



Parish Times

Special Edition
Catholic Schools Week

JANUARY 2020

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Blessed New Year! I hope that each of you had a blessed and joy filled Christmas season. My Christmas was enriched by experiencing the warmth of Christmas liturgies at several parishes, especially enjoying heart-warming children's Christmas plays and liturgies. For a more magical season, I recommend adding a school or parish Christmas performance to your holiday traditions. Among the many blessings of Christmas, love, hope and joy for our children and their future is most



Chuck Short

Continued on page 26



The congregation assembles after the Mass for All God's Children held January 5 at St. Francis of Assisi Church. The Mass invites the participation of people with special needs in all the liturgical roles of the Mass. Photo by Bill Froh

Is Our Anger Hurting Those Most in Need?

I was extremely disappointed but not altogether shocked to see a recent *Washington Post* article on our former archbishop, Theodore McCarrick, and his reported sharing of monetary resources with members of the curia (the governing body of the Church) during his time here in Washington.



Fr. John Enzler

The money he reportedly gave to high-ranking curia members came from a fund that consisted of money given to him to be shared

Continued on page 20

Visit a Catholic School – You Might Be Surprised by What You Find There!

Working parents who often may not see their children between 7:30am and 6:30pm during the week, can find themselves exhausted by the demands of work and raising families. Weekends are over-scheduled with soccer and basketball, karate and ballet, tutors and art classes. Parents can become focused solely on “the product” with no appreciation for, or enjoyment of



Patricia McGann

Continued on page 35

Mass for All God's Children Recognizes Diverse Gifts of Adults, Children with Differences

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

For the eighth consecutive year, St. Francis of Assisi Parish served as an oasis of acceptance, tolerance, and community during the Mass for All God's Children

celebrated on the Feast of the Epiphany.

The liturgy, which highlights the gifts of children and adults with physical, developmental and intellectual differences, welcomes people of all faith traditions to participate in

the Mass. The 36 adults and children serving in the Mass on January 5 came from at least seven Catholic parishes in Montgomery County and Washington DC, as well as

Continued on page 31

iMercy Mission: The Divine Hotspot

By Rus Wester

The Dominican Friars have been proclaiming the truth of God's Word for over 800 years to Catholics by preaching parish missions around the world. The ministry of Dominican priest Fr. Bill Garrott, OP, guided him to bring his grace-filled mission messages to St. John Neumann parish in November 2019. Father Bill has preached over 175 similar parish missions and retreats in the United States and Canada.

“My mission is similar to any held in the Church,” said Father Garrott. “The basic point of a parish mission is to unleash a deeper work of God's Holy Spirit into the life of the believers. And it's to draw people who have “drifted away” from Christ or don't even know Him.”

SJN's three-day, evening mission started with preaching focused on the unconditional love of God the Father and concluded that night by asking all to approach the altar, especially families (intact, broken, troubled, struggling, separated by distance) to receive a special blessing with the Oil of St. Joseph from the Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal. A



Fr. Bill Garrott, OP (the Order of Preachers) speaks to the parish mission participants at St. John Neumann Church in Gaithersburg.

prayer was offered with each blessing of oil on parishioner foreheads:

“Through the intercession of St. Joseph, may almighty God heal, protect and strengthen you and all your family.”

The second evening talks focused on God the Father's remedy for us in His Son Jesus,

who sets us free from sin, enabling us to forgive and gives meaning to our suffering. That night we adored the Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

The third and final night's preaching

Continued on page 8

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Brookewood Senior Performs Solo on the Kennedy Center Stage

Grace Tifford, class of 2020, played her tuba center stage at the Kennedy Center on November 19, 2019 during the NSO Youth Fellows Concert. Grace was part of a select group (of six students) who were accepted into the National Symphony Orchestra Youth Fellowship Program. The NSOYF is a prestigious program that allows musically talented students to study with musicians in the Kennedy Center's National Symphony Orchestra.

Grace, a member of Holy Cross parish, began her fellowship in 2017 under the tutelage of David Fedderly, a world-renowned brass musician. She is currently studying under Seth Cook (Principal tuba of the Washington Opera and associated with the Kennedy Center), and she takes supplemental lessons from Steve Dumaine (principal tuba of the NSO).

Grace has been studying music since she was three years old, starting with the cello. Her musical abilities are far-reaching (she is able to play piano, percussion, the trombone, and cello), though she has recently focused on her talents and abilities to play the tuba.

The opportunity for Grace to be a part of the NSO has been a



Grace Tifford with her Brookewood teachers during her Kennedy Center solo performance

great boon for her: "The fellowship program not only allowed me to understand what a professional musical career would entail, but it also taught me how to gracefully interact with others in the musical world. It showed me the possibility of making a dream into a reality," Grace said when asked about the opportunity.

Grace's musical abilities have also

greatly benefitted Brookewood's life. Grace has gladly and humbly offered her skills during the school's annual gala fundraiser, festival days, and other events.

Grace hopes to continue to become a professional musician after she has finished college study. Brookewood is so proud of Grace Tifford and all of her accomplishments.

OPT

2020 Maryland General Assembly Session Underway

The 441st legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly officially began in Annapolis at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, with legislators, advocates and members of the public converging on the state capital to mark the start of 90 days of state policymaking.

Maryland's annual legislative session runs each year from early

January to early April, and during that time, the state will consider many important issues. Sine Die, the last day of session, will be Monday, April 6, 2020.

As of the opening bell, more than 50 House bills and 120 Senate bills were pre-filed. Legislators are expected to introduce as many as 3,000 bills during the 90-day session.

Among the top priorities for the Catholic Church during the next 90 days will be:

Education funding. The Maryland Catholic Conference will support increasing funding for the BOOST Scholarship Program and for expanding access to pre-Kinder-garten to all Maryland 4-year-olds.

Protecting Life. The Conference

Continued on page 39

Bearing Witness: Life and Justice for All

2020 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering January 25-28

The annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (CSMG) attracts more than 500 participants from around the country. The

conference seeks to equip current and emerging leaders in Catholic social ministry and advocacy to cultivate God's justice as they engage

in their communities and around the world.

The theme of this year's gathering is Bearing Witness: Life and Justice for All. Convening immediately after several annual pro-life events, CSMG participants will explore the Catholic Church's call to unity and a consistent ethic of life on issues impacting life and human dignity across the spectrum. The issues to be discussed include those that impact both families as well as the wider communities: the death penalty, human trafficking, restorative justice, maternal and child health, migration, violence, and poverty. Participants will conclude the final day of the gathering with visits to Capitol Hill where they will visit the offices of their elected officials.

When: January 25-28, 2020
Where: Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500

Continued on page 8

Index

Christ the King.....	32	St. Francis International School.....	37
Holy Cross.....	14	St. Jane de Chantal.....	9
Holy Redeemer.....	13	St. John Neumann.....	7
Mary of Nazareth.....	25	St. John the Evangelist.....	29
Mother Seton.....	24	St. Jude.....	28
Our Lady of Lourdes.....	27	St. Martin of Tours.....	6
Our Lady of Mercy.....	10	St. Mary - Rockville.....	4
Our Lady Queen of Poland.....	34	St. Mary - Barnesville.....	35
Resurrection.....	20	St. Michael.....	33
Senior Services.....	22-23	St. Patrick.....	18
St. Bartholomew.....	5	St. Peter.....	21
St. Bernadette.....	15	St. Raphael.....	17
St. Elizabeth.....	12	Woods Academy.....	16
St. Francis of Assisi.....	31		

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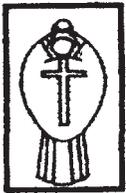
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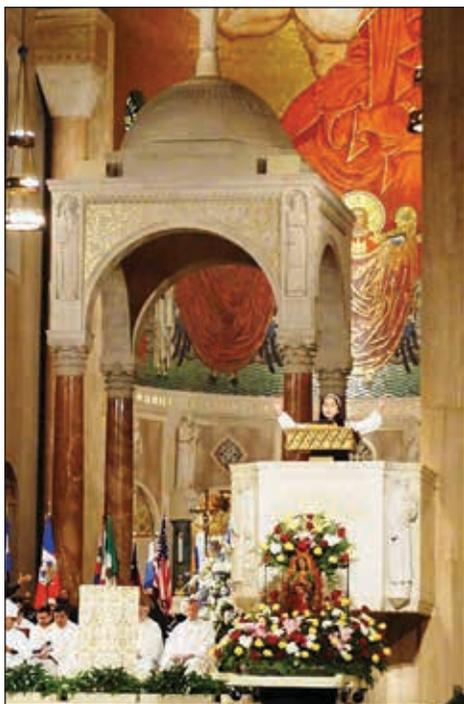
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Ten Great Years as Saint Francis International School

Former Saint Camillus School reinvents itself and thrives

The word crisis is often viewed as a negative term that can evoke fear, frustration, and panic. In 2009, the leadership at Saint Camillus Parish and School in Silver Spring leaned into the idea of *crisis* by accepting that the Greek root word is more literally translated as “turning point” or “a time of decision.”

Saint Camillus School has had a history of leadership and innovation in the Archdiocese of Washington going back to its founding in 1954. In 1960 alone, 1,277 students from grades K to Eight filled the school. In the 1980's Saint Camillus aggressively embraced providing Pre-K and Early Childhood Education. In the 1990's Saint Camillus became a majority minority school and was recognized with a national Blue Ribbon from the US Department of Education. Then, in the early



SFIS fourth-grader Sophia was the cantor for the Psalm at the archdiocesan Walk with Mary Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

2000's, Saint Camillus began a shift to serving large numbers of children from immigrant families.

All of these *turning points* were their own kind of crises, times that required *decisions* to be made. The early 2000's brought changes at Saint Camillus School as the neighborhood dynamics all around the Silver Spring school changed. First, this brought an intentional shift to embracing the importance of high-quality Pre-K education as a core mission of the school to meet the needs of working families. Then, it became important to develop of an approach to language arts and literacy that took into account the fact that a majority of students at Saint Camillus went home to families where English was only one of several languages spoken. Finally, in 2006,

Continued on page 37

Justice and Advocacy Council

Practicing civility in difficult times

By Anthony Bosnick

Whether in private conversations with friends, at home, or at public gatherings, many of us find that civil behavior is a growing challenge. The anger in our country today often makes us hesitant or even fearful to talk about public issues that need discussing.

In our last column in *Our Parish Times*, we reflected on how the Justice and Advocacy Council of Montgomery County (J&A) relies on the principles of Catholic social and moral teaching (CST) as the foundation for our discussions about public policy. For J&A members, these principles of CST are more often implicitly understood

than explicitly discussed. Either way, for Catholics, CST should be the bedrock on which we base our public policy thoughts and decisions.

For a quick introduction to or review of these principles, search the web for “USCCB Catholic Social Teaching”.

Talking about challenging topics. Below are some tips that can help us have fruitful conversations. They come from a helpful article called “How to Talk Politics Without Ruining the Party” by Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers. It is easily found on the internet.

We only have space for the main

points, so here they are. (If you find this helpful, read the full article.)

DON'T avoid all political conversation.

DO prioritize relationships over policy points.

DON'T agree to disagree.

DO ask questions to identify shared values.

DON'T go along to get along.

DO turn down the heat.

These principles are very helpful. Think about them and how they apply in your interactions with others. They may give you some helpful insights. Recently, however, in some personal discussions I've found situations where people are

Continued on page 32

 Our Parish Times

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Continued on page 32



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Members of The Ortiz Family have a nice visit with Santa at the St. Nick's Festival. From left to right: Mary Grace (5 years old and in Pre-K at St. Mary's), Rebecca (3 years old) and Barbara (2 years old), along with their mother Yanellys.

Catholic Schools Week is Coming Up!

By Siena Do

“What's your favorite thing about St. Mary's School?” That question was asked of several eighth-grade students, no less than the week before finals.

“It's small, so you can make more friends than in a bigger school,” was Rachel Pham's and Ella Cauchi's answer. Lia Ilagan also answered with, “Community.” It's true – St. Mary's currently has only about 200 students, so the students are all well-acquainted with their schoolmates, even those outside their grade.

Sebastian Goodfellow said, “The relationships between the students and teachers.” And from an eighth grader who wished to remain anonymous: “How much the teachers truly care about their students' education.” It's also true – the teachers here are the best and all of them do their best to help their students excel. For example, particularly for the older students facing a more challenging curriculum, they can meet up



Lucy, a St. Mary's School student, enjoys cotton candy at St. Mary's annual Christmas tradition, the St. Nick's Festival, on December 7. Families from the parish and school enjoy dinner, treats, dancing, crafts, shopping for loved ones in Santa's elf shop and a visit from Santa himself.

with their teachers during the Lunch/Recess period, before and after school if they need a bit of extra help.

Since the student body is currently small, there is plenty of room to grow! And as we say around here, “St. Mary's is a great place to grow!” Come and see us at our Open House

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St. Bartholomew's popular 'Rock and Roll' Mass gets a visit from Archbishop Wilton Gregory

St. Bartholomew's most distinctive and popular weekend Mass welcomed Archbishop Wilton Gregory on December 15. The 8pm Sunday night Mass attracts hundreds of people with its live contemporary Christian music, and Archbishop Gregory quickly noted how the energy of the Mass holds special appeal for younger generations of Catholics.

"I'm delighted that on this first visit to St. Bartholomew's that I come to a Eucharist that is so filled with young people and their parents and grandparents," His Excellency stated. He later noted that the vibrant Mass reminded him of his first assignment as a Deacon in a suburban Chicago parish with similar live music.

"It engages them," Archbishop Gregory reflected. "It lets them know that there's a place in the Church for them as they are, as young people."

Despite the late hour of the Mass, several families attend regularly, even with children. In addition to



Above, This contemporary Christian music group plays weekly at St. Bartholomew's 8pm Sunday Masses

At left, Archbishop Wilton Gregory says Mass as St. Bart's Christian rock band looks on

enjoying live drums, guitars, piano, and vocal harmonies, many attendees are drawn to the socially minded homilies of the Mass's usual celebrant, Monsignor John Enzler, the CEO of Catholic Charities of the

Archdiocese of Washington.

"My family loves going to 8pm Mass because we get to hear live upbeat music that you can't really find anywhere else," says St. Bartholomew School eighth-grader

Lauren Connelly. She was also privileged to be among several school students who volunteered as ushers, altar servers and a lector for the Mass featuring Archbishop Gregory.

"I was honored to meet such a

holy figure," says Connelly. "His words really stuck with me and I felt a personal connection when I heard him speak."

Let the music play on for 2020!

OPT



St Bart's Choir

St. Bartholomew Church Choir Annual Choral Concert

The Pastor welcomed everyone to the full house concert and thanked the volunteers that made the program possible especially the choir Conductor Carole J. Wycsocki, the Choir, soloists and instrumentalists.

He also pointed out that at the intermission there would be a collection taken up for the Little Sisters of the Poor who minister to the poorest in the area as Sister described while the collection (totaling \$8,570) was gathered.

The program was Saint-Saens Christmas Oratorio and selections from the



Sister Jeanne Véronique



Pastor Rev. Knestout

Vivaldi Gloria as well as the Halleluiah Chorus, all received standing ovations.

The choir was comprised of the regular St. Bart's choir plus several additional singers from the area. All were volunteers, and the soloists are all parishioners of St. Bart's.

Soloists for this event: Julia Constable-Allen, Margaret Black, and Jeanne Hisle, Sopranos; Carol Rollie Flynn, Mezzo-Soprano; Joanna Delaney, Alto; Vin Kelly, Tenor; John Martino and Daniel Villar, Baritones

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More St. Martin of Tours News on Page 36

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Sixth and fifth grades visit the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

St. Martin's Celebrates Catholic Schools Week

By Anne Gemunder

Each day, during Catholic Schools Week (January 26-February 1), we honor different contributors to our school community and celebrate what makes Catholic schools so extraordinary. We will observe the week with an Open House, a school-wide assembly, a service project, a Living Rosary, and other activities for students, families, faculty, and parishioners. Through these events, we focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church and our community. Our faculty's Catholic Schools Week Committee plans a wide array of activities, but parents and students contribute greatly to the week's success.

Crusaders Celebrate Catholic Schools Week with Whirlwind of Activities

- Sunday 1/26 – Parish Appreciation Day, Open House from 2:30 to 4:30 pm, Family Mass at 5:00 pm
- Monday 1/27 – All-School Mass, Lenten Food Drive Begins
- Tuesday 1/28 – Character Day, Mad Science Assembly, 24-Hour Day of Giving
- Wednesday 1/29 – Student Appreciation Day, Wacky Tacky Day, Student Bingo
- Thursday 1/30 – Family Appreciation Day, Sports Day, Volleyball Game
- Friday 1/31 – Spirit Day, Living Rosary, Teacher Appreciation Lunch

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My St. Martin's School Family

By Anecamie Augustin, Eight Grader

Attending Catholic school has had both a positive academic and a spiritual effect on me. I have been attending St. Martin's for nine years. Since St. Martin's is a small community, the teachers have been able to work with us individually and as a class. As an 8th grader, soon to graduate, I know I will be well prepared for high school.

I appreciate how everyone acts like we are just a big, happy family, which in many ways we are. Friends, peers, and teachers make you feel supported for who you are. As a community, we are taught that it is important to reach out with care and compassion for those less fortunate.

Spiritually, I enjoy going to Catholic school, because the students, teachers, and

Continued on page 36



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St. Martin's sixth and first graders partner as Bible Buddies throughout the school year enjoying many activities such as holiday arts and crafts. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

Breakfast with St. Nicholas

Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus each year, this is where the young and old of the parish congregate for a great December breakfast, games and personal visits for Saint Nicholas, and this year Santa Clause dropped in for a visit!

The Ron Bauer family again opened their generous gift bags and provided St. Nick with surprise gifts for everyone, delivering smiles and joy from one side of the parish center to the other. 2020 Breakfast – eleven months and counting!

At right, Knights Manny Dayao (L.), PGK/Current Deputy GK, and Brian Hiles, WARDEN, KofC Council #12127 welcoming everyone to Breakfast with St. Nicholas...and a visit from Santa. Below, parishioners Marla, Raelene and Ron Bauer traveled to Hershey Park, Pa., numerous times this past year to win prizes at fairway games and bring back to SJN hundreds of Christmas gifts for parish children attending the Breakfast with St. Nick. Since 1997, the Bauer family has donated over 14,000 Christmas items for the enjoyment of this annual Knights of Columbus event.



At right, St. Nicholas spent the morning visiting families and helped distribute gifts to the children of the parish.



Director of SJN Music and Liturgy since 1997, Mary Lu Hartsell has served as organist for most Masses celebrated at St. John Neumann and has formed all the adult and children's choirs.

Why a Children's Choir?

By Mary Lu Hartsell, SJN DIRECTOR of Music & Liturgy

[This article appeared previously in the SJN Bulletin Nov. 16/17, 2019]

I am sometimes asked why we have a children's choir. I'll tell you, but first a little story about my very early history. When I was seven years old, a small choir was formed in the church next door; my mother signed me up – it was a way for her to get an hour-long nap or some chores done without my being in the way. That was the start. Now I teach and direct a children's choir. Let me tell you the reasons why:

Young people who get involved are more likely to stay involved. Statistics show that children who sing in a choir are less apt to drop out of church later.

Learning to read and sing music from the printed page gives children

a sense of mastery. It involves the mind, body and spirit in a unique way. Children know that they know something special.

Being part of a creative community is transformative. The children work together to become greater than their sum. It's not just musical, it's biblical.

Singing in a choir reinforces the value of authority. In order to be successful, the singers must adhere

Continued on page 39

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WITNESS

Con't from page 2

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Program and Speaker highlights include:

- Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago will deliver the keynote address, Our Call to Holiness: Life and Justice for All. His Eminence is a consultant for the USCCB's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; co-chair for the National Dialogue Initiative with Muslims; chair for the USCCB's Subcommittee for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe; and a consultant for the USCCB's Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism.

- Terri Steinberg, mother of a wrongfully convicted prisoner previously on death row, will share a personal testimony following the keynote address.
- Kim Daniels, J.D., associate director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University will moderate a plenary discussion highlighting the Church's leadership and global witness on peace and disarmament, life-saving international assistance, migration, and advocacy with persons in poverty in the U.S.
- Gerard Powers, director of Catholic Peacebuilding Studies for the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and coordinator of the Catholic

- Peacebuilding Network, which includes two dozen episcopal conferences, universities, development agencies and peace organizations. CPN has focused on the Church's peacebuilding work in Colombia, the Philippines, and central and East Africa, and on issues of reconciliation, peace processes, mining, and nuclear disarmament.
- Michael N. Okińczyc-Cruz, executive director for the Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership (CSPL) and adjunct professor at the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University of Chicago. A faith-based community organizer, Okińczyc-Cruz has worked to address issues related to criminal justice, mental health, corporate bank accountability, immigration

reform, refugee rights, public transportation, workforce development and workforce diversity on a local, statewide and national level.

- Sr. Anne Victory, HM, RN, MSN, chair of the Board of Directors for U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, a national network of Catholic sisters who are addressing the issue of human trafficking across the country. She is currently serving as the director of education for the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking.
- Ronnie Moore, of the Archdiocese of New Orleans will be awarded the 2020 Sr. Marget Cafferty Award. A long-time civil rights advocate, Moore developed the first AmeriCorps program in the country for returning citizens and

brought this program, Re-entry 72, to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and continues to mentor, consult, and advise emerging organizations serving the returning citizen population, as well as returning citizens to advocate for removing barriers for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons.

A plenary session from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), "Transforming Communities with Restorative Justice," featuring representatives from several CCHD-funded community organizations engaged in the work of bringing restorative justice to communities and schools, including Precious Blood Ministries of Reconciliation, in Chicago, IL and Citizens of Louisville Organized and United Together (CLOUT).

More information is available online: www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org/.

OPT



Blessed Sacrament School

Courtesy, Acceptance, and Respect for Everyone



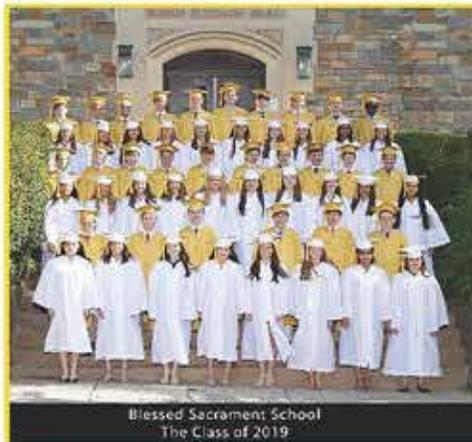
Learn



Serve



Lead



Succeed



SJN Parishioners receiving the Oil of St. Joseph, from the Oratory of St. Joseph in Canada. The Oratory was the home of St. André Bessette (1845-1937), who constructed a chapel in Montreal, Canada in honor of St. Joseph. The oil blessed at this shrine was distributed and according to some estimates brought about over 10,000 people being cured from the prayers and anointing's of St. André's oil.

iMERCY

Con't from page 1

drew us closer to the Holy Spirit whose power enables us to live the Christian life and become witnesses of Jesus Christ to the world. Father Garrott concluded with a blessing with a first-class relic of St. John Paul II taken from his blood-soaked sash on the day he was shot in Rome in 1981.

A Holy Rosary was prayed, and confessions were heard each night of the parish gatherings.

EDITOR NOTE: one might easily conclude that we would welcome Father Bill Garrott, OP back for another mission...soon.

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At left, students performed a scene from the Gospel on the altar of the St. Jane de Chantal Church during the special Christmas Eve Children Mass.



At right, Pastor Fr. Giese sat with children during the homily to ask questions and discuss the wonderful event of the birth of Jesus.

Christmas Eve Children Mass at St. Jane de Chantal

For the very popular Christmas Eve Children Mass, a group of children from the St. Jane de Chantal School and Faith Formation students performed a scene from the Gospel. There were shepherds, sheep, many angels, a cow and, of course, Joseph and Mary welcoming baby Jesus.

During the homily after the

Gospel, the pastor of St. Jane de Chantal Parish, Fr. Giese, sat in front of the altar with the children to have a conversation about the wonderful event of our Savior's humble birth in a manger. Fr. Giese asked several questions to which the children had very good answers. He inquired about what gifts they wanted for baby Jesus; many of them were very gener-

ous in what they would give, but they all agreed that the best present would be our unconditional love.

For many, this mass was the highlight of the Christmas season. Some attendees even arrived more than one hour early to make sure to get the best seats for this wonderful celebration.

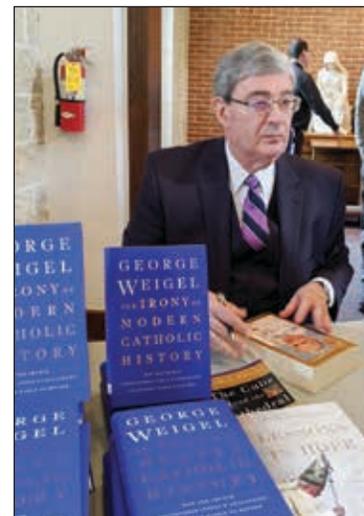
George Weigel Book Signing at St. Jane de Chantal

George Weigel, a New York Times best-selling author and a leading Catholic Church theologian, signed his new book, *The Irony of Modern Catholic History: How the Church Rediscovered Itself and Challenged the Modern World to Reform*, after several weekend Masses in December at St. Jane de Chantal Church.

Mr. Weigel is a Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and one of America's leading public intellectuals. He has authored more than 20 books over the years, but he is best known for the two-volume biography on Pope St. John Paul II: *New York Times*' bestseller, *Witness to Hope* (1999), and its sequel, *The End and the Beginning* (2010). In 2017, Weigel published a memoir of the experiences that led to his papal biography: *Lessons in Hope - My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II*.

Mr. Weigel is an active member of St. Jane de Chantal church where he is lector at Sunday Masses. As a

Continued on page 36



New York Times best-selling author, George Weigel, signed copies of his new book, along with copies of his other best-selling books, in the Gathering Space of St. Jane de Chantal Church. (Photo Courtesy of James Caulfield)

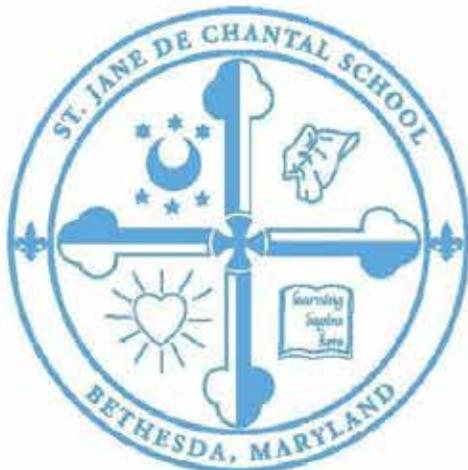
St. Jane de Chantal Parish
9601 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD

Fr. Samuel C. Giese
Pastor
301-530-1550

St. Jane de Chantal School
Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton
301-530-1221

Susana and Mario Cerritelli,
OPT Editors

More St. Jane de Chantal News on Page 36



St. Jane Frances de Chantal School

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Monday, January 27 and Thursday, March 26

Tour Classrooms, Meet Teachers and Parents

Our Lady of Mercy School News

School Open House

On Thursday, January 30, from 8:30-10:00 we will host our second Open House event of the school year. Members of the Mercy Student Council will be assisting our parent tour guides, providing personal tours of our school.

Catholic Schools Week Program

Mercy students and staff have a wonderful program of activities planned for 2020 Catholic Schools Week: Students will lead the Sunday, 11 am mass, participate in a service project for the homeless, recognize their parents during the Wednesday school mass, and celebrate teachers with a special breakfast.

Robotics at Mercy

Mercy has launched its first-ever FIRST Robotics Team! The mission of FIRST is to “inspire young people to be science and technology leaders by engaging them in exciting Mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership.” Mercy’s program will build upon the coding and robotics students are taught in the Technology classroom and prepare them for the FIRST LEGO League challenges.

Nativity Restoration

The parish Nativity was lovingly restored just in time for the Christmas season. School parents Aura Flores, Suzi Blasic, and Glenda

Alfaro, along with Mercy’s Art Teacher Miss Waites, worked many hours to repair and restore these beautiful figures. It was no easy task to apply epoxy to bond the cracks, glue pieces together, sand, and paint. Patience was the number one requirement!

Senator Visits Mercy

State Senator Susan Lee praised Mercy’s students during her recent visit when she listened to a student presentation about the school’s and parish’s impressive footprint in the Montgomery County Community. Some of the important footprints from the combined efforts of the parish and school each year:

- Over 11,000 meals were provided to the poor and homeless.
- 2,600 pounds of food was collected for St. Martin’s Food Pantry in Gaithersburg; 25 large boxes of food went to the McKenna Center food pantry.
- 30 packages of diapers were collected and given to the Christ Child Society
- 231 children received school uniforms and supplies, and 272 winter coats were given to children in need
- 22 bags of clothing were collected and given to local women’s shelters; 45 sock stockings filled with toiletries went to a homeless shelter for men.

Mercy hosted Senator Lee’s visit in collaboration with the Maryland Catholic Conference to support continued Maryland grant programs for Catholic Schools.

OPT



Above, the Christmas story was told beautifully by the students in this year’s pageant.



Mercy’s science teacher, Mr. Sharp, took home the prize for the staff’s Ugly Sweater Contest!



At right, Mercy preschool students tell the story of Jesus’ birth.



Above, State Senator Susan Lee tours Mercy and listens to student presentation on Mercy’s footprint in the community.



Above, Mercy school parents worked hard to restore the parish Nativity figurines.



At left, Mercy’s NJHS students deliver 25 boxes of food to the McKenna Food Pantry



OPEN HOUSE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 30TH
8:30-10:00 AM



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For information call the school office at 301-365-4477 or visit our website: www.schoololom.org

Musicians of Mercy

On Sunday February 9, there will be a concert in Our Lady of Mercy Church presented by the Musicians of Mercy. The concert will benefit the Jewish Coalition against Domestic Abuse. The JCAD raises awareness and provides support for victims of power-based violence. The concert takes place at 3 PM. The afternoon concert provides a great opportunity for people who are reluctant to drive after dark to enjoy wonderful music and return home before the sun sets.

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Names in the News

A page of Our Lady of Mercy’s bulletin for January 12 is dedicated to the children and adults baptized in 2019. An amazing variety of names show up in the children’s baptismal list. Out of seventy-five children, only three names – Charlotte, Frances, and Harrison – appear twice. There was, however, a trend in names that begin with the letter C. They were given to thirteen of the children (Catalina, Cooper, Carter, Christopher, Carli, Charlotte, Cecila, Charles, Carolina, Caia, Colin and Caitlyn.) In addition to the seventy-five children; nine adults were also baptized at Mercy last year. May God bless the newly baptized and their families now and throughout their lives.

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Our Lady of Mercy Parish
 9200 Kentsdale Drive
 Potomac, MD

Fr. William Byrne,
 Pastor
 301-365-1415

Our Lady of Mercy School
Ms. Deborah Thomas,
 Principal
 301-365-4477

Gerry Burgess, OPT Editor
 301-330-5676

Making Plans for the New Year

Even though we are in mid-January and there are plenty of winter days ahead, there are future forward people looking to be well prepared for the coming months. Our Lady of Mercy School is in the process of reviewing pre-kindergarten applications for three and four-year old children who will attend in the fall.

Planning for summer camps is also getting organized. In June SCAMP (Summer Camp at Mercy Parish) will offer a one-week summer day camp for children from two Southeast Washington, DC parishes. Also being planned is a summer day camp that will run from June 29 to July 24 for children in the area near Our Lady of Mercy Parish.

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GEORGETOWN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

GEORGETOWN PREP CELEBRATES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Georgetown Prep, an independent, Jesuit college-preparatory school for young men in grades 9-12, is part of a rich tradition of Catholic education in America since 1634 and is the oldest Jesuit secondary school in the country. Prep's 90-acre campus features state-of-the-art academic, athletic and student centers, small classes and a rigorous curriculum that has helped graduates earn admission to the world's best colleges and universities.



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The Joy of the Advent and Christmas Seasons Fills Our Hearts at St. Elizabeth School



Parents and guardians were treated to such wonderful singing at our Christmas concerts



Our cute reindeer are patiently waiting for Santa during their Christmas debuts.

The Advent and Christmas seasons always hold so many memorable moments for our school community at St. Elizabeth School. The joy that the preparation for Christmas brings is evident in our students' smiles all month long. In one of our favorite Christmas traditions, fifth graders created and presented Advent calendars to their Kindergarten friends. Sixth graders also embraced the season by learn-



Fifth graders presented their Kindergarten friends with home-made Advent calendars. We love this tradition!



Our community collected over 14,000 cans for the Greg Gannon Canned Food Drive.

St. Elizabeth Parish
 917 Montrose Road
 Rockville, MD
Msgr. J. Wilfrid Parent
 Pastor
 301-881-1380
St. Elizabeth School Principal
Vincent P. Spadoni
 301-881-1824
Gerry Moore,
 OPT Editor
 202-887-6475

ing about and then making their own Jesse trees. Festive decorations designed and put up around the school by our parent community transformed St. Elizabeth overnight into a Christmas village and brightened those chilly December days for all of our students and faculty. We concluded our Greg Gannon

Food Drive, which served as an important reminder of the power of community service, and all of our students performed beautifully during our three Christmas concerts led by music teacher, Mrs. Deborah O'Neill. Complete with recorder performances from our fourth graders, Spanish and French songs from our middle schoolers, and a sing-a-long of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" with some of our youngest students, all three mornings were show stoppers for our parents.

Our eighth graders re-enacted that very special night of Jesus'



Above, thank you, St. Elizabeth eighth graders, for your beautiful reenactment of that very first Christmas.

With lists in hand, students enjoyed shopping for family and friends at this year's Santa's Workshop, at left.



birth for our school community during the final concert, and students departed ways for vacation with a very real sense of the true meaning of Christmas. As a school community, we are looking forward to the beginning of a new year together and all of the excitement that it will bring.



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Johnny Holliday HR Career Day Keynote Speaker

Inspiring Students to Learn, Serve, Lead, Succeed

By Ann Enkiri

Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Kensington, Maryland embraces the celebration of Catholic Schools Week (CSW). It is a week of prayerful thanksgiving, learning, service, school spirit, friendly competition, and entertainment. Coming together as a school and parish community on January 26 at 9:30 AM for Sunday's opening CSW Mass demonstrates HR's priorities: faith, family, schoolwork, and activities. This Mass provides a wonderful occasion to offer God thanks for a vital and successful parish school that is fulfilling its mission under the faith-filled leadership of Father Hughes and Father Ebuka and of Mrs. Joan Hosmer, school principal.

Mrs. Hosmer guides and inspires a wonderful faculty and staff that includes Art, Library, Music, PE, Technology as well as French, Spanish and Resource Teachers. Teachers collaborate daily to create a welcoming and caring community where children thrive – growing in knowledge of God and of God's love. From PreK3 through Eighth Grade, Holy Redeemer School students shine with God's grace as they work, play, explore, create, imagine and share. HR parents partner with HR teachers not only to support their own children's education but to enrich learning opportunities for each and every student



Johnny Holliday: Voice of the Maryland Terrapins

in PreK3 through Eighth Grade.

Career Day on Monday, January 27, is a longstanding Catholic Schools Week tradition at Holy Redeemer School. Parents, alumni, and parishioners visit homerooms

to talk about their careers, sharing how their favorite academic subjects and personal interests informed their career choices. This year, Holy Redeemer School is proud to welcome Mr. Johnny Holliday as the Career Day Keynote Speaker for Grades 5-8.

Mr. Holliday, a nationally renowned and locally beloved radio broadcaster, is an icon of his times: an innovator and lifelong learner who seized upon the right opportunities for his talents and skills. His career story is truly remarkable – from its start as a top-40 deejay through its unbelievable trajectory as actor, sportscaster and author. Mr. Holliday's accomplishments as a deejay won him entry into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and include emceeing The Beatles' final live concert at San Francisco's Candlestick Park. Mr. Holliday transitioned from the musical air waves to sportscaster, drawing on his own love of sports and his lifelong aspiration to coach. For twelve years, Mr. Holliday co-hosted the "Nats Xtra", providing pre- and post-game coverage for the Washington Nationals. Johnny Holliday is the voice of the Maryland Terrapins, honored last year for 40 years of his play-by-play announcing of the football and men's basketball games. Mr. Holliday has earned many accolades and career achievement awards, notably Maryland Sportscaster of the Year, 2014.

Holy Redeemer is proud to claim Johnny

Holliday and his wife, Mary Clare Holliday as they are longstanding parishioners of Holy Redeemer Catholic Church. Mr. and Mrs. Holliday are the parents of three Holy Redeemer School alumnae – Kellie, Moira, and Tracie. They are the proud grandparents of seven grandsons and of three current HR students Bridie, Clare, and Maggie McCarthy, and one future HR Cardinal, Holly. Mr. Holliday is revered professionally for his ability to connect with people and to build relationships. HR students are so honored to have a keynote speaker who embodies their school's quarterly values themes – the 4 C's: Courtesy, Compassion, Commitment, and Community. What a perfect speaker to inspire Catholic school students to learn, serve, lead, succeed.

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Holy Redeemer Parish

9705 Summit Avenue
Kensington, MD

Rev. Mark Hughes
Pastor

301-942-2333

Holy Redeemer School

Mrs. Colleen Ryan,
Principal

301-942-3701

11811 Claridge Rd., Wheaton, MD 20902 | www.avalonschools.org



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24th Annual Patricia Sullivan Benefit Dinner
Saturday, March 14, 2020 (see back page)



A Holy Cross parishioner has a trunk brimming with gifts which she will deliver to one of the Giving Tree partner organizations.



Two brothers help their parents and grandparents to sort and organize the gifts for delivery.



Weltha Logan, founder of the Giving Tree project at Holy Cross School, is pictured here about twenty years ago.

The Giving Tree at Holy Cross

Holy Cross parish has sponsored an annual Giving Tree for over thirty years, partnering with local organizations that support those in need. It is a tradition that has deep running roots in the Holy Cross parish and school communities. Weltha Logan, who recently celebrated her

90th birthday, founded the Giving Tree drive at Holy Cross. Until very recently, she was a driving force behind each yearly effort. Her enthusiasm for the holiday outreach program was contagious, and there are many volunteers and families in the church who say it is one of the touchstones of their holidays.

Colleen Scanlon, a longstanding organizer reflects that her children looked forward to it every year. Now that she has grandchildren, they are also eager participants. "It has become a family favorite. It's the sort of tradition that not only does good for the larger community, but it boosts holiday spirit within the school and parish communities—it just feels good to reach beyond yourself during the Christmas season," she shared.

Having an opportunity to spread cheer during the Christmas season is a gift for all who participate, and the gifts make a real difference. The recipients who benefit come in

Continued on page 39

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4900 Strathmore Avenue, Garrett Park, MD
Fr. Robert Buchmeier, Pastor
301-942-1020
Holy Cross School
Lisa Maio Kane, Principal
301-949-0053
Lurana Hogan, Parish Editor
l.hogan@hcross.org

More Holy Cross News on Page 38



**St. Bernadette School's
New Pre-K 4's**

St. Bernadette is proud to announce that we are expanding with the launch a Pre-K's 4's program for the 2020-2021 School Year. Enrollment is now open. Please call 301-593-5611 for a tour!

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Pastor
301-593-0357

St. Bernadette School
Mr. Ted Ewanciw,
Principal
301-593-5611
Kate Doyle Rodgers,
OPT Editor
301-593-5611



St. Bernadette School Grades K-8
Catholic Schools Week
OPEN HOUSES

Sunday, January 26 // 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
School band and chorus performances at 11 a.m.

Wednesday, January 29 // 9:30-11:00 a.m. & 1:00-2:30 p.m.



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Contact Kate Rodgers at 301-593- 5611 x135 with questions or to schedule a future tour.
80 University Blvd East, Silver Spring, MD 20901 | www.SaintBernadetteSchool.org



We would cross over oceans and climb mountains to celebrate this year's GeoBee winners! Our expansive congratulations to Jacob B. (champion), Althea F. (First Runner Up) and Conall D. (Second Runner Up) pictured here with our St. B's Geo Queen Bee Virginia Cooper and Ted Ewanciw, principal.



Jeanine Murphy-Morris, recently retired satellite engineer for NASA, spoke to our Grade 7 students. Her presentation described how satellites are used to collect electromagnetic radiation data to study space, weather and land cover on Earth.



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Robots, Racing Cars, and Drones, Oh My!

The STEAM Showcase is an interactive hands-on event highlighting The Woods Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics curriculum.

On Saturday, December 7, families arrived to find the gym filled with robots, building activities, art projects, racing cars, toothbrush bots, inventions, and so much more.

We were delighted to host employees from CRB, a local architectural and engineering design company that focuses on the bio, pharma and tech industry and does a lot of work for notable companies such as AstraZeneca, Merck, Emergent BioSolutions, and many others. Woods Alum Justin Cassidy (2010) and his coworkers led a variety of different experiments covering topics such as air pressure, motors, static electricity, material strength, and structures.

In addition, STEMQuest Camp by Drobots



Kindergartner Emma Mullally is thrilled by the marshmallow catapult at The Woods fifth Annual STEAM Showcase, an interactive, hands-on event for the entire family.

Company, which will offer summer camp at The Woods in 2020, was on hand to display some of the technology and activities included in their program.

Every day at The Woods our students embark on a journey of exploration, discovery, creativity, and innovation – 21st-century ideas at work. The possibilities are endless, and this annual event showcases this journey perfectly.

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The Woods Academy

6801 Greentree Road
Bethesda, MD 20817
301-365-3080

Head of School

Joseph E. Powers

OPT Editor

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Director of Marketing, Communications,
& Alumni Relations

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Victory for the Green Machine, The Woods Academy Robotics Team

On Saturday, December 14, The Woods Academy Robotics teams, the OwlBots and the Green Machine, participated at the FIRST Lego League (FLL) Qualifier held at Hammond High School in Columbia, Maryland. Twenty-eight teams competed. The Green Machine was one of only six teams to survive that Qualifier and advance to the FLL Maryland State Championship, which will be held on Saturday, February 23, at UMBC in Catonsville. All are invited to attend and cheer on the Green Machine!



(L-R): Coach Megan Mullally, AJ Harper, Mason Gaszner, Malcolm English, Quentin Toner

The OwlBots are the youngest Woods Academy Robotics team to attend an FLL Qualifier and scored in the top ten in the Robot Games portion of the event. The Green Machine won the Core Values Award, which is given to a team that best demonstrates the FLL Core

Values of Inspiration, Teamwork, and Gracious Professionalism throughout the Qualifier.

Each year the teams are presented a unique challenge facing today's scientists. The 2019 City Shaper Challenge compelled teams to explore how they could build a better world. They researched and presented their own innovative solutions for a way to improve a building or public space. The OwlBots developed a filtration system to be used on The Woods Academy playing fields. The Green Machine conceived of the *Trash Chomper*, a machine that could be used to collect trash on the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, they spent numerous hours using LEGO MINDSTORMS technologies to design, build, and program autonomous robots.

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Kneeling (L-R): Aitana Marina Alonso, Ava Scafide; Standing (L-R): Lily LeBlanc, Valentina Baier, Pierce Bennett, Coach Megan Mullally, Vicente Brandao, Francisco Villegas Vega

Getting Down to Business

Students at The Woods Academy Gain Skills and Expertise to Thrive in the Real World

“We’ll negotiate with them,” said Fifth-grader Ava Scafide when the “Shark Tank” asked what her team would do if students did not want to pay for their service. Her team developed a solution to the of overflowing Lost and Found bins that sit in the back of the Multipurpose Room and the frustration that parents often have with their children when they are missing a coat, a lunchbox, or even a shoe. This recent presentation was the culminating project of one of the highly anticipated opportunities provided to students at The Woods Academy in Bethesda, a trimester of Business School led by Head of School Joe Powers.



Fifth Graders (L-R) Leo Hickey, Jackson Gormley, Ava Scafide, Sami Ozan, and Elizabeth Tedla (not pictured) present their business plan for “Lost and Founders” to Head of School Mr. Powers and their parents, the potential investors.

The students in Mr. Powers’ Business class explore innovation and entrepreneurship. In small groups, the students create a business

Continued on page 32

St. Raphael Sodality February events

Everyone is invited to join Sodality on February 7 at 10:00 am in the Parish Library to hear about the apparition and message of Mary in Kibeho, Rwanda. Thirteen years before the bloody genocide that swept across Rwanda and left more than a million people dead, the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ appeared to eight

young people in the remote village of Kibeho. Through these visionaries, Mary and Jesus warned of the looming holocaust, which (they assured) could be averted if Rwandans opened their hearts to God and embraced His love. After the genocide and two decades of rigorous investigation, Our Lady of Kibeho became the first and only

Vatican approved Marian site in all of Africa.

Sodality will host an Irish Country Tea in the Parish Library on February 12 at 1:30pm. Members will have an opportunity to sign up to bring a treat to the Tea, which has become a favorite annual tradition.

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K-8 students bring down the house with "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus!" in St. Raphael School's annual Christmas program. Photo by Tom Carrington



St. Raphael Sodality joined the fifth-grade students of St. Raphael School for the annual Christmas party at Raphael House. Sodality provided gifts for each resident that the children pulled in on a toboggan. After handing out the gifts while wearing their Christmas hats, the students and Sodalists led the residents in Christmas caroling. There were smiles of pure joy all around.



St. Raphael School fifth graders spread holiday cheer by visiting residents of Raphael House senior home. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia



St. Raphael School students vie for top honors in the Spirit Day shooting contest. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia

St. Raphael School and Nursery School Make Spirits Bright

By MJ Zafis-Garcia

St. Raphael School and Nursery School wrapped up the second semester with Christmas traditions that have become a special part of our school and parish family. For almost 25 years, St. Raphael Parish has hosted its annual Mother Teresa Luncheon for residents from two Washington, D.C., shelters run by the Missionaries of Charity. The guests attended Mass, accompanied by the fourth-grade class, and were treated to a hot meal served by our seventh and eighth grades. The event was sprinkled with Christmas carols, including a performance by

Continued on page 39

**St. Raphael Parish
St. Raphael School**

1513 Dunster Road
Rockville, MD

Rev. Michael Salah, Pastor

Teri Dwyer, Principal

**MJ Zafis-Garcia,
OPT Editor**

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Parochial Professor!

Fr. Patrick Mullan, Parochial Vicar at St. Patrick's, leads a 7th grade Reading class on the Christian allegory in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis.



Trip to The White House

Fifth graders, accompanied by their teacher Kelly Burgess, visited the White House in December. In addition to touring the public spaces, the group was fortunate to see "The People's House" decorated for Christmas.

St. Patrick's Parish
4101 Norbeck Road
Rockville, MD

Rev. Msgr. Charles J. Parry
Pastor
301-924-2284

St. Patrick's School
Ms. Christie Anne Short,
Principal
301-929-9672

Parish Editor
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Contact rectory to apply

Raising Kane Funds

The Monsignor Thomas A. Kane Scholarship Award was created at St. Patrick's School to honor Monsignor Kane in gratitude for his vision and dedication as the founding pastor of the school. Msgr. Kane's wish was for the scholarship to be awarded to any parish family with more than two children enrolled at St. Patrick's School. Our families value the Catholic education and strive to make it affordable for all. A second collection will be taken the weekend of January 25/26 in honor of Catholic Schools Week to benefit the scholarship. We look forward to the opportunity to expand Msgr. Kane's founding ideal to help families afford the cost of a Catholic education.



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Let's Take an Elfie!

On December 7, 2019, St. Patrick's School hosted its annual "Breakfast with Santa" which includes a hot breakfast, pictures with Santa, bingo, crafts, and story time. It is planned by the sixth-grade families and features the sixth-grade students as "Santa's elves." The students assist in all aspects of the event from food service, calling the bingo numbers, and helping the little ones with crafts. It's a memorable day for young and old kids alike!



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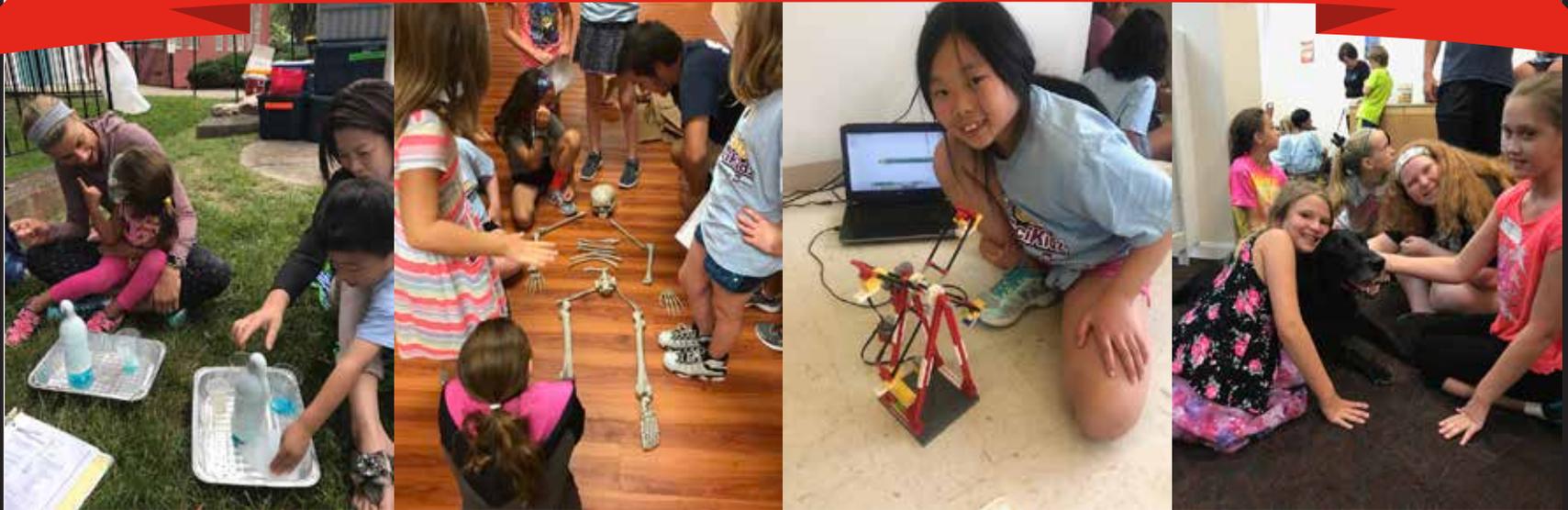
Christmas Cheer

On December 10, 2019, the fifth-grade class of St. Patrick's School visited Grace House, an assisted living home in Silver Spring, to share some Christmas cheer with the residents. The students sang Christmas carols, visited with the residents, and played some spirited games of bingo. This has been a Christmas tradition for fifth graders at the school for nearly fifteen years.



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Msgr. Pennington Knights of Columbus Council 9808 Grand Knight Scott Ford with the winners of the 2019 Keep Christ in Christmas poster contest.

Keep Christ In Christmas

The 2019 Keep Christ in Christmas poster contest sponsored by the Resurrection Msgr. Pennington Knights of Columbus

Council 9808 was judged by Pastor Rev. John Barry, Members of the Council and several parishioners. Grand Knight Scott Ford presented the winners with a certificate and a \$25 Target gift card.

Congratulations to the winners! Kindergarten, Clara Meacham; Third Grade, Lana Baniqued; Fifth Grade, Richard Rozario; Eight Grade, Alicia C. Gonzalez-Ren; High School, Kimira Dallo.

Keep Christ In Christmas is a Knights of Columbus activity that is done nationwide.

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Winterfest at Resurrection

For nineteen years, on the first weekend of every December, Resurrection holds Winterfest! On the Friday (3:00 to 9:00 pm) and then on Saturday (9:00 am to 3:00 pm) thousands of shoppers came through the Amadeo Hall and the lower level of the Rev. Robert Keffer Parish Life Center. As shoppers entered, they were encountered with the Bake Sale table, Raffle Tickets to buy for a cash prize or for a handmade quilt (done by the Resurrection Quilting Bees), a Wine Cork Pull, food sold by the Msgr. Pennington Knights of Columbus Council #9808, a Silent Auction, the Crafter's Raffle, and the Treasure Chest Rooms. Not to mention the over 75 vendors who came to display and sell their works of art and talents.

This year, volunteers, shoppers, and vendors were treated to live performances by Pastor, Rev. John Barry (Friday and Saturday) and the Resurrection Preschoolers on Saturday morning. Santa even made several appearances! Planning for Winterfest starts in September and vendor spots start to sell each year as early as May. The profits made from Winterfest

are used to pay the debt on the Rev. Robert Keffer Parish Life Center. The Parish Life Center (as it is referred to) is a building that contains Resurrection's parish offices, classrooms for Religious Education, spaces for ministry meetings, space for parish events, the Resurrection Food Pantry, and the St. Helen Youth Center.

Several Resurrection parishioners, led by Mrs. Phyllis Bottegal and Mr. Bill Ratcliffe, meet several times to prepare for, gather donated items, encourage all parishioners to donate and volunteer, to set up and clean up from Winterfest. Winterfest has become one of the most beloved events in the Archdiocese as guests come from all over for shopping, meeting new people and catching up with old friends, to support local artists and vendors, and to take a look at Father Barry's snow village (referred to as Pastor's Village).

As Resurrection goes into planning for the twentieth year of Winterfest, mark your calendar now for Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5 as you will not want to miss this event!

OPT

ENZLER

Con't from page 1

with others. Unfortunately, there was too little oversight and too few checks and balances in place as to how the money was being spent.

Sadly, we've also seen articles about Bishop Michael Bransfield in nearby West Virginia, who also used money for purposes that sure seem inappropriate.

In light of situations like these and the struggles in the Church over the last 18 months or so, a number of people have understandably reevaluated their choices about giving to the Church and associated organizations.

I completely understand that people are worried and concerned about how their money is being used by those in authority. I struggle a little bit more to understand the decision to reduce or outright stop giving to individual parishes. I know the archdiocese's Annual Appeal has felt the negative impact as well.

I look at the whole situation from primarily a local point of view. Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill is known for the saying, "All politics is local." I think we would do well to think of how we give in much the same way. Charity begins at home, as the old proverb goes.

From my perspective, we need to support and take care of those doing the work of the Church. If you're happy with your parish school, the religious education provided to your children, the effort on the part of your pastor and priests to provide a good liturgy each Sunday, the fulfillment and guidance you receive in the homilies they share, the spiritual growth you experience through the many adult education activities offered, why diminish your support for those efforts that help you and so many others?

One of my good friends whom I grew up with at Our Lady of Lourdes parish told me about a year ago of a friend of his who said he was not going to give any more money to the Catholic Church and related charities. My friend's response was straightforward. "Oh, so you're mad at the Church and you're going to take it out on the poor?"

That's kind of how I feel about not giving to our parishes. I completely understand and share the anger at some cardinals, some bishops, and the problems that have come to light. I get the desire to make a statement. However,

I struggle to understand why anyone would "take it out" on their own parish.

Let me state clearly that all of us have a right to make sure that gifts from our hard-earned money are not wasted and are used for the purposes for which they were intended. It comes down to trusting whether that will happen.

If you do not trust how the money will be used, you are right to hesitate, reconsider, and perhaps reduce or stop your gifts. But if you do trust your pastor – and, frankly, our new archbishop – as well as all who work on behalf of our Church, aren't we called to be a part of their efforts to serve those in need and to spread the Good News of Jesus to all who come our way? Don't we all want to be a part of that?

In this first month of a new year and a new decade, I encourage you to prayerfully think again about your own gifts of time, talent, and treasure, and how we use God's blessings to us. I think it's important that we all look carefully at what we have and how we got it. In most cases, the answer is hard work, yes, but ultimately, most of all of what we have comes directly from God.

The key question: What does God ask of us in return?

I'm reminded of conversations I've had with a friend of mine, a man who has done very well in business and has acquired some wealth through the years. He has said to me more than once, "Fr. John, I don't want to get to heaven and have Jesus say to me, *I gave you all of this wealth. Why didn't you do more for the poor? Why didn't you do more for my Church?*"

He has it right. His wealth is first and foremost, a blessing from God. How we use the blessings we're given from God's benevolence is an important part of our earthly journey.

For probably close to 20 years now, if you call me on the phone, you'll often hear me say the following as part of my voicemail message: "Today is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God."

As you reflect upon God's gifts to you, I encourage you think about what you do with those blessings as your gift back to God. For me, that means helping our individual parishes, our pastors, and all who work on our behalf to bring about God's love in our own community and God's care to all in need.

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Christmas Spirit Takes Center Stage at Saint Peters

By Erin Pant

Saint Peter's Winter Concert and Musical Spectacular took place on December 17, 2019, at Our Lady of Good Counsel's Performing Arts Center. Each year, students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade, under the direction of music teacher Mr. Peter Nguyen, creatively retell the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. This year's theme, "Away in a Mango," was a tale of passengers from a Christmas cruise who are shipwrecked at sea and become castaways on an island. There, they encounter two other castaways who have survived on the island for many years. As they await rescue, they remember how people, long ago, waited for a Savior to come rescue them too.

Preparations for the Christmas program begin in late October. Sixth grade students serve as cast and crew



Saint Peter's annual Christmas production, "Away in a Mango" was a tropical retelling of the birth of Jesus

members in the production, while students in kindergarten through fifth grade perform musical components, some with challenging choreography.

The show's grand finale featured all of the students performing a spirited rendition of "Go Tell It On The Mountain."



Saint Peter's Choir performed several seasonal favorites.

The evening also included a wonderful performance from Saint Peter's choir. The choir, made up of 88 students in grades 4 through 8, per-

formed several seasonal songs including "Frosty the Snowman", "The First

Continued on page 32

Students Put Artificial Intelligence to the Test

In December, Saint Peter's sixth grade class explored the complex world of machine learning as part of their computer curriculum. Sometimes called artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning is the task of training a computer algorithm to identify one or more objects. These types of software systems are commonly used today for speech/facial recognition, music identification, and self-driving cars.

"Students are often exposed to these types of programs, and we wanted to help them understand the technology behind the sciences," said Mr. Stephen Szot, Saint Peter's computer teacher.

The students were challenged with creating a machine learning model that could identify common tree leaves such as field maple, red maple, pin oak, and sassafras. First, the students used a computer

and camera to image 10-15 leaves of each leaf type until the training software indicated a 95% or higher leaf identification confidence level. After the training portion was complete, students tested the model's accuracy by introducing new, previously unseen leaves. Lastly for fun, students attempted to fool the algorithm and leverage their art skills by creating their own drawings

of known leaves to see if they could be identified. "By successfully following the learning process, the students were able to gain a higher level of understanding of computer vision, confidence dealing with the complexity of open-ended problems and working with others to achieve a common goal," said Szot.

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Students were challenged with creating a program that could identify common tree leaves



On January 6, students participated in a procession to mark the Epiphany of the Lord.



In December, second graders celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

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It's Not Too Late to Prevent the Flu!

It's that time of year again – flu season. And it is not too late to get your vaccine.

There are many reasons to get a flu vaccine:

- Flu vaccination can reduce your risk of flu illness, doctors' visits, and missed work or school due to flu.
- If you are vaccinated and still get sick, flu vaccine can reduce the severity of your illness.
- Flu vaccination also can help protect women during and after pregnancy, and protect the baby born to a vaccinated mom for several months after birth.
- Flu vaccine also has been shown to save children's lives, prevent serious events associated with chronic lung disease, diabe-

tes and heart disease, and prevent flu-related hospitalization among working age adults and older adults.

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently, but millions of people get flu every year, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized and thousands to tens of thousands of people die from flu-related causes every year. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against flu. Vaccination has been shown to have many benefits including reducing the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and even the risk of flu-related death in children.

How do flu vaccines work?

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are used to make the vaccine.

Getting vaccinated isn't just about keeping you healthy; it's also about helping to protect others around you who may be vulnerable to becoming very sick, such as babies, older adults, people with compromised immune systems, and pregnant women.

It's not too late to get a flu vaccine to protect yourself and your loved ones this flu season! Find a place near you to get a flu vaccine with the HealthMap Vaccine Finder at: vaccinefinder.org.

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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

Where Curiosity Never Retires

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at American University (OLLI at AU) is an association of, by, and for the people in the Washington, DC, area who wish to continue to study and learn.

OLLI at AU is dedicated to the proposition that learning is a lifelong process and that curiosity never retires.

Learning Community

What makes OLLI unique is that the basic concept is that of peer learning and teaching. Members come from varied backgrounds. What they have in common is genuine interest in continuing their learning experiences and intellectual stimulation in an organization of like-minded people. Members participate fully in study groups, either by leading them or attending them. There are no tests and no grades; members participate purely for the joy of learning. The goal is a high-quality learning experience accessible to all.

OLLI has three types of academic programming:

- Fall Semester (Sept.-Nov.) and Spring Semester (March-May): Study groups meet once a week for 8-10 weeks.

- February Shorts and July Shorts: Study groups meet 3-5 times over the course of one week
- June Minis: Study groups meet once a week for 4 weeks.

- Study groups, Minis, and Shorts meet one of three 90-minute time frames: 9:45-11:15 a.m., 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m., or 1:45-3:15 p.m. Class sizes range from 120 in lecture format to 10 in small discussion groups. For a membership fee, participants may take up to 3 study groups.

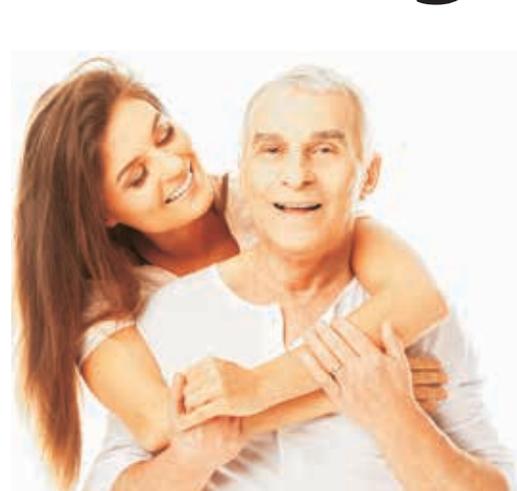
In addition to study groups, OLLI at AU has a Friday Lecture Series during each semester, and extended lecture series in January and May.

Membership Involvement

Membership in OLLI at AU provides an opportunity for social interaction, new friendships, and collegiality. Activities are planned and operated by members. As a democratic membership organization, OLLI at AU depends on the volunteer services of its members. Volunteering brings involvement in the Institute in meaningful, satisfying ways. Members are

Continued on page 23

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Four Ways Low-Calorie Diets Can Sabotage Your Health

By Caroline Kaufman, MS, RDN,
January 9, 2020

Your body requires energy to power its biological functions such as digestion, breathing and pumping blood, along with the activity you do throughout the day. Did you know that your resting metabolic rate (the amount of energy your body uses at rest) makes up the majority of your total energy expenditure? It's important to consume enough energy from food to keep your body functioning normally. If you eat too few calories, you may be putting your health at risk in the following ways.

You Won't Meet Your Nutrient Needs

It's easy to underestimate the significance of something you can't see or feel, but vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients are just as important to your long-term well-being as the number on the scale.

For example, dietary calcium is important for both bone health and bodily functions such as muscle control and circulation. For the first 30 years of life, the body stores excess calcium in bones. After 30, you stop gaining bone mass and rely on existing stockpiles to keep your bones strong for the rest of your life. If you can't meet your calcium



needs, your body is forced to "break open the piggy bank" and scavenge your bones for this crucial mineral. This process increases your risk for osteoporosis (thinning of the bones and loss of bone density) and hip fractures.

You Slow Your Metabolism

When you don't eat enough, your body goes into survival mode and starts breaking down muscle to release the glucose stored inside, which can be used for energy. Because you're not taking in enough calories, your body slows down your metabolism in an effort to conserve energy. You might feel

Continued on page 25

Modifying Your Home for Healthy Aging

Most older adults want to continue living in their homes as they age. Yet many homes often need to be adapted to meet the changing mobility, sensory and cognitive needs of the older adults who live in them.

Home modifications help make homes better suited to meet the changing needs of the people who live in them – and can help prevent falls, maximize independence and support caregiving. Home modifications range from the simple – clearing clutter off the floor, improving lighting or removing rugs to help prevent falls – to more complex – installing a stair lift or renovating a bathroom to make it accessible for someone with mobility limitations. Making these and other home modifications can help older adults

continue to perform daily tasks such as cooking, using the toilet and bathing.

It is important to understand that home modification is a process that starts with identifying what modifications are desired or needed by the individuals living in the home.

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) has produced a consumer brochure, **Modifying Your Home for Healthy Aging**, to help older adults understand the modifications that might help them continue to live in their homes as they age and how to locate and work with a modifications contractor.

To access the brochure online, visit: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Resources/BROCHURES/docs/Home-Modification-Brochure.pdf>

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OSHER

Con't from page 22

strongly encouraged to participate in one or more of the following ways:

The Board and its various committees develop and implement policies, procedures, and activities designed to enhance the overall program.

Study Group Leaders are members with special expertise or interests who wish to share these with other members by designing and leading study groups.

Study Group Representatives provide liaison between their study group and the OLLI at AU administration. They facilitate member participation, make announcements, and assist Study Group Leaders.

Organization

OLLI at AU is an independent, non-profit organization 501(c)(3) incorporated in Washington, DC, located at American

University (AU), and is part of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute National Network, which now includes 123 Institutes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. OLLI at AU leases space from AU for its administrative offices. Members are eligible to use the university library, computers, parking, Metro shuttle service, campus store, dining facilities, and to join the Jacobs Fitness Center at a reduced rate.

Study groups and educational activities take place at 4801 Massachusetts Ave.

Support of OLLI at AU

Membership fees – \$300 per semester or \$550 for the fall and spring semesters – support the program. OLLI at AU is further supported by an endowment from the Osher Foundation given to and managed by American University. OLLI at AU receives a percentage of the interest from the endowment annually.

For more information, visit: www.lli-dc.org

Getting a REAL ID driver's license

After October 1, 2020, you'll be denied access when you try to fly or enter a federal facility if you don't have a REAL ID driver's license or another ID-compliant document.

To help ease the inevitable rush of drivers who need new licenses, MDOT MVA has added staff and 11 REAL ID stations at its 16516 S. Westland Drive office in the Walnut Hill Shopping Center, Gaithersburg (next to the MDOT MVA Walnut Hill branch office). Call 410-768-7000 Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, to schedule an appointment.

Hours for both offices are 8:30 am-4:30 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 am-6:30 pm on Thursday, and temporarily, 8 am-4:30 p.m on Saturday.

REAL ID is a federal security standard for IDs.

Marylanders can check their REAL ID status on the MDOT MVA website, www.mva.maryland.gov/realid/realidlookup.htm, by entering a driver's license or identification card number into the REAL ID Lookup Tool.

If required to bring in documents, customers can visit the online document guide to identify and collect the needed documents and schedule an appointment: <http://license.mva.maryland.gov/CheckList/default.aspx>

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DOT Seeks Input on Proposal to Make Airplane Lavatories More Accessible

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) seeks public comments on a new proposed rule to improve restroom access for passengers with disabilities on single-aisle aircraft with 125 or more seats. The rule is based on negotiated rulemaking undertaken by DOT's Advisory Committee on Accessible Air Transportation, which included aviation industry representatives, disability rights advocates, and other stakeholders.

The proposed regulation addresses lavatory interiors, on-board wheelchairs, and training of flight attendants.

Comments are due by March 2, 2020. Read the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) and submit a comment: www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/01/02/2019-27631/accessible-lavatories-on-single-aisle-aircraft-part-1

Stay tuned: In the near future, DOT plans to issue an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit comment and gather information on the costs and benefits of requiring airlines to make lavatories on new single-aisle aircraft larger, equivalent to that currently found on twin-aisle aircraft.

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Christmas Carols and Cookies

By Fr. Phil Ilg

This past December 22 we hosted our first Christmas Carols and Cookies event. It was a fun and wonderful evening spent

together as a parish.

5 parish groups participated including our Teen Choir, Neocatechumenal Choir, Spanish Charismatic Choir, Sodality, and Seton Seniors. In addition, various solo acts were performed that night, all of which were parishioners of Mother Seton.

The music ranged in genre from classical to bossa nova, polka, gospel, rock, rumba, and traditional carols. Roughly 250 people attended, and a festive spirit was present.

Cookies and other baked goods provided by Martha's Ministry and hot chocolate, coffee and water provided by the Knights of Columbus.

OPT

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Christmas in Emmitsburg

With the season's celebrations now in motion, the Mother Seton Sodalists traveled to Emmitsburg, where the children distributed the gifts from the Giving Tree to the Retired Daughters of Charity. The Sisters were elated, and the children per-



Above, children from Mother Seton performing for the Sisters in Emmitsburg.



Retired Daughters of Charity enjoying the festivities.

formed for them, making their parents, grandparents, friends and the Sodalist proud. Everyone enjoyed the holiday treats that included hot chocolate with marshmallows for the children.

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Posadas Navideñas at Mother Seton

By Brenda Rosado

Starting December 16, 2019, families in the Hispanic community of Mother Seton, led by Fr. Phil Ilg, Deacon Fidencio Gonzalez and Deacon Raúl Calvo, received the Holy Family and all the faithful who joined in their journey.

Las Posadas means "The Inns," a religious festival celebrated between December 16 and 24. Las Posadas commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from



Parishioners follow the procession in search of safe refuge for the Holy Family.



Fr. Phil Ilg reads passages of scripture, gives catechesis and sings Christmas carols at a house which received the Holy Family.

Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus. Adults, including musicians, and children follow the procession, which visits selected homes and asks for lodging for Joseph and Mary. Traditionally, the procession is either refused or provided lodging and the hosts often provide refreshments. At each stop, passages of scripture are read, catechesis given, and Christmas carols are sung.

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Seton Seniors Lunch

On Wednesday, December 11, members of the Seton Seniors and a few invited guests traveled 30 minutes north of Germantown for an afternoon of festivities at the Dutch's Daughter Restaurant in Frederick.



The Seton Seniors Christmas lunch at Dutch's Daughter in Frederick.

Father Pierre Toussaint, who was at Mother Seton for the Advent Mission, joined them. As usual, the Seniors enjoyed their lunch, participated in the gift exchange and sang carols including our holiday favorite – The Twelve Days of Christmas.

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Germantown, MD 20874



Cost to Attend: \$25/player includes extra raffle ticket if registered by Feb. 14th! (\$30/player for walk-ins on event night) Includes door prize raffle, regular bingo games, snacks, water/soft drinks, dinner, dessert! "Specials" Bingo games, 50-50 Cash Raffles, and "Rips & Tips" can also be purchased on event night.

Reserve Your Seat: Mail checks made out to "KofC #11024" with name, email address, seating request in envelope addressed to KofC Bingo at Mother Seton Parish. Tables for groups of eight reserved on "first registered, first served" and "best effort" basis. Paid players get email confirmation. **Net Bingo proceeds shall be used by the KofC Council #11024 to support Mount St. Mary's Seminarians.**

OVER \$1500 IN CASH PRIZES!

Must be 18 or older to attend and no alcohol allowed per Montgomery County MD law. *Snow date: Friday, March 6, 2020

Mary of Nazareth Visits Calleva

By William Antonetti

This fall Mary of Nazareth sent their fifth through seventh grades on a trip to the Calleva ropes course. This annual event is something looked forward to, and the eighth graders lament that they miss their time at Calleva with regularity. The students were eager to get there, and the grades all engaged in various time-filling activities for their bus ride over. The seventh-grade boys decided that mid-October was the perfect time for Christmas Carols, the sixth grade counted to 1000 as loudly as possible, and the fifth graders played twenty questions. Their teachers might have been even more glad to arrive than they were.



Fifth grader bravely propelling in the air!



Jackson (fifth Grade) gearing up to climb.

Arriving at the course, the students were divided into groups and then sent to various activities with different event leaders. Some of these leaders were alumni from local Catholic high schools, includ-

ing Georgetown Visitation and Gonzaga. Most of these activities had a team building or self-discovery element to them as students attempted to navigate swaying boards, tangled knots of ropes, and

climb to new heights. The students had no control over their groups, and so many branched out and socialized with classmates they would not talk to otherwise.

Returning from Calleva, the stu-

dents had clearly enjoyed their day and were more than ready to head home, and after another thirty minutes of Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You" the teachers were too. The next day students

were happy to discuss the fun activities, meeting Tinkerbell the farm cat, and who they got to do these activities with.

OPT

Mary of Nazareth Roman Catholic School
 14131 Seneca Road, Darnestown, Maryland 20874
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Assistant Principal: Mrs. Rosemary Adams
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 Affiliated with the following parishes:
 Mother Seton, Germantown; St. John Neumann, Gaithersburg; St. Mary's Shrine, Barnesville; St. Rose of Lima, Gaithersburg; St. Paul, Damascus; Our Lady of the Presentation, Poolesville; Our Lady of the Visitation, Darnestown.

DIETS

Con't from page 23

sluggish and cold and have gastrointestinal abnormalities, such as constipation.

You Lose Your Mental Edge

Your brain runs on glucose just like a car runs on gasoline, and it needs a constant supply to keep everything running smoothly. If you're hungry all day and running on fumes, you can't work at peak capacity.

You Might Get Gallstones

Very low-calorie diets (around 800 calories per day), cause rapid weight loss and increase the risk of gallstones, which may cause abdominal pain and require surgery.

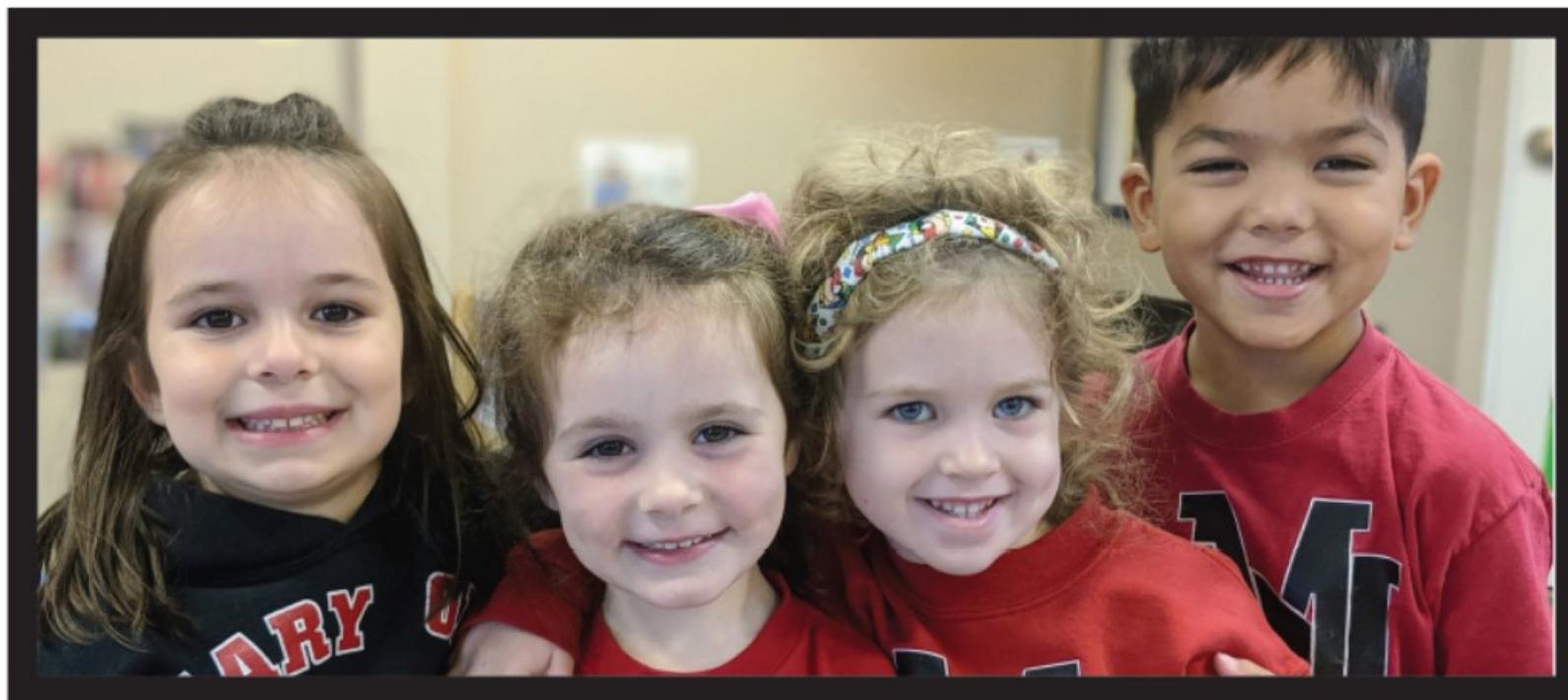
How do you know how low is too low? It depends on many factors that vary among

individuals. Consult with a registered dietitian nutritionist who has the expertise to devise a nutrition plan tailored to your needs.

Source: *eatright.org Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

Caroline Kaufman, MS, RDN, is a Los Angeles-based nutrition expert.

OPT



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SHORT

Con't from page 1

evident in the Nativity.

We've been focusing on kindness in our reflections this year. Let's continue this as we begin 2020. While we hope and pray that the love of the Christmas holidays will continue into the new year, indicators point to a return of incivility and unkindness in society. Even the most hopeful guy I know, Pope Francis, began 2020 by observing, "The new year does not seem to be marked by encouraging signs... hope has to be realistic." Let's pray for God's help in protecting us from hardening hearts and despair even as political, social and religious

institutions continue to disappoint.

I was reminded during the Christmas liturgies of the unique gifts we Catholics have been given which are our local parishes. Churches were filled with faithful and hopeful Catholics gathered joyfully in these, their spiritual homes. Parish life is a direct descendent of Christ's model for Christian living. From the beginning of Christianity followers of Christ gathered to worship locally, seeking comfort and security, and engaging in kind service to each other according to Christ's teachings. These communities were effective and likely account for Christianity's vast and rapid expansion throughout the world. Indeed, they transformed communities from living in fear

of God's punishment and wrath to ones that thrived in God's love and mercy. In today's world of frustration, disappointment and despair might we find comfort, healing and a sense of unity in parishes which emulate the early Christian communities?

If you're reading this column, you are likely an engaged Catholic. But like many devoted Catholics, you may well be suffering from the revelations of failures by Church leadership. This is apparent as we witness local church attendance returning from Christmas overflow to disappointing lows. Our Church will heal when our parishes thrive. If we truly expect our Church to heal, it must begin at the parish level. We know that the key to

thriving parishes is engaged parishioners. **At this time, I can't think of a better new year's or Lenten resolution than to commit ourselves to strengthening our parish by promoting greater parishioner engagement.** Pessimists may observe the smaller numbers at Mass and think that parish engagement will be unlikely. Optimists (also known as Christians!) will look at people at Mass regardless of the number and think of each person as a potential partner in strengthening parish life.

Transforming our parishes into Christian worship and action centers offering parishioners the same sense of belonging, comfort, and kindness for each other which were the cornerstone of early Christian

communities will build parish unity and strength. While parishes offer several options for engagement, the relatively low response suggests additional and new opportunities are needed. Pessimists will argue reasons why people won't engage. Yet we know from examining successful parish programs when people find their inspiration, their commitment may transform their own lives and those of others. Might parish activities like these engage more parishioners?

A parish refugee and immigrant assistant center including relocation assistance and English as a second language instruction.

An older program including daily social and physical activities to address isolation so common among older people.

A parish environmental awareness and sustainability team including education, recycling, and other "green" projects within the parish.

A parish Intergenerational program to promote relationships among generations which have become increasingly estranged.

A parish volunteer center matching the interests of parishioners with volunteer opportunities.

A parish life-long learning center offering lectures, seminars, and field trips.

A parish adoration chapel

These are but a few of the possibilities given the diversity and talents present in our parishes. We can't expect parish clergy and staff to lead in these efforts. They're already very busy. If we want to create parishes where kindness and unity prevail, we will need to expand opportunities for Christian worship and action in our parishes and find new ways to inspire others. And we will have to lead the way.

There are three important opportunities in January around which parishes can unify and act. The first, let's **unify around the sanctity of life.** If you missed the annual March for Life, you can still advocate for life by contacting elected officials. You may want to lead others in your parish in establishing sustained pro-life ministry learning and advocating about the continuum of issues relating to the dignity of life. Another January opportunity for parish **unity is support for Catholic schools.** The last week of the month is Catholic Schools Week. Consider visiting the school, attending the children's Mass, thanking school staff and especially reaffirming your support for the work of the schools. Finally, **unify your parish around the principles of social justice, equality and rejection of all forms of discrimination** by honoring the Martin Luther King Holiday perhaps with discussion and education groups and a renewed parish commitment to ministries of justice and service.

Think about how much kinder our communities will be if Catholics unified around Christ's Word in their parishes.

Kindness Today

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Chuck Short
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Completed cards are proudly displayed by students in Grades 5 and 7.

The Spirit of Giving is Embraced by the Students of Our Lady of Lourdes School

By Bridget Launi

The month of December is a particularly busy time of year in schools. This was definitely the case this year at Our Lady of Lourdes. The obvious seasonal activities were on full display: singing carols, Christmas art projects, practicing for the annual Christmas pageant, class Christmas parties, and beautiful decorations throughout the school. As much as the students of Lourdes enjoy these celebratory aspects of Christmas, as members of a Catholic community, they know in their hearts that the true meaning of Christmas is not found in all of these trappings. In an effort, therefore, to approach the season in a more holy way, students chose to organize



Above, the youngest students of Lourdes with their donated hats, scarves, and mittens.



At left, Grade 5 students pose with their donated "Blessing Bags."



At right, Students from Grades 5 and 7 work together to create cards for the parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes.



At right, A second grade and sixth-grade student work together to prepare a fleece blanket for donation.



Several helping hands are needed to ready this fleece blanket for donation.

service projects to benefit the less fortunate in our community. These projects also afforded teachers the opportunity to explain to students how charitable actions such as these not only promote the Principles of Social Justice but also offer them the chance to perform one of the Corporal Acts of Mercy.

The projects chosen by each grade include: Students from The Little Group, PreK, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 collected new hats, scarves, and mittens for children to make "winter bundles" to be donated to our school's Coats of Many Colors

Drive. Grades 2 and 6 made fleece blankets for

Continued on page 30

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

7500 Pearl Street
Bethesda, MD

Msgr. Edward Filardi, Pastor
301-654-1287

Ms. Amy Moore, Principal
301-654-5376



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Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

A 2015 National Blue Ribbon School

Catholic Schools Week OPEN HOUSE:

January 28, 2020

~ 9:30-11:30 AM & 1:00-2:30 PM



2020 TOUR DAYS: February 27 & May 13

School tours available between 9-11 AM & 1-2:30 PM

Call 301-654-5376 or go online to <http://bit.ly/OLOLTour> to reserve your tour.



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School provides a solid foundation in the Catholic faith, fosters academic excellence, and educates children to be successful leaders who serve the world.

- Since 1941, proudly providing Catholic faith-based education and curriculum for students in preschool 3's through 8th grade.
- NEW Discovery Center provides opportunities for hands-on experiences with open ended-materials that integrate STEM components and correlate to our standards.
- Resource center and support programs
- Enrichment classes (before & after school) include: Latin, Italian, Math and Science.
- Extracurricular activities include: CYO sports, drama club, band program, children's choir and more!
- Licensed after care program

At Our Lady of Lourdes, the door to a Catholic education is always open. Come in and see the difference traditional Catholic values, a strong, inclusive community, and an exceptional faculty and staff can make in your child's life.

St. Jude Regional Catholic School: Come, Catch Our Spirit!

St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCs) is more than a Catholic day school for grades pre-K (3- and 4-year olds) through 8 in Rockville – at SJRCs the spirit of community and our Catholic faith are infused in everything we do.

AT ST. JUDE:

We ARE...educators of the whole child. SJRCs prides itself on providing a vibrant arts, music and community service education with a strong physical education program. Our sixth graders



“We are St Jude” is a daily cheer at St. Jude Regional Catholic School. Pictured is Principal Glenn Benjamin surrounded by faculty, staff, and students.

experience the world first hand in Outdoor Education, our Drama Club gives our children a creative outlet beyond the classroom walls, and our students who may need an extra helping hand can draw on the expertise of a full-time resource teacher.

We ARE...academic excellence. At every grade level, we deliver a curriculum designed to prepare students for the rigors of high school. In fact, a large majority of our 4th- through 8th-grade students attain honors of achievement each marking period. Additionally, nearly every single 8th grader who applies is accepted to a Catholic

high school, and a majority of our graduates attend one.

We ARE...compassionate toward others. We turn our students’ hands and hearts toward good works – from collecting much-needed goods for St. Ann’s Infant and Children’s Home, to preparing bagged lunches for service men and women, to gathering canned goods to feed the hungry. St. Jude children learn their role in the community of caring. Even within the school the spirit of lending a hand up is ever-present in the buddy system—every older child has a younger child to mentor, teaching the buddy good behav-

Continued on page 30

Shrine of St. Jude Parish

12701 Veirs Mill Road
Rockville, MD

Fr. Paul D. Lee, STD,
Pastor
301-946-8200

**St. Jude Regional
Catholic School**
Mr. Glenn Benjamin, Principal
301-946-7888

Maureen Martin,
OPT Editor
MaureenCMartin@verizon.net

**More Shrine of St. Jude
News on Page 30**

Open House at St. Jude Regional Catholic School, Jan. 29

As part of the annual national Catholic Schools’ Week events, St. Jude Regional Catholic School will open its doors on Wednesday, Jan. 29, for prospective students, their families, and the community to learn about the school and its mission to provide high-quality, values-based education. Doors will be open from 9-11:30 a.m. and 6-8 p.m. Admissions information will be available at both times; however, teachers will be available to speak to prospective families in the evening.



St. Jude Regional Catholic School serves students from 3 years old through 8th grade of all religious, racial, ethnic, and income backgrounds. Its location at 4820 Walbridge Street in Rockville is perfect for commuters as it is convenient to Veirs Mill Road, Connecticut Avenue, Georgia Avenue, and Rockville Pike.

For information on the curriculum, admissions policies and registration, contact the school office at 301-946-7888 or visit www.stjuderockville.org.

OPT

Come, Adore Our Infant King!

The annual Infant of Prague celebration took place at the 5 p.m. Mass on Jan. 11th at the Shrine of St. Jude. The parish is blessed to have a beautiful statue of the Infant and each year honors Him during the Christmas Season while blessing the children of the parish. The Infant of Prague’s promise to each of us is, “The more you honor me, the more I will bless you.”



A reception followed in the Thaddeus Room, featuring tamales, desserts, and hot chocolate along with door prizes of toys and Infant of Prague statues, pictures, and devotional prayer books. Be sure to check the parish bulletin next December for information on this annual event.

St. Jude Regional Catholic School Celebrating 64 Years 1956–2020

OPEN HOUSE

January 29, 2020 • 9:00–11:30am & 6:00–8:00pm



- Resource & Learning Skills Program
- High School Preparatory Focus
- Spanish K-8
- Small Class Size
- Challenging Academic Curriculum
- Resources & Learning Skill Programs
- Extended Day Program
- Athletic Association (soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, T-ball)
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“Realizing that parents are the primary educators, we encourage an active involvement in their children’s education.”

-Glenn Benjamin, Principal

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301-946-7888
www.stjuderockville.org



Angel on My Shoulder

During certain seasons of the Church year, like Christmas and Easter, it is easy to picture the Heavenly Hosts—Angels and Archangels praising God. But during the rest of the year, and particularly in a Catholic elementary school, the picture of the littlest angel comes to mind. You know the one, the angel with the slightly askew halo and the smudge on the face.

During the month of December, these little angels seemed to sit on



Above, Angels with Crooked Halos

At left, Heavenly Music



Guiding Student Body in Prayer

the shoulders of many of the students at St. John the Evangelist, inspiring them to help others, opening their minds to new experiences, and helping them praise God in words and music.

Each class at school and in Religious Education, along with the school faculty and staff, partnered with Catholic Charities to Adopt-a-Family for Christmas. The children and their parents gave generously to families who needed a special angel to watch over them and help them celebrate the true spirit of giving. After gathering for a student-led prayer service, students helped load all the presents into cars for delivery to the families.

Being inspired also carried over to the classroom. Mrs. G's sixth-grade science class discovered the wonders of nature and the chemistry of compounds that could be combined to make slime! The delight on their faces gave them an angelic look – almost.

The Christmas season has passed, but we will continue to listen for the little angels on our shoulders as they help us see God in ourselves and each other.

OPT



Above, Discovery of Natural Wonders
At right, More Heavenly Music



Above, Gifts for Others

During our annual Christmas pageant, children raised their voices in song celebrating the Christ Child's coming. Listening to their not-quite-heavenly voices was made even more special when looking at the Kindergarten class dressed like angels, complete with lop-sided halos.

At the holiday band concert, both beginner and advanced bands entertained us with their latest repertoire and Christmas classics. Those musicians whose angels nudged them just a little more delighted the audience with their solos.



St. John the Evangelist School OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY
January 26
11:30–2:00PM

TUESDAY
March 26
6:00–8:30PM

St. John the Evangelist Parish
10103 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD
301-681-7663

Rev. Joseph Calis
Pastor

St. John the Evangelist School
Mrs. Margaret Durney,
Principal
301-681-7656

Monica M. Bradford, OPT Editor
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Elizabeth Seton High School *Celebrates* Catholic Schools Week



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Seventh and eighth-grade students help the City of Rockville set up the Toy Shop each year to serve families in the Rockville area. St. Mary's Church and School collected approximately 250 toys and then spent the Friday before Christmas turning the Elwood Smith Recreation Center into a Winter Wonderland Toy Shop! #whystmarysrockville

CSW

Con't from page 4

on Sunday, January 26, the kick-off day to Catholic Schools Week for the Archdiocese of Washington. We will have exhibits in the gym and tours led by school families and staff. While prospective students and their parents can get a personal tour *anytime*, our Open House is truly the best opportunity to get a feel for our wonderful community. Catholic Schools Week is intended to highlight the unique benefits of a Catholic education – and St. Mary's is no different. The students here not only receive a top-notch academic education, but perhaps even more crucial to their development is that they learn in a caring, close-knit community grounded in the



Faith, Knowledge and Service. St. Mary's students love to have the opportunity to serve their broader community while demonstrating their faith in projects such as the City of Rockville Toy Drive.



What great fun while giving to others! Students create homemade decorations to transform the Elwood Smith Recreation Center into a festive, winter wonderland.

Catholic faith. St. Mary's believes in educating the whole person.

Coupled with Catholic Schools Week is St. Mary's 2019-2020 Annual Appeal to help provide funds so that as many deserving students as possible can receive these benefits of a Catholic education unavailable at public and/or other schools. Resources from our generous parishioners are absolutely essential in this regard. Your help is greatly needed! 100% of any-sized donation will help families who need it to still be able to send their children to St. Mary's School. Donations by credit card and check are welcome. For more information and to make a donation, please visit stmarysschoolrockville.org. Thank you for your generosity – and investment in the future!

OPT



Service is more fun with friends! Seventh and Eighth grade girls take a break from working together to organize hundreds of toys for the City Toy Shop.

Shrine of St. Jude

SJRCS Alumna Named Class of 2019 Valedictorian

By Michelle Ardillo

After graduating with the St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCs) Class of 2015, alumna Rebecca Welton continued her academic excellence at the Academy of the Holy Cross (AHC) and finished her high school education as valedictorian of the AHC Class of 2019.

Rebecca was an outstanding student during her time at SJRCs, excelling both in and out of the classroom. She participated in Challenge, a Catholic girls' club whose mission is based on faith, family, and service to others; the school yearbook; student government; art club; and drama club. Year-round she assisted with the children's liturgy program at the Shrine of St. Jude,



Rebecca Welton (SJRCs '15, AHC '19) graduated as valedictorian from Academy of Holy Cross.

and was a frequent altar server. Additionally, she enjoyed playing sports such as soccer, softball, tennis, and swimming.

Rebecca distinguished herself at AHC as a Sancta Crux Scholar, a member of the National Honor Society, a Student Ambassador, a member of the Robotics Team, and Lead Copy Editor of the Cross & Anchor yearbook. She also continued playing tennis as part of the AHC Varsity Tennis team.

Rebecca is currently a freshman in the Honors College at the University of Maryland-College Park, where she received the Dean's Scholarship and the Leidos Award. Rebecca is majoring in engineering, and everyone at SJRCs could not

be prouder of her. volunteered each summer with the parish's Vacation Bible School,

OPT

ST JUDE

Con't from page 28

ior in church, working on projects together, and watching over them in the halls and at recess.

We ARE...a community. We encourage parents to become an integral part of our school through numerous volunteer positions—helping with the hot lunch program, planning events through the Home School Association, chaperoning a field trip, or monitoring the halls and playgrounds. We want parents to feel as at home at St. Jude as their children do.

We ARE...people of faith. Ever mindful of our Catholic identity, SJRCs fosters a strong faith commitment and religious spirit, values, and morals. Students attend weekly mass and adoration and monthly penance as well as participate in the annual May Crowning and Christmas pageant, attend Rosary Group, and recite the school prayer and other prayers throughout their school day. Additionally, priests from the Shrine of St. Jude are involved with the school nearly every day.



Students at St. Jude attend weekly mass and adoration.

We ARE St. Jude...and you can be, too!

To learn first-hand what makes the St. Jude community unique, attend the upcoming Open House on Wednesday, Jan. 29, from 9-11:30 a.m. and 6-8 p.m., or schedule a visit to see students and teachers in action. You can also learn more about St. Jude Regional Catholic School and watch an Admissions

Video on its website - www.stjuderockville.org. Additionally, Mr. Glenn Benjamin, principal, can answer any questions you may have about the school or the application process. He can be reached at 301-946-7888 or Glenn.Benjamin@stjuderockville.org.

OPT

GIVING

Con't from page 27

the homeless in our community.

Students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 assembled "Blessing Bags," for the homeless in our community. The bags contained toiletries and necessities purchased by the students and their families.

Grades 5 and 7 made Christmas Cards and distributed them to parishioners at a daily 7:00 am Mass.

Students in Grade 8 made Christmas Cards for the Little Sisters of the Poor in Washington, D.C.

Our students' generosity and outreach to others in our community was truly something to celebrate this Christmas. Students joyfully performed their service and were proud to be able to live out the Mission and Philosophy of Our Lady of Lourdes School: "Our Lady of Lourdes School provides a solid foundation in the Catholic faith, fosters academic excellence, and

educates children to be successful leaders who serve the world." Our students' actions provide living proof of the strong Catholic education that Our Lady of Lourdes students are receiving. Thank you, students, for being such wonderful ambassadors of our great school!

The accompanying pictures exhibit the joy that students experienced as they organized and implemented their service projects.

OPT

Through Theology of the Body, Teens Discuss Saint's Reflections on How to Love Themselves and Others

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Thirty-five years after then-Pope John Paul II gave his final address on a series of talks that addressed the human body and the moral issues that emanate from it, the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Group is tackling *Theology of the Body* with a new gusto and a thirst for its truths.

St. Francis Youth Minister Sarah Seyed-Ali said she chose *Theology of the Body for Teens: Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life* as the youth group's curriculum because teenagers are bombarded with so much information about dating and relationships. "It's appropriate that deep relationships form in high school," she said. "But when they're formed, deep questions are asked, and answers aren't always there."

The *Theology of the Body* is a series of addresses given by then-Pope John Paul II to papal audiences in Rome from September 1979 to November 1984. Comprised of 129



St. Francis of Assisi Youth Minister Sarah Seyed-Ali discusses giving and receiving in relationships, a lesson in *The Theology of the Body* curriculum, published by Ascension Press.

individual addresses, it includes St. John Paul II's reflections on marriage, adultery, the resurrection of the body, celibacy, virginity and contraception.

Judging from the discussion that ensued January 12 at the High School Youth Group meeting, there is plenty of interest for the framework and learnings of *Theology of the Body*. As they learned about giving versus receiving as it relates to relationships, the eight teens offered what they hoped to learn from the curriculum, including:

- What is the church's opinion of one's sexuality?
- How we are called to treat those around us.
- How one knows the difference between a venial and mortal sin.

In her lesson to the teens that night, Seyed-Ali explained that teens getting to know one another through dating won't necessarily marry for another 10-15 years. Therefore, chastity is important for them to know and

practice right now. Chastity is the virtue that directs our sexual desires and attitudes toward the truth of love.

"Chastity is learning how to love rightly," Seyed-Ali said. "John Paul II wrote that a life of chastity is one where you run to the responsibilities of love." This will lead to happiness in love, because the concept of love, as defined by St. John Paul II, is "an act of will that consists of preferring, in a constant manner, the good of others to the good of oneself."

During a small group discussion on the night's topic, the participants' five girls and three boys separately discussed study questions offered by the study's publisher, Ascension Press. The conversations were lively, punctuated by both free-flowing discussions and laughter.

"In our culture, there's almost nothing people try to censor," said one male high school student.

OPT

MASS

Con't from page 1

from the Jewish, Muslim and non-denominational faith traditions.

Sylvia Jones, the parish's Special Needs ministry coordinator, said the fully inclusive Mass reminds us of the appreciation we should all have for life. "It's that we all have a gift, no matter what," said Jones, whose adult daughter Meghan served and mentored the altar servers. "People realize all the gifts they bring. It's a good way for people to be more accepted."

Celebrated by St. Francis Pastor Fr. John Dillon, the Mass featured people with physical, developmental and intellectual differences serving in all liturgical roles. Four young women greeted people in the church's Gathering Space, while clusters of young people stood at all the doors fulfilling their roles as ushers.

Deacon Jim Datovech, whose 40-year-old son has multiple spe-

cial needs, gave the Homily during the Mass, emphasizing the story of Jesus meeting the blind man in John 9, in which Jesus' disciples asked Him whether it was the fault of the blind man or his parents that he couldn't see. Jesus' answer – that neither is at fault but that it is so the works of the Holy Spirit may be visible through the blind man – applied also to the example people with special differences offer to the world, Deacon Datovech said.

"You are an epiphany to people who may not recognize the abilities you have," he said. "You are an example of all any person can be. You are a modern version of the Three Kings. We celebrate you and thank God for the gift of your presence."

After two young men had played two Christmas carols on the piano and Fr. Dillon had thanked the liturgical ministers by name, Jennifer Klein, who attends Church of the Redeemer, considered what the Mass meant to her. "It's a blessing," she said. "It's hard not to cry."

OPT



Faith McLuckie of Washington DC and Abby Knight of Arlington, Va., before the Mass for All God's Children.

For Garden Care Ministers, Beauty of Parish Grounds Reflects the Loveliness of Their Faith

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Amid the persistent chill and muted grays of January, it's easy to forget that spring lies just around the corner. But at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, the two-person Garden Care Ministry is just biding its time to coax the beauty they experience in their Catholic faith out of the ground and in the church's gathering areas.

The ministry, comprised of parishioner Maria Dunn and Director of Adult Faith Formation and Social Concerns Tony Bosnick, has worked for much of the past four years to shore up the flower beds and curb side appeal of the suburban parish, which sits on more than an acre of land. Having re-established the ministry after several years of dormancy, the volunteers are focusing now on beautifying the entranceways of the parish and ensuring the plants and flowers that dot the parish grounds reflect the legacy of the parish's patron saint.

"Our Catholic faith does not consider beauty to be frivolous, but rather a way to praise God and to reflect glory to God in thanks for our earthly nature," Dunn said. "We want our grounds to reflect this."

Dunn and Bosnick, who are former neighbors in Montgomery Village, describe their vision for the garden in symbiotic terms – improving the entranceways to the church by adding color, height and texture to the front circle, around the statue of Jesus Christ and St. Francis of Assisi near Muncaster Mill Road and around the church's entrance sign. They have also focused on planting native plants in the flower beds lining the sidewalks of the Rectory and in the beds edging the church's main entrance.

Introducing native plants, such as anise hyssop, aromatic asters and orange cone flowers, have attract-



St. Francis of Assisi Director of Adult Faith Formation and Social Concerns Tony Bosnick and parishioner Maria Dunn plant flowers last year in the flower beds of the church parking lot. Along with a couple church volunteers who help water and weed, Bosnick and Dunn comprise the parish's Garden Care Ministry.

ed many butterflies and moths in the spring and summer months, reminding visitors of St. Francis' great love for nature. "We're doing it, because we're St. Francis and we wanted it to be a haven for little critters," Dunn said. "I like it, because it fits the situation. In terms of beauty, appropriateness plays a huge part in what you should do."

Part of the ministry's work has also focused on maintaining some neglected areas of the grounds. Last summer, Dunn and Bosnick spent several hours weeding a raingarden planted on the southeastern side of the church to filter rainwater off the parking lot and ready it for another year of performing its job.

The committee is now focused on beautifying the physical entrance of the church on either side of the main doors, by adding three large

pots on one side and a single large pot on the other. "The garden is not just about the making the grounds attractive," Bosnick said. "It also makes a connection with who God is and who we are as His people."

OPT

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Silver Spring Young Adults Group Reconvenes

Like most Millennials, young-adult Catholics today are looking for ways to build authentic community. Two Dominican friars from the Dominican House of Studies in Washington are helping to provide a solution: a local faith-study group. Br. Charles Marie Rooney, OP and Br. Raymond Maria La Grange, OP, who are studying for the priesthood, lead Silver Spring Catholic, a weekly small group open to young adults from the six parishes in Silver Spring and surrounding area. Based out of Christ the King Parish, the group meets on Monday evenings at 7 p.m. to discuss a chapter of a selected book and enjoy the fellowship of Catholic peers.

The brothers aim to bring the great riches of the Catholic intellectual tradition to bear on contemporary life. Last fall, the group studied Fr. Jean D'Elbee's *I Believe in Love*, which distills the spiritual



Br. Charles Marie Rooney, OP, who with fellow friar, Br. Raymond Maria Le Grange, OP, leads the group of young Catholics at Christ the King

teachings of St. Therese of Lisieux. "St. Therese takes us to the basic foundation of the Christian life: God's love for us. We all had fun unpacking her wisdom and apply-

ing it to our lives with the help of Fr. D'Elbee," said Br. Raymond.

On January 13, they began discussing G.K. Chesterton's classic, *Orthodoxy*, which is an apology for the beautiful coherence and believability of the Christian faith. "Chesterton is an entertaining writer and has a passion for both the true and the absurd, which ought to make for lively discussions," Br. Charles added.

Anyone interested in attending may reach out to the brothers at sscatholicfellowship@gmail.com or on Facebook at [Facebook.com/SilverSpringCatholic](https://www.facebook.com/SilverSpringCatholic). Latecomers are also always welcome—those who would like to join after the group officially has begun need not be dissuaded or worry about catching up on the reading. "This ultimately is an outlet for growing in intimacy with God and friendship with other young Catholics," the brothers said.

OPT

Tagalog Mass at Christ the King

By Froilan Manansala, Liturgical Leader LISM Prayer Group

The Filipino community celebrates Masses throughout the area each Sunday at alternating parishes. On the first Sunday of every month, the Mass in Tagalog is celebrated at Christ the King from 4 until 5pm. It is

sponsored by The Lord Is My Shepherd Prayer Group, a strong, vibrant fellowship which works on behalf of all at Christ the King, in various ways.

The 2020 Tagalog Mass calendar includes: January 5, February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1 and

December 6. Additional services are held during the year, such as Sinulog, the festival of the miraculous image of Santo Niño, celebrated every 3rd Sunday of January, which occurred last Sunday at Christ the King.

OPT

Christ The King at St Michael's Oyster Feast

Christ the King Parish will be "trucking" over to the Williamsburg Room of Saint Michael the Archangel Church, our neighboring parish in downtown Silver Spring, on THIS coming Friday, January 31, to engage in that traditional Chesapeake Bay tradi-

tion of feasting on oysters! A small group of parishioners will be going to enjoy the work of their Knights of Columbus Council 15084 who each year lay out raw and fried oysters, oyster stew with a wide menu of side items, ham, beer and wine.

The evening will also include a 50-50 drawing (you win half the "pot" of money collected should your name be drawn), a small items

bargain table (much like a small bazaar) and music. The cost is \$42 for adults and \$12 for children under 13 years of age. It is quite the family night. Even though it is less than a week away, you might still be able to reserve a seat by contacting one of the Knights; for information call Charles Hayes 301-806-8347, James Robertson 301-589-0306 or Steve Holowenzak 301-585-3848.

OPT

SPIRIT

Con't from page 21

Noel", "Born on Christmas Day," and "Joy to the World."

"I am very proud of all of our Saint Peter's students," said Nguyen, "The

OPT

CIVILITY

Con't from page 3

so far apart and so angry that civil discussion has not been possible. I've had several unfruitful and painful "conversations" like that!

Our experience at J&A meetings. However, in my 15 years of attending J&A meetings, I have never experienced one that did not remain civil and mostly fruitful. I think that is because we are all working for a better Montgomery County. And I think too that our Catholic mentality guides us according to CST principles that reflect a Catholic world view. The example of the J&A Council gives me hope about what is possible.

I've also seen this civility at other public gatherings, like the one I recently attended with people from Maryland Legislative District 39. Our state Senator and three Delegates were all present and discussed the issues of the upcoming 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

I was encouraged that our elected representatives were seeking ways to promote the common good. They presented the issues they are working on, and invited us into conversation with them—now and during the session.

I do not agree with everything they endorse, especially regarding their possible support for the two great life issues of extending abortion to birth and assisted suicide, issues that were not discussed. But I felt from my past associations with Senator Nancy King that the door is open to continue to discuss these issues with her, as we have in the past.

Because the discussion was civil,

I feel welcome to talk with her about them. I hope this extends to the three Delegates. Time will tell. We have to continue to understand and promote the Catholic view of the dignity of the person and the sanctity of life.

At the county level as well. The J&A Council works primarily on issues as they relate to Montgomery County. We attend public hearings, meet with County Council members, and attend and testify at County Council sessions.

We have found that the County Council members are interested in what we have to say. And even better, we have found that there is considerable respect for the work of the Catholic Church among many of them. This is rooted in their appreciation of the Church's generous efforts to help those in need on the margins of society in the County.

Their respect especially for the work of Catholic Charities and parish social outreach efforts is great. In these challenging times for the Church, this is encouraging. So we keep civilly advocating even when we disagree. We hope and trust that this opens doors, and may perhaps change some votes.

Civility is possible. Let's take the opportunity to practice it. Perhaps you would consider joining us at one of our next J&A meetings on January 22 or February 26 to see what we do and how we practice civility. Call J&A chair Brian Dorsey at 240-888-4736 for more information.

OPT

Anthony Bosnick is a member of the Justice and Advocacy Council and of St. John Neumann parish, Gaithersburg. He is director of social ministry at St. Francis of Assisi parish, Derwood.

BUSINESS

Con't from page 16

that will solve a problem or meet a need within the school community. After they brainstorm ideas, research and collect data, and finally develop a polished business plan, the students pitch their ideas to a room full of investors—Mr. Powers and their parents. This Shark Tank-like presentation requires the students to hone their public speaking skills and practice resilience and flexibility. The young entrepreneurs must remain poised and confident as the investors contemplate a deal.

The most recent presentations were given by "Lost and Founders"—five students who aim to reunite students with lost belongings for a small fee and will even wash or clean the items for an additional \$1- and "Crystal Clean"—a five student cleaning crew who developed an eco-friendly cleaning solution specifically for the classroom white boards. These two teams will operate their businesses at the school for one week hoping to turn a profit. This year all profits from student-led businesses will support The Woods Academy's sponsorship of a Washington Jesuit Academy student.

Last spring, a group of seven students scored a deal for their Water 4 Whales startup. The startup offered customizable water bottles for sale to encourage conservation and decrease the use of plastic. In just one week of operation, the students earned \$151.33 which they donated entirely to 4Ocean (www.4Ocean.com), an organization committed to removing trash from the ocean and coastlines.

Not only do the students in Grade 5 explore innovation and entrepreneurship, they also learn the basic principles of investment and even provide advice for the investment of real funds for the school. The Class of 2019's Student-Advised Investment Fund earned over 40% in the last three years and the class chose to give the investment earnings back to the school when they graduated in May.

At The Woods, students learn to use complex technology to express themselves, solve problems, and create opportunities as innovators, leaders, and entrepreneurs. Students participate in authentic projects and gain applicable skills that include collaboration, critical thinking, communication, character, and creativity, growing in the context of the world they will one day lead.

OPT

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Answering the Pope's Call by Directly Ministering to Silver Spring's Most Vulnerable

By Caren Carden, Jason Giavannettone, and Jason Moore

On December 5, 2019, Oscar (last name unknown) died overnight at the Takoma/Langley bus depot. Oscar was an elderly, undocumented immigrant who fell into addiction after years of living on the street. Such deaths occur even though there are hundreds of churches, synagogues, temples, and other faith-based institutions nearby that should represent oases of compassion and relief for vulnerable and marginalized individuals like Oscar. Many faiths preach compassion for the poor as one of



their highest priorities; however, if God were to make an appearance today, can we be assured of his pride in our efforts, especially

when Oscar and countless others continue to die alone on the streets? It is time for us to directly
Continued on page 37

New Leader Couples

By Oscar Mendez

The Christian marriage is a sacrament, and St. Michael the Archangel Parish wants to provide all the necessary tools to men and women who are looking to join their lives in the sacrament of matrimony.

During two consecutive Saturdays, November 30th and December 7, Carla Ferrando-Bowling from the Archdiocese of Washington, Office of Family Life, prepared five married couples who are members of our parish, as new leader couples in the Archdiocesan



St. Michael's new leader couples ready to share their knowledge, wisdom, and life experiences with new couples who are looking to enter the sacramental marriage.

Continued on page 37



Above, The Three Kings visit St. Michael's on the Feast of the Epiphany. At right, The children received a catechesis about the Feast of the Epiphany and why the Three Wise Men were following the star leading them to Jesus. They also had an opportunity to interact with them and to ask many questions.



St. Michael the Archangel Parish was joined by over 250 parishioners in celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12, 2019. The celebration began with a bilingual Mass that was followed by fellowship and a serenade to the Patroness of the Americas.



Kately Javier from the Archdiocese of Washington was the guest speaker for St. Michael the Archangel's second annual Bilingual RCIA Alumni Reunion. Thirty parishioners who completed the RCIA process over the past 10 years attended.

MCPS Students Discouraged from Protesting

By Conrad Smith

From what I've witnessed, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are condemning climate-related protesting without saying a word. First, schools have created obstacles, seemingly under the pretext of scheduling conflicts, for students who want to participate in protests demanding action to address climate change. Second, attending a protest is considered an unexcused absence.

There are over 3,000 people at Montgomery Blair High School, many of whom want to protest, but cannot due to school conflicts. There have been tests scheduled on the same day as the protests that could significantly affect the grade for the class. If a student misses school to attend a protest, the absence is considered unexcused, and the student is not given the opportunity to make up the test. However, a student could try to obtain a doctor's note claiming he was sick to be able to attend the protest with an excused absence. These possible outcomes either discourage students from participating in protests for fear of sacrificing their grades or encourage students to sacrifice their academic honesty by lying to be able to fight for what

is important to them. This occurs despite the MCPS Board allowing students to take up to three protest days a year, at the discretion of the principal. At Montgomery Blair High School, these protest days never used.

Pope Francis's encyclical says, "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." Change can and very much should happen. How can a school not allow students to protest, a right protected under the U.S. Constitution? Students seem to have three options: they can fail a class, they can lie, or they can do nothing and continue to leave it up to government officials. Change can come from the people. Positive change must not be stopped by a system. John F. Kennedy stated, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try". We need to be able to fight for this beautiful Earth that God created. Whether we are restrained by a system or by apathy, we must still fight for a better and healthier world because, "the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality" (John F. Kennedy).

OPT

Soup and Scripture Filled Our Hearts During Advent

By Andrew Russell

I was one of several St. Michael's parishioners who attended the Advent Soup and Scripture event in the St. Michael's Rectory. I am so glad that I went. It really made Advent meaningful for me. We read from scripture and other articles provided by our pastor, Msgr. Tolentino. We all had time to

share where we are in our spiritual life and the importance of prayer in our life. It was so good to be in the Rectory with our pastor and fellow parishioners. I could feel the presence of God in the reading of scripture and in each member of the group. I left the meeting feeling that I was closer to God. By the way, the soup was great!

OPT



The Fil-Am Ministry at St. Michael's hosted its 13th Annual Free Health Screening with the Migrant Heritage Commission and many Filipino and Asian-American volunteer associations in the DMV.

10th Annual Oyster Feast

St. Michael the Archangel's 10th Annual Oyster Feast on January 31 starts at 4:30pm.

The event is sponsored by the Knight of Columbus.

Call Charles Hayes at (301) 806-8347 for information and reservations

OPT

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Gift of Good-Deed Hearts on Epiphany

During Holy Mass on January 5, 2020, the Feast of the Three Kings, OLQP parish children brought their own gifts to Baby Jesus in the Manger. These were their special good deeds which they performed during Advent, in preparation for Christmas. The children wrote down their good deeds on home-made paper hearts. During the presentation of the gifts, they brought them to the altar and then placed them on the straw in the manger next to Baby Jesus. Fr. Jerzy Frydrych, pastor of Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish, read aloud to the congregation the good-deed hearts of each child.



Students from the OLQP Polish Saturday School presented the Christmas play on Jan. 12 at the OLQP Parish *Oplatek* Dinner.

Pray, Eat, and Dance

By Bozenna Buda, ED

Something to look forward to at this time of the year is the Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish Christmas Dinner *Oplatek*, in Silver Spring. This year was no exception. The annual event draws parishioners and friends from near and far. The pastor, parish groups and numerous individual parishioners and youth work hard preparing for, and helping on, the day of the event.



Members of the OLQP Parish youth choir sang, played, and performed at the Polish Christmas Carols *Koledy* concert on Jan. 5, 2020, under the musical direction of Mr. Janusz Bilinski (seen in center, back row).

OLQP Christmas Carols *Koledy* Concert

By Bozenna Buda, ED

After Holy Mass on Jan. 5, 2020, the Our Lady Queen of Poland parish youth choir, under the musical direc-

tion of OLQP organist Mr. Janusz Bilinski, presented a concert of Polish Christmas carols *Koledy*. Members of the youth choir first set up the live Christmas tableau with Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the center. They sang and played on instruments the beloved and rhythmic *Koledy* passed down through the centuries by oral song tradition, before they were written down.

The *Koledy* arose in various regions of Poland and some are sung in dialects, such as the mountaineer dialect. The *Koledy* concert showcased the wonderful and varied talents – vocal, musical, and performance – of our OLQP youth who continue this beautiful Polish Christmas tradition.



Above, OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych prays and blesses the *Oplatek* wafer at the parish Christmas dinner.



In the finale, above, the *Ojczyzna* Polish Dancers from Baltimore invited everyone at the OLQP Christmas Dinner *Oplatek* in Silver Spring to join in dancing the *Polonaise*. Leading the dance, in the first row on the left, is Malgorzata Bondyra with Our Lady Queen of Poland Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych and OLQP Parish Council President Izabela Macander, flanked by Michael Carnahan on the right.



At left, Parishioners and friends shared the *Oplatek* and exchanged good wishes for the New Year at the dinner on Jan. 12.

At left, the *Ojczyzna* Polish Dancers from Baltimore dressed in colorful Polish costumes, performed regional Polish dances at the OLQP Parish Christmas dinner on Jan. 4 in Silver Spring.

On Sunday, January 12, 2020, after the 12 noon Holy Mass, the Knights of Columbus hall filled quickly as everyone arrived to enjoy the Polish traditions, the food, and the entertainment.

It started with the dimming of the lights and the presentation of the Nativity Play by students from the OLQP Polish Saturday School, under the direction of Mrs. Ewa Chlebowska, Principal, and the dedicated teachers and parents. The first presentation of the play had taken place before Christmas at the Polish School prior to Christmas vacation. Each staging of the play, in addition to the central characters of Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, and kings, included students dressed in region-

al Polish costumes as well as *bona fide* Polish scouts in uniform. The Polish School Nativity play included poems and Polish Christmas carols (*Koledy*). It was a beautiful sight to behold and was very much appreciated by the audience, who applauded enthusiastically.

Next was the prayer and blessing of the *Oplatek* by OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych. The *Oplatek* is a thin rectangular wafer similar to the Communion wafer. Each person receives a whole *Oplatek* and shares a piece with others and also breaks off a piece of the other person's *Oplatek*. This is done while exchanging good wishes for the New Year with each other and can be followed by a hug. It is a very festive and happy time as individu-

als make their way around the hall breaking the *Oplatek* with their friends and making new friends along the way.

Then, everyone sat down to a delicious meal of clear beet soup (*barszcz*) with small dumplings (*uszka*), two kinds of pierogi, golabki, salads, various side dishes, and Polish desserts.

This year again, we were treated to traditional Polish dances by the *Ojczyzna* Polish Dancers from Baltimore, MD. They performed dances from several regions of Poland. Then, in true Polish style, they invited everyone to join them in dancing the *Polonaise* to conclude this magnificent afternoon.

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Prepare a Way for the Lord

By Liz Smith

St. Mary's Faith Community began their preparation for the birth of Jesus on the first Sunday of Advent. Once a month, parish youth host a mass. For Advent, the sixth grade read the Word and the younger children led the congregation in song from the altar. From the choir loft, St. Mary's student cantor and musicians assisted. The Jesse Tree in the Sanctuary contained dozens of tags with names of needy families and patients at Springfield Hospital, Sykesville, MD. Donations were accepted for the 25 baskets that are prepared each year by the Youth Group.

The Pavilion was a-buzz with activities for Advent which created an environment of faith and service.

The Sodality sponsored service activities to support the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center. Donations and gently used baby items were collected. The Annual Cookie Bake Sale proceeds also went to the Center. Purses filled with toiletries, hats, gloves, and some gift cards, were donated to the Dorothy Day Center. The Haiti committee supported our twinning parish with Christmas Cards, Haiti Ornaments and Coffee sales.



Diana Snouffer and Teri Crawford man the Bake Sale for the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center.

The children were provided a variety of Advent and Christmas crafts. The craft theme offered a spiritual reflection to assist the children on their path through Advent. The children had a wonderful time during these activities. Donut Sunday coincided, and is always a special treat!



Christmas Eve Pageant

The women of the parish participated in an evening of prayer, reflection, and dinner at "Advent by Candlelight." The room was lit from the glow provided by each table's unique Advent Wreath. A spiritual reflection was provided by Father Stephen Ellis.

Adults of the parish participated

in Faith Study on Bishop Baron's series on the Mass each Sunday night. Sunday Scriptures with Fr. Kevin was offered each Tuesday morning.

Each week during Advent, each religious education class had an Advent Wreath at their Prayer Station. As the weeks progressed,

all prepared for our program Pageant. The class Pageant was performed for parents and families during the last class in December, followed by a reception. Children who were available participated in the Pageant at Christmas Eve Mass.

OPT



Children lead the congregation in song during Youth Sunday mass.



Sodality Ladies participate in Advent by Candlelight.



Father Kevin joins Deacon Dave and his family for Advent Crafts.

McGANN

Con't from page 1

the process of parenting. In the world of Washington "private" schools, parents are faced with pressure to get children on the *right* teams, connected with the *right* families, dancing at the *right* cotillion, and admitted into the *best* high schools. Parents are expected to produce well-rounded, well-educated, self-confident, beautiful children by establishing a system of child-rearing that involves almost no downtime, and very little family time. Even family vacations have to take place at exotic locations or at the local beaches where "everyone who's anyone" goes.

What's the outcome of this system of high-pressure parenting? It's overscheduled, anxious children who have barely had a chance to deal with social or personal challenges on their own before they head off to college. It's parents who dare not let anyone know that it all seems like too much for them

and for their children. It's children who never get the opportunity to stay home on Saturday to help Dad rake leaves or to play with friends in the backyard. Today's children struggle to organize and direct their own play. They are so accustomed to being supervised by adults in what is supposed to be their "free time", that they have lost the ability to create their own fun – or they discover with YouTube that the best fun is to be found in violating the standards of behavior and of self-respect that they have learned at home.

Something has to give – parents and their children need help in the struggle to hold their own against the external pressures that wear away the fabric of the family. Catholic school leaders and teachers are in a perfect position to provide a counterbalance to the craziness of this society within which we are raising our children. Traditionally, Catholic school communities have given parents the support they need to hold back the influences of the greater society. Everything about Catholic schools is

countercultural. Our Catholic teachings tell us that there is no such thing as the "right" club, or the "best" people. Our Catholic teachings remind us that it is within the family that we learn who we are - that is through prayer and hard work that we become contributing members of the world without surrendering our values and our integrity. Catholic schools educate children in an environment that supports families as they raise children of strong faith, intellectual curiosity and courage.

If you have always thought that Catholic schools are not available to your family, or if you have seen them as exclusive or ultra-conservative, you might want to take this time to rethink. Catholic schools are holding Open Houses and giving tours this month and next. Go and find out for yourselves that our schools are full of good people who love the children they teach, people who are ready and willing to partner with you as you raise your children.

OPT

Prelude Music Rings Out for Christmas

By Diane Yendrey, Director of Music and Liturgy

Musical preludes for Christmas Eve masses are inspirational: surely the songs of the season are overflowing in the hearts and minds of all! One tradition in particular that started at St. Mary's in this past decade, is the half hour concert prelude, prior to the Christmas Eve Children's Mass and Pageant. In particular, the high school contemporary ensemble students are given an opportunity to audition and perform a seasonal piece for the program. Congratulations to all of this year's soloists! The student choir was joined by musicians on bells, flute, oboe, guitar, and piano, for a truly joyous celebration of the

Vigil Mass.

St. Mary's (adult) Church Choir also offered a half hour evening concert prelude, prior to the late mass on Christmas Eve. Selections ranged from traditional to contemporary and featured a number of guest instrumentalists as well. "O Holy Night" never seemed more fitting!

OPT

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St. Martin of Tours

St. Martin's Parishioners Consecrate Themselves to Mary

By Emily Moldiz

Seventy-five St. Martin parishioners consecrated themselves completely to Mary on December 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It also marked the 99th Anniversary of the Parish and the annual Advent Parish Mission.

"Why consecrate ourselves to Jesus through Mary," ask Father Dave Wells "Because Jesus came to us through Mary, and we go to Jesus through her as well."

Father Wells, St. Martin's Parish Administrator, and Sister Mariana de Jesus, OP from the Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, gave the evening talks in English and Spanish focusing on "Mary's Missionary Motherhood." The evening followed with Adoration, confessions, and finally the Consecration to Mary.

The process began on November 9. The parish supplied the book "33 Days to Morning Glory" by

Father Michael Gaitly. Fr. Gaitly summarizes the teachings of four giants of Marian spirituality, St. Louis de Montfort, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Mother Theresa and St. Pope John Paul II, making it easy to grasp, and simple enough to put into practice. It consists of an initial 12-day preparation followed by a period of three consecutive weeks, each week focusing on a different theme. After the 33-day program is completed, the Act of Consecration is made on a Marian feast day.

The Parish offered opportunities for the community to pray and reflect together on the readings and prayers leading up to the Total Consecration.

Father Wells said he was impressed that 75 people consecrated their lives to Mary. He also said St. Martin's is a spiritual parish. It was a beautiful way enter into the Christmas season and the Centennial year.

OPT

St. Jane de Chantal



Annual Christmas Play at St. Jane de Chantal School

Before the Christmas break, the lower school performed their annual Christmas Play for the students and families of St. Jane de Chantal. Pre-kindergarten through fourth grade played the parts of shepherds, sheep, wise men, stars, angels, and Mary and Joseph. Fourth grade students narrated the play, which is based on the Nativity Christmas story. Songs sung by the children reminded us all to slow down and create peace in the world and live out our mission as Catholics. Christmas comes from the heart!

Centennial Sketches – History of the Land of our Parish

By Emily Moldiz

This is the first of a series of articles celebrating the 100th anniversary of St. Martin's Parish.

Catholics in the Gaithersburg area first organized for worship on the estate of Francis Clopper, near today's Seneca Creek State Park, where St. Rose was founded in 1836 as a mission church. But that chapel was 3 miles over hilly terrain from where the town of Gaithersburg was growing, centered around the railroad line that was built in 1873. So, by the late 1880s, Gaithersburg Catholics gathered in the home of Thomas and Adeline Gloyd, near the intersection of Diamond and Frederick Avenues, whenever they could find a visiting priest to celebrate Mass in the parlor.

As this Catholic community grew, they began searching for a more permanent worship site, and soon settled on property at the corner of Summit and Frederick Avenues. This triangular property had been the site of the Summit

Hotel, a summer vacation spot for DC residents, until it had burned down in 1895.

According to oral histories, a group of seven or eight ladies called on the property owners, John B. Diamond and Ignatius T. Fulks, to see if they would sell the property for a church. They agreed. Mr. Diamond was Catholic and donated his share of the land. Mr. Fulks sold his portion for \$10 – a fraction of its true value (and equal to about \$250 today). The deed was recorded in Montgomery County on April 17, 1914. Mr. Diamond and Mr. Fulks sold 2 parcels of land, one of 3.5 acres and one of 44 perches (about 1/3 of an acre) to George Harrington, pastor of St. Mary's in Barnesville. Three days later, Fr. Harrington transferred the land to James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore.

Thus, in April 1914, the beginnings of our physical church were laid here in Gaithersburg. But, three months later World War I began, and building a church would have to wait.

OPT

Happenings in Our Blue Ribbon School

School reports provided by Catherine Skibo

Holiday Band Concert

Once again, the incredible band director of St. Jane de Chantal School, Mrs. Tifford, wowed parents, faculty and students alike with the winter beginner and advanced band concert before leaving for their Christmas break. Beginner band is comprised of fourth grade students, who are brand new to playing an instrument. Both bands are strong in numbers and sound! Holiday favorites such as Jingle Bells were performed, as well as more traditional pieces such as Chante Noel and God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen. The band brought the Christmas spirit to the school with their beautiful music, talented playing, and their Christmas attire. Parents, faculty and students gave a big thank you to Mrs. Tifford for all she does for the St. Jane de Chantal band!

Choir Christmas Concert

The St. Jane de Chantal Children's Choir joined with the Maplewood Choir to present a Christmas concert to students, fac-

ulty, and Maplewood residents. Choir members sang holiday tunes from around the world, including a Christmas Medley and a traditional Spanish song. Students played ukuleles to accompany many of the more modern Christmas songs. Dressed in Santa hats, red scarves and red sweaters, the choirs' beautiful voices helped to put everyone in an excellent Christmas spirit!

Catholic Math League

Once again, the school participated in the Catholic Math League. This is a math test given nationally to Catholic schools four times per year. St. Jane de Chantal students had an outstanding performance on this past test. The Third Grade placed ninth in the region with Declan Driscoll placing 77th out of 900+ students. The Fourth Grade placed second in region and 23rd overall out of 56 schools with Simon Nguyen placing first in region and 20th out of 1000+ students. The Fifth Grade placed ninth in region with Tyler Skibo placing 20th in region and 77 out of 1200+ students. The Sixth Grade placed fifth in region and 27th overall out of 72 schools with Joey McCormick

placing ninth in region and 40th out of 1000+ students. The Seventh Grade placed 4th in region and 14th overall out of 41 schools with Johnny Broome placing fourth in region and sixth overall out of 500+ students. The Eighth Grade placed first in region and fourth overall out of 69 schools with an incredible performance by David Cao who placed first in region AND first overall out of 1200+ students, Brett Wall who placed eighth in region, and Maddie Ryan who placed ninth in region.

Sixth-Grade Field Trip

The sixth-grade students visited the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in early January and toured many beautiful chapels that represent countries from all over the world, including the Hall of American Saints. The best part of the trip was that the entire Basilica was still decorated for Christmas with a beautiful Nativity scene and artwork depicting many Saints and the holy Trinity in the newly completed main sanctuary. The class was able to participate in a mass during the visit.

OPT

FAMILY

Con't from page 6

community can all pray together, since we go to Mass once a week and say prayers three times a day. I especially enjoy the priests' homilies. They try their best to help the congregation understand the Gospel message clearly. My religion teacher has taught my classmates and me how to be good stewards, and she has given me determination to serve

in the church as an altar server. In addition, I love to be a reader or an usher.

I am thankful for attending Catholic school, for helping me learn about my religion, deepening my faith, and encouraging me to learn to the best of my ability. I will continue to serve the Lord in the future because of St. Martin's. I am thankful for my caring teachers, friendships, and for being accepted for who I am.

OPT

WEIGAL

Con't from page 9

guest lecturer, he has also spoken to St. Jane's parishioners about his experiences and life lessons learned during the time he spent as a biog-

rapher of St. John Paul II.

According to Google Books, Mr. Weigel's new book is "a powerful new interpretation of Catholicism's dramatic encounter with modernity, by one of America's leading intellectuals". The book leads a discussion about how the Church has

found a renewed evangelical essence during the last century and a hope for the survival of modern society instead of succumbing to the modern world and its increasing secularism. This is clearly a book that every catholic should read.

OPT

TEN GREAT YEARS

Con't from page 3

Saint Camillus decided to welcome large numbers of students from Our Lady of Sorrows School, including almost the entire eighth-grade class, after their school closed.

All of these *turning points* and many others over the course of 55 years required bold decision making and vision and made it possible for 2009 to be bring the boldest decision of all.

In 2009, many well-established Catholic schools around the Beltway were faced with the need to evaluate how to balance a commitment to excellent education for children with the need to be financially sustainable. At Saint Camillus, they looked out to neighbors like Saint Michael in downtown Silver Spring and Saint Mark the Evangelist nearby the University of Maryland and saw the risk that schools might close. The crisis that the community at Saint Camillus considered was “how can we ensure that children from working and poor families continue to have the option of Catholic schools as they have had for generations in our neighbor-



SFIS Drama club presented the play “CSI: Christmas Scene Investigation”



The Magi joined SFIS for the first Mass back after Christmas vacation.

hoods.”

So, Saint Camillus made the bold decision to voluntarily offer to close if other parishes would

260 students. In August 2010, Saint Francis International School opened with over 430 students and a mission to continue the legacies of Saint Camillus and Saint Mark the Evangelist Schools.

Saint Francis International School is now in its 10th year continuing this important mission. Over the last decade, SFIS has already been recognized for its national leadership in promoting diversity in Catholic education. Today, SFIS is

the fifth largest parochial school in the Archdiocese of Washington. The Latino community within SFIS

is the largest of any elementary school in the archdiocese and SFIS has the largest African American population of any parochial school in Montgomery county – and the second largest group of Black and mixed-race students in the entire archdiocese.

456 students attended Saint Camillus School when it opened in September of 1954 and about 440 students age three through eighth grade attend Saint Francis International School today.

On Wednesday, January 29, at 8:30 am in Saint Camillus Church, Archbishop Wilton Gregory will lead a special mass to celebrate the tenth Catholic Schools Week at Saint Francis International School. It will also be a time to celebrate 65 years of Catholic education at Saint

Camillus Parish! Alumni of Saint Camillus School are especially invited to join the SFIS community in this time of celebration as SFIS looks forward to continuing its mission for years to come!

OPT



Support the mission of Saint Francis International School with a gift at www.mightycause.com/ForTheFuture

join in creating a new school as partners. In June of 2010, Saint Camillus School closed with about

COUPLES

Con't from page 33

Program *Transformed in Love*.

The couples received their training in Spanish; which equipped the participants with the necessary tools to provide witness presentations, on a variety of topics related to family life and the Church’s teaching regarding the sacrament of marriage.

St. Michael’s parish already has an

active marriage ministry who works and prepares couples in English; along with these new leader couples, our parish will now have the opportunity to help our clergy in the preparation of couples in both languages, English and Spanish. The parish now has the blessing of more than 12 married couples who are ready to share their knowledge, wisdom, and life experiences with new couples who are looking to enter the sacramental marriage.

OPT

MINISTERING

Con't from page 33

assist the poor and vulnerable in our midst and to answer Pope Francis’s urgent plea to show compassion for the poor.

Our Ministry for the Poor and Vulnerable held a Warm Clothing and Blanket Drive. The purpose was to directly minister to those in need within the downtown Silver Spring area and surrounding communities and to provide an opportunity for our parishioners to have conversations with those in need.

Donations were collected for three weeks and resulted in the collection of hundreds of winter clothes, which translated to over 50 people being able to obtain free coats, blankets, socks, and other clothes to prepare for the coming winter months. The drive also gave parishioners the opportunity to meet the poor and share some time together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Sadly, three individuals who attended have since passed away: Sharon Tilly, Iben Uduak, and David Wombs. We know that we have a long way to go, but hopefully this event represents a good start.

OPT

**24th Annual Patricia Sullivan
Benefit Dinner
Saturday, March 14, 2020
(see back page)**

Be “salt-wise” this winter

Overuse of salt to melt ice and snow results in runoff into stormwater drains, local streams and eventually, to the Chesapeake Bay. It can corrode concrete and masonry, harm pets, damage surrounding plants and lawns and affect the water supply, posing a risk to sensitive wildlife and stream health.

Removing or preventing ice and snow doesn’t have to be difficult – in fact, by following these simple steps, you can save time and money while protecting people, property, pets and the environment!

Be Salt-Wise!

- **Shovel early & often** – Remove snow and clear pavement before snow turns to ice.
- **Consider Green Alternatives** – There are many organic, salt-free and pet-safe de-icers on the market today. Products containing calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) are more eco-friendly. Remember to use these products sparingly, and don’t expect them to replace the need for shoveling. In addition, scattering sand on icy surfaces can provide temporary traction and reduce the danger of slipping.
- **Go easy!** – Sprinkle de-icers sparingly and evenly. Read the directions carefully and apply the least amount necessary. More is not better. When applied properly, it won’t take much to get the desired results. Leave space between the grains. Using a lawn spreader can help spread deicer evenly and prevent clumping.
- **Know when to treat** – De-icers and salt are not meant to replace the work of shoveling. They are meant to loosen ice so it can be shoveled away.
- **Check the temperature and weather conditions** – Let the sun be your friend! It can do the work for you. If temperatures are expected to rise, de-icers



Did You Know?

One 12-oz mug holds enough salt to treat a 20-foot driveway or ten sidewalk squares.



or salt may not be needed.

- **Choose wisely** – Weather conditions can change the effectiveness of certain de-icers. Check that your de-icer is designed to work for the current temperature and conditions. Only apply to surfaces that are already icy. When pavement temperatures drop below 15°, salt doesn’t melt ice.
- **Sweep** – At the end of a weather event, sweep and collect any sand, salt, or undissolved de-icer. Any excess can be reused for the next storm. Letting them runoff into our waterways is harmful to our drinking water and wildlife.
- **Save Money** – Adding too much salt is a waste of your money, and the environmental costs affect our whole community.

Source: Montgomery County Dept of Environmental Protection

OPT

Holy Cross

Holy Cross School: Faith, Scholarship, Service – and Holiday Fun!

By Grace Fogarty, Director of Communications, Student Council Executive Board

As the holiday season comes to an end, Holy Cross' students and faculty alike reminisce on the fun traditions and shared memories in preparing for Jesus' birth. A Christmas pageant run by our music director, Ms. Rappaport, began this season's festivities. Grades Pre-K 3 through Eighth grade sang songs ranging from beloved, classic Christmas carols to creative twists on our favorite hymns that fit in perfectly with the fifth grade's live reenactment



Even Holy Cross Principal, Mrs. Lisa Kane, spent time with Santa, above, during the Breakfast With St. Nick event in December! Her wish was for each of us: blessings of the Christmas season and joy throughout the year.



At left fifth Grade students at Holy Cross reenacted the story of the Nativity during the annual Christmas pageant.

Below, Holy Cross Eighth Graders help to organize the delivery of gifts donated for the Giving Tree.



of the Nativity Scene. The pageant concluded with the choir performing a beautiful and diverse mix of Christmas melodies.

Throughout December Holy Cross families are reminded of the true meaning of Christmas with our annual Giving Tree. Both Holy Cross School and Parish celebrate Christmas by selecting a tag off of the tree and giving a special gift to the children of a family in need. Parishioners and the school community take part in our goal to bring a little Christmas cheer to families in our area.

One Saturday in December, Holy Cross hosts our Breakfast with Santa. On this Saturday each year, the air is filled with the aroma of warm pancakes and breakfast treats, as well as holiday glee. This year, sparkling snowflakes hung from the ceiling, and students and families created Christmas crafts while sipping on hot chocolate. Children shopped in Santa's secret store assisted by middle school-aged elves. Meanwhile, Santa Claus sat

in his chair, listening to the wishes of all the children.

Holiday Door Decorating, a student-favorite tradition at Holy Cross, is another exciting winter activity celebrated by all grades. Each year, a theme is selected ranging from "Christmas Around the World" to this year's "Gingerbread," and classes plan and create their own door designs. Students deck

the halls of Holy Cross with their artistic ideas. Once the decorating time is up, students leave one shoe outside of their classroom in hopes of a visit from St. Nick who has been known to leave Candy Canes for the boys and girls.

Holy Cross is looking forward to another amazing year in 2020, filled with more traditions and celebrations!

OPT



Bee Happy!

Holy Cross School students in Grades Four through Eight participate in the yearly National Geographic Geography Bee. Based on performance in a classroom-level assessment, two representatives from each class are selected to compete in the school bee. Middle School Social Studies teacher, Mr. Michael Cilano conducts the Bee with the help of several Eighth-Grade students. This year, at the end of twelve rounds, two Seventh Grade students – Sebastian Thomas and Isabelle Amador – went head-to-head for the final round question. Sebastian Thomas ultimately was named the school champion. He will take a proctored online qualifying test that will determine if he will be among the top-100 ranked students to qualify for the Maryland State GeoBee. Pictured, left to right, are Holy Cross Principal Mrs. Lisa Kane, Sebastian Thomas, Isabel Amador, and Mr. Michael Cilano.

Montgomery County Provides Information about New Rules for Accessory Dwelling Units

New information about Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) is now available. The information reflects changes in the County's Zoning Text Amendment 19-01 that took effect on Dec. 31.

An ADU is a second dwelling that is part of an existing single-family detached home and is used as a completely independent living facility with its own provisions. An ADU may not be used as a short-term vacation rental.

An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a residential unit that is either: 1) in or added to an existing one-family dwelling, or 2) in a separate accessory structure on the same lot as an existing one-family dwelling and used as a complete, independent living facility with provisions for cooking, eating, sanitation, and sleeping. Accessory Dwelling Unit without a Special Exception approved before May 20, 2013 must apply for a Class 3 Accessory Dwelling Unit License with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Licensing and Registration.

What are the requirements to license an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

Detailed requirements are available online and may be downloaded at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/Resources/Files/finance/licensing/publications/class3adu-pub-information_sheet.pdf

How do I apply for an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

The ADU Application Form may be downloaded at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/Resources/Files/finance/licensing/forms/class3adu-form-application.pdf

Where are Accessory Dwelling Units in my neighborhood?

A listing of the addresses of all Montgomery County Licensed Accessory Dwelling Units and Pending ADU Applications is available at: <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA-Licensing/Class3/List>

What if I have more questions?

Contact Licensing and Registration at (240) 777-0311. **OPT**

Get Updates from the County SNOW PORTAL

Winter Storm Information Portal: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/snow/
This handy, online website provides information on the latest delays and closings, the status of plowing in your neighborhood, up-to-date snow-related information and submitting a service request.



Source: Montgomery County Dept of Housing and Community Affairs

National Prayer Vigil for Life at Shrine, January 23-24

The National Prayer Vigil for Life will be held from Thursday, January 23 to Friday, January 24, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Over 20,000 pilgrims from around the nation are expected to gather there and pray for an end to abortion before the annual March for Life on the National Mall. The Vigil marks the 47th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions legalizing abortion through nine months of pregnancy. Since those decisions, over 60 million abortions have been performed legally in the United States.

The principal celebrant and homilist at the opening Mass for the National Prayer Vigil for Life on January 23 will be Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, who is chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Many of the nation's bishops and priests will concelebrate the Mass with Archbishop Naumann in the basilica's Great Upper Church. The principal celebrant and homilist for the closing Mass for the National Prayer Vigil for Life on January 24 will be Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D. of the Military Services, USA, who is secretary for the USCCB. After the conclusion of the Mass on Friday, the partici-

pants make their way down to the national mall for the annual March for Life.

The schedule for the National Prayer Vigil for Life:

Thursday, January 23:

- 5:30 PM Opening Mass in the Great Upper Church
- 8:00 PM National Rosary for Life
- 9:30 PM Byzantine Rite Night Prayer
- 11:00 PM ~ Holy Hours led by seminarians (through the night)

Friday, January 24:

- 6:00 AM Eucharistic Adoration in the Crypt Church
- 6:30 AM Morning Prayer and Benediction
- 7:30 AM Closing Mass in the Great Upper Church

For those seeking the Sacrament of Reconciliation, confessions will be heard in the Our Lady of Hostyn Chapel of the Crypt Church over the course of nine hours before and after the opening Mass. See www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/january-roe-events/national-prayer-vigil-for-life-schedule.cfm for additional details.

"Even if you aren't able to physically be present with us in DC, we invite everyone to join in our witness and pray for an end to abortion," said Kat Talalas, assistant director for pro-life communications at the USCCB. "Thousands of

Catholics across the country have already signed up for 9 Days for Life. . . , the pro-life novena taking place January 21-29. We ask all of the faithful to unite in prayer to protect the rights of unborn children, to end the violence of abortion, and for greater respect for human life."

The National Prayer Vigil for Life is co-sponsored by the USCCB's Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and The Catholic University of America.

Media are invited to attend the opening Mass and interview pilgrims who have traveled to Washington from around the country for the fourteen-hour vigil. Advance registration is requested via the media request. . . form on the basilica's website. Video footage from the Mass may also be obtained by satellite feed, courtesy of the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). For coordinates, please contact Jacquelyn Hayes, director of communications for the basilica, at 202-281-0615 or jmh@bnsic.org.

For more details on the overnight National Prayer Vigil for Life and other pro-life events in the Washington area, please visit www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/january-roe-events. To join -- and help spread the word about -- 9 Days for Life, visit www.9daysforlife.com.

OPT

NURSERY SCHOOL

Con't from page 17

our 4-Plus students.

The Christmas program put on by the students of SRS and the two pageants by SRNS are magical shows that everyone looks forward to every year. This year's K-8 program included such classics as "What Child is This?" and "The Little Drummer Boy," as well as a new entry for SRS, "Breath of Heaven" by our seventh grade, which was, in a word, breathtaking. Our preschoolers did not disappoint as they delightfully told, through song, the story of the birth of baby Jesus. It's the best 12 minutes ever.

Because Christmas is a time of giving, our fifth-grade class made its annual visit to Raphael House next door to spread holiday joy. Donned in Santa and elf hats and carrying festive bells, the students serenaded the senior residents with carols and then presented each one with a gift and homemade card.

CYO basketball is in full swing. We marked the start of the season with SRS Spirit Day, which celebrates our Angels and all things St. Raphael. The highlight is the students-vs.-teachers basketball game, which, in a stunning upset, the staff dominated this year. P.E. teacher Andrew Price introduced a new addition to Spirit Day -- boys' and girls' shooting contests, where sixth-graders Damien Quesnel and Reagan Alexander came out on top.

Catholic Schools Week is almost here, and everyone -- from our preschoolers to our eighth graders, to our parents, staff, and clergy -- gets in on the festivities. We kick off with a Sunday Mass, where students wear their uniforms to show their school pride, followed by a full schedule of events. Our students write letters to teachers and priests, make sandwiches for the hungry, listen to presenters on Career Day, and enjoy games and activities. The week is topped off with Family Fun Night.

OPT

SESSION

Con't from page 2

will oppose any efforts to enshrine abortion in Maryland's constitution and to legalize the practice of physician-assisted suicide.

Support for our most vulnerable. The Conference will support efforts to protect immigrants, provide for our poor, curb human trafficking, protect the environment, provide services to individuals with disabilities, and violence protection

programs.

To stay up-to-date on the work of the Conference throughout the next 90 days, be sure to visit the Legislation page on the Maryland Catholic Conference website: www.mdccatholic.org. This is the hub for all Conference activity during the next 90 days. The Conference shares every piece of testimony it submits and keeps a tracker of all the bills it is weighing in on throughout the session. Be sure to bookmark the page and check back often.

OPT

GIVING TREE

Con't from page 14

all sizes-- young children, youth, and adults. The gifts received also come in all forms: toys, educational games, clothing, and gift certificates for a meal out. The gifts are tailored to meet the needs of the individuals supported by the various charitable organization with whom we partner -- which gives this outreach a very personal touch.

Arc Montgomery County, one of our Giving Tree partners, expressed their gratitude in a letter. "We have a lot to be grateful for, and the kindness and generosity of Holy Cross Church sits high atop our list," their letter read.

The Social Concerns Committee has much to be grateful for as well. The generosity of Holy Cross Church and School families is astounding--more than six hundred gifts were donated this year! So many volunteers work joyfully

every step of the way--to generate the gift-giving tags to put on the tree; to select, purchase, and wrap gifts; to organize and sort the gifts as they arrive; to help load trucks and cars for delivery; and, even making deliveries to various partner organizations. The entire effort, from beginning to end, is a manifestation of Jesus' love and through it, all of our lives are enriched.

OPT

CHOIR

Con't from page 7

to the notes on the page and they must pay attention to every cue of the director. As children grow older, their natural inclination is to rebel against authority of any type. Singing in a choir shows them how submitting to authority helps them achieve something that is otherwise impossible.

Music stimulates mental development. Studies have shown that kids who do music also do better in school.

Singing in front of others develops a child's self-esteem and confidence. Fear of speaking in public regularly tops the lists of the most debilitating phobias. The experience of facing the on-looking gaze of congregation, leading them in song, and successfully cantoring under pressure goes a long way toward developing confident and competent adults.

Singing hymns and other sacred music helps children (and adults) learn scripture and the beliefs of the church. It is one of the best catechetical tools we have. Children in choir memorize, without knowing it, a vast portion of the Bible

and they internalize our beliefs. They memorize our prayers and responses, and they develop a love of the Liturgy.

A children's choir gives value to children as worshipers. These days, it's more and more tempting to leave performing to the professionals. Even adults have bought into the concept of "church as a spectator sport." We could help change this by celebrating the contributions that children make while leading the congregation's song. We can show them that their voices count -- that THEY count -- in the Kingdom of God.

OPT

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