



Parish Times

Summer Camp Special
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MARCH 2020

Living the Faith Together

FREE

The Joy of Lent

By Chuck Short

Lent is one of two special seasons of the liturgical year which offer Catholics unique opportunities for spiritual growth. Advent is the other. These defined times provide useful structures to reflect on our spiritual goals;



Chuck Short

Continued on page 4

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

One generation praises your deeds to the next and proclaims your mighty works.

— (Psalm 145:4)

A few months ago, some folks from Montgomery County talked to me about the idea of inter-generational engagement, about how Catholic communities can work together to grow, strengthen and support one another



Fr. John Enzler

Continued on page 5



Why I March

"I march for those who don't have a voice, and I want to let people know that adoption is always an option. I am so thankful that my grandmother chose life at the young age of sixteen and gave my father up for adoption. She is the reason I am here – to give a voice to those who don't have one." – Michelle Kilmer (19 years old, nursing student at CUA, and one of 11 children of Larry & Jen Kilmer) pictured on right with fellow marcher and CUA classmate Ellie Brutsche at the March for Life on January 24.



A Season of Reflection

St. Martin's school children mark the start of Lent with an Ash Wednesday Mass led by the fifth grade. They received a cross on their foreheads made of ashes burned from the previous years' Palm Sunday crosses. Fr. David Wells explained that during Lent we pray, fast, and give alms as a way to make room in our heart for a greater love of God and others.

Support for the Sanctity of Life Calls SFA Pastor to Offer Testimony on Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

As a boy growing up in Butler, Pa., Fr. John Dillon knew a family who were German refugees in the 1930s. The family had a daughter with developmental differences, who was not permitted to join them and was institutionalized in Germany. During the Nazi regime, he recalled his family friends saying that all the people in the institution were killed, but the daughter managed to hide in a closet and was spared.

That story came to the forefront of Fr. Dillon's mind when the Maryland General Assembly in February introduced the End-of-Life Option Act, a bill that would allow a doctor to prescribe lethal doses of drugs to a patient with a terminal illness who has been given six months or less to live. It also motivated him on February 28 to offer testimony before a Maryland Senate Committee opposing the bill, which has been introduced to the state's legislative body four times previously.



On February 28, Fr. John Dillon stood outside the Maryland Senate Office Building in Annapolis, MD, after he testified before the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee in opposition to the End-of-Life-Option Act.

"I see that as where we're going if we don't say no to laws like this," Fr. Dillon said recently.

The testimony offered by Fr. Dillon came about after he wrote to his parishioners about the introduction of the bill in a Flocknote message, in which he described his ministry work serving as the on-call

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In the Image and Likeness of God

One of the hardest concepts to teach children is the fundamental message that each of us and every one of us is created in the image and likeness of God. How do we teach our children to see the Face of God in the man who asks for quarters outside of Starbucks? How do we convince them that we are called to see the dignity of the boy in the wheelchair who cannot speak? If we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, if we are called to love saints and sinners alike, how do we reconcile God's imperative with the world we live in today? Our tendency is to encourage sympathy for "the poor" or "the disabled". We teach our children to donate to charities because we have more, and we should share what we have with poor families who live in misery and squalor. We pat ourselves on the back because we "include" children with disabilities in our schools, or because we build a ramp at the rear entry of our business. Sympathy and condescending generosity only reinforce the idea that some of us are better than others by virtue of what we have or how we look and function in the world.

So, how do we teach our children to understand that we are all equal in God's eyes, and that each of us deserves respect? First,



Patricia McGann

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Rwandan Genocide Survivor Immaculée Ilibagiza Speaks at Holy Cross

The Academy of the Holy Cross community was honored to welcome Immaculée Ilibagiza on Thursday, February 13, 2020. Immaculée survived the Rwandan genocide by being hidden in a 3-foot-by-4-foot bathroom for three months with seven other women. Nearly all of her family were murdered by the killers. She is the author of *Left to*

Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust, which details how her deep faith in God developed during the unimaginably difficult time. Students, faculty and staff read Immaculée's book, Theology classes discussed the book, and Social Studies classes studied the Rwandan genocide in preparation for the assembly.

As a child, Immaculée was part

of a close-knit family with a strong devotion to their Catholic faith. Her father was a leader in their small hometown village. When there were issues that arose, the people of the town would rely on her parents' strength for resolution and support. Her parents were dedicated to ensuring their three sons and daughter received the best education possible. Immaculée was a university student home for the Easter holiday in April 1994 when the Rwandan genocide began. As the killings neared their family's village, Immaculée and her brother were sent to the nearby home of a pastor. With only her father's rosary for comfort, she would remain there for 91 days. Her parents and two of her brothers were murdered during the terror of killings the left more than a million people dead.

Immaculée shared in her powerful talk how a devotion to praying the rosary, meditation, and studying scripture helped her to find hope. As she spent hours and hours in prayer, her faith deepened to an absolute trust in God's protection, mercy, and forgiveness. Through



L-R: Ophelia Hyde '21, Lindsey Cooper '21, Elyssa Padilla '22, Grace Miller '20, Caroline Owan '23, Immaculée Ilibagiza, Colleen Haanes-Olsen '20, Rebecca Bisrat '20, President Katy Prebble, Principal John Sullivan

the experience she was able to forgive her family's killers and find peace. At the conclusion of her talk, the assembly erupted in a standing ovation. To thank Immaculée for her inspirational talk, the Holy Cross Madrigal Singer ensemble performed the moving song "The Prayer of the Children" by Kurt

Bestor.

Following the assembly, Immaculée remained to sign books and pose with students, parents, faculty and staff for photos. Students eagerly waited in line to have their books signed and to thank her for her inspiring message of love and peace.

OPT

Parish Immigration Information Forum at Christ the King

By Liz Weiss, CTK Social Concerns Commission member

On Saturday February 29 Christ the King Parish hosted a very informative Catholic Charities' presentation on Immigration, entitled, "Parish Immigration Forum: What's Going On? How can you help?" The presenters came from

a variety of Catholic Charities programs. Parishioners from Christ the King, St. John the Evangelist, St. Camillus, St. Jane de Chantal, and St. Elizabeth's parish participated.

Fr. Fr. Jacek, OFM began with a prayer. Then Fr. Peter Daly began by providing statistics. Eleven million immigrants are not documented, about half of this group have over-

stayed their visas. Approximately 800,000 young people are enrolled in the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program. Fr. Daly discussed three principles the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports: The Human Right to Migrate, The Country has a right to regulate its borders, and the Country must regulate borders with justice and mercy. An immigrant family of five, members of the TPS (Temporary Protected Status) Alliance, came to share their story, a very moving presentation.

The Forum broke into groups and rotated through 3 roundtables, discussing Direct Service, Advocacy, and Legal Services of Catholic Charities. Christ the King parish has a Literacy program. St. Camillus parishioners help take immigrants to Appointments, ESOL programs

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Choose Life, Protect Our Common Home

By Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM

“Every person must plant a few hundred trees in his lifetime,” Herlindo shouted enthusiastically, a shovel in one hand and a tree seedling in another. As a member of a local Catholic parish, he was giving instructions to a group of twenty-five teenagers and their parents.

By the time they were finished, five hundred trees were planted at the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary near Lothian, MD along the Patuxent River.

Sister Judith Rojas from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington has worked hard to support volunteers like Herlindo and to engage the Latino community in the Archdiocese, in collaboration with El Corazon Latino and its staff. Our immigrant brothers and sisters are well aware of the strong connection between climate and migration crises. Thousands of men, women, and children fleeing countries such as Guatemala or Honduras are climate refugees. Faced with the extreme droughts, massive crop failures, and the specter of misery and near starvation, they are forced to migrate in order to exercise their right to life.

The global threat posed by climate change is well known to another group of immigrants who have settled in Montgomery County. Bangladesh is at ground zero for the global climate emergency. Its territory is only slightly larger than the state of Virginia, yet there are 164 million people living within its huge river delta. As the sea level rises and rice harvests are jeopardized, the lives of people there are being sacrificed at the altar of greed and moral myopia.

“A bold cultural revolution.”

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Earth Day and the fifth anniversary of the encyclical by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*. This landmark document is his clarion call for “a bold cultural revolution.” (#114). Care for God’s creation is one of the seven principles of Catholic Social teaching.

In 2001, the U.S. Catholic Bishop issued a statement: “Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good.” In it, they write: “At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God’s creation and the one human family. . . . It is about our human stewardship of God’s creation and our responsibility to those who come after us.”

Several schools and parishes in the Archdiocese are stepping up to the plate. Stone Ridge High School in Bethesda trains the young people of *Laudato Si’* Generation to be leaders capable of responding to the cry of the climate refugees and clamor of the earth.

As a result of efforts by the Archdiocese of Washington Energy Purchasing Cooperative, in May

of this year, most of the parishes in the Archdiocese located in Maryland will follow the example set by St. Camillus Church and St. Francis International School in 2017 and switch to 100 percent clean, renewable wind power. The price they will pay for this clean electricity will be lower than what they are currently paying for electricity generated largely by dirty fossil fuels. This demonstrates how affordable renewable electricity has become, and why there is no moral or economic justification for a church or religious school now to rely on electricity that is not from clean sources.

What can your parish do?

What else can your parish and/or school do that would have a big, positive environmental impact? Did you know that municipal solid waste landfills were the third-largest source of human-related methane emissions in the United States? Methane is a heat-trapping greenhouse gas. Over the first 20 years after methane is emitted to the atmosphere, it has 86 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide. This is why composting food scraps is such a big deal. Earlier this month, Saint Francis International School and St. Camillus Church signed a contract with a locally owned food scrap recycling business CompostCrew. (See: <https://compostcrew.com/>).

The composting project will divert 6,500 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year. That would be like taking three cars off the road or preventing 343 gallons of gasoline from being consumed each year.

And what can you do to help engage the young people of your parish in following in the footsteps of Jesus with charity and intergenerational justice? Check out the amazing Parachutes for the Planet project, which is based in Bethesda. See: <https://motherearthproject.org/parachutes/>.

To date, more than 2,600 parachutes have been created and used by young people in 72 countries across 6 continents in their mobilizing efforts for climate justice and a sustainable future. If your parish or school is interested in any of these programs, the Catholic Charities Green Team will be happy to assist you.

OPT

Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM is director of Parish Community Organizing and Advocacy at Catholic Charities of the ADW.

 **Our Parish Times**

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PUBLISHED IN ALTERNATE MONTHS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.

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with Fr. Harry Geib, SJ

SPIRITUALITY AND AGING

Saturday, March 21, 2020
3:00 – 5:00 PM

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Gonzaga High School in DC.
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5 Spiritual Practices of Aging
Well, and more...



Following his talk there will be time for reflection and – for those who wish – 5:00 Mass in the church. Fr. Geib entered the Jesuits after his graduate studies in gerontology at Duke. He has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Thailand, Malaysia, and Uganda. More recently he was the health care coordinator for the Maryland Province Jesuits, and Superior of the Colombiere Jesuit Community.

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Holy Redeemer School Facilitating 21st Century Learning

By Marianne T. Green, Technology Teacher, Holy Redeemer School

Using the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) framework to assess and implement technology within our school is a priority. Students explore a variety of topics from NASA missions to Midwest geography using different technologies to enhance their learning experiences.

Our eighth graders, for example, are in the process of developing podcasts featuring topics ranging from the impact of chemical warfare to summer swimwear. Students began this process with an exploration of this genre and an evaluation of popular podcasts. This group then composed original podcast ideas to pitch for teacher approval. Currently, they are recording and editing these approved podcast pitches. Ultimately, they will evaluate one another's podcasts and vote



Fourth graders finishing their Green Screen video project. Photo by Marianne Green



Eighth graders working with podcast equipment and software. Photo by Marianne Green

for which should be submitted to the NPR Student Podcast contest.

Redefining "Houston, we have a problem," seventh graders composed original NASA mission scripts, designed green screen vid-

eos, and edited these using Chroma key software. Curious about how these videos look? Subscribe to our social media platforms and see them go live!

Coding for both programming

animations and robotics is also part of our technology culture. From the youngest learners working with Ozobots and Bee-Bots to our fifth and sixth graders learning about frames, storyboard designs,

and animation coding, our digital natives are moving beyond computer literacy and into computer proficiency

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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

SHORT

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assess our progress; and recommit to living more holy and complete Christian lives of devotion and service. St Benedict, the founder of modern monasticism and the Benedictines, wrote in his famous sixth century "Monastic Rule" that Lent

should be a time of joy for Christians. Not a concept we often associate with Lent! Benedict's perception of Lent is as a time for Christians to move closer to the joy of Christ's love through prayer and service. Benedict emphasizes the positive objective of Christ's love over the negative of sacrifices. He teaches that the role of sacrifice in Lent is to remove physical and spiritual barriers that keep us from prayer and service which are the joyful fruits of Christian discipleship. Benedict's lesson resonates with me. Lent concludes with Christ's greatest act of love for all humanity. My goal for Lent is to move as close to that love as possible. I pray your journey through Lent will bring you closer to the unlimited joy and love found in the heart of Christ.

Potomac Community Resources (PCR) will hold its annual Patricia Sullivan Benefit Dinner on March 14. PCR is a model of parish kindness in action. This year's event celebrates the twenty-five years of visionary leadership Monsignor John Enzler has provided to PCR. He was pastor of Our Lady of Mercy parish when several parishioners approached him and asked that the parish sponsor a project to connect parishioners together including people of differing intellectual and physical abilities. He not only said yes but rolled up his sleeves and help lead the effort. Today PCR has 250 volunteers kindly sharing their interests and talents in sustained friendships with PCR members. Everyone benefits from the friendships and Mercy parish as a whole is stronger and more unified because of the loving spirit generated from these relationships. PCR will also honor Alice Erickson as outstanding adult volunteer, Grace Stephens, outstanding youth volunteer and Michael C.T. Gardner, outstanding staff member.

The work of PCR is a great transition to our reflection. We've been focusing on kindness this year. In the last two columns we reflected particularly on the unifying and healing effects which activities of kindness can bring to parish life. In December, I wrote of the potential and role of multi-generational activities. I "leaked" the news that the Justice and Advocacy Council was partnering with Catholic Charities to sponsor a major

Spring event to discuss multi-generational projects and promote cultures of intergenerational relationships within Catholic parishes. The partners, including the same Monsignor Enzler who envisioned PCR twenty-five years ago, believe building these relationships may be antidotes to the damaging stress to parish life resulting from recent scandals. The spirit and love generated by multi-generational relations may help unify and heal parish life.

The Montgomery Convocation on Engagement Across Generations will be held on March 21 in the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street in Rockville from 8:15 am to 1pm. The Convocation will convene parish and other Catholic leaders including school and religious education, local high school administrators, social concerns, youth and aging ministers, clergy and Catholic service organizations such as Victory Housing and Catholic Charities to consider ways Catholic communities can collaborate to connect multiple generations in services and friendships sharing their resourcefulness, experience, and compassion to confront important community and parish issues. During the convocation, to which all are welcome examples of multi-generational projects will be presented and discussed including:

- Assisting parishioners to age in place and live more vital and socially active lives.
- Supporting young families
- Encouraging youth through tutoring, career exploration, religious and social activities
- Mentoring for immigrants in language, culture and economics
- Opportunities for those with differing intellectual and physical abilities to more fully participate in community life
- Ministering to the health and spiritual needs of those who are ill

In January we reflected on the importance of local faith communities to the earliest Christians. The local Catholic community was not a center simply for Sunday obligation. These communities were thriving centers which seamlessly integrated the material and spiritual lives of all their members. Love for each other was the principle and kindness the practice. I am inspired by the many talents of parishioners at my parish, St Elizabeth's. Engineers, entrepreneurs, medical, financial and legal experts, musicians, actors,

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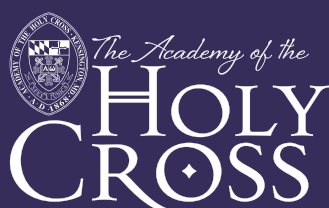


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through multigenerational relationships.

It's a fantastic idea, and one that I invite you to help us explore further.

In our conversation, I learned about what's called the "silver tsunami," the aging population in Montgomery County. It's the fastest growing part of our population, and needs are emerging that were not recognized in the past. Most want to remain in and be a part of their communities, but as more and more people age in place, an increasing number are lonely and almost forgotten about as life seems to pass them by.

At the other end of the spectrum, we have the younger generation that surveys show struggles with finding direction and purpose. Young families face challenges with money, education, childcare, and housing. Many younger people do not have the contact with their grandparents or older neighbors that some of us did growing up. They are missing an intergenerational experience of family and neighborhood.

We all have busy schedules and are active in many things, all of which may be great. It seems we are now at a point where we need to ask ourselves: Are we overlooking two

of our most important populations – our younger and older citizens?

This is a serious issue that needs further discussion and planning. To do that, Catholic Charities and the Justice and Advocacy Council of Montgomery County are holding our first convocation on engagement across generations. It will be held March 21 at the Montgomery County Executive Office Building from 8:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. I invite you and everyone to consider joining us for what should be a very educational and valuable experience.

We will discuss how generations can work together to help one another and build strong communities through:

Enabling parishioners to age in place and live actively

Supporting young families with children

Encouraging youth through tutoring, career exploration, religious connection, and social activities

Mentoring immigrants to succeed as they come to the U.S.

Enabling those with different intellectual and physical abilities to more fully participate in the community

I strongly encourage you to come for this very first meeting. I don't know where it will lead, but I know we can use your help in this wonderful effort to create faith-driven and supportive relationships across generations. It's a great chance to join others in considering how we can do a better job as Catholics and as citizens of Montgomery County to bring generations together for the

good of all.

I would love to see you there and hope you will join us on March 21. You can let us know you're coming by calling 301-476-0186, or you can register online at <https://tinyurl.com/skaleyo>.

This worthwhile effort to bring generations together reminds me of something my father did probably 60 years ago. He was a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at our parish, Our Lady of Lourdes in Bethesda, and as part of that he would visit two or three homebound, elderly women maybe once a month. He did this while raising 13 children, working at a very important job as a writer for the Department of Agriculture, writing spiritual books, and being a spectacular husband and father.

Where did he find the time? I still don't know, but he did. It's a question we all wrestle with.

I can tell you that his visits made an impression on three generations: the elderly women, his own generation, and me as an eight- or ten-year-old boy. I would sometimes go with him, and I recognized even then his goodness, how much joy he brought to these women, but also their sadness and loneliness. You never know what impact your actions might have, but I think it's especially poignant when multiple generations come together.

We are all God's children. We all deserve to be welcomed, loved, and cared for in our own communities. We all have something to offer by working together.

Let's make this happen.

OPT

McGANN

Con't from page 1

we have to convince ourselves that that's actually true. If we change the language we use, and the things we say, we can begin to understand the truth. If we recognize that "people in need" are simply people in need, we are reminded that a lack or surplus of material goods does not determine the quality of one's life. We remember that the love of family and positive relationships with the people around us are what bring joy to our lives.

If we acknowledge that there are people who "live and learn differently" than we do – not better or worse, just differently – we neutralize the judgments implied by labels like "disabled" and "handicapped". If we abandon the idea that we have a right to decide who gets included or excluded from our schools or our lives, we gain a new perspective on what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God.

Our actions communicate our values. Our children watch and they listen. They know what we believe because we show them. If we have spent our whole lives believing that some people are pitiable, and that some are to be avoided, we need to reconsider. It's time to act as if we believe in the inherent dignity of every human being – as if we believe that we are all equal in God's eyes, and shouldn't have to wait till we get to Heaven to be treated that way. Praying and acting "as if" might have to do until we come to understand the "Image and likeness of God" message. In the meantime, our children will be watching, listening and learning.

OPT



Montgomery County Catholic Convocation on Engagement Across Generations

Catholic Charities and the Justice and Advocacy Council of Montgomery County invite parishes and their ministries, Catholic schools, and non-profit agencies to participate, understand, explore and create faith-driven relationships across generations to promote the good of all.

March 21, 2020

8:15AM-9:00AM: Refreshments and Registration

9:00AM-1:00PM: Convocation

Montgomery County
Executive Office Building Auditorium
101 Monroe Street Rockville, Maryland 20850

Generations working together can help with many community goals while building stronger Catholic communities through (but not limited to):

- Enabling parishioners to **age in place** and live **actively**
- **Supporting young families** with children
- **Encouraging youth** through tutoring, career exploration, religious connection, and social activities
- **Mentoring immigrants** to succeed in the U.S.
- Enabling those with differing intellectual and physical abilities to more **fully participate in the community**

Please complete this survey in advance to help inform the Convocation:
<https://tinyurl.com/skaleyo>

Please inform us of any special accommodations you require.

RSVP to leah@empoweringtheages.org
or 301-476-0186 by March 6, 2020

St. Francis Parishioners Delve into Scripture as Part of Word of God Sunday

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

To commemorate Pope Francis' recent proclamation of January 26 as Word of God Sunday, about 10 St. Francis of Assisi parishioners gathered after Mass that Sunday to discuss passages from the Gospels of Matthew and John and discuss their experience of Scripture in their lives today.

Word of God Sunday, which falls on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, encourages Catholics to delve into Scripture and discover its meaning for them, particularly as many Catholics don't have established traditions of reading the Bible. St. Francis of Assisi's Adult Faith Formation Committee seeks to change this at the parish, with both a robust Small Group program and special offerings of Bible study such as the Word of God program. "We are supposed to read the



Parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi Parish pose underneath the Information Monitor, where they watched a video on the Gospels of Matthew and John to celebrate Word of God Sunday on January 26.

Bible," Fr. John told the group of parishioners gathered for Word of

God Sunday. "There's so much we have to learn."

Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony

Bosnick introduced the program, showing a video from *The Gospel of Matthew* by Rev. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv., on the parish's Information Monitor in the Gathering Space. As parishioners watched intently, the video focused on the call of Simon Peter to be the foundation on which the Church was built and Jesus Christ asking Simon Peter if he loved Him.

After the video, parishioners volunteered their observations on the Gospel passages. One parishioner remarked that she had never compared the differences between the synoptic gospels on how Simon Peter became the head of the Church. Another parishioner asked how old John was when he wrote the Gospel and how his experiences differed from the other synoptic gospel authors.

Director of Religious Education

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Sacraments, Fellowship and Some Sleep Bring Teens Closer to Jesus Christ at Retreat

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

As she prepared to take seven teenagers to the Mount 2000 retreat held February 7-9 in Emmitsburg, Md., St. Francis of Assisi Youth Minister Sarah Seyed-Ali hoped the teens would have both a formative experience and

come closer to Jesus Christ. They also caught up on some sleep – but that is all part of God's plan for them, she said.

"They were honest with me and they were honest with themselves," Seyed-Ali said upon their return. "God is merciful, and he meets us where we are."

Between a few naps, the four teenagers from St. Francis of Assisi Parish and three teenagers from St. John Neumann Parish did forge both a tighter bond with one another and with Jesus Christ. An opportunity for teens from across the archdioceses of Washington and Baltimore to immerse themselves in church traditions, Scripture and the sacraments, the retreat offered many ways for the teens to meet their peers, talk about topics relevant to their lives and deepen their faith.

Throughout the weekend, the teens listened to keynote talks and then broke out into small group discussions on various topics. Cienna Edgar, a student at Gaithersburg High School, said she attended a break-out session on friendship and love that she found useful.

"A lot of people talked about old friendships and how to get out of toxic friendships," Edgar said. "[The seminarians] talked about how you have to heal to leave. They made it funny."

The teens also participated in *Lectio Divina*, an ancient prayer technique for reading the Bible slowly and contemplatively; observed a Eucharistic procession culminating in Eucharistic Adoration; and had the opportunity to go to Confession at any time.

Ted Modrick, a student at Wheaton High School, said he appreciated the pairing of a seminarian with each group of teens, because he got to know the seminarian as a person. "I came to see him as a cool guy, rather than just someone who will be ordained," Modrick said.

Modrick also remarked that he found going to Eucharistic Adoration and Confession to be powerful experiences. "I went [to Confession] at the end of the weekend. When I walked out, I felt different – it was nice," he said.

Seyed-Ali said she could see that God was working on the teens during their sleep. She counts it as one of God's many blessings.

OPT



Permanent Deacons Jim Datovech and Will Garcia flank Archbishop of Washington Wilton D. Gregory on February 23, when Archbishop Gregory celebrated Mass for the first time at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Derwood, Md. The parish's Adult Choir and Contemporary Ensemble co-led music during the Mass, which included an honor guard by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus.



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President's Day

It's no lie that these kindergarteners look adorable in their Washington-inspired hats as part of a study of the meaning of Presidents' Day.



These Students Deserve a Reaction!

On January 25, three teams from St. Patrick's School competed in the Chemical Education Foundation's Regional "You Be the Chemist" Challenge. These teams were comprised of 7th and eighth graders who had qualified through their scores on a written exam. The teams collaborated on timed chemistry questions for three hours.

The team of Joe Allston, Caleb Beswick, Vince Calvo, and Alejandro Carr earned third place in the competition! The other teams were comprised of the following students: Maria Farren, Karolina Konieczny, Charlie Myers, Clement Radich, Namika Sekamanya, Sarah Siegle, Seamus Stevick, and Jimmy Troy. We are especially



proud of their hard work. Congratulations to all and many thanks to Mrs. Fecko, junior high science teacher, for coordinating.

OPT

SCRIPTURE

Con't from page 6

Susan Anderson pointed out to the participants that the rules of authorship of the synoptic gospels were not necessarily absolute.

"[The Gospel of John] was attributed to John the apostle, but the Gospel reflected those that came after him," Anderson said. "It

could have been penned by those who knew the apostles well."

Parishioner Patricia Wilson, who took part in the program along with her brother, said the parish's offering of the Word of God program was a valuable way to spend half an hour after Mass.

"We need to hear the Word of God and be edified by the Word of God," she said. "We are many parts, but one body."

OPT

BILL

Con't from page 1

priest at Casey House, the only all-hospice, acute care inpatient medical facility in Montgomery County. After Director of Social Concerns Tony Bosnick suggested that this ministry in accompanying people to a compassionate end could be the basis of witness testimony, Fr. Dillon asked permission from the Archdiocese of Washington and Maryland Catholic Conference to offer testimony based on his experience. Mary Forr, the public policy manager of the archdiocese, put him in touch with Maryland Against Physician Assisted Suicide, the coalition of disability rights groups, healthcare professionals and faith-based communities, opposing the legislation.

On February 28, Fr. Dillon took his seat before the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and delivered a

90-second testimony, limited by the more than 100 people signed up to testify in support and opposition of the bill.

"As I accompany people to the end of their life journeys, I've witnessed that [patients] often feel like they are worthless or a burden," Fr. Dillon testified. "They see the sacrifices their family and friends have made and feel ashamed that, in their condition, they cannot reciprocate. But that is not so. They are precious in God's eyes and to their loved ones, who care for them out of love for them. But these patients need this reassurance and reminder that their lives are valuable and worthy."

Parishioner Marie Yeast, who serves as the parish liaison for the Maryland Catholic Advocacy Network, said, "Fr. John not only exercised his right to freedom of speech but he gave witness, based on his personal experience with the terminally ill and their families, to the belief that all human beings have value, worth and dignity."

OPT



A Trip through Time

By Sarah Siegle and Katie Saponaro

On February 5, the eighth-grade class at St. Patrick's School visited the National Archives, which is located at 700 Pennsylvania Ave NW in Washington, DC. The eighth graders had the experience of learning about the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, some of the many historical documents which are housed in The Archives.

The eighth-grade class saw the original copies of these significant documents as well as the Magna Carta, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Articles of Confederation. Through a new interactive educational program, the students analyzed the three founding documents that led the United States to freedom and discussed how

these documents were a foundation of our government.

The eighth-grade class also toured the museum to see historical patents for inventions and play interactive games.

OPT

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Gaithersburg Bridge Remembers St. Martin's Founding Pastor

By Carolyn Silvey

Father John Stanislaus Cuddy was the founding priest of St. Martin of Tours parish in Gaithersburg. He celebrated the first mass on the parish property on December 12, 1920. The first church was made up of 3 surplus army mess halls, which Fr. Cuddy, a former Army chaplain, had transferred to Gaithersburg from Camp Meigs in northeast Washington, D.C. Fr. Cuddy became our first resident pastor when he was transferred to Gaithersburg from St. Mary's in Barnesville in 1921 and began boarding in the Schwartz house, now the Gaithersburg City Hall. In the following years, he built the school and the convent for the teaching Sisters. He organized a Knights of Columbus chapter, and was well-known in the community for producing theatrical programs complete with lighting and sound effects.

Tragically, Fr. Cuddy was killed on Dec. 7, 1928 at the ground-level railroad crossing in Gaithersburg.



The Fr. John Stanislaus Cuddy Memorial Bridge located along Maryland Route 355 in Gaithersburg commemorates the founding pastor of St. Martin's Parish. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School

The crossing had no gates, only a watchman to guard it. Despite efforts by the guard to stop Fr. Cuddy's car, it drove onto the tracks, was struck by an approaching work train and dragged some distance. Witnesses to the accident tried to unsuccessfully to save the

priest.

The tragedy made headlines in the Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, and Montgomery County papers. A dramatic photo in the Post shows the total wreckage of the car. An inquest determined that there was no fault and Fr. Cuddy's death

was "an unavoidable accident."

The priest was well-loved by both his parishioners and the Gaithersburg community for his "genial good nature". One person said Fr. Cuddy was "imbued with the spirit of brotherly love" and never asked about a person's religion before choosing to help someone in need. His funeral at St. Martin's was celebrated by Baltimore auxiliary bishop John McNamara and included 8 priests as honorary pallbearers and 8 members of the Knights of Columbus as active pallbearers.

The grade crossing where Fr. Cuddy was killed was often described as one of the most dangerous railroad crossings in the state. The community demanded changes, and the Gaithersburg Chamber of Commerce petitioned the Maryland State Roads Commission, who agreed to eliminate the crossing. A two-lane bridge over the tracks was completed in December 1930, 2 years after Fr. Cuddy's death.

As Gaithersburg grew, the small

bridge could not handle the increasing traffic on Rt. 355, and the state upgraded the overpass to a 4-lane bridge with access ramps from West Diamond Avenue. The new bridge was officially opened on December 7, 1987, 59 years to the day from Fr. Cuddy's death. Governor William Donald Schaefer, Gaithersburg Mayor Ed Bohrer, and Archbishop James Hickey all participated in the dedication ceremony, along with children from St. Martin's school.

The new bridge was dedicated to Fr. Cuddy. According the Gazette article describing the event, Mayor Bohrer said, "By dedicating the bridge in his honor, we give it a sense of the religious and cultural history of the time."

So, every time you easily cross over the railroad tracks using that big bridge in Gaithersburg, regardless of whether one of the dozens of daily commuter or freight trains is passing below you, think of Fr. Cuddy and how his death brought a bridge and safety to Gaithersburg 90 years ago.

OPT

Impactful Visit to the Holocaust Museum

By Rita Antonetti, Eighth Grader

When I went to the Holocaust Memorial Museum recently with my 8th grade class, it hurt to learn about how corrupt our society used to be. This event was a very cruel part of our history and I wish that it had never happened. I saw what the people who were liberated looked like and read stories from many of their diary entries. They were very skinny, and

you could see almost every one of their bones. The Nazi were very cruel and none of what they did was right. Hundreds of Jews were packed in one rail car and thousands in one train. Many of the Jewish people were tested on and used for medical experiments.

After being tested on they were let go but many of them had sustained permanent damage. Some of them couldn't walk properly and some couldn't write very well

either. Most of them didn't make it. The ones who did make it sustained a different kind of damage. They had many emotional scars but despite this, they kept going. None of them ever gave up hope and they always believed that their situation was going to get better. One family that believed this was Anne Frank's.

Anne Frank lived in a small attic with seven other people, where they had very little food. They were trying their best to stay hidden

and alive. One day they were all taken to camps and Otto Frank, Anne Frank's dad, was the only one to survive the terror. We all hope something like this will never happen again and everybody is so glad that it is over. It was an impactful experience for our eighth grade to visit the museum, especially after we learned about it in class.

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Lion Cubs from Pack 926. St. Martin's Parish has chartered this Cub Scout Pack for more than 40 years. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School



SHORT

Con't from page 4

social workers, teachers, chefs some early in their careers others later or retired. Through kindness and love and working closely together, there is no limit to the good that can be accomplished. Imagine a group of older adults learning technology from a millennial. Imagine a

group of young mothers exploring children's nutritional needs with a retired certified dietitian. Imagine career exploration clubs for disabled adults and teens with a business leader, or a parish crisis center advising parishioners facing various types of crises. All of these and many more good works are possible if Catholic parishes adopt the role of homes for Christian prayer, love and service.

It takes a village to raise a child

and it requires Christian communities to build the City of God. Active parish communities are the pulsating hearts of our Catholic faith. Christ's love radiates into the world through intentional acts of kindness emanating from parishes. To find the joy of Christ's love, practice kindness.

Kindness Today,
Chuck Short
cshort5@verizon.net



Middle school students study the scientific principles of surface tension, interference of color, and light optics in science class by making diagonal bubbles through geometric figures. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School

40 DAYS FOR LIFE
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Mardi Gras Colors Mark the Annual Time and Talent Fair



Lots of discussion and fellowship occurred around the exhibit tables set-up in Caulfield Hall for the St. Jane de Chantal Time and Talent Fair.

By Eve Marie Szczepansk

Purple, green and gold balloons floated in Caulfield Hall at St. Jane de Chantal Church where the Parish's annual Time and Talent Fair took place just days before Ash Wednesday. Two-dozen active ministries showcased their mission and spotlighted volunteers in an effort to attract volunteers to discern their vocation, be it religious, music, evangelization, social justice or the environment. Parishioners snacked, chatted and explored colorful displays with eager representatives standing by ready to describe the turning point

Continued on page 13

DAR Honors St. Jane de Chantal Student Essay Winners

By Mary Russell

Two St. Jane de Chantal School students, Caitlin Brown and Luke Matelis, were honored by the Goshen Mills Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution at their February meeting. Caitlin is the Chapter's eighth-grade winner of its American History Essay Contest, and Luke is the seventh-grade winner. Accompanied by family members and the school's seventh and eighth-grade English teacher, Colleen Kish, the students read their winning essays to the assembled Chapter members and were presented with certificates, bronze medals, and

Barnes and Noble gift cards.

In a surprise announcement, the Chapter's American History Chairman, Karma Beal, reported that a panel of independent judges has named Caitlin as Maryland's eighth-grade winner and Luke as the seventh-grade winner in the state-wide essay contest. They will be honored at an awards luncheon in March during the Maryland State DAR's annual conference. Their essays will now be judged along with entries by other seventh and eighth-grade students from the mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia.

The DAR sponsors the annu-

Continued on page 31

Safety and Security a Top Priority at St. Jane de Chantal

By Skip Mahon

St. Jane's Committee on Safety and Security hosted a 90-minute training session in January for the Parish's "Immediate Responders (IR)". The IR consists of the Parish Clergy, Ushers, Liturgical and Music Ministers, and Parishioners with expertise in Medicine, Law Enforcement, Fire/Rescue/Emergency Services, Military, and other related fields. The training focused on integrating this diverse group of experts to work together in responding to different emergency situations that could possibly arise during Mass. Approximately forty IR members participated in the training



Skip Mahon presents to the St. Jane de Chantal Immediate Responders at a Safety and Security Training event that occurred in January. (Photo courtesy of Carol Ramirez)

session. Pastor Fr. Giese and Mr. Skip Mahon led the presentation and discussions. Additional training on safety and security is being planned for the Spring and will be open to all Parishioners.

OPT

St. Jane de Chantal Environmental Committee Reaches Out to Congress Regarding Drug Disposal Practices

By Steve Boehm with portions adapted from Congressman Raskin's letter

Recently, Steve Boehm of St. Jane's Environmental Committee wrote to Congressman Raskin to ask whether the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) could assist in disposing of the expired prescription drugs in an environmentally respon-

sible way. These expired drugs are collected during the Drug Take-back Day.

As a longtime advocate for creative solutions to our country's opioid and prescription drug crisis, Congressman Raskin was thrilled to hear from the St. Jane community and wrote back to the committee. To address their

Continued on page 13

St. Jane de Chantal's "March for Life" was a Closer to Home Event

January 22nd marked the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion in all 50 states. While many parishioners of the St. Jane de Chantal Parish participated along with the tens of thousands of pro-lifers at the main event on January 24, 2020, for the National March for Life held in Washington, DC, some others from the parish decided to march and say prayers closer to home. On this day parishioners congregated at the sidewalk outside of the late-term abortion clinic located in their neighborhood at the Wildwood Medical Center in Bethesda. The group gathered for prayers, readings and songs led by Pastor Fr. Samuel Giese, with the civil right to life of the unborn being at the heart of their prayer vigil. Afterwards, the St. Jane de Chantal Church hosted around 100 high school boys from South Bend, Indiana, for an overnight stay in the gym at St. Jane de Chantal School. These boys were visiting and attending events in the Nation's Capital for the March for Life.



Pastor Fr. Giese led parishioners from St. Jane de Chantal Church in prayers and songs outside the late abortion clinic located in Bethesda in observance of the March for Life. Photo by Carol Ramirez

St. Jane de Chantal Parish


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Holy Cross and Kindness Go Hand in Hand

At the conclusion of afternoon announcements every day, students at Holy Cross hear this reminder given by our principal, Mrs. Kane: "When you can be anything in this world, always be kind." A chorus of voices in every classroom always join in as Mrs. Kane delivers the last three words: Always be kind.

A Kindness Tree outside the school office is a visual display of the kindnesses shown throughout each day. At the beginning of the school year, the tree was adorned with autumn-colored leaves; these were replaced by red and pink hearts as we neared Valentine's Day. Each recognizes a kindness extended by a student, teacher, or parent. "Isabel helped me carry a poster," one reads. Two others say, "Cobie helped Daniella zip her coat." and "Charlie makes me laugh



Holy Cross students pose in front of the Kindness Tree which decorates a wall near the office.

and smile every day."

Visitors to the school often stop to acknowledge our Kindness Tree. "We want our students to recognize that kindness is something that happens every day, with every decision and action we take. The Kindness Tree helps us remember that our faith calls us to show God's love in the world."

OPT

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More Holy Cross News on Page 17

Holy Cross Students Help Eliana's Light Shine

Students in Pre-K 4, Kindergarten, and First Grades participated in the annual Valentine's Day Cards and Cookies initiative sponsored by Eliana's Light, a non-profit organization that supports families with children who have complex medical conditions. Their goal is to support each family's whole health and well-being throughout the year.

At Valentine's day, volunteers make cards for children who are staying at various Washington, DC area hospitals. Cookies, designated for the caregivers due to the children's specific dietary needs,

Continued on page 19



Holy Cross students proudly show off the Valentine's Day cards they created for the Eliana's Light organization.

Holy Cross Kindness and Koala Bears!

Kindness was in Julietta Ewers' heart when she put her plan into action: to help the Australian wildlife affected by the recent wildfires there. One Saturday morning, she was watching a favorite show on Nickelodeon when information was shared about how people could help. Julietta wanted to help and came with a clever idea. She wanted to have a dress down day at school with an animal print clothing theme. A phone call from Julietta's mom to principal, Mrs. Kane, set it all in motion.

Donations were generous! The effort raised over \$625 for World Wildlife Fund Australia, a chapter of the international wildlife conservation organization. Afterwards, Julietta composed a beautiful letter to accompany the donation and



Julietta Ewers poses with several school mates, Principal, Mrs. Kane, and our fifth-grade teacher, Miss Striegel on the animal print-themed dress down day fundraiser for Australian wildlife.

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explaining her fundraising idea. In it, Julietta explains that her favorite animal is the Koala, and how appreciative she is that the organization is raising money to help Australia's animals.

Julietta's kindness stretched across the globe. We are very proud of her for showing us what one person can do when they have a kind heart, a wonderful idea, and a plan!

OPT

Holy Cross Alumna Spotlight

Maddie Zalewski graduated from Holy Cross School in 2016 and is in her senior year at St. John's College High School. She is poised to move forward to the next chapter of her life and recently committed to attend the University of Maryland. As excited about her future as Maddie is, she stays connected to her past through her frequent volunteer work at Holy Cross, where she was a student from Kindergarten

Continued on page 19



Principal Frank English and Assistant Principal Christine Davison with students Hanye Udejlofor and Keira Nilsen

Saving the School

America Magazine recently had an article entitled: The era of the parochial school is over. Meet the Catholic educators searching for what's next. Members of the St. Bart's community this past October were faced with a real-life situation quite similar to that in the article's headline. With mounting yearly deficits and declining enrollment, the school faced closure at the conclusion of the school year in June. For many, the idea of not having a school attached to the parish meant an essential element of parish life would be lost.

After several years of consultation with the Archdiocese of Washington Catholic

Schools Office, Fr. Mark Knestout, pastor of St. Bartholomew, met with the community and tasked the people of his parish and school to come up with ways to save the school from its potential closure. Very high benchmarks for the school's continued viability were set by the pastor which included raising at least \$750,000, a high retention percentage of existing students, and an increase in overall enrollment of the school to the breakeven point of expenses and tuition.

St. Bart's school and parish community made up of parents, teachers, and concerned

Continued on page 19



Rev. Timothy Daniel former parochial vicar St. Bartholomew moves on

There's a lot to say about my move from St. Bart's to Nativity. First, the move was a surprise, as I expected to be moved in July. But that is how God works sometimes! We always have to remain abandoned to Him, ready to respond: "The Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Mt 8:20).

Secondly, however, I was of course sad to have to say goodbye to so many so quickly, especially the groups I had led or begun myself. My Spanish

Bible Study, for example, had grown to 20 consistent members, sharing prayer, food, and discussion each week for over three years. It has been one of the greatest joys of my priesthood so far, as it has shown me how God's word is truly "effective" (Heb 4:12) when we are "good soil" (Mt 13:23), humbly receptive and ready to put into action whatever the Lord asks. I will greatly miss them and many other groups and individuals at St. Bart's.

At the same time, I and many others were excited for the new assignment. The same Spanish Bible Study as well as others (the school, Women's Bible Study, 6pm Spanish Mass community) threw some very touching send-off parties, celebrating the fact that I was going to be of greater service in the Archdiocese. My new assignment, Nativity Catholic Church on 13th and Peabody, NW,



Rev. Timothy Daniel

will indeed have many opportunities for such service, as it brings with it increased pastoral responsibilities for me as well as a greater diversity of parishioners (African American, Central American, and Filipino members). I will have much to learn and hope to build on what I was blessed to learn at St. Bart's.

In any case, my mission remains fundamentally the same now and in the future: to bring people to Christ. As Pope

Emeritus Benedict XVI said, "The faithful expect only one thing from priests: that they be specialists in promoting the encounter

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St. Elizabeth School

Celebrating our St. Elizabeth's Spirit!

The months of January and February have been filled with so many moments of student and school pride. Catholic Schools Week was such a wonderful celebration of who we are as a community. As we incorporated our school year theme – Kindness Creates Community – into our

week-long celebration of Catholic education, parents, students, and faculty were able to reflect on what makes our school truly exceptional. From shared “buddy” moments between our middle school students and lower grade students to the playful competition and comradery felt in the gymnasium as the school

cheered on our 8th graders and teachers during their annual volleyball game, Catholic Schools Week reminded us of the love and pride we have for our school.

In February, that pride continued as our Robotics teams successfully competed at local competitions, we recognized our stellar Varsity

basketball teams at the CYO Pep Rally, and our grade school students cheered on our middle school Geography Bee contestants as we crowned our school winner, Liam Reed. We ended the month with a brand-new publication of *The Saints Express*, an online student newspaper, and a visit from

Rockville Mayor Bridget Newton to our fourth graders.

Each day brings something new here at St. E's, and we can't wait to see what our students do next. Go, Saints!

OPT



Above, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others who worked for equal rights for all, 4MM celebrates our diversity at St. E's!

At right, our students put our Kindness Creates Community theme into words



Above, congratulations to all of our Middle School Geo Bee contestants

Below, the seventh-grade Rookie All Stars robotic team. We are so proud of all our teams who competed this month.

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Above, Mrs. Penny and our fourth graders welcomed Rockville Mayor Bridget Newton

At left, A picture perfect CSW morning at carpool!



Above, the Saint E's express podcast in action.

At right, Go, Saints! Having fun at the CYO Pep Rally!



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Capital Campaign

by John McKeon

Christ the King Parish has launched a two-year Capital Campaign to raise funds to replace the church's nearly 60-year-old heating and air conditioning system.

Parochial Administrator Father Steve Carter held a meeting at CTK on January 31 to brief parishioners on the project. He noted that the

HVAC system was installed when the church was built in 1961 and has been deteriorating for several years. The new system will not only be more efficient and reliable but is expected to reduce monthly utility costs significantly for years to come.

In addition to the new equipment, electrical, ducting and other systems must be upgraded to meet current building codes and accom-

modate the new HVAC.

Through the Capital Campaign, the parish is seeking donor pledges of \$1,000 over two years. A monthly special offertory collection is being added, and all funds are being kept apart from the regular operating budget of the parish. The January meeting also discussed a wide range of possible fund-raising activities to be undertaken over the coming two years. **OPT**

TALENT FAIR

Con't from page 9

in their lives that attracted them to a particular ministry.

Many volunteers signed-up for many of the Parish's long-standing social justice pillars, such as for S.O.M.E. – So Others May Eat. This social justice ministry has

been feeding the less fortunate for close to four decades. The Gabriel Project offering support to pregnant woman who chose life also attracted many volunteers. The Pro-life Committee recognized the church's teaching about the dignity of life by encouraging participants to protest the legalization of euthanasia. Their table was filled with information about upcoming efforts to close the

late abortion clinic within walking distance of the Parish. Pastor Samuel C. Giese and Rev. Chip Luckett were on hand to thank everyone for their generous contributions and invited them to pray for religious vocations, especially for Marco Cerritelli, a first-year seminarian from St. Jane de Chantal Parish studying at the Saint John Paul II Seminary. **OPT**

PRACTICES

Con't from page 9

question, he relayed several recommendations that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has for the disposal of expired or unwanted pharmaceuticals. After a drug take back event, the EPA recommends that the pharmaceuticals are incinerated in a hazardous waste com-

bustor. Hazardous waste combustors are a special type of incinerator that breakdown hazardous materials in a manner that limits toxic and harmful chemical emissions from the incineration. The EPA also regulates the levels of toxic emissions these combustors may emit. For more information on safe disposal of pharmaceuticals, please look at the set of guidelines he provided in the following website managed

by the EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/hwgenerators/collecting-and-disposing-unwanted-medicines>

Congressman Raskin thanked the St. Jane de Chantal Environmental Committee for their question and expressed his deep appreciation to the committee's efforts to better the community through ecologically responsible drug disposal. **OPT**

Lenten Reflection Groups – Join Us!

by Suzanne Sigüenza, CTK parishioner

All are welcome to come, share, and deepen your Lenten Season with weekly reflections using as a guidebook "Living Your Baptism in Lent" by Dennis Strach, CSC.

Groups meet at parishioners' homes (very nearby) or at CTK:

- Tuesdays at 3pm, for about 90 minutes: led by Chris Tan/Marie McKeon. Contact Chris Tan at annop.tantisunthorn@gmail.com. This group will be following a guide called Living Your Baptism in Lent.

- Thursdays at 10am: contact Liz Weiss at liz_weiss@hotmail.com. This group will use The Little Black Book, plus other scriptural works.

- Evening/Weekend: Time/Day TBD depending on interest, at Christ the King or home. Contact Suzanne Sigüenza at suzanne@siriusarts.net **OPT**

IMMIGRATION

Con't from page 2

are in some parishes. Handouts included the following topics: Immigrant and Refugee Knowledge sheet, Immigration Updates, Catholic Charities Quick Resource Guide Montgomery County, and Immigration Legal Services and Office Locations, and fact sheets about the Census and why it matters. Fr. Fr. Jacek mentioned how important it is for funding for communities. There is information from the Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition on how churches can support the census as a tool for dignity, justice and equity.

This forum was a wonderful opportunity to learn about the ser-

vices Catholic Charities provides for immigrants and how parishes can become more active. **OPT**

Christ the King

2301 Colston Drive
Silver Spring, MD
301-495-2306

Fr. Stephen Carter, OFM, Cap.,
Parochial Administrator

Katie Holland,
OPT Editor

kh7@georgetown.edu

More Christ the King
News on Page 2



ST. JOHN'S

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Artist Hour

Mrs. Kelly Sweet, Kindergarten teacher, shares a story with students at the conclusion of the Artists' Hour, where preschool students with their siblings and parents enjoyed a morning of arts, crafts, stories and snacks.



Mark and Mo Stiles pose with Msgr. Amey and Principal Debby Eisel (far right) as they are honored as School Family of the Year at St. Mary's Annual Auction & Awards Gala on February 22. The evening's other honorees included Rose Dunn (Parishioner of the Year), Brock Roughton (CCD Volunteer of the Year) and Darian Garcia (Alumnus of the Year).

St. Mary's Parish
520 Veirs Mill Road Rockville, MD
Msgr. Robert Amey, Pastor
301-424-5550
St. Mary's School
Mrs. Debby Eisel, Principal
301-762-4179
Mrs. Debby Eisel, Parish Editor
301-762-4179

Multicultural Day 2020

St. Mary's School celebrates a diverse school and parish population with our annual Multicultural Festival. Families come together to share their family traditions, their cultural dress, and their delicious food with all of our parish and school. With over 20 countries represented, our youngest parishioners participate in a parade of nations and perform songs and dances from their ancestral lands. St. Mary's Multicultural Festival shows us that our differences enrich us all.

OPT



Brian and Anne Fullerton in festive attire are ready for a great night out, all to support their kids' school.

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Kevin Daly and Jacques Payen look quite dapper under balloons of the traditional colors of Mardi Gras, the theme of this year's Gala.

St. Mary's celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday by reading his books and dressing as his characters on March 2, 2020! During the month of February, all St. Mary's students participated in a month-long reading challenge. Because our students read over 41,000 minutes in the month of February, Mrs. Eisel, principal of St. Mary's School, ate Green Eggs and Ham on the roof of the school courtesy of Ms. McLaughlin, our school guidance counselor.





Madeline Dodge, Seventh and Eighth-Grade Language Arts Teacher (far right) and Kelly Tanzi, Fifth-Grade Language Arts & Social Studies Teacher (right) with Spelling Bee Finalists (left to right) Luka Radovic (7), Sean Kenny (8), Gabriela Pabon (7), and Josie O'Connor (5).

Scripps National Spelling Bee Eighth-Grader Sean Kenny Advances to State Competition

Twelve amazing Woods Academy spellers entered the competition on February 24. The four finalists were Josie O'Connor (5), Luka Radovic (7), Gabriela Pabon (7) and 1st Place Finalist Sean Kenny (8). Sean will represent The Woods Academy at the State Level Competition on March 7 at Bullis School!

OPT

2020 National Geographic GeoBee

Seventh-Grader Michael Rock Advances to State Geo Bee

Students from The Woods Academy participated in the school-level competition of the National Geographic GeoBee on February 3. Michael Rock a seventh-grade student, won first place, with Henry Farrell, a sixth-grade student, winning second place and Areg Louis Devoyans, a sixth-grade student, finishing in third place.

The school-level competition is the first round in the annual National Geographic GeoBee, a geography competition designed to inspire and reward students' curiosity about the world.

Questions cover not only geography but also cultures, physical features, history, and earth science.

The National Geographic Society developed the GeoBee in 1989 in response to concern about the lack of geographic knowledge among young people in the United States. Over more than three decades, 120 million students have learned about

the world through participation in the GeoBee.

School champions, including Michael Rock, will take an online qualifying test; up to 100 of the top test scorers in each state then become eligible to compete in their State GeoBee. The winners of the State GeoBees receive and an all-expenses-paid trip to National



School Geo Bee Winner Michael Rock (7) with event organizer and Fifth and Sixth-Grade Language Arts Teacher Kelly Tanzi

Geographic Society headquarters in Washington, DC, next May to participate in the GeoBee national championship, competing for cash prizes, scholarships and all-expenses-paid Lindblad expedition to the Galapagos Islands aboard the National Geographic Endeavour II. Learn more at www.natgeobee.org.

In addition to the GeoBee, National Geographic also offers classroom resources, student experiences and professional development opportunities for educators.

OPT

Save the Date!

Former Faculty Tea

Friday, April 17, 10:00 AM
The Woods Academy Library
All former faculty and staff members of The Woods are invited back to campus.

Class of 2016 Prayers & Pizza

Sunday, May 3, 4:30 PM
The Woods Academy Chapel

Families from The Woods Class of 2016 are invited to join us for Mass celebrated by Fr. Ray Kemp and a casual pizza dinner.

16th Annual Art Celebration

Thursday, May 14 & Friday, May 15
Featuring Frozen Jr. performed by Grades 7 and 8
Visit www.woodsacademy.org/artscel for details and to purchase tickets.

OPT

The Woods Academy

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

Head of School
Joseph E. Powers

OPT Editor
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Bishops speak out in support of Louisiana law requiring abortion doctors to have hospital admitting privileges

On March 4, the Supreme Court of the United States heard oral argument in an abortion case out of Louisiana, *June Medical Services v. Russo*. The case challenges a Louisiana law that requires abortion doctors to have hospital admitting privileges. Kat Talalas with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities issued the following statement:

"Women, their bodies, and their babies are immeasurably valuable. The violent act of abortion not only destroys the lives of unborn children, but often severely harms women's physical, psychological, and spiritual health. Louisiana is right to prioritize women over abortion industry profits. All states, not only Louisiana, have a strong interest in regulating a procedure which is lethal to children and immensely damaging to women. It adds insult to injury, and speaks to the callousness of the abortion industry, that providers are seeking to overturn basic, standard protections for



CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn

women seeking this life-altering procedure. The Catholic Church encourages all people of faith to pray about the outcome to this very important case. We also ask all to pray for the women who are compelled to seek abortion: that they may find alternatives that value their health and well-being, and the lives of their precious children."

The USCCB filed a joint amicus curie brief in the case along with the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Association of Evangelicals urging the Supreme Court to uphold the law.

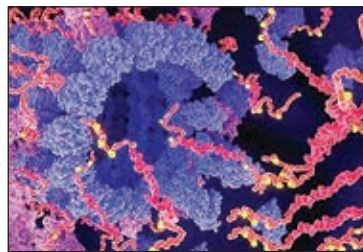
OPT

Blood test method may predict Alzheimer's protein deposits in brain

NIH-funded study reports advance in blood-based detection of a biomarker of Alzheimer's disease

Researchers report an advance in the development of a blood test that could help detect pathological Alzheimer's disease in people who are showing signs of dementia. This approach could be less invasive and less costly than current brain imaging and spinal fluid tests. The blood test detects the abnormal accumulation of a form of tau protein known as phosphorylated-tau-181 (ptau181), which is a biomarker that suggests brain changes from Alzheimer's. The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, was published on March 2 in *Nature Medicine*.

Phosphorylation of tau proteins leads to disintegration of microtubuli in a neuron axon. Over the past 15 years, research advances in the development of biomarkers like tau protein have enabled investigators to more accurately diagnose Alzheimer's disease, select research participants, and measure response to investigational therapies. Tau and other biomarkers can be detected with PET scans of the brain and lab tests of spinal fluid. However, PET imaging is expensive and involves radioactive agents, and spinal fluid tests require spinal taps, which are invasive, complex and



time-consuming. Simpler biomarker tests are still needed.

"The considerable time and resources required for screening research participants with PET scans and spinal taps slow the pace of enrollment for Alzheimer's disease treatment studies," said Richard J. Hodes, M.D., director of NIH's National Institute on Aging (NIA), which funded much of the study. "The development of a blood test would enable us to rapidly screen a much larger and more diverse group of volunteers who wish to enroll in studies."

An international team of researchers used the new test to measure the concentration of ptau181 in plasma, which is the liquid part of blood that carries blood cells. The samples were collected from more than 400 participants from the University of California, San Francisco Memory and Aging Center; the Advancing

Research and Treatment for Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration (ARTFL) consortium; and a research study sponsored by Eli Lilly.

Their analysis demonstrated that the ptau181 in plasma could differentiate healthy participants from those with Alzheimer's pathology, and differentiate those with Alzheimer's pathology from a group of rare neurodegenerative diseases known collectively as frontotemporal lobar degeneration (FTLD).

"It has become clear that there are many possible biological pathways to dementia," said Roderick Corriveau, Ph.D., program director at NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), which also supported the study. "Finding a blood test that specifically identifies the presence of Alzheimer's pathology in the brain should greatly help researchers develop better treatments for the many who suffer from dementia."

In the future, improved biomarkers like ptau181 may help not just researchers but also physicians to detect and diagnose Alzheimer's and related neurodegenerative disorders earlier, when interventions are more likely to be effective.

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Maryland Senior Olympics 2020 Schedule

The Maryland Senior Olympics 2020 schedule of events is now available at <http://mdseniorolympics.org/2020-schedule>.

Montgomery County venues will host a variety of events:

- Badminton at Bauer Drive Community Center in Rockville on 8/29
- Golf at Laytonville Golf Course on 9/14
- Lawn Bowling at Leisure World on 8/1
- Road Race 5K at Kentlands and Lakelands in Gaithersburg on 9/5

- Shuffleboard at Leisure World on 6/27
 - Softball at Olney Manor Regional Park on 9/12 & 13
 - Swimming at Germantown Indoor Swim Center on 9/12
 - Table Tennis at Potomac Community Recreation Center on 7/25
 - Tennis at Olney Manor Regional Park on 8/28, 29, & 30
- Online registration opens at the beginning of April.

OPT

St. Bartholomew

Bobcat Buddies Discover Joy and Leadership through Peer Mentoring

The Bobcat Buddies peer mentoring program was introduced to St. Bartholomew School this year under the guidance of Resource Specialist and Potomac Community Resources Board Member, Amanda Herndon. Eighth grade students are tasked with planning and executing fun and creative one-hour lessons twice per week for students in the St. Bart's inclusion program. Lessons may include recreational sports, arts and crafts, as well as relevant social skills.

The Bobcat Buddies program has a profound impact on the mentors as well as their buddies. The eighth-grade students develop a deeper sense of compassion, sensitivity, and understanding toward their peers with developmental differences. Their buddies have an opportunity to make



Eighth-grade peer mentors Cary A. and Will T. with buddies Logan C. and Karlena S.

new friends who are also amazing role models. These friendships grow and continue to blossom throughout the school year. The lessons that all the children learn from participating in this meaningful program are lessons that they will carry forever. "The real gift is seeing the eighth graders take responsibility and ownership of their lessons. They are true leaders in our school, and I hope this experience ignites a desire to use their God given gifts to cultivate new friendships and to help others" said Amanda Herndon.

The Bobcat Buddies challenge you to Rock Your Socks on March 20th & 21st for World Down Syndrome Day! Wear your colorful, mismatched, or unique socks to show the joy and diversity of our world! #stbartshasheart

OPT

Holy Cross

Catholic Schools' Week at Holy Cross School

By Brady Heafitz, Director of Communications, Student Council Executive Board

During Catholic School's Week, from January 26 to 31, students at Holy Cross showed their school spirit, as well as their appreciation for their community. Planned by the Student Council officers, the week was packed with fun activities for the students and teachers.

On Wednesday, students took a break from celebrating, and did our part for the homeless by contributing to the Cup of Joe service project. Students in grades three through eight became an assembly line, assembling meals for those less fortunate consisting of pop tarts, Oreos, apple juices, and peach cups. The effort was led by the teachers and student council officers who made sure everything was running smoothly. "It gives us the opportunity to give back," says Student Council president Franco Amodeo.

The Student Council also had a fun day in



Eighth Grade students prepare for the Cup of Joe event by unloading storage containers and organizing the food items.



Everyone had fun on Throwback Thursday during Catholic Schools' Week when students dressed in classic styles of different decades. It was groovy!

store for the students on Friday, or Pajama Day. Students could be seen getting out of their cars at morning drop off in all kinds of pajamas. After two periods of classroom instruction, everyone headed down to Lewis Hall, our multipurpose room, which had been converted into a movie theater. Students were delighted to find popcorn piled high in the back of the room waiting to be distributed. Students enjoyed watching the Disney classic, Ratatouille, laughing at some parts, tearing up in others, and having a great time taking a break from the regular schedule. "It was fun" says vice-president Kayla Augustin. The students were released from school at noon with smiles on their faces, eager to get home, wishing every Friday at school was like this one.

Taken as a whole, the students of Holy Cross enjoyed showing their school spirit, with a little charity work on the side, altogether making for a perfect Catholic Schools Week!

OPT

St. Raphael Parish invites you to an Afternoon of Recollection with Fr. Harry Geib, SJ

SPIRITUALITY AND AGING

Saturday, March 21, 2020
3:00 – 5:00 PM

Fr. Harry Geib is the new rector of the Jesuit Community at Gonzaga High School in DC. He will speak about **6 Spiritual Tasks of Aging, 5 Spiritual Practices of Aging Well, and more...**



Following his talk there will be time for reflection and – for those who wish – 5:00 Mass in the church. Fr. Geib entered the Jesuits after his graduate studies in gerontology at Duke. He has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Thailand, Malaysia, and Uganda. More recently he was the health care coordinator for the Maryland Province Jesuits, and Superior of the Colombiere Jesuit Community.

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A LEISURE CARE COMMUNITY



Resurrection's Women's Ministry Celebrates First Year

In the fall of 2018, Resurrection parishioners, Kelly Maltagliati, Lisa Peacock, and Sabine Paul met at the Panera in Silver Spring. The goal of that meeting was how to engage all women of Resurrection to come together for spiritual enrichment, service opportunities, and fellowship. Thus, the Resurrection Women's Ministry (RWM) was created. The very first event was January 12, 2019 with a kick-off Mass and potluck. At the potluck, the women got to know each other and spoke about what spiritual, service, and fellowship activities they would like.

For the first event, there were sixty Resurrection women in attendance. In the first year, there were pilgrimages to St. Anthony's in Ellicott City, St. Mary's City, and St. Clement's Island. The RWM also volunteered at the Resurrection Homeless Shelter, assisted with the funeral reception for a fellow

parishioner, supported a fundraising bake sale for Resurrection Youth going to Steubenville, and represented Resurrection at Burtonsville Day. Mary Lenaberg came to the Resurrection and visited with the RWM for a discussion and book signing. At the Lenaberg event, the RWM raised and donated money to Gabriel Project and ARC of Montgomery County. In November, Paulist Seminarian Chris Lawton gave a pre-Advent program on how to make the most out of Advent. At the event, attendees said the Rosary together and followed it with fellowship.

This past January, the Resurrection Women's Ministry celebrated their first anniversary by attending Mass together with a pot-luck dinner following in the St. Helen Youth Center. Kelly, Lisa, and Sabine have worked to engage members of the RWM to take leadership roles in formatting programs and have encouraged all Resurrection women to become involved with the ministry. The next event is Saturday, April 4 in the St. Helen Youth Center where Father Barry will give a mini-retreat, *The Ten Commandments: A 2020 Look*. Congratulations to Resurrection Women's Ministry on your achievements in the first year and we look forward to all of years to come!

OPT



Father Virginius Osuagwu talks to the Confirmation candidates and their sponsors.

You Have Been Chosen!

Resurrection Parish 2020 Confirmation Candidates think their sponsor is significant to him or her. They see their sponsor as a follower of Christ! Candidates begin choosing their sponsor with much prayer. The word "sponsor" comes from the Latin word *spondere*, which means to "give assurance, promise solemnly". By definition "sponsor" means one who presents a candidate for baptism or confirmation and undertakes responsibility for the person's religious education or spiritual welfare. They choose a person who they admire, respect and who actively lives out the beliefs of their Catholic faith. Their chosen sponsor is someone they trust and feel comfortable turning to for help, advice and guidance, especially in regard to his or her spiritual life. This journey is a journey together. Faith sharing is a mutual exchange. Together is a key. Sponsors for Confirmation represent the Christian community reaching out to lead members into the Family of God. They also serve as a mentor to the candidate.

Helene Stever, DRE, said, "In preparation to receive the Sacrament the Confirmation, Resurrection Parish Candidates are taught the important role of a Confirmation Sponsor. We celebrate the Confirmation Sponsor chosen with a Mass at which they are blessed, followed by a dinner, spiritual activity and a talk on "walking side by side" in their faith. Candidates give their sponsor a handwritten thank you note,



Resurrection parishioners help bless the 2020 Confirmation candidates and their sponsors.

a gift of the Holy Spirit key chain and a sponsor bookmark. They faith share; one question they ask each other that always has interesting answers is "what gift of the Holy Spirit do you feel you most have or most need."

So on April 30, with the Most Reverend Roy Campbell, as he administers the Sacrament of Confirmation, candidates and their chosen sponsors will now be called to lead each other closer to God, to continue to grow in knowledge of their faith, and to challenge one another to lead lives of holiness and service.

OPT



Spring Open House
April 22, 2020
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm



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Resurrection Catholic Church Congratulates the Msgr. John Pennington Knights of Columbus Council 9808 for winning the 2018-2019 Knights of Columbus Star Council Award, the first for the Council since 2004. The Star Council Award recognizes outstanding achievement in membership, insurance, and service program activities.



Coach Maddie poses with the Pre-K Hawks basketball team.

ALUMNA

Con't from page 10

through Eighth Grade. During her high school career, Maddie completed countless hours of service at Holy Cross, giving back to the school that helped to shape her during her elementary school years. Over the past year alone, Ms. Zalewski has served as a co-director of the Children's Christmas Eve Gospel Pageant Mass and coached Pre-Kindergarten basketball.

When asked why she enjoys volunteering at Holy Cross, Ms. Zalewski responds with an enthusiastic, "Because I love this place; it's like a second home to me!" With wisdom beyond her years, she elaborates by stating that she loves the simple time in her life that the school represents and that she enjoys seeing former teachers and working with the students. Ms. Zalewski indicates that she feels compelled to give back to the school that has given her so much. She states, "Holy Cross helped to prepare me to be successful at the high school of my choice while emphasizing the importance of serving others. How could I not want to volunteer at Holy Cross?"

Mrs. Yvie Killian, the Director of the Children's Christmas Eve mass states that, "Maddie has been a tremendous help with the Christmas Eve mass for several years. Whether coaching Middle School students in their readings or helping Pre-Kindergarten students with their sheep hats, Maddie has always been eager to help. The stu-

dents have loved having her there to guide them along as well."

Thank you, Maddie, for your service to Holy Cross!

OPT

SCHOOL

Con't from page 11

parishioners rallied to this task of meeting the benchmarks. They met in a brainstorming session and set up a main steering committee and several subcommittees which set out to improve the school's communications, marketing, recruiting, fundraising, and budgeting methods. Their main goals were to meet the benchmarks and to increase enrollment in order to place the school in better financial viability for years to come.

One concerned parent telephoned each current family to discuss tuition and true costs. Based on these parent discussions, the steering committee proposed that the school move to

true cost tuition but to phase it in, over the course of a grandfathered year. For those that could afford it they agreed to pay the higher tuition starting next year. The Annual Fund was held over for the remainder of the year in order to provide more time for people to fundraise the needed \$750,000. Other parents and teachers began working on better marketing plans coupled with social media in order to increase enrollment. Parents also took the needed step to indicate with letters of intent and registering early their children for next year to show that retention was also an important goal to meet.

The results were amazing. The school steering committee raised nearly \$880,000 which included immediate cash to cover the current deficit and money for scholar-

ships allocated for next year. They obtained an above average retention rate of 89%. More work is taking place to increase enrollment for next year. Currently the school has 119 students enrolled, 14 applications in process, and 10 applications being discussed. In addition, the committee received permission to begin a process of converting its current governance structure to a Limited Jurisdiction Board which will take on greater responsibility in assisting with the school's financial viability.

Msgr. John Enzler, President of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and in residence at St. Bart's, stated in the *Catholic Standard* newspaper that the work to save St. Bart's was "Faith in Action: passing on the great blessing of a Catholic Education."

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ELIANA

Con't from page 10

accompany the Valentine's Day cards. The outpouring show recipients that members of the community are thinking of them and sending best wishes.

A Holy Cross parent, Mrs. Megan Dennis, suggested that students participate in the effort this year. Students made cards with uplifting phrases such as, "You are loved." and "You are strong and brave." When finished, Mrs. Dennis delivered the cards to one of the designated hospitals in our community.

If you would like more information about Eliana's Light, please visit their website at www.elianas-light.org.

OPT

Spanish Marriage Preparation Course

By Father Phillip Ilg

On three consecutive Saturdays in February, the 8th, 15th, and 22nd, the Spanish community at Mother Seton gave an Archdiocesan marriage preparation course for nine couples about to get married. The purpose of the course was to integrate these couples into the

life of the parish. It was a great success in that the four couples and Fr. Phil who gave the course, found them receptive and willing to embark upon this wonderful endeavor, and to do so in the midst of our local parish community where it will be nourished. It is an initiative that certainly was well received and, God willing, will be repeated.

OPT



Spanish marriage preparation celebrating together the end of the course



Parishioners at Knights of Columbus bingo

RESULTS & THANK YOU!

Annual Knights of Columbus Seminarian Support Bingo and Dinner

Second Annual Knights of Columbus Seminarian Support Bingo and Dinner was held Friday, February 21. Heartfelt thanks to 188 attendees and all others who supported this event to net enough proceeds to support 11 Seminarists at \$500/each this year! Save the date and budget for the Third Annual event on Friday, February 2021 (if weather postponement, then February 12).



OPT Having fun, dancing, eating. Everybody wins!

Mary of Nazareth
Roman Catholic School



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MoN's STREAM Night
May 6th from 6:00-8:00

Come see STREAM projects,
use engineering skills to complete
a hands-on activity & witness that
there is no place like MoN!

Black History Celebration

By Dorrette Paulin

Faith To Carry On – For three decades, Mother Seton Parish has hosted a non-denominational Black History program for the community. This year's program featured Gospel music by Mother Seton's Youth Choir, Holy Trinity Choir, the GARBO Singers, Goshen Choir and Devin Osborne in addition to Liturgical Dancing by Grace's Favor and inspirational narrations by Francine Grey-Theriot and Mona-Mae Juwillie.

Sharply at 2:30 p.m., our Mistress of Ceremony, Nadine Davison signaled the beginning of the program and everyone stood to join the choirs in the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Our Pastor, Father Lee Fangmeyer welcomed everyone to the program and said the opening prayer. We were on our way to an afternoon of lively Gospel music, liturgical dancing and inspirational narrations. Mother



Seneca Community Choir

Seton's Youth Choir led the program with Climbing Up D Mountain and This Little Light of Mine. The visitors were fascinated by the children's performance. How many times

Continued on page 23



Mother Seton's Youth Choir

Mother Seton Parish

19951 Fr. Hurley Boulevard
Germantown, MD

Fr. Lee Fangmeyer, Pastor
301-924-3838

Brenda Rosado, OPT Editor
Bulletin@Mothersetonparish.org

It's the teachers!

by Margaret Durney

As the principal of St. John the Evangelist school, I have always known that the teachers here are excellent at their craft and care deeply for our students. They are always looking for ways to make sure the students are engaged. But I must admit that they still have the ability to surprise and delight me with their creative lesson plans.

While teaching her students about Michelangelo, Miss Debrot's students lay on their backs and painted pictures taped to the bottom of their desks so they could see what it might be like for Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

The Junior Kindergarten teachers – Mrs. Whitney, Mrs. Zajac, and Mrs. Bilodeau – showed their class how to add up to 21 by playing the card game with jumbo cards (looks like the teachers lost!). The students learned about extinct animals by making woolly mammoth masks. They experienced different customs and holidays and the start of Lent by celebrating Mardi Gras. And they honored our men and women in uniform when they sent a care package to one of our fathers who is stationed in Turkey.

During Catholic Schools Week, all of our students get a chance to learn about various work experiences as our parents and grandparents par-



At left, JrK teachers helping their students learn what numbers add up to 21.

Below, Fourth graders, dressed up in work attire for the career of their choice, listen intently to a guest speaker on Career Day.



ticipate in Career Day. This year we were fortunate to have speakers who are a pastry chef, police officer,

dancer, nurse, FBI agent, attorney, scientist, and more. *Continued on page 23*



First graders, learning about Michelangelo, paint pictures on their backs.



A thank you photo as part of a care package sent to one of our fathers stationed in Turkey.

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

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Reading Excitement at Our Lady of Lourdes School

By Eighth Graders Diego Orrego and Lily Capizzi.

On January 27, the start of Catholic Schools week, Our Lady of Lourdes started its first ever Read-A-Thon. A Read-A-Thon is an exciting fundraiser that lifts a student's love of reading to new levels. First of all, prizes for reading and raising money enticed students to read. Some of these prizes included a free tag-day, pizza and ice cream parties, and a lunch with our principal, Ms. Moore. The Read-A-Thon was not only about winning special treats. Students raised money for the school by asking family and friends to sponsor their reading. Once all donations were counted, the total amount of money raised for Our Lady of Lourdes school came out to (drum roll please) **\$27,429.00!** Students



Eighth-grade students each sample one of the many titles from the Reading March Madness program underway at Our Lady of Lourdes School.

were excited about reading and even a little bit competitive because of the Read-A-Thon. Total number of minutes read, with all grades combined, was **118,480 minutes**. All in all, the Read-A-Thon was one of our most successful and exciting fundraisers!

Another stupendous activity we started late February is Reading March Madness, a new idea that our fifth-grader teacher, Mrs. Korol, introduced to Our Lady of Lourdes. Last year, Mrs. Korol held a Reading March Madness amongst her class, and due to its popularity, introduced it to the rest of the school. It works basically the same as the NCAA March Madness. First, we have a wonderful selection of books to choose from. The list was put together by the creators of the website, Reading March Madness. Teachers at Our Lady of Lourdes

replaced a couple of titles from the list with choices of their own. Some big hits from these titles are *Resistance*, by Jennifer A. Nielsen, and *Wildfire*, by Rodman Philbrick. The process for the March Madness requires students to read a minimum of 4 books. An overall best book is chosen based on the most votes. Reading March Madness is such a good idea for our school because reading more and learning to love books is a necessity that enriches academics and life in general. Reading March Madness gives students a variety of books to enjoy that they might typically not read. All these books are great, and they will keep you on the edge of your seat. This 2020 March Madness event really was a thrilling new way to start a new year of reading on a positive note!

OPT

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

7500 Pearl Street
Bethesda, MD

Msgr. Edward Filardi,
Pastor

301-654-1287

Ms. Amy Moore
Principal

301-654-5376

Patronal Feast Day Celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes

By Deidre Walsb

Our Lady of Lourdes celebrated its Patronal Feast Day on February 11 with prayer, Marian Hymns and enjoying French delicacies. The students began their day together reciting the prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes and classes visited the chapel which was adorned with a beautiful wood carving depicting Our Lady's apparition before St. Bernadette. Here they prayed, blessed themselves with holy water

from the Lourdes spring, and touched a piece of the grotto gifted to the parish by the Archbishop of Lourdes, France. Many students recited the rosary at the grotto adjacent to the Church. It was a time for learning and reflecting upon Our Blessed Mother, St Bernadette, and the miraculous apparitions.

That evening parishioners gathered in the Church for a Holy Hour led by Msgr. Filardi and Fr. Ubau. The service began with Eucharistic Adoration followed by recitation of the Rosary and meditating on the visions and experiences St. Bernadette conveyed to the faithful. The Holy Hour concluded with a beautiful candlelit procession to the Grotto while singing hymns dedicated to Mary. Those in attendance then enjoyed a French feast and wonderful conversation in the Church portico. The organizing efforts of The Ladies of Lourdes made for a wonderful evening.



OPT

The beautiful Grotto at Our Lady of Lourdes parish

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

A 2015 National Blue Ribbon School



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March 25, 2020
9:30-11:30 AM & 1:00-2:30 PM

2020 TOUR DATE: May 13

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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.

2020 Youth Rally and March for Life

By Anthony G. Sabadi

Pope Francis tells us, "The right to life is the first among human rights. We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished, and protected."

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School students are taught that every human being has value. As followers of Jesus, students defend life by seeing Jesus in all people – at all stages of human life. For example, each November, students see Jesus in the homeless by generously giving canned goods and food for our Food Drive. In December, students see Jesus in the poor by giving coats during our yearly Coat Drive. Lourdes' students follow through with the message of Christ: love one another, as I have loved you. Yet, in today's world, Jesus' calling must especially be shared with the most venerable.

As Catholics, we are taught not to comply with a culture of indifference to the right to life – especially those who are voiceless and defenseless. On January 24th, Our Lady of

Lourdes students proudly joined thousands of fellow Archdiocese of Washington Catholic school students, as well as students from across the United States and the world, in The Youth Rally and Mass for Life.

On this day, our sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students, led by our Assistant Principal Mr. Long, were encouraged to participate in the national Rally and Mass. At the event, our students gave concrete participation and witness to the Gospel of Life. The students listened to speakers, sang songs, prayed, and celebrated in Mass. Students were excited and motivated to see each child as a gift and go forward with an attitude of respect for life.

We are so proud of our Lourdes' students. Every day, their attitude and actions are ones of respect and love. From their prayers, participation in Mass, financial generosity, and acts of kindness, students carry on the message of Jesus. At Lourdes, students truly see life and one another as a gift.

OPT

The Journey to the Sacraments

The two-year intense preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation begins in seventh grade.

Our young candidates begin the year with a retreat entitled *Saints by My Side* at the Church of the Annunciation. Retreat facilitator, Ms. Morace and her staff lead the candidates through an enriching morning as they encountered the Saints. The eighth graders attended a retreat at the same location in January, *Called by Name*.

Early in October the candidates from both seventh and eighth grade stand before the congregation to profess their intentions at a Rite of Commitment. The candidates may attend either of two masses for the Rite.

Candidates are immersed in parish life. They participate as readers of The Word during Youth Sunday Masses, usher, and provide volunteer assistance to special parish events.

St. Mary's is blessed to have such a dedicated and committed group of young candidates.

Our candidates for First Penance and First Holy Communion are also in a two-year preparation program. They led the congregation in song during Youth Sunday. They prepared their sacrament candles which were blessed on the Feast of the Presentation. During their Sacrament of First Penance, they acted out the Gospel reading of the Prodigal Son. Father Kevin prepared a Feast of Pardon to celebrate the sacrament. They will attend a First Holy Communion Retreat in the end of March.

OPT



Maya Kozauer read The Word at Mass



Children lead the Congregation in song



Cecelia Zeranski read The Word at mass



Fr. MacFarlane blesses First Penance Candles



Confirmation Retreat

TEACHERS

Con't from page 21

tist, doctor, graphic artist, ship's captain, military officer, diplomat, and others. The students asked thoughtful questions, and our speakers were a hit!

Our students also learn that we have time in our school lives to have fun, particularly during Catholic

Schools Week. On Wacky-Tacky day, both the students and teachers dress up (or down as the case may be), and we all arrive in our pajamas to start the week. On Student Appreciation Day, the odd-numbered classes square off against the evens for games and raucous cheering. Each side has a theme and dresses accordingly. This year we had characters from *Frozen* go up against the members of the U.S. Olympics team.

In addition to scooter and bouncing ball relays, the teams take turns singing songs and doing cheers using American Sign Language.

Whether seated in their classroom desks, or under them, or reading in PJs snuggled up with pillows, our students are exposed to learning in myriad ways. Teachers and students are constantly learning from each other while enjoying the experience along the way.

OPT

BLACK HISTORY

Con't from page 20

have they heard: "This Little Light of Mine"? The children did an impressive rendering of the song starting with the youngest and ending with the older children. Not to be outdone, the veteran choirs had us on our feet in response to their music. Devin Osborne performed a rendering of

Josh Groban and his mother from Grace's Favor danced her way into our hearts.

In the second part of the program, we were spell-bound as our thespian Francine Theriot-Grey recited poems by Maya Angelou and Mona-Mae Juwillie who narrated the tireless struggles of Harriet Tubman, the achievements of W.E.B. Dubois who was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard

University, Frederick Douglass and others who worked to pursue justice, freedom and equality. At the end of their presentation, Mona-Mae surprised us with "O Freedom" to the rousing applause of the audience. We ended the program with the vibrant, vivacious performance by the Holy Trinity Choir. Our Pastor said the Benediction, and everyone was treated to substantial refreshments.

OPT

DANIEL

Con't from page 11

between man and God." ("Meeting with the Clergy," Warsaw, Poland; May 25, 2006) Authentic renewal in any parish and in the universal Church will not happen by conforming the Church to the world, but by

becoming "holy...transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom 12:1-2). In practice, then, I will be prioritizing Eucharistic Adoration and daily Mass; regular Confession; faithful Scripture study and Catechesis, guided by the continuous Spirit-led Magisterium of the Church; the works of mercy; and Mary's powerful intercession through the

Rosary. That's the time-tested plan; we don't really need to come up with much else. As Chesterton said, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried." I pray for the wisdom and fortitude to be faithful to that plan at Nativity, and wherever the Lord may call me in the future.

OPT

Youth in Concert – March 15

by Diane Yendrey

On March 15 at 7:30 p.m., St. Mary's Music Ministry is pleased to present our youth in a free concert in St. Mary's Church, 18230 Barnesville Road, Barnesville, Maryland. The concert is free with a free-will donation.

The concert will feature One Call Institute teaching artists: Zachary Stachowski and Bex Gaunt; our various youth in music ministry, and parish musicians.

Please join us for music that will lift and inspire! Funds raised by

donation go to support our students who are applying to attend One Call Institute (OCI) this summer: a program of the National Pastoral Musicians Association.

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New Events Planned at Mercy

We are grateful for the support of our growing list of parent volunteers who have stepped up to run the many events held at Mercy this year. What is just as exciting is to have parents suggest NEW events for our community! New to our calendar this year will be a Used Book Fair

and the Mercy Flea Market. The Used Book Fair will be held March 18-19 with proceeds going to the Mercy library. The Flea Market will be held on Saturday, April 25 and will be open to all. Proceeds from the market will be allocated to the classroom and facilities wish list.

OPT

Special Olympics Basketball Game

Mercy's annual Special Olympics Basketball game will be held on Thursday March 12. Doors open at 6:00 pm and the game starts at 6:45 pm. All proceeds for this event will go to support Special Olympics of Montgomery County and PCR! Please come and support us!

OPT

Parish Pilgrimage

Father Stephen's new parish, Holy Angels, is hosting a Spring Seafood Dinner on Sunday, March 22, 2020, which includes a bake sale and craft tables. Our Lady of Mercy is having a par-

ish pilgrimage to see Catholic sites and partake of the Spring Seafood Dinner. A forty-passenger bus will leave Mercy at 8:30 AM and return at 4:30 PM.

OPT



Mercy students, parents, and staff celebrate Father Stephen Wyble and say farewell during a special reception in his honor. Father Stephen was called upon to lead Holy Angels and Sacred Heart in Bushwood, Maryland last month. In his short time at Our Lady of Mercy, he enriched the lives of the entire community through his joyful presence and dedicated service.

Farewell to Father Stephen

News in the bulletin of February 9 is memorable for Father Bill's message to the parish titled "Father Stephen to Run Two Parishes." Many Mercy parishioners were surprised by the news and saddened to be losing such a wonderful young priest, however, we were happy that Father Stephen's gifts and talent had been

recognized with the assignment as pastor of the parishes in Southern Maryland, Holy Angels and Sacred Heart.

Father Bill shared that Father Stephen had mentioned he might get a dog when he had settled in his new parishes. The "Pooch Fund" to cover vet expenses and the other expenses of a new puppy

was born. If Father Stephen ever needs any tips training a puppy, he can call Father Bill who has the best behaved dogs, Roo the beautiful boxer who would wait quietly and patiently while he prayed in the church and Zelig, a black lab who just turned two and is a devoted fitness trainer who makes sure he gets a good walk each day.

OPT



Mercy families enjoy pancakes and King cake on Shrove Tuesday

Celebrating the Lenten Season in Many Ways

The annual parish Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was a great success, feeding over 200 people. A number of other

activities are planned to make the Lenten Season meaningful for students, parents, and staff. Several Lenten Lunch Discussions will be held during which the faculty and staff will discuss passages from the little black book.

Student Stations of the Cross will be held on three Fridays during lent, with a special Family Stations scheduled for March 6. Mercy students will be offering special prayers during Lent for four Seminarians who are from Mercy. This is a special way to connect our students with these wonderful young men.

OPT

Making a Difference in and out of the Classroom

Mercy's Kindergarten teacher, Kathleen Greene, recently returned from a service trip to St. James Parish near Montego Bay, Jamaica where she helped build a new school building for the Rosewood Heights community. Joining her on the trip were Mercy alum Henry Sullivan (librarian Anna Sullivan's son) and his father,

Jerry.

The new school building includes four classrooms, a fully equipped nurse's room, a kitchen to feed all students, and separate bathrooms for students and teachers. With this new school building, the Rosewood Heights community will now have a registered infant school unit, qualifying them for government support.

Members of the community agree that this new push for education will create pride in their community.

Thank you to Miss Greene, Henry and Jerry Sullivan, and other members of the Mercy community who served this very deserving community in such a meaningful way.

OPT



Mercy teacher and alum help a community in need.



A Night of Sugar & Spice and Everything Nice!

Mercy's second annual Father-Daughter Dinner & Dance was a magical success! An incredible committee of moms helped make this the sweetest night for the dads and daughters.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish

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Potomac, MD

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301-365-1415

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

Gerry Burgess, OPT Editor
301-330-5676

Sodality Lenten Events

St. Raphael's Sodality prayerfully enters Lent with several events to help us grow in holiness. On Fridays following 9am Mass during Lent, Sodality members will lead and pray the Stations of the Cross, Mary's Way. We prayerfully walk Christ's Passion, Crucifixion and death, and read his mother's perspective as she walks with her Son.

On March 11th at 7:00 pm in the Parish Library, Fr. Tom Morrow will explain his Devotion to the Stations of the Cross. Fr. Morrow prays the Stations of the Cross every day before he offers Mass, YEAR ROUND. On March 12th Sodality will cook and serve dinner for residents of the Interfaith

Works Women's Center, and on March 17th Sodality members will join members of St. Raphael's Adult Club for a Lenten retreat day at St. Anthony's monastery in Ellicott City.

To participate in these events or if you have questions, please email Louise Cox at louisecox25@comcast.net. To join St. Raphael's Sodality you may send a check for \$30 payable to St. Raphael's Church (note Sodality dues in the memo line) to Aleta Phillips, 304 Winter Walk Drive, Gaithersburg MD 20878.

Our motto is "To Jesus through Mary."

OPT



St. Raphael's Sodality members enjoyed their sixth annual formal tea. For this year's "Irish Country Tea" we had a display of Irish items in Katie's Shoppe, festive Irish decorations and music. After we feasted on tea sandwiches, scones, Irish soda bread, and desserts, we prayed the Holy Rosary. Each table played a game in which they answered questions about themselves, such as What do you remember about your First Communion or Who's your favorite priest; why?

The shortest month not short on excitement at SRS



Fans of Jackie Robinson listen to the baseball legend recite his speech at the annual Black History Museum put on by second grade. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia



Singer/songwriter/storyteller Daryl Cobb captures the attention of students during his presentation in honor of Read Across America. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia

By Tiffany Murphy

To kick off February, St. Raphael School welcomed wonderful parent presenters to inspire our students for Career Day. Presenters: Catherine Sanwo, chief financial officer for Friendship Public Charter School; Jim Beane, special agent for the FBI; Patrick Cheng, therapist, including pastoral counseling, at MedPsych Health Services; Meg Quickel, veterinarian at Quickel Relief Services; and Antonino Blandino, lead

mechanical engineer at the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration. While the older grades were sitting in on Career Day presentations, our kindergartners were treated to their own special visitor, Dr. Elizabeth O'Leary, general surgeon.

As February continued, our second-graders impressed visitors at their Black History Museum, where they portrayed remarkable

Continued on page 31



Dr. Elizabeth O'Leary helps budding physicians at St. Raphael School look the part on Career Day. Photo by Shawn O'Brien

What's Ahead

Registration for St. Raphael School and St. Raphael Nursery School for 2020-21 is open. Visit the Admissions Page of our website at www.straphaelschoolmd.org for more information.

- March 25-31: Online auction—open to all—to benefit the students of St. Raphael School
- March 28: SpringFest cornhole tournament and adult social
- April 24-25: "Frozen Jr." middle-school musical
- April 29: Girls' Night Out spring shopping boutique—retail therapy, anyone?

For details about these events and more, visit our website at www.straphaelschoolmd.org.

OPT

St. Raphael Parish St. Raphael School

1513 Dunster Road
Rockville, MD

Rev. Michael Salah, Pastor

Teri Dwyer, Principal

MJ Zafis-Garcia,
OPT Editor

301-762-2143

www.straphaels.org
www.straphaelschoolmd.org
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St. Raphael Parish invites you
to an Afternoon of Recollection
with Fr. Harry Geib, SJ

SPIRITUALITY AND AGING

Saturday, March 21, 2020

3:00 – 5:00 PM

Fr. Harry Geib is the new rector
of the Jesuit Community at
Gonzaga High School in DC.
He will speak about
6 Spiritual Tasks of Aging,
5 Spiritual Practices of Aging
Well, and more...



Following his talk there will be time for reflection and – for those who wish – 5:00 Mass in the church. Fr. Geib entered the Jesuits after his graduate studies in gerontology at Duke. He has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Thailand, Malaysia, and Uganda. More recently he was the health care coordinator for the Maryland Province Jesuits, and Superior of the Colombiere Jesuit Community.

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For more information: suzanne.nelson2@gmail.com

St. Raphael Parish Library

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A Celebration of Culture and Community

By Erin Pant

The rich diversity of Saint Peter's community was on display at the school's fourth annual International Night on January 31, 2020. More than 400 attendees enjoyed an evening of delicious food, informative displays, hands-on demonstrations, and beautiful performances representing different countries around



Above, families crafted beautiful displays to showcase information, artifacts and cuisine from each country.



At left, cultural demonstrations took place throughout the evening including an Ethiopian coffee ceremony

At right, Saint Peter's International Night was enjoyed by more than 400 attendees.



the world. Families hosted tables that proudly showcased a specific country. Displays featured country information, flags, photographs, artwork, traditional artifacts, and cuisine. Countries represented included Colombia, Cuba, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Haiti, Italy, Ireland, India, Jamaica, Lebanon,

Mexico, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Poland, South Korea and the United States.

Attendees received paper passports and were able to collect stamps as they visited each country display. Throughout the event, special demonstrations took place including an Ethiopian coffee ceremony. Students also had an opportunity to receive Nigerian henna hand tattoos, try on native clothes from Peru, make a Filipino Christmas parol, receive an introduction to the Korean alphabet, and learn how water dikes function in the Netherlands.

"International Night has become one of the most popular events of the year, and for good reason," said Mrs. Cocozzella, Saint Peter's Principal. "It's an incredible opportunity for families to share their unique cultures while celebrating unity as one school community."

The evening culminated with music and dance performances. Mr. Nguyen, Saint Peter's music teacher, opened the performances with a rousing rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner. Next, a group of students performed a traditional song and dance from the Philippines, and finally, parent volunteers performed two Peruvian dances including an elegant Marinera dance.

OPT

Saint Peter's Students Create Lenten Reflection Art

Students at Saint Peter's came up with the idea to mark the beginning of the Lenten Season, with a school-wide project combining art and faith. Each student decorated a tile with words, phrases or images related to Jesus or the crucifixion. Students were asked to reflect on the message that we are all part of the Body of Christ and therefore, we are all called to take up our cross and follow Jesus. Our crosses are joined with his. Student chose words including sacrifice, love, forgiveness, devotion, peace, savior, faith, and follow me. The more than 300 tiles were then joined together to create an eight-foot tall mosaic cross. Mrs. Helene Redmond, Saint Peter's Middle School Language Arts teach and Mrs. Kelly Nichols, Saint Peter's second grade teacher, spearheaded the design and implementation of the project.



OPT

Students Compete in Annual Ballroom Dance Competition

Each year, Saint Peter's seventh and eighth grade students participate in a ballroom dance course, a tradition that started 19 years ago. The 11-week program begins in the fall, as part of the physical education curriculum, and concludes with a competition. The course is led by dance instructors Paul and Diane McRoberts, who have been teaching ballroom for more than 20 years.

"During the course, we introduce the stu-



Eighth-Grade winners in the Waltz category

Crabs, and Sharks, and Whales! Oh My!

On Thursday, February 6, 2020, the National Aquarium visited Saint Peter's School, bringing with them an assortment of artifacts and live animals. The students prepared for this visit by creating a large, colorful mural of various sea creatures that included turtles, blowfish, jellyfish, crabs, and rainbow fish. When the much-anticipated day came, the aquatic learning experience was divided into two parts: first, whole group presentations in the Parish Hall, followed by small, hands-on sessions in Saint Peter's STREAM lab. In the whole group presentations, students learned about the life of the shark. One student donned a shark costume as a visual, and the National Aquarium presenters discussed the different senses of a shark and explained how these senses help to navigate life in the sea.

After receiving training from National Aquarium staff, parent volunteers manned lab stations that offered small groups an interactive



Students interact with artifacts during a visit from the National Aquarium

learning experience. Students were able to compare prehistoric shark teeth to present day shark teeth. They were also able to "comb" the fine plates of a baleen whale, and even able to pet a live horseshoe crab, hermit crab, and sea urchin. The students enjoyed learn-

ing incredible facts, such as a baby whale gains one pound an hour, while a lobster gains one pound every seven years. Learning about the complex life in the ocean gave the students a new awareness of God's aquatic creatures. Next time they go to the beach, they are sure to impress with their newfound knowledge!

OPT



National Aquarium staff and volunteers stand in front of a large student-created sea creature mural

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Principal
301-774-9112
www.stpetersolney.org

Continued on page 31

Bowling Brings Them Together

By Gina Nino de Nightingale

A few years ago, the staff at SJN all went bowling as a farewell send-off for Fr. Dave Wells. I was the youth minister at the time, and took my (then) two kids with me. My oldest was three, and she thought it was so funny and wonderful to see all of the priests bowling, especially Fr. Sweeney! She brought it up with delight, over and over again. I wanted everyone in the parish to have the same opportunity, and extend the invitation to include our ADW seminarians and religious from different orders; and so the idea for Bowling with Vocations was born!

This President's Day, we had over a hundred parishioners come out to bowl with Fr. Bill, two of our Deacons, five ADW Seminarians, one Sister of Our Lady of Mercy and two postulants, three Nashville Dominican Nuns, and one Priest and four Novices from the Marian's of the Immaculate Conception!

We had teams with tiny tot bowlers rolling their balls down the metal bowling ramp and grandparents out with their grandkids. We had large families with multiple ages of



One-tenth of the bowlers who came to be with SJN-invited Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, Nuns, postulants, and novices

bowlers and adult bowlers that came out by themselves or with friends. We had several lanes of teen bowlers, and some bowlers with disabilities. Everyone was laughing and talk-

ing across the lanes. Some were competing, while others were showing off their silly trick styles. And all of this was along with and while getting to know their vocations guests!



Three generations of family members took to the lanes to share laughter and team spirit with Priests, Catholic religious and fellow parishioners during SJN's *Bowling with Vocations*.

This is exactly what the St. John Paul the Great Vocations Society had been working and praying for!

OPT

Kevin Wells Speaks About the Priests We Need

By Rick McKinney

Kevin Wells, the author of "The Priests We Need to Save the Church," spoke at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Gaithersburg on February 10, following a public Rosary. Some 120 persons were in attendance. Kevin is a freelance writer and Catholic evangelist and the brother of Fr. Dave Wells, the current pastor at St. Martin of Tours Church in Gaithersburg.

Kevin's talk was largely about how God worked in his own life through the caring and holy ministry of various priests. One of the priests was Msgr. Tom Wells of Mother Seton Church in Germantown, his real "Uncle Tommy," who counselled Kevin

and his wife, Krista, some 20 years ago. Back then he and his wife were newly married when they found out that they could not have children together. Kevin wanted to adopt but Krista wanted to use in vitro fertilization, which was not in accord with Catholic teaching. Their marriage became extremely tense and cold over the issue. Finally, reaching out to his Uncle Tommy, the priest invited them to meet with him at his rectory. He told Krista how she did not know how lucky she was to be given the full cross of Jesus to bear in intimate friendship



Author Kevin Wells with wife Krista and daughter Shannon. Photo by Laura Quigley



with him. A life of sanctity, he said, does not begin until one begins to renounce oneself. He hugged Krista, and asked them both to hand over everything to God, and surprisingly in the days ahead, they did just that. Now they have three adopted children. All was not rosy however, for two nights after they met with him, Uncle Tommy was gruesomely murdered in that same Germantown rectory.

After various encounters with Christ through the aid of holy priests, including the healing of a burst aneurism deep in his brain, Kevin began to see that there was a thirst in God's people for holy

priests to unveil for them the treasures of the Church -- the Eucharist, prayer, devotion to Mary, and more. So he felt inspired to quit his job and begin writing a new book about the kind of priests that people were thirsting for. However, after floating some initial chapters to some eight Catholic publishers, he was told no one was interested, because, he was not a priest and could not tell priests how to be priests.

Dejected and unemployed he got some good advice from a faith filled priest and a holy lady not to give up and in 2018, after the Cardinal McCarrick scandal broke, publishers began calling him back and asked him to finish his book. Before it had been difficult to write one sentence but now he felt Jesus filling his head and his heart as the words poured forth. The

finished book was finally released in August of 2019 and is now in its fourth printing.

OPT

Editor's Note: Books available through Sophia Institute Press: www.sophia institute.com.



St. John Paul the Great Vocations Society Coordinator, Mary Beth de Ribeaux (Center) is flanked by Vocations Society members KC Davy (left) and Marisa Stoolmiller (right), as SJN launches its annual Lenten practice of praying for vocations ... in the parish, and in the Washington Archdiocese.

Growing Priests on the Vocations Tree Branches

By Adam J. Rimback

This Lent, many parishes will provide a means to exercise the important Lenten practice of prayer, through the Vocations Tree project. Parishioners will have the opportunity to choose a prayer card to pray for one seminarian among the 73 in the Archdiocese of Washington. Each card features a seminarian's name, photo, interesting biographical information, and an intercessory prayer.

We are asked to pray for vocations, but a more fundamental question in the minds of some might be, "If God is omniscient, then why is it necessary to pray for anything, much less for those He personally calls to the priesthood and religious life?" To fully answer that question would fill a book. However, one of the most compelling reasons is that prayer

constitutes the most effective means of conveying man's deepest desires to the Lord, who waits patiently for us to but ask His help. In Matthew 7:7 (NAB) Jesus encourages our dependence on Him, declaring, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

To this end, on February 3rd, three St. John Neumann parishioners and I travelled to the St. John Paul II Seminary to assemble prayer cards in packages to send to 82 parishes. While there we got the perspectives of some individuals impacted by the program. Dylan Prentice, a seminarian and former opera singer from St. Martin of Tours, shared what impact the prayers have on him: "It encourages me to pray for each of you, and to pray for my future parish."

Continued on page 31

St. John Neumann Parish
9000 Warfield Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20882

Msgr. Robert Panke
Pastor

Rus Wester
OPT Editor



Presentation of the KofC Service Award for excellent food service to the St. Michael the Archangel community.

Tenth Annual Knights of Columbus Oyster Feast

by Charles Hayes

On January 31, 2020, St. Michael's Knights of Columbus hosted over

100 guests at its 10th annual Oyster Feast, including priests from three parishes and the

Continued on page 30

Preparing for the Worst CRASE Training at St. Michael's

by Lisa Taylor

On January 6, 2020, St. Michael the Archangel Parish held Civilian Response to Active Shooter Event (CRASE) training for its clergy, staff, and ministry leaders. The event was sponsored by the Parish Council and included two sessions, one in English and the other in Spanish. Montgomery County Police Officer Kathy Estrada educated the group on how to respond to the presence of an active shooter during Mass, Sunday school, and other parish activities. The attendees learned about when to Avoid, Deny and Defend with active shooters. Officer Estrada also shared FEMA's Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations for Houses



Officer Estrada presents CRASE training to St. Michael's parishioners.

of Worship and a Guide from the Maryland State Police. The Parish Council will amend its emergency plan in wake of the training

and continue to educate its leaders about best practices for responding to active shooter events.

OPT

Phase 1 of the St. Michael's "Green Project" Complete

by Jason Giovannettone

The St. Michael's Green Team has undertaken a major project (the "Green Project") with the objective of "greening" up the church and the Parish Center building and surrounding property. The Green Project is divided into multiple phases: (1) clearing the property; (2) installing rainwater harvesting infrastructure at the Parish Center and the Church itself; (3) replacing asphalt surrounding the Parish Center with green space; and (4) replacing the Parish Center parking surface with permeable pavers or porous concrete.

One of the major tasks within Phase 1 was to empty and remove an old storage trailer (see photo) and remove a dilapidated playground on the northeast side of the Parish Center. The storage trailer had been located on the property for at least 25 years and was used to store used equipment and furniture from the old school. Over the last



The storage trailer had been located on the property for at least 25 years and was used to store used equipment and furniture from the old school.

several months most of the trailer contents were advertised and sold on Craigslist, from which nearly \$550 was raised for future "green" initiatives. The empty trailer and playground were finally demolished on Thursday, Feb. 20. The

affected portion of the property is now clear and ready for future phases of the Green Project. With the trailer removal representing the final task of Phase 1, planning for the design and implementation of Phase 2 has begun.

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In recognition of the 35th Anniversary of Monsignor Tolentino's ordination to the priesthood, St. Michael's parishioners contributed to the restoration of the parish tabernacle.



Grand Knight Michael Spraggins presents the Family of the Month award to Darrell, Anna, and Conrad Smith.

St. Michael's Knights of Columbus Family of the Month Award

The Knights are reinstituting the Family of the Month Program at St. Michael the Archangel Parish. Our purpose is

to give recognition to families that have made significant contributions of their time, talent, and treasure to the Parish. So far in 2020, the Smith and Henriquez families have been recipients of this award. The Knights seek input from the parish for future recipients of Family of the Month using the following criteria: family names, phone number, and a short description of why the family is being nominated. Being a member of the Knights of Columbus is not a requirement.

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St. Michael's Parish

805 Wayne Avenue
Silver Spring, MD

Rev. Msgr. Eddie Tolentino,
Pastor

301-589-1155

Edwin Méndez, OPT Editor

301-589-1155



St. Michael's parishioners answer God's call to serve at the January 26 Ministry Fair and Bake Sale.

Three Shrine of St. Jude Pro-Life Events



A Successful Baby Bottle Campaign

For more than 25 years, the Shrine of St. Jude has helped the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center (SGPC) in Gaithersburg serve underprivileged pregnant women who think their only option is abortion. Under the leadership of Bill Luksic, the St. Jude Pro-Life Committee holds a Baby Bottle Campaign fundraiser in October, Respect Life Month. Empty baby bottles are distributed to parishioners who wish to participate, and they are asked to fill the bottles with coins, cash, or checks. They are collected at the end of the month and taken to SGPC to be counted.

In January 2020, we were notified that parishioners contributed \$11,000+, which

brought the total over the last 20 years (when we started to keep records) to more than \$125,000. Thanks to St. Jude parishioners who are so very generous in supporting the annual Baby Bottle Campaign.

Cupcakes for Life Fundraiser

Since 2014, St. Jude (SJ) parishioner and Pro-Life Committee member Jennifer Kilmer has asked her friends and other parishioners to bake cupcakes to sell after Masses one weekend in January. The profits from the sale pay for a bus to take SJ parishioners and students to the March for Life.

Each year, dozens and dozens of delicious cupcakes are baked and enticingly decorated. After each Mass, the Breezeway becomes a chaotic scene—while adults are relatively sedate when making their selection, children with large eyes dart from one end of the table to the other to choose their favorite cupcakes. A bargain at \$1.00 each, \$5.00 for six, and \$10.00 for twelve, St. Jude parishioners are very generous, and those who don't purchase cupcakes often drop donations in prominent cookie jars.

This year, the fundraiser yielded \$1,300—



After the rush is over, (on right from back to front) St. Jude ushers, Tony Varron and daughter Patti Stoute with husband John Stoute get their turn at the Cupcake for Life sale. Sellers (on left from back to front) are Amy Wasel, Jennifer Kilmer, and her son Peter.

enough to pay for a bus, matching hats for riders, transportation assistance for the St. Jude Youth Group to get to the Archdiocesan Mass

and Rally, and a donation to the St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth and Families.

March for Life 2020: Why We March

While Shrine of St. Jude parishioners and students waited... and waited... and waited... for the bus (which never arrived) to take them to the March for Life, some explained their reason for marching:

- Sandra Anaya-O'Brien: "Abortion is a violent act."
- John Paul Kilmer, Heights freshman: "To stop the killing."
- Alex Lopez: "I'm an active pro-life person who wants others to follow my example."
- Susana Lopez, St. Jude fourth grader: "So we can help save moms' and babies' lives."
- Michael Moynihan: "A person's a person no matter how small."
- Santiago Tellez-Leon, St. Jude seventh grader: "Babies are in danger. It's a Mother's responsibility to care for her child."

And, don't worry! St. Jude marchers found alternative means to get to the March.

OPT

Fr. Patrick Mullan Leads SJRCS Faculty and Staff in Retreat

By Michelle Ardillo

St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCS) faculty and staff were treated on Feb. 14 to a moving and meaningful retreat led by Fr. Patrick Mullan, self-described "native son of the parish." The day began with Mass in St. Clare Convent Chapel celebrated by Fr. Pat, who was ordained June 15, 2019, and is currently Parochial Vicar at nearby St. Patrick Catholic Church. Breakfast in the parish's Our Lady of Guadalupe Room followed.

Fr. Pat started the retreat by sharing his ordination holy card with each person, and then leading all in the prayer on his holy card—the Prayer of Abandonment by Blessed Charles de Foucauld. In his unique way of using self-deprecating humor to illustrate how we are all called



On St. Valentine's Day, Fr. Patrick Mullan directed St. Jude Regional Catholic School faculty and staff in a day-long retreat.

to daily discernment, Fr. Pat used Holy Scripture as well as passages from the Catechism of the Catholic

Church. In illuminating the challenges of Catholic School teachers, he quoted St. Frances de Sales: "Be

patient with everyone, but above all with yourself." Before sending everyone off for 30 minutes of silent reflection, he pointed out that as teachers, the Lord has empowered us to anoint our students and share with them the blessings and special grace we have been infused with by the Holy Spirit.

As a precursor to our entry into Lent, Fr. Pat demonstrated the need for us to quiet our minds and bodies and rest in the Lord with a simple exercise using a quote from Psalm 46:11: "Be still and know that I am God!" He shared that perhaps this Lent could be one of silence and inactivity, rather than one of activity and the busyness of doing more. Fr. Pat ended the retreat with a closing prayer and blessing for all Catholic School teachers.

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Happy St. Patrick's Day!

St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCS) fourth-grader Thomas O'Connor and his father Dan O'Connor represented Ireland at the school's International Day Festival in January. This annual event celebrates the many different cultures embodied at SJRCS and features traditional clothes, dance, and food.

Eighth-Grade Retreat: Wet...but Wonderful



Last month, St. Jude Regional Catholic School's Class of 2020 enjoyed a "wet" but wonderful overnight retreat at the Camp Maria Retreat Center in Leonardtown, MD.

By Michelle Ardillo

On Feb. 6-7, St. Jude Regional Catholic School's (SJRCS) Class of 2020 enjoyed a "wet" but wonderful overnight retreat at the Camp Maria Retreat Center, a ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, located in a beautiful setting in Leonardtown, Md. With almost non-stop rain and extreme wind, the group was confined to indoor spaces as the waters of Breton Bay rose around the camp. Although the group had to forego the customary bonfire and s'mores, retreat leader Matt Avery led the students with bonding activities, music, quiet reflection, and his personal testimonials of his faith with the theme "Appreciate

Your Family."

The retreat group attended Mass celebrated by Fr. John Nguyen, pastor of Our Lady's Church in Leonardtown. Fr. John, a former Parochial Vicar at the Shrine of St. Jude, was delighted to reconnect with the 8th graders he knew from his time at SJRCS. Other highlights included delicious meals in the dining hall, a candlelight ceremony where students wrote letters to themselves to be mailed to them next year, and Mr. Avery's "ashes and oil" ceremony.

The Class of 2020 was chaperoned by Mrs. Jeanne Donatelli, assistant principal and middle school religion teacher; Mrs. Michelle Ardillo, eighth-grade homeroom and middle school language arts teacher; and

eighth-grade parents Mrs. Monica Aguilar, Mr. Jon Ambush, Mrs. Lisa Lambert, Mrs. Reyna Liriano, and Mr. Edwin Lopez.

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Shrine of St. Jude Parish

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Give us this day our Bigos and Pierogi ...

by Bozenna Buda

Food has a way of bringing people together. Beyond its nourishment value, it can be an expression and sharing of our culture and heritage. It served its many purposes again this year on January 29th when volunteers from Our Lady Queen of Poland (OLQP) Parish in Silver Spring sponsored and served the Wednesday Night Dinner for the Catholic Terps at the Catholic Student Center (CSC) at the University of Maryland in College Park.

The Wednesday night dinners at the CSC are held during the Fall and Spring semesters. Local parishes and groups sponsor and feed the university students, most of whom



OLQP volunteers in the Catholic Student Center kitchen at the University of Maryland preparing to serve the Wednesday Night Dinner for the Catholic Terps on January 29, 2020: Andy Michaels, Richard Okreglak, Gosia Psurek, Edwarda Buda-Okreglak, Urszula Kolodziej, Renata Zeleznik, Kasia Roberts, David Birely, Bozenna Buda, Joanna Roberts, Stefan Witzak, and Ola Zeleznik. Not pictured are Anastazja Kolodziej and Danuta Gromek.

also attend the Holy Mass which precedes the dinner. The group from OLQP prepared and served a Polish dinner to more than 250 people this time. On the menu were favorite Polish foods such as Bigos (hunter's stew), Pierogi (dumplings), vegetables, bread, and assorted delicious home-made Polish pastries, including Chrusci. During dinner, the students heard St. John Paul II's favorite songs. We had a display about OLQP Parish and about St. John Paul II.

Many parishioners from OLQP contributed to the success of the dinner. We thank the OLQP Rosary Society, the St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council of the Knights of Columbus, and OLQP Pastor, Fr.

Jerzy Frydrych, for his encouragement and support. Many individuals helped, including Dr. Urszula Heberlein, GK David Birely, SK Stefan Witzak, SK Richard Okreglak, Dr. Edwarda Buda-Okreglak, Joanna Roberts, Bozenna Buda, SK Andy Michaels, Renata Zeleznik, Gosia (Maggie) Psurek, Urszula Kolodziej, Katie (Kasia) Roberts, Ola Zeleznik, Anastazja Kolodziej, Dr. Danuta Gromek, Ela Marciniak, Edyta Szemiel, Mary Ann Evan, Tatiana Psurek, and Maria Kot. We thank Vera Szerszen, Sandra Zachariasiewicz, and Brad Ortins for their support and Bozenna Lis for helpful advice. We thank everyone for their hard work and contributions! Bog Zaplac!

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Pastor Rev. Jerzy Frydrych, S.Chr., and the Parishioners of Our Lady Queen of Poland & St. Maksymilian Kolbe Parish wish you a Blessed Easter and invite you to share in our Lenten and Easter traditions. *Wesołego Alleluja!*

HIGHLIGHTS OF LENTEN and EASTER SEASON at OUR LADY QUEEN OF POLAND & ST MAKSYMILIAN KOLBE PARISH

SUNDAYS at 11:40 AM – “Gorzkie Zale” Lenten Devotions
FRIDAYS at 7:30 PM - Stations of the Cross

Parish Lenten Retreat - March 27-30, 2020

HOLY THURSDAY, April 9 at 7:30 PM - Mass of the Lord's Supper

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10 at 7:30 PM – Stations of the Cross and Adoration

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 11:

- Traditional Polish Blessing of Food at 10:00AM, 10:30AM, 11:00AM, 11:30AM, 12:00PM, and 12:30PM
- Easter Polish Food Bazaar 10:00AM – 1:30PM
- Easter Vigil Mass at 7:30PM

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 12

- Resurrection Procession and Mass at 10 AM & 12 Noon Easter Mass

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, APRIL 19, Special Program

- 10 AM – Holy Mass
- 11:15 AM – Adoration of Blessed Sacrament & Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- 12 Noon – Holy Mass and veneration of the Relics of St. Faustina and St. John Paul II
- 1:30 PM – Parish Easter Dinner “Swieconka”
- 3 PM – Hour of Mercy - Adoration of Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Devotion

SUNDAY, May 3, Parish Feast Day and Picnic

National Remembrance Day Mass

By Bozenna Buda

On March 1, Our Lady Queen of Poland Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych celebrated Holy Mass to commemorate National Remembrance Day in Poland and the Polish Diaspora. The Mass intention, requested by the Washington Metropolitan Area Division of the Polish American Congress (PACWmad), was to remember and pray for the Cursed-Indomitable Soldiers (“Wyklytych - Niezlomnych Zolnierzy”). The Honor Guard was provided by the St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council of the Knights of Columbus. Representatives from organizations included the PACWmad, Polish Legion of American Veterans (PLAV), and Polish Scouting Organization ZHP.

The end of World War II did not bring independence to Poland. Poland continued to be occupied by Soviet Russian forces which imposed Communism on the people. The Indomitable Soldiers fought for freedom and independence. They defied the atheistic Communists and were brutally tortured and imprisoned. Many were murdered by the Communist authorities and



OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych and visiting priest Fr. Adam gave out Holy Communion at the Commemorative Remembrance Mass on March 1st.

buried in unmarked graves to obliterate their memory from the collective consciousness. Since the fall of Communism, the memory of these soldiers is being restored in an independent Poland through the efforts of families, associates, journalists, scientists, and others. This

year marked the 10th anniversary of this remembrance.

President Andrzej Duda of the Republic of Poland wrote in his letter for this occasion that, “I am convinced that memory and historical truth are the foundations of our nation's identity and contribute to building the spirit and strength of a free, independent and sovereign Poland - honor and glory to the heroes, and the eternal memory to those who died for Independent Poland.” As St. John Paul II noted, “There is no freedom without truth.”

OPT

OYSTER FEAST

Con't from page 28

Franciscan Monastery. In addition to a wonderful meal, the Knights offered small donated articles for sale. Everyone enjoyed their fill of unlimited oysters, including all of the fixings.

Proceeds from the event primarily support mothers in need. This year

the local Council also approved a \$1,000 contribution toward housing costs for a homeless couple who currently reside in a tent behind the church and are very active in our Parish.

The Knights are thankful for the generous support of the Parish community that allows the annual Oyster Feast to continue with great success.

OPT



The St. Maksymilian Kolbe Knights of Columbus provided the Honor Guard at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish, Silver Spring, during Remembrance Mass on March 1, 2020.



**Our Lady
Queen of Poland**

9700 Rosensteel Avenue
Silver Spring, MD

**Rev. Jerzy Frydrych,
S. Chr. Pastor**
301-589-1857

Bozenna Buda, OPT Editor
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bbudadc@gmail.com

Our Lady of Mercy

Financial Literacy Training at Mercy

Students in Leadership 7/8 participated in two workshops with Sparks Business Academy. Workshop 1: Students enjoyed a crash course in stock market investing. They learned how to “buy the stock market” using a simple S&P 500 ETF. Workshop 2: Students learned the fundamentals of managing money to build wealth.

At right, Mercy 7/8th leadership students learn about the stock market.



Congratulations Mid-Atlantic Champions!

Mercy's 12U CYO Boys Basketball team took first place in the CYO Mid-Atlantic championship! It was an exciting final game, but Mercy came away with the hard-fought win.

DAR

Con't from page 9

al essay contest nationwide, and it is open to students in grades five through eight. The contest is designed to encourage the knowledge and love of American history among our nation's youth. This year's assigned topic was “The Voyage of the Mayflower” on the 400th anniversary of that event. Students were challenged to imagine they were one of the passengers on the ship and knowing what materials were available in 1620, what would they have packed to prepare for the journey and for their new life in the wilderness.

OPT



Two St. Jane de Chantal School students were honored by the Goshen Mills Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution at their February meeting. Left to right: Chapter Regent Francie Whitlock, seventh-grade winner Luke Matelis, St. Jane de Chantal English teacher Colleen Kish, eighth-grade winner Caitlin Brown, and American History Chairman Karma Beal. Photo by Mary Russell

BRANCHES

Con't from page 27

The importance of praying particularly for these men cannot be overstated, because as seminarian Sam Huffer cautioned, “When you enter seminary, the devil puts a huge target on your back.” Prayer also helps spawn new vocations.

Maris Moriarty of the Office of Priest Vocations at St. John Paul II Seminary said of the project, “This has had a tremendous impact on the growth of vocations in our Archdiocese”. So, this Lent, when you see the Vocations Tree in our church vestibule, take a card and pray through Lent and beyond. The benefits are endless!

OPT

SRS

Con't from page 25

men and women who worked to change the lives and attitudes of people around them. The students read biographies and wrote their own speeches, which they recited from memory for museum guests.

Read Across America encourages lifelong reading and celebrates Dr. Seuss' birthday. On Feb. 26, singer, songwriter, and storyteller Daryl Cobb entertained and educated K-8 students with a high-energy warm-up to Read Across America, which followed March 2-6. His message: Join the adventure and read!

We wrapped up February with a

visit from City of Rockville Mayor Bridget Donnell Newton. She spoke with fourth grade about what it's like being mayor, the importance of local government, and the upcoming “If I Were Mayor” essay contest. SRS had a winner in the statewide competition in 2014 – we are hoping for a repeat!

OPT

DANCE

Con't from page 26

dents to three dances, the Tango, Waltz and Swing,” explained Paul McRoberts. “The students learn challenging footwork, how to lead, and correct posture. We emphasize the importance of staying with the music and working as a team.”

According to the McRobertses, ballroom dance provides many benefits including mental, physical and social skills. The class provides a non-threatening environment for the students to learn a new skill together. This allows them to gain confidence in themselves, and in communicating with the opposite sex. They also feel part of a group and learn how to work together toward a common goal.

The course culminates in a final dance competition. Students dress up for the event and family members are invited to attend. “The competition provides the students



Students compete in annual ballroom dance competition

a goal to work toward throughout the course. When the competition nears, students begin focusing even more, they are competitive and want to win. We always remind them to do their best and have fun,” said Paul McRoberts. The competition is two heats. Three or four dance couples are selected from each heat to dance in the finals. In

the finals, a top three per grade are selected for each dance type and receive medals.

“It's fun for us to watch the students succeed and to see their interest in dance grow over the course of the program. They become more comfortable and confident,” said Diane McRoberts.

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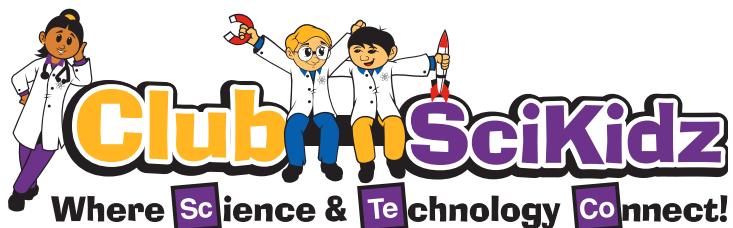
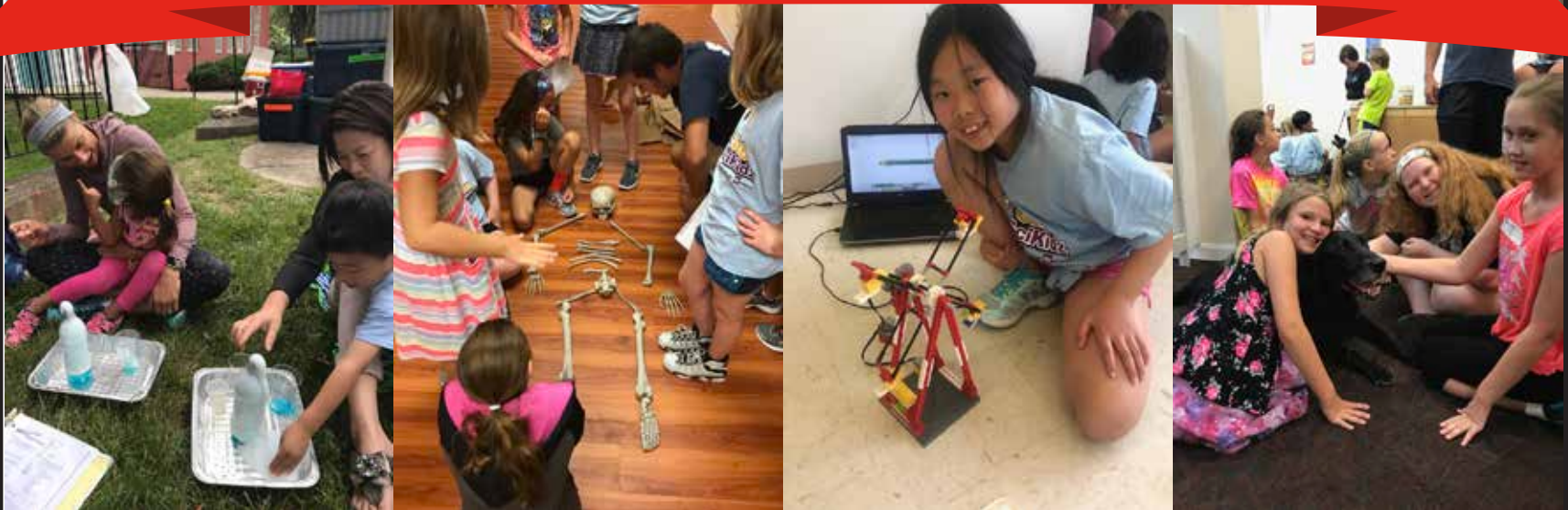
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