheering us on to fight the good fight of faith, to run the race of discipleship and so gain the prize of eternal life in Christ as they did. (cf. 2 Tm 4:7).

Mary, queen of all saints, pray for us! †



We don't worship Mary or the saints; worship is due to God alone.

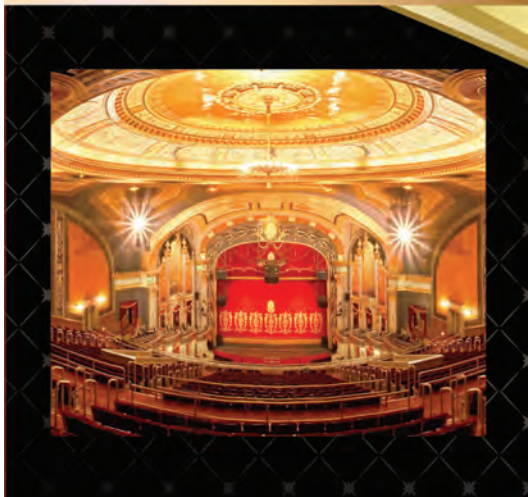
Instead, we honor them with special devotion because of their example of faithfulness to God's will in their lives and their place worshipping God in eternity.



FATHER JEFFREY GUBBIOTTI
is pastor of
Holy Rosary Parish
in Ansonia.



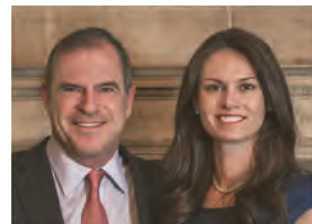
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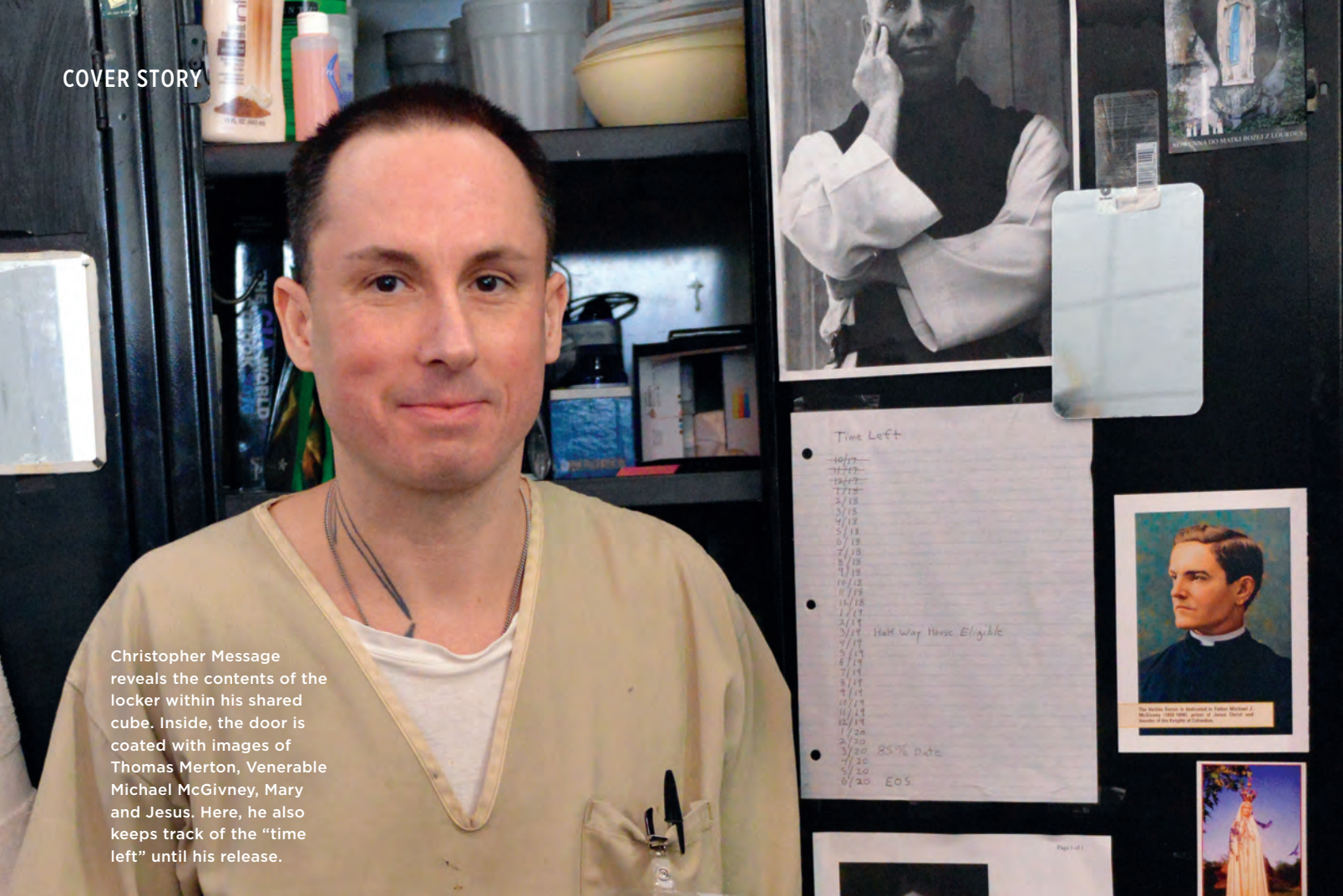
THROUGH
RELIGIOUS
ART THERAPY

STORY BY
SHELLEY WOLF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DAVID ROYCE

Inmate Christopher Message stands behind the altar in the worship space at Cybulski Community Reintegration Center in Somers. His painting of the crucifixion of Jesus is hung before each Mass.





Christopher Message reveals the contents of the locker within his shared cube. Inside, the door is coated with images of Thomas Merton, Venerable Michael McGivney, Mary and Jesus. Here, he also keeps track of the “time left” until his release.

IN THE CUBE HE SHARED with three other inmates, Christopher Message worked every night for nearly a month on an image of the crucifixion of Jesus on a 2-foot-6-inch by 3-foot-4-inch canvas at the Cybulski Community Reintegration Center in Somers, which is part of the Willard-Cybulski Correctional Institution. After sketching the image, he mixed paints and layered on the black background, flesh tones and white highlights. When he wasn’t satisfied with the results, he repainted sections.

When Message thought he might be done, he leaned the painting against a locker, stepped back and asked the other inmates in the military veterans’ dormitory for their opinion.

“I called my friend Mike and I said, ‘What do you think?’ He said, ‘Stop! Stop! Don’t do anything more to it. Leave it alone. Leave it alone,’” Message recalls.

Before long, others joined in.

“I had 10-15 inmates crammed into my cube, all staring at it. Everybody was in silence just staring at it,” he says. Their collective conclusion? Leave it alone. It’s done. “I was like, ‘All right. I’m done. I’m stopping,’” Message says.

In retrospect, he is surprised that so many people, including the corrections officers, expressed so much interest in the creative process and in the final results. He’s equally pleased by the mood of the piece — dramatic, yet intimate — just as he had envisioned. Message’s mastery

over the subject is also a happy outcome, considering he has never had any formal art training.

“Out in the world, before prison, I couldn’t even draw a stick figure,” he admits.

Now Message hopes to use his budding artistic talent to share his affection for Jesus, Mary and the saints with others when he is released from the reintegration center, which prepares offenders for release into the community. Five of his paintings have already been shown as part of an exhibit at Lichtenstein Center for the Arts in Pittsfield, Mass.

A need for portable art

Message, 41, credits his newfound passion for painting to a religious art therapy program developed by Deacon Michael Torres, liaison for Catholic prison chaplains for the Archdiocese of Hartford. Deacon Torres is also the Catholic chaplain/facilitator at Willard-Cybulski Correctional Institution in Enfield and Somers and at Carl Robinson Correctional Institution in Enfield.

As chaplain of Catholic services, he prepares men who are interested in receiving the sacraments and reconnects many to the teachings of the *catechism*, which he says is the best guide for a healthier journey when they return back to society.

“I think it redirects them back to the core of what they learned as kids, the teachings and doctrine of the faith, and the love of God and neighbor,” Deacon Torres says. His work also reinforces “how important it is to have that blanket of spirituality as part of the reintegration, so they can utilize that when they get back home.”

In addition, Deacon Torres serves as a deacon at St. Martha Parish in Enfield.

Deacon Torres began the art program in the Cybulski Community Reintegration Center in 2016 after the staff told him to remove religious items from the nondescript space that was used for multid denominational worship and religious programs. The room needed to be cleared after each use to prepare for the other religious faiths.

“That struck me,” he says. If we can’t put things up permanently, he thought, maybe we can create something portable. He had seen evidence of artistic talent in the housing units, he says, and wanted to direct it toward the worship space.

So Deacon Torres invited inmates to participate in an art therapy class for one hour every Tuesday. Five Catholic men signed on, including Message. The class was held in the worship space using art supplies left over from an old art program at the prison, plus new supplies donated by St. Catherine of Siena Parish in West Simsbury.

Deacon Torres left it to the men to draw and paint whatever they wished.

“I’ll be honest with you, I have no art skills whatsoever,” Deacon Torres said.

“But it attracted me, what they’re able to express in their artwork. We have conversations about our relationship with God and how can we express that in works of art. That’s pretty much the core of the program.”

There was no instructor, but the men quickly began to collaborate, teaching each other. Some had perfected sketching, while others excelled at mixing paints. “So they were sharing their gifts,” Deacon Torres recalls. “It was really special.”



Deacon Michael Torres is the liaison for Catholic prison chaplains for the Archdiocese of Hartford.



**I THINK IT REDIRECTS THEM
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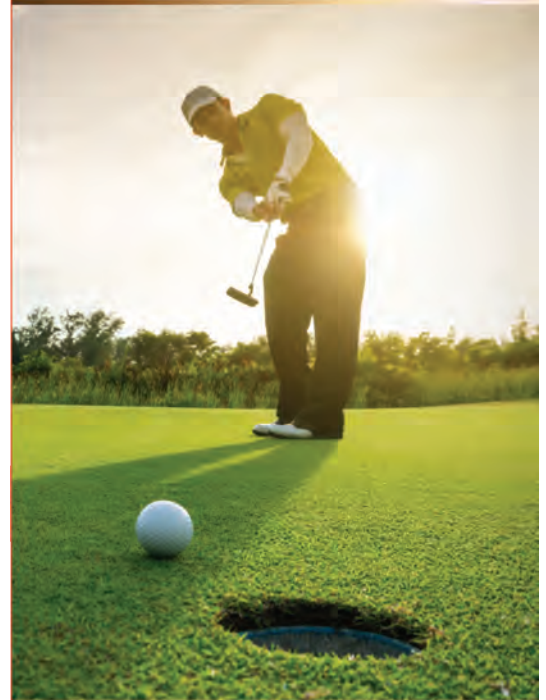
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Finding his style

Message shared the sketching skills he had developed on his own during the first few years of his sentence. He enjoyed the leap to painting and found solace working in the worship space.

“Going to the chapel and doing the art program, it’s a relaxing environment and nice and quiet,” Message says. “You can use your imagination and put all your emotions into the paintings. It kind of becomes a form of meditation and prayer at the same time.”

His first painting was of Jesus with the crown of thorns on an 11-by-14 1/2-inch canvas. “We didn’t have the skin tone paint yet, so I did it in all dramatic black and gray,” he recalls.

In time, Deacon Torres asked the men to contribute paintings that could serve as the Stations of the Cross.

“It was challenging doing the Stations of the Cross and trying to capture the mood of each station onto a small canvas,” Message said. One of his contributions was the fifth station, in which Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross. “They met face to face. I did a zoom-in.”

Father Robert Villa, pastor of St. Martha Parish in Enfield, visited the Cybulski center and other prisons each week to celebrate Mass and offer confession. He also requested religious art.

“I contemplated getting a crucifix for the wall,” he says of Cybulski, “but then I heard of Message and that he was experimenting with sacred art.”

Father Villa asked Message to create a larger artwork to place above the altar, and selected the painting “Christ Crucified” by Spanish painter Diego Velázquez as inspiration for the new work. The inmate agreed to the assignment.

“When they ordered the large canvas, I was pretty scared,” Message admits. “I thought, ‘I can hardly paint on these small canvasses and now I’m supposed to do it on this big one.’ It was very intimidating.”

A big fan of the Italian Renaissance painter Caravaggio, Message ordered two books about his life and works and picked up the technique of *chiaroscuro*, the use of high-contrast light and shadow for dramatic effect.

Many artists have painted Jesus on the cross, Message notes, but he wanted to make the work his own personal expression. “It’s completely my own mood, shading, color,” he says. “I even added the teardrops coming down his face.”



“
You can use
your imagination

AND PUT ALL YOUR EMOTIONS
INTO THE PAINTINGS. IT KIND OF
BECOMES A FORM OF MEDITATION
AND PRAYER AT THE SAME TIME.

— CHRISTOPHER
MESSAGE

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Christopher Message shows where he stores his paint supplies in the cube he shares with three other inmates.

Message began the piece in class and obtained permission from authorities at the facility to continue working on it in his dorm. Now that it's completed, the painting is securely housed in the chaplain's office until Message hangs it above the altar before each Mass.

"Being his first time, he did a phenomenal job," Father Villa says. "It definitely enhances the [Mass] experience for the guys."

Coming full circle

Message says he had no previous training in the fine arts, but his life story suggests an artistic nature.

Born in Hartford, he was adopted at 1½ and raised in Fairfield, where he attended Mass every week with his adoptive family. He played piano, and even played the organ in church from the age of 9 through his years at a Jesuit high school.

Message joined the Navy for a brief stint, then was gainfully employed as a barber — a profession that combines technical skill and creative talent. He also worked as an emergency medical technician in Bridgeport, where he says he witnessed violence and tragedy.

He drifted away from the Church. His anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder got out of hand. In his attempt to control them, he says, he began to abuse alcohol just to sleep, and later abused prescription medications and cocaine.

His issues escalated until, in his words, he "went off the deep end" and committed a series of arsons in quick succession in Fairfield County. According to news accounts in the *Connecticut Post*, a firefighter was injured fighting one of the fires and Message was sentenced to 10 years in prison followed by five years probation. He has already served 6 1/2 years.

"The Catholic Church in prison has definitely pulled me back to where I needed to be and helped me to rebuild my faith," he says today. "I take full responsibility for what I did, and I'm ashamed, embarrassed, humiliated. I never broke the law ever before.

"I plan to seek professional help if any issues arise," he adds, "and never turn to drugs and alcohol again. I have my family and friends and faith in [God and] the Catholic Church for structure and support when I get out."

Faith in a future

During his incarceration, Message not only found his way back to the faith, he also discovered his personal vocation.

As part of his participation in the religious art therapy program, Message read Thomas Merton's book *No Man Is an Island*. In the book, Message says, the American theologian and mystic suggested that everyone has his or her specific vocation.

"I kind of believe my vocation is to be sharing the love of God, Mary and the saints with the world through beautiful paintings and beautiful music," he says.

Once Message has completed his time at Cybulski, he plans to take formal painting classes and also hopes to do more with his music.

During his early years at MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution, he composed a series of eight classical piano sonatas, titled "Sonatas for the Saints." He says he has 80 pages of handwritten sheet music.

"I would love to be able to put on some kind of concerts in churches out in the world," Message says, "and maybe have my paintings in the background while the music is being played."

Message has other dreams. He is enrolled in a certificate program for human services management, which is offered on-site by Asnuntuck Community College of Enfield, and he hopes to find work in that field someday.

In the meantime, he has given a few paintings away as gifts to his girlfriend, mother and Archbishop Leonard P. Blair. Of his mother, he says, "Seeing my artwork, it gives her comfort knowing that I'm OK and doing what I'm doing in prison." †

Deacon Torres says chaplains can always use the help of more prison ministry volunteers to assist with various prayer activities, programs and sacramental preparation. Spanish-speaking volunteers also are needed.

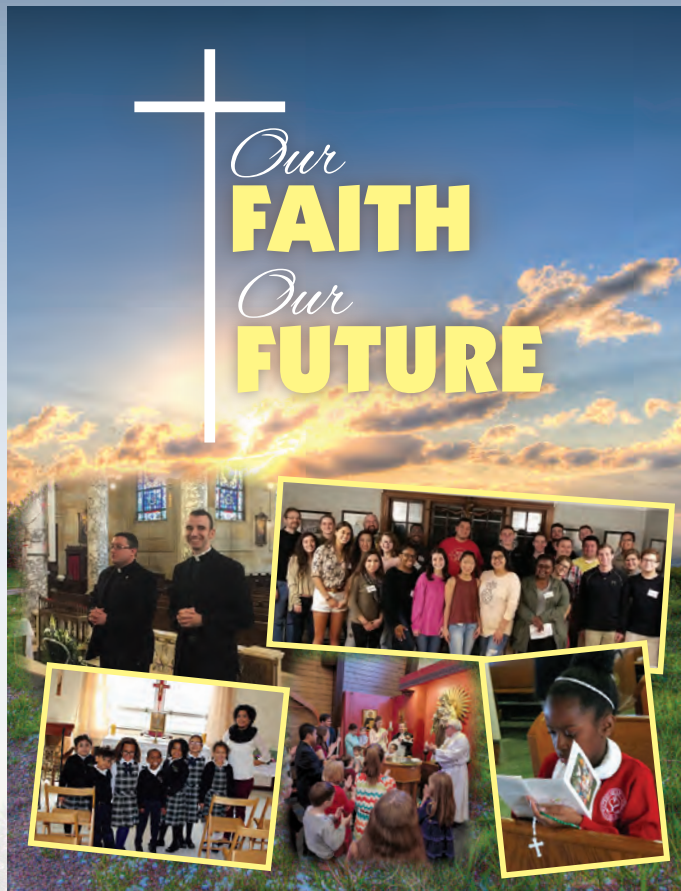


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Archbishop's Annual Appeal *helps fathers become dads*

Michael Wilson talks to Luis Santiago at Southside Family Center in Hartford.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF RADIO AND TELEVISION, CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

Hill, Southside and Parker Memorial family centers in Hartford. It is supported in part by donations to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal.

Santiago runs the program at Southside Family Center. Alwyn Foster heads it up at Asylum Hill and Parker Memorial family centers.

Santiago and Foster use their personal experience as dads and a lot of training to help as many as 180 other men each year to become better fathers.

"I've been involved in the fatherhood program since 2012, six years now," said Santiago. He works to educate fathers on parenting skills and overcoming barriers.

Using a curriculum called Fatherhood Development, he stresses positive parenting, emphasizing the role of the father, he said. In the case management aspect of the program, he assesses the fathers and helps them overcome any barriers to loving relationships with their children.

"We set goals and we help them achieve them. Success can mean a lot of different things to different dads. One of them could be just getting employment. Another could mean getting custody or visitation rights to the kids," Santiago said.

He asks each dad to make a commitment to complete an eight-week program, after which he bestows a certificate of completion. But that's not the end.

"We say, 'We're here to support you. If you want to keep coming, you can keep coming.' And some of the dads do come and continue to engage the services, while others feel they got what they needed and moved on," he said.

Most men succeed, he said, and many return to encourage

Michael Wilson said he would do "anything and everything" to be able to have a healthy relationship with his son.

A recovering opioid addict, now clean for more than four years, Wilson, whose last name has been changed for this story at his request, told a court-appointed guardian ad litem (GAL) that he wanted meaningful access to his 11-year-old son, who lives primarily with the son's mother, Wilson's former wife.

The GAL, sworn to act in the best interests of the child, suggested Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood, a program run by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

During hour-long weekly sessions with fatherhood specialist Luis Santiago at Southside Family Center in Hartford, Wilson discussed his thoughts and feelings on specific topics. "We talked about what it's like to be a man and how to shape or mold our sons into being thoughtful, well-adjusted young men," said Wilson, a professional chef working in a corporate setting in the Hartford area.

His sessions with Santiago were often difficult, he said. "There were

a couple of sessions where I got emotional. And it was nice because it brought out things that I had been putting away and not bringing up, kind of hiding from," he said.

Because of the success of the fatherhood program, Wilson's son now spends every other weekend with him, and they see each other twice during the week, usually at his son's karate practice or lacrosse games.

Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood was launched at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford in 2012 to involve and engage fathers in the healthy nurturing of their children. Today, the program is in place at Asylum



**STORY BY
JACK SHEEDY**



other dads in the program.

Foster has had similar successes at Asylum Hill and Parker Memorial centers.

“We provide an eight-week parenting program that covers everything from effective co-parenting to [child] advocate practices,” he said.

“We also do a family relationship course, which is a course between a mom and dad, whether they are together or just co-parenting from separate homes,” he said.

Some men are mandated to attend by the court system, to help them find ways to establish emotional bonds with their children while they find ways to catch up on financial support, he said. Other men step forward proactively because they recognize they need guidance, he said.

Santiago said, “I really believe that I’ve seen a difference when a father’s involved. The impact that a father has on the life of a child, it’s immeasurable. We understand that people say there’s no love like the love of a mother, and I respect that; but there’s such an impact that a father plays in both a son and a daughter — in different ways, but they do have an impact. We have so many people who are not complete because they don’t have a father involved in their lives.”

Both Santiago and Foster gave examples of how well the program is working.

“Every time I help a father to become a better man, I’m also helping the family to become a stronger family.”

— ALWYN FOSTER

Santiago said, “A couple of years ago, there was this father who came to me and he was working with child protective services in, I believe, North Carolina, because he had just found out — he didn’t know — that he had fathered a child, and five or six years had gone by and the child was in foster care and the mother had lost the rights to the child.”

Working with the North Carolina agency, Santiago helped the father to fly down there to see his child, he said.

“It took a lot of work, but one of the greatest things is that eventually he was able to gain full custody of this biological child, and they began to form a relationship,” he said.

Foster related another success story: “There was a dad that came into the group. You know, many of the guys are referred by the court, so they have a high level of disdain for even being there. But he came into the group and the other guys noticed that he had a little bit of an attitude and they addressed it,” he said.

“Come to find out, he had so many issues with his children because he had so much unforgiveness in his heart for his own father. Long

+
FOR MORE INFORMATION
on Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood, call Asylum Hill Family Center at 860.244.9944, Parker Memorial Family Center at 860.757.0827 or Southside Family Center at 860.297.7800.



PHOTO BY JACK SHEEDY

▲ Fatherhood specialists Luis Santiago, left, and Alwyn Foster.

story short, we ended up reaching out to his dad throughout the course of the group — his own father — and amending that relationship,” Foster said.

“In the completion ceremony, his father was the only person to be there when he got his certificate,” he said.

“When you affect the father, you affect the whole family. You have so much influence on their wives or their girlfriends, and, as a result of that, you also influence their families. Every time I help a father to become a better man, I’m also helping the family to become a stronger family,” Foster said.

Before going through the program, Wilson said his son “didn’t seem happy, he seemed a little withdrawn. Now he’s very outgoing, very vocal. He’s a great kid. We have a very open and honest relationship. He talks to me about everything and anything,” Long Wilson said.

“And my son tells me that he can see a difference in me. He thinks that I’m more positive,” he added.

Santiago calls Wilson’s experience in Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood “one of the bigger success stories that we have. [The program] helped him build a deeper connection with his son, and he still checks in with me every so often.” †

◀ A group talks as part of Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood, a program run by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ORTV

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL IN WATERBURY

BY MARY
CHALUPSKY

Celebrating its 95th anniversary this year, Sacred Heart High School in Waterbury is an academically rigorous school from which students go on to attend some of the finest colleges and universities. From humble beginnings in 1922 as a parish high school with 36 students taught by the Sisters of Mercy, Sacred Heart has evolved into a vibrant archdiocesan high school.

The school's long history includes such milestones as becoming a co-ed institution in 1938, moving to the former Waterbury Catholic High School in 1975 and achieving an 80-year dream with the construction of a gymnasium, Alumni Hall, in 2001.

Today, Sacred Heart High School offers a challenging curriculum taught in the Catholic tradition to 360 students from 20 towns. Not only do 98 percent of students go on to institutions of higher education, but college-bound students have been awarded \$10 million in scholarships.

Among signature programs are a marketing and management program that provides a basis for studies in business; a pre-engineering program that incorporates computer-aided design, an in-house video/media program that develops broadcast journalism and production skills; the Carrafa-Petrello health care program with Trinity Health and St. Mary's Hospital that prepares students who seek careers in care-giving; and a partnership with Post University that offers students an early college experience. Moreover, this diverse Catholic learning community lives its Catholic identity and continues to expand its reach into the local Waterbury area. Students provide 14,000 hours of service to more than 72 organizations, annually.

"We're very passionate about giving back to the city of Waterbury," said the school's president, Eileen Regan. "We take pride in our mission of educating students of diverse backgrounds in a strong Catholic tradition that empowers students to be moral and productive members of society." †



Sacred Heart High School on South Elm Street in Waterbury.



▲ The first co-ed class poses.



▲ Sister Francis Zajac of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, a member of the science department, with honors chemistry students Najma Braddock and Alex Valente.



◀ Jatorra Jackson and Rachel Gray at graduation 2017 at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury.



▲ Students at work in the technology lab.



▲ The Sacred Heart High School Boys Class L State Champions.



**HEART
TEAM
MISSION**



▲ Students pose with Archbishop Leonard Blair in 2015 during one of his visits.



CNS PHOTO/TYLER ORSHURN

For seminarian, God wrote straight with crooked lines — OR HEADLINES

Anthony Federico is one of three seminarians from the Archdiocese of Hartford, studying at Theological College in Washington, D.C. But he's the only one of them to inadvertently create an internet outcry.

Federico, who is 33 and in the third year of his theology, grew up in Connecticut, a big fan of the National Hockey League's Hartford Whalers, who have since decamped to Charlotte, North Carolina. He was possibly an even bigger fan of baseball's New York Yankees — so much so he couldn't watch the opening game of the World Series, as he was still mourning the Bronx Bombers' playoff exit the week before.

Not only was Federico a fan, he was a participant: hockey, baseball, soccer, swimming and tennis, from youth leagues to high school at Notre Dame in West Haven. At Providence College, Federico majored in theology — not the keenest choice for finding a job in the big, wide world.

However, his passion for sports landed him a job at ESPN in his home state. In an interview with Catholic News Service, Federico said he saw it as "vindication" that he could get gainful employment despite his theology major. He worked there

for seven years, first in the tape warehouse finding and shuttling vintage footage where it needed to go, and later in ESPN's "mobile group" in digital media work — a job he considered a plum. "It was the right place at the right time," he said, as cellphone usage was exploding.

Then came the incident that changed Federico's career path.

In 2012, a little-heralded guard named Jeremy Lin, a Taiwanese-American, started playing terrific basketball for the New York Knicks, gaining international fame. Those in the know started gushing about Lin's emergence.

Eventually, Lin's star dimmed. ESPN had a story ready to go about it. It was Federico's task to write the headline. He wrote "Chink in the Armor" never intending it, he said, to be an

▲ Anthony Federico, a seminarian from the Archdiocese of Hartford, Conn., poses for a photo inside the recreation room at Theological College in Washington Oct. 25. In 2015, the former sports journalist was the college's darts, pool and ping-pong champion.

ethnic slur against Lin.

But the damage was done, the blowback immediate and intense, and the fallout inevitable. Federico got fired within days from his first job.

Federico, the eldest of five siblings, moved back in with his parents, who did their best to shield him from "the daily hate mail and death threats," he said.

Time passed and Federico was able to rebound. In a meeting he attended with representatives of a start-up in Stamford, Connecticut, he walked away with a job offer to be a consultant.

As opposed to working at ESPN, which nearly always entailed the late shift, Federico worked days for the startup. He told CNS he'd walk around Hartford on his lunch hour, taking in the sights.

He came upon a church that had a weekday Mass at 12:10 p.m. After dismissing the thought at first with "I'm not a daily Massgoer" Federico went inside one day and got hooked. Soon, colleagues asked him what he was doing with himself during his lunch hours. "Come and see" was his reply.

So they went. And saw. And discussed. Some were Catholic and they posed serious questions about Catholic belief and practice. "These are brilliant people," he said. "I had to go home and look at the *catechism* (of the Catholic Church)" to frame suitable answers for the next day.

On another visit, he noticed the "struggle" of the parish priest, who was

in the confessional before the noonday Mass. He did not have enough time to hear everyone's confession before he had to prepare to celebrate Mass. "I thought, 'If we just had more priests ... ohhhh, I get it Lord,'" Federico recalled.

That was the moment he knew his vocation.

"I had a good deal. I was making money, traveling a lot. I thought I

Anthony Federico, currently studying at Theological College at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., will be ordained to the transitional diaconate for the Archdiocese of Hartford at 11 a.m. on May 19 at St. Mary Church in Newington. Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Peter A. Rosazza will be the ordaining prelate.

THINGS TO DO

■ The St. Elizabeth of the Trinity **Bereavement Support Group** will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. for 10 weeks beginning **May 1** at St. Therese Church, 555 Middletown Ave., North Haven. The group offers Christian-based support in a small group setting. Information is available at 203.234.9447 or bgode@snet.net.

■ Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center in Farmington will offer a **retreat day** titled “In the Upstairs Room — Waiting for the Spirit” from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on **May 16**. Four days before the Solemnity of Pentecost, this day of reflection will invite people to place themselves in the upstairs room where Jesus’ disciples waited in prayer to be “clothed with power from on high.” (Lk 24:49) The day will include a prayer service, conference and the opportunity for confession. It will conclude with the celebration of the Eucharist. This program will be presented by long-time retreat team member Passionist Sister Mary O’Brien. The \$25 fee includes lunch. Register at 860.677.8519, olcretreat@sbcglobal.net or www.ourladyofcalvary.net.

■ Catholic Underground Connecticut will have a **Pentecost party** from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. on **May 19** 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 who gather once a month to pray and experience Catholic culture and fellowship. Information is available at www.catholicundergroundct.com.

■ Frassati New Haven will host **Frassati on Tap**, a night of discussion about the faith, from 6 to 9 p.m. on **May 20** at the Stony Creek Brewery, 5 Indian Neck Rd., Branford. 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.

had the life I was supposed to have,” Federico said. “I was content with my life, but not happy.” He added family and friends were “surprised, but not shocked” with his decision.

Federico said he had considered priesthood as early as age 15, but always distanced himself from the idea. When he went to the Hartford archdiocesan vocation office, the personnel knew him already — not from his ESPN notoriety, but because he had applied a couple of years before only to be “nervous, scared, afraid” of following through. “I was looking at it through the no’s, not the yes,” he added. This time “I am doing this in freedom,” he said.

This marks Federico’ fifth year

at Theological College, which is the national diocesan seminary of The Catholic University of America and directed by the priests of the Society of St. Sulpice.

And while he’s getting his classwork in, and living in rectories and learning from pastors during the summers, Federico hasn’t renounced his love of sports.

He said he and his fellow seminarians have won four intramural championships at Catholic University, which is across the street from the seminary. Theological College also won the Vianney Cup, a soccer tournament for four East Coast seminaries.

And, while some laypeople par-

ticipate in “iron man” triathlons — swimming, bicycling and running — Federico was the 2015 winner of the “iron seminarian” competition that takes in the decidedly different pursuits of darts, pool and ping-pong.

“People think seminarians live in some dark building and walk like this,” he said, imitating a slow, straight walk with palms pressed together at chest level. “We have a great culture here.”

And, if all goes according to plan — provided it’s God’s plan — Federico will be ordained to the priesthood in spring 2019. †

STORY BY MARK PATTISON
Catholic News Service

‘COME AND FOLLOW ME’

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

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 @ArchdioceseHart

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 [Facebook.com/ArchdioceseOfHartford](https://www.facebook.com/ArchdioceseOfHartford)

■ The Catholic Cemeteries Association will present a **Dignity of Life Seminar**, providing educational and resource information about elder and end-of-life care, in two locations during May. They will take place at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on **May 23** at St. Mary’s Hall in Derby of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles Parish; and at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on **May 31** at St. George Church in Guilford. 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.

■ The St. Francis and St. Rose of Lima **236th year anniversary gala** will take place from 6-10 p.m. on **May 24** at Anthony’s Ocean View in New Haven. Honorees will be the development committee, for its many years of dedication to the children of St. Francis and St. Rose of Lima School in New Haven: Ellen Anderson, Margaret Gilhuly, Mark Blondin, Pete Leahy, Suzanne Blondin, John Leary, Ann Caruso, Don McCarthy, Don Deloge, Terri Santillo and Bob Schreck. For ticket information call 203.777.5352. Ticket deadline May 7.



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'Indispensable' parish volunteers honored for their service

■ Archbishop Leonard P. Blair honored 118 worthy parish volunteers from 88 parishes in the archdiocese with the St. Joseph Medal of Appreciation during a prayer service on March 18 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

Archbishop Blair bestowed the honor on volunteers who

were nominated within their parish for commendable service, for giving of their time and talent to support their parish community.

Many recipients have served their parish for decades in numerous ways, such as by acting as religious education teachers, lectors or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Some honorees serve the needy or coordinate parish events and fundraisers.

"On behalf of the whole archdiocese, and especially those of us who are priests and pastors, I thank you most profoundly," Archbishop Blair told the awardees, "and we all ask God to bless you for your goodness, your dedication and for all that you do."

The full list of awardees may be found at <http://goo.gl/q9Fi123>.

— STORY BY SHELLEY WOLF,
PHOTOS BY MARIA ZONE

Rooted in Faith: Bringing social justice home is theme of 2018 conference

■ The Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry (OCSJM) of the Archdiocese of Hartford will sponsor its ninth annual Bishop Peter Rosazza Social Justice Conference on Saturday, June 9, at the Archdiocesan Center of St. Thomas Seminary, 467 Bloomfield Ave., Bloomfield. The conference is open to the public.

The morning keynote is titled "Let Justice Flow at Home: Rooting Catholic Social Teaching in the Family." It will be presented by Joan Rosenhauer, executive director at Jesuit Refugee Services. Rosenhauer recently served as executive vice president, U.S. Operations, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), where she was responsible for leadership of the agency's mission of assisting Catholics in the United States to act on their faith by helping people in need around the world. Prior to joining CRS in 2009, Ms. Rosenhauer spent 16 years working for the Office of Justice and Peace at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"Rooted in Faith: Bringing Social Justice Home" is the theme this year, and addresses the

importance of living Catholic social teaching," said Lynn Campbell, executive director of the OCSJM. "Our workshops are designed so that participants can bring back the information and skills they learned to their 'home' — their family, parish, school or religious community."

Participants will have the opportunity to select among 12 diverse workshop topics (including four in Spanish) and explore exhibits from local nonprofit agencies. Simultaneous translation into Spanish will be available for the keynotes.

The closing keynote, "Home Is Where the Heart Is," will be offered by Father Stephen Sledesky, pastor of St. George Parish in Guilford.

Father Sledesky will encourage his audience to start at home when it comes to changing hearts and inspiring change in others and the world.

For information or to register online or by mail, visit www.catholicsocialjustice.org or call 860.242.5573. Registration is \$40; \$30 for students (age 14-21). It includes workshop materials, lunch and refreshments. Registration deadline is June 1, 2018.



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

Reverend Charles Bak, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.



Reverend Luis Luna Barrera, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Dennis P. Connell, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Anthony R. DeFronzo: granted bi-ritual priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Dec. 12, 2017.

Monsignor Steven A. Ferrari: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 9, 2018.

Reverend Kevin J. Forsyth: from pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Plainville, to medical leave of absence, effective Jan. 22, 2018.

Reverend Peter Kucer, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Michel Legault, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend John R. Lyons, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 9, 2018.

Reverend Paul J. Pace: reappointed administrator of St. Francis Xavier Parish, Waterbury, effective Feb. 22, 2018, for one additional year.

Reverend Edward J. Przygocki, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Vincent A. Salamoni, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Robert Sickler, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Thomas Simon, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend Jeffrey Thompson, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Reverend David Zercie, MSA: renewal of priestly faculties* until Dec. 31, 2018, effective Jan. 10, 2018.

Deacon Michael Torres: from North American Martyrs Parish, East Hartford, to St. Martha Parish, Enfield, effective March 25, 2018, for a five-year term, in addition to duties as Catholic chaplain for the Department of Correction for the State of Connecticut.

Deacon Carl M. Vecca: from St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, Naugatuck, to Mary, Mother of the Church, Waterbury, effective Feb. 14, 2018, for a five-year term.

— REVEREND RYAN M. LERNER, CHANCELLOR, MARCH 23, 2018

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

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Obituaries

■ **Sister Mary Sean Reagan** (Elizabeth Ann Reagan), a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, West Hartford, died on Feb. 25, 2018, at Monsignor Bojnowski Manor in New Britain at age 87.

Born in Fall River, Mass., on Oct. 29, 1930, she entered her religious order on Sept. 3, 1957, and professed her perpetual vows on March 1, 1965.

Sister Sean earned a bachelor's degree in education from Framingham State College in Framingham, Mass., and a master's degree in counseling and pastoral ministry from Fairfield University. She continued her education in clinical pastoral education at the Hospital of St. Raphael in New Haven, and became a certified chaplain and a member of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, eventually serving on the Clinical Pastoral Education Advisory Committee of Calvary Hospital

Hospice and Palliative Care in the Bronx, N.Y. She was the chief clinical dietitian and then director of dietetics at St. Joseph Hospital and Medical Center in Stamford. She then was a pastoral counselor at Calvary Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care in the Bronx.

In 1997, she took a chaplaincy position in the Spiritual Care Department at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury.

She retired to the provincial house in 2005 and moved to Monsignor Bojnowski Manor in 2012

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 2.

■ **Deacon Joseph Sloan**, 77, of Enfield, died at home on March 4, 2018. He was the husband of 47 years to Maryann (Furey) Sloan.

He was born on April 21, 1940, in Springfield, Mass. An Enfield resident for most of his life, he earned four master's degrees in education from Westfield State

University in Westfield, Mass., and American International College in Springfield.

He was stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army and was with the Air Force Reserves for 20 years. He was employed by the state of Connecticut for 20 years, 13 as a security supervisor with Bradley Air Force Base and seven as a teacher in the GED program at Osborne Correctional Facility.

Ordained as a permanent deacon, he served at St. Patrick and St. Martha churches in Enfield.

In addition to his wife, Deacon Sloan is survived by his children, Annmarie Sloan of Enfield and Thomas Sloan of Agawam, Mass.; and his sister, Peggy Sloan of Enfield.

Father Robert Villa celebrated a Mass of Christian Burial on March 10.

 **FOR FULL OBITUARIES**
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