



OUR Parish Times

Special Edition
Summer Camp Issue

MARCH 2021

Living the Faith Together

FREE

Springing Laudato Si to Life

After biting cold during February and Covid isolation, spring feels especially hopeful. Nature is a blessed gift from God. Each day, we are assured that the sun will shine longer and more warmly; the daffodils and tulips



Chuck Short

will cheerfully appear through the faded brown mulch; and all things Easter will bring joy to Christians everywhere.

Having been largely isolated at home this year, we may have come to more deeply appreciate our natural surroundings. Local parks, once the domains of dog walkers and children are bustling community centers. Nature paths are less wild and overgrown as new explorers discover the diverse variety of plants and animals with which they share neighborhoods. Bikes, scooters and skateboards are transportation modes. The outdoors have become family recreation rooms, communal back yards and inspiring worship centers. The air is cleaner and sky clearer. The

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We Miss You and Need You

We are not yet able to fill our churches to full capacity, but I cannot begin to express how wonderful it is to see more people returning to Mass, while staying mindful of safety protocols we must continue to take. We need you, and I know my brother priests feel the same way.



Fr. John Enzler

Our priests and parish staffs have done yeoman's work this year, finding new ways to serve the faithful and administer the sacraments. It has been very different for us priests as well. I did not realize how much I missed celebrating Mass with parishioners until we were not able to do so beginning one year ago.

We have been able to move forward to some degree since the shutdown last March, but I still miss many people. We have probably a third to a half of our regular attendees, which means there are many wonderful, active, and faithful Catholics I have not seen for a full year as they have been careful about their health and the health of others.

As more vaccines are distributed and hope

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LENTEN FOOD DRIVE

St. Martin's students in Gaithersburg collect food for their annual Lenten Food Drive. This year's goal is to collect more than 9,000 items by Holy Thursday. The food drive is led by the Student Council and each class competes to donate the most food items. This service project offers students an opportunity to connect what they are learning with action, and help to improve the lives of others around them. The food is delivered to the St. Martin's Food Pantry, which is distributed to those in need on Monday mornings. These fifth grade students collect and count items during their recess time. Local organizations are encouraged to support this effort. Donations may be delivered during school hours.

Teacher Linda Merkel Remembered

By Laura Fellers, Amy Moore, David Norton, Pat Stallsmith

Linda Merkel passed away on February 1, 2021. Over the past 36 years, she devoted her life to teaching students in the ADW.

David Norton, an alumnus of ADW Catholic schools, remembered if you were lucky enough to grace the halls of Holy Redeemer School or Our Lady of Lourdes School, you knew that Mrs. Merkel was a

once-in-a-lifetime teacher. Once you were one of Mrs. Merkel's kids, you were for life.

Mrs. Merkel's reputation preceded her in all the best ways. You were now on the inside of all the Merkelisms you had heard about from the students that graduated before: diagramming sentences; beginning every class with a "happy good morning!" and continuing with a happy everything else. The trademark curly-cue strand of

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During Linda Merkel's educational career, which spanned 36 years, she was an excellent teacher and administrator. She influenced thousands of students and mentored many younger teachers at Holy Redeemer School and Our Lady of Lourdes School. Linda retired in 2012 and cherished time with her grandchildren. Shown here in 2020, Linda shares her contagious smile of happiness with Ria (left) and Camila in her Baltimore condo.

Lent – A Great Time to be Catholic

Catholic: all embracing, universal, involving all



Patricia McGann

As Catholics, we practice traditions and rituals that reinforce for us our membership in the community that is the Catholic Church. We renew our commitment to our faith and to the Church by participation in Mass, the Sacraments, and prayer. During Lent, we make sacrifices; we attend Stations, and we abstain. We might put a little extra in the offertory basket, and we might donate to the Annual Appeal. These are important outward signs of our membership in the Catholic Church.

There is a difference between being a "Catholic", and being "catholic", though.

Most of us have always been Catholic - it was something our parents chose for us. We learned from our parents and our teachers what was expected of us as practicing Catholics. These well-established habits renew for us our commitment to the Church, and they are important ways to ground us in the faith that has and always will sustain us in times of trouble.

But we are called to do more. We are told that the presence of God is shared with others when we serve as a force for good in the world. We become a force when we choose to be generous, to be kind, to be catholic.

Continued on page 16



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The Most Destructive Racists

By John Naughton

The Peace and Justice Council of Montgomery County is to be applauded for addressing the evil of racism ("The Persistent Challenge of Racism: Four Parishes Respond", *OPT* January 2021). The worst racism in terms of its longevity and deleterious effect on black families is the systematic racism of Planned Parenthood and Democrat politicians.

Planned Parenthood Racism

Eugenicist/racist Margaret Sanger, founder of the Birth Control League (1917) later named Planned Parenthood (1940's), established

the goal of eliminating black people in the early 20th century. She and her compatriots (including the Klu Klux Klan) set about ways to keep black people from reproducing, which has continued to this day.

As a result of the riots of 2020, Planned Parenthood began admitting their past and current racist treatment of black employees. In 2020, 19 of PP's 49 U.S. affiliates confirmed their racism. In late February 2021 in its annual report, Planned Parenthood Federation of America included the



John Naughton

following statement by its president, Alexis McGill Johnson, and board chair Aimee Cunningham: "Planned Parenthood is 104 years old, and we're committed to addressing structural racism, both historic and current, in the federation." However, PP has not

changed its racist policies.

Planned Parenthood continues Sanger's eugenicist racist goal by targeting black women for abortion with almost 80% of their abor-

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Saint John's Catholic Prep Names Will Knotek Head of School

The Saint John's Catholic Prep (SJCP) Board of Trustees announced in February that Will Knotek, who has served as Principal for the last three years, has been appointed Head of School effective July 1. In November, current President Dr. Thomas H. Powell informed the Board of Trustees of his plans to step down after leading SJCP for the past six years. The Board voted to transition from the President and Principal leadership model. The new model will vest Mr. Knotek with the overall responsibility for all school operations.

"Saint John's Catholic Prep is very fortunate that Will Knotek has agreed to lead our school. While he has some large shoes to fill, it was apparent during the search process that Will possesses a genuine love for Saint John's Catholic Prep, maturity, and energy that will serve the school well. He has earned the respect of his colleagues through his hard work and dedication. Saint John's is in good hands, and we can't wait to see what the future holds," said Trustee Pat Crowley, Chairman of the Search Committee and incoming



Will Knotek

Chairman of the Board of Trustees,

Saint John's Catholic Prep is the premier Catholic college preparatory high school in Frederick County. Founded as St. John's Literary Institution in 1929, the co-educational high school became known as St. John's Prospect Hall in 1958. In 2013, St. John's moved to its new Buckeystown campus south of Frederick just four miles from Interstate 270.

Dedicated to developing the whole student, mind, body, and spirit, the school offers small class sizes as well as a small

student to teacher ratio. Saint John's is proud of its 100% college applicant acceptance rate and SAT score averages that consistently come in higher than the county, state, and national averages. The school offers College-level Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and Honors level courses as well as a wide variety of championship sports and clubs. Saint John's Catholic Prep is proud of its demanding academics in the Catholic intellectual tradition allowing the school to prepare virtuous leaders for society.

OPT

The Feminist Case Against Abortion

In celebration of the 201st birthday of Susan B. Anthony in February, Feminists for Life released Part 1 of FFL President Serrin M. Foster's speech, "The Feminist Case Against Abortion."

In the 17-minute video presentation, Serrin shares the pro-woman, pro-life history of the early first-wave feminists. Her landmark speech has been recognized as one of the "Great Speeches in History" in an anthology called Women's Rights.

"The Feminist Case Against Abortion" is available on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/j1WKn723G_w.

OPT



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J&A Council

Planning for the future

By Anthony Bosnick

The Justice and Advocacy Council of Montgomery County (J&A Council) advocates for various public policy issues in the county. Catholic social teaching (CST) guides us as we consider the issues.

Building the kingdom of love, justice and peace. Why should Catholics become involved in policy issues? Scripture and Church teaching call us to build the kingdom of God in this world. In fact, the U.S. Bishops encourage us in their document "Forming Consciences

for Faithful Citizenship," to "participate in public life and contribute to the common good" (FC, p. vi).

In addition, Pope Francis teaches us: "Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace. . . . You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavor" (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 25). Hopefully, the call to holiness draws us.

Planning for the future. In this Covid year, the J&A Council has

continued to meet by Zoom. Over these past months, we have invited a number of county groups and officials to speak with us about issues of importance to them and to us.

Just recently, in February, we heard from Rev. Rosetta Robinson from Interfaith Works (IW), which has long addressed and promoted justice issues in Montgomery County. She spoke about a number of IW programs, such as the Grant Assistance Program which targets zip codes in the County most needing assistance. She also spoke of issues related to School Resources Officers and more adequately funding programs focused on the needs of students. We look for ways J&A can collaborate with IW on these issues.

Another helpful discussion was

with *Diego Uriburu, one of the leaders of the Black and Brown Coalition*. By 2025, this coalition hopes that all students, particularly Black and Brown, will have "equitable access to the resources, opportunities and supports they need to be successful in college, career, and life." They look for effective and diverse teachers and leaders to improve the success of Black and Brown students in the schools.

J&A also met with the Housing Initiative Partnership about the Montgomery County Home Sharing Program. This group helps homeowners and those seeking affordable rental space to come together to find more housing opportunities in the county in existing structures. It is not for all, or for all neighborhoods. But it works for some, and

this group seeks to promote those arrangements.

We have also met with Dr. Raymond Crowell, director of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Resources, and with Council members Gabe Albornoz, Evan Glass, and Tom Hucker. Together we are trying to understand how we can promote public policy in line with the best in Catholic social and moral teaching.

Catholic social teaching guides us. All of these discussions were intended to help the J&A Council members understand issues and possible solutions facing us in the future. In light of these issues, we turn to the guidance which Catholic social teaching provides as we seek

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Biography of the Parents of "The Little Flower" by St. Jane Parishioner

Reviewed by Celeste Pappas, St. Peter's Olney Choir Director

On October 18, 2015, Pope Francis canonized Louis and Zélie Martin, the first married couple ever to be declared saints of the Church at the same time. Ignatius Press' new Vision Series book, *Louis and Zélie: The Holy Parents of Saint Thérèse*, by St. Jane parishioner Gina Marie Tennant, brings their story to life for young people.

Relying heavily on the many letters of Zélie, Louis, and other family members, the author has crafted a delightful narrative that begins with the childhoods of both Louis and Zélie, their meeting and subsequent



Gina Marie Tennant

marriage, and the story of their nine children, five of whom survived and became brides of Christ. It is a beautiful, touching story of family life lived with Christ as the center. We see how Zélie came to start her lace making business in Alençon, how Louis became an "horloger,"

a maker of clocks and watches, and opened his shop, which he eventually sold to his nephew so that he could help Zélie manage the financial side of her lace making business. We see how their family was touched by the Franco-Prussian War. We get a glimpse of middle-class Catholic family life in late 19th century France, and we see how the Martins were always ready to help those in need.

Once I got started, it was hard to put this book down. If you are a fan of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, you will love learning more about her family! I think this is a story that readers around age 11 and up will enjoy.

OPT



US Bishops call for protection of unborn life as Covid Rescue Plan Act passes

Following the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act on March 10, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the chairmen of six USCCB committees released a joint statement. The bishops expressed support for the provisions in the bill that would provide relief to help those in need during the ongoing COVID pandemic but were also critical of the bill's lack of protections for the unborn.

"As the American Rescue Plan Act was being written, Catholic bishops reached out to every House and Senate office to express our support for providing additional relief to help poor and vulnerable people who are most at risk of harm from this pandemic, and our strong conviction that this relief should also protect the unborn and their right to life.

"We are grateful this legislation addresses many positive provisions including unemployment assistance, child and earned income tax credit enhancements, nutrition funding, vaccine distribution funding, health care funding, housing assistance, international

assistance to regions stricken by COVID, conflict, and hunger. There are provisions in this bill that will save people from extremely desperate situations and will likely save lives.

"However, it is unconscionable that Congress has passed the bill without critical protections needed to ensure that billions of taxpayer dollars are used for life-affirming health care and not for abortion.

"Unlike previous COVID relief bills, sponsors of the American Rescue Plan Act refused to include the longstanding, bipartisan consensus policy to prohibit taxpayer dollars from funding abortions domestically and internationally. The policy was needed because this bill includes many general references to healthcare that, absent the express exclusion of abortion, have consistently been interpreted by federal courts not only to allow, but to compel, the provision of abortion without meaningful limit.

"The many important, life-saving provisions in the American Rescue Plan Act have

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Stations of Cross



Above: Parochial Vicar Fr. Michael Russo leads the Saint Bernadette middle school students through Stations of the Cross last week.



At right: Mrs. Liz Smith's Pre-K 4 class is learning the Stations of the Cross streamed via FormEd.



Spring has Sprung

Above: The Saint Bernadette School fifth graders enjoy Phys. Ed. outside as the weather warms up!



At left: Kindergartners line up patiently as they get ready to go outside for recess on a gorgeous day in early March!

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Holy Redeemer

Here we GROW again!

Is it a science lesson? A religion lesson? A tactile hands-on activity/ fine motor skills practice? Yes, yes, and yes! Each year PreK students at Holy Redeemer plant marigold seeds in individual cups and take care of them between March and May. Despite the occasional enthusiastic watering by three and four-year old hands, somehow the plants all end up sprouting, and the flowers then



Continued on page 12 Above: PreK students wait for signs of growth

Eucharistic Procession for Life

On January 29, 2021, Fr. Ebuka Mbanude lead several classes from Holy Redeemer School in a Eucharistic Procession for Life in union with the annual March for Life. The procession began at the Mary Shrine and processed around the school with a recitation of the Rosary. The procession ended back at the Mary Shrine where Father Ebuka blessed the participants.



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Holy Redeemer School
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Science is Always in Season

By Erin Pant

Saint Peter's second graders have been discussing freezing temperatures, ice, and the intricate symmetry of snowflakes. However, it is not the winter forecast they are focused on, instead, it is part of their Project Lead the Way STEM curriculum.

The class has been learning about solids, liquids, and gases, as well as the differences between reversible and irreversible changes. To further explore this topic, students were presented a hands-on STEM Challenge – could they build an insulator from recyclables that would keep an ice pop frozen for sixty minutes?

The students began by spending two weeks gaining knowledge, gathering materials, and sketching out their designs. Second grade teacher Mrs. Kelly Nichols introduces this project each year, however this time additional considerations were made to adhere to COVID-19 protocols.

"Our insulator project did significantly change this year. Usually it is completed in teams, however we adapted the project into individual experiments to eliminate sharing



materials," said Nichols. "While we lost the collaboration aspect, the students proved to be resilient and it didn't quell their excitement for the activity at all."

To prepare for the experiment, both in-person students, and students participating in distance learning, filled a bag with water and froze it, observing how the liquid changed to solid. Next, they constructed their insulators with the recyclable materials they chose,

such as plastic, bubble wrap, aluminum foil, and packing materials. Finally, they placed their ice pop inside and began monitoring, measuring out the liquid melt every 15 minutes for one hour.

Students discovered quickly what items worked or didn't work. Second-grader, Tanya Brundage, found that the aluminum worked the best. "It was fun building with recyclables and learning how to measure in milliliters," said Brundage.

"One of the main lessons I hope students took away is that there



Above left: Second-grader Tanya Brundage displays her completed incubator.



Above right: Students learned about Wilson Bentley and created their own symmetrical snowflakes.

At left: Second graders hold up materials they have chosen for their STEM project.

are different ways to accomplish a goal, and to never focus negatively on why something didn't work, but instead reflect on what you learned and what can be changed the next time," said Nichols.

Next time, Brundage said, "I would make the insulator bigger and longer, because the bag that was holding the ice pop was bigger than my box."

A second seasonal STEM challenge involved creating symmetrical snowflakes on black paper with 20 cotton swabs. The class read

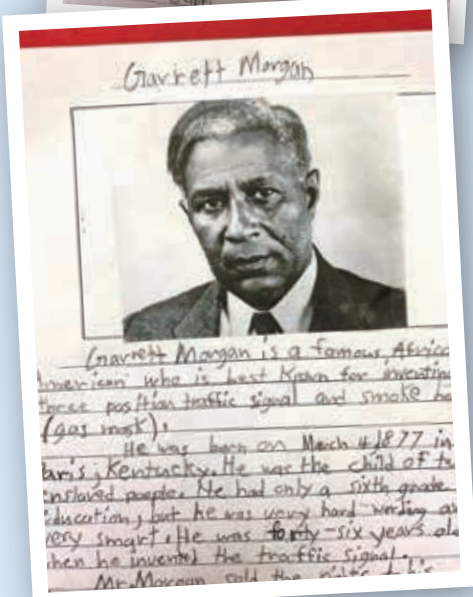
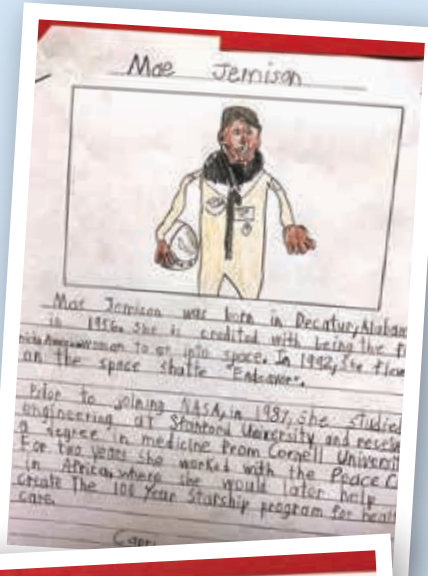
"Snowflake Bentley" which tells the story of Wilson Bentley, a pioneer in the field of photomicrography who photographed, documented, and studied snowflakes.

"The project incorporated history, science and math," explained Nichols. "We reflected on what individuals can accomplish with just an idea and how God has given us the gift of our wonderful minds, and we are called to continually develop and grow these gifts."

OPT

Celebrating Black History Month

Saint Peter's third grade students have been learning about the research process and put their new knowledge to use by researching and writing reports on important African American leaders and their contributions to our society. Each student was assigned a different person. Scientists, inventors, business entrepreneurs, politicians, and athletes were represented by the various reports.



Saint Peter's Parish Youth Ministry Gives Back to Community

Operation Gratitude

By Anneka Girish, '24

We are so thankful for our parish community for making all our service opportunities and fun events possible through your various contributions! Especially during COVID, Saint Peter's Youth Ministry (SPY) has been a place that has allowed us teens to come together and build a stronger Catholic youth community, whether through prayer, service, or games, and we are so grateful for that. In January, our youth group gathered at the to thank



Saint Peter's Youth Group made bracelets and cards for soldiers as part of "Operation Gratitude"

and pray for all our service troops through "Operation Gratitude". We made utility paracord bracelets along with personal cards for our soldiers who work selflessly to serve and keep our country safe. We also enjoyed being together as a community while playing games with nerf guns and enjoying a meal.

Operation Gratitude's Mission: To forge strong bonds between Americans and their Military and First Responder heroes through volunteer service projects, acts of gratitude, and meaningful engagements in communities nationwide.

OPT

Outdoor Stations of the Cross

By Gabriella Georges '24

Our teens (SPY) are always finding ways to bring people closer to God whether it is through prayer, writing cards, or service projects that teens complete together. One of the most recent projects we completed was creating an Outdoor Stations of The Cross. Through our art, people are able to pray and reflect on Jesus' passion. We are able to grow closer to God during this time and really focus on Him, along with the sacrifice He made in order for us to be saved. These stations



Youth created Outdoor Stations of the Cross for nearby senior communities.

help everyone, no matter where they are.

This year, the SPY is helping everyone grow closer to God by bringing the stations to them. A set of the Stations were given to Our Lady of Grace Parish and Grace House Assisted Living in order for the elderly to be able to pray outdoors. I was able to draw out and color the fifth station, Simon helps Jesus carry His Cross. I was very honored to know I was helping others get the chance to learn

about and know God, but I was also happy. I was happy because it was one of the few moments this year, where everything felt normal, but it also helped me see that you can still maintain your relationship with God, no matter the circumstances.

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Bulletin board with kindness pictures



Kindergarten and First grade tissue paper crosses



Seventh and Eighth grade mosaic crosses

St. John the Evangelist – Growing in Size, Spirit, and Love

St. John the Evangelist is excited about all the new families who have become members of our school family this year and those who will join us in the fall. We are also pleased to announce

that we are starting a 3-year-old pre-Kindergarten class starting in September. Registration is open now. Our growing family is a source of pride for our community.

Growing spiritually, our students have been making their Lenten journey through Art. Fourth graders drew symbols of the Passion. Kindergarteners and first graders made purple tissue paper crosses. Second and third graders made crosses from clothespins. Fifth graders drew crucifixes in the style of the crucifix at San Damiano. Seventh and eighth graders made mosaic crosses. Many grades have made “good-deed beads” for Lent. They can count each good deed or sacrifice they make daily or they can use it as a Rosary decade.

Our Lenten journey also includes Stations of the Cross. Because of



Cardinals brightening up a Winter landscape

the Covid restrictions this year, we are planning them a little differently. Friday Stations are led by our eighth graders via Zoom. Every year this class also presents Living

Stations, which is attended by the whole school and many parishioners. This year the Living Stations will be recorded and shown on the parish's YouTube station.

Lifting our spirits is also a priority. Again, our Art class creates wonderful murals for our walls. What could be more pleasing to see than bright red cardinals against the winter landscape?

Practicing compassion and love for one another has always been the goal at SJE. During Lent, we are listening to the words of Pope Francis, who asks us how we will fast this Lent. We are fasting “...from selfishness and be compassionate,” “...from sadness and be filled with gratitude,” “...from hurting words and say kind words.” The Primary grades have a bulletin board in their hallway which reminds us “When you are kind, it not only changes you, it changes the world.” Surrounding the poster are pictures of the children being kind to one another.

OPT



St. John the Evangelist School

announces the opening of a
3 Year Olds Pre-K Program
2021-2022 School Year

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Second and Third grade clothespin crosses



Fifth grade “San Damiano” crosses

J&A COUNCIL

Con't from page 3

to promote human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity – principles which correspond with a Catholic view of the world.

At the core of CST is the centrality of the dignity of the human person and the belief that “human life is sacred.” The Church stresses that “the dignity of the person is the foundation of a moral vision for society.” J&A embraces this primary teaching to guide us in our work.

CST also advances the common good. This principle teaches that we are in this together and we need to

consider and promote what is best for all. Folded into this are questions about human rights, rights of workers, tax policies, and care for the environment.

The principle of solidarity is based on the truth that we need to work together to advance the common good. We are one human family above all else.

Subsidiarity teaches us that local institutions should not be overwhelmed by larger institutions in society. Even so, the Church recognizes that these larger institutions do have essential roles, especially when smaller, local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.

The principles of CST guide us as we plan for the future. For more background on and a good introduction to Catholic social teaching, google “USCCB Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching.”

Join us for the next meeting of the J&A Council on Wednesday, March 24, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 by Zoom. Contact Mary Bennett (mmcben58@gmail.com) or Larry Couch (lawrencecouch1@gmail.com) for more information and the link.

Anthony Bosnick is director of social ministry and adult faith formation at St. Francis of Assisi parish, Derwood.



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A Coach for All Seasons

By Xavier and Quincy Long

Children across the Archdiocese miss the live action, teamwork, competition, and excitement of CYO sports this year. At Our Lady of Lourdes, the children are missing a few other things as well - sweaty palms, nervousness, pregame butterflies, and post-game exhaustion. How can anyone miss these, you ask? It's easy when it's not them who is suffering from these maladies but their coach!

You have not ridden the beautiful roller coaster of youth sports until you have had the distinct pleasure of having Coach Brendan Quinn roam your sidelines. With the perfect mixture of passion, shock, humor, and compassion, Coach Quinn has been coaching CYO sports, from boys and girls basketball and soccer to baseball at St. Ann's and then Our Lady of Lourdes, for more than 20 years.

Thursday, March 11, 2021, Coach Quinn was surprised with, and honored by receiving, the St. Thomas Moore - Man for All Seasons Award. This award is given to a person you can "always count

on in things big and small", and there is not a better possible recipient than Coach Quinn.

Mr. Quinn is truly a man for all seasons, sports, and occasions. He tirelessly gives his time and talent to the children he coaches, both on and off the court, and therefore, his contribution to the well-being of his players does not end when the season does. For his former players that have gone on to play in high school, Mr. Quinn can often be seen at their games, cheering and coaching, and sometimes refereeing, from the stands. And after the game, Coach Quinn always makes a point to find his player, shake their hand, and talk about the game for a minute - still coaching, still leading. At Lourdes, when the CYO seasons end, Coach Quinn's influence does not.

CYO was started to be a ministry, and if you ask any of the hundreds of players who Coach Quinn has worked with, they will tell you it was always fun, always exciting, and always meaningful.

We at Our Lady of Lourdes are lucky to have Brendan Quinn on our side.

OPT



The fifth grade celebrates the successful food drive.

Catholic Schools Week

Before the OLOL School community settled into Ash Wednesday and this Lenten season they were busy celebrating Catholic Schools Week and the Annual School Read-a-thon. Both events coincided to make Catholic Schools Week that much more fun for all the students, faculty, and staff.

Although this year's Catholic Schools Week celebrations had to be changed from previous years, we were still able to partake in classroom door decorating, Student Appreciation Day complete with pizza and ice cream, Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day, and a service activity. OLOL's 5th grade class sponsored a school and parish wide canned food drive to help a local Catholic Charities Food Bank. The food drive was very successful and made the school community that much stronger as everyone chipped in to do their part to help those in need.

The Read-a-thon was a big success as well. This year's event outdid last year's Read-a-thon performance both in total donations made and total minutes read by all the students in the school, from our Little Group three-year olds all the way up to and including our 8th graders.

The Read-a-thon took on new meaning



Fifth graders sort and box donated food items.

this year too. As we are all staying within our own "pods" we have not been able to visit and share our lives with many people who are dear to us. The Read-a-thon changed all this as the students could reach out through their reading activities to all those whom they have not been able to visit. Family members and friends from across the country and around the world were all able to be part of each student's reading journey, by posting on the Read-a-thon school page encouraging words of support and praise to keep their student reading, reading, and reading.

So as you can see the OLOL community was able to adapt and be creative in order to be able to continue the fun tradition of Catholic Schools Week at Lourdes.

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A Special Feast Day Celebration

February 11 marks the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes and commemorates her first apparition to St. Bernadette in 1958. We celebrated our patroness on this day, 63 years later, with a candlelit Mass followed by a procession to the Grotto which is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother.

We have long looked to Our Lady of Lourdes for spiritual and physical healing. Our pastor, Fr. Rob Walsh and vicar, Fr. James Morrison, dedicated the month of February to serving the sick and homebound of the parish. They asked for parishioners to share the names of those nearby who have been unable to attend Mass due to illness or the Coronavirus restrictions, so that they could visit and administer the Sacraments. These members of the community were remembered during the Mass.

Candles lit the darkened Church allowing for standing room only. Former Our Lady of Lourdes students served on the altar and a schola singing traditional Latin hymns and incense added to the beauty and solemnity of the Mass. Following the final blessing, the congregation processed to the Grotto where individual blessings were bestowed



The grotto at Our Lady of Lourdes

by Fr. Rob using a first-class relic of St. Bernadette. It was a beautiful end to our Lady's feast day.

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Godfamily Does God's Work Through #ADWCommunity

Amy Boccella Smith, her seventh-grade daughter, Sophia, and St. Bartholomew Admissions and Development Director, Neda Ghassabeh, like to say they are a 'Godfamily.' Sophia attends St. Bartholomew, and her mother Amy served as Ghassabeh's godmother and sponsor when Ghassabeh was initiated into the Catholic Faith in 2018.

"Does that make Sophia my godsister?" Ghassabeh muses with a smile. Recently, the three collaborated to put faith into action by spearheading a dental drive for the Catholic Charities Dental Clinic.

Boccella Smith, who is a teacher at Our Lady of Victory in Georgetown and a former Service Chair at St. Bartholomew, was inspired to launch a drive at both schools. The goal was to gather oral health supplies for February's *Children's Oral Health Month*.

"Working at Our Lady of Victory and being a long, LONG time parent and parishioner at St. Bart's, I knew I had two communities at



Neda Ghassabeh and Sophia Smith with oral health donations collected for people in need.

my fingertips who would be totally into the idea," says Boccella Smith. "One of my goals for a long time

has been to try to get local parishes and schools to work together for the greater good."

In early February, Sophia announced the project in her role as Principal for the Day at St. Bartholomew. Each student was sent home with a brown paper bag they were to return to school filled with supplies.

"I wanted to launch the drive because I wanted to help people in need," says Sophia. "I think the school has responded positively to the drive."

Ghassabeh saw the project as a way to do something impactful and put a little power into the student Principal's hands.

"I wanted to make sure her Principal for the Day experience was special despite the challenges and limitations of COVID," she explained.

Throughout February, much-needed supplies rolled into both Our Lady of Victory and St. Bartholomew.

"It makes me happy to see all the bags that people have brought in and how seriously they're taking it," says Sophia.

Most importantly, she feels the power of the special relationship between herself, her mother, and Ms. Ghassabeh.

"It's really cool how my 'godsister' works at the same school I go to. I also enjoy how Ms. Ghassabeh is more like a friend than a teacher, especially when we see each other around the school," Sophia says.

OPT

St. Bartholomew Parish

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Rev. Mark Knestout

Pastor

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Frank English, Principal

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SHORT

Con't from page 1

pandemic has dramatically changed the way we interact with nature and each other. This is an awesome gift of inspiration, kindness and joy from God, the timing of which is no coincidence for humanity. I suggest for our reflection this time, we focus on God's gift to us of this planet with its natural beauty and sustaining resources. Many have been strengthened during the pandemic by newfound appreciation of their natural environment. Let's

consider what we can do to return God's favor and assure earth's healing beauty continues for generations to come.

Thanks to Pope Francis, we have a blueprint for action. In 2015, he wrote the encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. Francis expanded his reflection in 2020 with a second teaching, *Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazon). To add action to his words, he convened a world-wide Synod of Bishops to delve more deeply into both teachings and determine actions bishops with all Catholics should take to protect

the earth for all. The Pope is especially concerned for the injustice of enduring damage occurring in the poorest parts of the planet. You can find information regarding Francis's teachings at the web site of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org). For our reflection, let's focus on opportunities for local parishes, schools and families to learn and act urgently to promote our common home.

Protecting the environment can be complicated and controversial. Fortunately, Pope Francis has helped us find common ground with his letters and the results of

the Synod. Our local response to the Pope's call should begin with a commitment to learning more about the issues that are threatening our common home, especially matters within our local control, and to understand the spiritual basis of our responsibility to sustain our natural environment.

To facilitate this, might each parish consider establishing a permanent ministry to lead a proactive, comprehensive environmental protection effort? Elevating care for our shared home to the same level of parish commitment as education, liturgy, social justice and music among other important ministries will create the structure for enhanced and sustained parish environmental action. For those who are familiar with the Church's teachings on social justice, you know that caring for the environment has been one of the seven guiding principles of social justice for decades.

Our parish won't save the earth overnight! There is no single action that will assure the planet and our local environment will be able to bless future populations. The effective approach, as Mother Teresa often taught, perform single works of mercy that will accomplish God's will. Here's a short list of ideas that may promote our local understanding and help your own God-inspired response to *Laudato Si*:

Establish a parish Environmental Action Ministry and engage leaders. Designate your parish as an Eco-Parish. This group can identify the environmental protection/restoration opportunities in the parish; sponsor environmental education discussions and presentations, especially to better understand and utilize the wisdom of *Laudato Si* as

well as local environmental challenges; identify, plan and implement parish projects; coordinate with other parish ministries such as liturgy, education and social justice.

Eco-parish activities are perfect for intergenerational relationships. Consider an intergenerational landscaping team to add natural beauty in and around parish facilities; working together create accessible and safe walking paths in local forested areas by clearing roots and other debris so the space can be used by all. Perhaps construct outdoor worship space on parish grounds such as Stations of the Cross and meditation grottos.

Earth Day, 2021, with its theme *Restoring Our Earth* is set for April 22. There's still time to plan a parish celebration this year! Could be the time to announce the establishment of your parish or school as an Eco-parish or Eco-school. Arbor Day 2021 is April 30th, a great day to learn, care for and plant trees.

Do the simple things like conserve energy and water, recycle trash, protect stormwater, minimize use of paper and plastics; provide safe accommodations for walking and biking to parish activities if reasonable.

The risks to our environment and the planet are global. Pope Francis reminds us that the Earth is our common home for which each of us has responsibility. Our local, sacred natural resources provide us with opportunities to respond to *Laudato Si* and proactively thank God for the gift of our common home.

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Father John Barry Reports Resurrection's State of Spiritual Care

Father Barry reported to Resurrection's faithful that the spiritual care for the parish has been creative since March 2020 and was proud that Cardinal Gregory commended it.

Since the start of the pandemic, each Friday from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm, there is Adoration and confessions in the parking lot. Father Barry created a Tabernacle window for people to come and pray (24/7). Father Barry said, "It is good to see a number of cars and people in them praying safely and cars [or walk-ups] lined up



Father Barry giving Ashes to Resurrection Faithful on Ash Wednesday in the parish parking lot.

classrooms are closed for the 2020-2021 Religious Education program. However, the program has gone to the Zoom format and we have also taped videos for each class. The videos are posted to the parish YouTube channel via the Resurrection website." Father continued that the instructors for the videos are Mrs. Helene Stever, Director of Religious Education and a member of clergy (usually himself). Father Barry commented, "This affords every student the opportunity for faith formation this year, and at their pace and time."

In this Holy Year of St. Joseph, Father Barry has created daily 10-minute videos for parishioners to view on the parish website about St. Joseph and faith. The videos are accompanied with Father Calloway's book, *Consecration to St. Joseph*. To enhance Resurrection parishioners' knowledge and prayer ritual, Resurrection has also added *Formed* to the parish website.

OPT

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MERKEL

Con't from page 1

hair on top made it a Merkel smiley meant it met her approval.

And while her love was unconditional, her approval had to be earned. Mrs. Merkel had high standards. Sugary though she was, she did not sugarcoat the important stuff. Her impact was extremely consequential for me, as I know it was for many others. Even when she was not in the room, she was still reaching students she never met. I like to think that she still is. Whether it is a father teaching his daughter how he learned to outline or a former student-turned-editor slashing away a comma splice as she gets ready to approve a piece for publication, I know Mrs. Merkel continues to show up in the lives of her students in so many happy ways. May God be with her.

Laura Graham Fetters, an ADW Language Arts teacher for 34 years, described Linda as someone whose heart was generous. When Laura first came to Holy Redeemer in 1990, Linda was assigned to be my "buddy teacher," someone who would help her to adjust to a new job and to learn the ways of the school. Besides the fact that Linda was consistently joyful and available to her, Linda's generosity never waned. Many of the lessons

and projects that have stood the test of time in Laura's own classroom are the very ones that Linda originally convinced her to teach: The Adventures of Ulysses, A Christmas Memory, and The Diary of Anne Frank. Linda's genuine love for a good story was contagious; however, it was her infusion of Christian values into literature lessons that have worked as models for Laura for over two decades. Furthermore, while Linda may have giggled at the adolescent behavior of some of her students, she never once heard her speak disparagingly about them; she adored them and worked tirelessly to provide them with deep and meaningful learning experiences. Finally, though not a Catholic, with her gifts of passion, love, and commitment to Christian principles, she was by far one of the most ADW "Catholic" teachers ever known.

Amy Moore, an ADW teacher, vice-principal, and principal for over 22 years, identified Linda Merkel as a master teacher, the kind that you remember for years to come. Mrs. Merkel's lessons come to mind every time you find yourself searching for just the right descriptive adjective, wondering if the sentence requires a semicolon or a colon, or trying to remember what exactly a dangling participle was anyway. Linda was an example of how to inspire a love of learning

in your students, and how to be fair, accurate, and honest in all you pursue. She loved teaching and helping other teachers to be their best.

At Our Lady of Lourdes, Linda was not only an exceptional teacher, dedicated to the individual successes of each of her students, but she was also a leader and mentor to teachers who worked under her as principal. Linda was diligent in her commitment to excellence, and tireless in her efforts to support and encourage the community of teachers, staff, students, and families at Our Lady of Lourdes for over 15 years. During Linda's career, in the different roles and many responsibilities of teacher, assistant principal, and principal, always radiated kindness, genuine concern, and the true passion of a person who had found their calling and used their God-given talents for the betterment of others.

We remember with fondness her closing message of the day, "I look forward to seeing you all tomorrow morning with bright, shining faces." Mrs. Linda Merkel brought joy, smiles, and laughter to Our Lady of Lourdes for many years and we will continue to honor her memory.

Linda Merkel is in our hearts in very special ways that we can never, ever accurately or fully explain with the mere tools of written words.

OPT

Resurrection Choirs

Even Covid-19 Can't Stop the Music!

Come; let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation. Let us greet him with a song of praise, joy like sing out our psalms. Psalm 95: 1-2.

One of the ministries that had to rethink how they did things during the pandemic was the Resurrection Music Ministry. Led by Mrs. Annick Kanter-Saint Hubert (Music Director) and Mr. Bill Wisnom (Principal Organist), the music at Resurrection has moved into the age of Zoom and never dropped a note. At every step of the pandemic, the Resurrection Music Ministry has not missed a beat, starting with the first tapped mass in March 2020. When Holy Week came, a small choir of seven (all standing 6-feet apart), sang for the taping of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Since then, they come together and sing for the taping of the weekly Masses which parishioners can find on the Resurrection website.

By the end of March 2020, the French, Handbell, and Adult Choirs were meeting via Zoom to practice. As with everyone at that time, there were some rough spots. But they stuck together and persevered! For April and May, they met weekly and as time marched on, they started using the breakout room and some would meet a little earlier for

extra practice. The rehearsal schedules were kept to the same days and times as much as possible. It was a little harder for the Handbell Choir, but each member watched videos on techniques and other performances.

In September, members of the choirs started to record their own parts and using current technology, Annick was able to combine each video to create a virtual choir. Several songs were recorded and used for the tapping of Sunday Masses.

Every year, the Resurrection Music Ministry holds a Christmas concert where each choir performs for the parishioners and their guests. A music CD is also created and sold to be enjoyed all year round. So that the tradition could continue, the idea was created to still have the concert – part live and part virtual. The program included the Adult, Women's French and Handbell choirs. A brass trio was also included since they are normally apart of the Christmas concert. With the virtual part being recorded ahead, many choir alumni who have moved out of the area were invited to perform in the concert. The Resurrection Christmas Concert has been available to watch via the parish website since December 21 and has had over 530 views.

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Mary of Nazareth Hands on Classes Even from a Distance



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In the Classroom . . . and from Home

maryofnazareth.org



Eloisa counts out her marigold seeds



Rowen and his newly sowed seeds



Aaron carefully places seeds in his soil



Joey shares his completed sequencing worksheet

GROW

Con't from page 4

go home as Mother's Day gifts in May.

Planting day begins with circle time to discuss the science of seeds sprouting and plants growing. With songs, fingerplays and simple discussion, children learn what plants need to grow. It quickly turns into a religion discussion as well, since God not only created the

seeds, but also provides them with the sunshine, soil, and rain to make them grow. Then touching on social studies, we learn that while God gives us the tools, people also have some responsibility to care for other living things.

When seeds are actually planted, children scoop soil into their cup, use math and fine motor skills to count and pick up seeds (often harvested from last year's extra plants) and then more soil and water before placing in a sunny window. Almost every year, a few stu-

dents immediately stand in front of the newly planted seeds and watch, waiting for some sprouting action. While it obviously does not happen that same day, there is always a magical moment when a child spots the first sign of life from those cups.

This year we will (fingers crossed) have over 80 plants growing in our PreK hallway, one for each of our PreK students. Since this tradition has been going on for decades, and teachers use seeds that were harvested at

the end of the previous summer from extra classroom plants, one could say that the Holy Redeemer flowers from many years ago are still producing new generations of plants each year. We like to think that like the marigolds, we are planting the seeds of a strong Catholic education in these, our youngest students, to continue growing for many years to come.

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De Chantal's Students Prayerfully Reflect During Lent While Also Celebrating Science Madness Month

De Chantal School teachers utilize the school's impressive faith and science programs to help students prepare their hearts for Easter and their minds for their futures in Science fields

By Catherine Tomsbeck

Students at St. Jane de Chantal school begin each school day this Lent listening to a Lenten Reflection during morning announcements. The eighth-grade students researched and prepared the daily Lenten Reflections, which they share with the entire school. Also during Lent, the DeChantal First Grade studied and reflected upon the Stations of the Cross. After learning about each station, the students wrote



De Chantal school's Room 2 First-grade students used their fantastic artistic abilities to illustrate the Stations of the Cross to help them better understand Christ's sacrifice

a daily reflection on what Jesus' suffering meant to them.

Throughout the winter months, De Chantal students participated in many long-standing school traditions. The Kindergarten students presented their "100 Days of School" projects and Third graders researched a famous historic person complete with a living presentation for their annual "Wax Museum" program.

March is always known

Continued on page 15

Big Improvements Coming to DeChantal Parish and School

St. Jane de Chantal Parish Launches Forever de Chantal Campaign

By Lisa Tehan and John Nalls

On January 28, 2021, Father Samuel Giese and the De Chantal Campaign Leadership Committee officially launched the \$3.5 million *Forever De Chantal Campaign* to improve the St. Jane Frances de Chantal church and school. The three projects will impact "Children, Church, and Community". The generosity of founding donors propelled the Campaign to the public launch, which debuted on the church's YouTube Channel and concluded with an announcement that \$3 million had already been pledged.

The initial inspiration behind the campaign was the desire to improve the physical plant with a beautiful synthetic field on the south side of the parish school. The acquisition of the adjacent property in 2000 provided an open grass area which proved to be an uneven playing surface with serious drainage issues. The project will also include an extensive underground drainage system and water retention areas, a storage/concession stand, bath-

Continued on page 19



The capital campaign includes intensive improvements to the school's playground and field.



Only memories of the De Chantal Dash starting line filled with excited students ready to race are allowed this year due to COVID restrictions.

De Chantal DASH is Virtual This Year but Still the School's Favorite Fundraising Event

St. Jane DeChantal School has made their annual 5K race virtual this year due to COVID

By Kelly Jana

The De Chantal 5K DASH has been a long-standing beloved tradition at St. Jane De Chantal school and 2021 will mark its 6th annual race. COVID is changing the traditional race venue into a virtual event but certainly is not taking the fun out of their plans! The De Chantal school community is still participating in monthly DASH days at school, dressing up uniforms with DASH gear, classroom basket raffles, and class registration competitions. On the day of the DASH, families will have the choice of running predetermined race routes on their own time schedule or they can run a course of their own choosing. They are,

of course, taking lots of pictures along the way and posting their times on the race site.

The De Chantal Dash is a Home & School run event and all proceeds fund enhancing the school community and keeping the students and faculty out of harm's way. The event tends to attract over 400 runners from the school and parish community. Participants of all ages are welcome, even little ones in strollers! They offer both a 5K run and a fun 1-mile run. The sea of colored DASH shirts on race day always bring a smile to all faces! Please join the community De Chantal by lacing up your

Continued on page 15

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Michelle D'Amour Flynn
OPT Editors

Our Lady of Mercy School News

Mrs. Christine Green receives CCSE "Making IT Happen" Award

The Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) has named Mrs. Green one of this year's recipients of their "Making IT Happen Award" (IT=Inclusive Teaching). Mrs. Green will receive the award during the CCSE Virtual Spring Benefit on March 13. We are truly grateful for her commitment to each and every student at Mercy!

Summer Learning at Mercy

Mercy's Summer Spectrum of Education will offer summer learning opportunities for students of all ages. All of the popular classes are returning, along with some exciting new opportunities! Participants can learn to paint, travel around the world, expand their math and reading skills, and much more! Classes will be in-person July 5-16.

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An Instagram Takeover at Mercy!

During Catholic Schools Week, four Mercy students took over @MercyPride, planning and creating engaging posts for each CSW theme day. What a great success it was! Here are some of their accomplishments:

11% increase in followers
25% increase in accounts reached

Dress Like a Teacher Post was the 2nd highest "liked" post in the history of @MercyPride!

A big Mercy Roar-Out to this fantastic foursome: Anna Gilbert, Carly Dougherty, Grace Heath, and Bobby Lannan!



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Mercy's Instagram Takeover Team showed its @MercyPride!

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Mercy students studied music compositions of Florence Price during Black History Month

Celebrating Black History Month

Mercy students visited the MLK memorial, worked on music compositions studying Scott Joplin and Florence Price, watched singer Marian Anderson's historic concert at the Lincoln Memorial, and discussed important contributions and bravery of African Americans in military service and defense of the country.

OPT

Staying True to the Mercy Mission

Teaching the faith continues to be our mission at Our Lady of Mercy School, and during the season of Lent, we are integrating many new and creative faith-based activities:

Last week, children's author Laura Alary visited us virtually. She read from her book, "Make Room: A Children's Guide to Lent and Easter." This gave the children in the younger grades a nice preparation for the season of Lent, and also led to interesting conversations about how authors get their books published.

Our PreK 3 did their own version of our parish tradition, having pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

On Ash Wednesday, after we participated in Mass virtually, Fr. Charles and Fr. Joe visited every class to distribute ashes. Using an ancient form of distribution, the ashes were sprinkled on our heads.

Continued on page 21



Mercy's Pastor Monsignor Charles Antonicelli distributes ashes to students during school.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish News

New Ways to Help the Hungry

Before Covid-19 a dedicated group of parishioners prepared a home cooked casserole, following a recipe provided by S.O.M.E. Casseroles were delivered on a monthly schedule to the food program. As a result of the pandemic, changes were made to the guidelines for food donations. Mercy is now providing Snack Packs for the homeless served by S.O.M.E. A gallon size zip lock bag with six pre-packaged snack items and a drink are prepared. Each volunteer provides at least

ten Snack Packs that are collected at OLOM and transported to S.O.M.E. Donations are accepted for the first two weeks of each month and delivered on the second Saturday of the month.

A Lenten Food Drive was held February 8 through 20, in support of the St. Martin's Food Pantry in Gaithersburg. Need for food assistance has increased throughout the county and items needed at St. Martins have expanded to include non-food items such as wipes, diapers and adult diapers, along with baby formula, baby food and the usual canned and non-perishable food items.

Lenten Programs

We are reminded that Zoom links can bring us closer to friends who have moved away. On Monday, February 15, Sister Pat Mensing, SSJ, who previously served the parish as our Pastoral Associate for Social Justice, provided a reflection on Zoom titled, "Hope in Winter Darkness," to prepare us to enter the season of Lent and to look at how to find God's blessings in this time.

Continued on page 21

Our Lady of Mercy Parish

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Our Lady of Mercy School
Ms. Deborah Thomas, Principal
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Gerry Burgess, OPT Editor
301-330-5676

More Our Lady of Mercy News on Page 21



Lent

On Ash Wednesday, each of our in-person classes gathered for a prayer service. This was such a special day as we felt our community come together as one to prepare our hearts for the Lenten season. Our fourth-grade students are also so very proud of their Lenten crosses and promises.



Read Across America

What fun it was to devote a day to the excitement of reading. Thank you to all of our guest reader "celebrities" who visited and Zoomed into our classrooms.



LENT

Con't from page 13

as "Science Madness Month" and this year each grade chose to focus on the scientific method. Second grade students explored the animal kingdom learning about classification and why animals may become extinct.

DASH

Con't from page 13

sneakers and hitting the pavement to enjoy a Saturday afternoon on April 17th with your families. Never in the history of the Dash has this been during a pandemic and hopefully, never again! Members of the community

Fourth-grade students began one inquiry with research on Catherine Johnson, the NASA mathematician, and then built a model of the Apollo 11 capsule and re-entry parachute. All middle school science classes took advantage of the recent NASA Mars landing of Perseverance to study the engineering and life science aspects of this endeavor.

OPT

who want to grab the moment and be part of history can register or sponsor the DASH can find opportunities at www.dechantal-dash2021.racewire.com. Registration closes on March 26. Please email Kelly Jana at kellyjana22@gmail.com with any questions. DO THE DASH!

OPT

Catholic Schools Week 2021

Traditions old and new filled our week as we reflected on this year's theme, "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service." Students celebrated a special Mass for the Feast of St. Blaise and made and delivered notes of appreciation to our clergy. The students also enjoyed an amazing, interactive music technology presentation, special treats, and a fun night of Virtual Bingo. Our teachers were treated to delicious meals and gifts and everyone enjoyed pajama day on a rather cold and snowy day! This week reminded us of the sacrifices that our families continually make to give their children the gift of a Catholic School education, and we are so grateful for our resilient, caring, faith-filled school community. #StEsSpirit



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Pastor

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St. Elizabeth School Principal

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Catholic Schools Week was celebrated with the usual appreciation for the gift of our school even if activities had to be modified due to the pandemic. Students enjoyed themed out of uniform days including Color Day, Hero Day, and Crazy Hat/Hair Day. As an act of service, diapers and men's socks were collected to share with neighbors in our community. Pictured: Second-grade students, dressed in their favorite color for Color Day, became conductors for a Music class.



As part of the "Small Things with Great Love" campaign, seventh-grader Porter shares a story with his little sister.



Showing S'more Love

Eighth grader Maria enjoys a sweet treat to celebrate the Class of 2021.



Celebrating the Class of '21

It has been a tough year to be an eighth grader with so many missed experiences this year due to the pandemic. Parents at St. Patrick's School have been spreading the love and appreciation this winter with surprise deliveries on the 21st of each month (in recognition of the 2021 graduation year). In January, the students were treated to hot cocoa bombs and in February, they received do-it yourself-s'more kits. Are there more surprises in store for our beloved eighth graders?



Small Things with Great Love Campaign

On Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's School launched a "Small Things with Great Love" Campaign which will run until the parish feast day on St. Patrick's Day. Students are encouraged to complete small acts of kindness. Pictured: Seventh-grader Vera donates diapers to benefit the St. Steven Martyr Food Pantry at St. Jude's parish.

ENZLER

Con't from page 1

grows that we can begin to do more things safely, I pray that we can all be together again soon. I pray that those who have needed to stay away can begin to return to Mass safely, that we can all start to resume normal activities of service and worship, and that our young people especially will come back to participate in the life of the Church and the parish.

You, our parishioners, can show us the way to say "yes" as Mary did to God and to each other. As we finish Lent and prepare to celebrate Easter and the gift of eternal life, that affirmative response means recentring ourselves on God and God's love for all of us. Holy Week is a great opportunity to celebrate that in a very special way.

I would like to focus especially on that word "opportunity." Most of us grew up with the belief that you had to go to church on Sunday because it is an obligation and part of our faith. Perhaps that was conveyed as more of a stick than a carrot, that if you did not go to church on Sunday you were committing a serious sin.

As you return or think about returning, I would like to suggest a different way of looking at attending Mass. Could we think of Mass a meaningful opportunity instead of a burdensome obligation?

I think of a recent story about a friend I grew up. He lived two houses away from me when we were kids in Bethesda, and let's just say he sowed his oats. Nothing major, but he could be a bit of a troublemaker at times.

Fast forward all these years later to a golfing trip he is on with his buddies. While on the trip, he said to his friends that he was going to Mass and asked if anybody wanted to go with him. These were all Catholics as I understand it, and yet they questioned why he would go to Mass when on a golf vacation.

His response was not "because I have to," or "it's an obligation," or "because it's a commandment." Instead, he said something like this:

"I go to Mass to say thank you. I have a wonderful, beautiful wife. I have six great children. I have a successful business, and even get to work with some of my kids. I have healthy grandchildren. I go to church for one simple reason - to say thank you

to God."

I am hopeful that we can all come back to church for that same reason, to participate fully in the Eucharist, which comes from the Greek word *eucharista* that means thanksgiving. We have much to be thankful for, even amid the very real sufferings and trials of the pandemic.

We thank God most of all for the gift of Jesus, who died on the cross for our salvation and conquered sin and death through his Resurrection on Easter morning. We can thank God for our health. We can thank God for the wonders of modern science that vaccines were developed quickly, and that COVID-19 may soon be in our rearview mirror. We can thank God that we may be able to see loved ones we have missed, return to our places of work, go to doctor appointments without fear, enjoy a meal at a restaurant, and so much more.

I also thank God that so many have stepped forward to serve others through Catholic Charities in the past year. They have assisted with food, shelter, healthcare, donations, and much more, doing so with great love for those in need. We have been overwhelmed by the response, and those we serve are filled with gratitude for your charity.

I know there are good and faithful Catholics still deciding when they can come safely back to church and how to handle this new normal. I am blessed to have received the vaccine, and I must say it gave me a stronger sense of peace than I expected. I feel safer knowing that my chances of contracting COVID are lower, and that the chances of a severe case are extremely low. I feel safe celebrating Mass and able to start returning to other activities, still being careful and safe for myself and those around me.

These decisions will be different for everyone. My hope is that as we feel able to do more, one of the first things in our minds and hearts is to seek the peace, thanksgiving, and community that comes with participation in the Eucharist and Mass.

We really do need you. We need your faith and your friendship, and we have missed it dearly. I believe you need your priests and your fellow believers, the sacraments, and the support of a faith community. As we move forward, may we all be together again soon in the weekly celebration of Eucharist that allows all to be one in our pursuit of the kingdom and to say "yes" to God in everything he asks of us and gives us.

OPT

McGANN

Con't from page 1

We know we are commanded to love our neighbors -and not just the ones next door or the ones we like. We know that love is more than a word or an emotion - it is an action. Are we willing to enlarge our circle of care? Can we expand our community of care to include people who don't agree with us, people who are so different from us that we find it hard to imagine loving them, people who push us away? Are we willing to venture beyond the safety of the known, no matter our circumstances, and act on our

love in a universal way - a catholic way - and love one person at a time?

Lent is the perfect time to find out if we are up to the task of loving our neighbor - and demonstrating that love in a concrete way. Lent is the perfect time to look very hard - to find the Face of God in people where it is well-hidden. Lent is the perfect time to abandon the idea that going through the motions is enough.

"The openness of our hearts and minds can be measured by how wide we draw the circle of what we call family."

"Don't wait for leaders. Do it yourself, person-to-person."

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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Parish Editor
New Volunteer Needed
Contact rectory to apply

St. Raphael School celebrates Black History Month, CSW and more

By Gabriela Herrera Gugiu

Lonnie Bunch, founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, said, "There is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history" and "no higher cause than honoring our struggle and ancestors by remembering."

At St. Raphael, teaching and celebrating Black history is an annual occurrence. Every February, the second-grade classroom is turned into a living museum honoring African American history and culture. This year, students were instructed to research and study American influencers and contributors in Black history and create an "exhibit" that was filmed and showcased through video. Examples of this year's prominent figures included Raye Montague, a naval engineer who created the first computer-generated U.S. naval ship, and Rosa Parks, an American activist in the civil rights movement best known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery bus boycott. This event allows our young minds to learn about the people and events that shaped our country's past and drove positive changes in our society.

Another one of St. Raphael's rich traditions is Family Fun Night —



Above: Seventh-grade teacher John Henderson is surrounded by his "Mini Me" copycats during Catholic Schools Week at St. Raphael School. Photo by Melissa Kelly
At left: Second-grade student Emma Gugiu portrays naval engineer Raye Montague for the St. Raphael School Black History Museum. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia



a simple, lighthearted event that encourages families to have some good old-fashioned fun. This year was no exception with the launch of the inaugural St. Raphael Iron

Chef competition. Families received a secret ingredients kit and dashed to work in their kitchens to compete for the school's best pretzel. The result was a new, creative activity to come together as a community while staying at home.

"We wanted to create an event that would bring families together and off electronic devices," said Sabrina Colaianni, HSA president.

"At the end of the day, Family Fun Night has always been about prioritizing our families."

Looking ahead, the school's spring events are also shaping up to build community, promoting outdoor and out-of-the box fun with more experiential auction items for bid this year. For more information of our annual fundraiser, SpringFest,

Continued on page 31



Baseball legend Jackie Robinson, portrayed by second-grade student Davey Quickel, was one of the luminaries included in this year's SRS Black History Museum. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia

St. Raphael Parish St. Raphael School

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Faith Formation During a Time of Pandemic

By Jane Zilles-Soberano, D. Min., Director of Faith Formation

The Shrine of St. Jude parish is continuing its faith formation program despite the pandemic. We have eight in-person classes on Sunday with 105 young people and two in-person classes on Monday with 16 young people. Most of our students are online in 11 classes of 165 students on Sunday morning and four classes of 50 students on Mondays. We could not do it without the generous work of 36 catechists. The sad thing is that our first and fifth grades are very small.

Fifteen students from ages 6 to 18 and one baby brother were baptized at 3 communal celebrations in January, and more than 100 young people celebrated First Reconciliation on Feb 13. Now they are preparing to receive Jesus in Holy Communion for the first time during one of six parish masses in May. Additionally, 68 adolescents are looking forward to being confirmed by the Most Rev Mario Dorsonville on March 19. Preparation included an online retreat for most of them with two in-person retreats for a maximum of 30 students each.

The volunteer catechists will tell you that teaching virtually is very hard and teaching in-person with masks and social distancing is no picnic either. However, we trust that God's grace will fill in what human effort lacks—always...but especially now.

One unusual phenomenon is that parents continue to bring students forward—15 since the beginning of January and most of them needing Baptism. We have added them to existing classes as well as started new ones. We are planning to continue some classes past the traditional ending date.

We could not do as well as we are without the help of the Archdiocesan Office for Religious Education. They have prepared creative lessons and sacrament retreats that use online videos, arts and crafts and reflections to deepen the spiritual life of parents and students alike.

While most of our adult programs are taking a vacation, we have a robust adult RCIA all on zoom. There are nine candidates in Spanish and eight in English, all preparing for Easter sacraments.

OPT

It Takes a Village

Thank You to Food Pantry Supporters

By Tom Roach

The St. Stephens Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude was established as a result of the pandemic and began distributing food to between 300 and 350 local families weekly since May 2020. Mike Goss, food pantry director, wishes to express his gratitude to the neighboring Catholic parishes and organizations for their support and donations. Truly, we are blessed to have so many who've answered the desperate call to feed the hungry.

The Shrine of St. Jude wishes to recognize and thank our fellow Christians for weekly, monthly, or one-time donations of food, diapers, gift cards, and other essential items: St. Martin of Tours Food Pantry (Gaithersburg), St. Patrick's (Rockville), St. Mary's Boy Scout Troop (Rockville), Our Lady of Grace (Silver Spring), Holy Cross (Garrett Park), St. Elizabeth's (Rockville), St. Andrew the Apostle (Silver Spring), St. Jane de Chantel (Bethesda), the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament (DC), and St. Jerome's (Hyattsville).

Special thanks to the Knights of Columbus from the Father Rosensteel and St. Joseph Manyanet Councils for the weekly delivery of over 700 loaves of bread. Parishioner volunteers have made that long Hagerstown round-trip to pick up that generous offering. Finally, Catholic Charities was instrumental in providing the pantry with a solid footing of a weekly delivery of 300 bags of non-perishable food between August and November with a special Christmas delivery of 350 turkeys.

If you wish to donate to the St. Stephen's Food Pantry, please see sidebar or contact Mike Goss at pantry@stjuderockville.org.

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Mike Goss, Director of the St. Stephens Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude, surrounded by the many donations of food items from generous supporters. Photo by Rev. Paul D. Lee, STD, Pastor of the Shrine of St. Jude

St. Stephen's Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude

Food distribution is on Saturdays from 9–11 a.m.

Pantry is located at 12701 Veirs Mill Road, Rockville, MD 20853

Donations Needed and Donation Drop-Off Schedule

Donated pantry items may be dropped off in the Breezeway (between the school and the church) on weekdays from 3:30 to 7:00 p.m. and on weekends from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. [Please note that if you are not able to make a donation drop off with the regular pantry volunteers present, you may leave the donation on a table labeled "Food Pantry" in the Breezeway during regular daylight hours (note that the Breezeway is locked every evening).]

The most needed items for the pantry are:

- canned tuna and chicken
- canned soups
- canned fruits, vegetables and tomatoes
- canned pork and beans
- small bags of beans and rice
- small bags or boxes of pasta
- peanut butter, jelly and jams (plastic jars)
- cereal and cans of oatmeal
- boxed pasta and pasta sauce (plastic jars)
- fruit juice (plastic jar)
- paper towels
- toilet paper

Wish list items:

- diapers (size 5 & size 6)
- baby wipes
- baby formula
- feminine hygiene products
- deodorant
- travel size soap, shampoo, and toothpaste

Monetary Donations Accepted
Cash and check donations as well as gift cards to grocery stores are gladly accepted. Additionally, you can also donate through Faith Direct.



As has been a tradition for many, many years, the third-grade Presidents arrived at St. Jude Regional Catholic School last month – only this time, during a snowstorm! Luckily, everyone was heard loud and clear due to amazing technology. Thank you to Mrs. Merideth – and congratulations to her entire third-grade class of "presidents"!

More Shrine of St. Jude News on Page 32

Shrine of St. Jude Parish

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The St. Jude Youth Group sponsored a Lenten Project to help DC Catholic Charities, which operates five low-barrier shelters in DC. The group collected various items, including Adult diapers; soap; coffee, cream, and sugar; tissues; hand sanitizer; antibacterial wipes; paper towels; toothbrushes and toothpaste; and gift cards for grocery stores. Pictured in photo on left are Mrs. Jonine Natale (Youth Leader of the St. Jude Youth Group) and Junior Bouffleur (member of St. Jude Youth Group) along with Fr. Jorge Ubau, parochial vicar at the Shrine of St. Jude. Photo by Cesar Sanchez. Pictured in photo on right are members of the Shrine of St. Jude Youth Group after collecting donations one recent Friday evening. Photo by Tom Roach. Kudos to the St. Jude Youth Group and all who contributed!



It pays to advertise in Our Parish Times

RASCISTS

Con't from page 2

tuaries in minority neighborhoods. PP encourages teens to engage in premarital sex through licentious sex-education programs. PP thereby undermines marriage and stable two-parent families (the foundation of society) resulting in more out-of-wedlock births and abortions. Planned Parenthood's racism has resulted in 40% of abortions being performed on black women who comprise only 13% of the population. Black women are aborted at three times the rate of white women.

Through the years PP has poisoned the general population with racism and their anti-family policies, including the killing of the preborn.

The historical details of PP's racism are found in the DVD, *Maafa 21*, available from Life Dynamics, and in American Life League's report, *Planned Parenthood's Racism . . . In Their Own Words*. Both are free and available on the internet.

Democrat Politicians' Racism

The Democrat Party was historically anti-black even through the 1960's with their filibustering of Civil Rights legislation. (Google "Democrat federal legislative racist history" for details). Democrat controlled states were replete with onerous, oppressive racist legislation.

In 2009 Hillary Clinton claimed it a "great privilege" when receiving PP's highest Margaret Sanger Award, "I admire Margaret Sanger enormously, her courage, her tenacity, her vision.... I am really in awe of her." Nancy Pelosi received the award in 2014.

While many Democrat politicians call others racist without evidence, PP goes scot free. PP is not cited as a racist organization even after admitting its racism. Indeed, Democrats insist on giving them \$600 million of our tax money annually and want to give them millions more in the coronavirus relief legislation. They also want to eliminate restrictions on federal funding of abortion. Why all the Democrat financial support of PP and abortionists? Because they are huge contributors to Democrats' election campaigns. PP donated \$45 million to candidate Biden's presidential campaign alone. PP and Democrats practice a highly effective and mutually beneficial system of racism.

Effects of Their Racism

PP/Democrat racism is a disaster for black families. Over 70% of black children are born to single mothers without the guidance, encouragement and discipline of a full-time father. Dr. Dobson of Focus on the Family some years ago did a poll of incarcerated black men and found over 90% did not know their father or hated him. PP's century long racism has even eliminated the concept of family in some men who impregnate several women without any concept of responsibility for the child. See: *Iyanla Speaks to 6 Men Who Have 87 Children with 50 Different*

Women and subsequent YouTube videos for a glimpse of this generational problem.

Single parent families suffer more crime, poverty, school dropouts, child abuse, and abortion than two-parent families. They often lack the resources to provide a good education for their children who have to take lower paying jobs. Thus PP's racism results in lifelong educational, social and economic discrimination of blacks. The elimination of two-parent families is the worst racism.

Rev. Walter B. Hoye II, founder of the Issues4Life Foundation commented on the recent report of the U.S. fertility rate, "In order for any demographic to continue to exist, the replacement level is 2.1. In order for the black community to survive, every black woman of reproductive age must have an average of 2.1 children. In 2017, the total fertility rate for the black community was 1.8. The current rate is 1.7. At this rate, by 2050 the total Black Fertility Rate will have dropped to 1.3 or lower." Hoye said, "There's no economic model in the world that will let [us] bounce back ... If we don't stop aborting our children at the rate that we are aborting them now, no more no less, we just keep on doing it ... we're going to be facing irreversibility," he concluded.

At the rate the black population is declining it may take another hundred years, but the PP goal of eliminating blacks will be achieved. Indeed, the entire U.S. population may eventually suffer the same fate, because the racism birthed by PP has resulted in killing the preborn and has invaded all of society with disastrous trends – premarital-sex, cohabitation, contraception and abortion – giving rise to the loss of faith, family and freedom which will eventually destroy our republic if not stopped.

The recent census found the number of couples marrying since 1970 has decreased by two-thirds. Anthropologist J.D. Unwin analyzed 86 cultures and concluded when sexual restraint is maintained a society flourishes and when they engage in widespread immorality of premarital sex it collapses. (Google: Sex and Culture.)

Actions to Mitigate PP/ Democrat Politicians Racism

Since our society has veered away from God's directions of how to live our lives, the obvious remedy is for people to repent. We need to live our lives in union with our Creator, pray for our country and urge others to do the same. Hopefully, God will hear our prayers and intervene to return society to living as He wills.

PP's destruction of the families will end when they experience enough public/political pressure. The Peace and Justice Council does well to inform people about racism. Hopefully, they will include the PP/Democrat politicians' racism. And more ways of spreading the word about this evil practice and its practitioners will be opened.

OPT

Mr. Naughton has served in various pro-life positions in both state and local organizations.

Celebrating St. Joseph's Day and the Year of St. Joseph

By Don Kinler

In celebration of St. Joseph's Day and the Year of St. Joseph, the Fr. Horace B. McKenna Council of the Knights of Columbus is sponsoring a St. Joseph Altar on Friday, March 19, from 8:00 am-8:00 pm at the Mother Seton Parish Center.



St. Joseph is the patron saint of immigrants, workers, unborn children, refugees, fathers, and craftspeople, among others. According to tradition, the practice of creating large food altars, or St. Joseph's Tables, dates to the Middle Ages, when there was a severe drought and famine in Sicily. The peasants prayed to St. Joseph, and when the rains arrived, they organized a celebration in his honor. Please bring a non-perishable food item to donate to a local food pantry to help feed our neighbors in need.

OPT



Blood Drive at Mother Seton

By Bob Bokma

Mother Seton Parish and the Fr. Horace B. McKenna, S.J. Council #11024 (Knights of Columbus) conducted a very successful blood drive on Sunday, March 7, 2021. The bloodmobile event was held in the parish parking lot. INOVA Blood Donor Services reported collections surpassed the goal established for the bloodmobile drive. McKenna Council thanks the donors and all those who collaborated.

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Above: The Inova Bloodmobile outside Mother Seton ready for blood donors.

At right: Knight of Columbus' Bob Bokma, event coordinator



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Fr. Lee Fangmeyer
Pastor

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Brenda Rosado
OPT Editor

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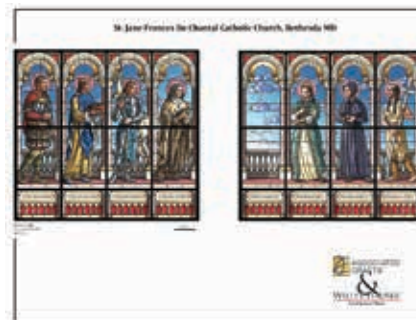
CAMPAIGN

Con't from page 13

rooms, a batting cage, scoreboard, and two new playgrounds.

The church worship space will be adorned with twelve beautiful new stained-glass windows designed by Associated Crafts & Willet-Hauser. The American and French born saints chosen each have spiritual ties to the parish and will be led by our patron saint, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, welcoming all to join her pilgrimage. In addition, the Church's Family Room will house a large window depicting a Guardian Angel watching over parish children playing at the edge of a streambed, with the church in the background.

The final project includes the



Several of the stained-glass projects include French and American-born saints with strong connections to St. Jane de Chantal's history.

renovation of the parish's 70-year-old Caulfield Hall, Scanlon Meeting Room and kitchen as well as the construction of a dedicated choir room, replacing the storage room surrounded by filing cabinets, holiday décor, and maintenance supplies in which our talented Music

Ministry presently practices. Caulfield Hall, used by so many of the parish's organizations, will benefit from new technology, lighting, sound, and Wi-Fi for presentations, guest speakers, and community gatherings. Improving the aesthetics of the hall and updating the kitchen will provide a warmer, more welcoming atmosphere to all who enter.

For more information about the Campaign and its three phases, or to view the 32-minute public launch, please go to www.stjanedechantal.org and click "Forever de Chantal". For questions about the campaign or to learn the different ways to give, contact the Parish Office by phone at 301-530-1550 or by email at office@stjanedechantal.org.

OPT



A Parish Mission talk by Monsignor Anthony Frontiero S.T.D. at Saint John Neumann parish, February 23 and 24 2021.

Lenten Parish Mission Led by Mt. St. Mary's Vice-Rector

By Rodney Harris

Monsignor Anthony Frontiero, S.T.D., Seminary Vice-Rector & Director of Human Formation

Mount St. Mary's University, led a two-night Lenten Parish Mission event at Saint John Neumann Parish on February 23 and 24, featuring Adoration, Benediction, and the opportunities for Confession.

Msgr. Frontiero opened his reflections saying in part, "this Holy Season, in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, cries out to us to deeply reflect on the Mystery of God's love because that's what

this is about. This whole season, as we prepare to celebrate the Paschal Mystery, is the ultimate expression, if that is possible, of God's love because he so loved the world that He sent His only son to be our Savior and Redeemer."

Msgr. Frontiero spoke about how close we are to God's heart and also gave a talk about the Paschal Mystery, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both events were live-streamed for viewers at home and both can be found on the parish's YouTube channel. A link can be found at www.saintjohnneumann.org.

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Eucharistic Adoration during Msgr. Frontiero's parish mission talk.

Saint John Neumann Parish Prepares for Lent with added Confessions

By Rodney Harris

As more and more people feel comfortable returning to Mass amid the Coronavirus Pandemic, with COVID-19 vaccines being available, a reminder that Saint John Neumann Parish is open for Mass, Adoration, Reconciliation, and other events. Mass is still celebrated weekday mornings at 6:30 and 9:00 am. (Saturday at 9:00 am.) Weekend Masses are celebrated at 5:00 pm on Saturday, and Sundays at 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 am, and 5:00

pm in English. Mass in Spanish is celebrated Sundays at 1:30 pm.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated Monday-Friday 8:30-8:45 am and Saturdays 9:45-10:30 am in the Church Vestibule and Saturdays 3:30-4:45 pm indoors and outdoors. Monsignor Robert Panke, Pastor of St. John Neumann Parish, says "you don't even have to (physically) come into the Church" for Reconciliation with the Church's outdoor options. During Lent, the Parish added an extra time for Confession on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 pm inside the Church. This time is not only for people who go regularly to the Sacrament but for those who have been away for a while.

In addition, Saint John Neumann is praying the Stations of the Cross every Friday night during Lent at 7:00 pm in English and 8:00 pm in Spanish.

OPT

The Vocations Tree is back at Saint John Neumann Parish

By Rodney Harris

Saint John Neumann Parish in Gaithersburg, Maryland is asking parishioners to pray for Seminarians from the Archdiocese of Washington. The Vocations Tree project was started by the Parish in 2006 and has spread to parishes across the Archdiocese.

The Parish has a tree set up in the church with the names and a short biography of Seminarians



Vocations Tree at Saint John Neumann Parish

in the Archdiocese and the Novices from the Parish. Parishioners are asked to take a card and pray for their vocation and formation through seminary. Monsignor Robert Panke, Pastor of St. John

Neumann Parish, said during a recent Mass of the Seminarians, "they need your prayers."

If you would like to "virtually" take a card and pray for a Seminarian or Novice, visit www.saintjohnneumann.org/vocations-tree.

OPT

March with St. Joseph

By Larissa York

"If there was ever a time when we needed a year of St. Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, now is the time." - Fr. Stefan Yap

In December, Pope Francis declared this as the Year of St. Joseph. This month, St. John Neumann Catholic Parish has several opportunities to help us get to know the silent saint better.

On Friday, March 19th, the parish will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph with daily Mass at 6:30 am and 9:00 am. On this feast day during the



Holy Family Statue at Saint John Neumann Parish

Year of St. Joseph, the Church has offered an opportunity to receive a plenary indulgence for any act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph. Please go to yearofstjoseph.org/indulgences/ for more information.

On Saturday, March 20th, the Mother Teresa Vocations Society will host a Morning of Reflection led by Msgr. Robert Panke. It will start with Mass at 9:00 am, followed by a reflection, adoration, and an opportunity to receive reconciliation. All are welcome and encouraged to learn more about St. Joseph as the Guardian of the

Continued on page 31

March For Life

By Marisa Stoolmiller

COVID-19 can't stop the March for Life here at St. John Neumann parish. Many parishioners from our community participate in the yearly National March for Life, which was on Friday, January 29.

This year, the pandemic and pressures on law enforcement in Washington, DC made the usually large gathering impossible. Organizers opted to conduct a Virtual March for Life. While our parishioners could not march in Washington this year, they marched nonetheless!

On January 29, more than 50 people attended a morning of prayer for an end to abortion. The parish gathering began with Mass at 9:00 am and continued with a Eucharistic procession on the parish grounds, followed by a Rosary, Adoration, and Benediction. The event ended in time to permit attendees' further participation in the online activities sponsored by the National March for Life.

OPT



March for Life Holy Mass, Eucharistic Procession, Rosary, and Adoration at Saint John Neumann—Msgr. Robert Panke, Pastor of Saint John Neumann Parish



Above: Monsignor Robert Panke, Pastor, Father Stefan Yap, Parochial Vicar of Saint John Neumann led a March for Life Eucharistic procession and Rosary on January 29, 2021 in Gaithersburg, MD.

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Pastor
Kimberley Rice
OPT Editor

Our Lady of Mercy



Dress like a teacher day during Catholic Schools Week is an annual Mercy favorite!



PreK 3 students stopped in Japan during their world travels.

MISSION

Con't from page 14

Miss O'Donnell has been discussing with her fourth graders the forms of prayer, and Principal Engel enjoyed introducing them to a new form of prayer that they were not familiar with – contemplation.

Seventh-grade teacher Mr. Sharp hung the Stations of the Cross throughout the school hallways. These Stations were made by students several years ago. Students and staff are now able to make the Stations of the Cross in the school.

Ms. Tyrell, Mercy's religion teacher shared a prayer aid with the older students, "The Stations of the Cross Prayer Book" that includes original drawings by her.

OPT

NEWS

Con't from page 14

Traditional observances of associated with Lent have been scheduled. Reconciliation is available on Tuesday's from 1:45 to 2:45 PM, and before weekend Masses on Saturday 4:00-4:45 PM. Sunday 8:30 -8:55 AM, 10:30-10:55 AM and 4:30 to 4:55 PM. Stations of the Cross are scheduled for Fridays at 7:30 PM in the church. The rosary is prayed Monday through Friday after the 8:30 AM Mass and the Holy Week Schedule has been prepared for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday.

Confirmation

A date has been announced for the Confirmation Masses. Due to pandemic limitations two Masses will be celebrated on May 15, 2021 at 10:00 AM and 12:30 PM. The day is bound to be a special occasion, as most of those to be confirmed knew the Bishop for many years, as Father Bill, their pastor. The celebrant of the Confirmation Masses will be Bishop William D. Byrne.

OPT

PROTECTION

Con't from page 3

been undermined because it facilitates and funds the destruction of life, which is antithetical to its aim of protecting the most vulnerable Americans in a time of crisis."

Chairmen joining the statement included Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace; Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, of Oakland, chairman for the Committee on Catholic Education; Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; and Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington, chairman of the Committee on Migration.

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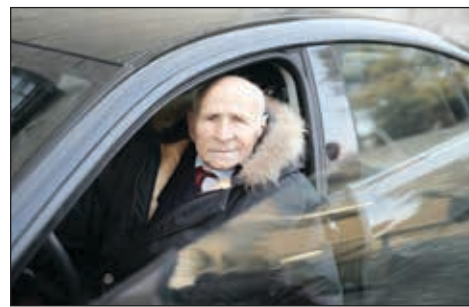
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MONTGOMERY COUNTY SENIOR NEWS



COVID-19 Vaccinations Now Available to All Residents 65 and Older

County residents over age 65 are eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations provided by County clinics. All vaccinations are by appointment only—there are no walk-ups. To pre-register, go to the County's vaccine webpage: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine.



Do you like to Drive?

You can help take people to receive vaccines or help deliver groceries and needed supplies. For details, please check out the Montgomery County Volunteer Center's COVID website

– www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteer-center/ – and enter the search term “drive.”



Free Tax Assistance Available for Eligible County Residents

Appointments for free tax assistance are available for residents earning \$57,000 or less through the Community Action Agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Safe virtual services are available through April 15th with IRS-certified preparers assisting taxpayers through Zoom.

To schedule an appointment online visit: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Cashback/. Look for the green “Book Now” button to schedule a virtual appointment. Customers with appointments will receive a call from VITA with information on how to prepare for the appointment. County residents may also call: 240-777-1123. To request accommodations, please call at least three business days in advance.

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www.VictoryHousing.org

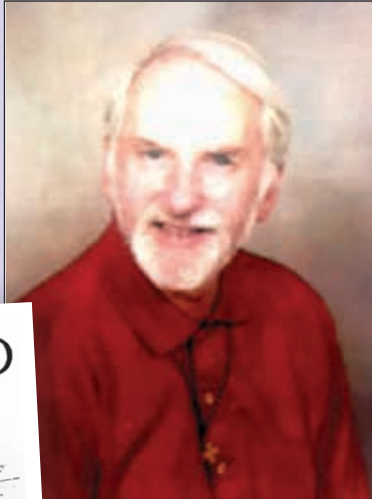
A Non-Profit Organization



Thank You “Brother Lou”

By Liz Weiss, CTK Social Concerns Commission

The Christ the King community lost another longtime parishioner this winter. Lou Schwartz known as “Brother Lou” to many of us was active with social justice for many years. He helped our



Brother Lou Schwartz

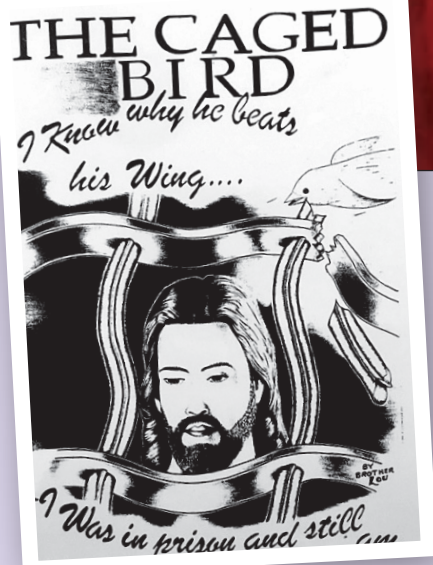
Parish develop the Social Concerns Commission. He was exemplary in his Christian life.

Brother Lou baked bread and cooked meals for the homeless, he was a prison chaplain at DC Jail for over 10 years and started a “pen pal” program for prisoners. He wrote a book about his prison ministry, *The Caged Bird: I Know Why He Beats His*

Wing: I Was in Prison--and Still Am, about Brother Lou’s encounters with Christ in the prisoners. Lou supported “Peace Meal” a program for the homeless at DC’s St. Aloysius Church. He also taught CCD at Christ the King for years. In addition, he co-led Interdenominational services at the local nursing homes in our parish. Lou also supported his brother Father Al Schwartz in Al’s ministry of World Villages for Children. Lou helped it become an international program. His brother Father Al, who died of ALS at a young age is in the process of Canonization.

During Lou’s last days, he was in formation to become a Secular Franciscan. Lou reached out to so many people, and he was a loving husband and father of 6 children. During the zoom funeral service, each of his 10 grandchildren recounted how special he made them feel. Lou encountered Christ in everyone. We will miss you Brother Lou, and we hope your example of Christian living will help us spread the love of Christ to all.

OPT



The Caged Bird by Brother Lou



Members of Choir at Ash Wednesday Mass in Spanish

Ash Wednesday

By Liz Weiss, Parishioner

On February 17 this year, Lent began on Ash Wednesday. Father Steve Carter, our Pastor, celebrated Mass in English and Spanish. Unfortunately, many people of the parish were unable to attend due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Like other special days in the church, Ash Wednesday is a time when many in the community come together to pray. It is a time to reconnect to our faith. Lent is the season of cleansing. In our Parish, the annual tradition of coming together with a soup supper and bread after the service did not take place due to the pandemic.

However, in spirit, many parishioners are trying to become bet-

ter Christians in preparation for Jesus’s death and his Resurrection. Thankfully, we are able to participate in Church services on the internet. This Lent, as in the past, we will self-reflect and renew our faith. We will continue our journey to spread God’s love.

OPT

Christ the King

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Silver Spring, MD
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Fr. Stephen J. Carter,
Pastor

Paul Lamoreaux,
OPT Editor

Holy Cross

Race for Education Raises School Spirit and Funds for Holy Cross!

Bright sunshine and beautiful blue skies created the perfect atmosphere for students to run, walk and even skip their way to the finish line of the Race for Education held on February 25! Each class had an opportunity throughout the day to walk or run a designated course on our beautiful nine-acre campus while distance learners were encouraged to participate at home. The excitement of the day was increased with a special appearance by our beloved mascot, the Holy Cross Hawk, who helped to cheer for our children! Students were excited to receive participation medals to recognize their efforts. In addition, students that received nine or more donations were eligible to select a spirit wear item or gift card prize.

Mrs. Megan Harbold, our event chairperson stated, “Over the past 12 months we have seen a lot of hur-

Continued on page 32



Above left: The Holy Cross Hawk joined in the race to encourage our youngest students and cheer their progress.

Above right: One student gave an enthusiastic two thumbs up for the Race for Education!

At left: Holy Cross hats were a hit in the Race for Education prize box!



Found Poetry, Found Inspiration

The eighth-grade class recently engaged in a project for Black History Month that showcased their creativity. Each student was tasked with selecting and conducting research about someone who has made a significant contribution to the history of America or is currently shaping the way Americans will live for years to come. Students chose notable Americans from all disciplines: music, literature, business, politics, and sports.

Continued on page 30



One eighth-grade student displays the found poem she wrote to honor Shirley Chisholm who, in 1968 became the first black woman elected to the United States Congress. She represented New York’s 12th congressional district for seven terms before she retired in 1983.



Another eighth-grade student created a tribute to Ruby Bridges who, at the age of six and just beginning First Grade, was the first African American child to desegregate an all-white elementary school in Louisiana.

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Holy Cross School

Lisa Maio Kane, Principal
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Lurana Hogan, Parish Editor
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Sisters Call, Knights Respond

By Sir Knights Stephen Holowenzak and Charles Hayes, St Michael the Archangel Knights of Columbus Council #15084

"I have come to realize more and more that the greatest disease and the greatest suffering is to be unwanted, unloved, uncared for, to be shunned by everybody, to be just nobody to no one."

— Saint Teresa of Calcutta

The words of Saint Teresa are the bedrock of the Charity pledge of the Knights of Columbus. They were solemnly practiced once again when the four District 11 councils in Maryland were made aware of the need to obtain four chalices and patens to be used by visiting priests who celebrate Mass at Sisters of Charity Missions in Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and Washington, D.C. The seed for this effort was planted when the St. Michael the Archangel council sang Christmas carols for the shut-ins under the care of the Sisters of Charity in Washington, D.C.

While caroling, Sr. M. Lizen, M.C., Superior, asked one of the



Above: Rev. Msgr. Eddie Tolentino surrounded by Brother Knights, four of whom are holding the chalice gifts. Photo by Steven Holowenzak



At left: A chalice Mass set gift with the St. Teresa of Calcutta inscription engraved on the base of the chalice. Photo by Steven Holowenzak



Brother Knights to help them procure chalices and patens for the mission chapels. The council members discussed and agreed to act and reached out to the other councils in District 11: St. Maximilian Kolbe, Father Rosensteel, and Holy Family and presented the opportunity to assist the sisters with their request. Without hesitation, each council gave its full support.

Thanks to the added effort of the District Deputy from District 11, Russell R. Sutton, Jr., funds were raised to purchase the patens and chalices with an engraving on the base in honor of St. Teresa of Calcutta. The chalices were blessed on February 5, 2021 during the noon Mass at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church by Monsignor Eddie Tolentino, Chaplain of Council 15084.

After receiving the gifts, Sr. M. Lizen said, "We are blessed by God for what the Knights have done for the Missionary Sisters of Charity Communities in Mexico, Canada, Cuba, and USA."

OPT

At left: The Sisters of Charities Communities receive the Knights of Columbus Council's gifts. Photo by Steven Holowenzak

New Administration, Same Mission

By Nicole Calaro

Since taking office, the Biden administration has moved to end travel bans, implemented a 100-day moratorium on certain deportations, halted the construction of the border wall between US and Mexico, and committed to work with Congress to pass immigration reform legislation that creates a path for citizenship for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) beneficiaries and recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS). These are just a few of the actions taken.

We as Catholics, in line with Catholic teaching, must advocate for immigration policies that pro-

mote the life and dignity of the human person and encourage solidarity. One action we can take today is to contact our representatives and senators and urge them to include immigrant and refugee essential workers in any COVID-19 relief package.

While COVID-19 continues to be a threat to everyone, immigrants and refugees are more likely to work in jobs that are critical to keeping our country running. Help advocate for them by contacting your congressmen to promote their life, dignity, and rights as workers and to show solidarity. To learn more, go to USCCB's Justice for Immigrants website.

OPT



February Black History Program—Sin of Racism Zoom participants

Black History Program Sin of Racism

By Lisa Taylor

On February 4, St. Michael the Archangel held an online program on the Sin of Racism as part of its Black History Program. Deacon Ron Ealey, Nicole Calaro and Lisa Taylor, the moderators for the evening, highlighted the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism and their letter, *Open Wide Our Hearts, the Enduring Call to Love*.

Parishioners from St. Michael's were joined by many members of

the Gift of Grace Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington who had an interest in exploring the sin of racism and inviting a more diverse community to their church. During the program, participants discussed what racism meant personally as well as God's call for his people to eradicate racism. Deacon Ealey also explored the ways Catholics can work to honor the life and dignity of all people through dismantling racism.

OPT

Forgiveness & Healing, A Spiritual Perspective

By John Webster

On Thursday, February 11, the St. Michael the Archangel Marriage Ministry hosted an online workshop titled "Forgiveness & Healing: A Spiritual Perspective." The workshop presenter was Ms. Rebecca Mullan, Clinical Director, St. Jerome Counseling Program. The central theme of the workshop was that forgiveness is a grace from God that allows us to heal from past

hurts and move forward in our relationships instead of being consumed by anger and hardness of heart.

More than 40 individuals participated in the workshop, representing multiple parishes throughout the Archdiocese. The attendees were greatly appreciative of Ms. Mullan's presentation and found the workshop to be deeply spiritual and a source of healing and comfort.

OPT

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Support of Pastor, Archdiocesan Initiative Give Parishioners Courage to Proclaim Stance on Racism

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

The issue of racism has always been a difficult topic to broach. But for a group of parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, the killing of unarmed Black people, such as George Floyd under the knee of a police officer last May, provided the impetus to ask their pastor for the parish to display a tangible sign of their outrage – a banner stating how their Catholic beliefs proclaim the just treatment of every one of God’s children.

The result is a vinyl sign with a profound tagline, now staked in front of the church: “Made in God’s Image: Pray and Work to End the Sin of Racism.” Its display represents the ministry of a core group of people who have prayed over the sin of racism, worked to align their actions with Catholic Social Teachings and considered how to inspire others to walk with them.

The idea for the banner seeded in 2019, shortly after the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released its pastoral letter, *Open Wide Our Hearts*, a call to end racism. The pastoral letter prompted parishioners to work with the



From left to right, St. Francis of Assisi parishioners Ann Pierre, Trish Olin, and Chris King flank the banner in front of the church, stating “Made in God’s Image: Pray and Work to End the Sin of Racism.” Pierre and King are the co-chairs of the parish Ad-Hoc Committee on Racism, which advocated to have the banner displayed in front of the church to express the parish’s stance to end racism.

church’s Social Concerns Ministry to invite Fr. Robert Boxie III, a former parochial vicar at the church, to speak on the topic of racism. The issue returned to the forefront after media coverage of Floyd’s death and the deaths of other Black people by law enforcement not held

accountable. These parishioners then formed an Ad-Hoc Committee on Racism in July 2020 and began formally planning how to put their faith in action.

“Those things prompted us to ask Fr. John again, as an Ad-Hoc Committee of the Pastoral Council,

if we could design and place a banner in front of the church,” said Chris King, one of the co-chairs of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Racism, and a member of the Parish Pastoral Council. “Fr. John discussed it with his staff, as well as the Pastoral Council, and everyone was supportive of the idea.”

At around the same time, the Archdiocese of Washington’s Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach was developing an anti-racism initiative in response to the deaths of unarmed Black people at the hands of law enforcement to help reinforce the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching, said Dr. Ansel Augustine, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach. Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory announced the campaign, “Made in God’s Image: Pray and Work to End the Sin of Racism,” at the March on Washington Anniversary Mass in August 2020.

“Our hope is to create a culture shift where all that are directly or indirectly a part of the Archdiocese of Washington, no matter their background, feel welcomed, their

unique history and experiences are valued, and respected as a person Made by God and in God’s Image and Likeness – thus, deserving of that respect and dignity,” Dr. Augustine said.

King reached out to Dr. Augustine’s office last fall to ask how they might collaborate. His staff then shared the Made in God’s Image artwork and taglines so that the church could proceed with creating a sign. Fr. John Dillon approved the banner, which was erected by members of the Parish Pastoral Council in late January.

Members of the Ad-Hoc Committee said they have received positive feedback on the banner, whose artwork was also used to make yard signs parishioners could place on their properties. They are also planning a town hall meeting for parishioners to discuss the issue of racism in April.

“We know that this needs to be discussed in an honest and caring manner,” King said. “Having a supportive pastor who has the trust of the congregation, as well as sincere and spiritual committee members, gives us courage to proceed.”

OPT

Virtual Lenten Parish Mission Aims to Inspire Others to Encounter Jesus Christ

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

When the time came for St. Francis of Assisi Parish staff to consider hosting a Lenten Parish Mission, Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick did not have to look far to identify faith-filled speakers who could illuminate their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The parish in Derwood, MD, has nearly wrapped up its four-part Lenten Parish Mission, which features clergy members, parishioners and a parish staff member presenting on topics under an overarching theme of “Encountering Jesus on Your Journey.” Hosted on Zoom on February 26, March 5, March 12 and March 19, the online events have steadily drawn increasing numbers of attendees, some of whom are pleased to see their peers in the pews sharing their faith experiences.

“Many parishioners are genuinely interested in growing as faithful disciples of Jesus, and I hope that these four presentations will give people insight into ways they can encounter and follow Jesus more faithfully, in ways that help them to become disciples who reflect the life and love of Jesus more brightly in their families, neighborhoods and work,” Bosnick said. “That’s the hope of this mission.”

Luckily, for the parish, a few of the speakers’ talks were already written, delivered and road tested.



This image brands the first virtual session of St. Francis of Assisi’s Lenten Parish Mission, which was titled, “The Year of St. Joseph” and presented by Fr. John Dillon.

Parishioners Trish Olin and C.C. English, who presented on “Favorite Saints and What They Teach Us” on March 5, had twice given similar talks to the last two groups of people discerning the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which Bosnick also coordinates. Having heard their talks already, Bosnick thought both the topic and delivery of the speakers would appeal to a large segment of the parish community.

The same was true when Deacon Jim Datovech preached on the Feast of Sunday of the Word of God during Mass on January 24. Once Bosnick heard the permanent deacon’s Homily, he thought it would be perfect for the parish mission.

Fr. John Dillon – whose talk on “The Year of St. Joseph” kicked off the online series – said he is so far pleased with the virtual Lenten

Parish Mission and is pleasantly surprised that nearly 50 people joined the March 5 talk on the saints.

“Having clergy, parishioners and staff members do this appealed to me because of the novelty of it,” Fr. Dillon said. “I thought that would arouse the curiosity of parishioners. From the increasing numbers of people attending, I think that hunch has proved to be accurate.”

The live talks were recorded, posted on the Parish YouTube Channel, and made available on the parish web site – an act Bosnick hopes will allow others outside the parish to discover these talks on conversion and discipleship.

See the parish’s virtual Lenten Parish Mission series at www.sfadw.org/lenten-parish-mission.

OPT

Online Preparation for the Sacraments Is Yielding New Appreciation for God’s Special Graces

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

For at least 70 children preparing to receive the sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish this spring, much of their discernment has occurred over laptops, tablets, and smartphones. When the children enter the church later this spring to receive Jesus for the first time and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Director of Religious Education Susan Anderson expects a real transformation to take place.

“I do think that this time of pandemic has given many people a renewed appreciation for the sacraments,” Anderson said. “There was a palpable sense of joy as families were finally able to bring their children for First Eucharist and Confirmation this past fall. I am expecting that our spring celebration of the sacraments will be joyful celebrations, as well.”

Since the onset of the pandemic a year ago, Anderson has labored to move the in-person preparation for sacraments to an online format. This has meant the parish’s approach of parents preparing their children for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist was now supported by online parent meetings and preparation days. For Confirmation preparation, the parish maintained its typical monthly schedule for candidates to gather but moved to online modules and a virtual Confirmation



On February 6, St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Catalina Truong displays the letter she wrote to Jesus Christ when receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time.

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Continued on page 27

Fatima's Knights Honor Sir Knight Mel Washington with Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser

The Knights of Columbus for Our Lady of Fatima Council (#6901) are honoring one of their own, Sir Knight Mel Washington, with an online memorial youth scholarship fundraiser to assist minority students seeking a Catholic education at a local school.

According to the GoFundMe website in Mel's honor, "Western and Upper Montgomery County lost a legend when Sir Knight Mel Washington passed away on October 4, 2020. If you live in Poolesville or nearby but you don't recognize the name, you've probably bumped into Mel and don't know it. Mel frequently served the community of Poolesville and upper Montgomery County tirelessly; he was an active member of Saint Mary's Parish in Barnesville; he was a founding member and active volunteer for his Knights of Columbus Fatima Council; Mel served as the official photographer for the Maryland State Council of the Knights of Columbus for more than two decades; and Mel served as a great example of how to lead and to serve."

"Most of all, Mel was always a gentleman. The warmth with which he greeted us, whether it was at the store or at Poolesville Day, was impossible to forget," expressed Past Grand Knight Donald Patti. "In short, the world needs more 'Mel Washingtons'. And, because the world is in great need of more 'Mel Washingtons', Mel's brothers in the Knights of Columbus have established a Mel Washington Memorial Youth Scholarship to



The Knights lost a legend when Sir Knight Mel Washington passed away on October 4, 2020.

honor him. This scholarship will benefit African American youth in our community by funding a Catholic education, giving them an opportunity, they would not otherwise be able to afford."

The Knights of Columbus Fatima Council will match all donations up to \$5,000.

If you wish to contribute to the Mel Washington Memorial Youth Scholarship, please visit GoFundMe at the following link: <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/mel-washington-scholarship>.

OPT

Outdoor Mass

Setting up for Saturday afternoon mass on January 9. From Christmas Eve through January, weekend outdoor masses were held under a tent for eager, hardy parishioners who brought lawn chairs, warm clothing, and masks. The tent is gone, but weather permitting, weekend outdoor masses continue. Photo by Diane Yendrey



Visiting priest, Msgr. Jack Macfarlane distributes the blessed ashes in European fashion, and in silence upon Caleb Bodmer. Two days later, Caleb helped lead Stations of the Cross with Fr. Kevin, our pastor. Caleb is an acolyte and a youth music minister. Photo by Maggie Bartlett, Special Times Photography.

Stations of the Cross are played and sung this year by sisters, Anna and Cara Porch. The sisters are trained as acolytes, and participated as well in music ministry until those activities were suspended this time last year. Anna and Cara are the first youth music ministers to return to the choir loft for Friday Stations during Lent. Photo by Maggie Bartlett, Special Times Photography



Fatima's Knights "Leave No Neighbor Behind" Donating \$5K During Pandemic

The Knights of Columbus for Our Lady of Fatima Council (#6901) have generously donated a sum of \$5,000 to assist multiple families-in-need across the four parishes of St. Mary's Catholic Church & Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima (Barnesville), Our Lady of Presentation (Poolesville), Our Lady of the Visitation (Darnestown), and Our Lady of the Perpetual Help/Syro Malabar Catholic Mission (Greater Washington, D.C.).

Like most of the nation, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the region's economy and, subsequently, many of our local parishioners, who are most in need. Recognizing this dire situation, Past Grand Knight Donald Patti led Fatima Council's work with the four priests to determine how the Knights could best provide charitable assistance. After consultation, Fatima Council voted to provide four \$1,250 checks, as part

of their "Leave No Neighbor Behind" program, to each of the four parishes, enabling each priest to provide money to multiple families enabling them to pay for utilities and other necessities during the cold winter.

The Knights of Columbus "Leave No Neighbor Behind" program aims to "protect our parishes, and serve our communities, remembering always that where there's a need, there's a Knight," according to their website. Former Supreme Knight Carl Anderson reflected, "[We must] deepen our commitment to the very principles which define us: charity, unity and fraternity."

If you are interested in learning more about the Knights of Columbus and the charitable work of Our Lady of Fatima Council, please contact Mr. David Bivans, Grand Knight, email: dnlbivans34@verizon.net. Also, please also check out Fatima Council's website: <http://uknight.org/CouncilSite/about.asp?CNO=6901>, and Supreme's website: www.kofc.org/en/.

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March 18, 2021 at 10am

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More St. Mary - Barnesville
News on Page 31



Second graders from St. Martin's School experience their First Reconciliation. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School

St. Martin's Volunteer of the Year Makes Lifelong Impact

By Sherry Antonetti

More than twenty-two years ago, Chuck Smith needed to help his son with service hours for school, so he joined what became the social concerns ministry of Saint Martin's Catholic school in Gaithersburg. It was that little "yes," that grew to become a mission and the work of the next two decades. On February 27 of 2021, in the basement of Saint Martin's where he once bagged and handed out groceries, volunteers from over the years, gathered to recognize the body of work he had done since 1998. The real thank-yous were out in the world, amongst the untold families that had meals for the week because of his team and the generosity of those who likewise heard the call to give of themselves in some fashion.

Mary Canapary worked alongside Chuck Smith and knew the whole history of the pantry program which began as a closet in the basement of the rectory where the secretary gave out food as needed to those who came and asked. It remained a mostly organic structure until Chuck arrived in 1992. It helped that Chuck spoke multiple languages and had a knack for organization and tracking things. He made contacts early on, across parishes, across the county and understood the need to keep careful track of donations and demand. He proved a good steward of the food and resources entrusted to him.

Chuck's gifts of vision lead to the program expanding from a closet to a created room in the church basement, to a renovated former school building in 2005. Tom Hill held up a graph gathered from the careful recording over the years showing the 223,460 bags of groceries handed out broken down by year. It was again proof of God's grace working through not only Chuck Smith, but so many in the church, and not merely Saint Martin's, but other parishes and other denominations as well. The mission of "feeding the hungry" served as an ecumenical outreach, creating friendships across many faiths, and an interior method of growing the faith within all who came to serve, and a witness to those served.

Chuck himself tells the story, "If you want to know if God provides, this is the place to work." Back in 2009, the Monday before Thanksgiving, he arrived at 5:30 in the morning to see a line of people waiting for him. The line stretched from the door of the pantry on to Summit Avenue and down the street. Chuck started giving out numbers, the system devised to ensure people received what they needed and to help keep count of who already received. He had made it past 200 before he walked back to the front of the line to prepare for handing out the food. As person after person stepped forward to get a bag, he worried they had run out of things to give before they exhausted the line of need. At 11:30 am, a truck pulled up at the pantry, brimming with donations from Jesus of the Divine Word in Huntington, Maryland, where the former associate pastor, Fr. Dan Leary then worked. They were able to serve every person who came that day, and everyone was reminded that God will do the multiplying, whenever we offer Him our loaves and two fish.

Teresa Villanueva worked with Chuck for many years. She said Chuck helped sometimes with Catholic Charities, providing workshops on how to open a food pantry program, set up and coordinate all the activities across multiple churches to receive, sort and store the food, and distribute. Silverio

Bonilla said Chuck had the gift of seeing the issues that needed to be addressed before they were known to the broader community. Many people echoed the sentiment, "He's strong," both in commitment to service of the poor, and in actual capacity to serve. Volunteers joked about his frugal use of everything, such that banana boxes became a means of easily counting and storing food – how many bread loaves could fit in a box, or cans, and remained a regular staple method of organization over the years. One could not overlook the "critical infrastructure of banana boxes."

Patrick Burke came looking for some form of service. In one of his first jobs as a volunteer, Patrick recalled Chuck asking, "Can you get more people?" to help with moving the bread from storage to the bags where they'd be distributed. I said yes and, "He left me to it. He's very willing to trust and not micromanage volunteers." Volunteers from Saint Bartholomew's and Our Lady of Victory came to praise Chuck's gifts for administration and his quiet, consistent detail-oriented service over the decades. "I used to call him so much for advice on pick up. I had no idea how much he did," said Craig Hostetler. Longtime volunteer with the pantry (since 2014) Jenipher Atieno talked about how he had "A servant's heart."

At some point, everyone who talked about helping, talked about how there seemed to be a plan and a system for every part of the program, taking in groceries, sorting them, bagging them and distribution. Even newcomers to the program recognized Chuck's leadership and organization helped make stepping into unfamiliar roles easier. Peter Singlenann and his wife Maria Elena started with merely doing deliveries from parishes, but saw in September that more help was needed, and started helping with distribution. Cathy Meyers, a two-and-one-half year veteran of packing the groceries, talked about how now, thanks to how well organized everything was, they even had bags ready for specialty diets like vegetarian, diabetic and gluten free.

The level of detailed procedure came from decades of organizational and institutional knowledge, all born of the day in day out service and leadership of Chuck Smith. Pantry day to day organization will now be handled by a board. It takes many hands to fill the zeal, heart and mere institutional understanding of a man who has run the program for two thirds of its existence. Luis Vides, who worked with Chuck in administration of the Pantry Program noticed when he started, "He is so hard working, all the time, he's someone who doesn't

Continued on page 29



Kindergarteners celebrated 100 days of school. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School

ONLINE

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Retreat to deepen their journey.

Anderson said the parish benefitted from the strength of its family-based approach to sacramental preparation, particularly for those preparing for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. It also benefitted from the practice of having Confirmation preparation sessions that are in addition to eighth grade religious education classes.

"This gave us an opportunity to focus on these young people and families and accompany them as they prepared for sacraments," she said.

Eighth grade student Ellie Mikula has prepared for Confirmation over the past few months, calling her experience "more prayerful" than if it had been done in person. Her

preparation has included completing online exercises, choosing her sponsor, writing a reflection essay, and attending the virtual Retreat that took place March 6 – her favorite part, thus far.

"I'm sure it was difficult to translate Confirmation preparation to an online format, but I talked to my brother [about his in-person preparation], and we had the same core experiences," Mikula said.

For Anderson, the challenges of both adapting to online platforms and helping catechists nurture a strong relationship with the young people and families they are helping guide are all part of her ministry during this unique time.

"It's a reminder that ministry is often about planting and watering seeds that others will harvest, trusting always that God will take care of the growth," Anderson said.

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Pastor

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Catherine Cooksey,
Parish Editor
240-477-8706
www.smsmd.org

From the Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Poland and St. Maksymilian Kolbe Parish

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

I invite you all to our Church to pray together, support ourselves spiritually and ask God for greater hope and love during the ongoing pandemic. We can feel safe; we follow sanitary rules. Due to epidemic reasons, the number of people in the Church is limited, so please sign up for Holy Masses. Details regarding registration can be found on our parish website: www.parafia-dc.org

Thank you to all who, even if they are not present at the Holy Mass, support our parish spiritually and materially.

May God reward you!

Rev. Jerzy Frydrych, S.Ch.

OPT

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday, April 1 At 7:30pm Mass Of The Lord's Supper

Good Friday, April 2 At 7:30pm Celebration Of The Passion of The Lord

Holy Saturday, April 3 Blessing of Food at 10:00am, 10:30am, 11:00am, 11:30am, 12:00pm, 12:30pm

Holy Saturday, April 3 At 7:30pm Easter Vigil Mass

Easter Sunday, April 4 At 10:00am Resurrection Mass In Polish

Easter Sunday, April 4 At 12:00pm Easter Mass In Polish

Easter Monday, April 5 At 7:30pm Mass In Polish



Representatives in attendance at the Mass commemorating Indomitables included the PACWMAD, Polish Legion of American Veterans, and Polish Scouting Organization ZHP. Knights of Columbus GK David Birely of St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council 16634 provided the honor guard.

Remembering Those who gave their lives for Freedom and Truth

On February 28, OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych celebrated Holy Mass requested by the Polish American Congress Washington Area Metro Division (PACWMAD) to commemorate the Indomitables (Niezłomni).

The Indomitables (also called the "cursed soldiers") were the post-

World War II anti-communist fighters. They suffered brutal repression, torture, and death at the hands of the Soviet-installed communist regime in Poland after 1945 (as a result of the Yalta Conference of 1945, also called the "Western Betrayal of Central and Eastern Europe"). Their remains were often thrown into unmarked graves to obliterate their memory. The communist authorities forbade anyone to speak about them.

It was only after 1989 that stories about heroes such as Witold Pilecki could be shared openly. The Parliament of the Republic of Poland, after a motion by the late President Lech Kaczynski, officially established March 1 as National Remembrance Day for the Indomitables.

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Silver Spring, MD

Rev. Jerzy Frydrych,
S. Chr. Pastor
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Bozena Buda, OPT Editor
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Sebastian W. and Tomek W. were lectors at the Holy Mass on Sunday, March 7, at OLQP. Both are preparing for Confirmation in Sr. Danuta Przybylek's class.



Sister Danuta Przybylek, S.A.C., (standing) with the Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish Confirmation class that she is preparing. Sister has been working tirelessly with the group. Sr. Danuta is from the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate (SAC) which was founded by St. Vincent Pallotti in 1835. Later, the Sisters formed the congregation known as the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate (the Pallottine Missionary Sisters) to carry their work of charity and evangelization all over the world.



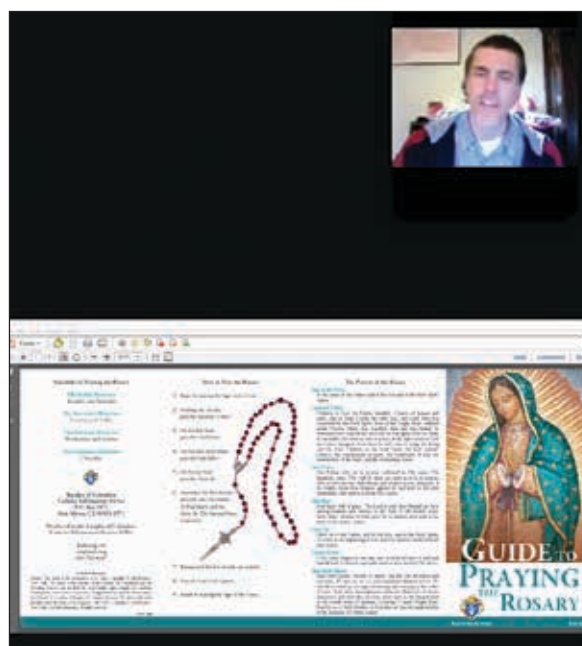
100th Anniversary of St. John Paul II's Birth
This is the merit badge (JP2) that our scouts earned for the 100th anniversary of St. John Paul II's birth. They had completed all the requirements in 2020 but because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions they had to wait until 2021 to receive it.

Praying the Rosary with OLQP Knights of Columbus Council 16634

By Bozena Buda, ED

During the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic we have been finding creative ways to do many things. Our joint prayer life is no exception. Thus, on February 25, 2021, a group from Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish prayed the Rosary together, virtually online. The gathering was organized on Zoom and led by Knights of Columbus GK David Birely of the St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council 16634. Several members of the OLQP Living Rosary Society participated. Everyone who joined had a part in reciting the Rosary.

It was a Thursday and we felt blessed to be praying the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. They are also called the Mysteries of Light and were added to the Rosary in 2002 by Pope St. John Paul II to complete the rest of the Mysteries. They occur between the Joyful and the



OLQP parishioner and St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knight of Columbus GK David Birely organized and led the praying of the Rosary on Zoom in February with participation of the OLQP Living Rosary members.

Sorrowful Mysteries.

In his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (RVM) (October 2002), Pope St. John Paul II recommended the addition of the "Mysteries of Light" because Jesus

Christ is the "Light of the World." The Luminous Mysteries are: 1) the Baptism in the Jordan, 2) the Manifestation at the Wedding in Cana, 3) the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God with the Call to Conversion, 4) the Transfiguration and 5) the Institution of the Eucharist. "Each of these mysteries is a revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus" (RVM).

John Paul II notes in the RVM that, "The Rosary of the Virgin Mary...is a prayer loved by countless Saints...[and] blends easily into the spiritual journey of the Christian life...The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer." He writes, "To pray the Rosary for children, and even more, with children [and] to experience this daily "pause for prayer" with the family...is a spiritual aid which should not be underestimated."

OPT

Celebrating the Sacraments of Mercy and Love

By Barbara Zellers

On February 13-14, four children enrolled in the Montessori-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program at St Paul parish celebrated, for the first time, the great Sacraments of Mercy and Love. Madeline Giorgis, Zane Lugo, Dahlia Nightingale Nino, and Annabel Shelhorse each responded to the voice of the Shepherd calling them to His table.

Over the past three years, the children have learned about Jesus the Good Shepherd – how, when, and why he laid down his life for us, how he prepared his flock for a time when he could not be with us in a way that we could see and touch him but would still be present to us in the Eucharist.

They meditated on the teachings of Jesus related to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They began with the True Vine, to recognize the importance of remaining in him, and the fruits that arise when we remain. They considered those things that separate us from God and one another, and the effort it takes to remain. They studied the parables of mercy in Luke, (the Found Sheep, the Found Coin, and the Found Son). Each one is about a loving search for the lost, with great rejoicing when the lost have been found, reconciled. Always



Above: Dahlia is meditating on the parable of the Good Shepherd. Behind her (left), Madeline is working on a map of the land of Israel. And Annabel's work (right) is a meditation on the Eucharistic Presence. Photo by Kimberly Morrison

Below: Zane is working with a 3-D map of the city of Jerusalem. Photo by Kimberly Morrison



a feast! Finally, the children learned of the faith of the Centurion, who believed Jesus did not have to be physically present to perform miracles. They came to know that Jesus heals our souls just as he healed the Centurion's servant.

Before receiving the Sacraments, the children experienced a two-day retreat, exploring the Mass and the Word, using age-appropriate materials to deepen their understanding. Using the Maxims, they each performed an examination of conscience and prepared to renew their Baptismal vows. Each family sewed a white robe – a reminder of our Baptismal garment and of the clean robe the father offered the found son – and the children embroidered them with a red cross and other symbols important to them.

The children made their First Reconciliation on Saturday, donning their white robes and renewing their Baptismal vows – all followed by the greatest feast, First Holy Communion, on Sunday.

The snow this year was a special gift as they hiked and sledded down the hill behind the church, experiencing the wonder and awe of all God's creation throughout their preparation.

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New Volunteer Coordinator May Get a Hold of You

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

St. Paul has a new Volunteer Ministry Coordinator, Kimberly Morrison. This used to be called the social concerns ministry, which included many simple human services plus advocacy for social justice. She sees her work as making it easier for people to serve in practical ways.

Her first project was an outreach to women in the county's shelter for battered women. She lined up people from the community to collect a variety of simple gifts to deliver on Valentine's Day – candy, flowers, basic toiletries, nail polish, toys for the kids, hand-written cards. The people involved included parishioners, and girls from an American Heritage troop. The shelter is hidden, for protection, so the gifts were delivered by police officers –

another plus, since it strengthens that relationship. Many women there had seen cops show up for something awful, like taking kids away for safety reasons; seeing the police in a happy role is good for everyone. Kimberly's outreach helped battered women – and cops. She helps people to serve.

Going forward, Kimberly plans to review the activities that her predecessors, Sherrie Wade and Margie Apgar, used to lead – then strengthen, revise, or rebuild them. Parishioners offer a rich list of services, but what more can we do to implement Catholic social teaching, to carry out works of mercy?

St. Paul Church implements most of the corporal works of mercy, but not all: we're not much involved with the archdiocesan prison ministry. Maybe it's time.

Kimberly has been in the par-

ish for 16 years, and has been active in youth ministry, hospitality, JustFaith, the Atrium program, and other services. Shortly after she and her husband joined, she was in a "Why Catholic" discussion group, and one evening she spoke about a homily about the cross. Generally, when people talk about the crosses we bear, they are annoyed and grumbling: this situation or that person is "such a cross"! But that's not the Lord's way; he embraced his cross. We should adjust. Barbara Zellers was impressed, and warned Kimberly, "Don't let Sherrie get a hold of you!" But the very next day, Sherrie called her up. Barbara had turned her in! And Sherrie was ready to pass out some crosses.

Now Kimberly's coordinating volunteers, which may mean you. What's your choice: grumble or embrace?

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Joseph's Music Surrounds Our Widows

By Anonymous

What can you tell me about being a widow in this parish? That clumsy question elicited an indirect but moving response, the story of our piano.

In 1955, Joseph entered the Steinway Showroom in New York City to fulfill a childhood dream. He was an accomplished pianist, although not classically trained. He had learned to play as a child, and this talent had helped him pay his way through university. He had enjoyed every minute at the keyboard, and then got paid! Now, happily married and with a growing family, he had landed a coveted promotion – and the time was right to own the Cadillac of pianos.

Joseph played every piano in the showroom, and settled on the instrument with the truest tone, a baby grand. The Steinway traveled with the family, moving west across the country. When Joseph died, he bequeathed the piano to his son and namesake: Joseph Jr.

The Steinway was part of Joseph Jr.'s home as his children grew up, and accompanied them to Damascus. From the first time he met Fr. Peter Sweeney, an affable Irishman in his simple rural church, Joseph Jr. felt he had found home.

When Fr. Sweeney built the new church, he couldn't afford an organ. So in the months before his own death, Joseph Jr. invited Fr. Sweeney – and the church organist Mary Beth Talamo, and Liturgical Director Maria Stanton – to visit his home and examine the piano.

Would a Steinway suffice?

The men traded Irish banter, and then crawled under the piano to inspect it structurally. The women stayed up top checking strings and keyboard, and Mary Beth played. And so it became the main liturgical instrument in the new church until a new organ would come.

Joseph Jr. did not live to hear the Steinway played at the dedication of the new church. But a few months later, his family gathered there for a wedding, preceded by sacred music played by Mel Ayala, dedicated to the memory of the two Josephs.

The Steinway still performs, lifting up parishioners – during the pandemic, weddings, funerals, baptisms, confirmations, holy days. Purchased by Joseph, and bequeathed by Joseph Jr., now in this Year of St. Joseph, it continues to resound with joy.

The Steinway was donated anonymously, and so it remains. But each note is gift, with love.

OPT

VOLUNTEER

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smile too much, but he's happy all the time." He remembered asking Chuck, "How do you know all these people really need this food." He answered, "I don't think about it. If someone comes here, they need something." and that was that.

Father Dave Wells, the Pastor of Saint Martin's, gave Chuck an award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the parish and the Church, along with several symbolic gifts of appreciation including a bottle of wine and beautiful orchids for his wife. "He's been here in charge for the hardest part." Chuck accepted the praise and award but said, "People try to

give me the credit, but it's not me. The work of the Lord is done by all who kept this going. Thank you... and the job is not over. The poor will always be with us."

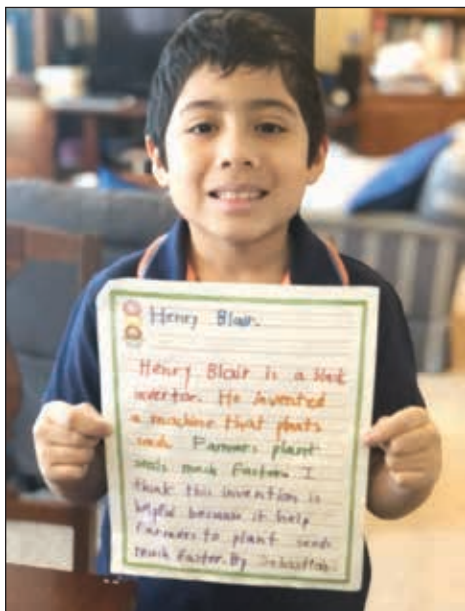
From all of us at Saint Martin's Pantry program, and all you have served, thank you Chuck Smith and bless you in all that you continue to do. Well done.

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John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe
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At left: An SFIS student writes about a Black inventor.

Above left: SFIS students drew about Black history.

Above right: SFIS students explored political art.

At right: A young SFIS student learns about peanuts and the invention of peanut butter.

Black History is a Year-Long Teaching Endeavor at SFIS

Proudly hailing from countries such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Ghana, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Gambia, and Liberia, among others, Black History is not simply a month-long celebration, but an ongoing endeavor to teach about race, culture, identity, faith, justice, and nonviolence. Our SFIS Franciscan mission propels us to engage in the community and promote social justice as global citizens. Therefore, the fabric of our family history and identity is imbedded into every subject we teach every day. However, it is imperative that we address these topics during Black History Month. This February, our school unified around

the mission of honoring our ancestors' struggle but also cultivating leadership among students of social justice who will be prepared to be agents of change in our diverse world.

In order to facilitate critical conversations, our school purchased for our faculty the book, *Not Light, But Fire: How to Lead Meaningful Race Conversations in the Classroom*, by Matthew R. Ray. We will soon begin our weekly book club discussions inspired by our former Notre Dame ACE Teaching Fellow, Casey Harris, who helped to author a reading discussion guide for the book.

Together, our teachers teach and take on the challenging history of American slavery, segregation, inequality, mass incarceration, and deportation, knowing that our Catholic faith drives us to seek to love as Jesus modeled for us. Our faculty understand that students are never too young to hold discussions about the tough subjects and know that combined with lessons about Jesus and our abiding Catholic faith, these difficult issues will bring about hope, healing, and, ultimately, transformation.

This year was particularly meaningful because our students found a new heroine in Amanda

Gorman, the young 22-year-old National Youth Poet Laureate. She spoke so eloquently at this year's Inauguration and Superbowl events. Our Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Grace Slattery, asked students to research her life and analyze her works to realize that they, too, are destined to be inspirational writers and poets. One student in her class, Lola, wrote a powerful poem entitled, "How, When, Why," where she asks, among other questions, "Why can't we just be heard? Why do we get the hatred we don't deserve? Why can't we walk without knowing that we are safe? When will we be able to drive out hate?"

Our students spend most days reading favorite books by culturally diverse authors, such as Alicia D. Williams, Jason Reynolds, Jacquelin Woodson, Nikki Grimes, and so many others. This year, we were blessed to be visited by Innosanto Nagara, the author who wrote *A is for Activist* and *M is for Movement*. Originally from Indonesia, he helped to inspire us to community activism. As an entire school, we read *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o, which enabled us to tackle the difficult subject of colorism.

We had some great teaching

moments as our kindergarteners created projects about our country's "Peanut Man," George Washington Carver, and first graders built rocket ships as they studied the life of an engineer, Mae Jemison. Our second graders studied black inventors as they were inspired by the book *Have you Thanked an Inventor Today?* by Patrice McLaurin. Our third and fourth graders read biographies and shared PowerPoint presentations honoring Black heroes' accomplishments, such as Bessie Coleman, Jackie Robinson, and Kobe Bryant, whom the students learned took his Catholic faith very seriously before his death.

Inspired by Amanda Gorman and Langston Hughes' poem *The Negro*, fourth graders learned about the contributions African Americans have made as workers, artists, scientists, in medicine, economics and government. Black History month is more than Blacks as victims and slaves. Black History is American History, our history and reaches from antiquity to today in every industry and phase of life. The fourth graders are taught this history all year, and they learned the impact and conundrum of supporting social justice and those who support every individual's dignity.

One fourth grade teacher, Alicia Fisher, worked to cultivate positive identity formation by having students write "Where I'm From" poems. One student wrote, "I'm from smooth roads and breezy days. I'm stuck in the middle of two great holidays. I love gaming and watching TV. But, I also love running and comedy. I don't have a favorite quote, but that's all right 'cause I got other stuff that I like to say. I believe in God and worship him in every way."

Our Middle School Graphic Design and Illustration teacher, Catalina Hernandez, asked students to create inspirational posters centered on Pope Francis' message that racism is a sin; "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life."

Our educational and mission work continues at SFIS as we will spend time during the month of March focusing on our protector and guardian of the church, St. Joseph, who understood so profoundly the plight of our families who had to leave their native lands and form new and enduring communities in Silver Spring.

OPT

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POETRY

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In the course of their research, students were asked to locate a text that described some of the contributions made by the noted individual. That text--a page from a book, magazine, newspaper, or an online source--became the springboard for "found poetry." Each student's poem celebrated the contributions and achievements of his or her personage from the disciplines of music, literature, business, politics, and sports. Artwork and other graphic design enhanced each creation.

The result was a beautiful tribute to such people as Langston Hughes, Madame C.J. Walker, Shirley Chisholm, Ruby Bridges, and Arthur Ashe, among others.

OPT

Shrine of St. Jude

Going to the (St. Clare) Chapel!

The Chapel of St. Clare of Assisi, located on the campus of the Shrine of St. Jude, has been the preferred spot for many smaller-sized weddings and baptisms following the completion of the Chapel's many renovations this past Fall. With COVID-19 restricting the number of people allowed to gather indoors, the St. Clare Chapel is the perfect size for couples and families to hold their weddings and baptisms. Pictured at left is Fr. Paul D. Lee, STD, pastor at the Shrine of St. Jude, in the beautiful St. Clare Chapel with bride Patricia Rowedder and groom Jordan Duke at their nuptials on Jan. 29, 2021. Photo by Sarah Prabhakar [ourhousephotography.com] Pictured at right, Patricia and Jordan are blessed by Fr. Lee in front of the recently renovated altar. Photo by Cecilia Rowedder



St. Mary - Barnesville



First Penance

The children on the path of preparation for their First Penance gathered with family to receive the sacrament. Children focused on the Parables of the Good Shepherd and The Prodigal Son. The children prepared a dramatic presentation of The Prodigal Son during the reading of the Gospel. They created candles to burn brightly on the altar once their sins had been forgiven.

The day provided a memorable focus on the forgiveness of God.

OPT

ST JOSEPH

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Redeemer and how he is a model for lay support of priestly vocations.

One easy way to support vocations is by selecting from our online Vocations Tree an ADW seminarian to pray for (<https://saintjohnneumann.org/vocations-tree>). You can bless them with daily prayers throughout Lent - and beyond!

On Wednesday, March 24th, Fr. Stefan will be giving a talk entitled "St. Joseph: The Shadow of the Father" at 6:30 pm. Fr. Stefan has been reading books by Jan Dobraczyński and Fr. Donald H. Calloway, as well as the Holy Father's letter, *PATRIS CORDE*.

As the parish continues cultivat-

ing a friendship with St. Joseph after March, we can consecrate ourselves to St. Joseph. On March 30th, St. John Neumann's will begin a 33-day preparation for the May 1st Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. We will follow Fr. Donald Calloway's book, *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*, which will be available after all Sunday Masses on March 20th - 21st for a nominal donation of \$5. There will be small group opportunities!

St. Joseph is your spiritual father whether you have a devotion to him or you feel as though you hardly know him. He wants to bring you closer to Jesus; like a good father, he wants to lead you home to heaven.

St. Joseph, pray for us!

OPT

ST RAPHAEL

Con't from page 17

visit straphaelschoolmd.org

Catholic Schools Week Highlights

Schools throughout the Archdiocese of Washington planned creative ways to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, and St. Raphael was

no different. Our week included fun themes for dressing up, including a new one that was a huge hit - "Be an SRS Teacher Mini Me," where students showed appreciation through imitation as they dressed as faculty members. View highlights from the week, as well as a video celebrating all St. Raphael has been able to accomplish during this unprecedented year, on our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/SRSrockville.

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SUMMER CAMPS

REGISTRATION
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For more info visit
ACTIVEmontgomery.org

Montgomery County Opens Summer Camps Registration

Montgomery County Recreation (MCR) and Montgomery Parks are hosting safe, fun and exciting camps that promote children's active and healthy lifestyles this summer. Camp registration begins on Monday, March 15 via ActiveMONTGOMERY.org, the registration and facility reservation system shared by Montgomery Parks, Montgomery County

Recreation and Community Use of Public Facilities.

Summer camp programming may look a little differently as County programs follow local, state and federal guidelines to decrease the spread of COVID-19. County restrictions will likely include outdoor programming, smaller group sizes, health questionnaire, COVID-19 waivers, sanitizing and more.

MCR camps offer a broad range

of summer programs located throughout the County. Campers will spend most their time outdoors with an emphasis on safety and fun. There will be a limited number of virtual offerings.

"Our staff has worked so hard to support the County's COVID-19 emergency response and it is great to begin reopening our facilities

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Vigil Location

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On Pilgrimage for Women's History Month

Maryland may be a small state, but it is one with a deep history of saintly women. The first saint born in the United States, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, ministered here, as did Servants of God Mother Mary Lange and Mary Virginia Merrick, both of whom are in the canonization process.

Why not make a mini-pilgrimage (in-person or virtually) to the sites where they prayed, during Women's History Month? (Please check websites before visiting regarding access, or to make a virtual pilgrimage.)

Stop 1: St. Mary's Spiritual Center & Historic Site, 600 N. Paca Street, Baltimore

"Paca Street," as it's known, is not only the headquarters for the Sulpician priests and home of the original St. Mary's Seminary, but the birthplace of three congregations of women religious: Sisters of Charity; Oblate Sisters of Providence; and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart

of Mary (Mich. and Pa.).

The existing Seton House was Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton's first Maryland home, in 1808, and the place where she decided to take vows as a religious. The historic church was the faith home to Servant of God Mother Mary Lange. A Caribbean immigrant and woman of color, she was encouraged in her deep faith by Sulpician Father James Joubert to found the first religious order for women of African descent, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, in 1829.

Stop 2: National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Emmitsburg

It was here after her year in Baltimore that Elizabeth Ann Seton founded the Sisters of Charity, the first religious order for women religious in the United States, and the Catholic school that became the seed for Catholic education in the US. The extensive shrine includes a Basilica with her tomb, museum and historic buildings from her life in Emmitsburg.

Stops 3 & 4: St. Paul, Ellicott City, and Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Washington, DC (on the DC-Md. line)

Servant of God Mary Virginia Merrick, founder of the National Christ Child Society, has ties to Ellicott City and Chevy Chase. "Miss Mary" spent summers at a family home in Ellicott City, where a fall as a teenager in 1880 resulted in lifelong paralysis. Her disability never stopped her from a life dedicated to helping children. A window at St. Paul, Ellicott City, was commissioned by her in memory of her father. As an adult, she lived in Chevy Chase and attended daily Mass at Blessed Sacrament, where she sat near the statue of the Blessed Mother that is at the front right of the church. (Be sure to check parish websites before visiting in person due to COVID restrictions.)

Source: Maryland Catholic Conference

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SUMMER CAMPS

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and programs," said MCR Director Robin Riley. "We are looking forward to a safe summer camp season and the MCR team have fun and exciting activities planned to make this a memorable summer for our campers."

MCR is accepting applications for 2021 RecAssist, which provides eligible County residents an opportunity to receive a scholarship to use toward most summer programs. County residents who currently receive public assistance from any of these programs are eligible for RecAssist:

Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA); Supplemental Security Income; Housing Assistance from a Shelter; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Maryland Medicaid; Care for Kids; Maryland Energy Assistance; Montgomery County HHS Rental Assistance Program; and WIC.

To view the guide and register online, go to **Active MONTGOMERY.org**. Customers can search summer camps by activity, date, age, location and cost. Registration is also available by mail, online or limited in-person appointments. For more information about registration, visit the website or call 240-777-6840.

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RACE

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dles and obstacles put in our path and some might have doubted the feasibility of having a fundraiser like the Race for Education or the success it could have - but this community rallied and showed that when a community comes together - amazing things can be accomplished." Thanks to the hard work of our students and the support of our community, amazing things did

happen, and the Race for Education raised more than \$17,000 for Holy Cross School! The proceeds from this event will be used to repair sidewalks throughout the campus. Principal Lisa Kane stated, "We are so thankful for our HSA for leading this event and for our faculty and staff who ran with their students and cheered them on to the finish line. We are filled with gratitude for our students and the generosity of our school community!"

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