



# OUR Parish Times

MARCH 2023

Living the Faith Together

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## Humbled, Grateful and Fulfilled

I must admit that I'm somewhat embarrassed that *Our Parish Times* has devoted space in this issue to me, my ministry and my love for the priesthood. I suspect some of it is because I've been writing for this wonderful local newspaper for over 20 years. I have enjoyed contributing a column first, as a pastor



Fr. John Enzler

*Continued on page 20*

## CONGRATULATIONS, FATHER JOHN!

Monsignor Enzler – Father John to all – will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood in May and will retire from his post as president and CEO of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Washington. This issue of *Our Parish Times* is dedicated to Father John, the priest and neighbor who has done so much for so many for so long. After reading his front-page column and that of his longtime friend Chuck Short, sit back, relax, and enjoy the special section, beginning on page 19, where you will find articles, photos, an interview with Father John, and “Congratulations!” ads honoring Father John by many of the schools he attended, parishes he served, and organizations that have benefited from association with him over the years.



## Celebrating a Servant Priest

There are few parishes in Montgomery County which have not been served by Monsignor John Enzler in some way or another during the past fifty years. Graciously the publishers of *Our Parish Times*, Larry and Kathleen Hamm, have designated this issue as an opportunity to honor Fr John as he celebrates his fiftieth anniversary as a priest and for his leadership of Catholic Charities. As one who has been inspired by Fr John for more than forty years, I'm honored to contribute.



Chuck Short

Thank God, this is a celebration and not a eulogy! So first, let's be assured that Fr John will continue to serve in many ways. While he is soon turning over the challenging work of leading Catholic Charities to a new President, his affection for Catholic Charities and attraction to the poor and marginalized people it serves is an immutable magnetic force generated by the love of Jesus.

My words of gratitude for Fr. John on this joyful celebration come from the heart of a loving friend and inspired colleague. Fr John and I have engaged in much “good trouble” together in service to the poor and vulnerable. Our paths first crossed in the 1970s while Fr John was a young priest assigned to CYO activities and I was a rookie County government staffer engaged in youth development work. Our friendship grew through our shared commitment to the clearest instruction of the Gospels, love of God and others, especially the vulnerable and poor. I learned from Fr John that we can see the presence of the risen Lord in every person if we but take the time to genuinely look into their faces. I've grown in faith through Fr John's example as an obedient, gracious, and loving servant to those in need.

Many wonderful things about Fr John will

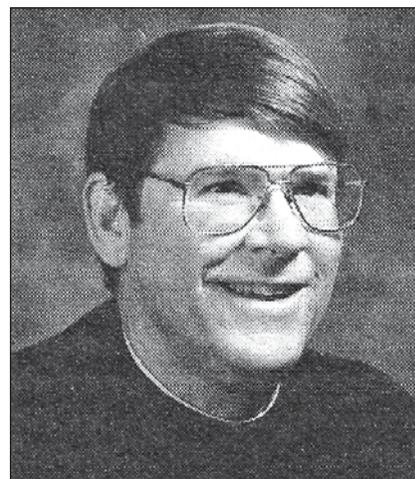
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## Father John and *Our Parish Times*

By Laurence Hamm, co-publisher

Msgr. John Enzler has contributed a column to nearly every issue of *Our Parish Times* since my wife Kathleen and I began publishing the paper in 2006 and he was the pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish. When everyone associated with *Our Parish Times* decided to dedicate this issue to Father John, the first thing I did was to look through the pre-2006 issues.

My archive of those early years is not complete. The earliest issue I have is Vol. I, No. 3, dated March 27, 1988. It includes coverage of just four parishes and schools: Holy Cross, Holy Redeemer, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St Jane de Chantal. The first mention I found of Father John is in an article in the October 1993 issue about



The photo that accompanied the 'Msgr. Enzler Corner' on Our Lady of Mercy's page in the September 1994 issue of *Our Parish Times*.

his “commissioning” 22 altar servers at Our Lady of Mercy, where he was the pastor. By September 1994, the ‘Msgr. Enzler Corner’ was a regular feature on Our Lady of Mercy's page in every issue and the OPT inter-parish news network had grown to 14 parishes.

Reading many of Father John's OPT columns one after the other I was struck by how similar they are. Each is focused – frequently on a group of our neighbors in need, personal – often including stories of people he has met, practical – with a “here's how” message, and positive – no surprise, his byword is Yes! I once read somewhere that the most motivating word in the English language is ‘let's’ – as in “Let's do this, together.” That is the under-

*Continued on page 16*

## BOOST Advocacy Day for SFIS

On Thursday, March 2, 10 Saint Francis International School students traveled to Annapolis on behalf of our community to advocate for legislative support for Maryland's BOOST Scholarship. The students gathered outside the State house at the base of the Thurgood Marshall statue, a symbol suitably chosen as it represents the tenacity and dedication necessary to fight for equal access and justice in our nation, particularly for the marginalized or underrepresented.

The students, ranging from fourth-eighth grade, had the opportunity to watch legislative sessions in both the House and the Senate to better understand how our state govern-



Students in the Maryland Statehouse

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### Summer of 2023 Programs

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# Fantastic Response in Support of Human Life in Maryland!

By John Naughton

In one day over 5,300 messages were sent to Maryland legislators through Maryland Right to Life's website MDRTL.org in support of life, a fantastic display of Marylanders' opposition to legislation enshrining abortion/infanticide in the state Constitution and legalizing assisted suicide, and their approval of bills that promote life. Pray the legislators will vote accordingly.

The bill to enshrine abortion and passive infanticide in the

Constitution; i.e., letting a baby who survives an abortion die without trying to help him/her, is cruel and barbaric.

The vast majority (70%) of Americans want limitations on abortion. The bills being considered by the Maryland legislature are out of step with a very large majority of Americans.

The physician assisted suicide bill (PAS) the legislature is considering has been defeated five times in Maryland. Some of the problems with it are:

- The drug used to kill people when taken in the necessary large dose is poisonous. So the person committing suicide must take a second drug to suppress the body's natural reaction to vomit the poisonous drug.
- Death does not always occur quickly. It can take as long as 4 days for a person to die.
- Suicide is supposed to be allowed only for people who are diagnosed with six months or less to live but these predic-

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# You Have an Angel on Your Shoulder

By Patricia McGann

Picture a child listening to you read the original versions of the Fairy Tales - Hansel and Gretl, and Rumpelstiltskin. Your eight-year-old is gripped by the battle between good and evil, and you certainly know which character she identifies with!



Patricia McGann

She immerses herself in the intense battle between the heartless villain and the brave hero. She might be terrified, but she doesn't want you to stop reading, because she believes that, against tremendous odds, the good guys will win. She's right.

Now picture that same child listening to the story of Joan of Arc, or Daniel in the Lions' Den. She

is mesmerized once again. Once again, she identifies with the hero and heroine who are willing to risk their lives to fight evil.

Children are hungry for meaning. They want to understand why it's important to do the right thing, even when no one is looking. We can begin, when they are little, to explain why we do certain things - simply because they are the right things to do.

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# Ukraine Comes to the Assistance of the Shrine of St. Jude

By Thomas Roach

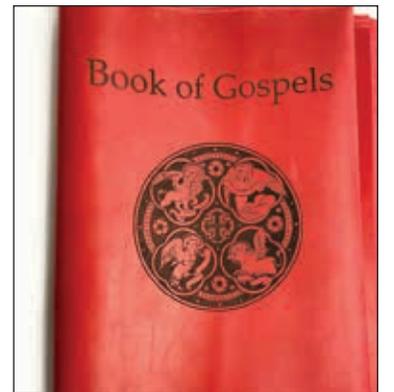
As a lector, my pastor, Rev. Paul D. Lee, STD, at the Shrine of St. Jude in Rockville, MD, challenged me to find a solution to the failing condition of the church's Liturgy of the Word books. The bindings were being held together with packing tape and replacing them would prove too expensive. Fr. Lee suggested I locate some nice inexpensive book covers from a local vendor for our very large-sized books. After coming up empty from local businesses, a search of the major online internet vendors, likewise, could not cover our unique-size books. A final online search found a small group located

in Kyiv, Ukraine, who came to our rescue.

Yulia, owner of Leather Sea Goods, which can be found on Etsy at [https://www.etsy.com/market/leather\\_sea\\_goods](https://www.etsy.com/market/leather_sea_goods), handled the special custom-made order for the Shrine of St. Jude. We communicated our special design of a logo, color, size and printing to Yulia and her four-person team via an email translation program supported by Etsy.

Fr. Lee is thrilled with the quality and craftsmanship of the beautiful leather book covers. The speed of delivery and minimal cost fit our budget.

I feel a bit prouder reading the Word knowing in a small way



One of the beautiful, unique book covers created in Kyiv, Ukraine, for the Shrine of St. Jude. Photo by Yulia, owner of Leather Sea Goods

we supported the brave people of Ukraine. We highly recommend other parishes support this Ukrainian business.

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# Show Mercy - Rejoicing in Mary's Return to Our Lady of Visitation

Parishioners and staff were elated to hear that "Mary" had been found. An impromptu "Welcome Home, Mary" party was held Friday, March 3 incorporating Friday evening Mass, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration and a simple dinner.

Heading to Saturday morning mass on February 11, Fr. Greg stopped to say "Hi" to the Mary statue at the lower entrance to the main building. He was shocked to see just an empty pedestal. After contacting police and reviewing surveillance video, it was determined two suspects, who appeared to be youths, had stolen the statue Friday, February 10 at 10:26pm.



Marian statue comes home.

Fr. Greg, offering not to press charges, immediately asked parishioners to pray for those involved as well as for the return of the statue. Parishioners responded with rosaries, novenas and mass intentions for the conversion of hearts of all involved and for "her" safe return.

The Madonna of Notre Dame Garden statue was gifted to the parish from the founding pastor, Fr Ray Fecteau during the difficult days of COVID lockdown. It was installed on November 27, 2020 and dedicated during Advent of that year. Since then, parish groups have used this statue for outdoor Rosary recitations as well as a traditional May Day "crowning". As

the parish vision statement states, "We honor Mary as our mother in faith and pattern of holiness in daily life." Therefore, the statue is both a beloved symbol as well as a beautiful figurine based on a French church antique.

On February 26 according to church surveillance, a statue of Mary had been dropped on the grounds of the River Road Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda at 2:30 a.m. By the end of that afternoon, the statue had been confirmed as ours and returned safely back to our parish.

"For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

—Matthew 6:14

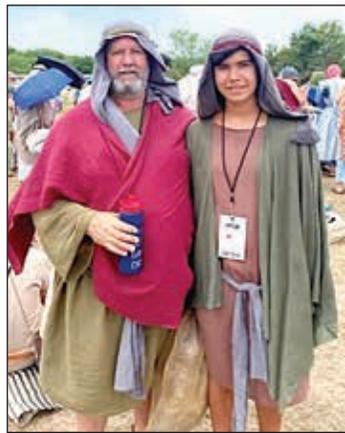
## DeChantal Family Joins the Cast of *The Chosen*

*A longtime DeChantal school family, the McCords, found a unique way to enjoy their love of the Bible on the small screen*

By Catherine Tomsbeck

While a student at St. Jane de Chantal, Christopher McCord, presently at St. John's College High School, began reading the Bible. Christopher was enthralled by the historical presentation in the Old and New Testaments, which caused him to search for additional historical references about Christ. Through this search, Christopher discovered the Angel Studios' series, *The Chosen*, which he began watching with his father, Mac McCord.

*The Chosen*, produced by Dallas Jenkins is an historical drama depicting the life of Christ and



Mac and Christopher McCord on the set of *The Chosen* dressed in costumes made by their biggest fan and also wife and mom, Anna McCord

His disciples. Watching the series together became a father-son ritual that culminated in Christopher and Mac joining the cast for the Final Episode of Season 3. The Episode named *Feeding of the 5,000* filmed in June 2022, depicted Jesus's preaching and feeding a multitude of followers. Christopher and Mac flew to Texas to join other actors portraying faith-filled followers of Christ.

Their historically accurate costumes were designed and made by a gifted seamstress and their proud wife and moth-

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The cast and crew of Moana Jr.

## Students Shine in Moana Jr.

The St. Elizabeth production of Moana Jr. was a huge success! The cast and crew brought out the hero in all of us with their messages of bravery and selflessness.

We had a special visit from Representative Aumua Amata Radewagen, who represents American Samoa as a delegate in the US House of Representatives. During one of the shows she met with our students to discuss American Samoan culture. She was able to provide a deeper understanding of traditions and answer questions about their rich heritage.



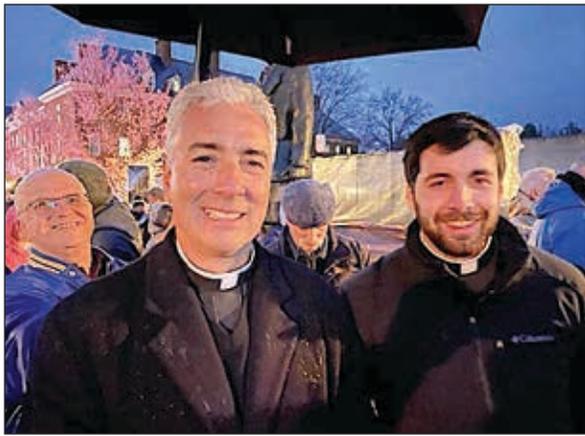
Representative Aumua Amata Radewagen of American Samoa visits with the St. Elizabeth's community.

OPT

# Holy Redeemer Joins the Maryland March for Life

By Paul Schilling

**O**n February 27, a busload of Holy Redeemer parishioners, including the Parish's Parochial Vicar Father Kyle Vance, and parishioners from neighboring parishes traveled by bus to the Maryland State Capitol in Annapolis to join in that night's Maryland March for Life. The March was sponsored by Maryland Right to Life and a host of pro-life organizations from throughout the state. Logistical support was provided by the Maryland Knights of Columbus, food by Chick-Fil-A, and the gathering space by St. Mary's Parish of Annapolis. Holy Redeemer's participation was spearheaded by the Parish's Respect Life Committee



Monsignor Filardi and Father Vance at the March

and the bus's funding was provided by an anonymous benefactor. The Maryland March for Life, one of the oldest state marches in the country, brings together Marylanders of all faiths who are concerned with pro-life issues before the state government each year. In previous years,

the March was overshadowed by the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. However, this year, after the June 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision overturning *Roe* and returning the abortion issue to the states, the March focused on various anti-life legislative initiatives before the current session of the Maryland General Assembly. Principal among these is legislation calling for a referendum in November 2024 to enshrine abortion as a constitutional right in the Maryland Constitution. Sadly, "Mary's Land" — the colony originally established to provide religious freedom to Catholics already has one of the most radical sets of abortion laws in the country. Now, the proposed constitutional

amendment allowing for abortion through the entire nine months of a pregnancy would make Maryland even more extreme in its anti-life policies. This amendment would not only entrench this regime in the Maryland Constitution - making Maryland an abortion haven - but could also even provide a basis for possible future legal action against Marylanders who oppose abortion. The Marchers also urged the members of the General Assembly to reject a "Kevorkian-inspired," assisted suicide law. The March night weather was miserable — cold and raining. That, however, did not dampen the marchers' spirits. Led from St. Mary's Parish through the streets of Annapolis by a fife, drum and bagpipe band, they rallied on the Capitol grounds with a crowd of more than one thousand, including youth and school groups and several pro-life Assembly members.

There, a number of prominent pro-life activists — Catholic and non-Catholic — spoke to the crowd about the pro-life cause, the various legislative items before the General Assembly, including some pro-life proposals, and the need for engagement with Maryland legislators. At the rally's conclusion, the Holy Redeemer parishioners and guests returned to St. Mary's and boarded the bus for home, carrying with them the speakers' charge to take action now by expressing their position on current legislation and to bring a friend to the march next year. More information about these and other legislative items of concern is available at the Maryland Right to Life website: Maryland Right to Life - Legislation ([mdrtl.org](http://mdrtl.org)) and at the website of the Maryland Catholic Conference: [MDCatholic.org](http://MDCatholic.org).

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Kensington, MD

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Mr. Thomas Corrigan,  
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301-942-3701

## United in Our Catholic Faith

By Caren Garayta

**T**his past fall our pastor, Father Mark Hughes, announced that he would be taking a mission trip to our sister parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Togo, Africa. The moment my 16-year-old daughter Reese heard the news she was determined to make this trip and I

was determined to make it happen for both of us. We knew what Father Bill Ryan, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe and former Holy Redeemer parishioner, shared with us during his yearly visits to Holy Redeemer but we could never have imagined just how much this trip would touch our lives and hearts.



Reese with Togolese parishioners



Reese and Caren in dresses made by villagers

At our initial Togo Trip planning meeting, Father Hughes shared that this was a "goodwill" trip. The purpose was to build relationships with the members of Our Lady of Guadalupe and to be there

to attend the dedication Mass of the Holy Redeemer Church, which was made possible by the generosity of members of our own parish, Holy Redeemer Kensington. It was hard

to imagine what this would look like. We spoke another language and there was the prospect of many cultural differences. I was excited but intimidated by thoughts of this trip's challenges and impact on our lives. We placed our trust in the Lord and got on the plane with open hearts.

The moment we arrived at our destination, the Holy Spirit was overwhelmingly present. We were surrounded by the most abundant joy and love I have ever experienced. All language barriers and cultural differences seemed to disappear as we connected through a smile, a hug, holding hands, and, most importantly, prayer. Our common love for the Lord and our



Father Hughes with HR's Togo Mission members in clothes custom-made by villagers

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**Wendy Spellman, PreK 3s teacher, was recognized recently by the Knights of Columbus, Rock Creek Council No. 2797 as Holy Redeemer's 2023 Teacher of the Year. This award recognizes outstanding commitment to Catholic education from faculty and staff of six local Catholic elementary schools. We at Holy Redeemer are so blessed to have Wendy Spellman as a part of our family, and are grateful for her energy, her talents, and her love. To date, she has had 147 three-year-olds in her care since 2016, with many more to come. Thank you, Wendy and Catholic school teachers everywhere!**



Mia and her daughters share giggles.

## Pre-Lent Feasting and Fun

The penitential season of Lent began on Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> so Our Lady of the Visitation closed out the season of “Ordinary” time with festivities focused on feasting, fellowship and fun.

The Super Bowl Party kicked off the fun series of parish events on Sunday, February 12. Superbowl Squares added excitement as well as earned funds for the parish Youth Programs. Subs, pizza and homemade treats satisfied the viewers as they watched the close competition. Attendee Marianne Bettie quipped, “It was fun to gather with fellow parishioners to cheer on my hometown team, the Eagles, despite the fact that Father Greg



Fun family time.

is not their fan and was rooting for the opponent. It was an exciting game down to the end.”

*Continued on page 16*



The Beattie's enjoy Super Bowl festivities.

## Walk with Jesus – Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ’s last day on Earth as a man. Installation of fourteen outdoor Stations of the Cross was completed in February on the OLVP campus. The peaceful area designed by parishioner Dean Graves aligns the First Station with the preexisting statue of “Mary of Notre Dame”, a one-of-a-kind commissioned piece gifted to the parish by the Willard family. The granite stations follow the sloping grass line towards the right side of the front entrance of the church. Each station is a large cross on a 3-piece tiered platform. The station is depicted in relief under the cross bar. Planned for future construction, a Prayer Garden will be situated beside the final Fourteenth Station.

Last Fall, parishioner Pete Geiling became aware of a set of stations laying on the ground in the rear of the Archdiocese of Washington Pastoral Center. They were previously removed from a property and were possibly going to a new home pending a decision from another community. Fr. Greg reached out promptly to get our parish on the list of potential recipients. Expectant waiting was rewarded with a call in January that the



The beautiful stations attract Teresa Sanwo and her boys.

stations would be ours as long as we could provide pickup and delivery.

Following a quick vote by the pastoral council, the plan began to come into fruition. The warmer weather in February aided the quick installation of the stations and construction of the lighted walking path continued into March.

Interested individuals and groups wishing to sponsor a station can contact the parish office, asking to speak with Alison Rascher. A sponsorship plaque will be installed at each station.

OPT

# Heal the Sick — Christ the Divine Physician

On the first Sunday of each month a Healing Mass is offered at Our Lady of the Visitation parish. This Mass fulfills the Sunday obligation but also provides a powerful healing opportunity for participants. Led by Fr. Greg Shaffer, those seeking physical, spiritual or emotional healing are given a personal encounter with the Living Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

During the Mass, following the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the monstrance. The congregation kneels as able as Fr. Greg brings the monstrance throughout the pews. Live, fitting, and powerful music from the Gospel choir, “Glorify”, opens hearts and souls to the Lord’s healing power. Each person is given the opportunity to touch the humeral veil. The veil surrounds the monstrance and is between Fr. Greg and the suppliant, thus removing him from the healing equation. It is a moment between the person and our Lord. As in the story of the hemorrhaging woman (Luke 8:43-48), who with faith wished only to touch Jesus’ garment in order to receive his healing grace, presenting oneself in faith to Jesus allows for the opportunity of deep healing.

Fr. Greg began his healing ministry the day he was ordained but didn’t fully exercise it until six years into his priestly vocation. He brought the healing mass to Our Lady of



Fr. Greg Shaffer with the monstrance.

the Visitation in 2021. Each month, the first Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm, the healing Mass has been offered. Many occasions of healing have occurred since then. One instance of spiritual healing happened for a young woman who had a broken relationship with God. In another, a parishioner suffering with a difficult relationship with their adult child received peace and emotional healing. Following the spiritual principle of “be here and be open”, the Lord leads the

healing in many dramatic and surprising ways.

God always answers prayer. Regular attendees of the healing Mass are seeing His responses of “yes”, “not right now”, or “something better” play out in their lives. The next healing Mass will be April 2 (Palm Sunday).

OPT

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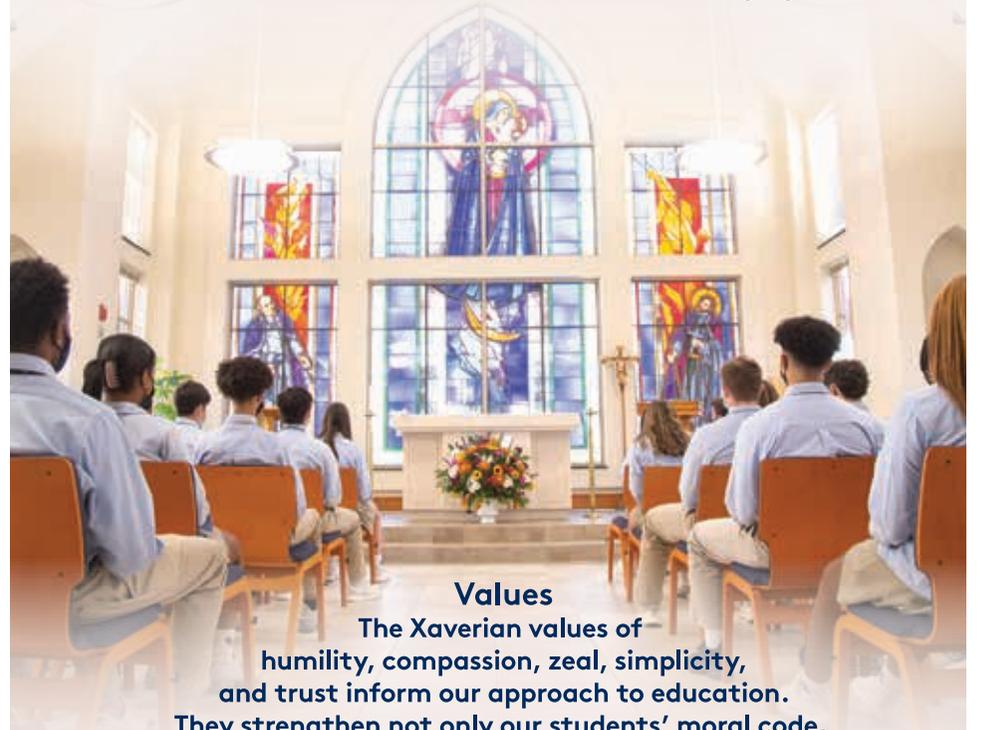


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# Young Adults Gain a Space to Discuss Faith Issues and Get to Know Their Peers in Church

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Once young adults leave Mass on Sundays, it's not always easy to connect with their peers outside of church. With the recent establishment of the Young Adults Ministry at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, the emerging ministry of 18-to-40-year-old adults aims to give a sense of belonging to young people, offer a deeper understanding of the Christian life, and provide a place to have fun.

Having started the Young Adults Ministry in December, Parochial Vicar Fr. Grzegorz Okulewicz said he aspires to offer a place where young adults can gather and share their questions with one another. The ministry helps fill a void since the phase out of 270Catholic, which served Catholic young adults in parishes along the I-270 corridor.

"One role of this group is to address real-life issues that are brought up by those who attend," said Fr. Okulewicz. "There's a lot of confusion



On February 24, seven members of the Young Adults Ministry at St. Francis of Assisi Parish gathered at Bowl America in Gaithersburg to have some fun. Fr. Grzegorz Okulewicz started the ministry in December 2022 to give young adults a place where they could ask questions among themselves.

about what are the priorities in life and what is true."

The newly ordained priest kicked off the endeavor last fall, when he invited the parish's young adults to respond to a survey gauging the best nights on which to meet, types of activities, and potential discussion topics. Since then, the group has settled on a gathering the second Sunday of the month, with food, fellowship, and conversation and a monthly bowling outing at Bowl America in Gaithersburg on the fourth Friday.

Michelle Joseph registered at St. Francis in the summer of 2019, joining the Choir that sings at the 9:30 am Mass and volunteering at various events. During the height of the pandemic, she submitted video and audio of herself used in the church's virtual choir recordings, but missed the social interaction that subsided with community group meetups.

When she heard Fr. Okulewicz's invitation to join the Young Adults Ministry, the 27-year-old

elementary school teacher went to meet other Catholics her age. While she prefers a model of Eucharistic Adoration, service and social activities, Joseph said thus far "it's been pretty positive – there's someone in the group I've been vibing with. And everyone's really nice."

As the weather warms, Fr. Okulewicz said he plans to offer hiking and an opportunity for the young adults to renovate one of the parish's storage trailers and paint murals on it. He has extended to a brother priest an invitation for their young adults to collaborate on activities and constantly invites the eight or so core members at St. Francis to bring their own friends to gatherings.

"Those who want it – it works for them," Fr. Okulewicz said. "Eventually, it will grow."

Please join the Young Adults Ministry at their gatherings from 6:30-8 pm on the second Sunday of the month in the Rectory's Youth Room or at Bowl America at 7:30 pm on the fourth Friday of the month.

OPT

## As Pandemic Becomes More Livable, Liturgical Ministries Undergo Rebuilding

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

When COVID-19 still encouraged not only the distancing of parishioners in the pews but ministers on the altar, the Masses at St. Francis of Assisi Parish scaled back to only having a celebrant, deacon, and one lector. Now that the pandemic has entered a livable phase, liturgical ministers who contribute to the celebration of the liturgy are slowly returning, though, their ranks will need to be replenished with thoughtful purpose.

Joan Treacy, the parish's liturgy coordinator, said after three years of scaled-back Masses at St. Francis, smaller numbers of liturgical ministers -- which include music ministers, lectors, ushers, joyful greeters, altar servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and Altar Guild -- are returning. For example, about half the ushers who served pre-pandemic returned to celebrate the first in-person Mass in June 2020 after Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory closed churches throughout the archdiocese in March of that year. Before the pandemic, roughly 30 young people served the altar; now, altar



As the liturgical ministers recently began returning to serve at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Liturgy Coordinator Joan Treacy said that smaller numbers of ministry members are coming back, given a confluence of issues.

servers number less than a third of that.

Treacy attributes the drop in liturgical ministers to a confluence of factors.

"A lot of our ministers were older -- with COVID, it's still scary to come back," Treacy said. "I believe some people thought this was a natural time to retire. A few altar servers grew up or got close to the end of high school. For servers, the kids didn't see their peers and maybe didn't think, 'Hey, that's something I'd like to do.'"

"I think it's going to be a slow rebuilding process."

Fr. John Dillon, pastor of the church, followed a careful course in involving liturgical ministers during the pandemic. When the church reopened in June 2020, only the ushers and joyful greeters returned in full force, since they had additional roles in enforcing that people who signed up for Mass could enter the church and ensuring attendees maintained social distance and were masked when county regulations required that. Music ministers participated on a limited basis.

Only within the past year have more music ministers returned, as have the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and the altar servers during Advent. Because the altar servers number less than 10 people, they can only serve at those Masses that fit with their availability.

Despite the dearth in their numbers across the board, at least one liturgical ministry coordinator -- Vincent Price, ministry coordinator of the ushers -- has experienced some success in recruiting some new ushers. Five young people now serve at the 9:30 am Mass, as do

several young people at the Mass in Spanish.

He accomplished this by noticing young people who were consistently at Mass with their families and approaching them about potentially serving during Mass.

"I've always felt, when the church involves youngsters, the church becomes part of them," said Price, a retired teacher. "There's gratification of serving your church as a young person and carrying that through as an adult."

Treacy added that the parish is also trying to expand its opportunities for liturgical ministers to be trained locally. Pre-pandemic, some liturgical ministers had to travel off-site to be trained at archdiocesan events. She advised Fr. John to offer training for Extraordinary Ministers for Holy Communion at the parish, which he has done, and become more creative in scheduling training for altar servers.

"We're trying to be as flexible as possible in order to make it as easy as possible to join a liturgical ministry," Treacy said.



In 2018, Haiti Ministry Coordinator Dan Cardile posed in front of a Haiti Benefit concert poster, alongside former parishioner Pat Labuda. Pat's knowledge, dedication and love for the Haitian people inspired other Haiti Ministry coordinators throughout the archdiocese to follow her example.

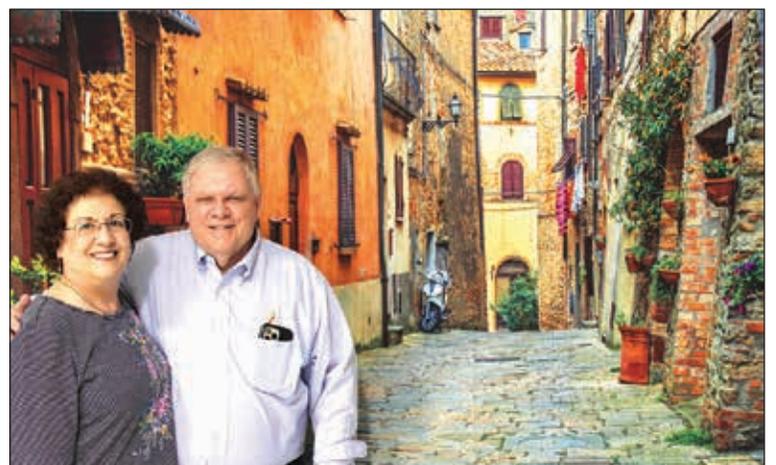
## Example of Longtime Haiti Volunteer Inspires Others to Follow Her Lead

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Having grown up in Haiti as a young child, Gilda Beauzile knew her birthplace as a youngster only in

snatches of memory. But, in the 2000s, former St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Pat Labuda visited Beauzile's parish, Jesus

Continued on page 18



On February 4, Patrice Datovech and Deacon Jim Datovech pose in front of one of the tapestries showing an iconic scene in Italy at the 2023 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Dance. The theme for the buoyant evening was "Italian."

OPT

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Students gather to compete in the Literature Bee Kahoot.

## The Buzz around St. Bart's Literature Bee

To celebrate National Read Across America Day, St. Bart's students came to school dressed as their favorite literary character and competed in a long-standing tradition, the Literature Bee. Originally started in 2013 as the Dr. Seuss Spelling Bee, the "Lit Bee" has evolved under the direction of fifth grade teacher, Ms. Kerry Parker. To better engage all students across grade levels, Ms. Parker surveyed PK3-8th grade students and teachers on everything they had been reading this year as a class, or titles or collections of special



interest. Using that information, Ms. Parker was able to generate a unique set of questions and present them in a fun, interactive Kahoot (a multiple-choice quiz on an interactive game-based learning platform). Representatives from each grade, organized by House Team color, took turns answering the questions with help from eighth grade facilitators. The Red team won the contest, but the biggest prize was the level of engagement and interest in what students throughout the school were reading.

OPT

## Journeying through Lent the St. Bart's Way

With the Mardi Gras Pancake Feast behind them, students ushered into the Ash Wednesday school Mass with an intention: how to better prepare for Lent. Fr. John Enzler's homily started with a series of questions designed to get students thinking less about what they're going to give up and more about what they can do to grow closer to God and to become more like the person He calls us to be. To support the journey through Lent, St. Bartholomew School has planned a series of activities and opportunities to deepen the community's faith and understanding of this holy season. All students will participate in weekly Stations of the



Fr. John distributes ashes after offering an important lesson to help prepare students for a holy Lent.

Cross and a special presentation by the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Guild on discovering our purpose from God through the life and words of Mattie. Students will also once again partake in Catholic Charities' Lenten Food Drive and the CRS Ricebowl, a program that invites families to reflect on the challenges of global hunger—and the Gospel call to care for our global human family. Beyond the paper collection boxes for monetary contributions, CRS Online offers a plethora of resources for daily reflection throughout the liturgical season with a daily calendar to guide prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Join us in the journey!

OPT

## Bobcats Step Up to Get Down for World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day (March 21) is a global awareness initiative which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. March 21 (3/21) is symbolic because people with Down Syndrome have 3 copies of their 21st chromosome. This year the Bobcats have been challenged to run, walk, or bike for 3 hours and 21 minutes from March 1 - March 21. Students will track their progress on a log and have opportunities to meet their goal during recess by inviting teachers and classmates

to join in on the fun as they celebrate their peers and the growth of St. Bartholomew School's inclusion program. The program started in 2019 thanks to the support of the Catholic Coalition for Special Education, which celebrates its 18th Annual Spring Benefit on March 25, 2023. Want to get down? It's not too late! Share your pictures by email or tagging @stbarts\_school with #stbartshasheart and don't forget to Rock Your Socks on 3/21!



St. Bart's students join together to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day.

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Our Parish Times Online

# St. Raphael School blossoms in Faith, Science, and Creativity

By Catherine Pulse

St. Raphael School is Marching into spring after a fun and eventful start to the second half of the school year. Our winter-time festivities continued after the holidays, with a successful Catholic Schools Week. Teachers, parents, students, and clergy all felt appreciated, with the many exciting events and surprises presented during this annual week of celebration. Parents were given a special gift, and teachers and clergy received personalized notes from students and a delicious thank you meal. The week concluded with Family Fun Night, an event that included ping-pong, video games, an array of snacks, and a movie. What a wonderfully planned week to celebrate the joy of



St. Raphael School first-grade students celebrate Matching Monday during Catholic Schools Week. Photo by Laura Magafan



St. Raphael School second-grader Rory Bryne plays his part as John Lewis in the Living History Museum. Photo by Laura Magafan



St. Raphael Nursery School students celebrate Matching Monday during Catholic Schools Week. Photo by Rachel James

being part of a Catholic school!

In early February, the second-grade class received the sacrament of First Reconciliation. Students spent months preparing at school and at home with workbooks, learning about asking for God's forgiveness of sins. All learned the Act of Contrition and were well prepared for the special evening. Simultaneously, the second graders were preparing for the Living History Wax Museum, a St. Raphael School tradition. Each student selects a famous African American figure and writes about why they were an important part of history. After writing and memorizing a brief pas-

sage about their chosen person, the students recited their presentation to family, teachers, and stu-

dents as a living history museum on Friday, February 17. The students' hard work was evident and were most impressive reciting stories, dressed as their famous person.

Students in grades six through eight have been preparing for the annual Science Fair, which is always a remarkable event. For months, students work on developing and executing an experiment, then present to the Science Fair judges where prizes are awarded. Mrs. Melissa Kelly, the St. Raphael science teacher, guides the students throughout the lengthy process, teaching them the scientific method and helping them

develop their own unique experiments and presentations. SRS is blessed to have such wonderful teachers!

St. Raphael School could not be more excited for another annual event on the horizon. Soon, the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will perform in the school play, *Cinderella*. The fifth graders are particularly excited to participate in the play as part of the junior ensemble. Ms. Flannery Jamison, music teacher and play director, has been coaching the students in what is sure to be an exceptional performance. Parent volunteers are working behind the scenes, creating items needed for the set as well as costumes. Our community always comes together to help one another and work in harmony, this year's school year theme.

Looking ahead, a team of parent volunteers is also hard at work planning this year's Spring Soiree and Auction. Each year, the auction provides families a chance to bid on exciting trips, tickets, artwork and so much more to benefit the school and recognize local businesses supporting the school. The creative Mrs. Laura Magafan, SRS parent, volunteer, and Director of Marketing and Communication, thoughtfully plans an unforgettable event that brings together parents and supporters to celebrate our wonderful school! It's sure to be an evening to remember.

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## St Bernadette Parent Gala

At left, the return of our parent gala was a smashing success, generating over \$50,000 to support SBS.

Below, parents get in on the gala's casino theme, posing for a picture.



At left, happy classroom after hearing all the Black History Month presentations.

Below left, a student presents on ballerina Misty Copeland, totally dressed for the part!

Below right, a sample of the Valentines gathered for local senior citizens.



## A Busy February at St. Bernadette's

Students at St. B's had a lot to celebrate in February. Classroom activities included learning about important Black figures from both throughout history and today in Honor of Black History Month. After researching their figure, students dressed up and presented their findings to their classmates. Greater Love was also in full swing as members worked to collect valentines for the Carding Cards Project. The cards were delivered to a local Sunrise Senior Living Community home. In addition to the Valentine's Day project, Greater Love also fundraised via tag days for earthquake relief, the Harriet Tubman Museum in Cambridge, MD and for Humane Rescue Alliance. **OPT**

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Students show off their creative 100 days t-shirts, depicting 100 objects of their choice. What a way to celebrate 100 days of school!

## McGANN

Con't from page 2

We can show them that the battle between good and evil isn't always a grand spectacle. It is more like an everyday spat. Remember the cartoon where the devil stood on the character's left shoulder, and the angel stood on his right shoulder? It's pretty much like that.

We want something we aren't supposed to have, and we are torn. We are pulled toward doing what we want to do and doing what we should do. We know what's right, and we know what's wrong - it's just that sometimes we choose wrong anyway. The Commandments tell us we are meant to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. That's easier said than done.

So, we talk to our children about choices, and we acknowledge that it's not always easy to know what's right, and even when we know, it's not always easy to choose

what's right.

We talk about times when we have chosen wrong, and we talk about what it means to make amends. We talk about forgiveness, and the model of perfect forgiveness we have in God. We remind our children, and ourselves, that no matter how many times we go with the guy on the left shoulder, God loves us, and He will wait for us to get things right.

We talk about asking for guidance through prayer, and we talk about going to Confession, and starting anew.

After we've done all that talking, our children have a lot to think about. While they are thinking, though, they are watching. They are noticing the small things you do and say. They see the way you treat other people. They can see that you are living according to the beliefs you profess, and they can see when you are not doing such a great job. They might even point it out when you've gone wrong, just like that angel on your shoulder. **OPT**

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## Congratulations, Mrs. Bueno!

**M**rs. Julia Bueno, the PK3 teacher at Holy Cross, was recognized by the Knights of Columbus, Rock Creek Council as Holy Cross School's Teacher of the Year!



Mrs. Julia Bueno, right, poses with principal Mrs. Lisa Kane at the Knights of Columbus, Rock Creek Council Teacher of the Year celebration.

Mrs. Bueno joined Holy Cross School in 2018 as the lead teacher for the school's inaugural Pre-K 3 class. She leveraged her tremendous skills as a teacher and developed a curriculum known for its academic excellence and faith formation. She runs a fun, high-energy, faith-filled class where our youngest students begin to foster a life-long love for learning.

Mrs. Bueno's engaging lessons bring excitement to the entire school. This year, for example, the PK3 class adopted seven fertilized eggs from a nearby farm. The PK3 students kept watch over the eggs as they incubated and cheered as the chicks began to hatch. Mrs. Bueno

worked with our technology teacher to set up a livestream webcam for other classes to enjoy the arrival of Cluck Norris, Egg Ryan, Feather Locklear, and Chick Jagger! Before returning the crew to the farm, Mrs. Bueno invited other grades to visit her classroom and greet the chicks.

Mrs. Bueno's classroom motto is, "There are no bad days, only good and better days!" Mrs. Bueno makes the days of everyone at Holy Cross better, and we are blessed to have her as a member of our school family. Congratulations, Mrs. Bueno!

A sincere thank you to the Knights of Columbus, Rock Creek Council for celebrating and supporting Catholic school teachers each year. We are grateful. **OPT**

## Holy Cross Church Supports Vocations!

*"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain..." John 15:16*

**L**ent in Holy Cross Church is marked with an intense support for vocations. Large prayer cards for men and women in religious and consecrated life can be found in all the pews to encourage the faithful to pray. The Vocations Cross returns for the second year and can be found in the front of the church. All parishioners and guests have been asked to take a card and get to know a seminarian while praying for their intentions. Finally, students preparing for the Sacrament of



The Lenten Cross stands near the altar in Holy Cross Church. It is an invitation to support our seminarians in prayer and deeds.



A parishioner has adopted a seminarian from among the cards on the Lenten Cross and donated a basketball to the John Paul II Seminary.

*Continued on page 12*



Is there a doctor in the house? A team of doctors and nurses attended school on Career Day!

## An Extraordinary Week of Faith, Service, and School Spirit

**C**atholic Schools Week commenced on Sunday, January 23 in a perfect way with the school and parish community coming together for 9:30 a.m. mass. The church was filled with a sea of green plaid as students proudly wore their uniforms to showcase their school pride and Catholic school identity.

An admission open house event took place Sunday afternoon for

prospective students. Attendees had the opportunity to engage in a presentation by Archdiocese of Washington Principal of the Year, Mrs. Lisa Kane and Christine Zalewski, Director of Development and Admissions along with a robust Q & A session with a panel of current school parents. The event also featured parent and student

*Continued on page 47*

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**More Holy Cross News on Page 33**

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## It's Opening Bell for the Mercy Young Investors Club!

**M**ercy recently launched a formal financial literacy program, **Mercy Young Investors Club**, which will build on the foundation of the financial literacy introductory session offered to all middle-school students. In addition to being a valuable differentiator on high school applications, this opportunity will expose students to the world of investing at an early age which will help them become more confident and responsible investors later in life. Students learn the fundamentals of investing and the mechanics of building a well-diversified portfolio across asset classes with a focus on stocks. They participate in an online simulation and select stocks for their mock portfolio using real market data, learning asset allocation principles along the way. Additionally, participants learn to assess risk in investing, read



The Mercy Young Investors Club kicked-off its first of five sessions. More than 20 middle school participants learned the mechanics of buying stocks online and the importance of diversification.

stock quotes, analyze stocks based on key metrics, calculate rate of return, understand the benefits of mutual funds/ETFs, and gain the insights to meet long-term financial goals through prudent investing. Students participate in monthly meetings and collaborate in small teams.

OPT

## New Leadership at Our Lady of Mercy School

**T**here was no better time than Catholic Schools Week for Monsignor Charles Antonicelli, Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy, to announce his decision to name Mrs. Christine Green as Mercy's permanent Principal and Mr. Jason Knecht as permanent Assistant Principal. The combined skill set of this very experienced leadership team will ensure a seamless transition and con-

tinuity of Mercy's mission. Mrs. Green is eminently qualified for this position, having over thirty-five years of teaching and administrative experience. Mr. Knecht has a master's degree in education and eleven years of teaching and administrative experience. Our Lady of Mercy School is blessed to have two such dedicated and well-qualified leaders.

OPT



Mercy's Student Council organized a successful fundraiser for Children's National Hospital!

At right, Mercy's librarian and French teacher helps the French Club students make crepes on Candelmas - the feast of the Presentation of Jesus to the temple.



Below, Father Joe teaches Mercy PreK 3 students about Holy Water for the first time.



At left, Mercy's 40-member school choir performed at the ADW Choral Arts Showcase closing out a joyful, week-long celebration of Catholic Schools.

## Our Lady of Mercy Celebrates Msgr. Enzler

**F**ather John Enzler was the pastor at Our Lady of Mercy for 14 years (1990 - 2004). During this time, he made an immeasurable impact on the entire Mercy community. In 1994, Father John along with a small group of Mercy families who have children with developmental differences, founded Potomac Community Resources (PCR). PCR is a private, nonprofit organization that promotes the inclusion of persons with developmental differences - intellectual and developmental disabilities - into all aspects of community life. Today, PCR serves hundreds of individuals and families in our region.

Father John's leadership was instrumental in the creation of the Inclusion Program in Our Lady of Mercy School, as well as the Religious Formation program for parish and school children. The school's Inclusion Program served over 400 students with learning challenges during his time at Mercy. In the last 20 years, over 5,000 students have been served by Mercy's Faith Formation program.

During Father John's time as pastor, Mercy parishioners established the Mercy Health Clinic, a nonprofit, nonsectarian health clinic designed in the model of an all-volunteer physician free health clinic. Mercy Clinic continues to provide primary healthcare, specialty healthcare, health education and medications free of charge to more than 2,200 patients annually who are struggling with health disparities related to poverty and suffering from long-term lack of access to healthcare.

Recognizing the need to address the challenges of a growing and vibrant community, Father John undertook a capital campaign to rebuild Mercy's worship space and expand

auxiliary facilities including:

- Added a new wing to Our Lady of Mercy School.
- Built a new church to accommodate the growing parish community.
- Purchased a home adjacent to the church property to provide a private living space for the priests of the parish.
- Made minor renovations to the Parish House to provide sufficient office space for the parish staff.
- Provided land for Victory Housing to build the Byron House, an assisted living facility located adjacent to the parish house.

These many contributions are significant, but most meaningful was the spiritual guidance Father John provided to all parishioners and their families during his 14 years at Mercy. Even to this day, he can be seen on the Mercy campus performing weddings, baptisms and funerals for many of the Mercy families. His motto "Just Say Yes" is as evident today as it was thirty years ago. We are blessed and we are grateful. His leadership and guidance will have a lasting impact on the extended Mercy community.

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# St. Martin's Food Pantry: Your Will be Done

By Julien Payen, Watkins Mill Senior and St. Martin's Class of 2019

St. Martin of Tours Food Pantry, located behind St. Martin of Tours Church in Gaithersburg, has been operating since 1992. From the early days when the Food Pantry was established to today, the growth in food distribution has been exponential. During the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the Pantry was still distributing food every Monday to over 300 families per week—and it's not slowing down.

For more than 20 years, Chuck Smith coordinated St. Martin's Food Pantry, which has been a vital resource for the community. Smith is supported by Father David Wells, the current pastor at St. Martin's

Church.

According to Smith, who retired in early 2021 but came back as one of nine members of the Pantry Board, the Food Pantry distributed 2.68 tons of non-perishable food on February 27, and about the same amount of fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh and frozen meat, bread and pastries.

The Lenten season is a time of sacrifice, reflection, and an opportunity to give back to those in need. The Church's dedication to serving the community is manifested in the Food Pantry.

The Food Pantry operates on a volunteer basis. Church members and community volunteers work together to organize and distribute the donated food. Most of them are

retired parishioners who want to give back to the community, and there is always a call for volunteers who can speak different languages.

The items are gathered from a variety of sources, including individuals, local churches, nearby stores, neighborhood associations, the Knights of Columbus, and schools. For instance, according to St. Martin's School Office Manager, Jenny Mohrbacher, out of their target of 9,500 food items, St. Martin's School has already received 4,254 food items, as of March 3, 2023, from students and staff that will be donated to the Pantry during this year's Lenten Food Drive, which runs until Holy Thursday.

The Food Pantry serves as a life-

line for many people who struggle with food needs. The donations provide essential nutrition for those who are in need in Gaithersburg and the surrounding communities, "but we do not exclude needy from PG County, DC, Northern Virginia, Frederick, Hagerstown or elsewhere," Smith said. "Collections for the most part recently are less than we distribute, and our food reserve—extraordinary by late 2020—has nearly disappeared," he added.

In recent months, the Pantry has seen a drastic drop in donations, but the need remains critical. The latest five-week rolling average jumped to 275.8 families per week, the highest average to date.

St. Martin's Food Pantry is a

shining example of the power of the community to come together and support one another. During the Lenten season, the Food Pantry's work takes on even greater significance as it becomes a symbol of the Church's commitment to serving others and sharing in the sacrifice of the season. As St. Martin of Tours said "Lord, if your people need me, I will not refuse the work. Your will be done."

As an integral member of the community, you can volunteer your time and help contribute to the Food Pantry by donating to the Pantry directly or through St. Martin's Church or School. For information on how to support the Food Pantry, visit <https://www.stmartinsweb.org/st-martin-s-pantry>.

OPT

## Our Academic Challenge Experience

By Reanna Mae Bejo, Victoria Blanco, and Mael Kpadenou, Seventh Graders

The moment Mrs. Morelli announced that we would be competing in the Academic Challenge, a rush of excitement filled our minds. "This could be a great opportunity for us!" we thought.

Each year DeMatha High School hosts the Academic Challenge, a quiz bowl competition between Catholic schools of the archdiocese; however, it had been canceled for the past two years due to the pandemic. Now that it was back, Mrs. Morelli couldn't wait to select the best academic students to battle it out. After students completed a series of scholastic trivia quizzes, she chose Reanna Mae Bejo, Victoria Blanco, Christopher Castro, Mael Kpadenou, David Mensah, and Alan Ramos to represent St. Martin's.

Leading up to the event, we prepared using study packets and Quizlet sets. We got together as much as possible during recess to simulate a real competition using buzzers and competing as a team until finally the day of the event arrived.

We nervously and excitedly listened to Dr. McMahon, DeMatha's

principal, review the rules. Finally, it was time to begin the challenge! He sent teams to different classrooms to compete against each other. As spectators watched on, we tried to score as many points as possible by buzzing in to answer questions. It was nerve-wracking and intense, but fun at the same time. As each game ended, we got a few moments of relief before we moved on to another room to go up against new teams. As all the games came and went, our confidence increased. Before we knew it, all games were complete and we followed the crowd to the cafeteria.

After a wonderful lunch, the awards ceremony began. We knew we did well, beating out teams in each of our four games. However, there was no way for us to know how many points teams scored in other rooms. When the principal announced that St. Martin of Tours school won second runner-up, our hearts jumped with joy! We went up to the front of the room and held our plaque with pride. Our parents stood up and took plenty of pictures, while we stood with wide grins on our faces. In the end, we were lucky to have such a wonderful experience full of fun and memories!

OPT



Congratulations to our 14U Boys basketball team, who took 2nd place in the CYO South Regional Championship, after an undefeated regular season! Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

## St. Martin's Knitting Club Helps the Less Fortunate

By Bella Yeates, Seventh Grader

There are many clubs at St. Martin's School, yet there is one club that helps people the most, the Knitting Club. It began in 2008 by our art and library teacher, Ms. Stinger, and a former student, Ms. Villars, who now works as a Spanish teacher at St. Martin's. The Knitting Club teaches kids how to knit clothing items such as hats and scarves. Ms. Stinger is also giving

lessons to the students on how to crochet.

Now you might think this is pretty boring, yet it really isn't. While students are knitting their hats, they can socialize with classmates and students from different grades. It's a great way to learn a new skill and make new friends!

The Knitting Club not only shows middle school students how to knit, but it also shows how to give to the less fortunate. The students make

hats for all people. Whether that would be for newborns, toddlers, teens, adults, or seniors.

Ms. Stinger has a special bucket we fill with our finished hats. Every month or so, when the bucket is full, she donates them to a local shelter. St. Martin's Knitting Club is a great experience to not just learn to knit, but to learn how to help other people.

OPT

## VOCATIONS

Con't from page 10

Confirmation have been invited to donate a basketball or football towards the JPII Seminary. These donations will support the seminarians who will be assigned to different parishes in the summer. The balls will also be used for the seminarians' recreational activities in seminary.

Please join Holy Cross Church in praying for a springtime of vocations in the Archdiocese of Washington. May we all be of one mind and one heart in the desire to raise young men and women in the service of Christ.

## HUMAN LIFE

Con't from page 2

tions are not always accurate. Many people live longer than expected. For example, in one case a person lived over 11 years after her six-month prediction.

- Once the law is enacted, pressure is put on the poor and disabled to commit suicide and the pressure from medical personnel and family can be intense. The Alzheimer's Association stopped working with the Compassion and Choices suicide organization because C&C pressured AA

patients to commit suicide.

- There is always action to relax the suicide law once it is put into place. For example, last year Vermont's suicide law was liberalized from requiring two in-person visits to a doctor 15 days apart, a written request and a 48-hour waiting period. It now consists of a telehealth option and elimination of waiting periods. This year the legislature is considering another liberalization measure - whether non-residents can commit suicide in Vermont. If this happens C&C will have a "go to" suicide state to recommend for people

from surrounding states. This way they will reach their goal of suicide coverage throughout the U.S much sooner without having to enact suicide laws in every state. No doubt Maryland is targeted to be a "go to" suicide state.

For a comprehensive treatment of Physicians Assisted Suicide see Documentary at [thedignitymandate.org](http://thedignitymandate.org).

Please pray that these death dealing bills of abortion, infanticide and suicide will be rejected. And be sure to let your legislators know your position through the MDRTL.org TAKE ACTION button.

OPT

### St. Martin of Tours Parish

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Gaithersburg, MD

Fr. David G. Wells,  
Pastor

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St. Martin School  
Stephen Lamont, Principal

301-990-2441

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Parish Editor

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Students singing joyfully to the Lord!

## Liturgical Song is Super-Powered Prayer!

By: Mrs. Sharon Pabon, Music Teacher

During our Founder's Day Mass this year, our third graders sang our meditation song "Father, We Adore You" by Terrye Coelho. Thank you for your beautiful, prayerful singing, third grade!

As we prepared the song during music class, we talked about how music can be a super-powered prayer! St. Augustine said, "The one who sings prays twice".

We discussed the differences between performing music during a concert and singing the meditation song during Mass. When we sing at Mass, we are *music ministers*, not performers! Our Upper School Choir members serve as music ministers during each liturgy.

The rest of the students at Mass are the *congregation*, not the audience. Music ministers sing from the heart and lead the congregation in sung prayer.

We were excited to invite our first graders to sing a meditation song during our Mass in February. Our second graders will share a special song during our First Communion Celebration Mass in May. During our Closing Mass in June, the fourth graders will be invited to join the choir and sing for Mass. Parents, we hope to see you at one of our upcoming school liturgies!

*"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all you lands; serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful song!" Psalm 100: 1-2*

OPT

## Positive Math Environments in Upper School

By: Mrs. Kristen Chrobocinski, 7th Grade Math Teacher

One of the ways I create a positive math environment is that I have students connect with each other while doing math. Gallery walks are one of the ways that help students to look at each other's work and learn how to provide feedback.

Seventh grade students have been studying multi-step inequalities. They were given an inequality that matched a word problem and had to decide what each number and variable represented in the situation. They created a poster that displayed their thought process, how they solved the inequality and a graph of the inequality. After they finished the poster, they were given 4 sticky notes and asked to provide feedback to their peers. Below are some of the questions they could answer as part of their feedback.

What is the one thing that group did that would have made your project better if you had done it?

What is one thing your group did that would have improved their project if they did it too?

How did the group decide the direction of inequality for the solutions?

Does their answer make sense in the situation?

Is their mathematics clear and correct?



Students collaborate at the board to solve a math problem

If there was a mistake, what could they be more careful about in similar problems?

OPT

### The Woods Academy

6801 Greentree Road  
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301-365-3080

Head of School,  
Joseph E. Powers

OPT Editor, Caitlin Chalke  
Director of Marketing and  
Communications  
www.woodsacademy.org



## Learning through Connections

By: Ms. Michele Carpenter, Co-Director of Montessori, Montessori II Teacher

"To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely" –Maria Montessori

The basis of learning is connection and discovery. Children are constantly looking for ways to make sense and deepen their understanding of the world around them. By creating connections and involving several different subjects in support of a theme, we can inspire children to discover these connections for themselves.

The structure of lessons in the Montessori classroom supports both connections and discovery. Instead of giving children the answer outright, we encourage children to discover concepts for themselves. This is especially evident in the sensorial area of the classroom.

Students come to discover geometric solids and their characteristics, measurement and length through the Red Rods, as well as properties of triangles, quadrilaterals and polygons through the geometric cabinet.

Children are natural observers of the world around them so we must allow them to discover the answer on their own. We give them the tools, vocabulary, and time to discover characteristics and patterns by starting with the concrete and moving to the abstract. This allows children to integrate these concepts and then make them their own.

In Montessori I, Mrs. A guided her students through a unit on Piet Mondrian. They studied his artwork and then were asked if it reminded them of anything in the classroom. Instantly one of the students enthusiastically



Montessori students at The Woods Academy utilize the sensorial part of the classroom to discover concepts which they then apply elsewhere!

pointed to the Trinomial Cube. The Trinomial Cube has several rectangular prisms and a cube and lays the groundwork for more complex algebraic concepts. It also ties in perfectly to the concepts of Cubism. The students were then given the opportunity to create their own art in the style of Mondrian. In learning and observing artwork, they gained a deep understanding of the artwork and its properties. This understanding then allowed them to make these concepts their own in an individual way reflective of their own personalities.

This is our ultimate goal of learning to allow children to discover concepts then independently and individually apply them. We do not teach our students concepts, but rather how to learn.

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MSP parishioners, Don & Mary Kinler

## MSP at The March for Life

**M**other Seton parishioners were present at The March for Life in Washington, DC, on January 20, 2023. It was a beautiful, inspiring day, and especially inspiring to see so many young people. The speakers were amazing and included Tony Dungy (retired NFL Head Coach) and

his wife; also, Jonathan Roumie (the actor who plays Jesus in The Chosen). Sister Mary Casey O'Connor and her twin sister Casey Gunning are two beautiful women in their 30's who gave an amazing joint talk, which was especially inspiring as Casey Gunning has Down Syndrome.

OPT

## A Celebration for "Life and Love"

**T**hank you to everyone who contributed their time, donations, ideas, presence, prayers and much more to the celebration for "life and love" on February 18, 2023. The goal of raising funds for the new ultrasound machine at the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center was generously surpassed!

Gracias a todos los que



Above, Celebrate Life.

At left, Susana Eusse, event chairperson.



contribuyeron con su tiempo, donaciones, ideas, presencia, oraciones y mucho más para la fiesta por "la vida y el amor" el 18

de Febrero de 2023. La meta de recolectar fondos para la nueva máquina de Ultrasonido en el Shady Grove Pregnancy Center fue generosamente superada!

OPT

## Hispanic Community Lenten Retreat at Mother Seton Parish

**O**n Saturday, March 4, the Hispanic community at Mother Seton Parish had a wonderful Lenten retreat. It was a great success, and we congratulate everyone who took the time to be able to be in this retreat. We thank Father Alberto Biondi for his support and catechesis. We also thank Father Lee Fangmeyer for giving us this opportunity to contemplate, live and experience the glory of Jesus in his Passion, Death, and Resurrection with our Hispanic community. God willing, we will continue to celebrate it every year.

El sábado 4 de marzo, la comunidad hispana de la Parroquia Mother Seton tuvo un maravilloso retiro de Cuaresma. Fue un gran éxito y felicitamos a todos los que sacaron tiempo para poder estar en este retiro. Agradecemos al Padre Alberto Biondi por su apoyo y su catequesis. También agradecemos al Padre Lee Fangmeyer por darnos esta oportunidad de contemplar, vivir y experimentar la gloria de Jesús en su Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección con nuestra comunidad hispana. Si Dios lo permite, seguiremos celebrándolo cada año.

OPT



Top, far left, Fr. Alberto Biondi

Top right, Hispanic Community Lenten retreat

Far left, Organizing Committee



Left, retreatants participated in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

### Mother Seton Parish

19951 Fr. Hurley Boulevard  
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Fr. Lee Fangmeyer  
Pastor

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Brenda Rosado  
OPT Editor

Bulletin@Mothersetonparish.org

It pays to advertise in  
Our Parish Times

### UNITED

Con't from page 4

Catholic faith brought us together. One family in the Lord!

This was so apparent the entire week. We were able to share the Eucharist in the most beautiful Masses I have ever attended while wearing clothing that two villagers had measured and sewn for us

in only three days. The churches where we attended Mass were overflowing and the choirs sounded like angels lifting up their voices to the Lord. We were able to see first-hand the unbelievable work of Father Bill's mission as he brings Christ to this community through witness, schooling, housing, electricity, and water. His "yes" to the Lord has touched so many and it was inspiring to see the great impact of his

mission.

On the final night of our stay, we were joined by about one hundred villagers to pray the rosary in their beautiful stone Rosary Garden with statues of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Juan Diego kneeling at her feet. I looked out at our two parish families coming together in love for our Blessed Mother and our faith. I was overwhelmed with emotion as I felt the movement of the Holy Spirit

among us, uniting us in prayer. My daughter beautifully summed up her experience with this quote, "When you have nothing, but you have God, you have everything." I am praying that another visit to Togo is in the good Lord's plan for me and my daughter. Until then, we will hold our brothers and sisters in Christ in a special place in our hearts.

OPT

# Sodality Units Make Lent More Meaningful

*DeChantal Parish Sodality Fosters Faith and Fellowship with Themselves and UMD Terps this Lenten Season*

By Anne Yockel

Members of the Sodality Guild at St. Jane de Chantal began the season of Lent in a variety of ways with opportunities to strengthen their faith, participate in service, and foster fellowship. On Ash Wednesday, Sodalists from the Regina Coeli unit attended Mass at the University of Maryland Catholic Student Center along with about 300 college students. After Mass the students enjoyed a homemade meal prepared and served by the Sodalists. Sharing their faith and interacting with the university students was a very meaningful way for the Sodalists to begin their Lenten journey.



Members of the St. Jane de Chantal Sodality served dinner to over 300 Terps from the University of Maryland who attended Ash Wednesday Mass.

On Saturday, February 25, Sodality hosted a Lenten Morning of Recollection. Father Andrew Clyne, Parochial Vicar at St. Jane de Chantal Parish, spoke on the season of Lent as a journey of freedom from sin, into the

true freedom for the children of God. Father Clyne shared that Christ did indeed come to set us free; but freedom is often experienced by us as an extraordinary burden, and so there is that ever-present temptation to backsliding: to give it away at the first opportunity. Father expressed that we exist to be in

*Continued on page 33*

# De Chantal Dash to Support Catholic Education: The School's 7th Biennial Race is fun for the Whole Parish

By Loren Wilkerson and Melanie Stebmer-Townsend

Calling all runners, walkers, and supporters of Catholic education, mark your calendars for the morning of May 6, 2023 to attend the 7th biennial De Chantal Dash! The De Chantal Dash is a long-standing and beloved tradition at St. Jane De Chantal School. This year's Dash will feature three events: a 5K Run, 1-mile Fun Run/Walk, and a new Tot Trot. The race starts and ends at St. Jane De Chantal School and concludes with a post-race breakfast and party. All participants will receive a race t-shirt and swag bag. The Dash is a family-friendly event of the Home and School Association. All proceeds will go towards improving the De Chantal school grounds.



Check out the new Dash logo and visit the Dash page on our school's website for more information and to register

and will participate in fun class registration contests. Classroom parents have been hard at work assembling amazing raffle baskets. Pre-K through 8th grade has a unique basket filled with themed items ranging from Legos, pool and beach items, and sporting goods. In addition, Mrs. Catherine Skibo, a De Chantal Kindergarten Teacher and the Head De Chantal CYO Cross Country Coach, is offer-

*Continued on page 16*

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

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

**St. Jane de Chantal School**  
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More St. Jane de Chantal News on Page 3

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**PRE LENT**

*Con't from page 5*

BINGO on Sunday, February 19 kept the good times rolling. Snacks and pizza fed the participants ranging from 3 months to 80+ years of age. BINGO caller David Bivens filled the pauses with corny jokes suitable for all. Event coordinator Meredith Williams had her team of seventeen volunteers in matching tee-shirts printed with "I love Jesus and BINGO". This event highlighted the fun-loving nature of our parish community, but also taught valuable lessons. The eight-year-old winner of the 50/50 drawing, Cameron, pondered Jesus' call to give to those in need. The next

day following her big win, she told her grandmother, Joan Weller, she wanted to donate ten percent of her winnings back to the poor box at the parish.

Finishing the series on February 21, parishioners were treated to piles of pancakes at the second annual Pancake Dinner. Timed to follow the Faith Formation session, students met up with their families to eat this Mardi Gras meal. Volunteers flipped pancakes, grilled bacon and ham and served syrup and delicious toppings. Attendees were left with their stomachs and hearts full. Our parish family was replete and ready for the serious season ahead.



**OPT** Dash finishers enjoyed a morning of fitness, fun, and community.

**RACE**

*Con't from page 15*

ing a training session for third-eighth grade students interested in getting race ready in the weeks leading up to the event.

The Dash is open to the greater Bethesda community and De Chantal invites all ages to register to attend. In past years, this popular event has attracted over 600 participants from the school and parish. Registration for the race is now open and can be found at this website: <https://tinyurl.com/decdash23>. Several levels of sponsorship are available to business or individual families. To sponsor or to purchase raffle tickets, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/dashdonor23>. Questions can be directed to [decdash23@gmail.com](mailto:decdash23@gmail.com). Whether you come to run, walk, cheer, or celebrate at the post-Dash Bash, hope to see you there May 6th!

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**THE CHOSEN**

*Con't from page 3*

er, Anna McCord. Christopher and Mac were part of the cast for two filming sessions. This included one daytime and one nighttime filming session. During the filming, Jesus, portrayed by Jonathan Roumie, led the multitudes in praying the Our Father, there were Roman guards on horseback and fires were lit throughout the hillside during the nighttime filming. Christopher and Mac joined 2,500 actors sitting on a hillside listening to Jesus preach and mingling with other followers of Christ.

The final episode of season 3, *The Feeding of the 5,000*, aired in February. Christopher, Mac, and Anna watched the episode at home and enjoyed seeing themselves on film. Watching *The Chosen* remains a father-son ritual and they hope to join the cast for another filming during season four.

**OPT**

**FATHER JOHN**

*Con't from page 1*

lying tone of so many of Father John's columns.

Father John has been a presence in the pages of *Our Parish Times* for thirty years – starting when he was pastor of Our Lady of Mercy, and then again when he was pastor of Blessed Sacrament, and since 2011 when he began working at Catholic Charities. There are now twenty-six Montgomery County parishes and schools participating in the OPT news network. We hope that Father John continues to write his column – after all, there are 35 parishes in Montgomery County – and we wish him all the best as he continues to practice the faith in action *ad multos annos*.

**OPT**



St. Mary's celebrated Catholic Schools week, day 2, with Pajama and Movie Day! Everyone got to dress out of uniform in their comfortable PJ's to watch a movie with some breakfast treats!

## Catholic Schools Week 2023

By Kathleen Morris

Saint Mary's students look forward to celebrating Catholic Schools week every year, and 2023 was no exception! The week-long festivities delivered many colorful themes to the classrooms, as the school community celebrated our amazing students, families, teachers and community.



St. Mary's celebrated CSW with a school wide service day! Students created breakfast bags filled with juice, cookies, fruit, and goldfish! These breakfast bags will be donated to Catholic Charities "Cup-of-Joe" breakfast program!

The week started off on Monday by celebrating our students with a Pajama Day, breakfast treats, and a movie. Students and teachers came to school dressed for comfort and enjoyed walking the halls in their jammies and robes. On Tuesday, students dressed in their most colorful, eccentric outfits for Wacky Tacky Tuesday. Polka dots, stripes and silly hairstyles filled the hallways. Wednesday was a first for Saint Mary's: an all-school field trip to the National Aquarium in Baltimore!

Throughout the week, the entire school participated in a service project, which benefited "Cup of Joe", a prepackaged breakfast program that serves men and women in

Catholic Charities' shelters. Students brought in donations of food, fruit and juice during the week and joined together on Thursday to assemble items into individual bags. The school also celebrated the day with a School Mass. Friday, the end of our Catholic Schools Week, was a half-day, which included a Seaside Carnival and dance party!

Catholic Schools Week was a wonderful and fun experience for the whole school. We are so fortunate to be surrounded by such dedicated members of our congregation.

OPT

## Celebrating Black History Month

By Kathleen Morris

One of the many amazing things about Saint Mary's is the diversity of the school and parish community, which we celebrate every day. February is a special month for many reasons, but most important is the observance of Black History Month. Saint Mary's recognizes Black History Month with a number of projects and learning activities.

Black History Month honors and highlights the integral contributions of African Americans to our nation's history. The celebration of Black History Month began in 1926 as "Negro History Week," and was the creation of Carter G. Woodson, an African American scholar, publisher, educator and historian. Dr. Carter G. Woodson spent his life

educating African Americans about the achievements and accomplishments of their ancestors. Black History Month officially became a month-long celebration in 1976. The month of February was chosen, as it coincides with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Saint Mary's celebrated Black History Month with many education-focused projects throughout their curriculum. The Pre-K to second graders learned about influential African American figures that have impacted our world, through story books, learning activities, media presentations and videos. First grade celebrated Black history month by learning about the lives of famous Black Americans.

Continued on page 18

<p><b>St. Mary's Parish</b> 520 Veirs Mill Road Rockville, MD <b>Msgr. Robert Amey, Pastor</b> 301-424-5550</p>	<p><b>St. Mary's School</b> <b>Mrs. Debby Eisel, Principal</b> 301-762-4179 <b>Mrs. Debby Eisel, Parish Editor</b> 301-762-4179</p>
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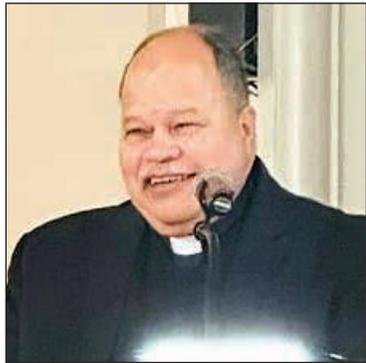
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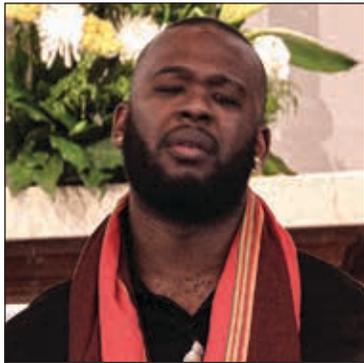
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# Musical Meditations on Black History Month



Reflections and prayers provided by Msgr. Eddie Tolentino, pastor. Photo taken by John Robertson



Musical selections by Jim Williams and Victoria Williams accompanied by Dr. Scot Hawkins and Jacques Sangwa, violin. Photos taken by Edwin Mendez



By Mary Ann Robertson and Janice Hamilton Outtz

The Music Ministry of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church presented a program in honor of Black History Month on February 5. The

program, “Musical Meditations on African American History Month”, was comprised of music, readings, prayer, and meditation. Included were songs sung by Victoria Williams, soprano, and Jim Williams, bass, accompanied by Dr.

Scot Hawkins. Also included, were wonderful, uplifting violin solos by Jacques Sangwa. The readings presented included poetry from Amanda Gorman and Langston Hughes as well as writings from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks,

and Howard Thurman read by John Webster and Adaeze Enekeuchi. Deacon Curtis Rodney provided readings from scripture. Msgr. Eddie Tolentino, pastor, led with an opening prayer and a reflection. The final blessing was provided

by all the clergy present—Father Carlos de Rodrigo, Deacon Oscar Mendez, Deacon Curtis Rodney and Msgr. Tolentino. It was a spiritually uplifting afternoon for all who attended.

OPT



Msgr. Tolentino leads the attendees in a discussion.

## St. Michael's Embarks Upon Five Synodal Meetings

By: Lisa Taylor

On February 11, 2023, St. Michael's welcomed Dr. Jeannine Marino and Deborah McDonald from the Archdiocese of Washington who are responsible for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns to embark upon a five series of synodal meetings at St. Michael's. The first session led by Dr. Marino and Ms. McDonald was “Encounter the Lord Through Worship and Evangelization.”

The second session on “Accompaniment” was held on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Other sessions include a focus on Involving the

Whole Community (March 5), Send/Service (March 15), and Vision and Planning (March 19). All the sessions are bi-lingual in English and Spanish, and all parishioners are invited to participate in these ongoing efforts. The purpose of the synodal meetings is to continue to listen to our church community through prayer and reflection. Each session includes a notetaker for each table. These notes will be used to write a report to the Pastor about the strengths and weaknesses of St. Michael's and inform the church's strategic plan.

OPT

## VOLUNTEER

Con't from page 6

the Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Owings, to introduce the archdiocesan Twinning Program to Beauzile's adopted spiritual home, thus inspiring the young woman to know and serve her homeland in a way she couldn't have imagined.

Beauzile became one of several people in the archdiocese who followed Labuda's example in serving the people of Haiti – a love born out of St. Francis of Assisi's 35-year-old twinning partnership with The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in rural Léon. On January 22, a Haiti Benefit Concert to raise monies for the Haiti Medical Mission not only featured a silent auction of Haitian artwork, wood carvings, and house wares that Pat collected and left to be auctioned off before retiring last year to Florida with her husband – it drew at least three Haiti ministry coordinators who were inspired by her example.

“I could not have missed this,”

Beauzile said on January 22. “It's my tribute to Pat.”

For decades, Labuda served as St. Francis of Assisi's key ministry leader with Haiti, making the first visit to Léon with then-pastor Fr. Donald Worch and parish staff, transporting medicines and medical supplies to the impoverished country on subsequent trips, and building a network of medical personnel who committed traveling regularly to Haiti. Over more than 100 trips to Haiti, she became fluent in Creole and learned how to get things done.

The partnership between St. Francis of Assisi and Conversion of St. Paul's parishes has now yielded a medical clinic, two schools and a coffee-selling initiative, which has helped Haitians direct their future.

Besides working alongside her Haitian brothers and sisters, Pat regularly attended meetings of the Archdiocese of Washington Haiti Committee in Washington DC. She helped connect pastors and people like Beauzile to Haitian parishes in need. In 2008, Jesus the Good Shepherd joined forces with Our

Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Grande Cayemitte, according to the parish's web site. In subsequent years, Jesus the Good Shepherd parishioners built a new church for the chapel in Anse du Nord; built a solar panel system for a health center in Pointe Sable and repaired the main church after damage sustained by Hurricane Matthew, Beauzile said.

Dan Cardile, the current Haiti ministry coordinator at St. Francis, said he has learned many lessons from Labuda. How to remain undeterred in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. How to walk in solidarity with the poor instead of trying to fix them. How to embrace the notion that we are not the Master Builder, but laborers in the field trying to make things a little better.

“[On January 22], several of us from all over the archdiocese stood together and agreed that none of us would have ever gone to Haiti but for Pat,” Cardile wrote in an e-mail. “We are all like Pat Labuda's little chickadees.”

OPT

## HISTORY

Con't from page 17

They learned about NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson and acted like “computers” to complete math problems. First graders also read about how brave Jackie Robinson was when he became the first Black baseball player to play in the Major Leagues. They read stories, watched videos and completed art projects on several important figures each week. Second graders selected and researched various African Americans that overcame tremendous hardship and obstacles to make a lasting impact on the world. They presented their historical figure to the class using posters or google slides.

Saint Mary's music director, Jessica Brunk, guided students in third-eighth grades to research different African American musicians. Students explored these musicians and their histories, made presentations, and presented their findings to the class. Students displayed a “walk through museum” at the end of the month for the whole school to enjoy and learn more about these musicians. Many of our teachers played the music of these amazing artists throughout the day. The students really enjoyed this project, as they learned about some famous names, including: Billie Holiday, Ray Charles and Jimi Hendrix, as well as some lesser-known artists, such as: Bessie Smith, Scott Joplin and Marian Anderson. These artists helped pave the way for many of

the modern musicians our students listen to today!

The Middle School English Language Arts and Reading classes read and worked on several different books that honor African Americans. These books helped to educate students on the impacts that these individuals have created on our world today.

We celebrated Black History Month in February to highlight the countless contributions of African Americans to the world. Saint Mary's strives to honor the diversity of its community by continuing to educate students on the contributions made by Americans of all different backgrounds throughout the school year.

OPT

### St. Michael's Parish

805 Wayne Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD

Rev. Msgr. Eddie Tolentino,  
Pastor

301-589-1155

Sheri Golden,  
OPT Editor

301-589-1155



Our Parish  
Times Online

# Msgr. John Enzler Special

## Saying "Yes": an Interview with Msgr. Enzler

By Amy Sapenoff Hamm

The history of Msgr. John Enzler's life is a history of saying "yes." He was shaped and formed by the "yes" of his parents, by the "yes" of happy and faithful priests that he witnessed in his childhood, and by his willingness to say "yes" within his own vocation as a priest, allowing the Holy Spirit to operate through him.

Msgr. Enzler grew up in the Archdiocese of Washington, a parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes in Bethesda. He was one of 13 children, the oldest boy. His parents were people of faith, serving as witnesses to each of their children of what it meant to live a faith-filled life. As Msgr. Enzler described it, "they exemplified the beauty that comes from living what is true." As parents, they saw the task of raising good Catholic children to be their own unique contribution to building the Church. This, of course, implied sacrifices. Msgr. Enzler noted, "My parents paid for over 200 years of Catholic education!"

It was in these formative years as a student at Our Lady of Lourdes that Msgr. Enzler first began thinking of the priesthood. He was not alone, sharing that, "in those days most boys at Our Lady of Lourdes considered the



priesthood, everyone saw happy priests who were truly inspirational." He can remember playing football with some of the parish priests during recess and watching how they interacted with the children. "They were happy and joyful." In addition to the parish priests he encountered, Msgr. Enzler also had a number of priests within his own family that served as examples and planted the initial seed of curiosity about his own vocation.

In the early years of discernment, he kept his desire for a vocation quiet, resisting the idea of going on discernment retreats and exploring the question further. However, eventually, he had to say "yes." This openness brought him to Mount St. Mary's, where he was again inspired by the example of the teachers that he had, seeing that they were forming pastoral, honorable men to become priests.

From the initial intuition of a priestly vocation, the "yes" that Msgr. Enzler gave to Christ and to His Church has flourished. In the 50 years since his ordination, Msgr. Enzler has served as a pastor for 27 years, worked in youth ministry for over a decade, and now is concluding his most recent chapter as the President and CEO of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Washington.

In each of those capacities, Msgr. Enzler was determined to serve God by saying "yes." Considering the work of the past 50 years, Msgr. Enzler reflected that, "All priests need to say "yes" to everything that we can, only saying no when we really need to. Saying "yes" to people helps us to build a habit of being open and indicates a willingness to try to do what Jesus would do. In

my experience, it almost always starts with listening to people and offering to accompany them in their questions, problems, and with their ideas. I have seen it many times, that if you say "yes," you create a path where you can invite others to participate in the life of the Church."

The stakes can be high. Offering the example of a parish priest who is reluctant to marry a couple that is not registered in their parish, he noted, "this can leave people to feel that the Church isn't there for them when they need it. It closes doors when we turn people away. First, they might go to a different parish, but pretty soon they will decide to leave the Church all together." Msgr. Enzler has personally tackled this problem by saying as many as four weddings in one day!

"We need to offer the sacraments to as many people as possible. Jesus would go to the margins to make sure that people's needs were met. I want to share this attitude with others, because when we say "yes," people's hearts are open."

This habit of saying "yes" has not only cultivated relationships and friendships among the faithful, but has also concretely led to

Continued on page 22

## Father John, a Man of Hope, Strengthened Lives and Communities

By Joan Fowler Brown

Msgr. John Enzler, Father John, has blessed Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and the community we serve in many ways. He brought his vision of service and his gift for fundraising, which allowed this important organization growth and sustainability.

Father John had a vision to make a real difference in the lives of those in need. He wanted to make sure that, while band aids have their place when someone is hurting, real change happens with in-depth care.

Continued on page 47



Father John at St. Maria's Meals, which is held weekly in front of Catholic Charities' office on G Street NW.

## Six Degrees of Father John

By Caitlin Chalke, Friend of Father John, Director of Communications at The Woods Academy, Catholic Charities Board Member, Co-Founder of 83.33 Society, former Co-Chair Enzler Society

Who needs Kevin Bacon when you have Father John?!

At the end of February, Father John was celebrated at the Christ Child Society Gala where



Father John with Caitlin and Chris Chalke at the baptism of their son, Jack.

there were over 300 people in attendance to support the Christ Child mission and our beloved Father John. To truly grasp the depth of Father John and his relationships, the MC for the night asked the crowd if Father John had married them or someone in their family; had baptized a child or grandchild in their

Continued on page 47



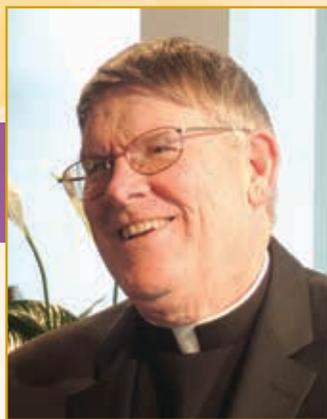
- Msgr. Enzler -

Congratulations on your special anniversary and your well-earned retirement!

Thank you for your many years of service and for touching so many lives through your ministry: families, schools, parishes, and especially the people served at St. Ann's Center and Catholic Charities.



# Congratulations!



*The Ignatian Volunteer Corps  
of the National Capital Area*

Salutes Our Partner and Friend

**Msgr. John Enzler**

on the

Occasion of His Retirement as  
President/CEO of Catholic Charities  
of the Archdiocese of Washington



## ENZLER

*Con't from page 1*

and then, for the last 12 years as president and CEO of Catholic Charities.

I feel like my pending transition out of full-time work as head of Catholic Charities has become a bit of a retirement tour. There have been multiple events, including with Potomac Community Resources and the Christ Child Society. There's this issue of *Our Parish Times*, and there are more events to come, including our annual Catholic Charities gala in just a few weeks.

And I haven't even gotten to the 50th anniversary of my ordination yet! (May 12)

All of this seems to be coming together in a whirlwind of events and parties and celebrations. I am touched, honored and humbled by the kind words and the tributes, which I think all speak of love – my love for the priesthood and the people I serve, the love they show me, and ultimately God's love for every single one of us.

In trying to live that love, the foundation of my priesthood early on became trying my best to say "yes" to people as often as possible. In doing so, I have received much more than I have given. It is a wonderful blessing to know many people in our area and to be involved in their lives.

At the Christ Child event, the emcee asked those in attendance to raise their hands if I had baptized them or their children or grandchildren. About one-third of the 300 people raised their hands. He asked the same question about marriage, and again about 100 hands went up. And finally, he asked how many had loved ones whose funerals I had celebrated. Same show of hands.

I know my calendar has been pretty full much of these last 50 years, but it still amazed me to see and realize how many people

had invited me into their lives, often at the most important moments. I realized again the power of saying yes, which I believe is what God asks of me and what Jesus would also do.

Jesus would say yes to those who come to him in need. He would say yes to people's hopes and dreams for themselves and their families. He would say yes to those who want to be close to the Lord through his Church and the grace of the sacraments.

Thank you to publishers Larry, Kathleen and Amy Hamm for the privilege of being honored here in *Our Parish Times*. Thank you also to all who have read my columns through the years and continue to enjoy the gift of our local newspaper in Montgomery County. I love that *Our Parish Times* connects us as we learn about important happenings at our parishes and rejoice in the good news of our local Church in action. Many of the articles are about those who have said yes.

I pray that God will continue to bless all of us in our vocations and our ministries toward others. I also pray for God's guidance as I continue my priesthood in retirement. I actually prefer the word "transition." I will step down in June as CEO and President of Catholic Charities, but I will continue to help this wonderful agency and its people who do such amazing work. I will also serve as chaplain at my alma mater, St. John's College High School, and I will continue to live and work at St. Bartholomew's celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments.

Life will change in some ways, but in other ways it will be much the same. I will continue to live my vocation to the priesthood and the work God calls me to do. I will continue trying my best to say yes to God and to my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It can require sacrifice at times, but I always receive more than I give. And as I like to say, the benefits are out of this world!

OPT

# CONGRATULATIONS

to

## MONSIGNOR JOHN J. ENZLER

*Our Former Pastor and Good Friend*

on your

## 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

*of Ordination to the Priesthood*



SHRINE OF THE MOST  
BLESSED SACRAMENT

SHRINE OF THE  
MOST BLESSED  
SACRAMENT

**SHORT**

*Con't from page 1*

appear in this edition of OPT. He is worthy of all of them. I won't risk repeating them. Surely, the humble and servant priest prefers otherwise. We best honor him by reinvesting ourselves and our parishes to the mission of service he began fifty years ago. Here are my suggestions to fill his heart with joy and gratitude. **Hope you will say yes!**

First, Fr John loves the Church, in particular parish life. Above all other roles as priest, Fr John is a servant pastor. Whether he is advising Cardinals and bishops, meeting with the rich and powerful, or running the largest nonprofit service organization in the region, Fr John always has time for pastoral ministry. Though often assigned major Archdiocese-wide jobs, he has chosen to live and serve in parish rectories. He baptizes, marries, counsels, and buries as many as most priests assigned fulltime to parishes. Aware of the Church's human frailty, Fr. John chooses its Divine Leadership to inspire his priestly life. He is guided by certainty that the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us. His priestly purpose is to inspire us to recognize and respond to the Holy Spirit's presence. **In honor of Fr John, let's strengthen the Church by building strong parishes with inspired Catholics.**

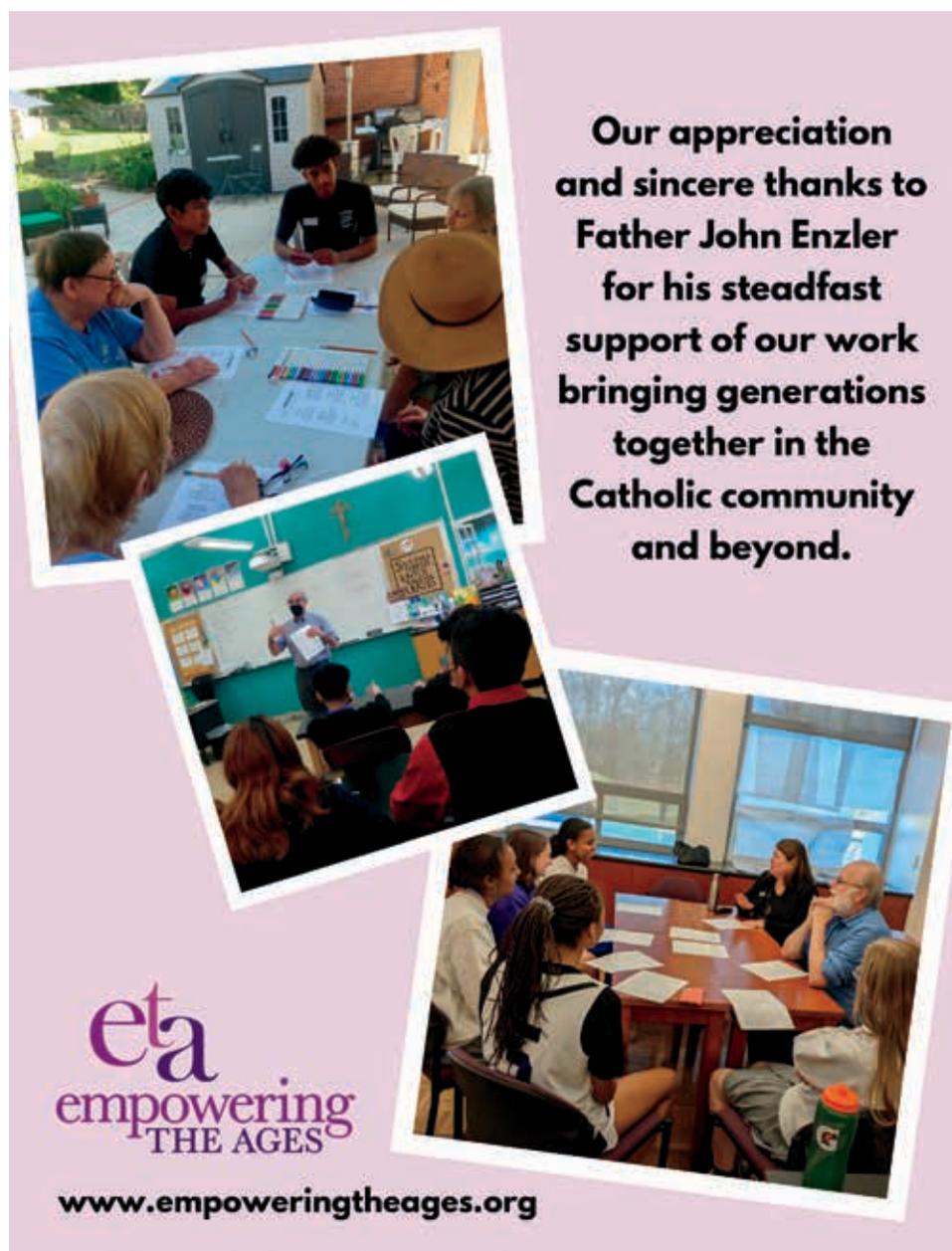
Second, Fr John's priesthood is integrated into every dimension of life and particularly marked by his enduring commitment to the least among us, the poor, the marginalized, the unborn, and vulnerable. Known for his personal humility, he is relentless in his affection and service to those in need. Whatever the cry of the poor, Fr John is obedient. Wherever there are two or more Catholics working to care the marginalized, Fr. John is there to support their work. As a pastor and President of

Catholic Charities, he demonstrates the local parish is the rock upon which the Church must build its preference for the poor. He engages local parishes in feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, welcoming immigrants, caring for the frail elderly and opens the Church's spiritual and community opportunities to people of all abilities. **Committing ourselves and our parishes to the Christian principles of gracious, loving, inclusive and obedient service to those who are poor, vulnerable and those who are marginalized is an excellent way to thank Fr John for his fifty years of service.**

Finally, to honor Fr John's enduring service to the Church and to those in need, consider a renewed commitment to sustain and support the charitable and advocacy work of the Church in parishes and through Catholic Charities by selflessly sharing time, talent, and treasure. Generously sharing ourselves is at the heart of Fr John's example and leadership. Money is, of course, essential to the work of Catholic Charities. Critically essential is the hands-on labor done in the vineyards, our parishes. To respond to Christ's call, parish activities need teachers, ministry participants, advocates for the poor, CYO coaches and volunteers. Non-profit service organizations, some of which Fr John helped create and sustain including Potomac and Upper County Community Resources; Victory Housing and Youth Centers; the CYO; Crossing Paths Intergenerational; the Shepherd Foundation Scholarship Fund; and Mercy Health Clinic require people with time and specific talents to effectively serve. **Thank Fr John by sharing your time, talent and treasure with your parish and other organizations addressing the needs of the poor and marginalized.**

Thank you, Fr. John and God Bless  
 Chuck Short, cshort5@verizon.net  
 Kindness Today

OPT



**Our appreciation and sincere thanks to Father John Enzler for his steadfast support of our work bringing generations together in the Catholic community and beyond.**

*eta*  
 empowering THE AGES

[www.empoweringtheages.org](http://www.empoweringtheages.org)



**CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY**  
 OF WASHINGTON, DC  
 WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

Congratulations to Fr. John for 50 years in the priesthood!  
 The DC Chapter of the Christ Child Society thanks you for all that you do for our community!



Reaching over 10,000 children and families each year

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*Thank you and  
Blessings Msgr. Enzler...*

for your dedication to our common home and for your vision and your leadership that led to the solar project for Catholic Charities. Through these utility costs savings, Charities has more resources to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and counsel the lost. Many blessings in your retirement!

With joy and gratitude – your friends at



## YES

*Con't from page 19*

the development of a myriad of programs and initiatives that, rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, have both provided for the daily needs and instilled hope in millions of people.

Reading through the pages of *Our Parish Times*, one learns about programs such as So Others Might Eat (SOME), Cup of Joe, Maria's Meals, and Mercy Clinic. These are just a few of the initiatives that Msgr. Enzler has helped to establish. Now, in addition to serving people in need, they also become important ways for Catholic schools and parishes to teach about the corporal works of mercy and to develop a heart of service within their communities.

In reflecting on the origin of these programs, Msgr. Enzler echoed an earlier sentiment, that saying "yes" to starting something new usually starts with listening. "One of the programs that we started that has been the most generative is Potomac Community Resources. This began when I was approached by my friend Joan Sullivan. She noted that there was a large population in our communities that was being underserved, young people with intellectual and developmental differences. PCR now serves a vast network with thoughtful and enriching programming, but it began just by listening to Joan and saying "yes.""

Additional initiatives have been made possible by others saying yes to a proposal from Msgr. Enzler and the staff at Catholic Charities. "Compass is a newer program that helps to tackle the problem of hunger at its roots, offering a surgical solution instead of just a band aid. We provide tuition for participants to earn their Master of Social Work

degree from Catholic University in exchange for offering Catholic Charities several years of service after graduation. So far we have trained 15 social workers in four years. The social workers want to stay with us, they have small caseloads of only 12 clients, helping them to actually build relationships and tackle problems. This is what fights poverty, instills hope, and changes lives. This program works not only because we said "yes" in taking on this challenge, but CUA said "yes" to us too!"

To summarize the experience of the past 50 years as a priest, Msgr. Enzler simply said that "saying "yes" allows God to step in and take over."

He does acknowledge that retirement might mean saying "no" a bit more often, but is quick to clarify that he sees this next step as a transition more than a retirement. He will continue to be in residence at St. Bartholomew's in Bethesda and will begin working as a chaplain at St. John's College High School. As part of that role he will say daily mass and have space in the counseling office to meet with students. He also anticipates that he will be saying a lot of funerals.

Being more in touch with parishioners and students on a daily basis, as he was in his days as parish pastor, will be an opportunity to experience again what he has been learning since the early days of his ordination, "it is the people who form the priest, just as much as the priests form the people. The Church is all of us, the clergy is part of it, but the entire community together, that is the Church."

We thank God for the gift of Msgr. Enzler's "yes" 50 years ago and for the many opportunities that he has created (and will continue to generate) to form each other in this beautiful Catholic community we share.

OPT

## THE ARCHBISHOP CARROLL HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY EXTENDS



CONGRATULATIONS AND PRAYERFUL BEST WISHES  
TO  
*MONSIGNOR JOHN ENZLER*

ON HIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AS A PRIEST!



Congratulations, Father John, on the  
**50<sup>th</sup>**  
 ANNIVERSARY  
 of your Ordination.

The members, directors, staff, and volunteers of Potomac Community Resources are grateful to you, our Founding Chairman, for your visionary leadership, encouragement, and support.

Your personal devotion to our members ensures that PCR remains a person-centered, welcoming and caring community where the dignity and worth of each person is recognized and respected.



**POTOMAC COMMUNITY RESOURCES, Inc.**  
 SERVING TEENS AND ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES  
 SINCE 1994  
 Msgr. John J. Enzler, Chairman · Brian P. Sullivan, President



A 501(c)(3) organization recognized by the Catalogue for Philanthropy as "one of the best" small charities in the region.

# Join Us in Honoring Father John



Under the leadership of Msgr. John J. Enzler, Catholic Charities has expanded social services, improving the lives of our neighbors who live in poverty. As he marks the 50th anniversary of his ordination and retires as president and CEO, we invite you to join us in honoring him for his work and commitment to giving a hand up to those in need.

In his honor, if you would like to, you can make a gift to ensure that his legacy of service lives on. All donors will receive an invitation to join us virtually at the Catholic Charities Gala on April 1.

We also invite you to share a short note of congratulations to Father John (100 words maximum) by sending your message in an email to [CCEvents@cc-dc.org](mailto:CCEvents@cc-dc.org) by April 14.

Make a gift at  
[www.CatholicCharitiesDC.org/FrJohn50th](http://www.CatholicCharitiesDC.org/FrJohn50th)





**Christ the King**  
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Silver Spring

**Holy Cross**  
4900 Strathmore Avenue  
Garrett Park

**Holy Redeemer**  
9715 Summit Avenue  
Kensington

**Mary of Nazareth**  
14131 Seneca Road  
Darnestown

**Church of the Resurrection**  
3315 Greencastle Road  
Burtonsville

**Shrine of St. Jude**  
12701 Veirs Mill Road  
Rockville

**St. Bartholomew**  
6900 River Road  
Bethesda

**St. Bernadette**  
70 University Blvd E.  
Silver Spring

**St. John the Evangelist**  
10103 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring

**St. Martin of Tours**  
201 S. Frederick Avenue  
Gaithersburg

**St. Mary's Catholic Church**  
520 Veirs Mill Road  
Rockville

**St. Mary's Parish**  
18230 Barnesville Road  
Barnesville

**St. Michael the Archangel**  
805 Wayne Avenue  
Silver Spring



## Congratulations, Father John!

All the participants in the news network of *Our Parish Times* join in thanking Fr. John Enzler for 50 years of saying “yes” and in wishing him all the best as he continues to practice the faith in action *ad multos annos*.

**Mother Seton**  
19951 Father Hurley Blvd  
Germantown

**Our Lady of Lourdes**  
7500 Pearl Street  
Bethesda

**Our Lady of Mercy**  
9200 Kentsdale Drive  
Potomac

**Our Lady of the Visitation**  
14139 Seneca Road  
Darnestown

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

**St. Elizabeth**  
917 Montrose Road  
Rockville

**St. Francis of Assisi**  
6701 Muncaster Mill Road  
Derwood

**St. Francis International**  
1500 St. Camillus Drive  
Silver Spring

**St. Jane de Chantal**  
9701 Old Georgetown Road  
Bethesda

**St. John Neumann**  
9000 Warfield Drive  
Gaithersburg

**St. Patrick Catholic Church**  
4101 Norbeck Road  
Rockville

**St. Paul Catholic Church**  
9240 Damascus Road  
Damascus

**St. Peter's Parish**  
2900 Olney-Sandy Spring Road  
Olney

**St. Raphael Catholic Church**  
1513 Dunster Road  
Rockville

**The Woods Academy**  
801 Greentree Road  
Bethesda

The Mount St. Mary's Seminary &  
Mount St. Mary's University Communities

# Congratulate



REV. MSGR. JOHN J. ENZLER, C'73



on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and his retirement  
as president and CEO of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Washington!

– Ad Multos Annos –



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UNIVERSITY



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SEMINARY

16300 Old Emmitsburg Road • Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727  
msmary.edu • seminary.msmary.edu



## **WE CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF MSGR. JOHN ENZLER'S FAITHFUL SERVICE**

**Victory Housing would like to express our deepest gratitude to Msgr. John Enzler for his decades of service as a vital part of our Board of Directors from 1999-2017.**

Your mission-driven life of kindness, compassion and community service has impacted countless lives.

**Wishing you peace and serenity  
in your retirement.**



CONGRATULATIONS

**Monsignor  
John J. Enzler**

*Proud member of the  
St. John's College High School  
Class of 1965*

**Thank you for your service  
to Catholic Charities  
Archdiocese of Washington**



**ST. JOHN'S**

COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL | Est 1851

# *Congratulations, Fr. John & Mr. English!*



May God continue to bless you both.  
We thank you for your leadership,  
dedication, and service to the children  
and families of St. Bartholomew parish.



ST. BARTHOLOMEW  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**Congratulations and Prayerful Best Wishes to Monsignor John Enzler as he celebrates 50 years of priesthood serving God's people in the Archdiocese of Washington.**

**Ad Multos Annos!**



**From parishioners and friends at  
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, Potomac, Maryland**

**Monsignor Charles V. Antonicelli, Pastor  
Reverend Joseph R. Cwik, Parochial Vicar**



**OUR LADY OF MERCY  
POTOMAC, MARYLAND**



## CHURCH OF THE LITTLE FLOWER

Bethesda, MD

*Congratulations*

**Msgr. John Enzler**

on the 50th anniversary of his  
ordination to the priesthood and  
retirement from his post as president  
and CEO of Catholic Charities

*Monsignor Peter Vaghi, the  
clergy, religious, and parishioners  
of the Church of the Little Flower  
offer our joyful congratulations,  
warmest wishes and prayers to  
Monsignor John Enzler*

*Ad multos annos!*



*Thank You!*

**Loras College celebrates  
50 YEARS of Father John's  
service and dedication  
to our community.**

—

Alma Mater · Loras College  
Class of 1969



**LORAS COLLEGE**



*Congratulations!*

**Monsignor Enzler, on your 50th Anniversary!**

From all of us at The Shrine of St. Jude  
and St. Jude Regional Catholic School



Holy Cross

# A Magical, Unforgettable Experience: Feel the Opera!

Beautiful strains of music filled the air of Holy Cross Church on Wednesday, March 1 where the entire school body was treated to the extraordinary talents of the Maryland Lyric Opera. In a program, entitled "Feel the Opera," students, faculty and staff were transported.

Holy Cross music teacher and musical director, Dr. Mariana Mihai-Zoeter, introduced each performance to provide context. The show opened with a duet by soprano Melissa Mino and baritone Javier Arrey from Puccini's *Pasquale*. It was followed by "The Meditation," a violin intermezzo from the opera, *Thaïs*, by Messenet, a violin solo performed by Laura Knutson, that brought tears to the eye. An aria performed by Javier Arrey from Mozart's *Figaro* lightened the mood with the accompanied comic antics of Cherubino, played by tenor Yi Li who returned as Prince Calaf to sing "Nessum Dorma" from Puccini's *Turandot*. The final performance included scenes from *La*



Violinist, Laura Knutson, had the audience mesmerized as she played "The Meditation," an intermezzo from the opera, *Thaïs*, by Messenet

*Boheme*, another of Puccini's masterpieces. It brought together all of the incredibly talented musicians: Ms. Mino singing an aria as the character Mussetta followed by a duet by Mr. Arrey and Mr. Li as the characters Marcello and Rodolfo. Pianist Brad Clark, and violinist, Laura Knutson, accompanied each of the performances.

*Continued on page 38*



The musicians take a bow to enthusiastic applause after an incredible performance at Holy Cross. (from left to right, Laura Knutson, Brad Clark, Javier Arrey, Melissa Mino, and Yi Li).

## SODALITY

*Con't from page 15*

communion with others and that sin cuts us off from that life-giving communion. He reminded us that we have been created and redeemed to be God's children and coming to full stature in Christ takes time, a lifetime, and involves a struggle against our weakness. He communicated that Lent is a time for us to venture out of ourselves into greater communion with God and others bringing us closer to the goal of becoming who God has destined

us to be. He revealed that this won't be achieved in one Lenten season, but we can think of Lent as the beginning of a journey to be lived in hope that one day we will be set free and become children of God. The women of the parish greatly appreciated Father Clyne's talk and the discussion that followed. They departed with an opportunity to reflect on how they can use their freedom to continue their efforts to become children of God. The Sodality will continue their Lenten Service by hosting one of the parish's Soups, Saints, and Stations that are every Friday in Lent.

OPT



# St. Jude Regional Catholic School News



On February 13, Mrs. Jeanne Donatelli, Principal of St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCs), along with one SJRCs student, Bethel Yosef, and Bethel's mother, Ms. Habte, (pictured above) addressed the Maryland General Assembly on the importance of not cutting the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today—BOOST—program and removing the words "Phase out of new families" applying for the program. Several others were there representing various private schools. "It was an enlightening experience, and SJRCs like to thank Garrett O'Day, Deputy Director of Maryland Catholic Conference, for his guidance and support of private schools," added Mrs. Donatelli.



On March 2, three students from St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCs) along with their History teacher, Mr. Miller, represented SJRCs at Maryland Advocacy Day for Non-Public Schools at the Maryland State House. The students spoke about the importance of the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today, known as BOOST, program as well as keeping it fully funded. They met with the Chief of Staff for Senator Kramer and State Delegate Vaughan Stewart as well as with a staffer in the office of State Delegate Bonnie Cullison. It was a wonderful experience for all involved as they were there with several other Catholic Schools, and also a great learning experience of how government works. Pictured from left to right are the SJRCs students who attended: Ajak Parek, Abel Yosef, and Susana Lopez-Chavarriga.



The St. Jude Regional Catholic School Rosary Club is back meeting in person every Thursday at 3:15 in the Shrine of St. Jude. St. Jude Thaddeus...pray for us. "There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot solve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary." Sr. Lucia of Fatima. Pictured (bottom row, left to right) are students Vedica, Michelle, Emma; (middle row, left to right): Amalia and Isabella; and (back row, left to right): Valario, Layla, Sefanit, Susana, and Giuliana.

## SJRCs Class of 2023 Learns to "Love Like That"

By Michelle Ardillo

St. Jude Regional Catholic School's Class of 2023 attended their eighth-grade overnight retreat at Claggett Retreat Center in Adamstown, MD, on March 2 and 3. Retreat leader Matt Avery, the Coordinator of Youth Leadership for the Archdiocese of Washington, based his talks and activities around the theme "Love Like That." Using music, slides, and passages from scripture, Mr. Avery helped the students think deeply about their relationship with God and how to love and live like Jesus.

While on retreat, the 23 eighth graders confirmed their reputation as a caring and compassionate class of young men and women, who were well-mannered and respectful throughout their retreat. Mr. Avery worked closely with Ms. Lucy Young, SJRCs upper school religion teacher, to balance meaningful talks with team-building activities and plenty of outdoor free time. Time was also spent journaling and writing letters to themselves to be received next year at this time.

Chaperones on the retreat included Mrs. Michelle Ardillo, eighth-



Students gather on the steps of the Claggett Center

grade homeroom teacher, and Mr. Jorge Velasquez, father of eighth-grader Jorge Velasquez. Highlights of the retreat included adoration and confession with Fr. Jorge Ubau, Parochial Vicar at the Shrine of St. Jude, followed by s'mores at a bonfire before lights out. Fr. Jorge returned on the second day to celebrate Mass with the students and adults, which included the blessing and distribution of crosses to the students as a tangible reminder of their time on retreat. May God continue to bless this wonderful class!

OPT

### Shrine of St. Jude Parish

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Rockville, MD

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St. Jude Regional  
Catholic School  
Jeanne Donatelli, Principal  
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**Church of the Resurrection Parish**  
3315 Greencastle Road  
Burtonsville, MD

**Rev. John M. Barry,  
Pastor**  
301-288-4662

Twenty-three of our young parishioners received the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time on Saturday, March 4. A beautiful and special day!

## Church of the Resurrection Prepares for Lent

The Church of the Resurrection has many opportunities to help their parishioners live a prayerful Lenten season. Parishioners were invited to attend a special event featuring Irish Tenor Mark Forrest and the clergy of the parish for a Lenten Evening of Prayer with music, meditations and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. The "Come Walk with Me" Eucharist Evening Program was held on Sunday March 12, at 4 p.m. Forrest, who was born in Dublin, Ireland studied music at The Catholic University of American. After touring with Broadway shows, he brought his talent to The Faith and Family Foundation, an organization he started with his wife Muriel. The goal of the Foundation is to support and encourage families with special needs.

There are also a number of ongoing initiatives for community members to take part in throughout the Lent. The parish website promotes Hallow's Pray40 community challenge, described as an invitation, "to make this Lent most transformative by joining Hallow's Pray40 community challenge with millions of Catholics around the world journeying through the *Imitation of Christ*.

Hallow's Pray40 Challenge is the largest virtual prayer event in the world, with hundreds of thousands of Catholics praying together every day leading up to Easter." Prayer meditations will be led by world-famous Catholics, including actors Mark Wahlberg, Jonathan Roumie from *The Chosen*, and Jim Caviezel from *The Passion of the Christ*, host of the *Bible in a Year* podcast Fr. Mike Schmitz, and Rwandan genocide survivor Immaculée Ilibagiza." Parishioners should check out the parish website or Facebook page for more information.

The women of the parish are also invited to participate in a Women's Lenten Bible Study. Meetings are held on Tuesdays with both morning and evening times. The group is following a six-week Bible study prepared by Joan Watson, a Catholic speaker, writer, and podcaster. More information can be found on the website under the Adult Faith Enrichment Tab.

Finally, parishioners can also find Fr. Barry's homilies and blog posts containing Lenten reflection on the Gospels, the importance of fasting, and other topics.

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## Christ the King



Lenten focus on the Cross

## Lent: A Time of Introspection

By Liz Weiss, Parishioner

Lent is the season of self-reflection. We look inside and ask some tough questions. How can I open myself to God? How can I become a better "Child of God?" The church gives us some sugges-

tions – praying, meditating, being more generous to others. Father Steve, our pastor reminded us of the reason we cover the statues and holy pictures in the church during Lent. They are covered in purple cloth. Father Steve explained our focus is the cross. It is not covered, but draped in red. Why is it highlighted? The cross is the symbol of Christ dying to save us. Our thoughts are focused on Jesus and his sacrifice for us, to save us. His 40 days in the desert and giving himself up on the cross, dying to save us. Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality in his Resurrection. During the 40 days, let us be open to Christ, give service to the poor, do justice and be kind to others.

**Christ the King**  
2301 Colston Drive  
Silver Spring, MD  
301-495-2306

**Fr. Stephen J. Carter,  
Pastor**

**Paul Lamoreaux,  
OPT Editor**

## Remembering Special Parishioners

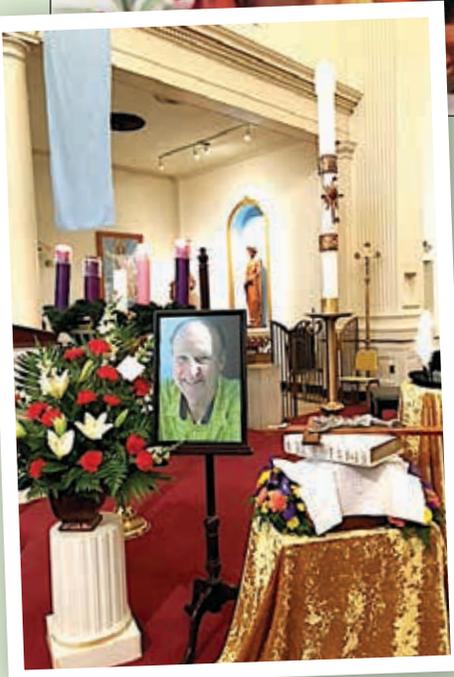
By Liz Weiss, Parishioner

In the last few months, our parish community has experienced a number of very sad deaths. Art Lord died after a short illness. He was an amazing volunteer, Eucharistic minister, participant in daily mass, husband, caregiver, and wonderful supporter of our church. Father Steve and many parishioners lost a good friend. Father described some of his conversations with Art about God, life, and immortality. Art's funeral was a special celebration of his amazing life. During his illness and after he died, a special group of parishioners rallied around his bereaved wife and assisted her with the overwhelming changes she faced. These parishioners modeled Christ's commandment to love others. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful role models in our Parish.

Several weeks ago, two of our parishioners died in a house fire.



Above, Hilda Quezada and Jesus Hernandez, her father



At left, picture of Art Lord displayed at his funeral

ful volunteer who greets everyone and runs our parish store in the back of the church. He lost his wife and father-in-law. The church community is helping him at this very sad time. The church was overflowing with supporters for the double funeral. Last week, his daughter spoke at the Masses to thank the church community for their support of the family in this terrible time. She said she understands why the parish community is so important to her dad. Jesus taught us to be supportive of each other. We are our brother's keeper.

Hilda Quezada and her father, Jesus Hernandez perished. Hilda was a hard-working volunteer and had a beautiful smile. Her husband Ofilio, is the wonder-

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# Save the Date: Montgomery County Commission on Aging Public Forum

Thursday, May 4 from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Activity Center at Bohrer Park, 506 S Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg

## Smart Home-Smarter Care: Technology that Supports Aging in Place

Advancements in technology enhance the lives of Montgomery County's growing population of older adults, especially those who want to age in place or need in-home services. At this Forum, learn about the technology applications and opportunities in areas like health and safety; communication and staying connected; and simplified living. Some of these technologies include motion sensors, voice recognition, artificial intelligence, and home modifications that enable better internet connectivity. The Forum will also enable participants to understand how to help expand the application of these technologies in the County.



## Engaging keynote speakers, panel discussion and Q & A will address:

- Technology needs of older adults to help them remain safe, connected, and independent.
- How technology can support the diverse older adult communities now and in the future.
- What's going on in Montgomery County and how the public and private sectors can work to support older adults and their caregivers.

## What to expect:

- Nationally recognized speakers
- Keynote and panel presentations
- Exhibit Hall with exhibitors displaying the latest in

- smart home technology
- No charge and free parking
- Lunch available

## Who should attend:

- Residents who are--or who want to--age in place and their caregivers
- Senior service providers, care managers, senior living specialists, hospitals
- County officials and staff
- Technology experts

Questions and to register contact Tremayne Jones at [Tremayne.Jones@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov](mailto:Tremayne.Jones@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov). **OPT**

## March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) and the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling are working together this month to increase public awareness of problem gambling and prevention, treatment, and recovery services available in Maryland.



While gambling often is considered a harmless form of entertainment, the rates for older adults' participation in gambling have jumped dramatically over the past several years, as have the problems associated with gambling. According to the NCPG, adults over 65 have identified gambling is a favorite social activity, surpassing movies, lunch, shopping, and golf as preferred social activities.

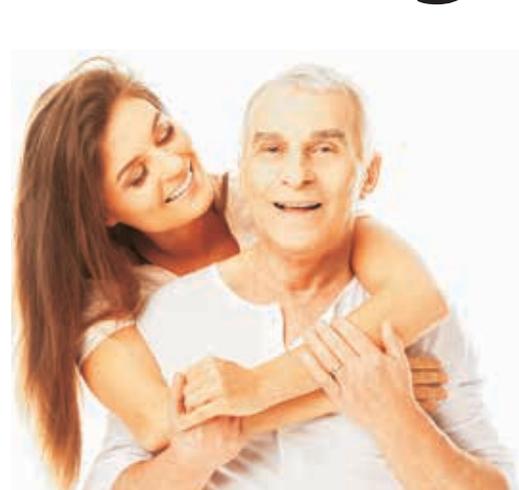
There are a number of reasons why seniors may be attracted to gambling. For starters, casinos often cater to senior citizens, offering bus transportation, free or discounted meals, special rewards and other prizes

that attract older individuals. In addition, gambling can provide a distraction to escape the loss of a spouse or a medical concern, or simply to help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Contact the Maryland Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER for information and resources available in your area. If you're not sure whether you or a loved one has a problem with gambling, take a brief NCPG screening test at: [www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/screening-tools/](http://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/screening-tools/)

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# Let's Talk Assisted Living.



It's a conversation we've been having with seniors and their families for over 30 years. At Victory Housing, you'll discover our simple and straight-forward approach to assisted living. From all-inclusive rates to individualized care, our award-winning communities offer the ideal setting to call home. **Call or visit us today, let's talk.**



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**Grace House**  
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**Byron House**  
Potomac • 301-469-9400

**Malta House**  
Hyattsville • 301-699-8600

**Raphael House**  
Rockville • 301-217-9116



[www.VictoryHousing.org](http://www.VictoryHousing.org)

A Non-Profit Organization





Our kindergarteners showed up in their best 100-day regalia!

## Age is just a Number!

**St. Elizabeth Parish**  
 917 Montrose Road Rockville, MD  
**Msgr. J. Wilfrid Parent, Pastor**  
 301-881-1380  
**St. Elizabeth School Principal**  
**Mary Penny**  
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**Heather Kerr, OPT Editor**  
 301-881-1824

The phrase ‘time flies when you’re having fun’ certainly rang true when our Kindergarteners celebrated 100 days of school. They showed up looking their best in wigs, mustaches, canes, glasses, and a few curlers too! These students proved that age is just a number!

**More St. Elizabeth News on Page 3**



We began our Lenten season by celebrating with an Ash Wednesday Mass for all St. Elizabeth students and faculty. May we all grow in faith during this time of reflection and prayer.

## St. Mary - Rockville

# Loving Our Valentine's Day Celebrations & Welcoming the Lenten Season

By Kathleen Morris

Love and kindness were in the air this February 14 at Saint Mary's, as students celebrated the feast day of Saint Valentine. Classes exchanged Valentine's Day cards, candy, and small toys with one another. Kindness was an underlying theme of this year's celebrations.

Valentine's Day is an excellent segue into the season of Lent, which is now upon us. At Saint



Above, sixth grade meets up with their second-grade little buddies to exchange Valentine's Day cards and treats!

At left, sixth grade shows off their wonderful red, pink, and white!

Below, the girls in first grade show how much they love Valentine's Day!



Mary's, the spirit of Valentine's Day can be felt every day. Everyone needs to feel loved and appreciated as a child of God and as a human being. Valentine's Day is an excellent time to honor those around us and remem-

Continued on page 38



Saint Mary's students pose as an all-school group during their field trip.

## A Day at the Aquarium

By Kathleen Morris

On February 1, Saint Mary's students from Kindergarten through Eighth Grade embarked on the first ever all-school field trip to the National Aquarium in Baltimore. Students, faculty and parent chaperones boarded several school buses to make the trek to Charm City to see the amazing displays that the Aquarium has to offer.

From the moment students entered the National Aquarium, they were whisked away into a Blacktip reef, which is a replication of an Indo-Pacific reef. The Blacktip reef featured massive rays, colorful fish and blacktip reef sharks. Students also explored an Amazon Rainforest exhibit and an interactive Chesapeake Bay exhibit that allowed them to touch horseshoe crabs and skates. A fan favor-

ite was the touchpool with moon jellies- many students went back for more than one chance to touch these incredible creatures. Other exhibits were Jellies Invasion, Dolphin Discovery and an Australian Extremes Exhibit.

While our Kindergarten through Eighth Graders were busy exploring the exhibits in Baltimore, Saint Mary's youngest students, the Pre-Kindergarteners, were also busy exploring another kind of "Aquarium". They were immersed in the magical world of "Aquarium", an interactive play at Imagination Stage in Bethesda. Our lucky Pre-K students sat right on the stage for the performance, which involved many of them helping with songs or props during the action!

Saint Mary's day at the aquarium was a highlight of their 2023 Catholic Schools Week celebration.

# 14U North Tournament Championship

The Our Lady of Lourdes 14U boys' team won the CYO Tournament Championship on Saturday, February 25, 2023. Lourdes played a very strong, tough, and determined Mary Of Nazareth team.

This is quite an accomplishment for Our Lady of Lourdes because they do not have tryouts or divide boys based upon talent. They are not a "select team"; they welcome every boy and work really hard to improve. Most importantly, they have spotless sportsmanship and teamwork.

OLOL held a lead for much of the game, but Mary of Nazareth stormed back to take the lead with under a minute left. In the closing seconds with Lourdes down by 2 points, Peter Capizzi raced the length of the floor and attacked the basket with a beautiful left-hand-



Above, the championship team celebrates with members of the OLOL school community!



At left, OLOL 14U boys pose with their trophy.

ed layup; it rimmed out. Fortunately, Luca Nicolacci clawed for an offensive rebound and fired a beautiful pass to Danny McGee as the clock rolled down to 5 seconds. Danny's shot was true the whole way - nothing but net! The cheers from the OLOL fans drowned out the buzzer.

Final score: OLOL 33 - MON 32.

What a fun game! Congratulations to Our Lady of Lourdes' 8th grade boys!

OPT

### Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

7500 Pearl Street  
Bethesda, MD

**Fr. Walsh**  
Pastor

301-654-1287

**Mr. David Long**  
Principal

301-654-5376

### St. Mary - Rockville

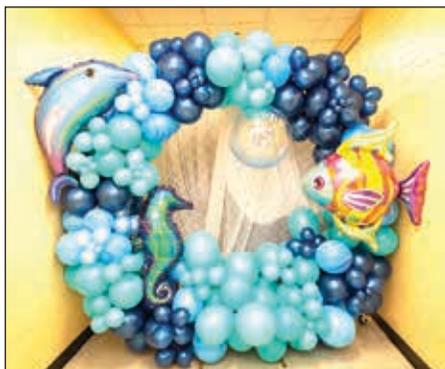


Here is a look at our fabulous Gala Team! We cannot thank you enough for the amount of hard work you put into making this Gala a great success!

## Under the Sea! St. Mary's Gala and Auction 2023

By Kathleen Morris

Saint Mary's annual gala and auction was a huge success in 2023! Parents, staff, parish members and the amazing gala committee worked tirelessly for months to ensure that this year's theme, "Under the Sea", would be a safe, fun and memorable event. This year



A sea balloon ring that our fabulous gala team put together!

was the first time that the gala had been held in-person since 2020 and Saint Mary's parishioners came ready to celebrate. Members of the parish and school community sold raffle tickets over the past several months, with chances to win \$3000, \$2000, or \$1000 prizes. There were so many exciting options to bid on

## Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

### OPEN HOUSE

March 21, 2023

9:30 am - 11:30 am & 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Join us and learn why OLOL would be a great Elementary School for your child!

Please call (301) 654-5376 for more information.



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

- Since 1941, proudly providing Catholic faith-based education and curriculum for students in Elementary and Middle school.
- Our Discovery Center provides opportunities for hands-on experiences with open ended-materials that integrate STEM components and correlate to our standards.
- Resource center and support programs
- Extracurricular activities include: CYO sports, drama club, band program, children's choir and more!
- Licensed after care program

7500 Pearl Street, Bethesda, MD 20814 ~ (301) 654-5376 ~ [www.bethesda-lourdes.org](http://www.bethesda-lourdes.org)



Pre-K students



Third grader, Rania with teacher aide Jackie Costa

## Beautiful Diversity at Saint Francis International School

Saint Francis International School lives up to its name in several ways. Members of our student body, faculty, and staff come from or have family links to many different countries and speak many different languages. A recent survey did not surprise us. Besides the United States, our students identify with at least 38 other countries. Our staff and faculty identify with at least 20 other countries. Our students speak at

least 13 different languages. Members of our community have connections with countries such as Bangladesh, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Honduras, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liberia, Paraguay, and Vietnam, to name a few. Languages spoken by our students include Amharic, Dutch, Hindi, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, to name a few.

We celebrate our diversity throughout the school year with tag days

allowing students to dress in the clothing of their cultures. We have various programs that highlight the many cultures at SFIS. Besides activities related to the recognition of Hispanic and Black Heritage, we also celebrate other cultures represented in our school such as Caribbean, Filipino American, and Ethiopian Heritage. We are truly an International school!

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Saint Francis International School Staff and Faculty on Retreat



Above, Ketsya (6th) lobbying with Delegate Charkoudian's staff  
At left, Mr. Waner (teacher), students, and Fr. Brian Jordan (pastor) outside State House

### St. Francis International School

www.saintfrancisinternational.org

Sam Chapa, Principal

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

St. Mark Campus  
7501 Adelphi Road  
Hyattsville, MD 20783

### BOOST

Con't from page 1

ment operates. Students then visited delegates' and senators' offices to speak with their representatives in order to share their personal stories and the impact that BOOST has had on them and our community as a whole. Of the over 300 students enrolled at SFIS, roughly 90 of them currently receive tuition

assistance through the scholarship, enabling them to receive quality Catholic education despite financial challenges their families face. This education gives students a chance to attend our school and graduate from a school that supports their needs and their family's values in a way that public education cannot. SFIS will continue to advocate and pray for the continuation of the BOOST program long into the future.

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## Brookewood Students Lead the Way on Annual Gala



Sophomore and St. Patrick's parishioner Ava Watson teaches seventh and eighth-grade students a tilt pose during school Gala practices.

By Glencora Pipkin

"5...6...7...8!" cues Brookewood sophomore Ava Watson as she trains the middle school for their upcoming performance in the Avalon and Brookewood Spring Gala. The dual school event is unique in that it asks all students and faculty to participate in a carefully choreographed performance, singing lyrics parodying well-known songs, all of which create an annual event of much anticipation and perhaps even mythic proportions.

For many years, teachers and outside trainers have helped choreograph and organize the schools' performances. Starting last year, however, administration saw great potential in giving upper school students the freedom and leadership to do this themselves.

"It's been a blessing to both the faculty and the students; faculty to get to see the fruit of our high schoolers' maturation, and students are more likely

to respond favorably to learning dance numbers from their peers," explains this year's Gala Director, Helen Williams.

Watson, a trained ballet dancer, is one of the students who has led the choreography sequences, planning and executing five different dance numbers, even assisting and teaching the faculty! When asked about the mental and work load of taking on these tasks, as well as her own studies and ballet training, Watson was unfazed: "I'm pretty used to having a high level of things to manage, so I'm careful to schedule tasks appropriately." Watson has enjoyed the challenge of learning how to work with untrained dancers, bringing out their own innate talents: "I learn so much from striking a balance: what can actually work for the students and their skills and what works best with the music."

Congrats to all of our students on their hard work for the March 25th Annual Gala!

OPT

### VALENTINE'S DAY

Con't from page 36

ber the less fortunate. Service and community are important tenets of the school and students are taught to show love to others in various ways: canned food collections for local pantries, baby item collections for Shady Grove Pregnancy Center and the Gabriel Project, Cup

of Joe service project for Catholic Charities and helping those in need.

As we reflect on the sacrifices that Jesus made for us during the forty days of Lent, let us also reflect on the small sacrifices we all make for one another. Let's honor our fellow humans by practicing patience and kindness throughout the Lenten season and remembering the less fortunate in our prayers and actions.

OPT

### OPERA

Con't from page 33

Mr. Brad Clark, Founder and Artistic Director sponsored the event--and our pianist for the afternoon--generously donating tickets for a weekend performance of *Otello* at Strathmore Hall. His goal to expose young people to opera

and to grow a future opera audience was successful at Holy Cross: the students listened with rapt attention throughout the performances and engaged enthusiastically in the discussion that followed.

Holy Cross School is grateful for the experience to "Feel the Opera" with the talented musicians of Maryland Lyric Opera.

OPT



Happy Mardi Gras from the 1st grade! Now on to a prayerful Lent.



It's official. Winners! Congrats to our boys' basketball team who took home the trophy. Well done on your hard work all season long.

**St. John the Evangelist Parish**  
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 Silver Spring, MD  
 301-681-7663  
**Rev. Joseph Calis,**  
 Pastor

**St. John the Evangelist School**  
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## UNDER THE SEA

*Con't from page 37*

during the live auction, including Principal for a Day and getaways to Deep Creek Lake and Maine. Handmade items from all of the classes were also up for bidding, along with themed baskets full of gift cards and goodies.

The auction was open virtually starting on Friday, February 17 through Saturday, February 18, giving bidders lots of opportunities to watch their most-wanted items! Visitors to the gala website could also browse packages, make bids, buy raffle tickets or Gala tickets, or donate to our wonderful Fund-a-Cause, Teachers' Wishlist, or the Kelley Bula Scholarship Fund. When gala attendees arrived at Saint Mary's on Saturday evening, they walked into an Under the Sea wonderland, as the school was decorated from top to bottom in nautical themes. The night started with hors d'oeuvres and a cocktail hour, while gala attendees walked the hallways of Saint



Members of the St. Mary's community getting their picture taken in front of the sea balloon ring!

Mary's, browsing baskets and other auction items and admiring the decor. A delicious sit-down dinner followed, with recognition of some outstanding members of the Saint Mary's Community, including our very own "Superhero" principal, Mrs. Debra Eisel. The Under the Sea Gala and Auction recognized several other award recipients: Parishioners of the Year: Rolando Felipe, School Family of the Year:

Shawn and Maggie Harwell, Religious Education Volunteers of the Year: Caryl Periera, and Alum of the Year: John Bean. A live auction came next, followed by music and dancing.

Saint Mary's sends a huge thank you to all of the wonderful committee members, volunteers and parishioners that helped to make Under the Sea a night to remember!

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St. John the Evangelist was happy to acknowledge International Women's Day in addition to National Catholic Sisters' Week. It was a great opportunity to celebrate our beloved IHM Sisters, Sister Doreen and Sister Roberta! We love you and are grateful for your presence, your ministry, and your example- today and everyday



**OPEN HOUSE**  
 Thursday  
 March 23  
 5:00PM - 7:00PM

## Remembering Kelley Bula

Each year, Saint Mary's hosts the Kelley Bula Family Dance to support The Kelley Bula Scholarship. The scholarship is in honor of Kelley Bula, a former St. Mary's student. Kelley Christine Bula attended kindergarten and first grade at St. Mary's School from 1993 until 1995. After she was diagnosed with cancer, Kelley became too ill to attend school and was home-schooled for second and third grade. During those years, while undergoing chemotherapy, radiation and a bone marrow transplant, Kelley remained close to her friends

and often visited the school. Kelley ultimately lost her battle with cancer at 4:10 a.m. on Saturday morning, January 18, 1997. She was only eight and half years old. Kelley was a beautiful, happy, courageous little girl who loved her family and her friends. She was full of the spirit, joy and grace that each of us would be lucky to have. She loved her school. It is because of this love for her school and in remembrance of this beloved child that the Kelley Bula Memorial Scholarship was founded.

Every year, each teacher from grades Kindergarten through

Seventh Grade selects one child whom they believe demonstrates the same qualities and attributes that Kelley had: a love of God, of life and of fellow man; a strong faith; happiness, hope, courage, sensitivity and caring. Once the teachers make their choices, Mrs. Eisel has the extremely difficult task of choosing one person from this group to receive the Scholarship. Kelley loved God, she loved life & she loved her family and friends very much. Saint Mary's is proud to help keep her legacy alive.

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PreK-3 to 8th Grade

- Enrichment Opportunities for Core Subjects
- Differentiated Learning Groups
- Advanced Math in Middle School
- Before and After Care



10201 Woodland Drive  
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www.sjte.org (301) 681-7656



# St. John Neumann Catholic Church Undergoes Expansion to Better Serve the Parish Community

By: Marisa Stoolmiller

On August 22, 2022, St. John Neumann broke ground on an expansion project for our church and parish center to expand its facilities and better serve the needs of its parishioners, staff, and community. While planning our expansion project several years ago, the parish researched and prioritized what was most needed and decided on the following improvements. First, a new entrance and facade that emphasizes the beauty and Catholicity of our faith. Next, a new and inviting narthex or gathering space to offer Sunday and weekday moments of Encounter. Also, a



Above, rendering of the new Adoration Chapel. Photo Courtesy Franck and Lohsen Architects



At left, crews pour the foundation. Photo Courtesy St. John Neumann Parish



At right, the framework and roof has been erected, and the inside space in the existing building has been framed. Photo Courtesy St. John Neumann Parish

new and expanded Adoration Chapel to offer a larger space for adorers, surrounding them with beauty as they spend time with the Lord. The chapel will give glory to Jesus, who is the center of our Church and life. New offices for the entire staff and a conference room were also included to strengthen the mission of forming intentional disciples, as well as provide greater visibility and resources for our religious

new, expanded sacristy and lay ministers room. Finally, two new confessionals where the faithful can come and receive the mercy of God in abundance will be added.

The construction at St. John Neumann Catholic Church has been funded through a combination of donations and grants from local organizations. The parish has also undertaken a fundraising campaign to help cover the costs of the project.

formation program. For the first time, all employees will be working in the same location. Additionally, the project includes a

Since breaking ground five months ago, great progress has been made.

“It seemed like just yesterday was the groundbreaking, and now, the walls are up,” says Colleen Harris, a parishioner at Saint John Neumann. “It’s a really exciting time,” Harris added.

The foundation has been poured, the framework and roof has been erected, and inside space in our existing building has been framed. It is very exciting to watch the expansion project come to life. We appreciate our partners at Forrester Construction

and Franck & Lohsen Architects for their vision and hard work. The parish is looking forward to the completion of the project and the many new opportunities it will provide for the church and the community. God willing, we will begin using our new space in late-Summer 2023.

For more information on this project visit the St. John Neumann website at [SJNCatholic.org/construction-corner](http://SJNCatholic.org/construction-corner). **OPT**

## Lent Activities in Full Swing at Saint John Neumann Catholic Parish

By: Rodney Harris

As the Church prepares to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord, Saint John Neumann Parish in Gaithersburg, Maryland, is marking Lent with 40 Days of Renewal.

In addition to Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings during Lent, the parish also hosts several “Soup, Salad, & Stations” events with simple meals. The Parish also hosted a Fish Dinner on March 10.



Msgr. Robert Panke leads Parish Lenten Mission. Photo Courtesy: St. John Neumann

On March 4, Parochial Vicar, Fr. Stefan Yap, led a Pilgrimage for

Women entitled “Finding God in the Present.” It occurred at Mount St.

Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and featured Mass, a

Holy Hour, talks by Fr. Yap, adoration, and Stations of the Cross.

Msgr. Robert Panke, Pastor of Saint John Neumann Parish, hosted a Parish Lenten Mission titled “The Mercy of God: Finding Freedom in Forgiveness.” The March 5-7 event featured praying the rosary and talks from Monsignor.

Holy Week will kick off on Palm Sunday, April 2. The Mass of the Lord’s Supper will take place Holy Thursday night at 7:00 pm, followed by Night Prayer at 11:00 pm.

Good Friday, April 7, will start with Morning Prayer at 9:00 am, followed by Confessions, Stations of the Cross, and the Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion at 3:00 pm in English and 7:00 pm in Spanish.

The Easter Vigil is celebrated April 8 at 8:00 pm.

To learn more about Saint John Neumann’s Lent schedule, visit: [www.sjncatholic.org/lent](http://www.sjncatholic.org/lent). **OPT**

### St. John Neumann Parish

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Msgr. Robert Panke  
Pastor

Kimberley Rice  
OPT Editor

# Books Make Everything Better



Second graders, with teachers Karrah Wenzlaff and Barabra Ryba, show off their book haul

After months of collecting children's books, the second graders donated a jeep-full of books for critically ill children as part of their Fill the Jeep project. The project, spearheaded by second-grade teacher Barabra Ryba and bolstered by the energy of second grade, called on the community to

give new or gently used children's books—enough to fill a Jeep. They met their goal and were able to deliver on Random Acts of Kindness Day, and the children enjoyed helping load the Jeep with their donations.

OPT



Seventh grade packing some love for the vulnerable in our community, way to go seventh grade!

## Serving from the Heart

Through classroom instruction and volunteer opportunities, Mary of Nazareth School strives to instill a love of service in the community in our students. Throughout the year, MoN provides multiple service opportunities encouraging students to fulfill their responsibility to help others. What better day to show charity than St. Valentine's Day? This year, between the pink-trimmed parties and construction paper valentines, seventh graders spent their Valentine's Day afternoon packing some love for the most vulnerable in our community by preparing lunches for Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring. Students made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, including water, fruit, and snacks. Our students were able to deliver over 100 lunches after school.

OPT

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St. Paul, Damascus; Our Lady of the  
Visitation, Darnestown.



Our Parish Times Online  
Graduation Issue – May 17



Mary of Nazareth  
Catholic School

Our Mission

LIVES OF SERVICE  
RIGOROUS ACADEMICS  
ROOTED IN FAITH

14131 Seneca Road  
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www.maryofnazareth.org





The prayer table displays some of the most powerful tools to have a prayerful Lent.

## Lenten Prayer Groups – A Community of Faith

Lent is a time of reflection and prayer. Our community is coming together for parent and faculty prayer groups throughout Lent to celebrate our faith together. Many of our students

have also created prayer tables in their homes to help keep Jesus at the focus of their everyday lives during this special time. We look forward to our time of reflection as we prepare for Easter.

OPT



Above, it was a St. Patrick's party as students created an assembly line to create bags to benefit SOME.



At left, young members of the St. Patrick's community help to prepare toiletry bags.

## St. Patrick's Monthly Service Projects – The Spirit of Giving

St. Patrick's monthly service projects always demonstrate that serving others is at the

backbone of our mission as a parish and as a school. During the month of January, we asked our students and families to donate socks and also participate in a Read-a-Thon that would help support SOME (So Others Might Eat). The response was overwhelming! We were able to collect hundreds of socks and purchase hygiene products that the students assembled into bags to distribute to those in need. Thanks to our families' generosity, we were also able to donate over \$5000 to support the wonderful work of SOME. We are grateful to our students and families who continue to walk the path of Jesus through service to others.

OPT

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**Parish Editor**  
Crystal Schmidlein

## CYO Basketball – Success and Sportsmanship

The St. Patrick's CYO basketball program has provided an exciting couple of months for our students and families! We have seen how teamwork, encouragement of others, and making memories with teammates can unite us as we celebrate our Badgers on the court. Our many parent coaches show us, each and every week,



Above, St. Patrick's Grade 8 Girls Basketball  
At left, St. Patrick's Grade 7 Girls Basketball



the impact they are having on each student player by reminding each other that being a good teammate as well as a good opponent teaches confidence and respect. The season may only last a short two months, but the lasting memories and lessons that are taught to our children are long lasting. We are proud of our Badgers for a well-played season and congratulate both of our 14U Girls team for placing second in their tournament.

OPT

## Catholic Schools Week Celebrates Dedication to Faith and Education

One week is not long enough for us to appreciate all that Catholic Education brings to St. Patrick's! Thankfully we make sure every week is a reminder of why we have chosen St. Patrick's to guide us in our education and faith daily. We spent our week thanking the many people who help create this wonderful community including our clergy, teachers, parents, students, and others in our community that we serve. Our clergy and teachers were given acrostic poems created by our students to remind them of the impact they have



Even parents were celebrated as part of Catholic Schools Week!



Students got in on the fun of the CSW science and magic assembly.

on them every day and to give our heartfelt thanks to all the time, love, and patience they show our students. Our parents were greeted with donuts during morning drop off to start their day with a sweet treat, and our students spent time playing games and reading with their buddies and classmates as well as enjoying a fun science and magic assembly that all ages enjoyed. It was sad to see this week go by so quickly, but the memories that were made and the daily reminders of why we choose Catholic Education continue in our everyday prayer, education, and the importance of serving others remain.

OPT

## Thank you, Msgr. Enzler!

As a gifted and generous leader, we have always turned to you, Fr. John, for ways to get our students involved and eager to give! Through your years of service as Pastor to Catholic schools to serving Washington's most needy, we have had the honor and privilege of watching you lead by example with a humble, generous, and gracious heart. Thank you for giving our children the opportunity to serve and showing through your own actions that our servant hearts can have a remarkable and meaningful impact on others. Congratulations and thank you for your 50 years of service!

-From The St. Patrick's School Community

OPT

# St. Paul's Joins Pro-Life March in Annapolis

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

Despite the chilly rain, the Maryland March for Life drew over a thousand people, including 12 from St. Paul's in Damascus, to gather at the State House in Annapolis calling for legal protection of unborn children.

Maryland legislators are considering a bill (SB798) to amend the state constitution and to establish "an individual's fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including, but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one's own pregnancy." That may sound like a good idea—as long no one gets injured or killed!

The 2022 decision of the US Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* alters the future of the pro-life movement. For the first time in half a century, states can act to prevent surgical abortion within their borders. But it's not clear how effective that will be. If 35 states ban abortion and 15 don't, abortion is less convenient but is still available to anyone anywhere in the nation. Non-surgical



In the rain and dark, the 12 pro-lifers from St Paul's were scattered through the crowd, but this drippy clump was cheerful.

abortion is increasing rapidly; crossing state lines for abortion is common; traveling abroad for an abortion is far easier today than it

was two generations ago; illegal abortions may become common, transforming bullies who kill helpless kids into folk heroes.

What is clear is that Maryland is a stronghold for the abortion movement. In 1991, Maryland passed a law guaranteeing a "right to abor-

tion." Pro-lifers put the law on the ballot in 1992, in a public referendum, and lost by a wide margin – 62% to 38%. So in the foreseeable future, when nearby states ban abortion, women and couples opting to end a pregnancy violently can and will travel to Rockville. Our abortion rate is going to climb.

The speakers in Annapolis did not offer much in the way of a strategy for Maryland that was different from the national approach in the past.

There was a small group at the edge of the march urging what they called "civil disobedience." Pressed, they did affirm the need for a non-violent approach.

One of the speakers at the rally was Pat Mahoney, who has a history of maintaining a civil dialogue with his opponents. That may be fundamental in pro-life work in Maryland. There's a time and place for confrontation, but there's also a chance and space for cooperation – on accurate data collection, on opposing forced abortion, and on a preferential option for pregnant and nursing refugees.

OPT

## Lenten Soup Supper Includes Support for Food Pantries

On Fridays all through Lent, the parish has soup suppers, offering a simple meal and a talk. The meals are simple, but it's debatable whether they are penitential, because the soups are all amazing and delightful.

Traditional Lenten practices include prayer and fasting and almsgiving. To encourage almsgiving, the speakers explain a variety of services that need our support. The speakers in 2023 include:

- Sherrie Wade, explaining the parish support for the past 25 years for a medical clinic in Honduras
- Brian Mulholland explaining a food drive for the food-insecure in Washington D.C.
- Joseph Shuler explaining Catholic radio
- Barbara Zellers explaining how we can fight human trafficking

A speaker from the Gabriel Project (or Network) explaining how we can give material and financial and emotional and spiritual help to young women or couples struggling with a pregnancy.

Brian Mulholland's presentation on March 3 was about the John S. Mulholland Family Foundation's work over the past ten years. JSMFF supports five outreach pantries in Catholic churches in Washington, east of the Anacostia River. They collect food from parishes outside DC, including St. Paul's. He said that there are other organizations out there collecting food from churches, but JSMFF is the only one that runs food drives during the summer. Pastors fuss that food drives don't work as well in the summer, because people are at the beach. But Brian notes that the hungry people aren't at the beach, so there's still a need.

John Mulholland was a longtime parishioner; his wife was parish secretary. Brian says that he visited his father's grave in Arlington Cemetery recently to report on how the foundation is doing. He thought his father would approve of everything they are doing, except for the name of foundation.

OPT



Msgr. Filardi uses holy water to bless the new organ

## St. Paul's Blesses New Organ

By Celeste Pappas, Director of Music

On February 5, St. Paul's marked the installation of their new organ with a blessing at the beginning of the 11:00am Mass. As our pastor, Monsignor Edward Filardi, wrote in the bulletin the following Sunday:

"This last weekend marked a significant moment in our parish history: we finally got an organ. I say 'finally' because it turns out twenty plus years ago when the new church was being planned, an organ was intended, but to defray costs it was decided to wait until after the dedication the summer of 2002. A letter I received last Saturday was an interesting revelation to me, from an anonymous donor, who wrote in part, 'My husband donated the piano to provide joyous music until an organ could

be purchased. Little did we know it would take nearly 20 years. So glad you now have both instruments to provide the parish with joyful sounds.' In the Order for the Blessing of an Organ, which we offered at the beginning of the 11am Mass last Sunday, the introduction states, 'in the Latin Church among the instruments the organ has always held a place of honor. Whether as an accompaniment for singing or as a solo instrument, this instrument adds splendor to sacred celebrations, offers praise to God, fosters a sense of prayer in the faithful, and raises their spirit to God.'"

Purchased from R.A. Daffer Church Organs, Inc., in Jessup, MD, the "new" St. Paul's organ is a three-manual Rodgers Trillium 957 digital pipe organ built in 2001. That means it has digital samples of real organ pipes. Previously in a Baptist

church in Yorktown, VA, it was purchased for less than half the cost of a new digital organ, the money for the purchase generously provided by an anonymous donor. Not only does the organ match the church in age, but the wood finish of the console also matches the pews. It has an excellent sound that reverberates in the very live acoustics of the new church and will hopefully be able to better support the singing of the congregation. While a pipe organ is the preferred instrument for any organ enthusiast, many times a pipe organ is not an option either because of money or space constraints. A digital pipe organ is the next best thing, and I look forward to many years playing this one, helping the parishioners of St. Paul's to raise their hearts, minds, and voices to God in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

OPT



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Times Online

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Saint Peter's Black History Month student committee planned special school-wide programming throughout the month with the guidance of Ms. Gallagher.



Saint Peter's school choir accompanied by Mr. Nguyen performed "Hymn to Freedom" at the school's Black History Month Closing Prayer Service.

## Saint Peter's Celebrates Black History Month

By Erin Pant

Throughout the month of February, students at Saint Peter's School took part in special projects and activities recognizing the achievements of Black Americans.

Third graders wrote biographies of Black Americans who have contributed to the histo-

ry of our country, while fourth and fifth graders researched and completed "Histograms," Instagram-like profiles of notable Black Americans.

Eighth graders took on a special leadership role in this year's Black History Month activities. Twenty-four students formed a special committee, led by middle-school English

Teacher Ms. Gallagher, to plan, organize, and lead school-wide programming.

"I joined the Black History Month committee to be a member of a committee that would do good at my school. I felt that it was vital to participate in something like this as Black man," said eighth-grader Nate Jeudy.

The committee members presented special

programming at least once per week during school-wide assemblies. To kick off Black History Month, students demonstrated the powerful impact of words by performing notable speeches made by Black Americans throughout history.

"I presented the magnificent words of Dr.

*Continued on page 47*

## Timeless Traditions Return

By Tina Banks

Saint Peter's School hosted two notable events in February - the Sweetheart Luncheon and the Mardi Gras Celebration.

"The luncheons are wonderful occasions to celebrate our Saint Peter's community," said Principal, Nelson Abreu. "These events provide an opportunity to educate the whole child by going beyond the classroom to provide enhancements of both spiritual and emotional growth."

Pre-K students invited a special guest to the heart-filled Sweetheart luncheon to celebrate the feast day of Saint Valentine, a Saint Peter's tradition dating back more than a decade.

As the guests waited with anticipation for the luncheon to begin, each student decorated their place setting with special artwork. In honor of Valentine's Day, students dressed out of uniform in colors of the season - red and pink - adding to the festive occasion. The special guests enjoyed the lunch hour chatting with their 'valentine,' taking pictures, and most of all making memories that will last a lifetime.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate with our children and get a glimpse into the amazing relationships the students have with



Pre-K and Kindergarten students enjoyed lunch with their special guests to celebrate Saint Valentine's Day

each other and with their teachers," said Pre-K 4 parent Melissa Smith. "We've been away from each other for so long. I truly hope we have more of these cherished opportunities to come together and spend time with our children, teachers, and parent community."

The littlest students were not to be outdone by their older school peers who enjoyed a Mardi Gras party and luncheon to celebrate Shrove Tuesday, the last day before the start

of Lent. Room parents from grades fifth through eighth transformed the Parish Hall into an indoor Mardi Gras festival complete with feather boas, beads, masks, and mini hats. Students played Lenten trivia while they enjoyed a sumptuous lunch of baked ziti and socialized with friends. Of course, traditional king cakes were part of the celebration!

"I really enjoyed the party and

*Continued on page 47*



Fifth through eighth grade students celebrated with a Mardi Gras themed lunch.

## Youth Ministry Winter Events



The Knights of Columbus partnered with the Saint Peter's youth ministry to sponsor a Mardi Gras pancake dinner. There were games, raffles and mask making. Everyone enjoyed the endless desserts!



Our little ones started their Lent off with our first Storytime with Jesus. Children ages 3 to 10 were invited to listen to the story of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, sing songs, make crafts and decorate cookies. Lenten resources for both children and parents were sent home. Several parishioners who have been early childhood educators as well as our parish youth helped to lead the day. It was a creative way to engage young families in our parish. We hope to make this a tradition.

### St. Peter's Parish

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In 1958, Pope Pius XII urged that a parish in every diocese be dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. In response to our Holy Father, Archbishop O'Boyle designated St. Mary's as the official Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima for the Archdiocese of Washington. The Shrine was dedicated by Archbishop O'Boyle on May 3, 1959.

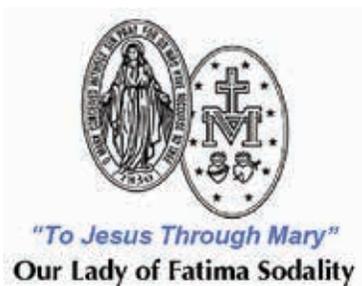
## Remembering with Liturgy and Devotions

by Diane Yendrey

**O**ur Lady of Fatima Sodality recently held a Mass of Remembrance for all its deceased Sodalists, naming those from 1944 to 2022. All members of the parish were invited to attend. Sodality Prefect Terry Crawford personally invited relatives of the recently deceased. Fr. Kevin O'Reilly chose a Memorial to the Blessed Virgin Mary for the morning mass on that first Saturday of February, coinciding with Fatima devotions and the Rosary that followed. Refreshments were served in the Parish House afterward.

For the mass, a detailed commemorative worship aid was distributed. A prelude, "Ave Maria Litany" was performed by music ministry including piano, guitar, and viola. Roses were placed at the statue of Our Lady by family members and friends in memory of recently deceased Sodalists.

As the designated Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, the spiritual practice for the faithful is to gather on the first Saturday of every month, and through prayer and special devotions including to offer up their



Holy Communion and Rosary, and meditate for an additional 15 minutes on a mystery of the Rosary; then these devotions are practiced with the specific intention of making reparation for offenses and insults made against Our Lady.

Our Lady of Fatima Sodality is an active organization involving many generations of women over the years. It seeks to enrich the spiritual lives of its members through a devotion to our Blessed Mother, leading to increasing devotion and love for Jesus. Following Mary's example, Sodalists also serve our parish community in spiritual and material needs. Every woman of Saint Mary's Parish is eligible for membership, and to take part in activities.

OPT

## Our Parish Mission: "The Bread of Life"

**O**n the second Sunday of Lent, we heard about Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain before his disciples, and a voice from Heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." If we sit in the quiet time of Adoration before the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, what do we hear? After

Sunday's homilies, and 30 hours of Adoration, Msgr. Jack Macfarlane gave a talk about the Eucharist's presence and how to deepen its meaning in our lives. What does Jesus mean, "I am the bread from Heaven"? What do Scriptures tell us? What do we believe? Msgr. Macfarlane expounded on these questions, described the great mystery, and led us in a guided meditation. He said that it is ever so brief to have a mountain top moment—but to try and capture it, and revisit it in the silence, and in prayer. He said, "The only reason we are here is that we come to be with our friend, the Lord. Feel his peace."

OPT

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## Confirmation Retreat

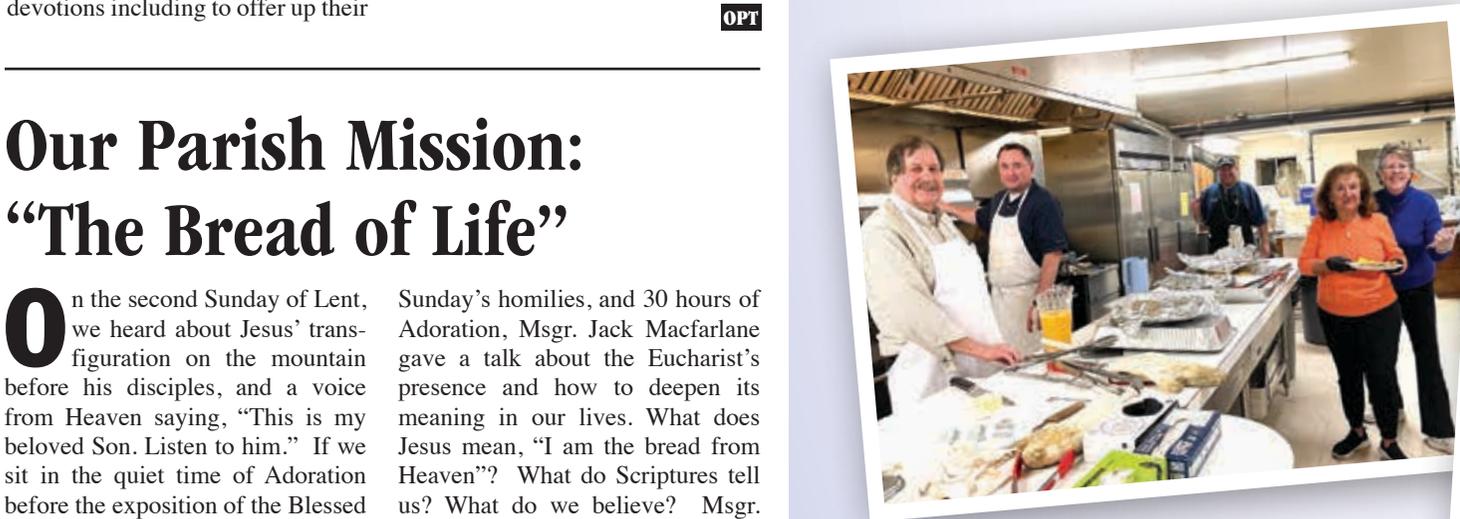


Retreat Director Matt Avery provided a day of reflection and exploration for our Confirmation Candidates.



A small representation of the many parish students who attend Catholic Schools, join Fr. Kevin for a blessing.

Father Kevin and Msgr. Macfarlane guided the children receiving their First Penance through the joys of the Sacrament of Forgiveness.



Above, the faithful Cooking Crew manned their stations to prepare fresh farm eggs and sausage, with stacks of pancakes.



Right, the Cabrera Family participated joyfully in the Mardi Gras theme at the Shrove Tuesday dinner.

# Dignitaries join OLQP in Remembrance Day Mass

By Bozenna Buda, ED

As St. John Paul II taught us, "Let us remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm, and look forward to the future with confidence."

We strove to do so on March 5, 2023, during the Remembrance Day Holy Mass requested by the Polish American Congress-Washington Metropolitan Area Division (PACWMAD) and celebrated by Our Lady Queen of Poland Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych, SChr. During Mass, we remembered the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives for truth and freedom. They were known as the indomitable, unbreakable, cursed, or unyielding soldiers (in Polish, *Zolnierze Wykleci, Zolnierze Niezlomni*). The annual Day of Remembrance for them is March 1 and was established by the Polish Parliament in 2011. It is commemorated in Poland as well as throughout the Diaspora. The "Unbreakable Soldiers" were members of the Polish underground who struggled against the Communist regime imposed on Poland by Soviet Russia after World War II. They were imprisoned and many of them were tortured and killed. They were buried in unmarked graves in an attempt to erase them from collective memory. Despite these efforts, the names of Lukasz Cieplinski, Danuta Sedzikowna, and others are known today. It was their perseverance and persistence which kept the desire for freedom alive in Poland.

In honoring the "Cursed Soldiers" this year, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki noted that they "testified with their lives to the great value of freedom, independence, truth and goodness" (<https://www.gov.pl/web/primeminister/prime-minister-mateusz-morawiecki-commemorated-the-cursed-soldiers>).

Distinguished guests joined OLQP



Some of the participants at the March 5, 2023, commemorative OLQP Mass in Silver Spring, MD. SK David Birely, Col. Karol Budniak, Dr. Edwarda Buda-Okreglak, SK Richard Okreglak, Bozenna Buda, Fr. Jerzy Frydrych, Minister Janusz Kowalski, Gen. Krzysztof Nolbert, GK Stefan Witczak, SK Jacek Marczynski, Ambassador Marek Magierowski, Mrs. Anna Magierowska, Margaret Rogoyski, Konsul Edyta Holdynska, Katarzyna Gierzynska, Ewa Chlebowska, SK Bob Dowlut, SK Aleksander Macander, SK John Armstrong.



The procession to the altar for the March 5, 2023, Holy Mass, celebrated by OLQP Pastor Rev. Jerzy Frydrych, SChr., which included an honor guard and participation by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus, Polish Scouting Organization-ZHP, Polish Legion of American Veterans S/Sgt J.A. Jagiello Post, PACWMAD, and others. Also present was Minister Janusz Kowalski from Poland.

parishioners in prayer on this solemn occasion. Minister Janusz Kowalski from Poland was present as were guests from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland - Ambassador Marek Magierowski and Mrs. Anna Magierowska, Konsul Edyta Holdynska, General Krzysztof Nolbert, Colonel Karol Budniak, and Dr. Rachon. Hanna Zawadka was the lector at Mass. The St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus with Grand Knight Stefan Witczak were in attendance. Representatives were present from PACWMAD as well as Dr. Edwarda Buda-Okreglak from the Polish Legion of American Veterans S/Sgt J.A. Jagiello Post, Ewa Chlebowska

from the OLQP Polish Saturday School, Katarzyna Gierzynska from the Polish Embassy Supplementary School, and Bozenna Buda from Polish Scouting Organization-ZHP.

The Mass was followed by a Coffee Hour sponsored by the Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus and the Parish Council.

In remembering and honoring these heroes, we preserve their names and the memory of their sacrifices. They, as well as St. John Paul II and Blessed Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, continue to inspire and fortify us as we look to the future.

OPT

## St. Maximilian Kolbe K of C Hosts Coffee Hours

At right, the crew from the St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus who hosted the Coffee Hour in the OLQP Parish Hall after the Holy Mass on Feb. 12, 2023. SK David Birely, SK Franklin Morton, Grand Knight Stefan Witczak, SK John Armstrong, SK Bob Dowlut, and spouse Mrs. Alice Marie Beard.



Above, OLQP parishioners and friends gathered in the parish hall to enjoy the coffee hour hosted by Council 16634 Knights of Columbus.



At right, the Roberts family at the coffee hour.



OLQP altar servers with visiting priest Very Rev. Pawel Sass, V.F., who celebrated the Holy Mass on Feb. 12, 2023.



MD March for Life- Photo from Grand Knight Stephen Witczak of the St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus, who braved the inclement weather to attend the 2023 Maryland March for Life in Annapolis, MD, in February. The event began with prayers at St. Mary's and proceeded to a rally at the State House.

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## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

**HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 6**  
 7:30 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper

**GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 7**  
 7:30PM Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

**HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 8**  
 Blessing of food 10:00AM, 10:30AM, 11:00AM, 11:30AM, 12:00PM, 12:30PM  
 7:30PM Easter Vigil Mass

**EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 9**  
 10:00AM Resurrection Mass in Polish  
 12:00PM Easter Mass in Polish

**EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 10**  
 7:30PM Mass in Polish

From OLQP Pastor Fr. Frydrych, SChr.:  
*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! Bog Zaplac!*

## A MAN OF HOPE

Con't from page 19

This philosophy led to Compass, a program created to address poverty in Wards 7 and 8 of the District by offering master's level social workers to those who want to make a change and move from crisis to stability with the hope of achieving long-held goals.

Father John brought other opportunities to those in need. In partnership with a friend, he brought hearty and healthy meals to those living on the streets or in shelters who did not have the opportunity to have what we know as a family meal.

Father John also stepped in quickly to address the immediate needs of our communities. He developed a massive food outreach program in the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic in which Catholic Charities provided 3.5 million meals to individuals who lost jobs and families who were vulnerable to hunger.

With the trust that Father John engenders, so many around the Archdiocese joined with him to invest in making real changes in the lives of so many. While Catholic Charities partners with government entities for a number of programs, there are many services that depend on donations. Services to those who have made the choice to carry their baby, services in a parish to support someone living with domestic violence, services to the newly arrived

who came to our communities with nothing. All these services and more continue and flourish because of his commitment to make a real difference.

It's ironic that Father John came to Catholic Charities to make a real difference in the lives of those in need, because, it turns out, he made a real difference in other ways as well.

When he first came to Catholic Charities, the programs and finances, let's just say, were more fragile. He told staff members that they should worry about taking care of their clients, and he would take care of the rest. This was a gift beyond imagine, as the trust in him gave each of our staff members the freedom to do all that they could in service to others and not live with the burdens of keeping their program alive.

To me, this gift was a multiplier, much like Jesus' story of the loaves and the fishes. What Father John gave to 800 staff members multiplied in service to hundreds of thousands of people. This has strengthened lives and communities in ways that are immeasurable.

The hope he gave clients and staff members is a treasured gift we are all better to have received.

*Joan Fowler Brown is chief of staff at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington.*

OPT

## SIX DEGREES

Con't from page 19

family; or walked with a family through the mourning of a loved one. (Father John has often done all three of these sacraments multiple times a day, and even in different states! A true legend.) As you can imagine, hundreds of hands throughout the space were raised for these questions. Yes, Father John has helped us all and then some. While Kevin Bacon can always be reached by six degrees or less in Hollywood, Father John can most certainly be reached by six degrees or less in the DMV.

This legendary man has been with many of us through our major milestones and the tiny moments in life that end up being the most special. Father John is everywhere and in so many people's lives.

I have been fortunate to have had many roles with Catholic Charities throughout my life and have worked very closely with Father John in different capacities. One of my favorite positions was being the Co-Chair of the Enzler Society (a group for young professionals named after Father John). This is where I understood the power of the "Pastor of the Poor" and what I have come to call "the Father John ripple effect."

Years ago, the Enzler Society worked closely with a program called the Youth Transitional Program (YTP) which provided transitional shelter services for young men ages 18-24 that were home-

less. We would go down to 801 East – a men's shelter where YTP was located – once a month to work with clients and celebrate holidays and life. Father John would join often, and to watch him connect and work with homeless youth was breathtaking. He has an energy unlike anyone I know – he listens and hears you, he connects with you, and then follows through on whatever conversation he has with you.

The YTP clients loved Father John and knew he was the real deal. I often saw big smiles on faces at 801 East the minute Father John walked in the room and Father John would return those smiles with a smile, a handshake, a high five, a fist pump - whatever was needed in that moment. The clients of Catholic Charities at 801 East knew this man cared for them, supported them, and would help them to the best of his ability.

Father John's greatest advice is, "when you go to bed each night, ask yourself one simple question: *Did you do something for someone today that made a difference in their lives?*" He always says that it could be as simple as a smile towards others, even if you yourself are stressed or not in the best mood.

Father John would do that for the clients of YTP – I saw it firsthand. He would make a difference in their life by listening to them, helping them secure a job or housing, or just offering a simple smile to them to brighten up their day.

You may not know this, but the

very act of seeing another person smile triggers an automatic muscular response that produces a smile on our face. Smiling is contagious (it's true!); and countless studies have shown that a simple smile to someone can lift their mood and create positive, happy feelings.

Now think about all those people that raised their hands at the Christ Child Gala when asked if Father John was a part of one of their life's big moments. He must have given them a smile on their face during that moment and many moments afterwards.

If Father John has taught the HUNDREDS or thousands of us (you, me, Catholic Charities clients – anyone!) anything, it's that a simple smile can make a difference in anyone's life. It truly is the Father John ripple effect – giving them a smile to brighten their day, in the hopes they will turn around and do that to someone else.

I encourage you to celebrate Father John today and everyday by giving someone a smile. Then when you ask yourself at the end of each day, "did I do something for someone today that made a difference in their life?" The answer can be YES! (An answer Father John gives us all every day.)

Thank you, Father John, for the countless smiles and the enormous amounts of love, care, and support you have given to all of us in this community. We are so lucky to call you a friend.

OPT

## BLACK HISTORY

Con't from page 44

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech. I presented this to all my fellow Saint Peter's students. I chose this topic because I felt the words really reflected how to make our nation a better place for everyone," said eighth-grader Chidiebube Dumebi-Kachikwu

Other presentations included information on the Harlem Renaissance and Jazz.

"Jazz was one of the creative influences that grew during the Harlem Renaissance. Jazz became a prominent part of the Great Migration, a time when African Americans spread north to take advantage of new job opportunities. I learned this through my research on the 1920s in Social Studies," said eight-grader Olivia Cooley.

The Black History Month committee also organized a tag

day with the money being donated to a Black run charity. To conclude the month, the committee led the school in a prayer service during which the school choir performed "Hymn to Freedom," an anthem written in 1962 by jazz musician Oscar Peterson during the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

"My favorite part of working on the committee was being able to form ideas with friends for something that really matters," said eight-grader Alexandra Kissal.

"I am so proud of the work of our eighth graders. They came up with so many wonderful ideas that enriched our school-wide Black History Month celebrations," said Ms. Gallagher.

OPT



Students pose with their completed "Histogram" projects.



At far left, Houston, we do not have a problem. On Career Day, an eighth-grade student donned NASA gear to indicate her wish to become an astronaut.

At left, Principal Lisa Kane led the faculty to a win in the basketball free throw competition against the eighth-grade students.

## SCHOOL SPIRIT

Con't from page 10

ambassador-led tours of the school and campus. In the hallway outside the school office visitors could read hundreds of colorful hearts that contained sentiments from students and faculty describing why they love Holy Cross School.

The Middle School Science Fair was held immediately following the open house event. Students shared their research findings with judges from our local scientific communities. Many of our young researchers will go on to compete at the Montgomery County Science Fair later this spring.

Astronauts, doctors, scientists, artists, lawyers and even a few scuba divers and rock stars arrived at school on Monday as students dressed for their future careers on Career Day! Students were fascinated as they heard from a spectacular cross-section of diverse talent from different fields share

information about their professions and career paths. Later that day, the entire student body created beautiful cards in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Washington collaboration and Valentines by Kids, an organization that puts cards in the hands of the elderly in assisted living and children in the hospital on Valentine's Day.

Tuesday's events included an awards assembly to recognize students for academic achievement and displaying Christian character. The awards assembly was followed by Coffee in the Classroom for parents to observe classrooms in action. The afternoon brought another service project as students assembled hundreds of packaged meals for Cup O' Joe, an organization that serves the homeless in DC.

Wacky tacky dress was the theme for Wednesday. That afternoon, students cheered for either the teachers or the Eighth Grade as these teams engaged in a free throw basketball contest resulting in a victory for the teachers.

Students came to school on Thursday sporting spirit wear or green and white clothing. They celebrated Student Appreciation day with visits from Catholic Schools Office leadership, completing an electrifying Club SciKidz circuitry experiment, having a pizza lunch and an afternoon of BINGO with snacks and prizes!

The week concluded with pajama day, a teacher appreciation breakfast, and eighth-grade students taking over the classrooms for teacher turnaround day!

Principal Kane proclaimed the week a resounding success and stated, "Catholic Schools Week was a joy-filled week for our school and truly exemplified this year's principles of "faith, excellence and service" for our entire school community. Holy Cross School is so blessed to have incredible students, parents, faculty and staff that are committed to Catholic identity and education."

OPT

## TRADITIONS

Con't from page 44

had a great time hanging out with my friends," said seventh grader Paige Hutchcroft.

"It was great to see another pre-COVID tradition return to Saint

OPT



# kidball

## summer camps

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- ▶ Bocci
- ▶ and much more...

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**ONE-WEEK SESSIONS**  
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