2020 Archbishop’s Annual Appeal
SPECIAL EDITION

• VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS TO OBSERVE FALL OF SAIGON
• DEFENDING CHRIST ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES
• BREAD FOR LIFE SERVES MEALS WITH DIGNITY

SERVING THE COUNTIES OF HARTFORD, NEW HAVEN AND LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT
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The 2020 Archbishop’s Annual Appeal has been launched with a goal of raising $10 million. Using the theme of, “Growing in Faith, Giving in Love,” it is hoped people think of their neighbors when donating and respond to the Lord’s call to discipleship and service.

“We are all part of God’s family and we have a responsibility to care for one another, especially by providing for the spiritual, moral and material well-being of each and all,” Archbishop Leonard P. Blair says in his Appeal message.

The annual Archbishop’s Annual Appeal funds hundreds of programs and helps thousands of people. In addition, the Appeal also funds the printing of the Catholic Transcript, so we can continue mailing it free of charge to parishioners within the Archdiocese of Hartford and beyond. Besides Catholics in Hartford, Litchfield and New Haven counties, the Transcript is mailed to anyone who has requested it around the country.

Your investment in the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal can perpetuate the good work of ministries improving the quality of life for thousands of people each year by serving the poor, the hungry and the homeless; caring for elderly priests; ministering to the sick and the elderly; educating seminarians and deacons; assisting Catholic schools; evangelizing through pastoral ministries; and reaching out through Catholic Charities and Works of Mercy and so much more. Your support helps to strengthen the life of the Church and the wider community from all walks of life — Catholic and non-Catholic.

To learn more about the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal, turn to pages 16 to 26 in this issue of the Transcript, which highlight several ministries, services and programs throughout the archdiocese directly benefiting from your contribution. Also, view this year’s Appeal video by visiting archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal, and be sure to look for more articles in future Transcript editions.

— Matthew 25: 35-40
The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead at Easter is what defines the world and the human person from beginning to end. The risen Christ makes it possible for us to attain our high calling to enter into what the Catechism of the Catholic Church calls “a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God.”

Perhaps surprisingly to some, the catechism goes on to say that “this relationship is prayer” and that prayer “is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.” (n. 2558ff)

In her book The Essence of Prayer, Sister Ruth Burrows, OCD observes that “prayer is not our activity, our getting in touch with God, our coming to grips with or making ourselves desirable to God. We can do none of these things, nor do we need to, for God is there ready to do everything for us, loving us unconditionally. ... The surest help we can give to ourselves ... [is] an ardent coming to grips with Jesus in the New Testament so as to ‘get God right,’ and the constant plea for greater faith. Nothing else is needed.” (p. 28)

This does not mean that there is not a form, content or method to prayer. It simply means that these are all means to an end — namely, our relationship with God in Christ. The forms and manner of personal prayer may vary from person to person, or according to our state of life or immediate situation, but certain fundamentals constitute a common heritage of prayer.

In the “Our Father,” Jesus taught us how to pray. St. Augustine tells us that “… if we are praying in the right way, we say nothing that cannot already be found in the Lord’s Prayer.” (Ep. 130) If you reflect on all the petitions of the “Our Father” (as the catechism does in its second section on prayer), you will find everything you need for a right relationship to God, to the world and to your very self. Remember, prayer is about relationship — our relationship to God and all else in relationship to him.

Although prayer is directed primarily and ultimately to God the Father, as reflected in the Liturgy, it is also right and proper to direct prayers to God the Son — Jesus — and to God the Holy Spirit, both of whom are co-equal with the Father in divinity and majesty. Then there are prayers invoking the intercession of Mary, whose motherhood embraces us all, and the intercessory prayers directed to the saints and angels, who are united with the faithful on earth from their place in heaven, thus reminding us once again that prayer is a relationship.

Finally, the catechism devotes several pages to a section that bears the provocative title: The Battle of Prayer. Aren’t we supposed to think of prayer as serene and peaceful? Not really. No. 2725 tells it like it is: “Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The ‘spiritual battle’ of the Christian’s new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.”

Prayer requires not only faith, but humility, trust and perseverance. May the joy of Easter confirm our hearts in the certainty that Christ is risen in our mortal flesh. God exists, he loves us and he thirsts for our love. Prayer alone in all its forms — public and private — can sustain and deepen this relationship. So let us do what the Lord asks of us in faith, and pray. ❯

Una sed mutua

EL ARZOBISPO LEONARD P. BLAIR
es el decimotercer obispo de la Arquidiócesis de Hartford.

a resurrección de Jesucristo de entre los muertos en la Pascua es lo que define al mundo y a la persona humana de principio a fin. El Cristo resucitado nos permite alcanzar nuestro sublime llamado a entrar en lo que el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica llama "una relación vital y personal con el Dios vivo y verdadero".

Quizás sorprendentemente para algunos, el Catecismo continúa diciendo que "esta relación es oración" y que la oración "es el encuentro de la sed de Dios y de la sed del hombre. Dios tiene sed de que el hombre tenga sed de Él". (No 2560)

En su libro The Essence of Prayer, la Hermana Ruth Burrows, OCD, observa que "la oración no es nuestra actividad, nuestro contacto con Dios, nuestro ‘llegar a enfrentar’ a Dios o nuestro ‘hacernos deseables’ a Dios. No podemos hacer ninguna de estas cosas, ni necesitamos hacerlas, porque Dios está allí listo para hacer todo por nosotros, amándonos incondicionalmente. ... La ayuda más segura que podemos darnos a nosotros mismos ... [es] un ardiente encuentro con Jesús en el Nuevo Testamento para ‘ir de la mano con Dios’, y la petición constante de una mayor fe. No se necesita nada más". (Pág. 28)

Esta no significa que no haya una forma, contenido o método para la oración. Simplemente significa que estos son todos medios para un fin, es decir, nuestra relación con Dios en Cristo. Las formas y la forma de la oración personal pueden variar de persona a persona, o de acuerdo con nuestro estado de vida o situación inmediata, pero ciertos fundamentos constituyen un herencia común de la oración.

En el "Padre Nuestro", Jesús nos enseñó a orar. San Agustín nos dice que "... si estamos orando de la manera correcta, no decimos nada que ya no se pueda encontrar en el Padre Nuestro". (Ep. 130) Si reflexionamos sobre todas las peticiones del "Padre Nuestro" (como lo hace el Catecismo en su segunda sección sobre la oración), encontrarán todo lo que se necesita para una relación correcta con Dios, con el mundo y con uno mismo. Recuerden, la oración se trata de una relación: Nuestra relación con Dios y todo lo demás en relación con Él.

Aunque la oración es directa, principal y finalmente dirigida a Dios el Padre, como se refleja en la Liturgia, también es correcto y apropiado dirigir las oraciones a Dios el Hijo, Jesús, y a Dios el Espíritu Santo, quienes son coiguales con el Padre en divinidad y majestad. Luego hay las oraciones invocando la intercesión de María, cuya maternidad nos abraza a todos, y las oraciones intercesoras dirigidas a los santos y ángeles, que están unidos con los fieles en la tierra desde su lugar en el cielo, recordándonos así una vez más que la oración es una relación.

Finalmente, el Catecismo dedica varias páginas a una sección que lleva el título provocativo: El combate de la oración. ¿No se supone que debemos pensar en la oración como serena y pacífica? Realmente no. En el número 2725 se nos dice tal como es: “La oración es un don de la gracia y una respuesta decidida por nuestra parte. Supone siempre un esfuerzo. Los grandes orantes de la Antigua Alianza antes de Cristo, así como la Madre de Dios y los santos con Él nos enseñan que la oración es un combate. ¿Contra quién? Contra nosotros mismos y contra las astucias del Tentador que hace todo lo posible por separar al hombre de la oración, de la unión con su Dios. Se ora como se vive, porque se vive como se ora. El que no quiere actuar habitualmente según el Espíritu de Cristo, tampoco podrá orar habitualmente en su Nombre. El ‘combate espiritual’ de la vida nueva del cristiano es inseparable del combate de la oración".

La oración requiere no solo fe, sino humildad, confianza y perseverancia. Que la alegría de la Pascua confirme nuestros corazones en la certeza de que Cristo ha resucitado en nuestra carne mortal. Dios existe, nos ama y tiene sed de nuestro amor. La oración sola en todas sus formas, pública y privada, puede sostener y profundizar esta relación. Entonces, hagamos lo que el Señor nos pide con fe y oración.
Toan Nguyen and Father Andy Mai, who both escaped from Vietnam, walk the parish center hallway at St. Mark the Evangelist Church in West Hartford.

ESCAPING AFTER THE
FALL OF SAIGON

Vietnamese Catholic community observes that fateful day in 1975, mourning loss but giving gratitude to God.

Story by SHELLEY WOLF | Photos by AARON JOSEPH
Father Andy Mai and other Vietnamese Catholics in the Archdiocese of Hartford still recall that day with great sadness, especially as the 45th anniversary approaches.

“In Vietnam, they celebrate the victory over the United States,” Father Mai says. “But for the people who have escaped from Vietnam, that’s a sad day for us because we had to escape the country — we had to leave for freedom and for freedom of religion as well.”

Today, Father Mai is the pastor of St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc Parish, a Vietnamese Catholic community that worships at St. Mark the Evangelist Church, part of the larger Gianna Molla Beretta Parish in West Hartford. This year, to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, his parish will celebrate a somber prayer service and memorial Mass on Sun., April 26, at 2:30 p.m.

The memorial Mass, which will be celebrated in the Vietnamese language, is expected to attract both Vietnamese Catholics and non-Catholics, Father Mai says. It will be followed by a coffee social in which people are welcome to share their experiences and memories.

Father Mai says the prayers of the local Vietnamese community will be three-fold. “We remember whoever died and sacrificed their lives by escaping Vietnam. We remember the heroes in the military, who sacrificed their lives for the country before 1975. And we pray for the country — that one day it will be free.”

Toan Nguyen (pronounced Twon Nwuyen), a parishioner of St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc, also escaped his homeland of Vietnam. Today, he is full of gratitude to God and to the United States for his life and freedom. However, he says he also feels sadness for all of his countrymen who were forced to flee and who lost their lives trying to escape after the Fall of Saigon.

“Everybody wanted to get out,” Nguyen stresses. Corruption reigned, he adds, as people took money from those desperate enough to escape in boats. “This is how the ‘boat people’ started,” he says, and half perished at sea. Those willing to flee on foot through Cambodia to Thailand became known as the “land people.”

“Many people escaped by all means and many died. It became a disaster for the country,” Nguyen says. “Nowadays, for anyone who escaped or lived free under the South regime of Vietnam, it’s a day to remember the people who died, including the South Vietnamese and U.S. soldiers.”

PERSEVERING IN HOPE

Both Nguyen and Father Mai have their own stories of loss — and gratitude — to share.

Father Mai was born in 1977, just two years after the Fall of Saigon, as Tuan Anh Dinh Mai. With no opportunity to work or to practice their faith, Father Mai and his family tried to escape from Vietnam by boat. “I tried to escape three times and my parents, too, but we didn’t make it,” he recalls.

Yet, his faith in God gave him hope. “With God all things are possible,” (Mt 19:26) This is my favorite guide,” the priest says today. “I put all my intentions in God’s will and asked him: If it is your will Lord, let my family and I remain always faithful to you and protect us with your ways.”

To commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc Parish will celebrate a prayer service and memorial Mass on Sun., April 26, at 2:30 p.m., at St. Mark the Evangelist Church in West Hartford.
Fortunately, Father Mai’s brother was accepted into the United States in 1985 as a refugee and he eventually sponsored the whole family. When the opportunity came in 2009 for Father Mai to join them, he took it, although he was in the seminary. “So that’s why I’m here,” he says. “I knew no English, but the Archdiocese of Hartford supported me to learn English and to continue with my vocation.”

Father Mai has been with the archdiocese since he arrived in the United States in 2009 at the age of 33. He continued his education, was ordained in 2014, and was installed in 2019 as pastor of St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc, where he is shepherding the local Catholic Vietnamese community in a free land. “I’m so happy to be here in the archdiocese to do my mission,” he says. “This is my home, and I have a responsibility to build my home here.”

LIVING IN FEAR

Born in 1958 in Saigon, Nguyen lived with his family in a free South Vietnam. “We understood the values of freedom and religious rights and all the human rights,” he says.

Then in 1975, when he was 17, South Vietnam fell to the Communists. “It was the death of freedom, the death of liberty and the death of all the rights that human beings are supposed to have.” That included religious liberty.

At the time, Nguyen was living in a seminary, studying for the priesthood. “All seminarians were dismissed,” he recalls, “returning to our own families as the state took over the seminary, using it as a training school for their Communist Party members.”

Hardship and near starvation followed for most. Worse yet, he says, citizens were drafted to spy on their neighbors. “Everybody was living in fear,” he says, “especially the Catholic people. They considered all the Catholics anti-Communists.”

Nguyen says he has “firsthand experience” with this, and was coerced into reporting what his priest said in the weekly homily.

Too poor for boat passage, Nguyen had no way out — until he got drafted into the Vietnamese army. While fighting in Cambodia in 1981, he and four other soldiers deserted and began the dangerous journey on foot past land mines and multiple fighting forces. “There was doubt and fear in my mind,” he recalls, “but I was raised Catholic. The more afraid I got, the more I needed to pray.”

Together, all five men made it to a refugee camp on the border of Cambodia, where Nguyen spent two years. Eventually, he was sponsored by Catholic Charities of Hartford. He arrived in Hartford in 1983, where he immediately joined the Catholic Vietnamese community at St. Lawrence O’Toole Church in Hartford. The community has since relocated to St. Mark in West Hartford. He is married now with three grown children and works as an electronics engineer.

“The fact that I am here today, I feel I am blessed and so much grace was poured upon me,” Nguyen says.

“The We Remember whoever died and sacrificed their lives by escaping Vietnam. We remember the heroes in the military, who sacrificed their lives for the country before 1975. And we pray for the country — that one day it will be free.”

— Father Andy Mai

TO READ MORE About Father Andy Mai’s Quest and His Parish’s Growth, visit archdioceseofhartford.org/catholictranscript.
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Here is what you will find by visiting archdioceseofhartford.org/catholictranscript

Hot Cross Buns and Egg Bread are Easter Favorites

Cinnamon Pecan Crown Cake Recipe

At Easter Vigil Mass, New Catholics are Welcomed Home

Download the 2020 Archbishop’s Annual Appeal Prayer

Evangelist Pete Burak ‘Stands Up’ for His Faith

Marriage Matters: He Says ‘I Had an Emotional Relationship via Facebook’

On Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, Priest Shares His Own Quest for Freedom

Rebecca Recognizes God’s Hand in Her Life
On Holy Thursday evening, we begin the sacred triduum with the Mass of the Supper of the Lord. This Eucharist is the memorial of the Lord’s Passover. Consequently, in each Mass, with sacramental signs, Jesus perpetuates in his Church the sacrifice of the New Covenant. (1 Cor 11:24-26; Lk 22:19-20; Jn 6:51; cf. Ex 13:3) Moreover, this Eucharist is the memorial of that love by which the Lord loved us even to his death. (Jn 13:1) Every year with this celebration, we renew our promise to the Lord to love one another as he has loved us. (Jn 13:34-35)

Also, on this holy evening, we remember the institution of the priesthood, by which Christ’s mission and sacrifice are perpetuated in the world. (1 Cor 11:23-26; Mt 28:18-20; Jn 20:21-23)

On Good Friday, “Christ our paschal lamb was sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7), bringing to fulfillment the prophecies and figures of the many offerings and sacrifices of the past that gave way to the single sacrifice of Christ our Savior. (Is 52:13-53:12; Jn 19:24-25; 36-37) As the Church contemplates the cross of her Lord and bridegroom, she commemorates her own beginning and her duty to extend to all peoples the salvific effects of Jesus’ Passion, celebrating this day in a spirit of gratitude for his wonderful gift. (Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9; 1 Cor 1:23-24; Rom 5:6)

At the Easter Vigil, “the supreme, most exalted of all solemnities of the liturgical year,” we commemorate the holy night of the resurrection of the Lord and his glorious victory over sin and death. (Rom 5:12-21) During this night, the Church awaits the Lord’s rising from the dead and celebrates it by meditating on the wonders of God throughout the history of salvation (Gn 1:1-2:2; 22:1-18; Ex 14:15-15:1; Is 54:4a.5-14; 55:1-11; Bar 3:9-15; 32-4:4; Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28), with prayers, and with the sacraments of Christian initiation.

As we engage in these liturgical actions, our love and gratitude to Jesus and our desire for communion with God and his people, as we pray, should make us more able to believe than any other time. A happy and blessed Easter to all. ☩

We are approaching the days of the most Holy Week. Its liturgies are of highest significance in the spiritual and pastoral life of the Church. Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, remind us of the core belief of our faith, which proclaims that Christ “died for our sins and was raised for our salvation.” (Roms 4:25) Since the Easter triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord is the culmination of the entire liturgical year, let us look a bit more closely at these celebrations in the light of the Word of God.
El significado sagrado de la semana santa

Ya se acercan los días de la Semana Santa, en la que la liturgia es de suma importancia en la vida espiritual y pastoral de la Iglesia. La Sagrada Escritura, especialmente los Evangelios, nos recuerdan la confesión central de nuestra fe, que proclama que Cristo “murió por nuestros pecados y resucitó para nuestra salvación” (Romanos 4:25). Dado que el Triduo Pascual de la Pasión y Resurrección del Señor es la culminación de todo el año litúrgico, veamos un poco más de cerca estas celebraciones a la luz de la Palabra de Dios.

El jueves en la noche, comenzamos el Sagrado Triduo Pascual con la Misa de la Cena del Señor. Esta Eucaristía es el memorial de la Pascua del Señor. En consecuencia, en cada Misa, con signos sacramentales, Jesús perpetúa en su Iglesia el sacrificio de la Nueva Alianza (1 Corintios 11:24-26; Lucas 22:19-20; Juan 6:51; cf. Éxodo 13:3). Además, esta eucaristía es el memorial de ese amor por el cual el Señor nos amó hasta su muerte (Juan 13:1). Cada año, con esta celebración, renovamos nuestra promesa al Señor de amarnos unos a otros como él nos ha amado (Juan 13:34-35). Además, en esta noche santa, recordamos la institución del sacerdocio, mediante la cual la misión y el sacrificio de Cristo se eternizan en el mundo (1 Co 11:23-26; Mateo 28:18-20; Jn 20:21-23).

El Viernes Santo “Cristo nuestro cordero pascual fue inmolado” (1 Co 5:7), cumpliendo las profecías y figuras de las muchas ofrendas y sacrificios del pasado que dieron paso al sacrificio único de Cristo nuestro Salvador (Isaías 52:13-53:12; Jn 19:24-25; 36-37). Mientras la Iglesia contempla la cruz de su Señor y Esposo, ella conmemora su propio comienzo y su deber de extender a todos los pueblos los efectos salvíficos de la pasión de Jesús, celebrando este día en un espíritu de gratitud por su maravillosa entrega (Hebreos 4:14 -16; 5:7-9; 1 Co 1:23-24; Rm 5:6).

En la Vigilia Pascual, “la suprema y más insigne de todas las solemnidades del año litúrgico”, conmemoramos la noche santa de la resurrección del Señor y su gloriosa victoria sobre el pecado y la muerte (RM 5:12-21). Durante esta noche, la Iglesia espera que el Señor resucite de los muertos y la celebra meditando en las maravillas de Dios a lo largo de la historia de la salvación (Génesis 1:1-2; 2:22:1-18; Éx 14:15-15:1; Is 54:4a.5-14; 55:1-11; Baruc 3: 9-15.32-4: 4; Ezequiel 36:16-17a, 18-28), con oraciones y los sacramentos de la iniciación cristiana.

En la medida que nos involucremos en estas acciones litúrgicas, nuestro amor y gratitud a Jesús y nuestro deseo de comunión con Dios y su pueblo, al orar, deberían hacernos más capaces de creer que en cualquier otro momento. ¡Una feliz y bendecida Pascua para todos! 😊
DEFENDING CHRIST ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES
Students receive guidance to express their faith.

Story by JOE PISANI | Photos by AARON JOSEPH

At Naugatuck Valley Community College, Daniel Mathews runs activities and programs for students that foster believing in God.

EDITOR’S NOTE:
This is the second in a series of stories about college campus ministries. In this edition, we highlight the Catholic ministries at Naugatuck Valley Community College and Post University, both in Waterbury.
For 17 years, Daniel Mathews has been on the front lines of evangelization, bringing the Catholic faith to college campuses where young people are often searching and sometimes confused.

As a Catholic campus minister for the Archdiocese of Hartford at Naugatuck Valley Community College and Post University, both in Waterbury, Mathews takes the good news into a secular environment that can be antagonistic to religion — an environment where young Catholics have been known to have their faith challenged and often lose it.

“We’re in the trenches, there’s no question about that,” he says. “Campus ministry is the frontline of faith.”

Mathews says his job is to represent Christ on campus. “I can’t be a fill-in-the-blank Catholic,” he says. “If I’m not willing to fully represent the Church, including everything it holds true, whether it’s au courant on campus or not, then I’m clearly in the wrong business.”

In his ministry, Mathews tries to reach the greatest number of students — firm believers, confused believers, non-believers and the curious — through the Newman Clubs. Named after Cardinal John Henry Newman, an English theologian and poet, Newman Clubs or Centers are Roman Catholic ministry centers for Catholic students attending secular universities.

Activities in the clubs include going to Mass, confession, Bible study, discussion groups, retreats, prayer services, praying the Rosary, community service, guest speakers, clothing collections, blood drives, hikes and an annual ascent of Mount Tom in Massachusetts. At Post University, students set up prayer trees around the university where people can post their intentions. And everything Mathews does revolves around Christ.

“If I am shooting pool with a student on campus, there is a spiritual component to it,” he adds.

Describing his work as “rocking chair ministry” or the “ministry of presence,” Mathews makes himself available to students who are curious, confused or carrying a cross.

“A SAFE PLACE FOR BELIEVERS

Peter Cisek, faculty adviser for the Newman Club and co-chairman of the Interfaith Center at Naugatuck Valley, says students need a place where they can meet Christ on campus that’s not hostile or indifferent.

“Society does a great job beating people down and telling them you can’t talk about God in public,” he says. “Everybody is waiting for somebody else to say it’s OK to bring your faith, but you have to be the change you’re looking for.”

While he was hesitant when first asked to be faculty adviser, Cisek says it turned out to be one of the best things in my career. “Back then, it was a challenge because the environment wasn’t as welcoming as now, but ‘in bits and pieces, God makes his way.’”

These are difficult times for young people, he says, because society is leading them away from God with enticements like the pursuit of wealth, possessions and success.

“But you are not going to find happiness in those things,” Cisek adds. “Happiness comes from a solid relationship with the creator and by fulfilling your role in the mission you’ve been designed to do by Christ.”

The best evangelizing is done by students who aren’t ashamed of their faith.

“IF SOMEONE SAYS SOMETHING NEGATIVE ABOUT JESUS, I’LL TELL THEM ‘THAT’S NOT RIGHT’ OR ‘THAT’S NOT TRUE.’ EVANGELIZATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE.” — Emily Verdosci
and are willing to express it to the college community, Cisek says he believes. One of those students is Emily Verdosci, past president of the Newman Club at Naugatuck Valley, and servant leader of the Greater Waterbury chapter of Crossroads 4 Christ, an organization whose mission is to develop young adult missionary disciples through friendships centered on Christ and eucharistic adoration.

On her first day of college she succeeded her older sister, Anna, as president of the Newman Club.

“It brought me something I missed when I went to high school,” Verdosci says. “Young adult Catholic groups give you a great support system in a secular college, so you can make friends with people who have the same beliefs you do.”

There are students like Christa Russell, a visual arts major and current president of the Newman Club at Naugatuck Valley, who aren’t afraid to defend Christ when the occasion requires.

Although she admits she is “terrified” about proclaiming her beliefs in a secular environment, “if someone says something negative about Jesus, I’ll tell them ‘that’s not right’ or ‘that’s not true.’ Evangelization is an important part of my life.”

Russell says she follows the examples of her mother, Naomi, and her late grandmother, Shirley, whose strong faith kept her focused on Christ throughout her youth. She sang in the choir, attended Bible study, played piano and became a youth leader.

When she considers the sacrifice that Jesus made for her, the choice is a simple one, Russell says. “I have to serve God and do my part,” she says. “My job is to lead people to Christ. Some people will agree, some may be vicious, some might get hostile. No matter.”

ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Donald Kelly understands spiritual confusion. He was raised Catholic, but by the time he entered the University of Michigan, he wanted nothing to do with the Church, until his life was in turmoil.

But it was a prayer meeting that led to a “conversion encounter,” he says, and later developed a personal relationship with Jesus that changed him forever.

“The Church is so much about establishing that personal relationship with Jesus, and unless students have that, it is difficult to hold onto them during that time of questioning in college,” Kelly says.

A program chairman in the Business School at Post University, Kelly is the faculty adviser for the Newman Club. To him, the Newman Club is a place where students can explore ideas and be with people who care about what they’re going through. It’s also a place that will challenge young people to do the right thing and look for opportunities to bring Christ’s love to others, even those from different denominations or who are just exploring Christianity.

“I think it’s important to help them realize that the goal of the Newman Center is not to create professional Catholics or necessarily go into the priesthood or become a nun or brother,” Kelly says. “It is for all of us, wherever we are, to be Christ’s representatives and evangelize wherever our professions lead us.”

For Joseph DeCrisanti, president of the Newman Club at Post University, finding devout Catholics on campus revived his faith and introduced him to the Church’s intellectual tradition at a pivotal moment in his life.

“I became good friends with people running the (Newman) club, and they kept me strong in the faith,” DeCrisanti says. A computer information systems major, he says he was on the verge of quitting the Church when he was in high school. He was looking for answers to universal questions about suffering and the existence of God.

Young people want answers, DeCrisanti says. “With all the societal pressures, they want a framework they can base their life around,” he adds. “A lot of them who were born into the faith are not really hearing what they need, so they say, ‘I’ve given this 18 years of my life and it hasn’t convinced me of its truth … so I’ll go somewhere else.’”

Daniel Mathews is a Catholic campus minister at Naugatuck Valley Community College and Post University.
St. Margaret Church in Madison is one of the 17 parishes that has received funding from The Hartford Bishops’ Foundation to date after successfully completing their local campaign in support of Forward with Faith.

“There are so many opportunities to improve the learning experience for our students that are now possible with this funding,” says Nancy Hoban, who oversees St. Margaret’s Faith Formation program for more than 300 children in grades one through eight with her fellow director, Chris McSweeney. “The timing could not be better with all of the families we have coming into the parish this year.”

Under the leadership of Father Dan McLearen and a committee of lay volunteers, St. Margaret Church surpassed their local fundraising goal and raised more than $900,000 in support of the foundation-led campaign, Forward with Faith. As a result, the parish will receive 50 percent of the funds collected to support local parish initiatives, including technology upgrades, new books and videos, interactive learning activities, and field trips for the Faith Formation program.

Ed and Joanne Arrandale, who serve as co-directors of Faith Formation for ninth- and 10th-graders, were equally excited to receive funding to support future class excursions — including outdoor retreats and community service projects — for their students.

“Forward with Faith enables us to think outside the box so we can better connect with our young Catholics,” Joanne Arrandale says. “You can’t learn Catholic teachings and values simply from text. It is so important to offer real-life learning experiences outside the classroom.”

Over the past few months, 65 students from the Arrandales’ 10th-grade class visited New Haven’s largest food pantry, Loaves & Fishes, at St. Paul and St. James Episcopal Church. When they arrived, students distributed food and clothing while interacting with visiting neighbors from the surrounding community.

The Arrandales spoke fondly of the written reflections that students have submitted about their experience. “One of our students wrote, ‘Helping these people really helped me to embrace my call to live as a Catholic,’” Joanne Arrandale says. “I was so moved to see how strongly the experience resonated with each of them.”

McSweeney and Hoban also spoke to the importance, as well as the challenges, of connecting with younger generations about their faith. “Reaching our youth is rewarding, but it is not always easy,” McSweeney says. “Kids in our class often ask important but complex questions. Instead of simply reading to them, we think of ways to keep the class engaging so each child feels encouraged to ask thoughtful questions about his or her faith.”

McSweeney, Hoban and the Arrandales recently enrolled in ELM (Evangelizing Catechesis, Lifelong Formation, Missionary Discipleship), which is a year-and-a-half program also funded by The Hartford Bishops’ Foundation, at no cost to the parishes, to help Faith Formation leaders transform their programs.

As they continue to invest in their ministry, McSweeney reflected on the important role that early Faith Formation plays in the future of their parish and the wider Church. “The future of our Church can be bright and vibrant, and our children are pivotal to that,” she says. “Maybe they’ll go away for a time, but the spiritual foundation they build early on is so important. Their lifelong faith journey begins here. It carries on with them. And with their families.”
Last September, Bronagh and Kateri O’Rourke, sisters who attend the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, donated $1 each they received as a gift to Donna Finneran, a fellow parishioner who runs the Brian O’Connell Homeless Project.

“It was like they were giving me a million bucks,” Finneran says.

The next day, Mark, a homeless man in Waterbury who stopped by the Basilica for a sandwich, asked Finneran for $1.75 for bus fare. She handed him the $2 and, after asking permission of both Mark and the girls’ parents, posted two photos side by side on Facebook — one of the givers and another of the receiver, all holding up those dollar bills. Finneran added a brief note, “From the hearts of God’s children to the faithful.”

“Everybody shared it,” Finneran says about that Facebook post. To her surprise, a former school friend of Mark’s recognized his photo, reached out to her for confirmation and then offered Mark a place to live. For Finneran, it was just another day of sharing God’s love. “I just want people to know about the homeless and respect them,” she says. “Nobody ever woke up and said they wanted to be homeless.”

When it comes to giving in faith and love, most people never know how far their money goes. But two young girls have shown that donating even a little can go a long way to helping someone in need.

Through the Brian O’Connell Homeless Project, named after her twin brother who died homeless in 2016, Finneran has helped countless other homeless individuals. Last year, she did so with a $10,000 check she received from the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal. Her ministry is one of many supported by the AAA’s Vicariate Outreach Program, which directs more than $1 million each year to more than 225 worthy local charitable organizations.

“It has helped me greatly,” Finneran says of the appeal. “They gave me $10,000 and with that I bought food, clothes, warm winter coats, winter boots and underwear. Any money I get from the AAA I use to get the homeless through the winter. There’s nothing like giving people a new pair of boots and socks.”

Finneran also uses AAA funds, as well as donations from others, to purchase...
Bronagh O’Rourke and her younger sister, Kateri, greet Archbishop Leonard P. Blair at an Archbishop’s Annual Appeal dinner. The siblings donated $1 each to the Brian O’Connell Homeless Project in Waterbury and were featured in the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal video.

PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

Catholic Charities operates a school readiness program for children ages 3 to 5 in the Child Development Center, 790 Grand Ave., New Haven.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

Bronagh O’Rourke and her younger sister, Kateri, greet Archbishop Leonard P. Blair at an Archbishop’s Annual Appeal dinner. The siblings donated $1 each to the Brian O’Connell Homeless Project in Waterbury and were featured in the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal video.

PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

As the charitable arm of the archdiocese, Catholic Charities is one of the largest recipients of funds from the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal. According to John Noonan, development and communications director for Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford, the agency received $2.4 million from the Appeal in 2019, providing almost 10 percent of the agency’s annual budget.

“We are so grateful to everyone for the generosity of the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal,” Noonan says. “To have the support of individuals in parishes all across the diocese, it’s very inspiring and much appreciated.”

For 100 years, Catholic Charities has been providing vital social services across the archdiocese, a mission that would not be possible without the support of the AAA, Noonan points out. “We exist because of the faith that people are expressing,” he says. “The Archbishop's Annual Appeal is such a powerful and meaningful expression of faith, kindness and concern for others.”

As a non-profit ministry today, Catholic Charities provides a broad range of social services through family centers, school readiness programs, youth...
activities, senior centers, group homes for those with disabilities, adoption services and behavioral health services, just to name a few. “Every day, the staff is engaged in living out the Gospel,” Noonan says, “helping those in need.”

Catholic Charities serves people by responding in “moments of crisis” as well as by being there for them as “a steady presence in people’s lives,” Noonan explains. For instance, a portion of the AAA funds received are put into an emergency assistance program to help with food, shelter and utilities. Other funds are directed to ongoing support, such as child care or senior services.

**CONSTRUCTING A SUPPORT SYSTEM**

At the St. Vincent DePaul Mission of Waterbury, funds from the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal are assisting people every day of the year. “The AAA helps us to provide essential services to those in need,” Edwin Rodriguez, director of development and public relations, says. “It’s really a significant component of our budget.” In 2019 alone, the agency received $60,000 from the AAA, and it has received similar sums for the past few years.

“We have a variety of services, but the core is the homeless shelter and the soup kitchen,” Rodriguez says. The shelter, which is open 24/7, serves 100 people a day. Rodriguez estimates the shelter has housed 700 different individuals over the course of a year. The soup kitchen is open seven days a week, 365 days a year, offering breakfast and lunch to more than 200 people daily.

The shelter’s case managers also try to get to the root of an individual’s homelessness, offer aid and support, and get the person housed again. “Whatever’s causing the homelessness can be overcome,” Rodriguez says. And once clients are re-housed, they can turn to the St. Vincent DePaul thrift store to furnish their apartments.

“We have to create a support system to help the individual,” Rodriguez explains. “You don’t give up on the individual. They’re God’s people and they’re somebody’s brother, sister, son, daughter, father or mother. For whatever reason they’re at the shelter, that’s heartbreaking but at the same time it’s heartwarming that they have a place where they can come to.”

**BATTLING FOOD INSECURITY**

Foodshare, the regional foodbank which serves Hartford County, depends greatly on support from the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal to help alleviate hunger. “The AAA goes a long way to help us do our work throughout the year,” says Al Marino, corporate and community giving manager.

According to Marino, over the last five years, Foodshare has received more than $36,000 from the Annual Appeal, which he calculates has translated into 91,260 meals. “It’s really helping a lot of people,” he says. The efficiency of the organization, he adds, enables it to turn every $1 donated into two-and-a-half meals.

“We work to combat food insecurity,” Marino explains. “In our area are 118,000 people who are food insecure, including 33,000 children.” Food insecurity, he says, can be defined as “people who are concerned about where their next meal is coming from.”

In the greater Hartford area alone, he says, Foodshare is a supplier to 12 food pantries that may be well known to Catholics, including pantries at St. Augustine Church and the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford as well as St. Thomas the Apostle Church in West Hartford.

Last year, all told, the organization distributed enough food to provide 11 million meals. “There’s a big push for healthy, nutritious food, so one-third of what we distribute is fresh produce,” Marino says. The organization also helps qualifying households to apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
Ways to Give

GIVE ONLINE
Visit appeal.archdioceseofhartford.org to make a one-time gift or pledge an online payment. Please call the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal Office at 800.781.2550 for additional assistance.

CHECKS & CREDIT CARDS
Checks should be made payable to the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal. For credit card donations, please provide credit card details on the back of your pledge card. Kindly mail the enclosed gift/pledge card in the envelope provided to P.O. Box 28, Hartford, CT 06141-0028.

INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNT (IRA) GIFTS
Consider making a gift through your IRA. The IRS allows direct transfers totaling up to $100,000 per year to 501(c)(3) charities without having to count the transfer as income for federal tax purposes, for those who qualify. Kindly instruct your broker to make the check payable to the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal, then send to P.O. Box 28, Hartford, CT 06141-0028. Please call the Appeal Office (800.781.2550) with questions.

PLEDGED GIFTS
Appeal gifts may be paid over five months. Consider including your first month’s payment with your pledge card.

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS
Every year, several local companies give generously to the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal through matching gift programs, allowing them to support causes that are important to their employees. Contact your Human Resources Department to determine if your company will match your gift.

BEQUESTS
Donors can continue to support the good works of the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal beyond their lifetime. Contact the Archdiocese of Hartford at 860.541.6491 ext. 3149 for further information on the transfer of stock, a bequest or including the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal in your will. Consult your attorney or financial adviser for further assistance and advice.

Fund Allocation

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Barrett Mahoney, Ciara Shannon and Kevin Maile, FOCUS campus missionaries from across the country, pause outside the admissions office at CCSU in New Britain.
W hile in college at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Ciara Shannon met friends who introduced her to FOCUS missionaries. “They showed me what it meant to be a Catholic missionary and run toward Jesus,” she recalls.

Michael Bauer from Minnesota. They were sent by the national organization Fellowship of Catholic University Students, also known as FOCUS. Based in Colorado, FOCUS is a national collegiate outreach aimed at sharing the Gospel with college and university students and inspiring them for a lifetime of discipleship. The FOCUS mission involves caring about other people’s salvation and teaching students the art of living by building one-on-one friendships, promoting prayer and the sacraments and leading Bible study groups. FOCUS also equips students for evangelization for wherever life might take them — on campus, in their parish, at work or as part of a religious vocation.

Three of the four FOCUS missionaries arrived at CCSU in time for the start of the 2019-2020 academic year; one arrived in January. They are on assignment here for just one or two years.

On weekdays, the FOCUS missionaries strike up casual conversations with students on subjects such as faith and love on the sidewalks, in the library, at the student center and at the Catholic Campus Ministry Center.

“They meet people I’d never be able to meet,” Father Michael Casey, Catholic chaplain at CCSU, says. He is also pastor of the nearby St. Francis of Assisi Parish in New Britain and
vocations director for the archdiocese.

“They are clearly individuals in love with Jesus and I hope they will be able to share that love with people,” Father Casey adds. “You really see their depth of faith and the clarity with which they express it.”

Many students at CCSU stay in the archdiocese after graduation “so we’re forming future leaders in the Archdiocese of Hartford,” he says.

So far at CCSU, the FOCUS missionaries have attracted 40 students to six Bible Study Small Groups — two for men and four for women. They also serve as a bridge to the Catholic Campus Ministry Center and St. Francis of Assisi Church, making students aware of the many activities available at those locations.

And they are doing all of this at a time when it’s crucial for the Church to get young people to factor faith into the formula of their lives.

“College is the first time that people are really free to think for themselves,” Barrett Mahoney, the FOCUS director for the CCSU team, says. During their college years, she adds, many students choose who they want to be based on what they decide to do for a living.

But, Mahoney stresses, each person’s “relationship with God the Father tells them who they are, and that is where their mission comes from.”

MEET THE MISSIONARIES

Mahoney, who is in her fourth year as a campus missionary, was raised Catholic in Texas, where she attended daily Mass with her grandfather. A priest also taught her to pray daily at a chapel. While in college at the University of Texas, she got involved with a Protestant ministry and seriously considered leaving the Catholic Church.

However, reading the Bible brought her back to Catholicism. “I got to John 6 and realized that the Eucharist is real,” Mahoney says. “It just all made sense.”

From that point on, she sought out Catholic friends, met FOCUS missionaries on campus at the University of Texas at Austin and also went on a FOCUS mission trip to teach the faith in Indonesia. “I had the freedom to actually choose Jesus,” Mahoney says. “Flying back to L.A., all the billboards were selling drunkenness and greed. I prayed to Jesus and said, ‘I don’t want this.’”

Recalling the water from the village in Indonesia as a life source, Mahoney says she realized God was giving her the living water of faith. “That’s how I knew I wanted to be a FOCUS missionary,” she says. “I was dead and now I’m alive.”

Today, Mahoney meets and greets students at CCSU. “We have tables set up to meet people or we go and sit with people in the student center and just talk to them and get to know them,” she says. “It’s really fun.”

She also leads Bible study groups so students can encounter Christ in Scripture and in each other. “It’s not just to preach at students. It’s a relaxed setting where we get to invite students to see what the faith is all about,” Mahoney says. “Our end goal is spiritual multiplication. Our hope and prayer is by the end of the year, we have people who want to lead Bible study and invite their friends.”

And, she adds, she hopes the students will carry their faith to their home communities. “We hope that the students we are working with continue to seek lives of prayer, friendship and mission in their home parishes,” Mahoney says. “We won’t see it immediately, but with patience and perseverance and trust in
“AMID THE CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH TODAY, NONE IS GREATER THAN THE INCREASING NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE ABANDONING THE PRACTICE OF THE FAITH AND EVEN A BELIEF IN GOD. FOCUS IS A VERY BRIGHT CANDLE SHINING IN THIS DARK PLACE.”

— Archbishop Leonard P. Blair

the Holy Spirit, we know that God wants to multiply the good works being done here.”

While she loves the mission, Mahoney admits she sometimes misses family and friends. She adds, however, that God has called her to be his missionary. “He doesn’t promise me stability, but he promises me his kingdom,” she says. “He promises me that he will take care of every need I have.”

Maile, who is in his second year as a campus missionary, began his spiritual journey in Minnesota, where he attended Mass every Sunday with his whole family. When he was 14, his parents gave him the option of going to Mass or staying home; he chose not to go to Mass and to do other “fun” activities.

“That fourth week, I noticed I lost the desire for fun,” he says. “My brother and dad were still going to Mass and happy with life and content. The big difference was I wasn’t going to Mass. I realized this might be something I was missing; that was a touch on the heart I’d never experienced before.”

At the age of 15, Maile attended his first adoration and admits it was the first time “I felt God’s love.”

Before leaving for college, his brother told him about Newman Centers on college campuses. So on his first day of classes at North Dakota State University in Fargo, a junior invited him to a Bible study group, which, he says, changed his life. “Bible study is where I learned the most about my faith and how I learned to make Jesus the center of my life,” he says.

On a FOCUS mission trip to Ireland, Maile led a four-day conference for young adults. “It was being able to share my faith with others that helped me realize the Lord placed a desire in my heart to be a missionary for the rest of my life,” he says.

Right now, Maile says, he’s exactly where he belongs. “I have the opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission and it’s a humbling experience,” he says. “Being a FOCUS missionary has fulfilled all of the desires I have wanted in a job. Being able to serve Jesus for at least the next two years, I’m very excited about how the Lord wants to continue working in my life, and in others’ lives.”

Shannon, who is in her first year as a campus missionary, has had little difficulty orienting herself to new locales. As a child, she moved with her family from Illinois to Minnesota to Colorado, where she was raised Catholic and attended Mass until her parents got divorced. Then, she encountered FOCUS missionaries at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she learned to run toward Jesus.

“It wasn’t until a retreat and encountering the Lord in adoration that I knew I needed to study the Bible,” Shannon says. “Going to church just wasn’t enough. I knew I needed to live differently and have Christ at the center of my life.”

Today, Shannon especially enjoys creating small Catholic communities through student Bible study groups, which she says do not require any homework. “I facilitate the conversation on the topics we talk about,” she says. “It’s more of a conversation that helps students open up their personal lives and their own relationships with the Lord. It’s a lot more personal than a class or a lecture with simply an educational side. It allows for deeper friendships and community.”

TO INQUIRE about FOCUS at CCSU, visit focusoncampus.org/campus/central-connecticut-state-university.
Serving Meals With Dignity

Bread for Life provides food, fellowship and dignity in a Christ-like manner to those in need.

Story by KAREN AVITABILE

Bread for Life in Southington does more than serve meals to the hungry — it has been sharing God’s love with anyone who has stepped through the door for nearly 40 years.

Donald Myler, who has been unemployed for about a year and lives and sleeps in his truck, is one of about 35 clients who benefits from Bread for Life by receiving a free meal six days a week. A religious man who attends church, Myler says he feels God’s love through the people he encounters at Bread for Life.

“I pray for the people here, the staff and all they do to make this happen,” Myler says. “I look toward God for inspiration. Things are working out.”

The mission of Bread for Life may seem simple, “to provide food, fellowship and a sense of dignity to those in need,” but is carried out through the compassionate staff and volunteers who are called to serve God. Some of the volunteers are parishioners from local churches.

“I believe that we bring Christ to those we serve in how we honor the call to serve the poor,” says Donna Ayer, executive director of Bread for Life. “We care for each person who comes through our door. We treat them with dignity versus treating them with pity or disinterest.”

Following a stroke, client Al McGloin suffers from cognitive memory loss and poor eyesight. Unable to drive or go to work for the past year, he has been getting a ride to Bread for Life’s headquarters on Vermont Avenue to have lunch Mondays through Saturdays and dinner on Wednesdays.

“I love the food and they treat everyone with respect,” McGloin says of the staff and volunteers. “You see all walks of life. I see young people and I see families.”
HUNGER HAS NO ZIP CODE

A recent survey indicated that most of the clients served by Bread for Life do not have the means to prepare their own meals and do not eat meals unless they come to the soup kitchen.

To address food insecurity in the community, Bread for Life serves about 350,000 homemade meals a year to people of all ages. This statistic includes meals and bagged dinners delivered to the senior community, homebound residents and children during the summer.

Two Bread for Life programs, called Our Fuel for School and Branford Hall Student Pantry, address food insecurity among schoolchildren and college-age students. In addition, its mobile food pantry brings lunch to children in two underserved at-risk neighborhoods once a month. Thanks to recent funding, Bread for Life is now providing teen dinners on the first Friday of each month.

Referred to as blessing bags, Bread for Life’s emergency kits are packed with water, hygiene items, socks, granola bars, gift cards and more for distribution by police officers encountering someone in need.

But Bread for Life does more than serve meals and distribute blessing bags. It strives to “move them forward” by connecting clients with agencies to obtain housing, identifications, state assistance and more.

“Food is the start of it, but it is not always what they need,” Ayer says. “Most importantly is to connect people with services that will help them move forward. We are on the journey alongside of them and are willing to walk there with them but always trying to move them forward.”

GIVING BACK, GETTING BACK

For volunteers, giving back means getting something back too. “It’s very rewarding to give back when you retire,” says Pat Byrne, a volunteer server for three years. “The people who volunteer here are my friends.”

After working in the town’s school system for 41 years, Steve Nyerick, a member of Bread for Life’s Board of Directors, began mingling with clients during mealtime at the request of Ayer who says, “Everyone wants to be known by somebody.”

“It’s like a family,” Nyerick says. “They (clients) tell you their life story. It’s good for them to talk about their lives. ... I found my niche talking to the people here.”

For the past seven years, volunteer Roger Lemire has been helping out in the kitchen and serving meals at Bread for Life. “I feel I want to make a difference in some people’s lives and this is how I do that.” 🍃
Jessica Knudson was involved in a domestic dispute a few years ago and was ordered by the court to undergo an education-based program about family violence. The Torrington woman sought out that city’s office of Catholic Charities, whose other five behavioral health centers are located in New Haven, Milford, Ansonia, Waterbury and Hartford.

“Judy’s been wonderful,” Knudson says, referring to program supervisor Judy Balcezak. “She’s probably the best counselor I’ve ever had, because she’s so personable and real. I don’t feel when I’m talking to Judy that she’s listening just because she gets paid. Her own life experience has influenced her work, and I think in a very positive way.”

A brochure published by the Torrington center states: “Our goal is to help clients develop skills to cope with life’s stresses and regain control of their lives.” Dolores Griffin, clinical director at the facility, says, adding the goal aligns with the Catholic Charities mission statement: “Reflecting God’s love, we partner with all to strengthen families and inspire people to achieve their fullest potential.”

The six behavioral health centers carry out court mandates from the state of Connecticut Judicial Branch. Each center also offers an array of other services. If the offender completes the 12-hour program and does not repeat an offense within a year, Griffin says, their court records are cleared “like it never happened.” A separate 26-week program may be ordered for repeat offenders, she adds. In this case, the offense stays on their records.

Once clients complete their cycle of classes, they’re issued a certificate of completion, which goes into the courts to show they’ve completed their assignment, Suzanne DeRosa, director of behavioral health at Catholic Charities, says.

Balcezak changed careers from architectural designer to counselor because of stresses in her own life she sought help with. “I think there is a certain cadre of people who want to turn around and help somebody else,” she says. “We call ourselves wounded warriors.”

Griffin formerly worked at church parishes as a director of religious education. Oftentimes, she says, people would come to her for informal counseling. So she decided to get a bachelor’s degree in social work and later a master’s in therapy. “I did my internship with Catholic Charities 23 years ago. I’ve never left,” Griffin says.

Knudson still seeks counseling after five years in various programs. She is executive secretary and director of communications for Green TEAR Initiative, an organization that raises awareness of mental health issues.

“My life isn’t perfect, but I’ve grown a lot,” she says. “I’m not a turtle hiding in my shell anymore. I’m better able to cope with not just daily stressors but other stressors that are not routine. I’m not as graceful as I’d like to be through those, but I don’t feel that the world is ending anymore.”

From left to right: Judy Balcezak, program supervisor in Torrington; Jessica Knudson, a client at the Torrington Family Service Center; and Dolores Griffin, clinical director at the site.
New Haven synod delegates expanding evangelization efforts.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This segment of the synod update was provided by Andrew Donarumo, a synod delegate of St. Michael Church, New Haven, on behalf of participating synod delegates from New Haven churches.

Synod delegates, representing several churches in New Haven with a diverse ethnic population, are sharing ideas together to promote evangelization underway at the city’s Catholic churches.

The New Haven synod group plans to expand its evangelization efforts citywide, statewide or “wherever the Holy Spirit leads us.” Design and implementation of a social media platform to share ideas is on the horizon.

Below is a summary of ways some of the city churches are sharing their faith with others.

**Sts. Aedan and Brendan Parish**, serving the west side of New Haven, is active in community evangelization. Its delegates promoted the four synod themes — encountering Christ, becoming missionary disciples, sent on mission and collaborating in the local Church using monthly Church bulletin inserts. Discussion with attendees pursued following a presentation to the pastor of “Pivotal Players of the Church,” a pre-Lenten series.

Following the meetings, a recap of synod presentations was given to **St. Bernadette Parish** at all weekend Masses. Located in the Morris Cove section of New Haven, St. Bernadette Church parish council launched and developed a booklet outlining and detailing its ministries prior to the synod meetings. Parishioners were encouraged to visit the archdiocesan website for additional information.

**St. Mary Parish**, served by the Dominicans, includes the historic St. Mary Church and the nearby St. Joseph Church. In the spirit of the synod, St. Mary’s offers adult faith formation and many social justice ministries. The parish offers options with Mass times, adoration hours and music. Additionally, the parish hosts Frassati New Haven, a fellowship of young adult Catholics in their 20s and 30s, hospitality after Sunday Mass and a monthly gathering for seniors.

A downtown Polish-American New Haven church, **St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Parish** took on an initiative last spring before the synod process began. A ‘Gifts and Talents Inventory’ was administered to its parishioners. As a result, new opportunities for parish ministries were identified and a hospitality ministry has started. St. Stanislaus offers weekend Masses in English, Polish and Latin, a Divine Mercy devotion and hosts a multilingual living rosary devotion annually.

**St. Michael Parish** was established in 1889 as the first Italian parish in Connecticut. Nearby Wooster Square Park provides a setting for both its outdoor Mass and the Knights of Columbus-sponsored Easter egg hunt, promoting an encounter and fellowship. Mass celebrations of Italian feasts preceding processions, festivals and liturgical devotions add to the experience.

**St. Martin de Porres Parish** was formed in 1945 to bring black Catholics into the Church. Traditional Sunday liturgies at 7:30 and 9 a.m., and a Gospel Mass at 11 a.m. are celebrated. The Stewardship Council acts as a steering committee providing parish direction. Breakfast, homeless meals and Thanksgiving basket ministries are some examples serving community needs. In February, the youth ministry held a four-week Black History Month celebration.

The final document will be presented by the archbishop at the synod closing Mass at the Toyota Oakdale Theatre in Wallingford on Pentecost Sunday, May 31.
Dedicated to the greater honor and glory of God and for the salvation of his people, the Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer in Las Vegas was named as such to be a proclamation for the shrine that “Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior ... and that he lives with us always and everywhere.”

Although wedged between numerous casinos at the southern end of the strip, the shrine, with a large cross on top of the building, stands out among all buildings.

“The Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer ... is a thriving place of worship for locals and visitors alike,” Bishop George L. Thomas says. “With their unique proximity to the Las Vegas strip and Las Vegas itself being a popular international travel destination, the shrine and the cathedral are often the subject of fascination. But in reality, we have found that given Las Vegas has more than 42 million visitors a year, we welcome large numbers of visitors who are grateful and pleasantly surprised to have the unique opportunity to worship during their trips to Las Vegas.”

Outside, the shrine is surrounded by a dedicated area called the Memorial Remembrance Walkway Stones, which is an everlasting standing memorial for deceased loved ones or to honor the living. In addition, there are memorial stones by a unique Jesus and the children statue area located outside the shrine’s front entrance.

Seating 2,000 people, the shrine is decorated with floating statues of Jesus’ life.
BEFORE YOU GO

• The Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer is located at 55 East Reno Ave., Las Vegas, at the corner of East Reno Avenue and Giles Street, across the street from the Luxor Hotel & Casino and south of the Tropicana Hotel & Casino. There is ample parking.

• The outdoor grounds and the shrine are open for silent prayer in the church Mondays through Fridays, 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

• Mass is offered Mondays through Fridays at 12:10 p.m., followed by Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament; Saturdays, 12:10 and 4 p.m.; and Sundays, 8 and 10 a.m., noon, 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. (in Spanish).

• For more information, call 702.891.8600 or visit mostholyredeemer.tripod.com.

A gift shop is open after all Masses.

For the Traveler, Psalm 121, The Lord My Guardian

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From whence shall come my help? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; or your guardian to sleep. Behold, the guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade at the right hand. By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night. The Lord will guard you from all evil; he will guard your soul. The Lord will guard your coming and going both now and forever.

in alcoves on both sides of the altar. Our Lady of Guadalupe chapel is the perfect spot for prayer with an altar, lectern, sanctuary lamp, crucifix and tabernacle which are original contemporary works in bronze. Also, there is an oil painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which originated in Mexico in the late 17th century, and a restored four-foot high, hand-carved statue of St. Joseph and the child Jesus estimated to be about 200 years old.

The doors of the shrine are open daily for guests who want to celebrate their faith or the liturgy with an international congregation of Roman Catholics.

“It is not uncommon to have a congregation filled with locals and visitors from several different continents worshiping together and that makes for a special experience to the universal Church for everyone involved, including ourselves, as it allows for us to meet and practice our faith with people from around the globe,” Bishop Thomas says.

JOIN ARCHBISHOP LEONARD P. BLAIR FOR HOLY WEEK AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOSEPH AT THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion
April 4, 4 p.m. Vigil (celebrated by Very Rev. Daniel J. McLearen, rector)
April 5, 10 a.m. Mass

Chrism Mass
April 7, 11 a.m. Mass

Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper
April 9, 7 p.m. Mass

Good Friday
April 10, 3 p.m. Liturgy of the Lord’s Mass

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil
April 11, 8 p.m. Vigil

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
April 12, 10 a.m. Mass
9 a.m., Easter Sunday Concert featuring Vivaldi’s Gloria
The Cathedral Schola Cantorum and Soli Deo Gloria Orchestra
Meredith Neumann, conductor, and Dr. Ezequiel Menéndez, organ
The Celibacy of the Priest

One of the most identifiable aspects of the Catholic priesthood is the reality of priestly celibacy. Priests freely forgo the joys of marriage and family life in order to make a fuller offering of themselves to almighty God in service of his Church. There is often much debate around this topic because celibacy for priests is a discipline in the Church and not a dogma.

Dogmas are those teachings which are at the center of our faith and cannot be changed. Examples of dogmas are that Jesus is God, that he rose from the dead, that he founded the Church. Disciplines are those practices which the Church has adopted as helpful to the living of the Catholic life but that can, in principle, change without changing our faith. Such examples are the abstaining from meat on Fridays and priestly celibacy. However, just because the Church can change the discipline of priestly celibacy doesn’t mean she necessarily should.

Priestly celibacy finds its origins in the person of Christ, who himself lived a celibate life. Additionally, those who followed Christ as apostles were called to leave everything behind to do so. “For this reason the Church, from apostolic times, has wished to conserve the gift of perpetual continence on the part of the clergy and chooses the candidates for Holy Orders from among the celibate faithful.” (Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, 81)

Celibacy provides a freedom to give everything for the sake of the Gospel and to keep one’s heart free of worldly attachments which would compete with the demands of ministry. A priest must be ready and willing to change assignments at a moment’s notice if the bishop decides such a move is necessary for the well-being of the local Church. He must be willing to be available at all times to tend to the spiritual needs of those in his care. He must put the preaching of the Gospel above any other material or earthly need.

But priestly celibacy isn’t only practical; it is also tied to who the priest is as spiritual father. The priest forgoes physical fatherhood in order to serve as a spiritual father to the people entrusted to his care. We call our priests “Father,” signifying the relationship that we have with them. The priest gives us life in baptism, forgiveness in confession and nourishment in the reception of Holy Communion.

Finally, priestly celibacy acts as a sign. Priests stand as witnesses that we should not live only for this world. A priest sacrifices the earthly joys of marriage and children and the stability of a family life in testimony to the fact that the ultimate reward for a Christian is found in heaven.

GOD IS CALLING NEW VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD, RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THE DIACONATE. ARE YOU ONE OF THEM? If you think God may be calling you, do not be afraid. Visit archdioceseofhartford.org/vocations or call the Office of Vocations, 860.761.7456.

FATHER MICHAEL CASEY is the director of vocations for the Archdiocese of Hartford.
Born in Valencia, Spain, in 1350, Vincent Ferrer’s parents were distinguished by their virtue and alms-deeds. They made it their rule to distribute alms whenever they could. At age 18, Vincent entered the Dominican Order during the time of the Great Schism — the Church’s division under multiple popes.

He received his doctorate at Catalonia, followed by five years of preaching at the cathedral at Valencia. In 1394, Cardinal Pedro de Luna set up a papal court in Avignon and named himself Benedict XIII. He offered Vincent many Church positions — even that of cardinal, which he refused. He only took the role of de Luna’s confessor.

Ferrer campaigned fruitlessly to end the schism and relinquished his duties to de Luna four years later to become a missionary. He spent the next 20 years preaching throughout Europe about sin, death, God’s judgments and eternity. His sermons were so powerful that many people returned to their Catholic faith.

Ferrer lay dying when he saw a vision of Christ, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. As a result of this vision, he was miraculously cured. He began preaching about the last judgment and the need for penance. Because of this, he came to be known as the “angel of judgment.”

Though Ferrer spoke only his native Spanish, people of all languages were able to understand what he said. His biographers believe he had the ability to speak in tongues to communicate the word of God.

He died at the age of 69 from a fever. He asked for the Passion of Christ to be read from all four Gospels at his funeral, because it was the Wednesday before Palm Sunday, April 5, 1419. He was canonized in 1455.

St. Vincent Ferrer Parish Has Unique Tapestry of Saint

BY SHELLEY WOLF

Parishioners at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Naugatuck are not likely to forget their patron saint. They are reminded of him each time they enter the church, where a tapestry of St. Vincent Ferrer hangs in the vestibule above the inner doors.

Created specifically for the parish by artist Sean Moore and Bramante Studio of Ontario, Canada, the tapestry is the artist’s vision of the healing of St. Vincent Ferrer.

The four-panel tapestry includes images of St. Vincent Ferrer in his Dominican habit reclining on a rock, St. Francis in his Franciscan habit with a dove on his shoulder representing the Holy Spirit, Jesus in “Transfiguration white” with his hand extended from the healing and St. Dominic with a dog, a symbol of the Dominicans. The spring of water shown behind Jesus and the three saints, and the hills and valleys depicted on the horizon, are all geographical elements found in Naugatuck.

The parish observes the saint’s feast day as well. “Over the years, our parish has had celebrations of the feast day, which included honoring parishioners who have contributed to the growth and progress of the parish in many ways,” says Father Binny Issac, parochial vicar at St. Vincent Ferrer.
MALTA HOUSE OF CARE’S WONDER WOMEN CLASS OF ‘20
Malta House of Care has announced the names of the Wonder Women Class of ‘20 who will be honored at the 10th annual awards ceremony and fundraiser on April 23, 6 to 8:30 p.m., at the Hartford Marriott Downtown Hotel. All proceeds will support the Malta House of Care Mobile Medical Clinic, an independent non-profit that provides free primary care to uninsured adults on a van that goes to four Hartford-area neighborhoods each week. The honorees are: Maryse Adonis of Newington, Ana Alfaro of Hartford, Noelle Alix of Simsbury, Kim Morrison of Avon, Sandy Cassanelli of Glastonbury, Wilma Hoffman of Newington and Dr. Pauline Olsen of Farmington. Tickets are $100 each. For more information and to R.V.S.P, visit maltahouseofcare.org/wonder-women-20.

RECIPES FOR STREAM SUCCESS FUNDRAISER
Catholic Academy of Waterbury is holding its first Recipes for STREAM Success fundraiser on April 23, 5:30 p.m., at the Country Club of Waterbury, 1 Oronoke Road, Waterbury. This event is slated to be the major fundraiser of the year. Guests can bid on dozens of cupcakes and cookies prepared by celebrity bakers. Guests can also sample a wide array of baked goods from local bakeries. A special guest will serve as master of ceremonies alongside Waterbury’s Bev Bucari. Tickets are $30 per person and can be obtained at Catholic Academy of Waterbury or by visiting catholicacademywaterbury.org.

BANANA PEELS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
Sister Damien Marie Savino, dean of science and sustainability at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Philip Sakimoto, an astrophysicist and former acting director of NASA’s Space Science Education Public Outreach Program, will present their response to Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si: Care for our Common Home, on April 24, 7 to 8:30 p.m., and on April 25, 4 to 5:30 p.m., at the Chiara Center, 275 Finch Ave., Meriden. Their presentation will address climate change in light of science and faith, and suggests practical steps to increase personal caring for creation. The cost is $25 for the presentation only and $10 for students (with refreshments). On Saturday, a fee of $35 includes a light supper. To R.S.V.P., call 203.237.8084. Make checks payable to Franciscan Life Center. For more information, visit flcenter.org.

AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT MAGNIFICAT
Kathleen Keefe, who has been in the teaching and healing ministry since 1987, will be the guest speaker at Magnificat on April 25, 9 a.m. to noon, at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 42 Century Drive,
Bristol. Keefe is the president and founder of Peace Through Divine Mercy, a charity for priestly and family renewal in the New York Archdiocese and The Eucharistic Institute, which will launch in 2020. Her recent book, Retreat from the World, is the moving story of how the physical healing of her son touched the heart of a priest and healed his spirit. The cost to attend is $25. Mail registration before April 15 to: Magnificat, P.O. Box 969, Southington 06489. For more information, visit magnificat-ministry.net or call 860.302.1349.

DINNER AND LECTURE AT SAINT THOMAS MORE
Father Patrick J. Ryan will speak on “The Call to Jihad and the Lure of Prosperity: Polarities in Contemporary Islam and Christianity in Africa” during the Morehouse Lecture on April 26 at Saint Thomas More, 268 Park St., New Haven. Father Ryan is the Laurence J. McGinley professor of Religion and Society at Fordham University. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Fordham and a doctorate in the comparative history of religion from Harvard University. At Fordham, he taught Middle Eastern Studies, held the Loyola chair in Humanities and served as vice president for university mission and ministry. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including When I Survey the Wondrous Cross: Scriptural Reflections for Lent (Paulist, 2004) and Amen: Jews, Christians and Mus- lims Keep Faith with God (Catholic University of America Press, 2018). The dinner and lecture will begin at 6 p.m. To R.S.V.P., call 203.777.5537.

BABIES IN BLOOM BENEFIT DINNER
St. Gianna’s Pregnancy Resource Center kicks off its fifth annual Babies in Bloom Benefit Dinner on April 26, 1 to 5 p.m., at Amarante’s Sea Cliff Inn, 62 Cove St., New Haven. This year’s keynote speaker will be Archbishop Leonard P. Blair. The St. Gianna Life Award will be presented to Christina Bennett, communications director, at the Family Institute of Connecticut. Dinner is included as well as an opportunity for raffles and prizes. Tickets are $50 for adults, $20 for ages 5 to 12 and free for children under 5. For more information, registration or donations, call 203.464.4316 or visit giannacenter.org.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP
Precious Blood Parish in Milford offers a Bereavement Support Group that meets every Thursday, 1 to 3 p.m., on the campus of St. Agnes Church, 400 Merwin Ave., Milford. The current spring session runs through May 28. Anyone coping with the loss of a loved one, recently or years ago, is welcome. To learn more or to register, call Ellen, 203.283.1934, or visit preciousbloodparishmilford.org/spiritual-groups.
The Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair, S.T.D., has made the following appointments:

- Very Rev. Steven R. Boguslawski, vicar general, moderator of the curia, departed from the Order of Preachers and was incardinated pure et simpliciter, into the Archdiocese of Hartford.
- Deacon Dennis R. Ferguson, senior status, effective Jan. 20, 2020. Appointed as the archdiocesan deacon for the deaf apostolate, effective March 1, 2020, for a term of five years.
- Rev. John L. Lavorgna, appointed associate director of Continuing Formation of Priests for the Archdiocese of Hartford, effective Feb. 1, 2020, for a term of five years, in addition to responsibilities as pastor of Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Waterbury.
- Deacon Dominic J. Corraro, from Most Holy Trinity Parish, Wallingford, to diaconal ministry at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Hamden, effective March 1, 2020, for a term of five years.
- Deacon John W. Thorpe, permanent deacon, St. Dominic Parish, Southington, appointed to diaconal ministry at St. Aloysius Parish, Plantsville, effective March 2, 2020, for a period of five years.
- Rev. Cyriac Maliekal, pastor, Christ the Redeemer Parish, Milford, to administrator of Christ the Redeemer Parish, Milford, effective March 3, 2020, for a one-year term.
- Deacon William H. Parkinson, permanent deacon, at St. Bernadette Parish, New Haven, appointed to diaconal ministry at Holy Infant Parish, Orange, effective March 16, 2020, for a period of five years.
- Rev. Joseph M. Elko, renewal of appointment as administrator of St. Martin de Porres Parish, New Haven, effective March 30, 2020, for a one-year term, subject to the possibility of renewal.

— REV. RYAN M. LERNER, CHANCELLOR, MARCH 2, 2020

HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT OF SEXUAL ABUSE TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

If you have knowledge or suspect that a minor or vulnerable adult (an adult with an intellectual disability) has been sexually abused, in any manner, by personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford, you are urged to report this information to:

Kathleen D. Nowosadko, Victim Assistance Coordinator
860-541-6475 • kathleen.nowosadko@aohct.org

Incidents involving sexual abuse of minors (persons under the age of 18) should be reported to: State Department of Children and Families Care-line 1-800-842-2288

Incidents involving sexual abuse of vulnerable adults aged 18-59 should be reported to the: Connecticut Department of Developmental Services – AID Division for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities 1-844-878-8923

Incidents involving sexual abuse of vulnerable adults aged 60 and over should be reported to: Department of Social Services for the Elderly 1-888-385-4225
Deacon Frederick Michael Grant, 70, died on Dec. 30, 2019, in Clermont, Fla. He was born in New Haven on March 16, 1949, the son of the late Edward and Jane Grant. He received his undergraduate degree from Southern Connecticut State University in 1971 and an MBA from Sacred Heart University in 1982.

He was ordained as a deacon in the Catholic Church in 1992. After a long career in manufacturing in Connecticut, he relocated to Clermont where he worked as a teacher at Windy Hill Middle School and Clermont Middle School.

Deacon Robert "Bob" E. Bernd, 76, of Enfield, died on Jan. 13, 2020. He was born in Lebanon, Pa., on Oct. 13, 1943, the son of the late Robert P. and Fannie Magdalene (Michenfelder) Bernd. He was employed by Hamilton Standard in Windsor Locks for more than 25 years and later employed by the Connecticut Department of Corrections as a chaplain, retiring in 2016. He served in the U.S. Navy. He was ordained as a deacon in 1994 and served at St. Martha's Church for 25 years.

Rev. Thomas Richard Mitchell of Bloomfield died on Jan. 16, 2020. Born in Honolulu, on April 23, 1933, to Thomas R. and Patricia (Rodgers) Mitchell Jr., he attended St. Justin School in Hartford and Northwest Catholic High School in West Hartford. He entered St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, entered St. Bonaventure University and completed his priestly studies at Christ the King Seminary in New York. In later years, he did advanced studies at Fairfield University. Father Mitchell was ordained to the priesthood in 1979 and began his service as the assistant pastor of Holy Infant Church in Orange. Throughout his priesthood, he would be assigned in various roles, including teaching at Northwest Catholic High School and pastoral work at St. Rose Church and St. Isaac Jogues Church in East Hartford, St. Augustine Church in Hartford, St. Patrick Church in Farmington and Sacred Heart Church in Hartford. In addition, he spent 10 years working in Puerto Rico, serving at El Buen Pastor (Good Shepherd Church) in Mayaguez, a sister parish of the Archdiocese of Hartford. His most recent assignments included serving as administrator of St. Joseph Church in Canaan and Immaculate Conception Church in Norfolk and, finally, as weekend assistant at Our Lady of Grace Church in Bantam.

Rev. Francis Xavier Callahan died on Jan. 29, 2020, at the age of 94. He was born March 4, 1925, in the Momauguin section of East Haven, the son of Anna Kililea and Charles Lewis Callahan. He graduated East Haven High School, St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, St. Mary’s Seminary and the University in Baltimore, Md., before being ordained a priest on May 26, 1949. He was assigned to parishes in Bristol and Mystic before being named in Hamden. He was 88 years old and professed 66 years in religious life. Sister Rosaria, daughter of the late Luigi and Rosetta (Giovanazzi) Seppi, was born in Belluna, Italy, on Oct. 3, 1931. She entered the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome on Oct. 7, 1950. She professed first vows on March 25, 1953, in Rome, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 25, 1958, at Mount Sacred Heart, Hamden. Sister Rosaria arrived from Italy in 1953 as a missionary to the United States and became a naturalized citizen in 1961. In her 66 years as a vowed Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she faithfully served as an early childhood and elementary schoolteacher in Connecticut, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

Rev. L. Randall Blackall died on Feb. 13, 2020. He was born on Jan. 18, 1929. In 1954, he was ordained to the priesthood in the Cathedral of St. Joseph. He began his ministry at St. Ann Parish in Hamden, followed by St. John the Evangelist Church in New Haven. In 1961, he was appointed archdiocese director of family life. He served as a strong advocate for pro-life causes and developed programs for young people and those engaged to be married. He served as chaplain of the then-St. Francis Orphan Society in New Haven, was spiritual director of the New Haven Curia of the Legion of Mary and served at St. Thomas Parish in Goshen and St. Timothy Church, West Hartford. He completed his active ministry as the pastor of St. Paul Church, Glastonbury. He studied at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield and St. Bernard’s Seminary in Rochester, N.Y., received a doctorate of ministry degree from the Hartford Seminary and was an adjunct professor of moral theology at Holy Apostles College, Cromwell. In addition, he has edited and written several books, including Design For Marriage, which grew out of his work with his family life ministry.

Deacon Paul E. Sabo, of West Haven, formerly of Milford, died on Feb. 14, 2020. He was born in Bridgeport on July 28, 1941, to Paul Sabo and Margaret Morris. He worked for Nestle for several years before starting his own business. He served in both the U.S. Army and National Guard during the Vietnam era. He spent many years coaching baseball in Milford Little League and basketball in the Catholic Youth Organization through St. Mary Church in Milford. He was ordained a deacon in December 1981. Originally engaged in pastoral work at St. Mary Church in Milford in 1983, he was reassigned in 2000 to Our Lady of Victory Church in West Haven. In 2001, he additionally began serving at St. John Vianney Church, West Haven, reaching senior status in 2016.

Sister Rosaria Seppi, Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, died on Feb. 12, 2020, at Sacred Heart Manor in Hamden. She was 88 years old and professed 66 years in religious life. Sister Rosaria, daughter of the late Luigi and Rosetta (Giovanazzi) Seppi, was born in Belluna, Italy, on Oct. 3, 1931. She entered the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome on Oct. 7, 1950. She professed first vows on March 25, 1953, in Rome, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 25, 1958, at Mount Sacred Heart, Hamden. Sister Rosaria arrived from Italy in 1953 as a missionary to the United States and became a naturalized citizen in 1961. In her 66 years as a vowed Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she faithfully served as an early childhood and elementary schoolteacher in Connecticut, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.
Do you find your weight to be a struggle, either emotionally or physically? Trinity Health Of New England Weight Management at Saint Francis can help. The members of our team are committed to working together to give you the advice, support and treatment options you need to take control of your weight and restore your health.

We offer proven methods for weight management that can be tailored to your unique needs. Your team will provide you with expert, personalized attention. They will become your trusted partners in your weight loss journey.

To learn more about your weight loss options, call 833-678-1100 or visit TrinityHealthOfNE.org/YWeight.