



Parish Times

Special Edition
Catholic Schools Week

JANUARY 2019

Living the Faith Together

FREE

Managing Distraction

Distracted prevents us from focusing on the most important things in life. We are distracted by smart phones, text messages, screen time, and of course our new trusted friend, Alexa, all of which have increasingly intruded into our lives and claim our attention. We are distracted by national political and government leaders and the media covering them as they bicker over power, politics



Chuck Short

Continued on page 38

The Quest for Convenience

When, or if, we encounter someone who uses a flip phone we immediately think, "Well, isn't that quirky!" If we order a new book or a toaster from Amazon, we expect it to arrive on our doorsteps two days later. After a long day of work, we stop off at Chop't, Fish Taco or Balducci's. It's all just so convenient!



Patricia McGann

There is nothing inherently wrong with making things more convenient. Our use of meal plans, Amazon Prime, phones that allow

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Living Our Faith

Ican't tell you how much I enjoyed the Christmas season. There is just something about celebrating the birthday of the Lord that brings out the best in all of us. Is it the family dinners, the wonderful decorations, the exchange of gifts, the aroma of baked goods, the many cards and greetings? It is just a special time for all of us who love to live our faith with more exuberance during the Christmas holidays.

Now that we are midway through January, preparing to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday, the Right to Life march, and



Fr. John Enzler

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Unique from Day One: Pro-Life is Pro-Science

On January 18, hundreds of thousands of marchers gathered in Washington DC and in cities across the nation to affirm the scientific fact that, from the moment the sperm penetrates the egg, a biogenetically unique human life has begun. Catholics will not be silent about the evil of abortion and will not acquiesce to a culture of indifference to the right to life of the most defenseless. Acquiescence is complicity: "Do not be afraid." Maryland will hold its March for Life on March 4 in Annapolis. To learn more about the Maryland March for Life, visit: www.mdmarchoforlife.com.

Photo by Kathleen Hamm



St. Peter's Annual Christmas Play "A Play in the Manger" highlighting that Jesus is the Reason for the Season

Jesus is the Reason for the Season

St. Peter's held its Annual Choir and Christmas Play on December 11, on stage at Good Counsel High School. The choir consists of students

from fourth grade through eighth grade with 102 students which is almost half of the student in those grades! The vocal per-

Continued on page 39



St. Peter's Annual Christmas Choir lead by Choir Director, Peter Nguyen

Montana Native Serves as First Regional Coordinator of 270Catholic

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Rob Stamper's faith journey – youth ministry participant, Knights of Columbus member, catechist and youth minister – reads like a resume of a Catholic with life experience to share. The 26-year-old Montana native will harness all those



Robert Stamper, Regional Coordinator of 270Catholic

roles as he seeks to inspire the faith lives of his own peer group as the Archdiocese of Washington's new 270Catholic Regional Coordinator, based at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Derwood, Md.

Stamper is the first paid staff member of the archdiocesan ministry for young adults, which connects young people age 18-35 in Catholic churches along the I-270 corridor and helps them build a deeper relationship with God. A parish employee at St. Francis, Stamper is supervised by Parochial Vicar Fr. Jack Berard and receives mentoring from the archdiocese's Jonathan Lewis and Megan Philip.

After serving a five-year term in the Marine Corps after high school, Stamper and his wife moved to Maryland in July 2016 to be closer to

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Standing up for life!

Monsignor Edward Filardi, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Bethesda, led the praying of the Rosary by a group of parishioners, churchgoers, medical practitioners and concerned citizens against abortions on January 6 at the Dr. LeRoy Carhart abortion clinic at the Wildwood Medical Center at 10401 Old Georgetown Road in North Bethesda.

The members of the prayer group, some of whom are active in the 40 Days for Life Campaign, will be back on February 3 and the first Sunday of every month to pray by the white picket fence outside the Wildwood Medical Center in the

Continued on page 39



LOL pastor Msgr. Filardi (fourth from left) leads a group of parishioners praying the Rosary in front of the late-term abortion clinic at Wildwood Center in North Bethesda.

Photo by Angelyn Tugado-Marzan

Students Explore "The Christmas Story" at the National Gallery of Art

Brookewood lower school students took three separate tours of the Christmas art of the great Masters at the National Gallery of Art on Monday, Dec. 3, 2018. The first and second grade (pictured) kept their docent very busy answering and asking questions all morning long.



On December 3, the thirty-nine girls of Brookewood's lower school boarded three vans for an early Christmas treat – a docent-led visit to the West Wing of the National Gallery of Art to explore the magic and mystery of "The Christmas Story" in art.

Divided into three separate tour groups by grades, the students primarily studied nativity-themed paintings of the Medieval and Renaissance collections located on the first floor of the gallery, just off the Rotunda (itself festive with massed poinsettias). The annunciation also proved to be a popular subject for the great masters.

Catherine Seibert, lead docent, noted that her office tailors tours for specific age groups and frequently prepares drawing materials, hand-outs, etc. in advance. "Tours are student-centered and inquiry-based rather than lecture-based... which is to say that we won't be giving art history lectures!", she explained. The students visited four galleries and engaged in activities such as careful-looking exercises. Students also were encouraged to ask questions.

While the Brookewoodtonians absorbed the many artistic interpretations of the birth and early life of the Christ Child, they themselves were leaving quite an impression on their learned docents.

In a follow-up email to the visit's coordinator, Margaret Killackey, Ms. Seibert said that during the docent debriefing after the tour the three guides "looked at each other and said, 'Wow!'" The docent of the first and second grade tour said it best with her summary: "I almost didn't need to be there!" Ms. Seibert went on to write that "it may not sound like a compliment – but it's actually the ultimate compliment because it underscores how engaged and well-prepared" even the youngest of the Brookewood students were.

She concluded by expressing her wish to see more Brookewood students in the months ahead. A wish with which the young women of Brookewood hardly concur. **OPT**

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Justice and Advocacy Council

New year. New Council members. New budget.

By Anthony Bosnick

The Justice and Advocacy Council (J&A Council) is taking some time to develop personal contacts with the new Montgomery County Council members and with the new County Executive. The 2018 general election resulted in the election of three new at-large Council members and a new executive. In the next months, we will meet with them

and introduce ourselves and our work to the ones we don't know.

Subsidiarity at work.

The work of the J&A Council is an example of subsidiarity, one of the principles of Catholic social teaching. Subsidiarity reflects the Catholic understanding that many functions of the body politic are better understood and solved by those people and agencies closer to

the concern at hand than by those higher up and further from them.

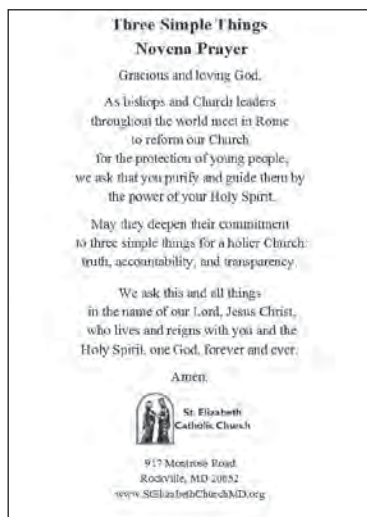
Subsidiarity comes from the Latin word *subsidiū*, which means "aid" or "assistance." It is based on the belief that the greater or higher powers should defer to the lower powers so that people and society are not overwhelmed by big government, big companies, or big banks. It reflects the belief that the

Continued on page 34

Three Simple Things Novena Prayer

In early November, St. Elizabeth sent 595 letters to the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Christoph Pierre, asking for three simple things: truth, accountability, and transparency in response to the Catholic abuse scandals of 2018. On December 12, St. Elizabeth received a response to the letters from Archbishop Pierre. The Papal Nuncio's letter was marked "personal and confidential," so it is appropriate to summarize its main points. The letter was respectful, gracious, and explicitly asked the Pastor to convey to you Archbishop Pierre's acknowledgment and thanks for our letters. He went on to make two primary points:

1. Pope Francis shares our concern for the principles of truth, accountability, and transparency.
2. These principles must be



applied not only in the United States but also in the universal Church, and to this end, Pope Francis has called the February 2019 meeting.

This second point reflects the Holy See's consistent message about the scandals since the November USCCB meeting: wait until February.

And so, we wait. However, as recommended by our Parish Pastoral Council at its December 3rd meeting, while we wait we will also pray as a parish in a very particular way.

A Novena of Sundays

Starting on the Feast of the Holy Family, Sunday, December 30, and continuing through Sunday, February 24, the last day of the worldwide meeting in Rome to address the abuse scandals, we will conclude our petitions at Masses with a prayer for three simple things at this meeting: truth, accountability, and transparency.

OPT

Georgetown Visitation Names Barbara Edmondson Eighth Head of School

Dan Kerns to Retire from Role After Three Decades

Georgetown Visitation has announced its next Head of School: Barbara McGraw Edmondson. Dr. Edmondson is currently the Chief Leadership and Program Officer at the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA); in that role, she oversees the development of a vision for Catholic school education in the United States.

"Barbara not only possesses the many skills required by this role, but also embodies the very traits that we seek to imbue in our students and our commu-



Barbara Edmondson

nity. She is a woman of faith, vision, and purpose," said Sister Mary Berchmans Hannan, President Emerita and Monastery Superior as well as a 1948 graduate of the high school and 1950 graduate of the school's now closed junior college.

Dr. Edmondson has spent her entire career in Catholic education. She earned her BA in psychology and an MA in educational psychology from Montclair State University before attaining her PhD in human development at George

Continued on page 34

What is a Life Worth? Remember Mattie

Remember Mattie. Born and raised in the Maryland suburbs of Washington DC, Mattie Stepanek became a poet, author, peace advocate and international celebrity before he died in 2004 at the tender age of 13.

He lived quite a life. He lived his life. But Mattie, before he was born, was in danger, like others diagnosed

with a disability in the womb.

What the world would have missed if Mattie had never been born. What if, having been diagnosed in the womb with likely medical challenges expected to end with death in infancy, Mattie had not been allowed to share his gifts?

"Mattie was not an accident. He was not a mistake.

Continued on page 26



Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter delivered the eulogy at Mattie's funeral Mass and stated, "We have known kings and queens, and we've known presidents and prime ministers, but the most extraordinary person whom I have ever known in my life is Mattie Stepanek."



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Shady Grove Pregnancy Center
16220 Frederick Road #118
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Photo Courtesy of Emily Randazzo

Dressed in pajamas, students from the St. Jane de Chantal School took time out of their Secret Santa Christmas shopping to pose for a photo with Santa.

St. Jane de Chantal Parish

9601 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD

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

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

Susana and Mario Cerritelli,
OPT Editors



A Time-Honored Tradition of Christmas Shopping at St. Jane de Chantal School

In December, the students of St. Jane de Chantal School participated in Secret Santa shopping, a time-honored and cherished Christmas event. Dressed in PJs, each grade took turns entering the gym, which was transformed into a magical winter wonderland full of wonderful gifts. With shopping lists in hand, students perused the many beautiful and affordable gifts as they shopped for their parents, siblings, friends and loved ones. Santa was also on hand to read a story and give out candy canes, while parent volunteers served as personal shoppers, wrappers, and cashiers. The school day was filled with Christmas excitement for everyone thanks to the hard work of the Home and School Association.

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A Bible Great Adventure at St. Jane de Chantal

by Peter and Kim Williamson

Prophecy of Jesus first came through Abraham as he spoke to his son, "God himself will provide the lamb." This and other truths of the Old Testament are being re-discovered by Catholics who desire a greater understanding of a Messiah immersed in the Old Testament. Jesus himself spoke of the prophets, Isaiah longing for God's kingdom, the cry of Jeremiah against injustice and Hosea's anguish over infidelity. He shared the joy of Israel when they heard from Ezra, the Word of God, lost during decades of forced exile and brutality in a foreign land. Every Sunday we also hear these readings, but the stories can seem lost in history.

To help us rediscover this rich history of our Church, three groups of St. Jane Francis de Chantal parishioners have started on a 'Great



Members of the Tuesday night study group gather for another inspiring "Bible Great Adventure."

Adventure' through the bible. The Bible study developed by scripture scholar and educator, Jeff Cavins, follows the continuous narrative story from Creation in Genesis to the establishment of the Christian church in the Acts of the Apostles. We celebrated finishing the first section of the course with a party of roasted lamb and delicacies and will restart in January, continuing our pilgrimage of hope through the ages.

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Courtesy of Jobanna Goetcheus and Catie Skibo

Christmas Comes from the Heart at St. Jane de Chantal School

On a Monday in December, the lower school of St. Jane de Chantal performed their annual Christmas Play for the students and families of the school. Pre-kindergarten through fourth grade performed their special parts in the play based on the Nativity Christmas story. Songs sung by the children reminded us all to create peace in the world and live out our mission as Catholics. Christmas truly comes from the heart!

More St. Jane de Chantal News on Page 34



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Christmas is Special at St. Bart's

At right, the St. Bart's Choir presents Handel's Messiah before Christmas.

Below, young St. Bart's parishioners sort food items contributed for the needy at Christmastime.



Above, St. Bart's children join farm animals and the Children's Choir on Christmas Eve.

At left, St. Bart's parents and children enjoy making wreaths at Christmastime.

More St. Bartholomew News on Page 34



St. Bart's upper school students dance with the Hispanic Flamenco Ballet

Dance field trip highlights St. Bart's Spanish curriculum

A November field trip to the Hispanic Flamenco Ballet Ensemble provided St. Bartholomew School's Spanish language students with an immersive taste of Latin dances from Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean. Arranged by Spanish teacher Silvana Lazarte, the field trip demonstrates the diversity and depth of the school's Spanish curriculum. "It is not just about mastering grammar and vocabulary but rather learning new expressions, sounds, and ways of seeing things," says Mrs. Lazarte.

St. Bart's begins Spanish instruction in Kindergarten, where students learn the basics through

singing, short educational videos, and games. As students develop, instruction broadens to include

Continued on page 11

St. Bartholomew Parish

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Bethesda, MD 20816

Rev. Mark Knestout
Pastor

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Christmas in Emmitsburg

By Dorrette Paulin

Pease in Christ — On Gaudete Sunday, members of the youth choir traveled to Emmitsburg for their Annual Christmas program for the Retired Sisters of Charity. In contrast to the liturgical color

for the third Sunday of Advent, the children donned their Santa hats and red scarves to reflect the upcoming Christmas season. On arrival, the children distributed the gifts from the Giving Tree to the Sisters and Katelyn Folmer, who was also our flutist opened

Continued on page 11

Presentation of Quilt of Valor for Walter Cronin

By Dorrette Paulin

For many years, the Quilting Angels of Mother Seton Parish labored quietly in the Parish Center piecing and stitching Quilts of Valor for veterans. The MSP Quilting Angels have awarded over 1,200 quilts since joining the Quilts of Valor Foundation in 2005, a Foundation founded in 2003 by a “blue Star” mother, Catherine Roberts whose son was deployed in Iraq. The impetus for the quilts was to promote healing, comfort and hope for the troops, and more

Continued on page 11



The Epiphany of the Lord at Mother Seton Parish

By Rossana Sobalwarro

Mother Seton parish celebrates the Solemnity of the Epiphany, the revelation that Jesus was the Son of God. Epiphany means manifestation. Today the Church celebrates the manifestation of

Continued on page 11



A shepherd with a camel of one of the Magi



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

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Germantown, MD

Fr. Lee Fangmeyer, Pastor
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Brenda Rosado, OPT Editor
Bulletin@Mothersetonparish.org



St. Martin Parish's New Administrator

By Emily Moldiz

When the phone call came from the Archdiocese, little did Father Dave Wells know that he would be moving to his fifth parish in eight years.

"I thought 'Wow,' not expecting this," said Father Wells, the new parish administrator at St. Martin of Tours. "St. Martin's is a big parish with so many ministries and it's a big responsibility."

Father Wells was called after Father Richard Gancayco needed to take medical leave in December. St. Martin's is Father Wells' first parish serving as a Parish Administrator where he has all the same responsibilities and duties as a pastor.

Although jumping into a new parish mid-year and learning all the administrative duties of a large parish is challenging, Father is very excited to serve the Spanish, English and French communities and facilitate the unity of the parish. He is also looking forward to working with the school and meeting the students.

"I love being around the school that I hope to be involved and engaged in," said Father Wells. "The school adds a whole dimension of life and vitality."

As a young priest he has a heart for the youth and young adults of the parish. He hopes he can reach out to them and show them Christ primarily through the sacraments and preaching the Gospel. St. Martin's has already given him opportunities with the school and the youth. In the first month alone Father was busy not only with the Advent and Christmas liturgies but he also had three days of hearing First Confessions, preaching at the Posadas, and visiting with families who come to the pantry.

Father Wells, who is the 6th of 8 children, first felt the call to the vocation of priesthood when he was in his Junior Year of high school at DeMatha. This was around the same time his uncle, Monsignor Wells, was tragically killed. In his senior year at University of Maryland, he knew God was calling him to be a priest. With the guidance of Father Bill Byrne and Bishop Dorsenville, Father Wells entered the seminary at Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland in 2004. He was ordained on June 19, 2010, on the same day he was baptized.

Previously, Father Wells served at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lexington Park, MD; Immaculate Conception in Mechanicsville, MD; St. John Neumann in Gaithersburg; and St. Raphael's, in Rockville.

OPT

St. Martin's Plans Catholic Schools Week Day of Giving

By Anne Gemunder

During Catholic Schools Week, St. Martin's School in Gaithersburg looks forward to a whirlwind of activities. Since 1974, this nation-wide annual week of events is a celebration of education, faith, and service, which are traditional trademarks of Catholic schools.

This year we are again participating in the National Catholic Education Association's, Many Gifts, One Nation: A Day of Giving on Tuesday, January 29. This event is a 24-hour giving campaign, encouraging those who have benefitted from Catholic education, to donate to a local Catholic school. For over ninety years, St. Martin's has offered academic excellence rooted in Catholic tradition. Through participation challenges, matching gifts, and the involvement of our generous school community, we hope to raise money that will benefit the school's greatest needs.

Each day, during Catholic Schools Week, we will honor different contributors to our school community. The week will include a school-wide Math assembly, an Open House, a service project, and other activities for students, families, faculty, and parishioners. Through these events, we focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to the church and the community.

Crusaders Celebrate Catholic Schools Week with Whirlwind of Activities

- January 26 – Celebrating Families: 5:30 pm Kick-off at Saturday School Mass

- January 27 – Celebrating our Parish: At all Masses
- January 28 – Celebrating Vocations: Math Assembly, School Mass, Lenten Food Drive
- January 29 – Celebrating our Community: Open House and Tour from 9:00-1:00 pm, 24-Hour Day of Giving begins at noon
- January 30 – Celebrating our Students: Wacky Dress Day, Student Bingo
- January 31 – Celebrating our Parents: Special Treats, Volleyball Game
- February 1 – Celebrating Faculty and Staff: Spirit Day, Living Rosary, Tuition Raffle

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St. Martin of Tours Parish

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Gaithersburg, MD

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St. Martin's School



Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

At left, Seventh-grade students confer with their teacher, Mrs. Morelli, during class.
Below eighth graders prepare for their weekly newscast on the Crusader News Station.



Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

Below, Third graders enjoy a story read by their teacher, Mrs. Maldonado.



Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

Above, a second grader from St. Martin's School celebrates after receiving the sacrament of reconciliation.



Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.



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Woods Student Artwork Featured on Cover of Potomac Almanac

Congratulations to Luis Barrenechea Arana (6) whose artwork was featured on the cover of the *Children's and Teen's 2018 issue of Potomac Almanac*, December 26-January 1. Artwork from 13 other Woods students is also published on page 10 of the issue.

OPT



Above, Luis Barrenechea Arana

At left, Luis Barrenechea Arana's artwork



The Woods Sister School

Since 2012, The Woods family – students, teachers, administrators, and parents – has joined hands with the Nyumbani Village community in Kitui, Kenya. This bond between the communities has included three Woods teachers and two Woods students visiting Kenya, several visitors from Kenya coming to The Woods, and an on-going Sister School Exchange Program between The Woods Academy and Hotcourses Primary located at Nyumbani Village as well as many gifts and donations flowing back and forth.

Justus Mwaka Musia from Hotcourses Primary visited all classes at The Woods in early December. He joined the Montessori Preschool students for PE, greeted students in the hallways, and taught lessons in some of the classes he visited. He focused on teaching about Kenyan Culture and the lives of our Sister School students at Hotcourses Primary in Nyumbani Village. This was his fourth visit to The Woods and students of all ages adore him!

In early November, the fourth-grade teachers Mrs. Megan Mullally and Ms. Nancy Talbot, both of whom have visited Nyumbani, issued a challenge to their students! Their goal was to collect enough backpacks for an entire grade of students at our sister school so that the students would have new bags for the new school year that begins in January. They started by collecting money to buy backpacks. Then,



The fourth-grade students and teachers were happy to spend time wrapping so many gifts for the orphans at Nyumbani Children's Home in Kitui, Kenya.

every student wrote a letter sharing information and asking questions of their new Kenyan rafikis (friends). Then they stuffed letters into the backpacks. Additionally, students sent a paperback book in each backpack. They were glad to help them get ready for their new school year. "It just takes ONE" to make a difference in the life of a child! In this case, that means 60 backpacks!

To continue in the spirit of giving, the fourth grade had a present wrapping party at the beginning of December. They dedicated the efforts of the party to help others who are less fortunate. The children were engaged in a clothing collection for the kids at Nyumbani. Each student brought t-shirts and underwear. The students wrapped the items with great care and Justus

delivered each present to an orphan at Nyumbani Children's Home.

Our Montessori preschool students as well as the students in grades one, two, and three participated in the season of giving for our friends in Nyumbani as well. They prepared even more backpacks and collected various school supplies for the students at Hotcourses Primary.

Head of School Joe Powers remarks, "...our two communities benefit from this partnership. Thank you to all, Woods teachers and our friends at Nyumbani and Hotcourses, for making this work so well for all the kids."

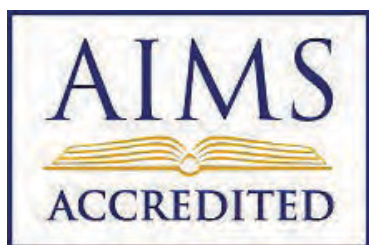
To learn more about our partners in Kenya visit www.nyumbani.org.

OPT

The Woods Academy Receives another Ten-Year Accreditation

In December, Head of School Joe Powers received notice that the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools (AIMS) Board of Trustees voted unanimously to accredit The Woods Academy for another ten-year period. This was the final piece of a nearly two-year long process. The accreditation process includes three parts: a comprehensive and inclusive written self-study by the school; a three-day in-depth visit by a team of outside peer educators who provide a written report to the school; and a school Action Plan that replies to the recommendations made by the visiting team.

According to the Association, "Accreditation by AIMS signifies a school's compliance with association standards and its commitment to continuously strengthen educational programs and teaching – all for the



benefit of students, who are not only at the heart of each school's mission and community, but also central to AIMS accreditation."

The Woods Academy Montessori Preschool is also a fully accredited member of American Montessori Society (AMS). AMS accreditation is a designation that a program meets a well-defined standard of excellence. The Woods is one of only eight schools in the state of Maryland with this designation.

OPT

The Woods CyberPatriot Teams Compete in the State Round

The Woods Academy is one of only 15 schools in the state of Maryland that sponsors a CyberPatriot Team in the Middle School Division. "CyberPatriot is the National Youth Cyber Education Program created by the Air Force Association (AFA) to inspire K-12 students toward

careers in cybersecurity or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future." These teams prepare for the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition during which the students are tasked with finding cybersecurity vulnerabilities and strengthening the systems while maintaining service in the given virtual



Seventh-grader Daniel Gaul consults with his teammate during the CyberPatriot Regional Competition in December.

networks.

Last year was the inaugural year for The Woods Academy CyberPatriot team. The Woods is proud to sponsor two teams during the 2018-2019 school year. Both teams have competed at the regional and state level this school year and Director of Technology Mr. Smith, the coach of both teams, predicts that at least one of the teams will place in the top five in the state.

At The Woods Academy, technology is an important part of a student's academic pursuits. The Woods sees opportunities like the National Youth Cyber Education Program as a way to enhance and extend learning.

OPT

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The Woods Academy

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301-365-3080

Head of School
Joseph E. Powers

OPT Editor
Jodie Shoemaker
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Relations
www.woodsacademy.org



ST. NICHOLAS DAY IN KINDERGARTEN!



St. Nicholas Visits Kindergarten!

On December 6, Kindergarten was delighted to have a special visit from St. Nicholas and members of the German Club from Georgetown Preparatory School! The visit to Kindergarten was especially apropos as it marked the feast day of St. Nicholas who is the patron saint of children. Additionally, the German Club requested to visit Kindergarten since its name has roots in the German language.

The Kindergarten students were attentive to the German Club's presentation about the history of St. Nicholas. The children asked questions and shared what they have learned about this special saint in class. In keeping with tradition, the Kindergarteners were asked to place one shoe in the hallway while the German Club sang several lively songs in German! The children were delighted to return to their shoes that had been filled with treats by St. Nicholas and his team from the German Club! Kindergarten truly appreciated this special outreach by Georgetown Preparatory School and their German Club. It was a great learning experience and great fun!



Holy Cross School and Parish Children Portray the Nativity Scene.

Joyful Christmas Eve Children's Mass at Holy Cross

The children of Holy Cross School and Parish joyfully collaborated to celebrate the birth of Jesus at the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve mass. Under the direction of Mrs. Yvie Killian, children in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade, beautifully portrayed the Nativity scene while the Children's Choir lifted their voices in song. Additionally, Mrs. Killian was assisted by several recent Holy Cross School alumni including Caroline Killian, Maddie Zalewski and Katie Zalewski.

Mrs. Killian stated, "I love being a part of the Children's Pageant Mass. I love that the children have the opportunity to experience the Christmas story first-hand, either through participating in the pageant or as part of the congregation."

Continued on page 11



Kindergartener Connor Mathews Is Excited to Portray a Sheep in the Christmas Eve Pageant Mass!

Holy Cross Parish

4900 Strathmore Avenue,
Garrett Park, MD

Fr. Robert Buchmeier, Pastor
301-942-1020

Holy Cross School

Lisa Maio Kane, Principal
301-949-0053

Lurana Hogan, Parish Editor
l.hogan@hccross.org

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I am a thinker, an athlete, an artist.

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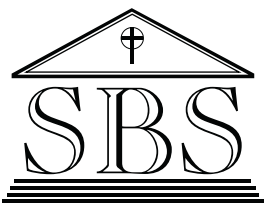


The Academy of the
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Pastor
301-593-0357**St. Bernadette School****Mr. Ted Ewanciw, Principal**
301-593-5611**Kate Doyle Rodgers,**
OPT Editor
301-593-5611St. Bernadette School Grades K-8
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with questions or to schedule a future tour.

St. Bernadette celebrates at the 2018 Catholic Business Network dinner with Karen Horvath-Wulf, second from the left, nominated as St. Bernadette's Volunteer of the Year and with Jim Weiserber, first on the right, winner of CBN 2018 Business Partner of the Year. Karen and Jim are pictured here with their spouses and St. Bernadette School Principal Ted Ewanciw.



Above, SBS Student Council Director of Publicity, Sophie Zanger, shares that in December, the SBS Grade Eight students worked together to clean out the St. Bernadette Mary Garden that leads to our front entrance of the school. They then planted bulbs in preparation for the spring. Pictured here, Will Weiserber, Jordan Chamberlain and Anna Miller.

Below, congratulations to Sage Dennis, Grade Eight, on winning the St. Bernadette School Geography Bee! Pictured here with SBS Grade Five Teacher and Geography Bee Chair Virginia Cooper and SBS principal Ted Ewanciw.

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The St. Bernadette Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary gathered for a delicious brunch to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Guests included our parish priests, Msgr. K. Bartholomew Smith and Fr. Emanuel Magro, as well as the St. Bernadette School principal, Ted Ewanciw and our parish DRE Neil Sloan.

Photo: Margaret Mary Flynn.

EMMITSBURG

Con't from page 6

the program with the *Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord* accompanied by the choir. The sacred part of the program progressed with the poetic readings of the Nativity interspersed with Christmas carols. This year's readers included third-grader Allyson who narrated loudly and clearly and two of the older children—Andrew and Lillian. Sophia and Conrad sang the verses of *Peace in Christ*, with Pasquale on his guitar, and the choir joined in the chorus: “*He gives us hope when hope is gone, He gives us strength when we can't go on, He gives us shelter in the storms of life, When there's no peace on earth, there is peace in Christ.*”

This was truly the best performance since the program's inception. The Sisters were elated and the children made their parents, grandparents, friends and the Sodalists proud. Again, this year, Santa Claus stopped by for a visit to the delight of the Sisters and the younger children. We conclude the program with the Sisters' favorite carol, Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer with the witty parts; Rudolph's nose shining like a lightbulb and glows like a flashlight. Everyone enjoyed the holiday treats that included hot chocolate with marshmallows for the children. We wished everyone a Merry Christmas and the Sodalists promised to return in February to play Bingo with the Sisters.

OPT

CURRICULUM

Con't from page 5

awareness of Hispanic culture. “Every year all grades are assigned a project that focuses on one aspect of culture,” says Mrs. Lazarte. “For the Seventh-grade class, this involves researching popular dances in Latin American countries, and giving an informational presentation along with a dance demonstration.” Elements of Catholicism are

also woven into Spanish instruction, and the school begins each day saying the Lord's Prayer in Spanish. By eighth grade, students can read and understand short novels, write essays, and hold a basic conversation in Spanish. Lazarte adds, “One of the greatest joys of my job is not only watching students grow academically and personally, but also having former students visit me to tell me their success, achievements, and love for Spanish.”

OPT

MASS

Con't from page 9

Santa, the tree and presents are important, but I love how this Mass instills memories of Christmas that are rooted in the story of Jesus' birth.” Maegan Mathews, an Eighth Grader at Holy Cross School stated,

“It's a holiday tradition that makes the celebration of Jesus' birth personal to me because of my participation in the Mass.”

The Christmas Eve Children's Pageant Mass is truly a special tradition at Holy Cross. Many thanks to Mrs. Killian, the children and the many volunteers that helped to make this Mass so special!

OPT

QUILT

Con't from page 6

than ever, Ms. Roberts' resolve continues 15 years later.

On December 26, 2018, Walter Cronin was honored with such a Quilt presented by MSP Quilters Sharon Brzostowski and Cindy Sadula. Walter Cronin, a former Mother Seton parishioner, World War II and Korean War Veteran is now a resident, at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in

Washington, DC. Together his daughter, Kathy, Father Lou, members of the Seton Seniors, and other friends, traveled to Washington for the event. Walter was surprised at the gathering and presentation and was pleased to receive his Quilt of Valor. A friend also sent him a vest with the Korean insignia to match the hat that he wore to daily Mass. We hope that Walter's Quilt will brighten his days, keep him warm and remind him of the love, respect and honor that the veterans deserve.

OPT

EPIPHANY

Con't from page 6

our Lord to the whole world; after being made known to the shepherds of Bethlehem. He is revealed to the magi who have come from the far east to adore Him.

The magi being the first fruits of the Gentiles; they lead in their way all the peoples of the earth to Jesus and thus the Epiphany is an affirmation of the universal salvation. This feast is the fulfillment of all the purposes of Advent and not only marks the liturgical crown of the Advent-Christmas but also illuminates the mysteries of the season.

And on Friday, January 4, our parish, celebrated this important feast in a remarkable way, in a beautiful event, prepared by the communities of the Neocatechumenal Way of our parish.

Children and adults awaited in the Parish Center, in a room totally transformed with royal elegance worthy of the special visit of the Three Kings. While they were waiting, the kids learned songs enthusiastically and participated in a catechetical dialogue that helped them to await with eagerness this special visit. They prepared a letter to entrust it to the Kings to give it to baby Jesus where they did not just ask for material gifts, but for much bigger things such as: health of a family member, being a better sibling, better relationships with their parents, reconciliation in the marriage of their parents, or



The three wise men, Gaspar, Balthasar, and Melchior, came to honor the infant Jesus.

help in school. The Kings came in their camels and made their royal entrance while the children were singing, and they walked directly to the Nativity where they fell prostrate and worshipped the king of Kings, presenting Jesus gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

They remained in the parish Center for a little bit as they recounted their story, the children asked them questions and then, they continued their way to Bethlehem.

After they had departed, the children had dinner. As they finished their meal, they collected a little gift the kings brought for them and went home very happy. We thank the Neocatechumenal Way for organizing this event. Also, we thank our Pastor Fr. Lee for his help and collaboration.

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The Greg Cannon Canned Food Drive holds a special place in the heart of St. Mary's School. St. Mary's students proudly pose wearing our "Cans of Hope" t-shirts after Deacon Nalls came to kick off our efforts for the drive.

Greg Cannon Food Drive

by Luke

Can you imagine what two million cans of food looks like? That is how many cans the Greg Cannon Canned Food Drive has collected since the 1980's for those

in need. It was discovered that food pantries were often low after the Thanksgiving holiday. That was when the Greg Cannon Food Drive was established. St. Mary's School has participated for the last several years. This

Continued on page 26


Two Sides of the Coin" Which is Better – Giving or Receiving?

by Lia

Place the stockings by the fireplace, decorate the tree, arrange your nativity set, prepare your milk and cookies. Christmas is coming! This is a great time we spend with our family and friends to

remember the most important gift, Jesus, and receive many presents! I know many people (including myself) make a Christmas wish list that contains what presents we would like to be given, and I know that when you

Continued on page 26




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St. Mary's Debate Club, inspired by several seventh-grade students, offers students in Grades 6 through 8 an opportunity to learn the art of public speaking and debate. The club meets weekly with Mr. Curley and Ms. Crosby.

St Mary's Debate Club

by Caleb and Daniella

On November 27, 2018, we interviewed Ms. Crosby, one of the co-moderators of the Debate Club. At lunch we met with her and asked some questions about Debate Club. Debate Club was started by a group of 7th grade girls. Mr. Curley and Ms. Crosby are the leaders. It is open to students from 6-8th grade and it is on Thursdays from 3-4 p.m., here at St. Mary's.

Debating is a good skill to have. A debate is an

argument in which people are persuaded to choose one side over another. Some topics they have debated were about junk food and homework. The kids sometimes are given the opportunity to choose the topics. Ms. Crosby loves to debate. She has done it before in Model UN and Moch trial. She loves to see the kids debate because it helps arguments become stronger. It helps logical thinking and speaking skills. As she says, debating is like a "fun and challenging game."

OPT

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

**More St. Mary - Rockville
News on Page 29**

Join us for the St. Mary's Multicultural Festival

The St. Mary's Multicultural Festival is returning on February 2 immediately following the 5 pm Mass. Join us to share the many cultures of our parish and school community. The event will feature a children's parade, arts and crafts, food, country displays and family entertainment from around the world. Our Festival celebrates our diverse community as we share our global experiences and food with each other.

OPT

The Musicians of Mercy Great Masterworks Concert

Through the years, Our Lady of Mercy music lovers have been fortunate to have the opportunity to attend many wonderful concerts in the church. The Musicians of Mercy Concert on Sunday February 10, at 2 PM will be the tenth annual concert in the series. The program will feature the many and varied talents of the musical staff of Our

Lady of Mercy, in a program of Symphonic Masterworks. Among the works performed will be music of Villa Lobos, Rachmaninoff, and Vienne. A freewill offering will be collected for a Mercy charity. Those who enjoy live classical music will find the concert to be a highlight of a winter afternoon.

OPT

Mercy Nursery Now Open!



Mercy's new nursery opened today with a special blessing by Father Bill Byrne

Beginning on January 3, the new Mercy Nursery welcomed our youngest Pride members! The nursery, a Parish-organized co-op program, will provide much needed support to Mercy staff, allowing them to be near their children with the added help of shared childcare costs. The school benefits significantly from an on-site nursery as it helps us retain our highly talented teachers and professional staff members.

Mercy's Pastor, Father Bill Byrne, spearheaded the nursery project as a ministry of the church, recognizing the positive impact it will have on the entire Mercy community. In his own words: "We love babies. We love teachers. This way we get them both."

OPT

Mercy NJHS Welcomes First Members

On Wednesday, December 5, three Mercy eighth-grade students were inducted into the Mercy chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. Charlie Gill, Locke Sullivan, and Grant Ward are the first members of the newly formed Mercy chapter of the NJHS. The National Junior Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding middle school students.

More than just an honor roll, NJHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. The formation of the Mercy



Congratulations to the newest members of the Mercy NJHS.

chapter is a valuable extension of our school mission and supports our Middle School leadership training and rigorous academic program.

OPT

Catholic Schools Week Program

Mercy students and staff have a wonderful program of activities planned for 2018 Catholic Schools Week:

Sunday - Mercy students will lead the Masses at 11:00 am and 5:00 pm. School staff will serve coffee and donuts to parishioners following the morning masses.

Monday is Student Day - a special assembly and classroom ice cream parties

Tuesday is Spirit Day- Mercy students will participate in a service project led by the Student Council to collect care packages for

the homeless. Special team spirit events will be held in the gym.

Wednesday is Parent Day - the school Mass will focus on parents and students will write notes thanking their parents for a Catholic education.

Thursday is our school-wide Open House.

Friday is Teacher Appreciation Day - our MPTO will provide a delicious breakfast for the faculty and staff; students get to dress like teachers.

OPT

School Open House

On Thursday, January 31, from 8:30-10:30 we will host our second Open House event of the school year. Members of the Mercy Student Council will be assisting our parent tour guides, providing personal tours of our school.

OPT

More Our Lady of Mercy News on Page 30

Our Lady of Mercy Parish
9200 Kentsdale Drive
Potomac, MD

Fr. William Byrne, Pastor
301-365-1415

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

Gerry Burgess, OPT Editor
301-330-5676



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More St. Raphael News on Page 31
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Sing We Now of Christmas

By Nina Cardillo

The annual Christmas Program at St. Raphael School celebrated Jesus, the reason for the season, through songs and performances by each of the classes and culminated in the Nativity story sweetly re-enacted by kindergarten. This year's program included a thoughtful rendition of "Mary Did You Know" by the seventh grade and the lively chiming of "Carol of the Bells" by the fifth grade. Eighth-graders in colorful Hawaiian shirts brought sunshine to the stage

in their performance of "Mele Kalikimaka (Hawaiian Christmas Song)," and third-graders sang a festive "Mi Burrito Sabanero" in Spanish. The fourth grade charmed the audience with their version of the classic "Old Toy Trains," and the whole school joined in the finale "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus!" Our preschoolers also delighted audiences by telling—and especially singing—the story of the birth of Baby Jesus. All of the performances reminded us of the joy of the Christmas season, the blessing of being together, and the gift of a Savior.

OPT

At left, St. Raphael Nursery School students joyfully tell the story of the birth of Baby Jesus.

Below, Grades K-8 express the spirit of the season at St. Raphael School's annual Christmas program.


Photo by Susan Rushbrook

Photo by Malu Rios

Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia / St. Raphael School

Above, St. Raphael School middle-schoolers help feed the hungry at the annual Mother Teresa Luncheon.

At right, The students-vs.-staff basketball matchup is the highlight of Spirit Day at St. Raphael School.


Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia / St. Raphael School
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Making Spirits Bright through Service and Outreach

For the 23rd year, St. Raphael's hosted about 85 guests from two Washington, D.C., centers run by the Missionaries of Charity. Our guests attended Mass, celebrated by Fr. Tom Morrow, along with Mrs. Roche's fourth-grade class. Afterward, SRS seventh- and eighth-graders and other volunteers, including St. Raphael Sodality and the Knights of Columbus, served a traditional, Christmas-inspired meal to our visitors, who joyfully participated in a piano sing-along and enjoyed a performance by St. Raphael Nursery School 4-Plus students. Before leaving, our guests were given a rain poncho and bag of personal toiletries, a handmade scarf (knitted/crocheted by St. Raphael's Labor of Love volunteers), as well as a bag of candy as a treat. This special event is one that we at St. Raphael's and the residents of the Missionaries of Charity houses look forward to every year.

In partnership with Catholic Charities' sixth annual Coats of Many Colors Drive, St. Raphael School and Nursery School collected new and gently used winter coats, scarves, hats, and gloves. At the school, SRS students wrote notes or prayers that were tucked into the pockets of every coat as a small token of love and encouragement. St. Raphael's is proud to collaborate in this archdiocese-wide collection to help those in need, and grateful for all the generous donations and support!

OPT

Dancing with the Star Students - A St. Peter's Tradition



Principal, Elizabeth Whelan with the winners of swing dance competition at the St. Peter's 18th Annual Ballroom Dance

On Friday December 14, the 18th Annual Ballroom Dance competition was held for the seventh and eighth-grade students at St. Peter's School. A tradition that started in the 2000-2001 school year has been a favorite of both students and parents since its inception. This competition is the culmination of fall dance lessons where the students get to show off what they have learned. Each year for the past 18 years the seventh and eighth-grade students have

Continued on page 39



St. Peter's Students successfully picking up a cup of water in the STEM Robotic Hand Challenge

STEM Elementary Curriculum in Action

STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The goal of STEM education is to encourage student interest in STEM subjects at an early age to benefit them when they enter the job market, and in turn this should benefit the economy. St. Peter's curriculum has followed STEM curriculum including the elementary school since 2014-15. In January 2019, our fourth and fifth grade students were challenged with a STEM project to Build an Igloo and Make a Robotic Arm, respectively.

The fourth-grade assignment was to build an igloo using given

materials and restrictions. Prior to building the igloo, they researched

Continued on page 39

Annual Gala was Hot

Over 175 people attended the 13th Annual "Hot Havana Nights" Gala Dinner and Auction on November 17, in support of St. Peter's School, which provides excellent education for students PK-8. The gala and auction grossed over \$100,000 and raised more than \$70,000 through ticket sales, sponsorships and auction item sales, making it the school's most successful fundraising event each year. The proceeds from this year's gala will be used to enhance the security at the school.

The live and silent auctions which raised over \$20,000 incorporated vacation rentals, sports tickets, social experiences, designer goods and the annual favorite of "Principal for a Day" and the coveted reserved parking spot. "The Family Fun at Great Wolf Lodge was popular and sold for more than anticipated during our live auction," explains Marsha Riggio, the Gala Chair for St. Peter's. "Our attendees were excited to have the My Big Fat Greek Islands Party featured

Continued on page 39



The "Hot" scene was set for St. Peter's 13th Annual "Hot Havana Nights" Gala

St. Peter's Church

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Olney, MD

Rev. Thomas Kalita, Pastor
301-924-3774

St. Peter's School
Mary Elizabeth Whelan,
Principal
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Parish Breakfast Tradition Ushers in the Christmas Season

by Colleen Zarzecki

St. John the Evangelist in Silver Spring hosted its annual Breakfast with Santa (BWS) on December 1, 2018. As always, BWS was eagerly anticipated by the entire parish community as the official start to the Christmas season. Now a tradition of more than 25 years, BWS brings together generations of families as well as parishioners from many different groups within the parish. For example, long-time parishioner Peg Daly brought her now-adult children to meet Santa Claus

Continued on page 18



Eighth-grade confirmation class students take a break from providing exemplary table service to BWS guests.

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Monica M. Bradford, OPT Editor
bradford2@comcast.net

**More St. John the
Evangelist News on Page 18**



An Artistic Start to Advent

On Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018, St. John's held its 5th annual Advent Wreath workshop. Hosted by the SJE Liturgical Arts Committee, the workshop welcomed groups of friends and families who created 24 unique wreaths using greens, pinecones, holly and other natural decorations to complement the purple and pink Advent candles. This event grows in popularity each year, as the tradition of the Advent wreath warms the homes and hearts of our parish families.

Elizabeth Seton High School *Celebrates* Catholic Schools Week

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Caroline Ross, Class of 2012, freshman



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Dewanna Knight,
grandparent



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The Nation's Capital Extends Our Students' Classroom

We are so fortunate to live in the Washington, DC area where our students can witness history, past and present, in our own back yard. St. John the Evangelist's eighth graders visited the National Museum of American History and the National Archives to obtain additional information for their projects on wars of the modern era. They were able to better understand the United States involvement in global wars and the aftermath of those conflicts. Then in early December, the eighth graders made a trip to Washington to pay their respects to President George H.W. Bush as he lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. As they passed his flag-draped coffin, they were witnesses to our country's respect for our past president and his contributions to America. The students signed the condolence book, which will become a part of President Bush's presidential library. Afterward, a local news station asked the students about Mr. Bush's legacy. One of our students replied, "It just goes to show how much you can help the world."

SJB School News

Every year a week is set aside to celebrate Catholic education. The week is observed with special Masses, Open Houses, and numerous other activities for students, parents, families, and parishioners.

Catholic Schools Week begins on Sunday, January 27, and runs through Saturday, February 2.

At SJB, we focus on the value Catholic education provides and our teachers embrace the opportunity to share the gift of faith. "Learn Serve Lead Succeed" is the theme for the week and sharing in the work of Jesus is what we try to do every day.

Whether it be making holiday cards for the Veterans at Walter Reed, donating gifts to Mary's House through our Shower for Baby Jesus, or preparing sandwiches for Martha's Table, the SJB community looks for ways to reach out and spread the good news.

Please consider joining us for one of the events during Catholic Schools Week or even volunteering in the school. The rewards are immeasurable! If interested in volunteering or if you have further questions, please call the School Office, 301 622-3076.

OPT

Best Wishes to 10:30 a.m. Band Pianist, Diane Pettit

The 10:30 Band would like to offer a very hearty "thank you" to Diane Pettit, our pianist. Diane has been playing piano with the "band" for 31 years! Recently, she and her husband Dave moved to Carroll County to be closer to their kids and grandkids. We really appreciate all the time and talent you've unstintingly given us Diane! Please stop by to thank Diane and wish her the best.

While Diane has been continuing to play on a temporary basis, the 10:30 Band is in need a new pianist. The group rehearses on Wednesday evenings and before Mass. (The 10:30 Band plays on the first two Sundays of the month.) If you are interested in sharing your talent with a fun, vibrant group please contact Lynne Wagner at lynne.m.wagner@gmail.com or at 443-492-9331.

OPT

CONVENIENCE

Con't from page 1

us to access email, Peapod, dog walkers, personal trainers, house cleaners and decorators all provide us with more time to do the important things in life, right? Wrong. The preoccupation with the "easier" and "more convenient" life robs parents and children of those experiences, those moments and hours that are spent together working on something – those experiences that teach children skills and help them develop qualities that will allow them to become productive, capable adults.

If we never wait in line - ordering ahead, printing out boarding passes, game tickets and reserving parking spaces we will find that our children are incapable of standing in the line for the water fountain or patiently waiting their turn for anything. When we are willing to cook together and clean the house together, we are teaching our children important skills and giving them the opportunity to accomplish something – to begin to become an expert cookie baker or leaf raker. The exchanges you and I have when we go to the library or the dry cleaners, and those quick conversations with checkers at the grocery store – they all serve as lessons for our kids. Children learn by watching and listening to us. They learn how to treat people with whom they do not have a personal relationship. They see that we are cordial and respectful, but we are not best friends. Is there anything that teaches patience and gives children the excruciating and exciting feeling of anticipation like a trip to the toy department in the months before Christmas? Amazon steals those moments from all of us.

I understand that busy parents can argue they've done all that and they deserve an easier life. One could argue that it's silly to waste a whole day cleaning the house and cooking with our kids when we could be doing other things. What other things – playing video games, sending emails, perusing Pinterest?

Deciding to get carryout on Friday night

is a great decision, especially if it means that everyone sits around the table eating pizza and catching up. It's a choice to make use of a convenience that will allow us to do something important. I wonder though, does our culture of convenience distort our thinking when we have to make the really important choices? Do we give up a Catholic education for our kids because it's so much more convenient to have them walk three blocks to the public school? Do we decide that spending our money on a home office makes more sense than paying Catholic school tuition? How about those pesky Sunday Masses? If there's a great spin class on Sunday mornings, and my kids go to Mass with their classmates and teachers on Fridays, do they really need to go again on Sunday? Have we moved from simplifying our lives to something else?

There is no doubt - parenting is hard stuff. Parents can choose to embrace the daily challenges of parenting - knowing that it's not always fun to take three kids to the grocery store, that Johnny won't get the floor as clean as a cleaning lady might, or that it can be crazy trying to get everybody up and out a little earlier in the morning. Parents can communicate to their children that doing the small, sometimes hard, sometimes mundane things is important preparation for the time when real challenges come along. Learning how to sweep the floor, how to fix a bowl of cereal, how to move a little more quickly so no one will be late to school – these are the small victories we steal from our children when our focus is on making our lives and their lives easier.

Struggle is still good for us. It is still a great feeling to work hard at something, complete the task, and learn the skill. If we mow down every obstacle, everything that doesn't earn money, things that takes "too much" time, or things that don't provide us with instantaneous reward, we shortchange ourselves and our children. Letting the search for convenience become a priority, letting it direct our decisions now will ultimately result in lost life lessons for our children.

OPT

Faith Formation Ministry

L.J. Milone, Director, 301-622-1122

adulldre@sjbssparish.org

Meditation Group

Tuesdays, 7:30–8:30pm, in Chapel

Join us for a 20-minute period of silent prayer followed by a short reflection given by L.J. Milone. All are welcome to attend whether or not they have experienced meditation. Come to the waters of quiet and let the mystery of God in Jesus refresh you.

Communing with God: The Catholic Way of Life

Sundays, 10:30-11:30am, in the School Library

While the children are in their classes on Sunday mornings, parents and other adults are welcome to attend a spiritually enriching class on the Catholic faith. The class is both an introduction to and a deepening of the Catholic way of living faith in our world.

Please contact L.J. Milone, Director of Faith Formation, ljmilone@sjbssparish.org, 301-622-1122, with questions.

The Book of Exodus

Why are journeys so important? How do we develop by living through a desert experience? Are these themes as important to us as they were and are to our Jewish brothers and sisters? How do we celebrate? You are invited to reflect on these questions and your faith journey with members of the Bible Study classes while 'walking' through the Book of Exodus. Classes begin on February 14 and continue for 8 weeks. The same course material is offered in the morning and evening, 9:30-11:30 a.m. or 7:30-9:30 p.m.

If you would like to join other adults exploring this very important book of the Old Testament or to learn more, please contact Alicia Urban: urban261@gmail.com or 301-879-4368.

OPT

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Student Participation Makes First Friday Masses Special

SJE School has a wonderful tradition of allowing the students to take an active role in liturgies. Students, along with their parents, look forward to the month when their class will be responsible for the First Friday liturgy. The first First Friday mass of 2019 was assigned to the seventh grade and the students did a great job with the music and readings. They helped everyone to continue the Christmas season by celebrating an early Epiphany.

BREAKFAST

Con't from page 16

when they were small; these days, Peg's daughter brings her own preschoolers to meet the merry old elf. Parishioners Catherine Simone and Rebecca Desrocher remember hearing about, if not attending, BWS when they were children; nowadays, both make it a yearly tradition for their families.

The chair of 2018's Breakfast with Santa, Kathleen Ortner, did a fantastic job by marshalling the talents of a diverse group of volunteers who made sure the event went off without a hitch. For example, volunteers set up the registration website, decorated the dining room, solicited raffle donations, and pro-



Members of the Rosensteel Council of the Knights of Columbus cooked a wonderful breakfast.

vided man- and woman-power on BWS morning. In addition to registrations, the online site allowed attendees to purchase digital and physical copies of pictures with Santa which were taken during BWS. Additionally, attendees could use the website to buy raffle

tickets for the many prizes on offer this year. These included an Apple iPad, a Kindle e-Reader, a Family Game Night package, a Fitbit and Family Sports and Fitness package, a Color Me Mine "claydate", a Ski-day package at Liberty Mountain, passes to ZavaZone, a Princess Awesome dress, a birthday party at Kicks Karate, a baseball autographed by Adam Eaton of the Washington Nationals, a gift card from Silver Spring's TTT restaurant, and a custom wooden Maryland flag handmade by an SJE parishioner. Additionally, each class from St. John the Evangelist school donated its own raffle basket – each themed basket showcased the creativity and inventiveness of SJE parents. Whether the theme was a cozy wine party, a family game night, a Christmas decoration basket containing cards and décor handmade by an SJE mom, or a Vera Bradley extravaganza, these baskets were a huge hit and made winning families very happy.

There were three hundred attendees at the two seatings of Breakfast with Santa. Members of the Rosensteel Council of the Knights of Columbus did all the cooking and provided a delicious menu of pancakes, waffles, scrambled eggs, sausages, and homestyle potatoes. Coffee, tea, milk, orange juice, and hot chocolate rounded out the offerings. Table service was provided by the 8th grade confirmation students from the parish Religious Education program and their peers from St. John the Evangelist School. Other volunteers helped decorate and set up in preparation or helped guests check in.

The highlight of Breakfast with Santa, of course, was the arrival of St. Nick himself in complete Santa Claus regalia. Children hushed with wonder as sleigh bells heralded his arrival. Smiles, laughter, and excitement were the order of the day as families lined up to have their pictures taken with Santa and to slip their letters to Santa into the special mail box that was set up. Parishioner Chris Newkumet donated his time and photographic skills to make sure that each family had a beautiful keepsake.

After a whirlwind four hours, both seatings of Breakfast with Santa were over. Parents and children returned home with smiles on their faces and dreams of sugar-plums dancing in their heads. BWS volunteers breathed a sigh of satisfaction at a job well done as they heard Santa's sleigh bells fade into the distance until next year.



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Breakfast with St. Nick is a Mary of Nazareth tradition and family favorite

Mary of Nazareth's Home and School Association welcomed families again this year for its annual Breakfast

with St. Nick celebration. The theme of this year's event was Santa's Workshop, featuring a variety of handcrafted decorations

that reflect the magical sentiment of the Christmas season. The entire school building was transformed

Continued on page 35



Handcrafted decorations filled the school's hallways.



Students enjoyed presenting their Christmas wish lists to Santa

Students Brighten the Holiday Season with Community Service

Mary of Nazareth Catholic School's mission is to prepare students for lives of service to God and neighbor. By providing classroom instruction and volunteer opportunities, Mary of Nazareth's Social Concerns Program raises students' awareness of the plight of the poor and encourages students to fulfill their

responsibility to help those in need. Students have abundant opportunities to serve their communities through extracurricular clubs and activities. This Christmas season, our students and families worked to bring joy to their neighbors through several service projects including:

Continued on page 35



MON Class of 2019 pictured in St. Patrick's Cathedral during the school's annual NYC trip.

Eighth-Grade Students Celebrate Last Year at Mary of Nazareth on NYC Trip

Mary of Nazareth's graduating class of 2019 had a wonderful time on the school's annual 8th grade trip to New York City. Each year, following the High School Placement Test (HSPT), our eighth-grade students depart for a special visit to some of New York's most iconic places. The trip began with a tour of the 9/11 Museum and Ground Zero, which students found moving. Next, they got a chance to explore Madame Tussauds wax museum, posing with many of their favorite celebrities. The day was rounded out with a night tour on the top of Rockefeller Center, featuring incredible views across the city. The next day, before heading home, students enjoyed seeing Christmas Spectacular show at Radio City Music Hall.

The final part of the trip was

Continued on page 35

**Mary of Nazareth
Roman Catholic School**
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Assistant Principal:
Mrs. Rosemary Adams
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Members of the St. Elizabeth band entertained the school with a Christmas concert before break.



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Members of our Student Council decorated our annual Christmas tree with Ornaments from families past and present!

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The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Bridget Launi

Christmas preparations were in full gear during the month of December at Our Lady of Lourdes school. Students gleefully wore Christmas themed socks throughout the month; they celebrated St. Nicholas Day, joyfully sang Christmas carols in preparation for their Christmas Concert, and of course, held classroom parties to ring in the season.

As exciting as these preparations were, as a Catholic School, the students of Lourdes are aware that the true meaning of Christmas is not found in all of this merry-making. Rather, it is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and through His birth, the coming of God among us. To celebrate this good news, students at Lourdes organized various collections during this Advent season to help bring aid to struggling families



Ho, Ho, Ho. 8th grade students prepare truck for delivery to The Children's Inn at NIH.

in our community.

Organized by our eighth graders, the first collection assisted families staying at The Children's Inn at NIH. Each class, from Little Group to Grade 8, was asked to donate different items to help stock

the "Gingerbread Gift Shop", an annual pop-up shop that The Children's Inn sets up each year for families to shop, at no cost, for holiday gifts. In addition to students donating items, eighth graders organized a Candy Shoppe Sale that raised over \$600.00 for gift cards and additional gift purchases. On December 14, Santa's sled, in the form of our Vice Principal's truck, made the trip to The Children's Inn to deliver a truckload of gifts.

The giving continued with

Continued on page 26



Eighth graders sort through gifts as they pour in.

Catholic School Pride

By Anthony Sabadi

"The heartbeat of the Catholic Church is Catholic Schools," said Cardinal John Henry Newman.

The pulse at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School is beating with Catholic School Pride.

Our Lady of Lourdes was named a National Blue Ribbon School during the 2014-2015 Catholic School Year. Lourdes was recognized with this prestigious award from the United States Department of Education because of our overall teaching and learning performance. Today, we continue to be a Blue Ribbon School.

Some may believe that cold numbers and tests and high achieving students make a school Blue Ribbon. The administration, teachers, faculty, students, and parents prove this myth to be false. Lourdes is a Blue Ribbon School because of our commitment to kindness, diversity, inclusion, learning, and teaching.

Our Lady of Lourdes is unique. We give all children access to curriculum, support all students, have high expectations for everyone, and believe that there are gifts and accomplishments within all children. When one observes our students, you will see patience, all students being treated equally as a child of God, and students overcoming difficulties with the support and encouragement of their classmates and teachers. We are the best Catholic School to prepare children for life and the diversity that our children will be blessed with.

Our students, teachers, and school consistently model respect for all human life. A Lourdes education empowers our students to learn in an inclusive environment. This calls



The pride of our parish, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School.

our students to look past our differences and address each person's talents, gifts, strengths, and weaknesses. Friendships are built, relationships are formed, and there is increased achievement for all students. Inclusion and diversity help students to

Continued on page 29

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

7500 Pearl Street
Bethesda, MD

Msgr. Edward Filardi,
Pastor

301-654-1287

Ms. Amy Moore
Principal

301-654-5376

**More Our Lady of Lourdes
News on Page 3**

The Wonder of the Nativity

By Deidre Walsh

In early November Fr. Rafael Barbieri enlisted the help of friends, Fr. Alberto Biondi of St. Catherine Laboure parish and Fr. Agustín Lopez, of St. Matthew's Cathedral, and began creating a beautiful Nativity scene which would grace the new parish meeting room during the Christmas season. The detailed project took countless hours to build and once completed, revealed a true love of the Christmas season and the Holy Family. It offered a more intimate and quiet space, separate from the larger Church, where visitors could reflect on the journey of our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph to Bethlehem in preparation of the birth of Jesus, followed by the wise men and shepherds who travelled great distances to meet the newborn King.

The men started the endeavor by cutting styrofoam cubes to build the landscape. They used spray insulation foam to create the rocky underlay. Paint and sand added a more realistic effect and moss, berries, and small stones finished the terrain. Next came the most difficult and possibly most frustrating step; building the stream which would run down the hillside. The sound of the flowing water, with bridges for crossing, lent to the tranquility of the room. A multitude of animals, including camels, sheep, cows and birds were scattered throughout the landscape, and the wise men and shepherds were shown approaching the Holy Family while being guided by the brilliant star. The three builders/artists left no detail to the imagination and even included poinsettias and lights.

Our Lady of Lourdes parishioners could be found after Mass or throughout the day



Beautifully crafted Nativity Scene adorns the new parish meeting room at Our Lady of Lourdes church.

peacefully contemplating the birth of our Lord. Children were mesmerized by the realistic effects of the scenery. The Pre-Kindergarten class had endless questions for Fr. Barbieri about the materials, building process and meaning of various figurines. The dedication and care that went into their work is a testament of the priests' faith and brings the true meaning of the Christmas season to light. It gave us a vision upon which one could meditate and lose the distractions of the busy day while preparing our hearts and minds for this great gift of our Lord.

At the conclusion of the Christmas season, the nativity scene will be dismantled in large pieces and stored away for easier assembly next Christmas. Its display is a tradition which we hope continues for many years to come. We are blessed to have Fr. Rafael at Our Lady of Lourdes and grateful to him for sharing this gift with us.

OPT

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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.

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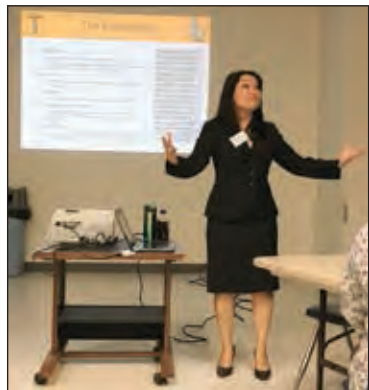
Navigating Your Finances God's Way

Bringing Financial Acumen to Small Group Participants

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

With the average American household carrying \$8,284 in debt, learning how to better manage one's finances seems to be a positive investment for anyone willing to do the work. At St. Francis of Assisi Church, parish leaders are trying out a financial curriculum with Catholic underpinnings that it hopes will assist participants in getting their financial lives in order and help them find a small group community that will provide friendship and support.

Coming off the heels of a 90-minute Food and Finance seminar that introduced participants to financial concepts and best practices, the four small groups -- three for English speakers and one for Spanish speakers -- with over 50 participants got underway the first week of January. The curriculum they are using, *Navigating Your Finances God's Way* by Compass Catholic Ministries,



Sophia Saeed with Primerica Advisors leads the Food and Finance seminar held Nov. 30, 2018, at the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Center.

aims to inspire participants with developing a new attitude toward money -- one focused on God, instead of acquisition of material goods.

Deacon Dan Finn, who spearheaded the offering of the financial curriculum at St. Francis, said the parish had been hoping to offer a financial course to parishioners -- and particularly, young adults -- for some time. The vision for the program is three-fold: through participation in the small group, parishioners will make new friends; through the bible study, participants will learn God's way for managing finances including dealing with credit card debt and retirement planning; and a byproduct of the bible study will be to improve stewardship to the church.

"If [people] understand that everything we have in this world is God's, then they'll be more effective in managing their finances God's way including giving to the church," Deacon Finn said.

Of the 58 people who attended one of the Food and Finance seminars, about a third signed up for one of the four *Navigating Your Finances God's Way* small groups. After the Dec. 6 Food and Finance seminar, St. Francis parishioner Fe DeCastro, a retired nurse, said she attended because she wanted to know what to do with her current assets. "It is good [to offer], especially for the young people," she said.

Deacon Finn expressed surprise that so many retirees did attend the Food and Finance seminars. He said people of retirement age have asked him specifically for ways to minimize expenses, including how to determine the best credit cards for consumers and the best cell phone plans. Efforts are underway to address this issue.

As the initial round of small groups continues to meet, Fr. John Dillon said he hopes people find ways to help address the debt levels many carry. "I hope that those who participated in one of the Food and Finance seminars and then moved on to *Navigating Your Finances God's Way* will find the assistance they need with their financial situation," he said.

OPT



Volunteers with the St. Francis of Assisi Christmas Tree Sale pose with the 400 Christmas trees that were sold during the 2018 holiday season. Former Ministry Coordinator Wayne Burnside stands second from the left on the front row, while current Ministry Coordinator Brian Pettit stands on the far right on the front row.

After 25 Years, Parish Christmas Tree Sale Brings Out Best in Volunteers, Parishioners

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Twenty-five years after St. Francis of Assisi parishioners first kicked off the annual Christmas Tree Sale, the beloved fundraiser has flourished as a testament to effective ministry leaders supporting one another, the importance of loyal and dedicated volunteers in a ministry's success and joyful work producing the best kind of church fellowship.

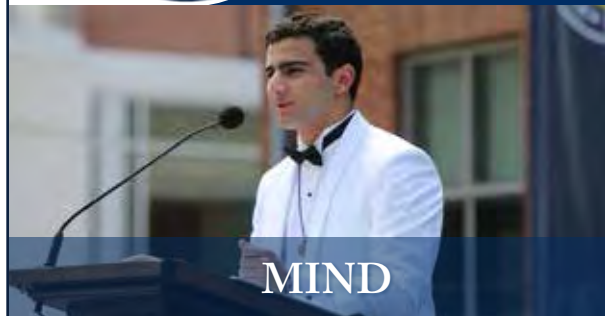
Founded in 1993 or 1994 by

male members of a Bible study group, the Christmas Tree Sale started as a simple fundraiser to support the then-20-year-old church led at the time by Rev. Donald Worch. Traditionally starting the Saturday after Thanksgiving in the front yard of the church, the Christmas Tree Sale typically lasts for three weeks until mid-December, when parishioners can expect to see men and women warming themselves around a barrel fire,

Continued on page 29



GEORGETOWN PREPARATORY SCHOOL



MIND



BODY



SPIRIT

GEORGETOWN PREP CELEBRATES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

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

FORMING MEN FOR
OTHERS SINCE 1789

Holy Redeemer School Career Day NASA Engineer Will Speak on Faith and Career

By Ann Enkiri

Holy Redeemer School will welcome Joan Ervin, NASA Instrument Systems Engineer, as the keynote speaker for Career Day on Monday, January 28th. This event, held annually, is one of the highlights of Catholic Schools Week. Joan will be traveling from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA. A woman of faith and science, Joan will share with her middle school audience that her Catholic faith plays “a vital, while sometimes subtle, role in helping her follow her dreams, discover her passions, and become the woman God dreams her to be.”

As an elementary school student, Joan was always asking for the latest Lego kit or working with neighborhood kids to build and launch an Estes rocket. Joan’s God-given curiosity, interests, and gifts led her to the University of Michigan and a career as an aerospace engineer.

Most recently, Joan was the Instrument Deployment Systems Engineer on the InSight Mission. InSight landed on Mars on November 26th, 2018. The Instrument Deployment System is currently operating and completing deployment of all instruments onto the Martian surface. Currently,



InSight Landing on Mars



Cecilia Ratke and Joan Ervin (top) with nieces and nephews (middle) Thomas Liotta, Sam Liotta, Grace Liotta, Luke Ratke, Benjamin Ratke, (bottom) Charlotte Ratke and Michael Liotta.

Joan is working on the PIXL (Planetary Investigation for X-Ray Lithochemistry) Instrument which is 1 of 7 science instruments on the Mars 2020 Rover. As an instrument systems engineer, Joan interfaces with many different experts ensuring that the various sub-elements of the design work together, are tested and characterized properly, and meet the intent of the science investigation.

Joan is an active member of Holy Family Catholic Church in South Pasadena, California, where she is helping facilitate a school of servant leadership for church leaders to develop and hone their skills as beloved disciples of Christ. Through her parish participation and her professional accomplishments, Joan embodies for our students the themes of Catholic Schools Week: Learn; Serve; Lead; Succeed. Holy Redeemer School is thankful to the Liotta family for sharing their own “Aunt Joan” as this year’s Career Day Keynote Speaker.

OPT

Holy Redeemer Dedicates a Memorial in Honor of the Life of Mr. Liekweg

By Mrs. Cristina Morris

Looking for a way to honor the memory of beloved colleague, Joseph Liekweg, who passed away in 2017, faculty at Holy Redeemer came up with the idea of a statue of St. Joseph. Faculty and students raised funds for the statue from contributions to Faculty Dress-down Mondays, HR’s Artsonia Online Gallery, Arts Festival Bake Sale and donations from eighth graders’ ice cream sales.

Artesanos Don Bosco was commissioned to carve the wood plaque of St. Joseph given that Joe Liekweg, in addition to being HR’s religion teacher and counselor, was also an extremely gifted master carpenter. One of his favorite activities with students was crafting cutting boards from exquisite woods and toys for homeless children.

Artesanos Don Bosco (ADB) is a non-profit organization that supports self-employed, skilled artisans in Peru. It provides the opportunity for young people to remain in their villages while earning an income and improving their lives. ADB had previously created a set of Stations of the Cross as well



St Joseph Memorial for school in honor of Mr. Joseph Liekweg



St Joseph in Adoration Chapel dedicated in honor of Mr. Joseph Liekweg

as a full size Nativity for Holy Redeemer Church. Their mission of helping the young was a perfect fit with Joe Liekweg’s mission in life: inspiring and guiding young people to Christ.

Pastor Mark Hughes was so pleased with the idea that he commissioned a second statue that is already installed in the Adoration Chapel. The plaque honoring Joe Liekweg will be blessed during the upcoming Catholic Schools Week and will be installed in the middle school hallway. *St. Joseph, pray for us!*

OPT

Holy Redeemer School Families Support S.O.M.E.

The families of the Holy Redeemer School community demonstrated their generosity through our Advent Community Service Project by decorating shoeboxes and filling them with socks, hats, gloves, and toiletries. These shoeboxes went to So Others Might Eat and they distributed the shoeboxes to the homeless men and women who S.O.M.E. serves.

Community service is an integral part of any Catholic school, teaching students the importance of serving others—especially those in need. Holy Redeemer strives to create meaningful service projects for our students, to which the students can easily relate



Brendan and Colin Neary, along with their mother, transported all shoeboxes to SOME just in time for Christmas!



Students collect fruit to go along with the casseroles parishioners made for SOME.

and are able to see the value and benefits of helping those in need. Holy Redeemer proudly supports S.O.M.E. by collecting fruit to go along with the many casseroles the parishioners prepare each month. In addition to collecting fruit, classes take turns each month to stuff snack bags filled with cereal, pretzels, raisins, etc. It is ongoing projects like these that help to instill the value and importance of service.

OPT

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

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-St. Francis de Sales



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

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



Shrine of St. Jude Parish

12701 Veirs Mill Road
Rockville, MD

Rev. Paul Lee, STD, Pastor
301-946-8200

St. Jude Regional Catholic School

Mr. Glenn Benjamin, Principal
301-946-7888

Maureen Martin,
OPT Editor

MaureenCMartin@verizon.net

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

At St. Jude,

We ARE...educators of the whole child. SJRCs prides itself on providing a vibrant arts, music and community service education with a strong physical education program. Our sixth-graders experience the world first hand in Outdoor Education, our Drama Club gives our children a creative outlet beyond

Continued on page 26

Come, Adore Our Infant King!

The annual Infant of Prague celebration took place at the 5 p.m. Mass on Jan. 5th at the Shrine of St. Jude. The parish is blessed to have a beautiful statue of the Infant and each year honors Him during the Christmas Season while blessing the children of the parish.

The Infant of Prague's promise to each of us is, "The more you honor me, the more I will bless you."

A reception followed in the Thaddeus Room, featuring pizza, desserts, and hot chocolate along with door prizes of toys and Infant of Prague statues, chaplets, and devotional prayer books.

Be sure to check the parish bulletin next December for information on this annual event.



Open House at St. Jude Regional Catholic School, Jan. 30

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

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

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

OPT

More Shrine of St. Jude News on Page 37

SJRCs Drama Club Goes Into the Woods

By Michelle Ardillo

Amidst the excitement of Advent, the birth of Our Savior, and a long Christmas break, the St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCs) Drama Club held auditions for its spring musical, *Into the Woods* JR. The cast list was announced just before Christmas break with a first read-through of the show with the entire 28-member cast after school on Dec. 19. Director Becky Sella, also SJRCs's computer teacher, is excited to bring this challenging Sondheim musical to the Thaddeus Room stage. Ms. Sella will be supported by SJRCs music teacher Mrs. Amy White as music director.

Cast and crew members include 8th graders Sara Stanley, Michael Nicolas, Katherine Sheetz, Nicole Koehler, Andrew Rapisura, Isabelle Flores, Michael Gitau, Christina Young, Brigid Gibbons, Breanna Valcarcel, and Sequoia Santoro. Seventh graders participating in the production are Isabella Grijalba, Isabella Turner, Raquel Liriano, Christian Patiag, Timothy Sanders, Coralie Arias, Esha Tamang, Rachel Shrestha, Naomi Barish, Benjamin Lopez, and Grace Townsend. Joining Drama Club for the first time are the 6th grade students in the cast and crew including Santiago Flores,

Continued on page 35

St. Jude Regional Catholic School Celebrating 63 Years 1956–2019 OPEN HOUSE

January 30, 2019 • 9:00 – 11:30am & 6:00 – 8:00pm



- Resource & Learning Skills Program
- High School Preparatory Focus
- Spanish K-8
- Small Class Size
- Challenging Academic Curriculum

- Resources & Learning Skill Programs
- Extended Day Program
- Athletic Association (soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, T-ball)
- Full Day PreK 3 year old & 4 year old



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-Glenn Benjamin, Principal

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301-946-7888

www.stjuderockville.org





Knights Serve Up Their Chili

The Knights of Columbus did it again! With a dozen crockpots filled to the brim with every imaginable version of homemade chili...with beans, without; with lamb, pork, veal, prime beef and combinations of same...plenty of fresh tomatoes, bell pepper, celery, other chunky vegetables and mushrooms; Tabasco/Crystal/Texas Pete's/Worcestershire/Pick-a-Pepper and maybe some lemon or lime juice, a pinch or two of Greek Seasoning and garlic cloves.... and all left to do is scoop a serving up to go with some of the best honey cornbread on earth.

That's what it was like again this year for the KofC Chili Cook-off. Don't miss it next November!

OPT

Santa was back in the Parish

By Terry Waters

Over 200 guests of all ages cheerfully welcomed Santa back to SJN in mid-December for the annual Knights of Columbus "Breakfast with Santa". Despite the rainy weather outside, the mood inside the Parish Center was nothing less than festive and energizing! Special thanks to all the Knights, their wives, our SJN priests, and our partners for making another great memory.

And of course, kudos to Tom Firestone for putting smiles on so many faces as he spread joy throughout the room as Santa Claus! And speaking of Santa, thanks to the entire Bauer family for their generosity in donating toys so that every child (and youth volunteer) received a gift that morning.

I want to recognize and thank



Red was certainly the color of the day as Fathers Kevin and Sweeney welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Claus to the SJN Breakfast with Santa.

all those listed below for their outstanding participation and support of our "Breakfast with Santa" this year. Thanks for making such a meaningful difference in the lives of so many parish families at SJN!

Father Kevin
Father Bill
Father Sweeney
Jim & Cindy Barr
Steve & Gloria Rhodes
Carl Franceski
Bob Breiner
Ed Grundler
Marlene Shoemaker
Ron Bauer family
Gary Guy

Ed Sullivan
Dan & Beth Cipra
Nick Hiles
GK Tom Whippen
Phil & Irene Davidson
John Jankowski
Terry Waters
Manny & Cecilia Dayao
Richard & Maureen Joseph
Mike York
Mike Donnellan
Jerry Kelley--Photographer
Jim McCarthy
Larry Doyle
Mike May
Jamie Quintero
Tom & Susan Firestone
SJN Confirmation Class
Tom Miller



Christmas is time for the GREAT BIRTHDAY, and a lot of colorful gifts generously provided by the Bauer Family each year.



The Knights of Columbus process into SJN church with the Silver Rose and the sacred image of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Knights and The Silver Rose

By Rus Wester

Each year since 1960, the international Silver Rose Program has brought together Knights of Columbus members in Canada, the United States and Mexico as they sponsor the travel of hand-crafted Silver Roses through these three countries as they reaffirm the Order's commitment to the sanctity of human life.

Many parishes along their pilgrimage route invite the Knights to assemble for prayer and spiritual renewal while honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe and praying together for respect for life, from conception to natural death.

This marked the 58th year of this prayerful tradition leading up to the December 12th Feast Day celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe in her Basilica Shrine in Mexico City.



Made of precious metal, the Silver Rose reminds that each life is precious, from conception in the womb until natural death.

SJN parish first hosted the Silver Rose in 2010.

OPT

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

Fr. Kevin Regan
Pastor

Rus Wester
OPT Editor



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FOOD DRIVE

Con't from page 12

year, we collected a little over 1,000 cans of food, and 11,900 were collected overall.

Many cans were brought into the school and the students received an "out of uniform" day as a prize. Many St. Mary's students volunteered on a cold Saturday morning to assist in collecting cans in nearby neighborhoods. St. Mary's came up with the slogan "Cans of Hope," and it appeared on all the t-shirts that volunteers wore this year. Cans of food really do represent hope to many people who are struggling. It shows we care, and they are not alone. "I am proud of our school for helping to give HOPE to



St. Mary's School students and parishioners collected over 12,000 cans of hope during this year's Greg Gannon Canned Food Drive in December.

those in need," School Principal Mrs. Eisel said. Thanks to all those who volunteered and donated cans this year!

OPT

TWO SIDES

Con't from page 12

are given something that you have been longing and wishing for, you jump up and down with excitement with a great big smile shining on your face. It feels amazing to get something you really want, and I used to think it was the best feeling in the world... until I gave a few strangers Christmas presents.

That year, my mom and I had learned about a family in need with three young girls, and we wanted to make sure they had presents under their tree on Christmas. We bought new backpacks, stationary, and crafts to give them on Christmas Day. We drove to their house and had not even stepped out of the car when we saw three

joyful faces peeking out at our car. The family ran to the door to greet us and we gave them their gifts. I was certainly not expecting such a big smile to appear on their faces. They squealed and jumped in delight, thanked and hugged us, and we were on our way back home. Seeing their great joy and gratitude brightened my day, and it was the best feeling ever. Knowing that we had made their day a little brighter brought a smile to my face, and their happiness was more contagious than the flu. I learned that receiving gifts is always great, but giving gifts is wonderful, too. The tradition of gift giving began with Jesus, and we are continuing the tradition. It spreads joy and happiness, and you will find that grateful smiles are like Christmas gifts themselves.

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ST JUDE

Con't from page 24

the classroom walls, and our students who may need an extra helping hand can draw on the expertise of a full-time resource teacher.

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

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

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



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

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

To learn first-hand what makes the St. Jude community unique, attend the upcoming Open House on Wednesday, Jan. 30, from 9-11:30 a.m. and 6-8 p.m., or schedule a visit to see students and teachers in action. You can also learn more about St. Jude Regional Catholic School on its website—www.stjuderockville.org. Additionally, Mr. Glenn Benjamin, principal, can answer any questions you may have about the school or the application process. He can be reached at 301-946-7888 or Glenn.Benjamin@stjuderockville.org.

OPT

WONDERFUL

Con't from page 21

another collection, also organized by our awesome eighth graders. Posters were made and hung throughout the school requesting donations of new hats, scarves, and gloves. It did not take long for students to fill an entire box with goods. These items were then presented to guests of our parish Sunday dinner for the homeless.

Our last collection has become somewhat of an annual tradition here at Lourdes. Organized by a couple of Lourdes parents, the Coats of Many Colors Coat Drive collects new and gently used coats to help those in need stay warm during the cold winter season. A local dry cleaner, Express Dry Cleaning, generously cleans our dry-clean-only coats from the Coat Drive at no charge!



Eighth graders gleefully ready gifts for delivery.

Thank you to everyone in the Lourdes community that made our Christmas Giving such a success this year. Living by the words of St. Francis of Assisi was truly on display this Advent Season at Our Lady of Lourdes School, "For it is in giving that we receive."

OPT

MATTIE

Con't from page 3

He was a spirit meant to be," said Jeni Stepanek, Mattie's mother.

Jeni recalls that doctors and many she knew expected her to have an abortion since her first three children all had been born with medical challenges and two children already had died. But Jeni felt that Mattie was a gift from God.

She remembers repeating to herself while pregnant and afterwards, "I will do whatever I can to let this child know you matter; you have purpose. I will create the celebration of your life. I will make sure any moment you can be happy, you are

happy. And whatever purpose you are here for, I will help amplify that purpose."

We give thanks for Mattie and for Jeni's decision to carry her child to term.

In 2001, when Mattie was 11, he spoke to young teens in Southern Maryland at a pro-life rally, explaining that the building blocks of life were hope, peace, courage, forgiveness and kindness. These building blocks, he explained, lead to the understanding that life is a gift, not a choice.

Mattie's brief life had many challenges, yet he accomplished a great deal in 13 years. He wrote six bestselling books of poetry, and one bestselling book on peace-making, speaking sincerely about how peace was possible on television talk shows,

inspiring everyone with his message that hope is real, and that life is worthy. At an early age, Mattie developed a profound relationship with God, and these spiritual conversations shaped his poems which he called his Heartsongs, which would later be published in his books.

Mattie J.T. Stepanek (1990-2004) was a poet and peace-maker who invited us all to "Remember to play after every storm!" A cause for sainthood has been established to show how Mattie, prenatally diagnosed but also welcomed and valued by family, friends and his hometown priest, is a role model for living a life of faith, hope and charity. For more information, visit: <http://mattie4sainthood.org/>

OPT

SOAR Spring Trips!

Registration begins Tuesday, February 12, from 8:30am–2pm

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation has released its Spring 2019 Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation (SOAR) travel program for active adults age 55 and over. Unless noted, all transportation is provided on rest-room-equipped motor coaches.

You may register for a SOAR trip in any of four ways. The fastest and easiest way is to use the internet and go to ActiveMONTGOMERY.org. You may also mail your trip application, fax it to 240-777-6818, or register in person at 4010 Randolph Road.

If you have questions about the registration process, please call 240-777-6840. If you have questions or require more information about a specific trip, call the SOAR Coordinator at 240-777-4926.

Spring SOAR trips include:

Cherry Blossom Cruise and Lunch

April 3
\$89

Guided tour of historic Carlisle, Pa.

April 11
\$66

Taste of Little Italy, St Leo's Church in Baltimore

April 17
\$70

American Revolution Center and National Constitution Center in Philadelphia

April 24, 25
\$92

Cold War Museum in Va. and Navy Yard Cold War Gallery in DC with guide Gary Powers, Jr.

May 1
\$69

Guided tour of historic Odessa, Delaware

May 15
\$60

A Patrick Henry Tour of Scotchtown, Va

May 22, 23
\$99

Sailing Trip on Chesapeake Bay

May 30
\$80

White Water Rafting Trip on the Shenandoah River

June 7
\$86

Walking Tour of Georgetown

June 12, 13
\$45

Major League Baseball

Seats are located in gallery/upper box seats. There is walking and step climbing required at each game.

Nationals vs. NY Mets (10:30am)

May 16
\$59

Orioles vs. New York Yankees (10:00am)

May 23
\$59

Nationals vs. Chicago White Sox (10:30am)

June 5
\$59

Orioles vs. Nationals (4:30pm)

July 17
\$59

Day Trippers

The Department of Recreation also offers a less strenuous travel program, the Day Trippers program for all ages. Trips leave and return from the Olney Manor Recreational Park.

Spring 2019 Day Trippers programs include:

Philadelphia International Flower Show

March 7
\$89

Observation Deck at CEB Tower in Rosslyn, Va. and Newseum in Washington, DC

March 22
\$84

American Music Theatre, In The Mood: 25th Silver Celebration Tour, Lancaster, Pa.

March 30
\$109

High Tea Luncheon and shopping in Lititz, Pa.

April 4, 5
\$89

“Jesus” at Sight and Sound Theatre, Lancaster, Pa.

April 13
\$149

Shen Yun Performing Arts at Kennedy Center

April 18
\$149

Kitchen Shoppe cooking demo/ gourmet lunch

Annual Ocean City “Springfest” & Berlin Blues Festival

May 4
\$63

Garden House High Tea, Harpist, Elkridge Furnace Inn

May 10
\$109

Chanticleer Gardens & Estate Tour (Pa.)

May 17
\$79

Frederick (Md.) Arts Show

June 1
\$49

“Grease” at Toby’s Dinner Theatre, Columbia, Md.

June 15
\$104

Completing an Online Transaction Safely

Late last month, police arrested a suspect for armed robbery at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and East West Highway in Silver Spring after agreeing online to a sales transaction. The seller-victim and buyer-suspect met for the sale/exchange and there was a disagreement over the transaction. To help reduce and deter such crimes, the Montgomery County Police Department has designated safe Exchange Zones for residents to complete online transactions. These Exchange Zones are located at each of the six police district station’s lobbies and parking lots (with the exception of the Second District parking lot); see addresses below.

When selling or purchasing items from an unknown person, the Montgomery County Police Department offers the following safety tips:

- Always meet the buyer or seller at an exchange zone that is well populated, well lit, and preferably at a designated police Exchange Zone.
- Tell a friend or family member where you’re going to meet someone and when possible, take a friend with you.
- Inform the buyer/seller that you will not be alone.
- Do not invite strangers into your home.
- Never give out any personal or financial information.
- When dealing with large sums of cash, don’t be afraid to tell the buyer that you will want to check the bills for authenticity.
- It is OK to show a buyer that you have an item, but do not surrender it until you have checked the validity of the currency.
- Look for the denomination specific security features. Each bill has a specific watermark and security thread.

Sometimes an advertised sale is a scam...trust your instincts – if it sounds like a scam or too good to be true, it probably is.

Montgomery County Police Department Exchange Zones

Headquarters/First District Station

100 Edison Park Drive, Gaithersburg

Second District Station (LOBBY ONLY)

4823 Rugby Avenue, Bethesda

Third District Station

1002 Milestone Drive, Silver Spring

Fourth District Station

2300 Randolph Road, Wheaton

Fifth District Station

20000 Aircraft Drive, Germantown

Sixth District Station

45 West Watkins Mill Rd, Gaithersburg

Please note that Montgomery County Police employees will not participate in transactions or act as witnesses.

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Unlike most communities, Maplewood residents own their own homes. In addition, there are several tax and financial benefits that you won’t find anywhere else. With a wide selection of residences, which you can customize to suit your style, you’ll find it easy to bring your treasured belongings with you — including your beloved pets!

Best of all Maplewood Park Place allows you to declare your independence by giving you the freedom to enjoy life and let our professional and caring staff take care of the details. Enjoy Maplewood’s full calendar of lively events and social activities, as well as fine dining, indoor swimming & fitness center, workshop, on-site medical clinic — just to name a few of our services. Plus, on-site assisted living and skilled nursing — if and when you need it.

Schedule your appointment to discover the difference 301-530-0500.



NIH offers tips to keep older adults safe in winter weather

As the winter months approach, it is important to understand risks that cold exposure can pose for older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Older adults can lose body heat quickly, and changes in the body as we age can make it harder to recognize a decrease in body temperature. The result can be a serious condition called hypothermia.

Hypothermia—a dangerous drop in core body temperature—can occur when it is cold inside or outside and the body is unable to produce the heat it needs to function. Even a relatively short exposure to cold conditions can result in hypothermia. Older adults are especially vulnerable to hypothermia because their bodies' response to cold can be diminished by chronic medical conditions and by use of some medicines, including over-the-counter cold remedies. For an older person, a body temperature of 95°F or lower can cause many health problems, such as heart rhythm disturbances, kidney problems, liver damage, or worse.

Warning signs of hypothermia include slowed or slurred speech; sleepiness or confusion; shivering or stiffness in the arms and legs; poor control over body movements; slow reactions, a weak pulse, or a core body temperature of 95 degrees F or lower. If you think someone has the warning signs for hypothermia, call 9-1-1 right away and try to move the person to a warmer place.

To help older adults understand the risks, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) at

the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has some tips to avoid some of the dangers and prevent hypothermia:

- When going outside in the cold, wear a hat, scarf, and gloves or mittens to prevent loss of body heat through your head and hands. Wear several layers of loose clothing to help trap warm air between the layers.
- If possible, let others know when you're planning to spend time outdoors and carry a fully charged cellphone.
- Make sure your home is warm enough. Set your thermostat to at least 68 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (F). Even mildly cool homes with temperatures from 60 to 65 degrees F can lead to hypothermia in older adults.
- To stay warm at home, wear long underwear under your clothes, along with socks and slippers. Use a blanket or afghan to keep your legs and shoulders warm and wear a hat or cap indoors.

The NIA has free information about hypothermia in a brochure "Stay Safe in Cold Weather," and a fact sheet in Spanish "La hipotermia: un peligro del clima frío." You can find these and other free publications on healthy aging on the NIA website (www.nia.nih.gov) or order free copies by calling NIA's toll-free number 1-800-222-2225.

OPT

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RSVP/AARP Tax-Aide Program

RSVP/AARP Tax-Aide provides free federal and state (Maryland) tax preparation services for low-to-moderate income taxpayers who live or work in Montgomery County. Special attention is given to those 60 years old and older. The program runs during tax season.

The program has more than 100 volunteers who are trained to prepare simple tax forms. Each year we prepare nearly 5,000 federal and state (Maryland) returns.

The AARP flier provides more information on which returns are considered simple and which are too complex (out-of-scope) for the program. The flyer is available at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/tax-aide.

Taxpayers with complex tax returns

The RSVP/AARP
Tax-Aide Program
will open on
January 28, 2019

To hear a recorded message
call 240-777-2577.

will be advised to seek paid tax assistance.

The RSVP/AARP Tax-Aide program prepares taxes at more than 20 different locations across Montgomery County and, to respect taxpayers' time, works by appointment only. Please review the AARP flier before making an appointment.

OPT

Maryland Senior Olympics Registration Open

The 2019 Maryland Senior Olympics will be held from May 1 through Oct. 7 at venues in Montgomery County, Howard, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Baltimore City and Frederick counties. There are 25 sports on the state level, including non-qualifying participatory sports: billiards, bocce, croquet, disc golf, air gun and trap shooting, and lawn bowling.

To participate, you must be aged 50 and above.

Registration deadline is two weeks prior to your event.

Registration opens late this winter. Teams and individuals can register online or by mail-in.

Visit for www.mdseniorolympics.org/registration.html for details.



Currently Scheduled 2019 MSO Events (updated Jan. 11)

May 1	Cycling 5k Time Trials, Davidsonville Elementary School, Davidsonville.
May 16	Billiards, Schweinhaut Senior center, Silver Spring.
June 5	Cycling 10k Time Trials, Davidsonville Elementary School, Davidsonville.
July 27	Table Tennis, Potomac Community Center, Potomac.
Aug. 10-11	Track & Field, Howard County Community College, Columbia. This is a USTAF-sanctioned meet.
Aug. 24	Volleyball (men and women), Meadowbrook Athletic Complex, Ellicott City.
Aug. 26	Bowling (singles), Brunswick Normandy Lanes, Ellicott City.
Aug. 27	Bowling (doubles), Brunswick Normandy Lanes, Ellicott City.
Aug. 31	5k Road Race, Kentlands/Lakelands 5k, Gaithersburg.
Sept. 4	Racquetball (singles), Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Center, Millersville.
Sept. 5	Racquetball (doubles), Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Center, Millersville.
Sept. 5-8	Softball (men's and women's), Olney Manor Regional Park, Olney.
Sept. 7	Badminton, Bauer Drive Community Center, Rockville.
Sept. 7	Shuffleboard, Leisure World, Silver Spring.
Sept. 14	Swimming, Germantown Indoor Swim Center, Boyds.
Sept. 26-27	Bocce, Asbury Methodist Village, Gaithersburg.
Sept. 28-29	Croquet, Ginger Grove in Annapolis and West River Wickets in West River.
Sept. 30	Archery, Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center, Parkton.
Oct. 3-4	Air Gun Shooting, Associated Gun Club of Baltimore, Marriottsville.
Oct. 6	10k Road Race, Sinai Race For Our Kids, Baltimore.
Oct. 7	Golf, Laytonsville Golf Course, Gaithersburg.

Senior Recreation Programs

Whether you're interested in the arts, adult swim, basketball, cooking, dance, fitness (even water fitness), golf, guitar, pottery, strength training, tai chi, tap dancing, tennis, yoga, and more, you might well find something you'll like.

Some recreation activities are accessed with a yearly pass, which are available at reduced fees for residents age 55 and older. Review all your options to purchase an annual pass. You have several options, including the "Total Rec" membership that includes swimming, exercising, basketball games and more; the "Fit n' Play" pass for exercise buffs; the "Gym Rat" pass for those interested mainly in pick-up games; the "All Pool" pass and the "Summer Swim" pass for swimmers; and the "Senior Sneakers" pass.

As you'll see, one of the most economical fitness options is the Senior Sneakers pass, which costs \$50/year for County residents who are age 55 or older. It's good for access to any Community Center Exercise Room and Open Gym during center open hours. It's the perfect pass for the boomer or senior who wants to work out and stay fit!

Many activities are free or low cost. Find out what's available where and how to register by visiting: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/senior/recreation.html

OPT

PRIDE

Con't from page 21

be friends and grow up and learn together despite our differences. At Lourdes, we do not merely accept and enroll students. We offer a sense of belonging. This awesome respect shows we are better together.

On Tuesday, January 29, Our Lady of Lourdes will be hosting an Open House. We invite all to attend. On this day, you will see and hear all that make our Catholic School great: kindness, diversity, inclusion,

teaching, and learning in a positive and supportive Catholic School environment.

The pride of the Catholic Church is our Catholic Schools. Catholic Education provides parents and children with something uniquely different than public and/or private schools. We share Jesus in the light of our Catholic Faith in all subjects, instances, and people. Our Lady of Lourdes is a tremendous example of this. We invite you to become part of our tradition. We are Our Lady of Lourdes!

OPT

St. Mary - Rockville



Following the GGCDF, St. Mary's celebrated with the annual St. Nick Festival. Santa came for a visit spreading joy to all who came to see him.

TREE SALE

Con't from page 22

waiting for prospective customers.

"The first year, we made \$4,000 because we were new to the business," said Wayne Burnside, ministry coordinator of the St. Francis Christmas Tree Sale from 1994 to 2015. "We got started late. They didn't sell out. But, in the second year, we got to \$7,000."

In 2018, the St. Francis Christmas Tree Sale garnered record sales of \$14,000 for the church's general coffers – a tidy sum that Fr. John Dillon attributes to both the quality of the trees and wreaths sold and that people simply look forward to it every year. "It provides good companionship," Fr. Dillon said. "It is a great opportunity for those among us who enjoy being outdoors in sometimes bracing weather. People enjoy helping the parish."

Yet, this is not to say that selling Christmas trees a quarter of a century has always gone smoothly. The ministry coordinators have found that 400 trees are the parish's "sweet spot"; the year they tried to raise inventory to 500 trees, sales weren't as brisk. Coordinators also say that 80 percent of their tree sales come from parishioners. "A lot of people who don't contribute may see buying a tree as their contribution to the church," Burnside said.

The tree sale activities normally start in August of each year, when

the ministry coordinators place an order with a tree broker, Hortu Sales LLC in Wisconsin. However, according to Ministry Coordinator Brian Pettit, an ongoing shortage with Douglas fir trees over the past few years has pushed up the start date for sale activities to April of each year.

What is vital to the smooth operation of the Christmas Tree Sale is the dedicated support of volunteers, said Burnside and Pettit. Several people come back year after year, with two volunteers taking the same shift every day of the sale. In fact, Pettit, 29, originally took over the ministry three years ago from Burnside, 65, after having volunteered as a high school student seeking Student Service Learning (SSL) hours. "I learned from the best," Pettit said. "We've been partners in crime."

Even as their year-over-year net profit increased 3 percent in 2018, there was an 8 percent increase in tree sales to the Christmas Tree Sale, which has caused some price increases for customers. In 2018, the sales team also collected \$1,291 in tips, which either goes to a specific family in need or is given to the Parish Outreach Fund for distribution to parishioners in need.

"We make money, and that's great, but it's not a prime motivator," Burnside said. "It's fellowship of the church."

OPT

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Raphael House
Rockville • 301-217-9116



www.VictoryHousing.org

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L to R. 1st Row: Myra Elipascua, Erlinda Basamot, Fr. Macias Serafica, Apen Juan, Aisa Sildo; **2nd Row:** Analyn Abriol, Misty Baldoza, Trish Betonio, Imelda Flores, Lumen Delfin; **3rd Row:** Jorge Gonzalez, Victor Basamot, Froilan Manansala, Nards Delfin, Lina Organo, Vicky Nimer

Christmas Celebration at Christ the King

By Isidra Molina, CTK DRE

Christ the King Parish had a wonderful celebration of Christmas with its different Masses in English and Spanish. During Christmas Eve Masses, one bilingual was dedicated especially to children and their families, celebrated at 4:00 pm. with Fr. Stephen Carter Celebrating. Children of the Religious Education/Catechesis Program, from kindergarten to Confirmation-age, as well as those in the RCIA-for-children program, acted out the First Christmas, dressed as Joseph, Mary, Angel Gabriel and shepherds. All parents of the Christ the King community were invited to dress up their children, those not in the play, as angels, shepherds or animals of the stable. During the procession at the beginning of Mass, every child played a music instrument such as drum or a Christmas bell, singing Silent Night until they arrived together, gathering in front of the stable to sing and dance a joyful Christmas song.

Later, at 8:00pm the same night the parish youth and Catechist assistants performed the same Christmas Play, during that Mass in Spanish with Religious Education Program assistant, Sister Monica Garcia helping along with the parish Young Adults Spanish Group to coordinate the evening Christmas Play.



Fr. Steve entering the Nave holding the Baby Jesus preceded by parishioners, Hilda and Ofilio Quezada

OPT

Simbang Gabi at Christ the King

By Maria Kendall, OPT parishioner

The Filipino tradition of Christmas novena, Simbang Gabi or Mass at Dawn, was celebrated for the 6th year at Christ the King Parish. It is popularly known as Misa de Gallo or "Mass of the Rooster" because it used to be celebrated early in the morning after the rooster's crow. Spaniards who christianized the Philippines introduced the tradition as a way of preparing spiritually for the birth of Jesus. At Christ the King, the Masses were celebrated at 8:00 P.M. to accommodate the schedules of families. After each Mass, a small package of surprise treats

awaits the attendees as they leave the church.

The Lord Is My Shepherd group coordinated the Masses which were sponsored by different parish families. Fr. Andy Gonzalo, Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul in Washington D.C. celebrated the first Mass. He had to fly to Manila because his mother passed away suddenly. It was a blessing that Fr. Macias Serafica who is visiting his family in Washington was available to celebrate the remaining Masses. Fr. Serafica is the Pastor of San Isidro Labrador Parish in Pasay City, Philippines.

OPT

Our Lady of Mercy

Mercy Pre Kindergarten: Committed to Excellence

"This conference is the vitamin for my teaching heart." This is how Mercy's Pre K 3 teacher, Mrs. Christine Castro, describes the NAEYC conference she recently attended. "In my 30 plus years of teaching, NAEYC had been my favorite conference because I get energized, rejuvenated, motivated and encouraged to keep doing what I have been doing. It validates and sharpens my familiar skills. It lifts up my spirit and makes me excited to keep teaching. I personally

want to bring spirit and excitement in every unit and theme I teach because my students will feel the same. I want them to enjoy learning."

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the largest early childhood education conference in the world. Each year, tens of thousands of teachers, program administrators, students, and researchers choose from hundreds of presentations and exhibits to explore the latest trends and research in the early childhood

field. Mrs. Castro has attended this intense professional development conference ten times. This year, she participated in 20 hours of continuing education training during the 3-day conference. Part of our vision at Mercy is to achieve the highest level of instructional excellence in every classroom, in every teaching moment, with every child. We are grateful to Mrs. Castro and our entire teaching staff, for their unwavering commitment to professional development.

OPT

Christmas Generosity

By Liz Weiss and Chris Tan, members, CTK Social Concerns Commission

Christmas giving began early this year at Christ the King parish. Its Social Concerns Commission sponsored two projects: Boxes of Joy and the Giving Tree.

The Cross Catholic Box of Joy program began in October, filling shoe-sized boxes filled with gifts for children. Each parishioner was invited to take home a container, choosing items for a girl or a boy within a specific age range. The

boxes were returned by All Saints Day as they were to be shipped overseas in time for Christmas to children in impoverished areas, children who had never before received a gift. A note in each box informed them that the gifts were from families in the United States and that they represent the greatest gift of all, Jesus, God's gift to us.

In December the commission began its annual Giving Tree project, whereby parishioners take a paper ornament from the tree situated in the vestibule, and return it (this year) with gift cards. This year 43 families and 132 children were assisted, the children receiving the gift cards to choose their own Christmas present. Each family received gift cards for groceries. Parishioners were once again very generous, making a merrier Christmas for so many families. Many thanks go to Christ the King's Parochial Administrator, Fr. Steve Carter, and the members of the commission for organizing and supporting these projects.

OPT



Live and on the Air!

Mercy Morning Live (MML) aired for the first time last month from Mercy's fully renovated Broadcast Studio. New equipment, flooring, backdrop, green screen, lighting, news desk and more, have completely modernized the studio. In addition to the morning announcements and prayer, the new technology will allow our student broadcast team to film news clips outside of the studio, at events, in the classrooms, etc. We will also be able to stream live broadcasts via Mercy's Facebook page!



An evening in Italy at Mercy's Father-Daughter dance.



The story about our Savior's birth told beautifully by Mercy students during the annual Christmas Pageant.

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

It's hard to keep anniversary years straight at SFIS

Saint Francis International School is in a unique position in the Archdiocese of Washington. On one hand, SFIS is young school having been founded in 2010. The first SFIS programs started with Summer Camp at St. Mark the Evangelist in June, 2010, and the first classes took place at St. Camillus in August, 2010. That means that *next* school year SFIS will mark a milestone with its tenth school year.

But, Saint Francis International School is also officially the successor to several parochial schools whose legacies go back decades. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of St. Mark the Evangelist parish and school in Hyattsville. In October, Fr. Roberto Cortes-Campos celebrated a special mass at SFIS honoring the Religious of Jesus and Mary who founded St. Mark School and thus laid the foundation for Saint Francis International School. On Sunday, January 27, at the 9 am mass the SFIS school choir will be providing the music ministry at St. Mark and the parish will be honored with a plaque from the National Catholic Educational Association recognizing their 60 years of commitment to Catholic education through St. Mark School and now SFIS.

St. Camillus School was founded in 1954, which means that the 2019-2020 school year will mark the 65th year that St. Camillus parish has sponsored a Catholic school. The ongoing commitment allows SFIS to serve over 440 students this year age three through eighth grade. This spring, the first students to graduate from SFIS back in 2011 will be graduating from college.



At left, thanks to Franciscan Br. Gino, St. Nicholas made his annual feast day visit to SFIS and even left gold (chocolate) coins in students' shoes.

Below, Mr. Henry Herrera directed another amazing Christmas concert for grades 1-8 and they were joined this year by the school bands.



Above, on the last day before vacation, Pre-K and Kindergarten performed a wonderful series of songs, dances, and poems to prepare for Christmas.



Above, SFIS has a large Orthodox Christian community and so it is important to make sure that the Christmas season stretches out to include Epiphany and the Orthodox Christmas celebration.

At left, there was officially snow as part of this year's Christmas season on the SFIS campus!



SFIS continues the ministry of St. Mark and St. Camillus Schools that has now prepared thousands and thousands to become wise and faithful members of our world.

SFIS is proud to count as its alumni not only those young men and women who have graduated from Saint Francis International School but the thousands of men and women who have attended SFIS, St. Mark School, and St. Camillus School since the 1950s. The education at SFIS today seeks to continue the good work of so many parishioners, pastors, teachers, and the Sisters who set high standards for what can be accomplished when a community is committed to Catholic schools.

With the recently renovated Camillia Room at Saint Francis, the school is inviting alumni of St. Camillus, St. Mark, and SFIS to consider organizing reunions marking these major anniversaries. Alumni interested in reunions or other events are encouraged to contact SFIS at office@sfismd.org or 301-434-2344.

OPT

St. Francis International School

www.saintfrancisinternational.org

Tobias A. Harkleroad,
Principal

St. Camillus Campus
1500 Camillus Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20903

St. Mark Campus
7501 Adelphi Road
Hyattsville, MD 20783

St. Raphael

Jingle All the Way! CYO Basketball is Underway

Another exciting CYO basketball season has started for SRS Angels in third through eighth grades. Spirit Day kicked off the season with a teachers-vs.-students game full of energy and enthusiasm. This CYO season promises to be filled with fun—go, Angels!

OPT

Coming up in the New Year

Registration for St. Raphael School and St. Raphael Nursery School for 2019-20 is open. Visit the Admissions Page of our website at www.straphael-schoolmd.org for more information.

Jan. 27-Feb. 1: Catholic Schools Week celebrates Catholic education and all who make it possible with a full schedule of special events.

Jan. 28: SRS and SRNS double open house (new date) invites interested parents to learn more about our schools and tour our campus. SRNS (3's, 4's, 4-Plus) is at 9:15 a.m., and SRS (K-8) is at 10:45 a.m.

Feb. 25-28: Read Across

America raises reading awareness and encourages the practice of this lifelong skill in memory of Dr. Seuss' 115th birthday.

March 16: SpringFest cornhole tournament and community fellowship returns...online auctioning will take place beforehand!

June 1: SRNS Golden Anniversary save the date for a celebration of Catholic preschooling 50 years in the making... "then-and-now" photos, memorabilia, and other memories are being collected. Check out a preview at bit.ly/SRNS50years.

OPT

A Busy Season for St. Raphael Sodality

St. Raphael's Sodality participated in many activities offered by the parish during the Advent season. At the Mother Teresa Luncheon, we served food to the homeless who attended with the Little Sisters of the Poor. We also joined them in singing Christmas carols and socializing during lunch. Sodality coordinated a Christmas party for the seniors at Raphael House. The fifth graders of St. Raphael School sang Christmas songs with the seniors and handed out stockings that we filled with gifts. Sodality also contributed gifts to the many charities on the Giving Trees in our church.

St. Raphael Adult Club and Sodality visited the Museum of the Bible, a 430,000 square foot building featuring rare artifacts spanning 3,500 years of history. This spacious museum offers an immersive and personalized experience with the Bible and its historical and ongoing impact on the world. We saw exhibits from the Vatican Museums and Vatican Library; original handwritten scrolls; an exhibit from the



Sodality members Mihuryl Hernandez, Shirley Lee, and Esther Stello visit the Museum of the Bible.

Israel Antiquities Authority; and stories of the Bible from Abraham through the creation of Israel to the ministry of the church.

In February we will have our Annual Sodality Tea with a Noteworthy (musical) theme. We will enjoy delicious tea sandwiches and desserts and sing our favorite

songs. In March we will again join with the Adult Club for a Lenten retreat at St. Anthony's Monastery in Ellicott City.

Sodality continues to faithfully pray the Holy Rosary after the 6:30 am and 9:00 am daily Masses. Please join us.

OPT

Special Mission to Cuba

By Joanna Roberts, Parishioner & Head of OLQP Rosary Society

At the end of November 2018, a delegation from Our Lady Queen of Poland & St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Silver Spring, Maryland, traveled to Cuba on a special mission. Our goal was to deliver a portrait painting of St. John Paul II to the church located in the town of Camajuani in Cuba, where Fr. Grzegorz Chrapla is the parish priest. Fr. Grzegorz is well known to Washington Polonia, having visited OLQP parish several times. He is a missionary priest, originally from Poland.

The image of St. John Paul II, which was painted by artist Janusz Migasiuk from Chicago, was funded by a group of Our Lady Queen of Poland parishioners. [A painting of St. John Paul II by the same artist hangs in the Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish church in Silver Spring.] The “messengers” received a very warm welcome from the local people and the priests. We had a chance to see and experience the dedication and hard work of Fr.



The OLQP parishioners who traveled to Cuba to deliver the painting of St. John Paul II standing with Fr. Grzegorz Chrapla are Joanna Roberts, Dorota Ponikiewska, and Viola Migasiuk.

Grzegorz and to participate in a solemn, very special, Holy Mass. We were particularly impressed by how the people love the priest and how well he communicates with them in Spanish.

Father Grzegorz's dream is to install the delivered St. John Paul II image together with images of the Merciful Jesus and Sister St.

Faustina, along with the relics of the two Saints, in the Camajuani church, thus spreading the message of God's Mercy among the Cuban people, who so desperately need it.

The installation is planned for Divine Mercy Sunday, on April 28, 2019. Much help and support, especially lots of prayers, are needed to accomplish this goal.

OPT

Koledy Concert at Our Lady Queen of Poland

By Bozena Buda, ED

There is no other season like Christmas. The anticipation of Christ's birth and the rituals surrounding it are both solemn and joyful.

At Our Lady Queen of Poland & St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Silver Spring, MD, the season is particularly meaningful because of our Polish traditions. The singing of An important part is the Christmas carols is an important part of it. Not only does the congregation sing them at Mass and Christmas gatherings, but the youth of the parish are encouraged to contribute their vocal and instrumental talents to what is now an annual Koledy (carols) parish concert. at Our Lady Queen of Poland.

Again this year, the youth of the parish presented their annual Koledy concert to a very appreciative audience on January 6, 2019. The annual concertIt was been organized and directed by OLQP parish organist Mr. Janusz Bilinski, who accompanied them on the keyboard..

Polish Christmas carols are very rhythmic, whether they are solemn or lively. This year's concert



OLQP Pastor Rev. Jerzy Frydrych with the Choir, led by Mr. Janusz Bilinski, that performed the Koledy (Polish Christmas carols) on January 6, 2019. The artists included Adam Zgol, Aleksandra Bilinski, Jakub Hlasko, and several of them played on more than one instrument. Julia Lechlitter, Mireille Lechlitter, Natalia Hlasko, Oliver Bilinski, Paula Hlasko, Sebastian Bilinski, Victoria Stanislawek and Sister Danuta Przybylek.

included a variety of instrument-tiety of Koledy.. In addition to singing, most many of the participants performers also played carols on differentvarious instruments, including the flute, saxophone, clarinet, bassoon, keyboard, and percussion.

The artists displayed a great deal of enthusiasm and wonderful creativity, particularly in their instrumental renditions. The artists were Adam Zgol, Aleksandra Bilinski, Jakub Hlasko, and several of them played on more than one instrument. Julia Lechlitter, Mireille Lechlitter, Natalia Hlasko, Oliver Bilinski, Paula Hlasko, Sebastian Bilinski, and Victoria Stanislawek.

A special treat this year was the solo by Sister Danuta Przybylek from the Pallotti Convent. We are blessed to have such a talented and hard-working group in our parish. and Mireille Lechlitter played beautifully on violins. Aleksandra, Sebastian, and Oliver Bilinski sang as well as played on several instruments, including the clarinet and saxophone. Adam Zgol played on the bassoon. Natalia and Paula Hlasko played the flute. Jakub Hlasko was on the percussion. Victoria Stanislawek, Adam, and Aleksandra sang many Christmas carols. Sister Danuta Przybylo sand a beautiful solo carol.

OPT



St. Nicholas visited Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish on December 9, 2018, and gave out presents to children.



The Offertory procession at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 2019. OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych accepts the Offertory gifts from Polish Scouts Artyiom and Daniel who are accompanied by altar servers and other parish children.



OLQP parish children presented their good deed hearts to Baby Jesus in the manger on January 6th. During Advent, children noted the good deeds they did on cut-out hearts and then brought them to church to place in the manger on the feast of the Three Kings.

It pays to advertise in
Our Parish Times

**Our Lady
Queen of Poland**
9700 Rosensteel Avenue
Silver Spring, MD

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

Bozena Buda, OPT Editor
301-495-3377
bbudadc@gmail.com

Resurrection Debuts a New Christmas Pageant

By Emily Kranking

On every December 24th, the Church of the Resurrection always hosts its annual Christmas Children's Pageant. During the pageant, the children of the parish gather to tell the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. But this year, the pageant was completely rewritten.

Last year, the format of the Mass changed, which introduced a flag portion from the children and new songs. This year, the storytelling itself was written, due to a lower participation from children this year. "We needed to make a quick decision as to how best to continue with so few participants," commented director Catherine Halpin. "In past years, we've had close to 20 kids participating from the start. So this was extremely odd to see so few kids at



Photo by Church of the Resurrection

After the pageant, children were invited to talk to Fr. Barry. "The kids have a lot to say that contributes to the message that night," said Fr. Barry. "We make it their Christmas Mass."

the first rehearsal."

Minus the inclusion of Mary and Joseph, the pageant was completely rewritten. Instead of the iconic story of the Nativity, the children reacted the famous scene from A Charlie Brown Christmas where Linus recites Luke 2:8-20 with additional dialogue by Halpin. "The Charlie Brown Christmas Special has been a tradition for so many," she says. "The way Linus, alone on the stage in that simple moment, really does help us focus."

However, as the rehearsals went on, the number of the cast started to grow. By the time there were enough children for the original pageant, it was too late in the process to revert back. However, the shortened pageant was admired by everyone on the team. "We got some nice input from our children volunteers," said

Fr. Barry. "A girl said that she could easily handle the Linus part, and she immediately auditioned and won the part! We wrote the pageant around that suggestion!"

Will the new Christmas pageant be permanent? Father Barry and Catherine Halpin aren't planning on it! "Maybe next year, a zip line and a fog machine for the angels to fly in!" Halpin laughed. Turning the answer to Fr. Barry, he explains, "I have written about fifteen different versions of Christmas pageants, and I keep coming up with new ideas for them. The main thing is to focus on the children's participation. During the Year of Mercy, I had a Mercy House built and the children looked at Christmas as Jesus coming to build a house (or world) of mercy. That was a good idea. Maybe I can duplicate it somehow."

OPT

The Journey of Faith Continues

by Ana Maria P. de Jesus, EPS DC 15

As the catechetical school year began, the Religious Education Program of the parish initiated a community journey where together students, parents and teachers enhanced their faith with activities appropriate for the season. Following the theme "Enlisting Witnesses for Jesus Christ" offered by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for the catechetical year, several youthful events encouraged each stakeholder to claim their roles as faith witnesses to the fulfillment of God's promise.

For Thanksgiving, the seventh and eighth graders filled-up the Thanksgiving totes with food items donated by the parishioners. These

items were sorted and stacked on the tables that were set up at the Keffer Center. Meanwhile, some students lined up like an assembly line and efficiently filled up the colorful tote bags for the Montgomery County families that needed assistance. The fun-filled helpful activity gave witness to the practice of one of the corporal works of mercy.

One of the first semester's family service activities was held at the Amadeo Room on Sunday, December 2 when the parents-in-attendance, along with the students' assistants, showed up to help the catechists collect and sort the Christmas food, baby items and toys for the distribution. Meanwhile, the students exhibited their artistic talents by competing in a poster con-

test sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Bishop Lyons Council #9808 with the theme "Keep Christ in Christmas." Later, each student received a candy cane with the background of its origin printed in each small package.

On a Sunday in December, the Christmas Food Donation bags were packed with the help of the sixth graders. Later, on a separate day, volunteer parishioners obligingly distributed them to the needy families of Montgomery County.

Finally, just before the students took their holiday vacation, Kevin Hassett, a parish volunteer, provided a thirty-minute Nativity presentation to seventh and eighth-grade students. He shared his insights on the background and the practice



Photo by Ana Maria de Jesus

Families gather to design posters.

of displaying the Nativity scene. About forty-six students converged at the Youth Center to hear his presentation and to appreciate the

Bethlehem Scene that his family donated to the parish.

As we begin a new year, the journey of faith continues.

OPT



Photos by John Small

The Church of the Resurrection threw its annual Winterfest on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. It was a successful affair with shopping, music, food, raffles and fun!



The Eucharist's Secret Helpers

By Susan Ahearn

The Linen Ladies. That's how Church of the Resurrection parishioner Roberta "Bobbie" Newell refers to herself and four other women who care for the linens used on the altar during Mass. Newell, who is retired, has taught CCD at Resurrection and she was asked to take over as coordinator of the small linens ministry.

According to Newell, members of the group rotate the job of laundering the altar linens. "We wash and iron the small linens used for all Masses," she said. "These include corporals, purificators, finger towels and other small towels for drying some vessels."

There is a very specific method used to clean the altar linens. "To launder the linens," Newell explained, "the ones stained with the Precious Blood are soaked in a solution of white vinegar and water. The purificators with lipstick on them are treated with a commercial stain remover. Then, they're soaked in the vinegar solution."

There is also a special way to dispose of the vinegar and water solution used in cleaning the altar linens. "The vinegar and water solution used cannot be poured down a normal drain but must be emptied into the ground. The linens must have the vinegar solution rinsed from them. All linens are then washed in hot water, detergent and bleach. No fabric softener is used in the drying process."

Next, a specific procedure is used when ironing the altar linens. "Heavy duty spray starch is used to iron the corporals. The purificators are dampened with water and ironed," said Newell. When the altar linens have been cleaned and ironed, they are returned to the church and kept in a special place.

The other volunteers in the altar linens are Elaine Auld, Mary Bombo, Margorie Moise and Ann Munson. They communicate by email or telephone to decide on when and who will do the laundry. "Each week, one of us will pick up the dirty laundry sometime after the last Mass on Sunday. After wash-

ing and ironing it, she returns it the following Saturday," explained Newell. So, when the Bread of Life and the Precious Blood are cleanly given, thank the Linen Ladies!

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Times

J&A COUNCIL

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people closer to an issue know better what is needed than a large and far-off organization.

The principle was articulated in the 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* by Pope Pius XI. That encyclical concerned issues of the social and economic order in light of the growing power of fascist and communist states. Subsidiarity is still important to us today considering the growth of our institutions.

It is always helpful for us to know what we are doing and why we are acting. Below are some examples of the work of the J&A Council and how they reflect subsidiarity.

Meeting with new Council member Gabe Albornoz

The J&A Council will host Councilmember Gabe Albornoz at our Wednesday, February 27 meeting at Holy Redeemer Church, Kensington. This is a way we practice subsidiarity. We will discuss with him how he plans to respond to the needs of poor and vulnerable people in the County. These gatherings in the past have typically been quite engaging, stimulating, and yes, even fun! You are invited. Consider coming. The meeting is from 7:30 to 9:30. Light refreshments will be served.

We hope to invite other new members to meetings in the future.

Upcoming county budget forums

The new County Executive Marc Elrich is holding five budget forums across the county as part of process of preparing the county budget. County residents are invited to present their priorities.

J&A members will be attending several of them. We will focus on the needs of people living at the margins of society. We have attended budget forums in the past and are often the only people there who express concern for the safety net for vulnerable and needy residents. Others tend to focus on schools, libraries, roads and public services.

Our concern reflects the call of Catholic social teaching to care

for the poor and vulnerable. As the U.S. bishops state, "The test of a just society is how the poor and vulnerable are treated." We are typically thanked profusely by County officials for bringing up this issue. The remaining forum is February 4 at 7:00 p.m. at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

County Council briefings, hearings and discussions

J&A Council members are also keeping an eye on upcoming activities of the County Council, such as their briefings, hearing and discussions, especially when they reflect our priorities and concerns. This is another way we promote subsidiarity.

Each year, we look at our priorities. We will have done that at our January meeting, which was held after the deadline for OPT copy. We will report on them in a future issue. In the past, our priorities have typically focused on the need for more affordable housing in the County, needs of the safety net for the poor and vulnerable, and often on public transportation.

New J&A officers

In December, the J&A Council elected new officers. New co-chairs are Brian Dorsey of St. Paul's in Damascus and Larry Couch of St. Elizabeth's in Rockville. We don't have a secretary yet. If you are interested in serving as secretary, please let us know!

We thank both Cathy Couch and Ann Barbagallo for their four years of service as co-chairs. They served generously, selflessly, and graciously. We thank them for their time and desire to help advocate for issues of importance to the Catholic Church in Montgomery County.

Dates to remember

Catholics in Annapolis with the Maryland Catholic Conference is February 21. J&A Council meeting with Gabe Albornoz is February 27. Consider attending both.

Anthony Bosnick is a member of the J&A Council and is Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Derwood.

OPT

EDMONSON

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Washington University; her dissertation was on identity development in adolescents.

Before working at NCEA, Dr. Edmonson spent 25 years both in the classroom and as an administrator in Catholic schools. Dr. Edmonson served as the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Baltimore, overseeing 68 schools, including 13 independent high schools. In 2017, Archbishop William Lori honored her with the Doris Musil Award for Excellence in Catholic Education for her work directing the development and execution of a school governance model, revising curriculum, establishing a comprehensive

teacher certification protocol, and developing partnerships with three Catholic universities.

Dr. Edmonson, who will be the eighth Head of Visitation since 1900, will begin on July 1, 2019. She follows the three-decade tenure of Dan Kerns, who joined Visitation as Assistant Head in 1986 and became Headmaster in 1989.

The first lay leader of the school, Mr. Kerns built on the strong legacy of the Sisters of the Visitation while championing educational advancements; he has overseen the strengthening of the school's competitive academic program, the development of world-class facilities, the cultivation of financial stability, and the creation of a dynamic vision for the future.

OPT

St. Jane de Chantal

Active Shooter Preparedness at St. Jane de Chantal School

The St. Jane de Chantal Home and School Association organized an important presentation for parents and teachers of the school. Law enforcement personnel from the Montgomery County Police Department spoke during a January evening on the essential role that parents play in preparing their children on how to respond in the event of an active shooting. They also presented alarming facts, such as that there are more guns than people in the United States, and in 2018 there were 340 mass shootings, a number similar to the previous years.

The speakers were all well-seasoned trained policemen, and they provided excellent tips and instructions about what to do when facing a tragedy. Even if hard to do, they emphasized that there is nothing



Parents and teachers filled the gymnasium to hear expert advice and practical information from Montgomery County law enforcement officials.

wrong with talking to our children in an age-appropriate way. Telling your child to be prepared, to run for shelter, hide if they can, and be ready to fight back were all invaluable and practical advice these

experts relayed to the audience. Parents and teachers left the presentation feeling empowered and more ready to confront a situation that we pray will never happen in our school.

OPT

HAPPENINGS IN OUR BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

School reports provided by Mrs. Catherine Skibo

Winter Band Concert

Once again St. Jane de Chantal's incredible band director, Mrs. Tifford, and the beginner and advanced bands wowed parents, faculty and students alike with the Winter Concert. The beginner band is comprised of students brand new to playing an instrument in the fourth grade. Both bands are strong in numbers and sound! Holiday favorites such as Jingle Bells and Jolly Old St. Nicholas were performed along with more traditional pieces such as Little Drummer Boy and Good King Wenceslas. The band brought the Christmas spirit to the St. Jane de Chantal School with all their beautiful music, talented playing and fancy Christmas attire.

Choir Christmas Concert

On a Friday evening in December, the St. Jane de Chantal Children's Choir joined with the Maplewood Choir to present a Christmas concert to students, faculty, and Maplewood residents. Choir members sang holiday tunes from around the world, including a song in German and a traditional Spanish song. Students played ukuleles to accompany many of the more modern Christmas songs. Dressed in Santa hats, red scarves and red sweaters, the choir helped to put everyone in an excellent Christmas spirit with their beautiful voices and song!

Catholic Charities Coat Drive

In early January, the St. Jane de Chantal School hosted a Catholic

Charities Coat Drive. Participants cleared out their closet and dropped off their donations of coats to the school's front office as a generous act to help keep less fortunate members of our community warm this cold winter.

Third Place Chess Award Goes to First Grader

Congratulations to St. Jane de Chantal School's first grader, Piper Trent, for placing third in an area Chess Tournament. Piper is part of the school's active and competitive St. Jane de Chantal Chess Club that meets weekly throughout the school year. This was an outstanding achievement for a first grader!

OPT

Shrine of St. Jude

Shrine of St. Jude at the March for Life 2019



Cupcakes for Life—Because Every Child Deserves a Birthday Cupcake!

The Shrine of St. Jude Pro-Life Committee held its annual Cupcakes for Life sale the weekend of Jan 12–13 to raise money for a bus to transport parishioners to the 2019 March for Life. Once again, the sale was successful and enough money was raised to rent the bus. A huge thank you to all of the generous people who baked, purchased, and sold cupcakes in support of Pro-Life.





The Three Wise Men and their camels were greeted by the parishioners of St. Michael's Parish for an afternoon of storytelling, learning and fellowship.

Three Wise Men at St. Michael the Archangel Parish

By Elia Gonzalez

On Saturday, January 5, the Three Wise Men Balthasar, Melchior, and Caspar with their camels embarked on a special journey to Silver Spring, Maryland.

Where over 100 people young and old gathered to welcome the travelers to St. Michael the Archangel parish. During their visit, the children of the parish listened carefully to the retelling of the Three Wise Men's special story.

Following the story, the children of the parish were given the opportunity to speak with the wise men and to ask them questions. Many of the children wanted to learn more about the significance of the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh

that the Wise Men were taking to the infant Jesus. The children also presented the Wise Men with letters they had specially written to Jesus. These letters for Jesus contained their petitions and gift requests. Unlike letters to Santa, these letters

were filled with gifts that only Jesus could give them. After the Wise Men parted the children and their families enjoyed some fellowship and snacks to bring an end to an exciting afternoon.

OPT

FAVORITE

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into a winter wonderland for families and children to enjoy. In addition to a hot breakfast prepared by Mary of Nazareth parent volunteers, children could write their wish lists and deliver them personally to Santa. A Christmas shop was available where guests could purchase gifts for loved

ones. Additionally, children got to enjoy creating their own Christmas crafts in the craft room. Breakfast with St. Nick is one of the school's most beloved holiday events, as it brings all members of the school community for a morning of fellowship and festivity. Our schools is deeply grateful to all members of the HSA, especially those on the decorations committee, for helping to continue this tradition from year to year.

OPT



The youth choir and members of the parish sing of joy and the birth of Jesus to resident of Terrace Retirement Community. This annual event allows the youth of St Michael's parish to share with the community the celebration of Christmas.

SERVICE

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Toys for Tots – MoN families donated toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them gifts for Christmas.

Christmas Cards – Patients in local hospitals received hand written cards, picture, and notes from our students.

Soles4Souls – Together, our school community collected 1,003 pairs of shoes to benefit children and

families around the world who need adequate footwear to attend school and work.

Box of Joy – Through this social concerns project, 120 boxes and \$506.25 were collected so that children overseas can receive presents on Christmas.

Share the Warmth Coat Drive – The MoN community is currently collecting coats for the Interfaith Works Clothing Center to provide families and individuals in need with quality used clothing and home goods.

OPT

NYC TRIP

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celebrating Mass together in St. Patrick's Cathedral together, with a special homily reminding students to be present with God in all they do. Students recall the trip as being a

once in a lifetime experience, spent with lifelong friends. This trip is one of the many ways Mary of Nazareth School honors it's students and their hard work. Congratulations to each member of our eighth-grade class - we look forward to saluting you again in the spring as graduation draws near.

OPT

DRAMA CLUB

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Alexis Braswell, Eden Tewodros, Clare Rowedder, Santiago Tellez-Leon, Caleb Garcia, Rebecca Balladares, Sally Gitau, Morgan Hough, and Elizabeth Breece.

This year's spring musical follows the brilliant success of last year's

Legally Blonde The Musical JR., also directed by Ms. Sella.

Mark your calendars now to go "into the woods" with SJRCS's Drama Club production! Performances will be April 12-13, 2019, in the Thaddeus Room of SJRCS, with a 7 p.m. curtain. Refreshments will be sold before the curtain goes up and during intermission. Please come out and support the SJRCS Drama Club!

OPT

Reuniting with RCIA Alumni

By Nicole Calaro

On December 1, 2018, St. Michael the Archangel hosted our first RCIA Alumni Event. We had parishioners who completed RCIA (English and Spanish) from 2010-2018 join in on the event. The theme was "Growing in Faith: Nurturing and Developing Our Personal Relationships with Christ." Many were open and eager to share their faith journey, from what brought them to RCIA and what they have been doing to deepen their relationship with Christ.

The RCIA leaders have long desired to host an event

to bring together past RCIA alumni in response to studies that state that anywhere from 50-90% of newly initiated Catholics stop going to church within a year after Easter Vigil. Our RCIA goal is twofold. One: evangelize and share our faith with the current group of catechumens and candidates so they can receive their sacraments on Easter Vigil. Two: create and support a community of RCIA alumni who remain active in the parish life.

We look forward to growing our parish through the RCIA program.

OPT

The Giving Tree

By Sandra Bonne-Année

Each year during the season of Advent the faithful are called to prepare themselves for Christ's Second Coming and his birth through prayer, penance and fasting. During the four weeks of Advent, the parishioners of St. Michael are also called upon to give to local families in need of assistance through the Giving Tree. Each year St Michael's own Matthew 25 adorns the Giving Tree with ornaments that provide families with gift cards for groceries, gifts or other essentials.

Through the generosity and support of the parishioners this year's Giving Tree received 248 gift cards

the blessed 38 families, which represented 130 individuals, in time for Christmas. In addition, the parish was able to provide 60 gift cards to Crossways Community and 42 to TESS organization. The remaining gift cards were provided to the rectory office for individuals requesting assistance after the holidays. Matthew 25 also received a monetary donation from Sodality that was used to sponsor a family of seven from the parish. The parishioners, Sodality and Matthew 25 should all be commended for making this Christmas truly merry for so many.

As the parish continues to celebrate the year of service, the success of the giving tree is a won-

derful reminder that sharing our treasures with others allows us to become a parish community that is passionate about the good of all people.

OPT

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Prepare a way for the Lord

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

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

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

The children were



At left, Devin Galentine read The Word during Mass



At left, Father Kevin and children used movement for closing song

Below, Crafts and Donuts



Above, youngest children provided the beat



Above, Diana Snouffer prepared an Advent Wreath to represent our Twinning Parish in Haiti



At left, Advent by Candlelight

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

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

unique Advent Wreath. A spiritual reflection was provided by Father Stephen Ellis.

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

Each week during Advent, each religious education class had an Advent Wreath at their Prayer Station. As the weeks progressed, all prepared for our program Pageant. The class Pageant was performed for parents and families during the last class in December, followed by a reception. Children who were available participated in the Pageant at Christmas Eve Mass.

OPT

St. Mary's Church to host Fifth Annual Antique Show, Live Auction, and Sale to Benefit Local Charities

This coming President's Day Weekend (February 16 and 17 from noon to 5 pm each day), St. Mary's Church in Barnesville will host their "5th Annual Antique Show and Sale" to benefit several local charities. Over 400 visitors are expected to peruse and buy hundreds of antiques, some dating back 400 years, from 15 regional antique dealers.

During the two-day event, known for its quality and variety of antiques and collectibles, there will be a "silent" auction; and, for the first time, St. Mary's Church will conduct a "live" auction from 3 pm to 5 pm on Saturday, February 16th. During the live auction, each dealer



A locally donated 200-year old table for auction or raffle

will have the opportunity to list one antique item, while individual patrons can list as many as three

pieces. A small listing fee and commission will be retained for each auctioned item.

At the close of the charitable event on Sunday afternoon (February 17) the Knights of Columbus will draw a lucky raffle ticket, enabling the winner to receive the Antique Show's Grand Prize.

The cost of admission is only \$5 with proceeds benefiting local charities, who daily meet the needs of our most vulnerable population. "In 2018, the Knights of Columbus donated nearly \$4,000 from this event to local charities and, with your help, we expect to surpass this amount in 2019," said James Abernethy, the council's Grand Knight.

Toward this goal, the Knights of Columbus are asking the public to donate any unwanted antiques, which would be sold at silent auction during the event. Those, who wish to donate or participate in some other capacity, are requested to contact Donald Patti at 866-478-8080 or send an email to info@saintmarysantiques.com.

OPT

STAMPER

Con't from page 1

his mother-in-law. They found a faith home at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Gaithersburg, where Stamper served as a catechist teaching eighth graders preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation, helped with youth ministry and joined the Knights of Columbus, an organization that has grounded Stamper's adult faith formation along the various stops in his life.

"The natural next step seemed to be working with young adults," Stamper said. "I could create and help create something firmer for people transitioning into young adulthood."

Currently, six Catholic churches in Montgomery County – St. Francis of Assisi; St. Rose of Lima; St. Mary's, St. Patrick's and Shrine of St. Jude in Rockville; and Mother Seton in Germantown work with 270Catholic in helping cultivate their young adults into disciples of Christ. Each month, those churches convene 40-100 young adults at group events. Stamper believes he can help continue building the faith of young adults through developing more small groups, small communi-

ties and larger community outreach.

Given the myriad distractions competing for young people's attention, Stamper recognizes that reaching young adults will be an ongoing challenge. "You have to find something that pierces through the busyness," he said.

Stamper said he will continue relying on existing 270Catholic volunteers -- both administrative and small group leaders -- to help the group realize its goals. He also places faith in the individual, who he feels can be inspired by others living their faith openly and authentically.

"The only way to reach someone is to show them that the faith of a practicing Catholic is different than what society sees," Stamper said. "If life is a river, then being Catholic is the rock that stops the flow of water in the river."

While he continues getting acclimated to his new job, Stamper is also completing his final semester at the Montgomery College-Germantown campus, where he is studying secondary education.

Fr. Berard points to the "great joy" Stamper brings to his new role at 270Catholic. "He wants to make sure the job is done well and completely, and I think that will end up being his greatest attribute," Fr. Berard said.

OPT

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Spreading Good Cheer

On December 12, the fifth-grade class of St. Patrick's School visited Grace House, an assisted living home in Silver Spring, to share some Christmas cheer with the residents. The students sang Christmas carols, visited with the residents, and played some spirited games of bingo. Alex Guarini commented, "I think the fifth-grade students had just as much fun as the residents did because we all enjoyed putting smiles on each other's faces." This has been a Christmas tradition for fifth graders at the school for more than a decade.



Under the Sea

St. Patrick's School students were hard at work on a recent Saturday afternoon in rehearsal for the school musical, "The Little Mermaid." Performances will be held on April 5, 6, and 7 at the Parish Center's Shamrock Theater in Rockville.



St. Bartholomew

St. Bart's music teacher turns playwright and composer

St. Bartholomew School's annual Christmas pageant featured a toe-tapping, smile-inducing original production by music teacher Daniel Villar. Set in a modern-day school with flashbacks to the time of Christ's birth, *Get Yourselves to Bethlehem!* explores how the Little Drummer Boy could be a role in a school Christmas pageant if he is not mentioned in the Bible. Villar, himself an alumnus of St. Bart's, spent months on the project. "For several years, Mrs. Rebaudengo, our religion teacher, kept mentioning that she wanted



Above, music teacher Mr. Daniel Villar smiles after the premiere of his Christmas pageant

At left, the Little Drummer Boy arrives at the nativity, in a scene from *Get Yourselves to Bethlehem!*

us to do a Christmas pageant featuring the story of the Little Drummer Boy," says Mr. Villar. "I started thinking of ways to turn a three-verse song into an hour-long production. I came up with lyrics and music for the original songs first, and then kept writing and rewriting the script."

The finished score includes Villar's original songs as well as traditional Christmas favorites. "It was a thrill to see the ideas I had bouncing around in my head come to life, and the positive reaction from the parents and St. Bart's community was just the icing on the cake." Anyone interested in learning more about *Get Yourselves to Bethlehem!* can reach Mr. Villar at www.danielvillar.com.

Problem Solvers

The St. Patrick's Robotics Team, the Brilliant Badgers, competed in a tournament on January 5, 2019 at the Universities in Shady Grove. They prepared three presentations, were evaluated in three judging sessions, and competed in three official robot matches. "The tournament was an exciting way for our Badgers to showcase their accomplishments, and celebrate their hard work throughout the past four months," commented Robotics Coach, Helina Hailelassie.

The Robotics team participates as a part of the First Lego League program for students in grades 4-8. The challenge for this school year is titled "Into Orbit" where teams are tasked to research challenges that astronauts face when living and working in space. Their work is focused on designing a robot to solve a mission and identifying and solving a physical or social problem faced by humans living in space. The students embrace the first philosophies of the First Lego League program which include "discovery, innovation, impact, inclusion, teamwork, and fun." The team worked on the impact of zero gravity and exposure to cosmic rays on astronauts in space. The Brilliant Badgers proposed adding a health room to the space station that included quantum levitation and shielding from cosmic rays. Members from the

St. Patrick's School team include Michael Agboli, Abiy Girmu, Hannah Girmu, Nati Girmu, Daniel Stone, and Theo TerHaar.

Additionally, the school has two First Lego League Junior teams for students in grades Kindergarten through fourth grade. These two teams will participate in an expo on January 20, 2019 at the Bullis School. They will showcase their projects in the "Mission Moon" challenge. Participants include William Antonucci, Declan Cramp, Aidan Devlaliwalla, Ryan Farren, Reagan Lukes, Zoe Lukes, Raymond McKelvey, Alexandra Potter, Maggie Smith, Juliette Stone, Rachel Stone, and Evan TerHaar.

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New Volunteer Needed
Contact rectory to apply



OPT

SHORT

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and many things petty invoking shameful levels of incivility. Many Catholics turned to their faith for spiritual relief and comfort from these and other distractions. Yet, recent revelations regarding clergy abuse, institutional deceit and intrigue in the Church have shaken trust and distracted many from the refuge of their beloved faith. What in the world is a faithful Catholic to do to resist distraction and focus on Christ?

Managing overwhelming distractions and recommitting ourselves to a devout focus on the true meaning of Christ's teachings are good resolutions for the New Year. It may help with our resolutions to focus on three early events in Christ's life. Remember the story in Luke, Chapter 2, in which the boy Jesus wanders off to teach in the Temple. Found by his terrified parents after several days of being lost, he responds to their question of why he wandered by telling them He had to be about His Father's business. Seems a bit

insensitive. Jesus's likely intention was to remind us that God had a plan for His Son from which Jesus must not be distracted by anything worldly, not even by His parents.

To prepare for His public ministry, the young man Jesus went on a retreat into the desert. Luke writes about this in Chapter 4. As He prayed, Jesus was visited several times by Satan who offered three tempting distractions. Jesus rejected each distraction by focusing on values inspired by the Holy Spirit; humanity does not live by bread alone; humanity must love and serve God; humanity must trust in God.

Finally, continuing in Chapter 4 of Luke, the focused Jesus begins His public ministry by clearly and confidently introducing a new and reformed mission for the followers of God, succinctly spelling out its objectives from which He will not be distracted, even unto death. He boldly announced that He has been anointed by God to bring God's Word to all people and to serve the poor and marginalized.

Reflecting on these vignettes from Christ's early life and other Gospel readings may be an effective

antidote to distractions we are certain to face in 2019, especially those which will challenge our spiritual life. The clarity of Christ's Gospel messages, especially the precision of the two great commandments to love God and others, can guide us through the fog of distractions humankind has created. Today more than ever, our parishes can be centers of God's love in which we find the fellowship, support and worship space essential for undistracted Christian focus. Rather than flee from our spiritual home, come help strengthen them for ourselves and each other.

During the month of January there are three important opportunities to set distraction aside and focus intently on Catholic values. The first, act to honor the sanctity of all human life. If you missed the March for Life and associated rallies, you can still advocate for life by writing letters to elected officials; establish or join a pro-life ministry in your parish; learn and reflect more upon the moral and ethical issues of life; volunteer with the frail elderly or disabled people. Another January opportunity for undistracted Catholic living is


action to support Catholic schools during Catholic Schools Week, the final week of the month. Visit a Catholic school. Attend the school Mass. Thank the staff and students for their commitment to Catholic education. Reaffirm your support for the parish school. Celebrate the spiritual and academic education of children in CCD and those being home-schooled. It is painfully obvious today that our Church will be sustained much less by Church leadership and much more by the commitment of those who teach our children and the parishes that support their work.

Lastly, each January we have the opportunity to refocus our attention upon Christ's great call to social and racial justice when we celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus models a commitment to social justice by caring for the sick, forgiving sinners and encouraging the poor. His dangerously unpopular message included welcoming the non-Jew, Gentiles often despised by the Jewish governing authority as sinners and unworthy of God. In the end, Jesus died because of His uncompromis-

ing commitment to these principles. If you wish to sharpen your focus on these values, consider reading the entire letter written by Dr. King while he was being held in the Birmingham, Alabama jail (www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html). It's lengthy, so you will have to find a time and place without distraction to fully absorb its grace and content.

Avoiding today's many distractions and focusing on Gospel values and lessons is difficult. After all, we are human and a weak match for the temptations of the evil one. Yet, with the help of our Lord, and support of our Catholic communities in local parishes, we will prevail and our faith will be sustained. Call to mind the difficult road Jesus chose for our salvation. Where would humanity be today had He allowed Himself to be distracted at any point from his mission?

God Bless,
Chuck Short
cshort5@verizon.net



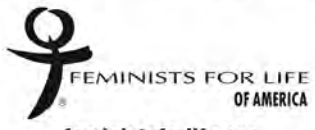
QUESTION
a b o r t i o n SM

Abortion rights activists promised us a world of equality and reduced poverty.
A world where every child would be wanted.

Instead, child abuse has escalated,
and rather than shared responsibility for children,
even more of the burden has shifted to women.

Question abortion. No law can make the wrong choice right.

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Registration Now Open for Catholics in Annapolis

Registration is now open for the Maryland Catholic Conference's annual event, Catholics in Annapolis, which will be held on February 21 starting at 3 p.m.

Each year, the Maryland Catholic Conference welcomes hundreds of Catholics from across Maryland to the capital to meet face-to-face with legislators and share the Church's position on important issues.

For the first time, this year's event will kick off with the prayer of the Rosary for our elected leaders, led by Maryland's bishops. Also new this year, inspiring speakers will address attendees to ignite passion for the issues.

"Our goal is to bring the event back to the core of our faith with the Rosary and to light a fire in the hearts of those who come

so they can go share that passion on these issues with their elected leaders," said Jennifer Briemann, executive director of the Conference. "We want each person to leave inspired and continue to be engaged on the issues."

Among the key issues Catholics will be asked to advocate on this session are a proposed abortion rights constitutional amendment, securing scholarships for low-income students, stopping the legalization of assisted suicide, and protecting human rights.

"This summer, Maryland's House Speaker said he would propose an amendment that would enshrine the so-called right to an abortion in our state's Constitution. As it stands, Maryland already has some of the most permissive

abortion laws in the nation and this effort would only waste critical state resources, diverting time and attention away from issues that our state needs to address," said Therese M. Hessler, associate director of Respect for Life. "This proposal threatens the value of Life in Maryland. If passed, it would make it virtually impossible to pass any future legislation that would sanction protection for our most vulnerable citizens: the unborn."

The Conference is encouraging Catholics to join them in Annapolis on February 21 and stand up for life, justice and human rights.

To reserve your spot today, visit www.catholicsinannapolis.org or call 410-269-1155. A full agenda for the day and more info is available online.

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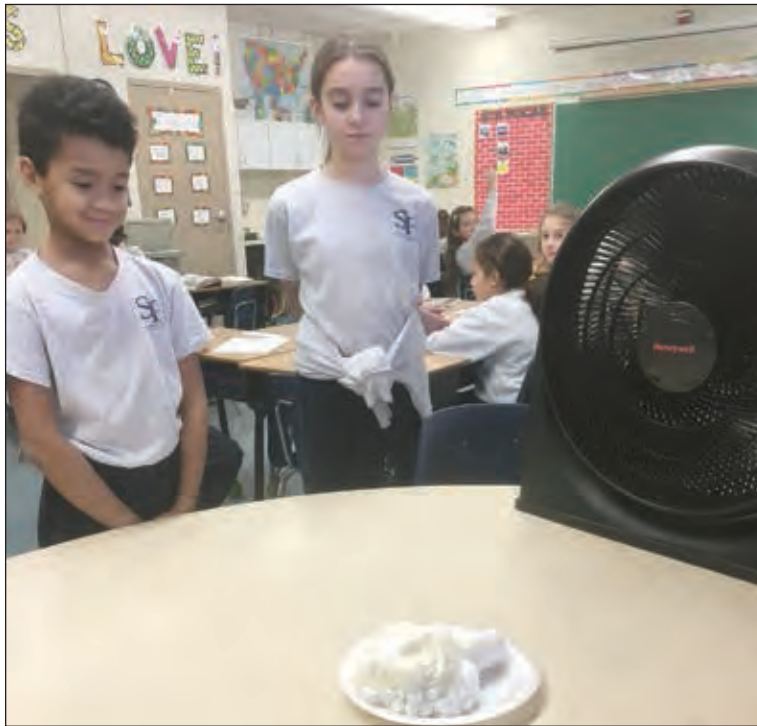
Con't from page 15

construction of igloos by watching videos of Alaskans building igloos and they read and discussed important parts of an igloo.

The structural requirements for their igloo were as follows: 6-inch diameter bottom, a dome top, an opening and strong enough to withstand a fan on high which represented a strong snowstorm. The building materials included different sized marshmallows, toilet and paper towel rolls, coffee filters, cotton balls, glue, tape, Styrofoam plates, paper and toothpicks. Each student prepared an individual design then, with an assigned partner, they completed the final design for their igloo. Students worked strategically building their igloo, but some groups had to do a full redesign while other groups only had to modify their original plans with slight modifications while they built.

The best part of the project was to see the different types of igloos that were made and how the students overcame obstacles while building their igloo. Proudly, all igloos were able to withstand the forces of wind from the fan!

The fifth-grade challenge was to



St. Peter's Students watching as their igloo is put to the test in the wind challenge from the fan in the STEM Build an Igloo Challenge

build a working robotic arm that could pick up a Styrofoam cup filled with water. Prior to designing, students researched the workings of a hand, the purpose of fingers and thumbs, and how muscles and tendons assist with hand movements. The materials they could use included cardboard strips and

pieces, binder clips, brads, clothespins, craft sticks, fishing line, wire hangers, rubber bands, tape, and string. The student created an individual design then they work collaboratively with group members to create a group design.

OPT

LIFE

Con't from page 2

hope of "drawing attention to and ending the evil of abortion" at the Carhart clinic.

The 40 Days for Life Campaign, according to Jill Gadwood, head of the campaign's local chapter in Bethesda, will "continue our spring 40-day prayer vigil outside the

Carhart Clinic from March 6th to April 14th, which coincides with the 40 days of Lent." Gadwood said the 40 Days for Life is a pro-life campaign with a vision to access God's power through prayer, fasting, and peaceful vigil to end abortion.

The campaign was started in 2004 by David Bereit with a local group in Bryan-College Station, Texas. Similar campaigns by religiously-

based pro-life advocacy groups have since been launched in communities in several countries including the United States, Canada, Australia, England, Northern Ireland, and Denmark. The campaign's name refers "to a pattern of several events lasting for 40 days repeated in the Bible, like Noah's Ark, Moses' 40 days on Mount Sinai, and Jesus's 40 days in the desert." Text and photo by Angelyn Tugado-Marzan

OPT

ENZLER

Con't from page 1

Catholic Schools Week, we settle back down into a more normal routine. The cold weather, including snow, throws us off our normal schedules. It is dark in the morning and starting to get a little lighter in the early evening. But, all that makes for a sometimes cold, wet, and dreary winter.

If that is true for us, who are so blessed with family and friends and lots of material blessings as well, what do you think it's like for the homeless who live on our streets all throughout the year? For the past 10 years there has been a "point of time" survey taken the last week of February. Non-profit groups, guided by the city, go out into the streets and the known gathering places for those without homes. Each year of the past 10 they arrive at a number of over 10,000 in the Washington area who are homeless on that particular weekend. There is some good news – about ½ of those people have found a place to sleep at night, with family or friends. The other ½ actually live

on the streets with some in shelters. Catholic Charities has 1700 beds every night and an additional 200-300 during the hypothermia season (under 32 degrees). It is shocking to realize that a couple thousand of these counted individuals are children. I don't know what is going to happen this year if the government shut-down doesn't end soon. The numbers will grow for sure. People don't deserve the inability of our Congress and President to find a solution that lets them keep their jobs and just as importantly, their homes.

When I was younger, I used to love the snow, the days off, and the enjoyment of staying home. Now, a snow storm that closes down schools and government, reminds me of the many people who are able to get out of the elements by staying in one of our shelters. I think of more than 100 of our staff members who continue to work making sure the shelters stay open and viable during those difficult weather days.

All of the above just speaks to how lucky I am, and I suspect you as well. If you have a warm home to live in and a roof over

your head and three meals a day, with clothes on your back, you are blessed. Hopefully we all can do something this winter that allows us to be more conscious of those who are affected by the shut down or because of circumstances sometimes beyond their control, have no place to live. Coat drives, gathering of hats and gloves, and serving warm meals are one-way Catholic Charities makes a difference all throughout these winter months. I'm always struck by one quote that reminds me of how lucky I am. St. Basil said, "If you have 2 coats you've stolen one from the poor." Since I have more than 2 coats, I have some work to do to make sure I'm taking care of those who are most in need. Catholic Charities allows me to do that every day. I would love to have your help if you are able to offer your time, talent, and treasure to help those who have been left behind. If you'd like to volunteer, please visit our website at www.catholiccharitiesdc.org and click on the VOLUNTEER tab to the right of the screen. We'd love to have your help.

OPT

SEASON

Con't from page 1

formance included seasonal favorites, O Little Town of Bethlehem, Carol of the Bells, and Joy to the World. The crowd favorite White Winter Hymnal includes a complex body percussion routine performed by the students while they sang. The Choir Director, Peter Nguyen commented "it was a fun and engaging way for the choir to stand completely on their own without the use of any formal instruments or background tracking."

The Christmas play titled "A Play

in the Manger" featured an acting cast and crew from the sixth grade. The play was setup with six scenes allowing each grade of K-5 to perform a Christmas song relevant to the show during the scene transitions. The play detailed the transformation of the main characters from being more concerned with their glory and fame to being humbled by Jesus' presence. The principal Mrs. Whelan commented, "The play was a beautiful expression of our students' faith!" This performance gave the children and parents alike a feeling of peace knowing that Jesus is our Savior and he is the reason for the season.

OPT

DANCING

Con't from page 15

learned to do the waltz, swing and tango. In the competition, the students compete for the honor of 1st, 2nd or 3rd place in each dance for the coveted medal.

The excitement builds leading up to the dance: Who will be your partner? What will you wear? Will

you win? The boys and girls dress in semi-formal attire to make the event extra special. The parents are invited to the competition portion of the afternoon. The whole seventh and eighth-grade communities are involved in this event and although there are winners during the competition, this school activity promotes social interaction and teamwork to achieve their dancing goal so all the kids are stars!

OPT

GALA

Con't from page 15

again this year. There were definitely 'good ole fashioned' bidding wars taking place!"

The décor included many gorgeous palm trees and other tropical plants that were donated for the event. The stage was set for a street theme from Havana including bright beautiful color and even included a car! The authentic

Cuban cuisine was mouth-wateringly delicious and was served with mojitos. There were salsa dancing lessons and even a cigar roller during the gala!

St. Peter's School would like to extend its sincere appreciation for those that help support the event by volunteering, attending, sponsoring or donating auction items to the gala! We look forward to another successful event again in the 2019-20 school year!

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