**Crossing Paths Heart to Heart**

Advent feels especially relevant this year. As we prepare our hearts to celebrate the nativity of Christ, we hopefully anticipate a vaccine against Covid-19, a new President, and the evolution of social, economic and faith practices in a post-Covid world. Not only does Advent start a new liturgical year for Catholics this year, but it also begins a new era. Thomas Merton’s reflection seems timely, “Life is just this simple: we are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it at all times. If we abandon ourselves to God, He shows Himself everywhere, in everything, in people and in things, and in nature and events. We cannot be without Him. It’s impossible. The only thing is, we don’t see it”. While we may not find Jesus in Church during this Advent, we will find Him in nature and events. We cannot be without Him. It’s impossible. The only thing is, we don’t see it”. While we may not find Jesus in Church during this Advent, we will find Him in nature and events. We cannot be without Him. It’s impossible. The only thing is, we don’t see it”. While we may not find Jesus in Church during this Advent, we will find Him in nature and events. We cannot be without Him. It’s impossible. The only thing is, we don’t see it”. While we may not find Jesus in Church during this Advent, we will find Him in nature and events. We cannot be without Him. It’s impossible. The only thing is, we don’t see it”. While we may not find Jesus in Church during this Advent, we will find Him in nature and events. We cannot be without Him. It’s impossible.

Continued on page 4

**Helping Overcome Loneliness and Isolation in These Difficult Times**

Just before the pandemic hit in March, I wrote in Our Parish Times about an idea that I and others were very excited about. We were about to kick off an effort to increase intergenerational engagement, to bring younger and older generations together to grow, strengthen, and support one another.

We even had a convocation scheduled on Engagement Across the Generations that was cancelled due to the pandemic. It was disappointing but still the right decision not to gather in big numbers during COVID-19. We remain unable to hold the convocation due to the continuing spike in cases, but I’m thrilled to report that the effort is still very much on our radar screen, and we are making progress even in these challenging times.

Since the summer, two of our local Catholic high schools have worked diligently to provide opportunities for their students to connect with our parishioners.

Continued on page 8

**Author Valerie Tripp and her S.M.A.R.T. Squad Inspiration at St John the Evangelist School**

Valerie Tripp, beloved author of many of the American Girl books, has the first book of a new series available now. The characters in Izzy Newton and the S.M.A.R.T. Squad: Absolute Hero are bright and inquisitive sixth-grade girls who Solve Mysteries And Reveal Truth. In this STEM-inspired series, Ms. Tripp wanted the characters to be authentic, so she did much of her research at St. John the Evangelist School in Silver Spring.

Two years ago, she had several “Lunch Bunch” meetings with the school’s sixth-grade girls. As Ms. Tripp explains in the acknowledgment section of her new book: “My bright, beguiling Lunch Bunch girls… inspired, encouraged, informed, and delighted me every time we met. I’d bring animal crackers and questions, and they’d bring enthusiasm, insights, and answers.” Ms. Tripp also thanked the girls’ sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Maureen Rossi, for all her help coordinating the visits.

The girls are now eight-graders, and three weeks ago they had a wonderful surprise. Their current Language Arts teacher, Miss Emily Pacconi, had been corresponding with Ms. Tripp. Now that the book has been published, Ms. Tripp wanted to sponsored a Quo Vadis event for young men exploring the possibility of becoming priests. The event began with participants attending the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass at St. John Neumann and the homilist and main celebrant at the Mass was Father Mark Ivany, the Archdiocesan Director of Priest Vocations at St. John Paul II Seminary in D.C. Concelebrating was Father Stefan Yap, SJ. The school’s S.M.A.R.T. Squad was there as well.

Continued on page 13

**The Service of Sisters Enriches St. Martin’s**

Over its 100-year history, St. Martin’s parish has been blessed by the presence and service of two orders of nuns, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the Dominican Sisters of our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, an order of teaching nuns, has the early history of St. Martin’s Parish. The Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, Srs. Mariana and Providencia are Dominican Sisters of our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. They minister to St. Martin’s families and are actively engaged in religious education and social work within the parish. Photo courtesy of St. Martin’s Parish.

Continued on page 16
Holy Redeemer’s Container of Love

“Will it all fit in the container?” thought Fr. Bill Ryan as he surveyed the three rooms at Holy Redeemer Church in Kensington full of donations for the mission he heads in Togo, West Africa. There were two rooms of over 500 boxes full of canned foods, household goods, religious articles, medical, school, and office supplies. In another very large room were tools of every variety, furniture, rugs, and musical instruments, including two pianos and an organ.

Fr. Ryan, a son of Holy Redeemer, began to discern his priestly vocation while a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo. For the past 14 years he has lived in the village of Achatnreve where he serves as founding pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

In addition to evangelization efforts and serving the spiritual needs of a growing parish, the mission has carried out impressive infrastructure development projects to meet the human needs of the people in this rural area, including schools and a health care clinic.

In 2019, Holy Redeemer and Our Lady of Guadalupe were joined as sister parishes. Fr. Mark Hughes, Pastor of Holy Redeemer, and two parishioners traveled to West Africa to visit the mission, returning with pictures and reports of the good works being done in Togo. And the parishioners of Holy Redeemer responded with a generous outpouring of support.

This September, during Fr. Ryan’s annual visit to the Archdiocese of Washington, Holy Redeemer embarked on campaign to donate supplies and equipment desperately needed by the mission. Collection proceeded for the month of September, culminating with Container Day on October 3, when parishioners (wearing masks and social distancing) filled a large cargo container set to travel to Togo by ship. And yes, everything fit.

Faith and Imagination

Faith and imagination – clearly the one requires the other – maybe that’s why our children accept the tenets of our faith so easily. They are able to imagine what it must be like to stand at the Gates of Heaven and meet Saint Peter. They are quite sure that they have guardian angels watching over them – and they imagine that Jesus is holding their hands, leading them on their way. When they get on their knees and pray for everyone they love, and then they pray for the mailman, the teacher, and even their pets and every soul on earth – even that horrible cat.

As we get older, we become less able to imagine, and often less able to believe. We’ve taken risks, and we’ve failed. We’ve experienced devastating loss of loved ones, and we have abandoned prayer because it “doesn’t work” – meaning it hasn’t given us what we wanted.

Most of us turn to our faith when things are really really bad – suddenly we dig that Rosary out of the bottom drawer, or we go to daily Mass – we bargain and we beg, because we are scared. The thing is, if we only pray or go to Mass when we want something and we’re sure that what we want is what we need – we set ourselves up for disappointment. I have had to learn the hard way that God gives us what we need, but not always what we want. Desperation can cause us to turn back to our faith – but how do we stay there? We have to be willing to suspend the expectation that we will get a clear answer to our questions or perfect solutions to our problems, and we have to abandon the idea that we know what the outcome should be. Faith requires an understanding that we are in trouble, our best move is to trust God to help us get through. Faith pushes back on powerful forces in our lives, and it can be a lot easier to give in and give up on faith when we want to do is hold on tight, and trust God.

When we face the despair of loss, we don’t hear the answers, or we don’t understand that when we are in trouble, our best move is to trust God to help us get through. Faith pushes back on powerful forces in our lives, and it can be a lot easier to give in and give up on faith when we want to do is hold on tight, and trust God.

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J&A Council

Catholic social teaching and the call to holiness

By Anthony Bosnick

Well, the 2020 presidential election is finally over. So now, let’s pause and look ahead. There will be more elections at the national, state and local levels. There will be countless issues to consider. How do we form our minds so that we can vote according to the heart and mind of Christ? If we are believers and disciples of Christ, that is our challenge.

Consider what Pope Francis writes: “Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace. . . . You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavor.” This is from Gaudete et Exsultate, (no. 25), his 2018 apostolic exhortation. In English it is “On the Call to Holiness in Today’s World”. Hopefully, the call to holiness should draw us. This is what the Justice and Advocacy Council (J&A) tries to do at the local level in Montgomery County. Whether tax policies, minimum wages, transportation plans, we focus on the issues of the county. We ideally seek to do that in ways that reflect the central issues of Catholic social teaching (CST).

The call to holiness and the common good

Every four years since 1976, the Catholic bishops of the United States have published a guide for Catholics regarding the upcoming national election. This guide is “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States.” (We will abbreviate it FC.) The purpose is to help “everyone...participate in public life and contribute to the common good” (FC, p. vi).

In recent years, the bishops have focused on four principles of Catholic social and moral teaching to guide us in living out the gospel message and sharing it with the larger community. These principles are rooted in Scripture and the natural law. They “hang together” and reflect what Pope Francis teaches in his encyclical Laudato Si: “everything is related” and “everything is connected” (nos. 120, 91).

Below is a short summary of the four central principles of CST:

• The Dignity of the Human Person. At the core of CST is the understanding that “Human life is sacred.” And so, the Church stresses that “The dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society.” Thus “direct attacks on innocent persons are never morally acceptable,” including abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and the like” (FC, 43).

• Subsidiarity. The Church teaches that “it is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations” in which people gather or are organized (Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church, 185).

Subsidiarity teaches us that “larger institutions in society should not overwhelm persons and families.” And when “larger institutions should not be in this together and we need society.” Thus “direct attacks on innocent persons are never morally acceptable,” including abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and the like” (Compendium, 164). Americans tend toward super-individualism, with a “I come first” attitude. The common good teaches us that we are in this together and we need to work together.

The Virtual 24th Annual Patricia Sullivan Benefit for Potomac Community Resources

Every year for nearly a quarter-century, the members, volunteers, benefactors, community partners and supporters of PCR have gathered at the Annual Patricia Sullivan Benefits. These dinners, which honor the memory of the young woman whose life inspired the creation of Potomac Community Resources in 1994 at Our Lady of Mercy parish, celebrate the PCR community, raise awareness about the organization’s mission to support individuals with developmental differences, honor volunteers, and raise funds.

The 24th Annual Patricia Sullivan Benefit was originally scheduled for October 18, but is now virtual, joining other events that have gone online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is scheduled to stream online on Saturday, November 7, at 7 p.m. Additional information can be found at www.potomac-comm.org.

Maryland Launches COVID Contact Tracing App

As the number of COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths are rising, the state, local governments, health care entities and ministries are working to reduce infections. Today, Governor Larry Hogan announced new precautions. These include 50 percent capacity for religious institutions, suspended hospital visits, and additional restrictions on bars, restaurants and other entities.

Last week, the State of Maryland released a new mobile phone app to assist with contact tracing. MD COVID Alert pairs seamlessly with Maryland’s traditional contact tracing efforts by using Exposure Notifications technology to notify users who may have been exposed to an infected person. Instructions to activate the app, privacy information and more area available at: https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/mdcovidalert/

Whether or not you download the app, if you see a call coming in from “MD COVID,” the call is from a public health contact tracer alerting you to possible exposure. Please note: contact tracers will NOT ask for money, credit cards or other personal information. For information on COVID in Maryland, visit the Department of Health Coronavirus website.

Catholic Advocacy Network Update

Maryland Legislative Session Will Look Very Different

Empty State House chambers may be the new normal for the upcoming General Assembly, which opens January 13. Both the House and Senate have prepared detailed safety plans in light of the pandemic. Plans include facility enhancements and cleaning, corona virus testing (members anticipate being in Annapolis), virtual hearings, and limits on in-person public access that include appointments, a two-person visitor limit and escorts to meetings.

“The Maryland Catholic Conference staff is prepared to adapt to the new precautions,” said Executive Director Jenny Kraska. She noted, “We already have been attending hearings and meeting with legislators via video conferencing and have submitted testimony electronically during 43 session hearings earlier this fall. We also are adding text alerts to our Catholic Advocacy Network to...”
**Betty Serritella’s Journey through Cancer**

Betty and Jim Serritella have been active in St. Paul parish for decades and their example has been a source of inspiration. Betty has a long and successful fight with cancer. After her chemotherapy and radiology and surgery, when she emerged alive, they decamped to St. Lucia.

**St. Paul Catholic Church**

9250E Damascus Road

Damascus, Md.

Msgr. Edward Filardi

Pastor

301-253-2027

**John Cavanaugh-O’Keefe**

OPT Editor

cavanaughokeefe@gmail.com

**UPDATE**

Cont’d from page 3

make it easier for parishioners to participate in sharing their voice.”

In addition to text and email alerts, a Catholic Virtual Lobby Day will be held during the session.

**Get Text Action Alerts during Session**

You now can receive action alerts by text or email (or both) during the legislative session. Sign up or update your preferences with the Catholic Advocacy Network.

To sign up for text alerts, text CATHOLIC to 443-764-8765. You will receive a reply asking for your name, and then your zip code so we can tailor alerts for you to reach your legislators.

**BENEFIT**

Cont’d from page 3

March 14, but due to COVID, was postponed. It took place as a virtual event on Saturday afternoon September 26.

Thanks to the creative leadership of Benefit Chairs Carrie and Amir Assili, Caroline and Michael Hickey, and Rebecca and Rob Shaffer, and the generosity of a record number of supporters, the evening was a great success. Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory served as Honorary Benefit Chair and Fr. Bill Byrne kept the guests entertained and the evening flowing smoothly as Master of Ceremonies. Guest appearances by PCR members Matt Ficca, Matthew McKeenin, and Maurine Yap and the performance by the band Long Lost Cousins added to the fun.

Congratulations to 2020 award recipients Grace Stephens (Outstanding Youth Volunteer), Alice Erickson (Outstanding Adult Volunteer), and Michael C.T. Gardner (Outstanding PCR Staff member), for the well-deserved recognition they received.

PCR’s Virtual 24th Annual Patricia Sullivan Benefit is viewable on demand on PCR’s homepage www.pcr-inc.org.

**SHORT**

Cont’d from page 1

find Him in the love of all God’s creations.

This year the Catholic Business Network of Montgomery County honors exemplary business and volunteer leaders who “live their faith.” This year’s Businessperson of the Year is Robert Easby-Smith. Bob is a partner with Chesapeake Restaurant Group. Bob and his wife Anne are long time servant parishioners of Holy Redeemer in Kensington. Bob is the penultimate example of sustaining parish activism. For years, Bob was the parish Athletic Director helping to build Holy Redeemer’s successful athletic programs. Beyond parish service, Bob served on the Archdiocese’s CYO Board, the Catholic Charities Board, the Knights of Malta, and he and Ann served on the Board of Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School. Bob’s leadership on this board led to the school’s rapid success. His adoring family practices the commitment to Christian service they learned at home. He is most deserving of this honor. We celebrate as well, the Volunteer of the Year, Rev. Mike Conway SDB, and the Paul Zurkowski Founder’s Award winner, Mark Johannessen. Thank God for their leadership and example.

We celebrate the elevation of Archbishop Gregory to Cardinal by Pope Francis. In a relatively brief time in Washington, Cardinal Gregory has acted boldly to defend the vulnerable, promote racial justice, heal the wounds of child sexual abuse and clergy distrust, and open communication with the next President. We are blessed to have him as our leader. Indicative of his humility and values is his video response upon learning he had been designated a Cardinal: in celebrating, Cardinal Gregory’s humble request of us is to love one another, feed the hungry, and visit the elderly among other acts of kindness. The Good Shepherd knows the needs of His flock.

Following up on Cardinal Gregory’s specific call to visit the elderly, let’s return to a previous reflection, the important role that intergenerational relationships play in the lives of parishioners and Christian vitality of parishes. You may recall the Justice and Advocacy Council, Fr John Enzler and I advocating in previous OPT columns for parish-based intergenerational programs which enable older parishioners and younger ones to seek common opportunities for mutual support and heart to heart joy. Catholic Charities, working with the Justice and Advocacy Council, the Archdiocese, and an experienced nonprofit, Empowering the Ages, have partnered in designing pilot intergenerational programs for parishes and schools. That effort was slowed by the pandemic. The work of the partnership continues and now appears to be prophetic as we have seen that one of the most tragic impacts of the pandemic is the severe human isolation it has caused especially among our elderly neighbors.

In this edition of OPT, my dear friend and President of Catholic Charities, Fr John Enzler writes about the urgent need for a parish response to loneliness among older people. He, like Mother Teresa who he references, knows too personally that the greatest poverty of all is loneliness. Both urge heart to heart connections with people who are lonely. The examples he and Leah Bradley cite in their columns of Cristo Rey Don Bosco and Holy Child Schools demonstrate the mutual comfort that arises from intergenerational relationships.

Leah Bradley in her guest column (page S-), articulates the value of intergenerational relationships as a means of shared learning and growth. As Executive Director of Empowering the Ages, her vision is to connect generations to build and enhance each’s strengths while benefiting each other and their shared communities. She is advising our local Catholic effort. The testimonial from one of the students confirms the heartfelt value of the relationships. As the effort evolves over the coming months, she will be available to help other parishes and schools.

We are grateful to Cardinal Gregory and the Archdiocese’s Office of Social Justice for joining the partnership and providing vigorous leadership.

I don’t need proof of the value of intergenerational relationships; recently, per Thomas Merton, the Holy Spirit sent it anyway! My age has diminished me enough to make crawling into the storage area to fetch Christmas decorations a less joyful holiday tradition! Wearing face masks, my grandsons Kasey and John Paul stopped over and did the task for me. My grand-daughter Hannah and I were recently talking about the virus vaccine. We were both looking forward to returning to normal. My own loneliness struck me like a ton of bricks when she said with innocence and sincerity, “Pop-Pop, after you get vaccinated will I be able to hug you again?” My heart soared.

Let us open our hearts to Jesus and each other at Christmas.

Merry Christmas and God Bless!

Chuck Short

**Advertise in Our Parish Times**

Catholic Schools Week issue

Ad deadline January 20, 2021
Our Thriving Faith and Parish in Difficult Times

We have had as a parish many challenges in keeping in touch with our parishioners, enriching their spiritual lives, and continuing our growth, during this pandemic. We have met this challenge head on and we are thriving in faith!

As soon as Montgomery County shut down in March, St. Mary’s pastor, Fr. Kevin O’Reilly convened a volunteer committee to reach out to every person on our registry. Calls were made to check in with our parishioners, to assess their needs and to assure them that we are here for them. They were invited to participate in Masses and other activities via Zoom. The committee also developed an outreach program to help those who did not have access to the internet. The efforts of this committee were greatly appreciated.

As spring turned to summer and the weather improved, we held ‘outdoor masses’ to allow us to comply with the county regulations. The masses were held several times a month in a beautiful grove of trees that have been planted by St. Mary’s parishioners. The masses were well attended and greatly enjoyed by those who participated. The outdoor masses continued well into the fall.

We are grateful for the support of our parishioners and the community at large. Through our efforts we have been able to continue to grow and to thrive in faith. We look forward to the day when we can meet face to face again and enjoy our faith together.
As we prepare our hearts for Advent, St. Elizabeth School is grateful for a healthy and safe start to our school year. With careful planning and imaginative reinventions, our community has stayed strong and present for each other.

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Trust the NALLS with your real estate needs from Start to Finish.
St. Bartholomew Launches The Bobcat StoryWalks for Covid-Safe Multisensory Learning

With social distancing and other coronavirus precautions changing the face of in-class learning, St. Bartholomew has found a creative way to engage readers with Bobcat StoryWalks®. StoryWalks® are a unique way to bring picture books to life.

Across St. Bart’s 11-acre campus, students are guided from station to station. They find laminated pages of a storybook at each location along with engaging, multisensory projects that bring the tale to life.

“This is part treasure hunt, part reading, and part exercise all in one!” says reading specialist Laura Digges.

The school will change the story each month, so new adventures always await. The first StoryWalk® features a book called Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert. In the story, a Leaf Man is blown to many different settings and changes shape.

Students engage with the story by collecting leaves along the way and gluing them on construction paper to make their very own leaf people. Older students benefit from journaling from the perspective of the main character or writing thoughts on the book’s deeper themes, such as how people can change in different situations and maintain resilience.

The outdoor activity is ideal for learning in the time of Covid.

“So many multisensory reading activities have had to be tweaked because we aren’t sharing materials and we’re trying to keep up social distancing,” says Mrs. Digges. “I saw a social media story about a parks and recreation worker who set up a book trail along a bike path.”

Digges brought the idea to the whole St. Bartholomew staff, which was enthusiastic about launching the school’s very own StoryWalk®. Now it is being enjoyed by students, parishioners, and neighbors.

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library. StoryWalks® are now found across the USA and in 13 foreign countries. Here in Bethesda, all local families are invited to enjoy this new and exciting way of experiencing the magic of stories.

Simply come to the campus during non-school hours – and be sure to bring your imagination and curiosity!

Above, young readers enjoy the book Leaf Man through a series of outdoor stations on St. Bart’s 11-acre campus.

At right, a Leaf Man made by a young St. Bart’s student who enjoyed the StoryWalk.

Chmelik Wedding

Con’t from page 5

any needs that our parish might help address, and to offer prayers and support.

The committee continues to reach out periodically to our parishioners and community to see that they are doing as well as can be expected during these times.

We had virtual masses beginning at the end of March. A small liturgy team taped both daily and Sunday masses, including all of Holy Week services. The same small group continues to tape and post all Sunday masses to our YouTube Channel. Maggie Bartlett, our tireless video photographer, directs all the technology to stream the Sunday masses.

When Montgomery County permitted outdoor gatherings, our outdoor masses began with the Confirmation class of 2019-2020, who received this Sacrament as families gathered at the outdoor altar with lawn chairs, spread across the spacious grounds. Since then, Diane Yendrey, our Music Director, sets up the sound system for three outdoor masses. Parishioners bring their chairs, their umbrellas, their masks, and they are celebrating the Eucharist in person once again. It is a joyful sight!

Our Faith Formation Classes, Youth Group, and Bible Study Groups, began meeting in person and virtually in September. Early in October, the new class of Confirmation candidates from both seventh and eighth graders stood to profess their intentions at a Rite of Commitment. They will attend a virtual retreat in January.

The life of a parish is its people. The challenge is to see how we can continue to serve their needs, even in a pandemic. We pray for the safety of all our community!
ENZLER

Dentists and residents at local nursing and retirement homes to begin dialogue between the generations. The efforts at Holy Child and Don Bosco Cristo Rey have been very successful, and they remind us of the urgent need for relationships and “reaching out.” We are all betwixt and between, out of kilter with our usual human contact. Young people miss their friends and the social opportunities that school provides. Athletics, music, and drama programs have been changed or delayed. Even simple things like eating lunch together in the cafeteria, walking and riding the bus to school together, and study groups don’t exist. Our young people are acutely aware – particularly if they are about to graduate – that this school year is dramatically different because of COVID-19.

If you are in the older generation, perhaps already somewhat isolated in your own home or a retirement home, you undoubtedly miss the chance to be with your loved ones, see your grandchildren, and celebrate family events together. I know many of you received visits from your families every weekend before the pandemic, and it’s heartbreaking that has ended.

Mother Teresa said the most terrible poverty is loneliness. In my work at Catholic Charities, I see how loneliness can also lead to feelings of hopelessness. At this time of increased separation from each other, we must ask how we can expand our efforts in schools and retirement facilities to link up younger and older parishioners for study groups, as pen pals, for book clubs, zoom concerts and ongoing relationships.

When we were about to kick off this engagement across generations earlier this year, we had no idea that a pandemic would follow and cause so much struggle and isolation. It has been a perfect storm of bad news for old and young alike. We look forward to continuing to develop this effort with the Justice and Advocacy Committee of Montgomery County, the Archdiocese of Washington, Empowering the Ages, and Catholic Charities.

Leah Bradley, from Empowering the Ages, and Chuck Short have both written articles for this senior issue of Our Parish Times. They have been key leaders from the beginning, and I encourage you to read their thoughts as well.

I hope you will join with us and participate, if you are able, and help open doors that have been closed for youth and adults alike. This is something we can do from our home, or while social distancing and wearing masks. If you are interested in learning more, please call Leah Bradley, Executive Director of Empowering the Ages at: 301-476-0186 or email: leah@empoweringtheages.org

We don’t get explanations, but we do eventually find help – someone reaches out a hand. Someone holds hope for us when we have none. Someone prays for us when we cannot bring ourselves to believe that prayer matters. Our children and grandchildren can help us to reimagine what God has waiting for us and to remember that our friend Jesus never leaves us alone. It is through the kindness of other people and the love of family that we can rediscover our faith. Through them we can see that the light of God’s love remains, and He will help us find the way forward.

McGANN

Looking ahead

As we consider public policy options as we move forward, we need to use our heads and think about these options in terms of CST. It doesn’t help us grow in holiness or build the kingdom of God by giving knee-jerk responses that mimic political platforms removed from or devoid of Christian understanding.

“Forming Consciences” is relatively short at 43 pages of text. You can read it by searching for “Forming Consciences USCCB”. The original document and many resources explaining it are available online (www.usccb.org/resources/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship-pdf).

Join us for the next meeting of the J&A Council on January 27, by Zoom. Contact Larry Couch (lawrencecouch1@gmail.com) for more information.

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

J&A

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McGANN

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As we consider public policy options as we move forward, we need to use our heads and think about these options in terms of CST. It doesn’t help us grow in holiness or build the kingdom of God by giving knee-jerk responses that mimic political platforms removed from or devoid of Christian understanding.

“Forming Consciences” is relatively short at 43 pages of text. You can read it by searching for “Forming Consciences USCCB”. The original document and many resources explaining it are available online (www.usccb.org/resources/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship-pdf).

Join us for the next meeting of the J&A Council on January 27, by Zoom. Contact Larry Couch (lawrencecouch1@gmail.com) for more information.

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

J&A

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We don’t get explanations, but we do eventually find help – someone reaches out a hand. Someone holds hope for us when we have none. Someone prays for us when we cannot bring ourselves to believe that prayer matters. Our children and grandchildren can help us to reimagine what God has waiting for us and to remember that our friend Jesus never leaves us alone. It is through the kindness of other people and the love of family that we can rediscover our faith. Through them we can see that the light of God’s love remains, and He will help us find the way forward.

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DeChantal Reaching Out to Homebound Seniors

DeChantal Parishioners Remember Their Retirement Home Neighbors During the COVID Lockdowns

By Carol Ramirez

ext door to St. Jane de Chantal Church is Maplewood Park Place, a Senior Living Community with over DeChantal 40 parishioners. As part of the COVID-19 precautions, visits to all resi- dents were put on hold and all outings were suspended. Obviously, many of these home- bound parishioners started to feel increas- ingly isolated. Our pastor, Fr. Giese, asked the Pastoral Council in early April to assist with an outreach effort to the parishioners of the Maplewood Park Place.

A group of parishioners and Pastoral Council members immediately responded to the request to call and reach-out to the Maplewood Park parishioners. A Pastoral Council member compiled a 5 page list of resources with common questions and answers. The Archdiocese of Washington provided an excellent script which was easy to follow and very helpful. The script started out with us introducing ourselves as Parishioners, asking how the parish might be able to support them, a reminder that we can be together through our live-stream YouTube Mass, and closing with a prayer.

Many thanked them for calling and a few had some urgent requests like a request for last rites of the sick to a carton of cigarettes. Rosemary Hartley, a long-time parishioner of DeChantal, said “I appreciate the calls and love praying the “Hail Mary” and “Our Father”. Please pray for my 6 children, the aides at Maplewood, and all the doctors.” Plans to re-start this effort are under- way since COVID-19 cases have caused Maplewood to restrict visitors and outings.

DeChantal Kindergartner Brendan Flynn (middle) and his siblings Jude and Maggie dressed in Christmas gear and sang in a video to help advertise the completely online DeChantal Christmas Bazaar

DeChantal School’s Annual Christmas Bazaar Turned Virtual

Due to COVID Restrictions the Annual Bazaar Was Much Smaller and Online

By Michelle Flynn

S t. Jane DeChantal School’s annual Christmas Bazaar has been a major fundraiser for its Home and School Association. Every year, many parent volunteers transformed the school’s Christopher Hall into a beautiful winter wonderland. All types of vendors selling crafts, a large thrift store, and Scholastic Book sale would pack into the school’s gym and cafeteria with the proceeds going to the school. Santa would even make an appearance, read stories to the children, and posed for photos.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the chairs of the Bazaar, Ann Marie McCormick and Gabi Antonelli, and the school’s principal, Mrs. Hamilton decided to change the Bazaar this year to be a completely online experience. This meant that the school’s HSA could only continue to sell some of the Bazaar’s favorites; Raffle Tree tickets, Hostess Baskets, School Spirit Gear, and a new item, Live Wreaths. All advertising was online through the school’s social media outlets and forwarded along by its parents. The Bazaar was hosted by the school’s online store and it opened and closed the weekend before Thanksgiving. However, parishioners and school families can still order a live wreath until supplies run out.

Although the Bazaar was much smaller than previous years, the chairs and its volunteer elves were still in the holiday spirit and happy to help the school as Co-chair Gabi Antonelli explains, “We didn’t know what to expect, but it was a huge success thanks to the unwavering support from Mrs. Hamilton and our DeChantal Family.”

St. Jane de Chantal School Continues to Give During the Advent Season

Students and Their Families Donate Food and Clothing to Their Community

By Catherine Tomsheck

T he annual “Season of Giving” at St. Jane de Chantal School underwent few changes this fall to accommodate our Hybrid and Distance Learning format for the 2020-21 school year. This year stu- dents, teachers, and parents reached out to our traditional community organizations and added a new partner.

Collecting food for the Greg Gannon Food Drive and Assumption Parish in Washington. D.C. continued as bags of donated goods accumulated in classrooms, the atrium, and at the school’s front entrance. Thousands of items were donated, delivered, and helped restock shelves of community food banks throughout the area.

Hundreds of Christmas Shoeboxes were carefully filled and wrapped by students and delivered to SONE and the Sisters of Charity. Each Christmas Shoebox is filled with warm scarves, hats and gloves along with small items of necessity to add a bit of cheer and warmth for those who are homeless or living in a shelter this Christmas Season. This year, our school Annual Coat Drive, for the first time, partnered with the ADW Consortium Schools of Washington DC. Students of St. Jane de Chantal donated over 100 children’s new and gently used coats. These coats were distrib- uted to children attending ADW Consortium Schools. The students and families of St. Jane de Chantal school continue to pray for and actively reach out to help those in need as our school commitment to live Christ’s call to serve others is ongoing.
Zooming the Living Rosary at Our Lady of Lourdes

By Audrey Brown and Emerson Hardwick, OSKX Class of 2023

One of the things we do every year at Lourdes in October is the Living Rosary. We all gather in the church grotto and students form a rosary as our priest and altar servers process around, leading the community in prayer. This year our community celebrated the Living Rosary differently due to Covid-19. Since we could not stand around the grotto all together, we made a video of every class saying a part of the rosary and our principal, Ms. Moore, edited it all together. The video included each of the classes saying one decade of the Rosary. The eighth grade took responsibilities for recording the other prayers and reading the sorrowful mysteries. On the day of the event, students in their classrooms, students at home, and parents all joined together online to view the video and pray along with it. It was so great to see the whole school over zoom to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

We wanted to ask how some people thought this year’s Living Rosary went, so we asked Mike Melluzzo, Ms. Capizzi, and Father James. Our science teacher Ms. Capizzi, who is a graduate of Lourdes, said she missed the community aspect of standing around the grotto as a school, and that she felt sad that we couldn’t all be together in person. She said that it was still special to be together praying the Rosary. We all agree that this year was definitely missing something, but seeing everyone on zoom as a community was still an amazing way to celebrate. Father James was the priest who led the Living Rosary and he said it was nice to still be able to be a community and celebrate together. Mike Melluzzo, a sixth grader, said that he still enjoyed the Living Rosary, and that we did the best we could. The video that the school made was definitely a great way to celebrate this occasion.

Covid-19 definitely affected the way we did the Living Rosary this year, but we are proud to say that we found a way to make this year’s Living Rosary a special time to remember at Our Lady of Lourdes. The rosary video was even shared with everyone so they can use it to pray at any time.

Thankful for our Grandparents at Our Lady of Lourdes

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Our Lady of Lourdes School celebrates Grandparents’ Day as students and staff head into the holiday weekend. Taking time to thank the grandparents in our community for their prayers, support, and guidance is a blessing for all involved. With Covid-19 restrictions in place, the creativity of the OLOL teachers and students was truly on full display this year.

Each year, the students and their teachers work on performances to honor the grandparents. This year, students and teachers made recorded performances with students doing actions, dances, or using sign language to accompany the songs. All students, including those learning from home, were represented in the videos. All hands were on deck as art teacher Mrs. Hussey and some of her students created beautiful artwork as a backdrop for the filming. Ms. Addison and her kindergarten class filmed their annual First Thanksgiving Play, music teacher Mrs. Parcon lead the students in practicing for their performances and recording them, and OLOL principal Ms. Moore edited and compiled the video clips. As Mrs. Parcon noted, “Although limited to just a video this year, our school only proved that we can still work together and come up with ways to celebrate Grandparents’ Day.”

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Eight-grade students use signs to accompany their Grandparents’ Day song.

Young Adult Ministry Thriving at Our Lady of Lourdes

Fr. Rob Walsh arrived at Our Lady of Lourdes from the University of Maryland’s Catholic Student Center in late July, but he didn’t leave behind the young men and women whom he had mentored during their college years at the College Park Campus. Many have found the same Catholic fellowship through the rejuvenation of the Lourdes’ parish Young Adults Group.

Fr. Rob was chaplain of the University of Maryland for ten years, ministering to thousands of students. When many might relate the college years as a time of dimin...
St. Mary's School Honors Mrs. Sweet

St. Mary's School honored Kindergarten Teacher, Mrs. Kelly Sweet, on Friday, November 13 with a surprise ice cream party for the entire school. In person and virtual learners gathered on Zoom to present Mrs. Sweet with her official Golden Apple and a gift from the HSA to acknowledge that she is the Golden Apple of our eye!

Mrs. Sweet has brought the faith to her students for over 20 years, teaching them about their role in God's creation through her classroom pets, courtyard garden, and many lessons about loving one another. We are thankful for the opportunity to finally honor Mrs. Sweet and proud that she is recognized as a Golden Apple Award winner!

Advertise in Our Parish Times
Catholic Schools Week issue
Ad deadline January 20, 2021

Halloween at St. Mary

Not even COVID can stop the Halloween Fun at St. Mary’s School! Students and teachers alike enjoyed the day in costume and participated in parties for in person and virtual learners. (pictures below)

MINISTRY

(continued from previous page)

ishing faith for young people, especially at a large public university, UMD’s Catholic Student Center was a haven for students wishing to foster a closer relationship with Christ. After graduation, these men and women are now finding the same camaraderie at Our Lady of Lourdes in Bethesda.

On Tuesday evenings, the young adults, many of whom are now young professionals or graduate school students, begin their evening with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Mass offered by Fr. Rob or newly ordained Fr. James Morrison. Then they make use of the extensive outdoor space adjacent to the Church to socialize. This is an opportunity to reconnect with former classmates and build new relationships with local young Catholic men and women. And once the Covid restrictions are lifted, they will make use of the many popular restaurants and meeting spots in nearby downtown Bethesda.

Former Terps, Kevin Stoll and Brendan Keane, are two mainstays of the revitalized Young Adults Group. They are both middle school teachers at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, where they pass on their devotion to Christ to their students. They incorporate their love for the faith and Catholic traditions into their teaching and their Lourdes students are showing renewed enthusiasm to live their faith in school, at home, and throughout their communities.

Any college graduate or those between the ages of 22 and 35 are welcome to join the Lourdes Young Adults. They only require a thirst for a closer relationship with God and the Blessed Mother, a willingness to learn more about the Catholic faith, and a desire to meet other like-minded individuals.
Still Scouting safely with Saint Bernadette Boy Scout Troop 440

70 years of Adventure - Proudly serving St. Bernadette’s Parish, School and the Community

By Laura Nichols

Going strong since March, Boy Scout Troop 440 continues to actively engage in fun, socially distant and masked outdoor activities and meetings while developing and exploring new skills, and providing service to the community. One of the biggest benefits of this small troop is their ability to engage and connect easily and safely because of their numbers.

In October, Troop 440 safely hosted a small cub scouting camping weekend and taught rising Webelos knot tying, Leave No Trace principles, fire building and first aid—all while having fun outside! In November, they backpacked another 10 miles of the Maryland segment of the Appalachian Trail, following a shorter September segment of 7 miles. Plans for December and January are already in place, with a focus on winter camping including dressing appropriately, campfire cooking and some fun outdoor activities to stay warm throughout the day.

St. Bernadette Troop 440 enjoys a socially distanced, masked up meeting on the campus field.

Do you have a son in grades 6–12 who loves outdoor adventures? Get connected to the boy scouts of Troop 440 at St. Bernadette in Silver Spring to learn more about what scouting safely looks like in the current environment. Contact Scoutmaster Nichols (troop440scoutmaster@gmail.com) for more information.

Why Join Scouting? The life lessons learned in Scouting form a foundation to embrace opportunity and overcome obstacles in life.

• A fun and safe environment to explore and grow while developing interests and skills
• Character building and development centered around morals and values
• The chance to learn life skills that help Scouts be successful adults and contributing members of society
• Exciting outdoor experiences kids love like hiking, camping, mountain biking, and more

Oh, Christmas Tree Joy Available at Saint Bernadette!

By the Saint Bernadette CYO

Happy Advent and an Early Merry Christmas to each of you! Christmas tree sales are in full swing on our front lawn. The lights are on and the fire is burning. It is always great to see people’s eyes light up when they find THEIR tree. You can see the joy. And in 2020, we can all use that glimpse of joy. So, please come on out to the Christmas tree lot and join us to buy a tree and say hello. We promise you will get a glimpse of the joy.

Until we can get sports back up and running, we wish you a very, Merry Christmas. Stay Active and may God bless you abundantly in this season of preparation leading up to the joy of Christmas.

With gratitude and humble hearts, we participated in our time-honored tradition of supplying Thanksgiving dinners to The Father McKenna Center. The outpouring of community generosity and relentless belief that we could safely make this happen in the time of pandemic, delivered 67 turkeys, 80 bags of side dish items and a check for $587 for their food pantry to assist with their work in meeting the demands of food insecurity and in ending hunger. A cornucopia of Greater Love!

St. Bernadette Parish
70 University Blvd., East
Silver Spring, MD
Rev. Msgr. K. Bartholomew Smith
Pastor
301-593-0357
St. Bernadette School
Mr. Ted Ewanciw, Principal
301-593-5611
Kate Doyle Rodgers, OPT Editor
301-593-5611
A small but determined group of St. John the Evangelist Junior Kindergarten students was set on serving Thanksgiving dinner. Usually, the students invite their parents to their classroom feast. But this year, with visitors to school limited, the four-year-olds still made decorations, set the table, and dished out the food their parents prepared. They were steadfast in their endeavor. Even the Pilgrims would have been proud!

With the coronavirus dictating everything we do at school, there are signs of its effect everywhere. There are six-foot markers down the hallways and outside around the school. Desk spaces are marked off in classrooms. Play areas are designated for each class on the playground.

So on one recent rainy day, when classes could not go outside for recess, the fourth grade was allowed to spend recess time in the gym. Without missing a beat, and without instruction from any adult, they set up a game they could all play and remain physically distanced. So with masks still in place, they spent the time running and laughing and enjoying the companionship of each other. What a testament to the resiliency of children!

Our parish’s Boy Scout troop does a brisk Christmas tree business every year. Undaunted by the crowd-gathering restrictions in place in Montgomery County, they are open for business, with a twist. Not wanting to disappoint their regular customers, the Scouts took orders for trees in advance and scheduled pickup times for each family, allowing their faithful patrons to once again enjoy the beautiful trees provided each year. These Scouts live up to their motto to be prepared.

With half of our students attending class in person and the other half at home, there are some inherent challenges. Although classes are live-streamed, there has to be an occasional textbook and supplies pickup. But what do you do about Science class labs? St. John the Evangelist Science teacher, Milenka Gutierrez, has reformatted most of her labs so the students at home can use household “chemicals” to perform experiments. With salt and ammonia, baking powder and paper clips, she has her fledgling chemists busy at home making science come alive.

For Veterans Day, St. John’s Home School Association sponsored a fundraiser to honor our active military and veterans. School and parish families could purchase small flags to honor someone in the military who is dear to them. The flags were then placed along the sidewalk in front of the school creating a meaningful reminder to us all of the sacrifices these men and women have made for our country. Proceeds from the sale were given to Fisher House at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Fisher Houses provides a home away from home for families of patients admitted for medical care at Walter Reed and for patients receiving outpatient care.

S.M.A.R.T.

Con’t from page 1

S.M.A.R.T.

Come back and see the girls. Miss Pacconi arranged a reunion that took place in the school library. When the girls walked in the room, they squealed with delight when they saw Ms. Tripp! She brought each girl a goodie bag filled with an autographed copy of the new book and, of course, animal crackers! The girls were delighted.

Ms. Tripp gave a short speech thanking the girls for their help. In sharing their sixth-grade thoughts on what it was like to be going to Middle School, the ups and downs of peer relationships, the academic challenges they would face, and their concerns and interests, Ms. Tripp said she was inspired to give characters certain traits and she got lots of ideas for future stories. She told the girls how much she had looked forward to their lunches together and how she felt they had all formed a special bond. She also asked them about the challenges they were facing now. No one could have predicted last March they these girls would view school, and the world, in such a different way due to the coronavirus pandemic. There were quite a few misty eyes at the end of her speech.

Ms. Tripp’s new book is published by National Geographic Kids. They wanted to film this reunion, but Ms. Tripp wished for this time to be private with just the girls and her. Miss Pacconi is working with National Geographic to plan future activities with Ms. Tripp and the girls in this ongoing relationship.

The girls at St. John the Evangelist will always remember their special time in sixth grade and their friendship with a wonderful and kind American author.
Fall Small Groups Are Smaller in Number, but Rich in Quality of Their Discussions

By Melissa Monteleone Egan

Dur­ing a time when the faith­lines of so many Catho­lics have been upended by the pandemic, 40 St. Francis of Assisi parishioners sought familiar­ity and fellowship this fall in small group dis­cus­sions focused on the Gospel of Mark, which offered context for litur­gal read­ings in the Church year that began November 29.


Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick said COVID-19 has broadly impacted small groups this fall, affecting both the num­ber of participants and the num­ber of groups involved. About half the number of parishioners who usually participate in fall small groups took part, while the number of groups fell by nearly half, compared with previous autumns.

“One thing I found quite inter­est­ing is that one group deci­ded this fall after a few ses­sions not to con­tinue, because for them, the fellow­ship of meeting in homes with light refreshments and other discussion was an impor­tant part of their experience,” Bosnick said.

The move­ment of the small groups from in-person dis­cus­sions to virtual con­ver­sa­tions played a major role in par­ticipants’ experi­ences as well. Parish­ioner Janice De­Mare, who has participated in a small group with seven other parishion­ers for two years, said the conver­sa­tions over the Zoom platform were always engage­ng – but you could feel something was missing.

“You have a certain cam­araderie when you’re together,” De­Mare said. “I think everyone would have preferred to meet in person.”

While meeting over Zoom made it easier to gather, Bosnick said the personal inter­ac­tion was more limited. In the future, Bosnick said groups might want to con­sider what works best for them and then be able to choose whether they meet in person or online.

“It is the spirit of the partic­i­pants that helps determine how the group functions,” he said.

De­Mare could not agree more. Her group is led by parish­ion­ers Rose­mary Hude­check and Mar­ianne Moore, both retired edu­ca­tors with an extensive know­ledge of Scripture. Their small group of nine people began meeting October 27, finished the first Gospel of Mark book the week of Thank­s­giv­ing and plans to recon­vene for the second book discussion on January 12.

“It’s the best — you learn so much and you have fellowship and friendship,” De­Mare said.

“We’ve just become very close. We are like family.”

Video Platforms and Productions Have Kept Parishioners Connected to Their Church

By Melissa Monteleone Egan

As St. Francis of Assisi Parish navigates its ninth month of celebra­ting Masses, praying togeth­er and continue­ing minis­try work dur­ing the pandemic, one fact seems clear in the new church envi­ron­ment — the use of video platforms and produc­tions will be part of parish life for the foreseeable future.

After arch­diocesan churches closed on March 14, the parish trans­itioned to using the Zoom plat­form for virtual prayer opportunities and Religious Edu­cation, Youth Min­istry and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults meet­ings. The parish pre­miered its first virtual Mass on March 22 on the parish YouTube Channel.

Several months into the pandemic, the Music Min­istry pre­miered its first choir record­ing, also on YouTube.

Since then, the Com­mu­nications Min­istry’s video produc­tion team has taken over the recorded Sunday online Mass and Voive Mass in the Time of Pandemic. It has also pro­duced several packages that melded music, video footage, prayer, and testimonies, including a May Crowning Service and a virtual Haiti Benefit Concert this fall.

Fr. John Dillon said he believes the video ministry has played a cru­cial role in keep­ing parishion­ers con­nected to their church during the pandemic, as well as the pas­sing of George Floyd under a police officer’s knee that the topic of systemic racism and personnel is not racist and that is uncomfortable believing that they are personally not racist and that is uncomfortable believing that they are personally not racist and that is uncomfortable believing that they are personally not racist.

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The 40 St. Francis parishioners participating in fall small groups are studying the Gospel of Mark, using these texts published by Little Rock Scripture Study.

Members of the Cronise family help Christmas Tree Sale Ministry Coordinator Brian Pettit, as he saws off part of a Frasier Fir tree trunk just sold at the St. Francis Christmas Tree Sale on November 29. The parish’s annual Christmas Tree Sale is open through Sunday, December 13, in front of the church from 9 am-8 pm on weekends and 3-8 pm on weekdays or until supplies last.

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The Catholic Sun

“We are like family.”

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The movement of the small groups from in-person discussions to virtual conversations played a major role in participants’ experiences as well. Parishioner Janice DeMare, who has participated in a small group with seven other parishioners for two years, said the conversations over the Zoom platform were always engaging — but you could feel something was missing.

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While meeting over Zoom made it easier to gather, Bosnick said the personal interaction was more limited. In the future, Bosnick said groups might want to consider what works best for them and then be able to choose whether they meet in person or online.

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VIDEO

Con’t from page 14

ected to the parish and church dur- ing the pandemic. He sees this most keenly in the prayer opportunities that Zoom has provided.

“People have started to make connections with each other, and deeper bonds are forming,” Fr. John said. “Some of this may be because of the hardships we are commonly enduring. Still, I see that the video opportunities have made these connections possible.”

The parish’s toe dip in experi- menting with video platforms last spring and deeper dive in producing more polished productions this fall has illustrated that there is a place for all kinds of talents in a parish. Alexander Scaltrito serves on the Communication Ministry’s video production team, working to shoot and edit video footage and offering strategic communications advice to the ministry.

Scaltrito oversaw the shooting of the virtual May Crowning service, working with Fr. John, Director of Music Janet Pate and two parishion- ers in producing a service that com- bined footage of the pastor in the St. Clare Chapel, the music director performing from her home and the parishioners sharing a reading and Prayers of the Faithful from their homes.

“I think one thing the pandemic has taught us is that there’s an appe- tite for this type of content,” Scaltrito said. “There’s value in filming the Mass and other religious events. If we can spread the Gospel message in more than one way, in more than one method, why not pursue that?”

Pate worked with the video pro- duction team on the May Crowning and the Haiti Benefit Concert. She is now gearing up for her ministry’s role in the virtual Christmas Mass.

“The virtual Christmas Mass will be a wonderful gift to the parish because viewers will again be wor- shipping from the church, they will hear favorite Christmas carols and they will be able to sing along to all of the music of the Mass,” Pate said.

Mary of Nazareth

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Mary of Nazareth Catholic School

14131 Seneca Road, Darnestown, MD 20874

www.maryofnazareth.org

Advertise in Our Parish Times
Catholic Schools Week issue
Ad deadline January 20, 2021

Grandparents Day
Even from Afar!

By Katie Schultz

W e have had to modify many of our school activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as most schools have had to do. Graduations, class trips, holiday celebrations and one of our most beloved traditions, Grandparents Day. Each year, our grandparents come into the school to spend time in class with their grandchildren. Parent volunteers meticulously plan a schedule to allow for grandpar- ents to rotate classes with each of their grandchildren and see multiple subjects. Teachers plan interactive activities that involve anything from students learning more about their grandparents’ past or engaging grandparents in interactive games or projects. Afterwards, our school community gathers together to celebrate Mass right before the Thanksgiving holiday. It truly is an event to look forward to! This year, our grandparents day was modified to make it safe for students, staff, and families to enjoy the celebra- tion even from a distance.

Each month, Mary of Nazareth School focuses on one of the Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. “The Church’s social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society.” (USCCB) These principles encourage and remind Catholics of the life and dignity of the human person and our responsibility to participate in solidarity with all members of our community. Our administra- tion asked families to send in a picture of a family member depicting their culture, history, and/or ancestry to be used for a virtual grandparent day celebration. From this information, a slide show was created to showcase family pictures and the stories combined to be used in a special version of morning announcements and our virtual waiting room for a virtual grandparents day Mass. We heard from numerous families who had interesting stories about how their families immigrated to America as well as brave family members who served our country in numerous wars. More specifically, we had great-grandparents who were forced to walk to Trail of Tears as members of the Seminole tribe in the early 1800s and a great-grandfather who worked on the White Pass Railroad for 53 years and was introduced to Queen Elizabeth of England and her husband Prince Phillip, who were his passengers in 1957.

Although we were not physically together this year for this beloved celebration, Mary of Nazareth was blessed to be able to spend time with families and showcase our rich diversity.

Some of the ancestral pictures that were submitted by Mary of Nazareth families!
Thinking about the priesthood and Neumann House across the street served on the back porch of the which has produced so many good, being such a prayerful powerhouse, who is able to give true bread to with Him who is the true King and to be fed and to be in relationship humble servants who go to Jesus their own little kingdoms, but as not as knowledgeable masters of leadership in the Church, about spoke about recent reports of failed 2020 and now the Parochial Vicar at a Diocesan priest newly ordained in a card and pray for a particular all Archdiocesan seminarians are for spearheading the Archdiocese’s Vocations Tree program when, during Lent, individualized cards with pictures and information about all Archdiocesan seminarians are hung on a tree and parishioners at more than half the parishes in the Archdiocese are then able to select a card and pray for a particular seminarian. Many of the 12 young men and 3 seminarians who participated in the Quo Vadis event knew each other from parish or home school youth groups. One participant noted that it is a lot easier to consider the priesthood when you already know friends or acquaintances that have gone on before you.

Students in grades K-4 were featured in one song, students in grades 5-8 in another, and the pre-school students did a dance routine. Lastly, the kindergarten play aired, and then students and grandparents were all invited to “unmute” for a final farewell and exchange of best wishes. Grandparents from all over the country and even other parts of the world were able to join in the celebrations this year, and the performers were a timely reminder about how blessed the community of Our Lady of Lourdes is to have its students, staff, parents, and grandparents working together to advance the school and parish mission.

On November 10, the Vatican released a report detailing the Vatican’s knowledge, decision-making, and investigation related to former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick from the years of 1930 to 2017. According to Vatican officials, this report was prepared by the Secretariat of State by mandate of Pope Francis. After his complete reading of the report, Washington’s then Cardinal-Diocese Wilton Gregory released the following statement on November 16.

As Archbishop of Washington I naturally began reading the long and difficult report on the Vatican’s investigation of Theodore McCarrick with a keen personal interest in how our beleaguered Archdiocese would be portrayed. Almost immediately, though, as anxious as I had been to learn what might be revealed about this local Church I have come to love so much, I realized this was exactly the wrong approach.

In the end, this tragic chronicle is not primarily about individual dioceses. It is about unconscionable human violation and the pain that too many people endured at the hands of a deceitful man who only pretended to want what was best for them in order to get what he wanted for himself. Further, it is about leaders who allowed themselves to be misled by the promises they received from others. It is about the people who should have been and were asked to protect and respect the men and women who communicated to former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick with a keen personal interest in how our beleaguered Archdiocese would be portrayed. Almost immediately, though, as anxious as I had been to learn what might be revealed about this local Church I have come to love so much, I realized this was exactly the wrong approach.

The Vatican’s report demands to be viewed through the eyes of the survivors and their loved ones without prejudice to where they may have first encountered Theodore McCarrick or where they may be today. As has happened too often in recent history, it revealed to me and to you dark corners of our Church of which I am deeply ashamed and profoundly angry – again. It pushed into sunlight a culture that has too often served not to build up our cherished Catholic Church – Jesus Christ’s greatest Gift to us – but to undermine it, far beyond the moral ecclesiastical tenure of a single fallen cleric. Those of us in leadership have too often failed to understand, to acknowledge, to respond to, and to prevent the damage done to our innocent faithful – minors and adults.

In the report there were mercifully no revelations of sexual abuse alleged to have been perpetrated in this Archdiocese, and while I am of course grateful for that, it provides little comfort. I promise you with all my heart that our vigilance in the Archdiocese of Washington will continue – we will support the healing of those who have been harmed, our protocols for reporting and responding to these crimes will continue unabated of the Holy Catholic Church, one must never again feel constrained to come forward and speak out. Pope Francis has already put into place procedures designed to uncover the truth in such cases of clerical and hierarchical wrongdoing.

The Church has taken a step forward, albeit much delayed, in looking honestly at both this particular case and at the future of ecclesial accountability. How large and how enduring a step remains to be proven to the countless people we have disappointed. There are challenges to our integrity that must be overcome before we can move forward, and yet paradoxically it seems we can’t move meaningfully forward until that integrity is restored. This will require time and transparency, contribution and commitment, prayer and reconciliation, authenticity and humility. I humbly beg for God’s Mercy for myself and for my brothers in the episcopacy. I implore our Heavenly Father to shower His Grace upon all whose faith has been tested too often by what we have done and what we have failed to do.

Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.
Connecting the Generations

By Leah Bradley, Executive Director, Empowering the Ages

Empowering the Ages is a non-profit organization transforming lives through facilitating and nurturing relationships across all generations. We connect people to each other and their communities to share, learn, and feel valued. As the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Empowering the Ages, I have a special passion for our organizational mission. I had a very close relationship with my grandparents, and through learning about my family’s past, I learned to appreciate all those who came before me and that we all have something to offer others. It’s through learning about my family history that I learned that my great-great-aunt Edith Stein became Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. While known for her teachings and her passion for her beliefs, I never really had the opportunity to communicate with before. I see this program as an opportunity to fill a social gap and discourage the negative stereotypes among generations, as well as build relationships and learn new things. I feel this program is especially wonderful to participate in during this difficult and sad time in our world. I am excited to continue spending time with the residents and continue this amazing experience!

Empowering the Ages staff provide aging sensitivity training for students, and, alongside school staff, act as facilitators for the Zoom discussions. The many conversation topics have ranged from careers, to holiday travel experiences, with all participants both asking and answering questions. As shared by a staff member of one of the Crossing Paths senior community partners, “The past months dealing with the Covid virus has left many of our residents feeling lonely and isolated. I can assure you, their participation in your Crossing Paths program has brightened their spirits and re-juvenated a sense of worth and purpose in the community. Since we started “Zooming” with the students, it has become an integral part of the resident’s week. They speak about the students, look forward to the meetings, and anxiously wait for the next week’s set of questions! I can’t thank you enough for including us in your program. It is wonderful to see our residents excited to share their life experiences with your students.”

We are enthusiastic to continue this work and expand our Crossing Paths programs so we can connect, empower and learn from each other. Consider joining our Crossing Paths program to offer an opportunity for your community members to stay connected and feel less lonely and isolated during this challenging time. Contact eta@empoweringtheages.org, 301-476-0186 or visit www.empoweringtheages.org to learn more.

Catholic Health Care Planning Video

Continual advances in medical technology bring many blessings but they may also pose complex ethical questions. Who will make decisions about your medical care if you get very sick or are nearing the end of your life?

A new one-hour on-demand webinar offered by the Maryland Catholic Conference will walk you through Catholic teaching, health care directives, and understanding options such as hospice or palliative care from experts who include Rev. Michael DeAscanis, STL, attorney Shannon Hammond, and nurse practitioner Joan Panke.

Watch the video plus get a Catholic-friendly advanced directive (available in English and Spanish) for use in Maryland, resources on Catholic teaching, tips for talking with your family about your wishes, and more at mdcatholic.org/endoflife.

Victory Haven Opened
A Haven for Seniors Opens in Damascus

Victory Haven, a 72-unit affordable rental community for seniors in Damascus, opened this summer. The four-story apartment building is near St. Paul Catholic Church, the town library and senior center. Developed by Victory Housing, the nonprofit affordable housing development arm of the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, the community includes 54 one-bedroom and 18 two-bedroom apartments available to house-holds with incomes at or below 30%, 40%, 50%, and 60% of area median income. Rents range between $820 and $1,505. Residents of thirty of the households will pay only 30% of their income towards rent.

Continued on page S12
AT HOME CARE, Inc.

Since 1977 At Home Care, Inc. is committed to being the Helping Hand for Aging in Place. AT HOME CARE, INC. is an industry leader in improving the options and alternatives that homecare offers. Let our experience help you in meeting your home care needs.

AT HOME CARE, Inc. is a licensed agency that reaches out to persons, one on one, to assist with the activities of day to day living. Our agency of professionals brings affordable assisted living to the individual in the comfort of their own home.

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- Personal care and hygiene
- Medication reminders
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AT HOME CARE, INC.

Architect’s rendering of The Seneca of Rockville

New Assisted Living Community Coming to Rockville

Construction is underway on The Seneca of Rockville, a $76 million senior housing community at the northwest corner of the intersection of West Gude Drive and Route 355 adjacent to the King Farm mixed-use community. The anticipated opening date is in late summer 2021.

The facility will have 116 assisted living and 30 memory care apartments. Floor plans range from studio to one and two-bedroom apartments. The Seneca of Rockville is being developed by Dallas-based Silverstone Senior Living. It is the first property for Silverstone in Montgomery County.

Watermark Retirement Communities will operate the facility. Based in Tucson, Arizona, Watermark currently manages 58 communities in 21 states. Watermark communities feature dozens of classes and regular outings for residents.

The six-story building, expected to be open by 2022, will be approximately 155,000 square feet in gross floor area and will include an underground parking garage. Amenities will include a wellness center and spa, art studio, massage services, salon, gaming and billiards rooms, multiple dining venues as well as multipurpose community spaces designed for lectures, live performances, spiritual or special programming.

Age Increases Risk of Hospitalization for COVID-19 Patients

Older adults are at greater risk of requiring hospitalization or dying if they are diagnosed with COVID-19. As you get older, your risk of being hospitalized for COVID-19 increases. Eight out of ten COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults 65 years or older.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Hospitalization Rate</th>
<th>Death Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29 years</td>
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<td>30-39 years</td>
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<td>4x higher</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>3x higher</td>
<td>10x higher</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-64 years</td>
<td>4x higher</td>
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<td>65-74 years</td>
<td>5x higher</td>
<td>90x higher</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>8x higher</td>
<td>220x higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+ years</td>
<td>13x higher</td>
<td>630x higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit cdc.gov/coronavirus for steps to reduce your risk of getting sick.
Do you know someone who cannot get to Mass?

Since 1952, the Archdiocese of Washington has produced a weekly televised Mass for those who are homebound. It is a wonderful ministry for those members of our Catholic family who are unable to be physically present with members of our Catholic family who are unable to be physically present with a local worshiping community for those who cannot get to Mass?

Our Parish Times

Ways to Safely Sell your Home during COVID-19

Have you decided it is time to move, but are nervous about safety? The traditional method of selling a home with unlimited buyer showings and open houses may feel daunting, but there are ways to ease this concern and to keep everyone safe.

The good news in most areas is, it is a seller’s market, due to a severe lack of homes for sale. Today’s buyers are serious, they know what they want and are ready to purchase. Buyers have purchased sight unseen, only viewing a video or having a FaceTime call with their agent.

The traditional way to sell a home is to market to the largest audience possible. This approach enhances competition and often results in the best price, terms and conditions for the seller. However, there are times when listing your home “quietly” or as a “private sale” can limit the inconveniences and safety concerns during the pandemic. The TV Mass is recorded without the presence of a congregation and is closed to the public.

To receive Celebrate! – the free TV Mass newsletter – email communications@adw.org with your email address. Subscribers will receive notice when the TV Mass recordings are once again open to the public.

Visit Arden Courts today to see why our experience makes a difference.

When it comes to memory care, EXPERIENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

For over 25 years, Arden Courts has cared for individuals living with many different types of dementia.

A CLEAR DIFFERENCE
Over 25 years ago, Arden Courts pioneered research on a residential environment which provides specialized care for persons living with memory loss. Our purposeful design promotes opportunities for residents to engage with one another, their families and staff. Person-centered care provided in our safe community gives families the peace of mind they deserve.

IT DOESN’T STOP THERE
Our ongoing commitment to staff education and training has kept us at the forefront of delivering the latest dementia caregiving techniques. Let Arden Courts’ dedicated and knowledgeable staff create a safe, engaging and caring environment for your loved one.

Arden Courts. Often imitated, never duplicated.

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arden-courts.org/SilverSpring

When it comes to memory care, EXPERIENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.
# Montgomery County Assisted Living Facilities

## LEVEL TWO FACILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew House</td>
<td>6904 River Road Bethesda, MD 20817</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron House</td>
<td>9210 Kendale Drive Potomac, MD 20854</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace House</td>
<td>3214 Norbeck Road Silver Spring, MD 20906</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landow House, Inc.</td>
<td>1799 East Jefferson Street Rockville, MD 20852</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>Marian Assisted Living, Inc.</td>
<td>19105 Georgia Avenue Brookeville, MD 20833</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raphael House</td>
<td>1517 Dunster Road Rockville, MD 20854</td>
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## LEVEL THREE FACILITIES

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<td>emode Atherton Village</td>
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<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspenwood</td>
<td>14400 Homecrest Rd Silver Spring, MD 20906</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford Court</td>
<td>3700 International Drive Silver Spring, MD 20906</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton Gardens at Friendship Heights</td>
<td>5555 Friendship Boulevard Chevy Chase, MD 20815</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton Gardens of Tuckerman Lane</td>
<td>5555 Tuckerman Lane North Bethesda, MD 20852</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brightview Bethesda Woodmont</td>
<td>4907 Ruby Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brightview Fallsgrove</td>
<td>9200 Darnestown Road Rockville, MD 20850</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brightview West End</td>
<td>285 North Washington Street Rockville, MD 20850</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookdale Olney</td>
<td>2611 Olney Sandy Spring Road Olney, MD 20832</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brookdale Potomac</td>
<td>11215 Seven Locks Road Potomac, MD 20854</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five Star Premier Residences of Chevy Chase</td>
<td>8100 Connecticut Avenue Chevy Chase, MD 20815</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends Assisted Living</td>
<td>17350 Quaker Lane Sandy Spring, MD 20860</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Continued on page S14

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- We offer support and safety during these challenging times.

Precautions are in place for your well-being.

Stein and Moskowitz Communities
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For more information and eligibility requirements call 301-244-3579 or email marketing@homecresthouse.org

For video tour and application, please visit: www.homecresthouse.org

14508 Homecrest House Road • Silver Spring, MD 20906
Three Things You Can Do Now!

Being Prepared in the Time of COVID-19

This is a challenging time. There are many things that are out of our control. But there are some things we can do to help us be prepared – both for ourselves and the people we care about. Here are three important things each of us can do, right now, to be prepared.

#1 Pick your person to be your health care decision maker

Choose a healthcare decision maker (often known as a proxy, agent, or health care power of attorney) – a person who will make medical decisions for you if you become too sick to make them for yourself.

• Have a talk with your healthcare decision maker to make sure they know what matters most to you. A simple guide to help you choose a health care decision maker is available at theconversationproject.org
• Make a plan to talk with your decision maker as soon as possible. Phone calls or video chats are good if you don’t live with that person. Fill out an official form naming your healthcare decision maker. Give one copy of the filled-in form to your decision maker and one copy to your health care team.
• Get a free health care decision maker form from the Maryland Catholic Conference at www.mdcatholic.org/endoflife or download a form for free from theconversationproject.org.

#2 Talk about what matters most to you

Talk with your important people and decision maker about what matters most.

• The Conversation Starter Kit available at theconversationproject.org can help you get ready to talk to others about what matters most.
• The Conversation Starter Kit or have an Advance Directive, review it with your loved ones to see if you want to make any changes or updates. After you talk to your loved ones about what matters, talk to your health care team.
• Call your primary care provider or specialist to set up a telehealth visit to talk about this. Knowing what matters to you helps your care team provide the care most appropriate for you.

#3 Think about what you would want if you became seriously ill with COVID-19

People who are older or have chronic medical conditions are more likely to become very sick if they get COVID-19. Some will recover with hospital care, but even with ventilator support many will die. Think about what you would want if you became very sick at this time. Fill out the forms available at www.mdcatholic.org/endoflife and theconversationproject.org.

The Conversation Project is an initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, a not-for-profit organization that is a leader in health and health care improvement worldwide.

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TTY: 711

Visit us online!

www.VictoryTerrace.com

Maximum income guidelines apply.

Developed by VICTORY HOUSING
The National Rehabilitation Hospital Center for Health and Disability Research has prepared a free consumer guide to help you find the right rehab program for you or your family member.

Selecting a high-quality medical rehabilitation program after you experience an injury or illness can be hard to do. You want a rehabilitation program that will give you the best possible care and that takes into account your own circumstances. For instance, you will want a program that considers how well you get around, the type of transportation you use, where you live, your level of family support, and your insurance coverage. You also want a program that will help you to become as independent as you can be in your daily living.

When it comes time to choose a rehabilitation program, where do you start? How can you tell which rehabilitation programs offer high-quality services that will meet your needs, and which programs will not? Unfortunately, people often must decide where to go for rehabilitation when they do not have the time to gather details about all available programs. Typically, decisions about which rehabilitation program to use are made when a person is already in an acute care hospital. If someone has not talked with you or a family member within the first few days after being admitted to a hospital, ask to see a hospital social worker. The social worker can help you begin the process of choosing a rehabilitation program.

The goal of this 56-page guidebook is to help you to choose a high-quality rehabilitation program. It includes four major parts. Part 1 describes medical rehabilitation—the what it is, how it can help you, and the different rehabilitation professionals who will work with you. Part 2 discusses health insurance plans so that you can understand what your plan will and will not cover. Part 3 talks about the different types of rehabilitation programs available to you, and Part 4 looks at ways that can help you find a high-quality rehabilitation program to suit your needs.

At the back of this guidebook, you will find a glossary of terms.


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**A Field Guide for People with Disabilities**

*Choosing a High-Quality Medical Rehabilitation Program*

---

**Take Control of Your Health: 6 Steps to Prevent a Fall**

**Every 11 seconds, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury.**

**Many falls are preventable. Stay safe with these tips!**

1. **Find a good balance and exercise program**
   - Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility.
   - Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for resources. Find a program you like and talk to a friend.

2. **Talk to your health care provider**
   - Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling.
   - Share your history of near falls.

3. **Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist**
   - Make sure side effects aren’t increasing your risk of falling.
   - Take medications only as prescribed.

4. **Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses**
   - Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.

5. **Keep your home safe**
   - Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas.

6. **Talk to your family members**
   - Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are not just a seniors’ issue.

---

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Select your aide from more than 300 available multilingual professional caregivers—women and men, available to work in homes, assisted living facilities, nursing homes—for nights, days, weekends, respite and hospice care, live-in or live-out.

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**Mailing Address:**
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P.O. Box 70623
Chevy Chase, MD 20813

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"Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans."

— National Council on Aging
Our Parish Times

December 2020     S7

Senior Services Guide

Meet the Brito Associates

Seniors Real Estate Specialists® (SRES®)

Helping you and your family evaluate your options and create a success plan to accomplish your goals.

We can help you from start to finish!

Be overjoyed, NOT overwhelmed!

Did you know

There are realtors that specialize in helping seniors figure out their next move?

Meet the Brito Associates

Seniors Real Estate Specialists® (SRES®)

Helping you and your family evaluate your options and create a success plan to accomplish your goals.

We can help you from start to finish!

Be overjoyed, NOT overwhelmed!

As you reach out to help others during the Covid-19 pandemic, please protect yourself and those you are serving by taking the following precautions developed by Montgomery County’s Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security and Department of Health and Human Services:

- Stay home unless you must be out for essential reasons.
- Stay home from work, school, and all activities when you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms, which may include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.
- Keep away from others who are sick.
- Limit close physical contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet).
- Call, email, or text your neighbors who may need help.
- If they are in need of immediate emergency care, call 911.
- Limit your help to non-contact activities. For example:

- Leave groceries on the doorstep. (Do not enter their house.)
- Make sure to thoroughly wash your hands before touching anything you deliver to them.
- To promote social interactions and combat loneliness, speak with neighbors on the phone or by video chat (versus going into their homes) on a regular basis.
- Conduct research on their needs and provide them with resources or connect them directly with help such as feeding, transportation to medical appointments, animal services, etc.
- Alert authorities if you think that a neighbor is in danger.
- Create an online network for your community.
- Remember to protect yourself first! Do not put yourself or others at risk.

MoCo Caregiver Podcasts

Every month Montgomery County produces two new free Podcast episodes developed especially for local caregivers. The Podcasts feature rewarding audio interviews, practical resources, helpful supports and quality of life engagement. Each Podcast episode is under 30 minutes. No special software or downloads are required.

The new offerings in December are:

Episode #31 KEEP ON MOVING

Guest: Andrew Peck-McClain with The Parkinson’s Foundation of the National Capital Area provides an excellent introduction to the support and resources available to County residents.

Episode #32 TOGETHER WE ARE RESILIENT

Guest: Pazit Aviv with the County’s HHS Aging and Disability Services lead this region’s (neighbors helping neighbors) Village program and during the COVID-19 pandemic has coordinated community providers on a new Food Access Call Center.

To access all the MoCo Caregiver Podcasts, visit: https://moco-caregiver.blogspot.com/search/label/PODCASTS

The MoCo Caregiver Podcast series is published by Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services - Caregiver Support Program

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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.
Maryland is the first state in the country to start a free, opt-in, telephonic service to check on Maryland’s older residents, all across the state. All seniors are urged to use the program as a resource during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Senior Call Check phone lines are open M-F 8 am-5 pm and Saturday 9 am-3 pm. During these hours, seniors can call toll-free 1-866-50-CHECK (1-866-502-0560).

How Does It Work?
Every day a telephone call will be placed to a participant at a regularly scheduled time. These calls will take place between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. as close as possible to the one-hour time block pre-selected by the participant. If the participant does not answer their first call, they will be tried two more times. If those calls go unanswered, additional calls will be made to notify an alternative person who is selected by the participant during program enrollment. This could be an adult child, a neighbor, or another loved one. The alternate will then be encouraged to check on the older adult program participant. The failure of the participant and alternate to answer may result in a Welfare Check by local law enforcement.

Who Can Participate?
Any Maryland resident who is 65 years of age or older who has a landline phone or cell phone (TTY is available). The participant and alternates should not have automated call blocking technology (or they should disable that phone feature for this program).

How to Apply?
Three options available to apply:
1. Online at: https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/senior-call-check-sign-up.aspx
OR
2. Download, print, and mail in the Maryland Senior Call Check Paper Application. Under RESOURCES, click on Paper Application at: https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/senior-call-check.aspx
OR
3. Call toll-free (866)-502-0560 and ask to have a paper application mailed to your home.

When Do Calls Begin?
Daily calls will not begin until the applicant / participant receives a call to verify all of their information. Verification will include a successful test automated call to both the participant and alternate where applicable. After all information is validated, a Welcome Packet will be mailed to your home address. The welcome letter will include your start date.

DRIVE YOUR MISSION
Volunteer today to help seniors in your parish go places.

Senior Rides is the oldest and largest provider of free, escorted, senior transportation in Montgomery County. Giving just two rides a month can make a world of difference in your Parish’s community and the life and independence of a senior.

SeniorRides
Seniors. Going Places.

Sign Up Today
www.seniorconnectionmc.org
When Strokes Aren’t Classic

By Vaughn Allex, Montgomery County Stroke Association

There’s a time and a place for the classics. Classic art, classic music, even classic cars. However, what about stroke? There are classic signs of stroke, most often represented by the F.A.S.T. acronym:

F Facial drooping.
A Arm weakness.
S Speech difficulties.
T Time to act.

Anyone experiencing sudden drooping of the face, difficulty or inability to lift their arm, or an onset of inability to speak clearly is in immediate need of medical help to either rule out or treat a stroke. Time is of the absolute essence, and the longer the wait between onset and medical intervention, the greater the chance of permanent damage or death.

As with most things, though, strokes may present themselves with other than the “classic” symptoms described above. Confusion, severe headache, inability to understand what people are saying, what you are reading, even not being able to see out of one or both of your eyes. Pain and “odd” feelings may also be signs of a stroke. The loss of feeling in an arm may or may not be accompanied by a strange tingling in that arm. Additionally, symptoms of a stroke may present as memory loss or emotional problems. People who have suffered a stroke may be unable to control their feelings or act out.

The signs can be very subtle, or hit you like the proverbial ton-of-bricks. What’s more, these symptoms may be persistent, or very transitory and brief in nature. They may fluctuate in intensity, then suddenly disappear.

The most important thing to remember is that any symptom, whether alone or in conjunction with others, is a signal for continued on page S12

Comfort & Consolation: Care of the Sick and Dying

A Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of Maryland

This 48-page booklet helps Catholics think through the often-difficult questions that arise in times of grave illness and impending death.

Developed in light of Catholic teachings and in accord with Maryland law on advance directives, Comfort & Consolation includes a practical four-page form, the Catholic Declaration on Health Care Decision Making, which Catholics can use to tell health care providers how they wish to direct their care. It covers spiritual support, nutrition and hydration, pain-relieving medication, terminal illness and pregnancy.

The basic principles of Catholic teaching are often misunderstood. Because the Church opposes both euthanasia and assisted suicide, it is often said that we believe that all possible measures should be used to keep individuals alive. This is decidedly not the case. Individuals and caregivers have a responsibility to preserve human life through care and medical science. However, this responsibility has moral limits. Extraordinary means that may not alleviate the underlying condition and may excessively burden the patient are not obligatory. Moral decisions about the extent of care should be made in terms of the benefit that may be offered and the burdens that may be imposed, assisted by the medical professional’s judgments and a person’s sense of what is appropriate.

In addition to the booklet, two new supplementary brochures have been developed:

• Summary Q&A – outlines the main points of Comfort and Consolation
• Legal Guide – provides practical advice for completing an advance directive that properly reflects Catholic principles and that also includes the Catholic Declaration on Health Care Decision Making.

To order one or more print copies of Comfort & Consolation in English or in Spanish, please call 410-269-1155 or 301-261-1979. The booklet is also available free online at: www.mdcatholic.org/endoflife.

Visual Language Saves Lives
kwikpoint.com | Copyright © 2018
What is a Village?

The Village concept is a growing grassroots movement that aims to provide the support that older adults may require when choosing to age-in-place. The idea is simple: neighbors helping neighbors. Villages help older adults stay in their communities by helping to coordinate and deliver services and support within their communities.

Villages are membership-driven, grass-roots organizations run by volunteers and paid staff to coordinate villagers access to affordable services, including transportation, health and wellness programs, home repairs, social and educational activities and trips.

Villages provide critical neighbor-to-neighbor connections to combat social isolation, improve mobility and access to services, and provide knowledge and support necessary to empower seniors and others to be healthy and secure. The Village Coordinator provides guidance, support and resources to support the creation and sustainability of villages in communities across the County.

Montgomery County is committed to support local initiatives. Resources for active and developing villages are available at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-

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Montgomery County is committed to support local initiatives. Resources for active and developing villages are available at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/Villages/resources. html

ACTIVE VILLAGES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Aging Well With Friends
agingwellwithfriends.org
emitellt@friendshouse.com

Bannockburn NAN
bannockburncommunity.org/
nan.php
kellym@verizon.net

Bradley Hills village
https://bvh.clubexpress.com
bradleyhillsvillage@gmail.com

Bethesda Metro Area Village
bmvillage.org

Burning Tree Village
burningtreetvillage.org
Board@BurningTreeVillage.org

Cabin John Neighbor 2 Neighbor
http://www.cabinjohn.org/
neighbor-2-neighbor/
301-799-4550 or 4CIN2N@gmail.com

Chevy Chase at Home
chevychaseathome.org
info@chevychaseathome.org

East County Senior Village
eastcountyseniorvillages.org
scsaunders33@outlook.com

Friendship Heights Neighbors
fnhneighbors.org
information.fhn@gmail.com

Kemp Mill Village
kempmillvillage@gmail.com

King Farm Neighbors Village
www.KFNV.org
301-799-8104

Little Falls Village
littlefealsvillage.org
info@littlefealsvillage.org

Greater Stonegate Village
greaterstonegatevillage.org
240-916-7989

Manor Connections
manorconnections.org
info@manorconnections.org

Mill Creek Village
millacreekvillage.wordpress.com
mctvillage@gmail.com

Muslim Community Center
mmccmd.org/mccseniors
snegm@aol.com

North Chevy Chase Connections
http://northchevychasecon.
wicksite.com/ncc
NorthChevyChaseConnections
@gmail.com

Olney Home for Life
olneyhomeforlife.org
info@olneyhomeforlife.org

Parkside village
www.parksidevillageemd.org
parksidevillageemd@gmail.com.

Potomac Community Village
potomaccommunityvillage.org
info@PotomacCommunityVillage. org

Silver Spring Village
silverspringvillage.org
info@silverspringvillage.org

Somerset Helping Hand
Helping-Hand
301-657-3211,
khninfo@gmail.com

Town of Garrett Park Senior Committee
garrettpark-md.gov/c/411
garrettpark2@comcast.net

Village of Takoma Park
villageoftakomapark@gmail.com

Villages of Kensington
villagesofkensingtonmd.org

Village of Takoma Park
villageoftakomapark.com

Village of Takoma Park
villageoftakomapark@gmail.com.

Making time
FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONE

Being a family caregiver is a rewarding, yet challenging responsibility that can be filled with moments of joy and frustration. Ingleside recognizes the delicate balance of caring for oneself while supporting a loved one living with Alzheimer’s or other dementias. It’s time to take care of both of you.

For a limited time, Ingleside Memory Support is offering a 30-day trial respite stay at our engaged community. Experience our person-centered program and extraordinary respite care services. Contact us for more information—call today!

INGLESIDE AT KING FARM
240-624-7807
www.ikfmd.org/memorysupport

A not-for-profit life plan community
Enrich Your Life at OASIS Lifelong Learning Center

Online lectures and discussion groups offer something for everyone!

COVID-19 has impacted all of us – particularly seniors over the age of 60. Through a partnership with Suburban Hospital, Washington Metro Oasis is working hard to keep you safe and connected through online classes for senior learners. OASIS offers programs in health, technology, arts & humanities and more.

Visit OASIS at https://washington-metro.oasisnet.org to:
- Find the courses that most interest you!
- View and print a calendar of classes for the next two weeks.
- View the most up-to-date list of all upcoming classes.

OASIS online offerings are designed to help you stay active, healthy and engaged. Staff understands the challenges of adapting to new technology. If you need help learning to use Zoom on your computer or mobile device, email OASIS at washingtonmetro@oasisnet.org.

STROKES
Con’t from page S10

immediate medical attention. Any symptom, whether severe or mild, is enough reason to seek immediate medical attention.

There are different types of stroke, due to clots cutting off blood to an artery (ischemic), or bleeding into the brain (hemorrhagic). How you will be treated depends on being diagnosed quickly enough to begin the appropriate treatment.

The time to treat, though, may be measured in only minutes. Once a stroke begins to present symptoms, no matter how mild, medical intervention is needed immediately to limit the damage. The period to administer clot busting drugs such as tPA (Tissue Plasminogen Activator) or to use physical methods such stent retrievers to mechanically remove a clot is measured in mere hours. This time-frame is reduced by the need to recognize and diagnose the location of the clot.

One study showed that of 60% of those treated with both tPA and stent retrievers were able to live independently, as opposed to only 30% who were treated solely with tPA. In the United States, stroke is the number five cause of death. However, it is the number one cause of permanent disability.

In law, there is a phrase, “Time is of the essence.” With a stroke, it can be said that time is life itself.

VICTORY HAVEN
Con’t from page S1

Building amenities include a large community space on the first floor, a library with an adjacent computer center, a game/TV room, a fitness center, and a wellness room for visiting healthcare professionals. In-unit features include luxury vinyl plank floors, LED lighting, Energy Star appliances, high-efficiency heating and cooling, and individual washer/dryers. In addition, Victory Haven will be an environmentally responsible community that meets LEED New Construction standards.

The new community’s location at 9616 Main Street in Damascus offers residents easy access to downtown Damascus, the nearby Damascus Shopping Center, and the Damascus Senior Center and Damascus Library which are located directly across Main Street from the property. In addition, immediately adjacent to the site is a medical complex anchored by MedStar Physician Partners at Damascus and Amber Hill Physical Therapy. The site is also served by Montgomery County’s Ride-On Bus service, which travels between the adjacent Damascus Senior Center and the Shady Grove Metro Station.

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Make Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging

It's never too late to make smarter food choices. Healthy eating is an important part of staying healthy as you age.

Following these tips can help you maintain a healthy weight, get the nutrients you need, and lower your risk of chronic disease.

How Many Calories Do You Need Each Day?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>how many calories do you need each day?</th>
<th>women</th>
<th>men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not physically active</td>
<td>1,600 cal.</td>
<td>2,000-2,200 cal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderately active</td>
<td>1,800 cal.</td>
<td>2,200-2,400 cal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active lifestyle</td>
<td>2,000-2,200 cal.</td>
<td>2,400-2,800 cal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose a variety of foods that are packed with nutrients and low in calories. Check the food labels to understand what foods will meet your nutritional needs each day.

Cut back on foods and beverages that are high in calories and added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats. Shift to healthier options like fresh fruits and vegetables instead.

Use a food diary to help you keep track of your daily calories, carbs, protein, etc., and see if you are making healthy choices. Understand how many calories you need based on your level of daily activity.

Workout to Go: Mini Exercise Guide

Build up your strength, flexibility, and balance with this free workout routine. These exercises are the best for older adults, at home or on the go.

Are you just starting to exercise? Getting back into a routine after a break? Wanting to keep up your physical activities away from home? The 13 exercises in this sample workout can help. In this booklet, you’ll find easy-to-follow strength, balance, and flexibility exercises that you can do anytime, anywhere.

One of the great things about physical activity is that there are so many ways to be active. This workout is only one of them. The secret to success is to be creative, find activities you enjoy, and keep going. This sample workout is part of Go4Life®, an outreach campaign from the National Institute on Aging at NIH to help you fit exercise and physical activity into your daily life.

Available free from NIA, to download the PDF or to order a print edition, visit: https://order.nia.nih.gov/view-all-publications.

For more exercises, motivational tips, and other free materials, visit: www.nia.nih.gov/go4life

Assisted Living Primer

How are you doing with your ADLs? The term “activities of daily living,” or ADLs, became widely used by gerontologists starting in the 1980s to refer to the basic tasks of everyday life, such as eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, and transferring (e.g. from a bed to a chair). Helping seniors with their ADLs is the purpose of assisted living.

When people are unable to perform these activities, in order to cope they need help, either from other human beings or mechanical devices or both. Although persons of all ages may have problems performing the ADLs, prevalence rates are much higher for the elderly than for the non-elderly. Measurement of the activities of daily living is critical because they have been found to be significant predictors of the use of paid home care, alternative living arrangements, nursing homes, physicians and hospital services.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the assisted living industry – blending aspects of both the hospitality (hotel) and the healthcare industries – evolved to provide assistance with ADLs in private-pay, congregate-living settings. Sunrise Senior Living in McLean (Va.) was the industry pioneer and is one of the largest providers of assisted living in the United States with more than 400 communities in 37 states. In addition to help with ADLs and assistance with medication, most assisted living communities provide three meals a day in restaurant settings, leisure activity programs, and limited transportation services.

It’s important to know what assisted living is not. It is not skilled nursing, and it is not regulated by the Federal government. Residents of assisted living communities who develop needs beyond help with ADLs and medications – who need the constant care and supervision of healthcare professionals – may have to be discharged to nursing homes.

Maryland has developed a three-tiered approach to licensing and regulating assisted living facilities. The major variable is the type and degree of assistance with medications that is authorized. Level I licensees (mostly smaller group-home facilities) may only provide “assistance with taking medication or coordinating access to necessary medication and treatment.” Level II licensees are permitted to “administer necessary medication and treatment, including monitoring the effects of the medication and treatment by staff.” Level III licensee responsibilities may include “monitoring or arranging for monitoring of the effects of complex medication and treatment regimens, ongoing therapeutic intervention or intensive supervision to manage chronic behaviors.”

In practice, this means that only Level III facilities are qualified to provide care for Alzheimer’s suf-
Montgomery County Comprehensive Care Facilities and Extended Care Facilities (Nursing Homes) Continued from page S8

Montgomery Village Health Care Center
19301 Watkins Mill Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
(301) 527-2500
Capacity: 147

Shady Grove Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
9701 Medical Center Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 315-1900
Capacity: 134

Oak Manor Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare
3415 Greencastle Road
Burtonsville, MD 20866
(240) 970-5600
Capacity: 150

Sterling Care Rockville Nursing
303 Adclare Road
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 279-9000
Capacity: 100

Peak Healthcare at Sligo Creek
525 Carroll Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
(301) 270-4200
Capacity: 102

The Village at Rockville
9701 Veirs Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 424-9560
Capacity: 160

Potomac Valley Rehabilitation and Healthcare
1235 Potomac Valley Road
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 762-0700
Capacity: 175

Wilson Health Care Center
301 Russell Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
(301) 216-4004
Capacity: 285

Regency Care of Silver Spring, LLC
9101 Second Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 588-5544
Capacity: 92

Source: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The Continuum of Care

Selling the house and moving to a retirement community can create enough stress for the entire extended family. To have to then pick up and move to an assisted living facility when you need help with an ADL or two, and then move again to a nursing home when your clinical acuity level continues to increase is too much for many seniors to even contemplate. Enter the CCRC – Continuing Care Retirement Community. CCRCs offer the full range of senior housing options – independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing – all on one campus or in one building.

Most CCRCs are at the upper end of the cost spectrum of retirement communities. Continuing Care Retirement Communities, also known as Life Care Communities, offer a secure, stimulating and protected environment for seniors, with access to medical and nursing services, should the need arise. There are a range of contract agreements, terms, entrance fees and monthly service fees which are set by the individual CCRC and regulated by the Maryland Department of Aging.

Montgomery County Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs)

Asbury Methodist Village
201 Russell Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Mr. Rob Liebreich
Executive Director
(301) 330-3000

Ingleside at King Farm
701 King Farm Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850
Ms. Michelle Kraus
Executive Director
(240) 499-9031
SEE AD PAGE S11

Bedford Court
3701 International Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20906
Ms. Janet S. Bradley
Executive Director
(301) 598-2900

Brooke Grove
18100 Siade School Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860
Mr. Dennis Hunter
Executive Director
(301) 924-2811

Riderwood Village
3150 Gracefield Road
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Ms. Barbara Harry
Acting Executive Director
(301) 571-7400

Friends House Retirement Community
17340 Quaker Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860
Mr. Ron Jennette
Interim Chief Executive Officer
(301) 924-5100

Source: Maryland Department of Aging
Pets Can Help Alleviate Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

By Kendall Van Blarcom

As animal lovers know, there are many benefits to having a pet. While it is true that pets can help alleviate stress, they are also a responsibility. If you are considering getting a pet, talk to a personal support coach about what you are expecting and how to choose the right pet for you and your lifestyle.

Having a furry friend can provide companionship for individuals who are lonely and, depending on the animal, can provide opportunities to get outside and connect with others. The right animal companion can bring so much joy to life.

When you choose the right pet, you are bringing affection and companionship into your home. The love people share with their animals is clear when you listen to friends and people share with their animals is clear. For example, if a person does not have the time or energy to care for a dog, adopting a puppy is not advised. After all, dogs will need to be taken outside at least three times every day. Plus, they need to be fed and played with regularly.

It is important to note that even low maintenance animals such as fish can help to soothe our worries. Watching them swim can be a way out of our own thoughts. Some find researching the best animal breed to match their lifestyles helpful. For instance, some older adults find the affectionate dog breed of Bichon Frise to be a good match. This breed does not shed and they are happy with a few short walks a day.

If you are interested in getting a pet, discuss your lifestyle and pet preferences with a staff member at a pet adoption center. They have experts on hand who will discuss different pet personalities with you. Together, you can determine what is best for your situation. This will typically include discussions about your energy level, if the animal will be near children, and what expenses may be involved. Knowing that pets can help alleviate stress, think about if a pet could improve your daily life. There are many resources to help you choose a pet. For some, it is an ideal choice, a snuggly friend who does not need to be taken out and is happy to spend an afternoon on the couch with their human companion. Others want a dog who will accompany them on walks or even a fish tank may be on your mind.

Discuss your options with a counselor and a pet adoption specialist. Then, you can choose the perfect furry friend for you. Source: SeniorNews.com

Hiring In Home Elder Care

A Resource Guide from Montgomery County

Most older adults want to stay independent for as long as possible. They want to stay in control of their lives and live in their homes or apartments among familiar surroundings and friends. Sometimes ensuring the best for your loved one requires hiring an outside care provider. This Resource Guide describes various types of care providers and suggestions to manage in-home elder care.

There are many types of elder care and this Resource Guide lists advantages and disadvantages of working with agencies or with independent care providers.

- Should I hire an agency or hire someone on my own?
- How can I make sure that all care needs are attended to?
- How can I find someone I can trust?

Learning how to answer these and other questions will help you hire in-home elder care with confidence. This guide is designed to help you determine the most effective way to find, hire, and supervise in-home care providers for your individual needs and preferences. Included are practical aides to help you throughout the process: a practical checklist to identify the tasks required to be completed by your homecare worker; a sample homecare worker position description, a sample application, and a sample employment agreement.

As you use this Resource Guide you may have queries or may need additional information (access to County supports and programs, a list of home care agencies, referrals for other services, etc). You are encouraged you to call: Montgomery County’s Aging and Disability Services helpline: 240-777-3000

Montcordsia provides a superior level of care to adults aging at home to help them stay as independent as possible.

We support families by addressing:

- Companion Care
- Personal Care
- Geriatric Care Management
- Assistive Technology

Schedule a brief consultation today.

240.331.5627 | montcordsia.com

Senior Services Guide
Our Parish Times December 2020 S15
Hospice Care: Finding Meaning in the Gentle Journey

By Kip Ingram, Director of Bereavement Care at Montgomery Hospice

Recognizing the whole person is one of the most important values associated with the hospice movement. That we are physical, emotional, and spiritual beings informs the kind of care and support hospice provides. While medical concerns are vitally important, just as significant is what someone thinks and how they might feel, the values and beliefs they hold, and the meaning by which they live. This is especially important given the medical uncertainty and concerns for professional, caring support that our society is experiencing.

For many, life’s meaning is tied to profound spiritual concerns and values shaped by a faith tradition. For those who stand within such a tradition, we in hospice want to acknowledge and honor the importance of a meaningful connection to a faith tradition for many individuals. Facing this time in life does not mean giving up on life. For many, it is another step in the journey of faith, a step to be taken in full awareness that this time can also have its blessings and sacred moments.

Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the hospice movement, once wrote: “You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.” At Montgomery Hospice and Prince George’s Hospice, our motto is “to gentle the journey” for our patients and families - for us, this means to help each individual life be as good as it can be for as long as it can be. So we offer the best in medical care, protecting the safety of those we care for, and we honor the meaning by which a person lives at such a time in life.
November Remembrances

By Bozenna Buda, ED

Many of us whose roots are in Poland have special traditions that we observe in November. The day after All Saints’ Day, we begin Wypominki. This is the month-long custom of praying publicly for our dearly departed by submitting their names to be read aloud in church, with accompanying prayers. It is a way to remember our deceased family members, friends, pastors, and others, and to pray for them in a special way.

On November 11, we commemorate Poland’s Independence Day (after 123 years in captivity from 1795 to 1918, and then again for nearly 50 years after World War Two). We celebrate this occasion at Holy Mass, as well as with concerts and speeches, because our Polish heritage includes our faith. On November 8 at noon, OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych celebrated the commemorative Holy Mass which was requested by PACWMAD (Polish American Congress, Washington Metro Area Division). Groups and individuals participated including OLQP Parish Knights of Columbus St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634, Polish American Congress Washington Metro Area Division, Polish Legion of American Veterans (PLAV), Polish Scouting Organization-ZHP, and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland.

Fr. Frydrych noted in his homily our heritage and the fact that it included so much sacrifice. It was faith and hope which sustained our predecessors in their struggles, and now it is our turn to continue the legacy. Father quoted from St. John Paul II’s homilies during his first Apostolic visit to Poland in 1979, “My fellow-countrymen, with the greatest warmth I again give thanks, together with you, for the gift of having been baptized more than a thousand years ago.” And, additionally, “So, before going away, I beg you once again to accept the whole of the spiritual legacy which goes by the name of ‘Poland’, with the faith, hope and charity that Christ poured into us at our Holy Baptism.”

During these challenging times, we are thankful for our faith community and for so many other blessings, including the gift of Pope St. John Paul II and his enduring homilies.

Council 16634 “Leave No Neighbor Behind” Initiative

The St. Maximilian Kolbe Knights of Columbus Council 16634 at Our Lady Queen of Poland (OLQP) Parish in Silver Spring is active in the “Leave No Neighbor Behind” initiative. Last month they delivered the food collected at OLQP Parish to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Washington, D.C., for distribution to families and communities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. They are grateful to OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych and OLQP parishioners for their generosity. We should note that the St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 was honored this year for achieving the Star Council Award for 2019-2020.

At left, St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634, GK David Birely with the Sisters of the Poor and others, when they delivered the collected food for the “Leave No Neighbor Behind” initiative.

Above, these are some of the youths who will be preparing for First Holy Communion in the year 2021 at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish in Silver Spring; Andrzej, Alek, Emilia, and Carolina. Fr. Frydrych and Sr. Danuta are working with the First Holy Communion and Confirmation classes.

At right, the youth of OLQP Parish are active in the liturgy. Aleksandra B. was the lector for both readings during the Holy Mass on Nov. 8, 2020.

Our hard-working and diligent scouts were awarded this colorful merit badge, at right, from the Polish Scouting Organization ZHP USA for their distance work at home during these Covid-19 pandemic times. It translates to, “Although we cannot meet [in person], we continue to function.”
Virtual Giving TREE 2020

Mother Seton Sodality of Our Lady is collecting donations for the 2020 Giving Tree! To help the families who are facing financial challenges this Christmas holiday and respect the ongoing health concerns, this year’s Giving Tree selection is virtual through Sign-Up Genius. The families receiving our gifts this year will benefit from gift cards to Walmart, Target, or Kohls for the adults, and new, unwrapped, age-appropriate toys for the children (newborn to 15 years old). Parents will also be provided with sufficient wrapping paper, tape, and bows so they can wrap their children’s gifts.  

Making your virtual selection

To select either a family (number) or individual(s), please go to: www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A9A722A2FCC16-mother

Donations of wrapping paper, bows, or tape will also be accepted.

Gift collection: Entrance of the Parish Center on December 12th (12 noon to 5:00 pm) AND December 13th (8:00 am to 1:00 pm). Email a label or mark the gift card or toy with your selected family’s number AND (if the gift is for a child) indicate age and gender.

For any additional questions or concerns, please email Sodality at: MSPgivingtree2020@gmail.com.

Collection for the Little Sisters of the Poor

The Knights of Columbus, Father Horace B. McKenna Council #11024 hosted a collection for the Little Sisters of the Poor on Saturday, November 21, 2020. The collection took place in the Mother Seton Parish parking lot. Many parishioners donated non-perishable food items, fresh vegetables, disinfecting cleaning supplies, computer paper, Giant gift cards, as well as medical supplies and cash donations. The Knights and the Little Sisters of the Poor wish to thank all the people who donated and were involved in the success of this event and for their great generosity. This collection will provide much needed aid to those in need who come seeking a helping hand from the Little Sisters.
St. Martin’s Parish News and Notes

Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist
Fr. Tony D’Souza and Deacon Bill Vita presented a 4-part series exploring the truth and beauty of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist, from its origins in Sacred Scripture to its profound role in the life of the Church and its members. The presentations were recorded and are now available on St. Martin’s YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/c/StMartinofToursGaithersburgMD/videos.

St. Martin’s Pantry
The Food Pantry has been serving record numbers of families since late October. Please consider donating non-perishable food items. Drop off times are Mondays 6:30pm to 1pm, Fridays 9:30am to 1pm, and Sundays 2pm to 5pm. Shortages are posted weekly at https://www.stmartinsweb.org/st-martin-s-pantry.

COVID-19 Testing
Since mid-October, St. Martin’s Parish has been offering free COVID testing for its community members. Testing occurs every few weeks on Sundays, with convenient drive-up service at Fr. Meyer’s Field.

Crusader Spirit Reigned!
By Anne Gemunder
This fall’s Spirit Week, sponsored by our Student Council, was a perfect blend of fun, family, and friendly classroom competition. School spirit is as important as ever at St. Martin’s, as some of our students are learning in the building and others are working remotely from home. Regardless of the venue, just about everyone joined in the theme-day events. Pride was at stake, with the winning class being awarded the Crusader Shield, a tradition started last year at Fall Fun Day, which was a competition-packed field day held at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg.

This exciting week started off with a Family Fun Day theme. Since Monday was a Collaboration Day for teachers, the students had a day off from school to enjoy with their families. For some, it was a day of hiking, biking, cooking, or competing. Others filled their day of fun by watching movies, picking pumpkins, raking leaves, or playing board games. A few families even visited museums and attended Halloween-themed events.

Day Two was Stuffed Animal Day. Students could either bring their favorite plush animal or dress like one. It was a cozy sort of day to have a warm and fuzzy friend by your side.

Day Three was Back to the Future. Students could dress as younger versions of themselves or as the people they planned become in the future. Many of our students dressed as adorable toddlers or very accomplished doctors, CEOs, and Superheroes.

Day Four was a Holiday Day. Students dressed up as their favorite holiday. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter themed outfits made early appearances, and still others dressed to celebrate Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and the 4th of July.

The grand finale took place on Friday, when we celebrated Halloween, one of the favorite themed dress-up days of the year. Although we were not able to hold our traditional costume parade, each class held a party with festive treats supplied by parents. At the end of the day, the announcement was made that two classes had boasted 100% participation throughout the week and would share possession of the Crusader Shield for the year. Congratulations to Pre-Kindergarten and Third Grade, and to all who helped share our Crusader Spirit!

Sisters
Con’t from Page 1

order was founded in 1804 by St. Julie Billiart (canonized in 1896), and Françoise Blin de Bourdon. Their mission was to educate “to form school teachers for the country areas,” according to the order’s website. Originally founded in France, the motherhouse was moved to Namur, Belgium in 1899, at which time the order became the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

The Sisters came to the United States in 1840, where they established their first school in Cincinnati, Ohio. From there they founded schools and convents across the entire East Coast. Given their mandate to teach in rural areas, it is not surprising that the Sisters located on K Street in Washington, DC, eagerly accepted pastor Fr. Cuddy’s invitation to teach Sunday school out in the hamlet of Gaithersburg, 15 miles from the city. The first Sunday school class was held in October 1923, with 35 students.

Determined to have the Sisters teach more than Sunday school, Fr. Cuddy began building the original school building during the summer of 1924. In September 1925 the first Catholic school in Montgomery County opened its doors. For the first few months, the Sisters commuted from downtown DC to Gaithersburg each day by train or car. By February 1926, Fr. Cuddy purchased 4 acres of property across Frederick Road from the church, renovated the existing house (which was built ca. 1890), and renamed it as “Notre Dame Convent” for the teaching sisters.

The Sisters would live at our parish until June 1973 when they left the school, which transitioned to a lay teaching staff. At least 87 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur served at St. Martin’s during their 50 years at our parish, and their impact on the life of the parish and community cannot be underestimated.

The school again benefited from the leadership of women religious when Sister Sharon Ann Mihm, CSC, was hired as school principal in 2005. Sister Sharon is a Sister of the Holy Cross whose Motherhouse is located in Notre Dame, Indiana. Serving from 2005 to 2013, she often said she could see the presence of Christ in the teachers, staff and families that she was honored to serve. Sister Sharon continues to visit the parish frequently while she continues her work at Holy Cross Hospital in the Spiritual Care Department.

The convent house is now known as “Fr. Meyer House,” named for our pastor emeritus who lived there after the sisters’ departure. Also on that 4-acre lot are the parish rectory, completed in 1998, and a new convent house which was built for a new group of sisters.

In 2008, St. Martin’s again invited an order of nuns to help serve the parish community. The Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima is a Puerto Rican religious congregation, founded in 1949 in Yauco, Puerto Rico, by the Servant of God Mother M. Dominga Guzmán Florí, OP. They are affiliated with the Order of Preachers. Their Charism is the evangelization of families, as shown in their motto, “Bringing Christ to the Family and the Family to Christ.”

The first sisters to serve at St. Martin’s lived in a nearby apartment complex, as the Fr. Meyer house was no longer habitable. By 2011, a new convent, located behind the rectory and Fr. Meyer’s house, was completed. Living on the property has helped the sisters integrate more fully into the busy parish life. They have worked extensively in family ministry, religious education, and social work. Their ever-present joy and enthusiasm help to make our parish a warm, welcoming family, as they willingly contribute to all parish activities. We hope this beneficial relationship continues long into our second century as a parish.
The Distance Learning Versus On Campus Environment at Holy Cross
by Eighth-Grade Student, Isabella Amador

Holy Cross School has done a phenomenal job creating a rigorous and engaging learning experience for both distance and onsite learners. As a student that has experienced both forms of education, I think the school has done well accommodating all students regardless of whether they are studying at home or in a traditional classroom.

I learned from the comfort of my dining room for my first month of eighth grade. I quite enjoyed the experience because of how included I felt in class discussions and small groups. I was able to actively participate in class and gain a strong understanding of topics. Even though I was physically separated from my teachers, it felt as if I was sitting right in the classroom, learning with my onsite friends. Through online resources such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Edpuzzle, Padlet, Jamboard, and Quizizz, we were able to continue our education even from afar. Holy Cross has also used sources like these before the pandemic, which meant they were very prepared and handled lockdown extremely well.

In addition, a supply pickup is scheduled for all the distance-learning students; they receive folders or bags containing materials needed for future lessons. This way, students continue to participate in class using items that are given to onsite learners. For example, I remember receiving seeds, fertilizer, and putting soil in the beginning of the year, which I then used to grow clovers for an experiment I conducted at home during science class! Distance learning at Holy Cross is a remarkable experience that I highly recommend.

While I learned remotely earlier this year, I recently returned to school for in-person instruction. After not being able to directly see my friends for so long, I was very happy to sit in class with them. The school has taken very strong precautions to ensure the safety of all of its onsite students. All students are required to wear a facemask and abide by social-distancing guidelines. Each desk is also surrounded by a box of tape on the floor, marking six feet in all directions to ensure this distancing. In addition, each desk has a plexiglass divider in front of it, and every classroom also has its own personal hand-sanitizer dispenser. To remind students to wash their hands for the recommended amount of time, the restrooms contain posters that detail proper hand-washing methods. To make sure that the school is sanitary, every Friday is virtual for all students in order to give the school an extreme deep clean for the week. These precautions make attending school safe for all students.

I am very happy to be back on campus and socialize with my friends. Students are allowed to now eat lunch outside with other classmates while following social-distancing rules, and sometimes classes can also take place outdoors as well. Specials such as art and physical education also occur during the week as it used to before the pandemic. Mask breaks are also given frequently to all students.

In conclusion, Holy Cross School has been an exemplary model in education during the Coronavirus outbreak. I have been satisfied with my experience in both models of learning: onsite and virtual. Through both, I have felt accommodated and safe. I am happy to be able to continue my education through the pandemic, and I am very grateful for the efforts the staff has taken to ensure that students can continue to learn despite these trying times.

Celebrating Mass Outdoors at Holy Cross

Holy Cross Church in Garrett Park has been blessed with a wonderful pastor, Father Robert Buchmeier. When Montgomery County lifted their COVID-19 restrictions on places of worship in June 2020 allowing for drive-in religious services, Father Robert, with the support of parishioners, willingly offered Holy Mass outdoors on Sunday mornings at 9:30am, on a makeshift altar set up on the church portico and with music provided by our keyboardist and cantor.

Volunteers coordinate parking so that those who wish to remain in their cars can view the altar and hear the Mass. Some families bring blankets and chairs and find a comfortable place on our beautiful spacious lawn under the canopy of trees.

One parishioner noted that attending Mass outdoors is an “extreme deep clean for the school.”

Holy Cross Parish
4000 Strathmore Avenue, Garrett Park, MD
Fr. Robert Buchmeier, Pastor
301-942-1020
Holy Cross School
Lisa Maio Kane, Principal
301-949-0053
Lurana Hogan, Parish Editor
l.hogan@hcross.org

Grandparents and Special Friends Day Goes Virtual!

Virtual Grandparents and Special Friends Day event was held on November 24th to uphold the Holy Cross School’s tradition of celebrating the bonds between grandparents and special friends, and the children in their lives. Although reimagined this year, the event still conveyed a message of love from Holy Cross to our cherished guests.

Guided by Art teacher, Mrs. Betsey Foley, students created cards with a handwritten message inside to send to grandparents or special friends. In addition, a pre-recorded video that included a brief prayer service; a special message from Principal Lisa Kane, images of students engaging in lessons and activities; and memories from last year’s Grandparents and Special Friends Day event was shared on our website for all to enjoy.

Principal Kane stated, “Although we could not host loved ones on campus this year, we felt it was essential to celebrate this special day and to help keep loved ones connected to the Holy Cross students in their lives.” Many grandparents and special friends shared feedback on the event indicating how much they enjoyed it. Mrs. Margy Fritzschler, grandmother of three students shared, “I thoroughly enjoyed the grandparents and special friend’s day video. It was beautifully put together and gives us a picture of how the school is managing to teach in spite of the current pandemic. There were a lot of happy faces and beautiful smiling eyes!”

We pray that it will soon be safe to welcome grandparents and special friends back to campus as our honored guests!

In November, Holy Cross Church and School combined efforts and collected hundreds of bags of non-perishable food, pantry basics, baby supplies, and Giant gift cards for Catholic Charities, Saint Jude’s Pantry, Linkages to Learning, and Mid-County United Ministries. Middle school students loaded the transport vehicles sent by the charitable organizations.
Our Lady of Mercy Students Compete in National Youth Cross Country Championship

Our Lady of Mercy students, fourth-grader Clara Aschenbach and fifth grader Owen Heilmann competed at the Cross Country Coaches National Youth Championships in Lexington, Kentucky last month. Top runners from all over the country traveled to Kentucky to have the opportunity to race against the best. Both Clara and Owen started their training program over the summer to prepare for this race and their hard work has paid off! Clara finished 11th in the 3000 meter 9 year old girl’s race with a time of 13:08 and Owen finished 4th in the 3000 meter 11 year old boy’s race with a time of 10:58. Congratulations Clara and Owen!

Two Mercy students take medals at the National Youth Cross Country Championship

Bishop-Elect Byrne

Our pastor is now Bishop-Elect Byrne. He will be ordained and installed as the Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts on December 14. Since he has a catholic population of just under 165,000, the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts. Although social distancing requirements kept us from having a traditional celebration, we found a few ways to share our gratitude for his five years of spiritual guidance and his joyful presence in our lives. An outdoor school Mass was held during his final week. students shared their “5 favorite things about Father Bill,” and members of the school and parish staff held a “clap-out” as he made his final walk from the church to the Rectory. We will miss him (and his black lab Zelie) dearly!

Farewell Bishop-Elect Byrne

A final school Mass in celebration of Bishop-elect Byrne

A Christmas Pageant Re-imagined

Planning for one of Mercy’s most beloved traditions is underway. We are excited to be bringing our families a virtual program that will be as beautiful and joyful as in the past! We plan a schoolwide zoom broadcast of the recorded pageant on the evening of December 17, the night the pageant would have been held in the church.

A Christmas Pageant

Helping New Mothers and Newborn Babies

Mercy seventh graders collected items for 25 newborn baby care packages. They will be delivered after Thanksgiving to Catholic Charities. A great effort by the whole school!

Christmas Masses

In order to practice social distancing, the Masses for Christmas will require reduced capacity in the church and restrictions are required for attendance. On December 1, reservations were accepted online and by the end of the day all of the Masses for Christmas Eve had been reserved. The 4PM Mass will be live streamed for those who attend online. A Communion service will be offered outside on Christmas Day at 12:30 PM.
Every year, fourth graders at Saint Peter’s look forward to participating in a beloved and long-standing school tradition, the “Hall of Saints.” Each student is assigned a saint to research and report on. In a typical year, after they complete the project, the students dress as their saints and lead the procession for the All Saints’ Day school mass, followed by a live gallery in the Parish Hall. Students from other grades, parents, faculty, staff, and clergy walk through the gallery and listen to the saints “come alive” and speak about their lives and work.

“The Hall of Saints project is designed to teach the students how to conduct research through the use of books and media, organize information, and be creative in putting together a formal presentation at the end,” said Mrs. Eunice Pak, Saint Peter’s fourth grade teacher. “I didn’t want the students to miss out on this long-standing tradition so this year, due to the pandemic, I modified the project and changed it to an online presentation, and a virtual “Hall of Saints” video gallery. Media specialist, Mrs. George, worked with the students on how to create a slides presentation, and music teacher Mr. Nguyen provided tips on producing video recordings.

Fourth grader, Lucy Myers enjoyed learning about her name saint. “The most interesting thing I learned about Saint Lucy was the miracles that she performed. In one miracle, she prayed to Saint Agatha and her mother was healed of a lifelong illness,” said Myers. “I also really enjoyed creating the costume and the challenge of figuring out how to attach the candles to the wreath I wore on my head.”

“I have 30 students in my class and each one of them put their heart into these projects. I am so proud of them and I hope they got a chance to learn about some amazing role models – people to help guide us in our lives,” said Mrs. Pak.

To view the virtual Hall of Saints video gallery, visit www.stpetersschoololney.org

Middle School students were excited to return to campus in November

News & Notes

All Grades Have Begun Hybrid Learning

Saint Peter’s began the school year with all students participating in distance learning. Students who opted to return for in-person learning did so in three phases based on grade level. As of November 2, all grades, pre-K through eighth grade, have begun hybrid learning. Students who have chosen to continue distance learning participate in a live stream of in-person classroom lessons.

Virtual Enrollment Sessions

Saint Peter’s began hosting virtual enrollment sessions in October and they will continue into 2021. The virtual sessions provide small groups of prospective families the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the school’s programs, curriculum, and culture, directly from Saint Peter’s Principal, Assistant Principal, Development Director and parent volunteers. Sessions take place on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and last approximately one hour. Visit www.stpetersschoololney.org to register for an upcoming session.

Reimagining Family Events

Saint Peter’s Home & School Association has adapted traditional family events, or created new events, to continue to provide safe ways for families to stay connected. A Virtual Bingo was held on November 50 families participated and enjoyed a fun night of virtual fun.

Time to Celebrate!

On September 24, Saint Peter’s was designated an Exemplary High Performing National Blue Ribbon School for 2020 by the U.S. Department of Education. While the traditional types of all-school celebrations couldn’t take place, faculty and staff found a unique way for the whole community to celebrate safely: a Blue Ribbon car parade!

Families were encouraged to show off their Panther Pride by decorating their cars. Large blue balloon arches greeted families as they entered and exited the parade route, which wrapped around the school. Along the way, families enjoyed waving to faculty and staff, who were decked out in blue and celebrating with noisemakers.

Families decorated their cars to celebrate the school’s National Blue Ribbon designation

Continued on page 23
doors made him imagine how Jesus taught the Gospel to his followers in the outdoors. Others have echoed that sentiment, and reflect that the experience of attending mass outdoors has brought a deeper appreciation of being part of our faith-filled community. Safety precautions are taken. Everyone keeps a physical distance, wears a mask, and sanitizes their hands to receive Holy Communion. Father Robert and the Eucharistic ministers should bring their headlights to signal that our car. Those remaining outside, on the church parking lot, should stay in their cars turn on their headlights to signal that our Eucharistic ministers will continue to distribute Holy Communion to them.

Holy Cross Church plans to celebrate outdoor mass when the weather permits until coronavirus restrictions are lifted. If there is rain, snow, or wind, Holy Mass will be offered inside the church, with limited seating in keeping with all coronavirus guidelines. Those who wish to remain in their cars during inclement weather will be able to listen to the mass through an outdoor speaker system, but hand sanitize prior to distributing Communion. Those who prefer to remain in their cars turn on their headlights to signal that our Eucharistic ministers should bring communion to them.

Holy Cross Church plans to celebrate outdoor mass when the weather permits until coronavirus restrictions are lifted. If there is rain, snow, or wind, Holy Mass will be offered inside the church, with limited seating in keeping with all coronavirus guidelines. Those who wish to remain in their cars during inclement weather will be able to listen to the mass through an outdoor speaker system, but we are currently exploring other options such as a radio broadcast. Eucharistic ministers will continue to distribute Holy Communion to those remaining outside, on the church parking lot, to an individual’s car.

All are welcome to participate in our outdoor mass on Sundays at 9:30 am. As with any outdoor event, remember to dress warmly!

For more information about Holy Cross Church, and all the ways we are continuing to connect as a community and celebrate our faith, please visit our website at www.hcrosschurch.org.

SRS Announces Volunteer and Business Partner of the Year

By Teri Dwyer

Each autumn, the Catholic Business Network of Montgomery County celebrates a volunteer and a business partner from each school. This year, we congratulate and thank Stephanie Serna Klinger as our St. Raphael School Volunteer of the Year and Roger Pardo and Viper Unified Communications as our SRS Business Partner of the Year.

Both were recognized at CBN’s annual Gala on Dec. 3.

In a school with many generous helping hands and fabulous volunteers, Stephanie Serna Klinger stands out. School events, Stephanie is there. In the middle of the action, Stephanie is planning setup, organizing fun, and making it come together. Surrounded by her husband and friends, she gets the job done. As president of our Home & School Association, Stephanie recruited and collaborated with our roster of class representatives, orchestrated regular communications with parents and staff, and ensured that our calendar was filled with events to punctuate each season for our students. From a school year opening day to SpringFest at the end, we applaud Stephanie for a job well done. Not even COVID has stopped Stephanie or dampened her efforts. With her phenomenal technology skills, she has made SRS online initiatives come to life.

A huge thank you to our 2020 volunteer of the year, Stephanie Serna Klinger! During the month of August, Roger Pardo’s company, Viper Unified Communications, donated 28 Cisco TelePresence Codec systems to St. Raphael School for video collaboration, 12 of which were integrated into mobile carts for each classroom. During summer and fall, one could find Roger at St. Raphael in the middle of the night and on weekends as he made his generous donation take shape. The Codec systems integrated with the existing Cisco phone system. Cisco Expressway Core and Edge devices were deployed on the network to allow for secure video communication to the Webex cloud-conferencing environment. This new way to adapt during the pandemic has helped facilitate a crucial connected learning and teaching experience for the St. Raphael School and Nursery School communities. Through Roger’s generous work transforming our communication abilities, we were able to pivot to virtual during a time of rising COVID-19 numbers. But Roger’s work doesn’t end there—he continues offering 24/7 professional development and support to our teachers. The difference between our spring virtual learning and now is night and day. We cannot thank you enough, Roger!

Upcoming Events

- SRS and SRNS Christmas pageants (virtual): Dec. 16-17
- SRS and SRNS double open house (virtual): Jan. 11
- SRNS registration opens for 2021-22: Jan. 15
- Catholic Schools Week: Jan. 31-Feb. 5.

For more information, visit www.straphaelschoolmd.org.
At any given time of day, it is quite possible to see one, three or more cars in Resurrection’s parking lot (on the Greencastle Road side of the church) for a long period of time. In early spring, Father John Barry, Pastor, created a Tabernacle Window. Parishioners and visitors remain in their cars to pray and reflect. When the weather permits, you may find someone with a mask and lawn chair sitting at the window. Everyone remains socially distanced and masked if they leave their vehicles. In the window, one will see flowers and candles around the Tabernacle. Father Barry placed lighting around the window on the outside wall. People have been seen adding bouquets of flowers or plants at the bottom wall, under the window. Parishioners have the opportunity to visit 24/7 and it is just not for Resurrection, but the entire community.

The Tabernacle Window is most popular on Fridays from 4:30pm to 7:30pm when there is parking lot Confessions and Eucharistic Adoration with Benediction. In very early summer, after hearing how popular drive-up Confessions were becoming (due to feeling comfortable), Father Barry decided that Resurrection had to be ‘outside of the box’ in order for parishioners to have easy access to the Sacrament. So, he created two stations for people to drive up and remain in their cars at a white fence partition. On the other side, Confessors will find Father Barry, Father Virginus or Father Michael Niba there ready to give the gift of God’s forgiveness. Clergy sits in a folding chair or if the weather is inclement, then they are in their cars. On the nicer weather days, there have been a few ‘walk-ups’ to receive the Sacrament.

Confessions take place in the same parking lot as the Tabernacle Window and during the three hour period there is also Eucharistic Adoration. Adoration ends with the Benediction given by Deacon Chuck Bierberich. Father Barry noted, “Surely a proper place for Confession and Adoration is in the Church, yet in these days, one needs to adapt. The key is to show reverence in the adapted settings. I do that. I have heard Confessions in many places outside of the church.”

Anyone who is in need of quiet private time in prayer and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is invited and very much welcomed.
Our Cardboard Helps the Franciscan Friars Farm

By Rus Wester

Little Portion Farm is a ministry of the Franciscan Friars Conventual focused on providing fresh food to those in need, while using sustainable farming methods. The 3-acre farm at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Maryland is intended to function as an ecosystem, with a diversity of plants and habitats to support the life of this “little portion” of creation.

In its first growing season of 2019, Little Portion Farm grew, harvested, and donated 3,136 pounds of fresh vegetables. This year, their second growing season, to date they have harvested and donated 18,527 pounds of fresh produce to their partner organization, the Franciscan Center in Baltimore, who last year provided hot meals to over 180,000 of those in need.

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Little Sisters of the Poor Receive SJN Knights of Columbus Donations

By Rus Wester

In an amazing act of generosity, St. John Neumann parishioners donated hundreds of pounds of supplies during the Knights of Columbus’ collection event in support of the Little Sisters of the Poor. Goods including paper products, cleaning supplies, batteries, and many other essential items were among the donations, all of which were delivered later on that afternoon to the Sisters at their Jeanne Jugan Residence in Washington, DC.

As Sister Jeanne Veronique recently wrote, “your donation of much needed and hard to find items…thrilled us all. These are dollars saved, which we are able to use in order to sustain a loving and safe home for our residents.”

Thanks to the Knights of Columbus for hosting this important event and to all the SJN parishioners who so graciously supported it. Working together we ensure that we “leave no neighbor behind” and that we continue to care for those in our community who need our help now more than ever.

The Knights of Columbus have supported the Little Sisters since March of this year, when the pandemic made it impossible for the Sisters to conduct their annual parish visits to invite all Catholics to help support their much-needed ministry. A little known fact—the annual parish visits of the Little Sisters previously provided 80% of their entire annual operations budget.

Sister Jeanne Veronique closed her letter by saying “Again, thank you for your friendship and backing of our work. It is only with the support of our benefactors that we have been able to care for the elderly poor in our nation’s capital since 1871—providing safe shelter, a loving home, clothing, healthy food, activities, medical and nursing care. We are committed to carrying out our mission for many years to come.”

KNIGHTS NOTE: The Knights want to bring hope for continuation of the Sisters’ care-giving efforts and are working with SJN Parish to stage another Sisters Collection of needed supplies in December 2020. It’s expected the Knights will renew this support program with Little Sisters facilities throughout Maryland for the 2021 calendar year.
Volunteer Spotlight
St. Stephen’s Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude

By Mike Goss, Food Pantry Director

The strength of the St. Stephen’s Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude is defined by its volunteers. Every Friday evening, 25 to 30 people arrive at the Thaddeus Room to complete filling 300 bags of non-perishable items with loaves of bread and boxes of cereal or by creating individual produce packages from bulk boxes of vegetables and fruit. The following Saturday morning, 20 adults and 25 students (ages 8-20) distribute the food and produce to the needy starting at 8:45 and continuing to 11 a.m.

With members of the community arriving up to 1½ hours early, a team of adult volunteers also arrive early to ensure parking and orderly lineup occurs. Following 7 a.m. Mass, another group of volunteers prepare the donations for distribution using carts for food bags and a pallet jack for the produce, while others work to place donated diapers and other baby needs into paper bags and use a sharpie to indicate the diaper size. A dedicated group of six volunteers led by Monica Flores, divided into two separate weekly teams, assemble at the arrival table with laptops for log-in while others watch the lengthening line to verify returning needly or assisting with clipboards for new registrants. At 8:40 a.m. all volunteers assemble in the hallway to receive updated information and comments for that day’s activity, followed by inspirational prayers and a blessing from one of the parish priests.

At that time everyone is dispersed to their positions, where the students take turns to help individuals with carrying bags and boxes to their cars. One of the regular volunteers is Brodie Wise, a vice president with Internet Testing Systems in the Baltimore area, who is also studying to become a permanent deacon in the Archdiocese of Washington. St. Jude was fortunate to have Brodie select our pantry as his summer mission project. From day one, Brodie was all-in to help us! He showed up week after week with an SUV full of cereal boxes, among other items. He personally helped clean-out every Giant Food Store in the Rockville-Olney-Colesville area of their remaining 67 cent boxes of Ovi-O’s during September and October. As summer ended, Brodie could have bid adieu. However, as one who truly exhibits his passion, Brodie has tripled down! In addition to continuing to assist our pantry, he is also working with two other parish pantries. Well done, Brodie!

Monetary Donations Accepted

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

More Shrine of St. Jude on Page 31
Call to Arms Campaign Launched

With the mission to provide necessary funds to facilitate the continued quality of education during the Covid pandemic, St. Patrick’s School launched its “Call to Arms” campaign on November 16. Led by parents Barbara Gutierrez-Smith, Sara Antonucci, Paula Fragomeni, and Danielle DeWitt in coordination with Principal Christie Anne Short, the campaign hopes to raise $100,000 before December 31st of this year.

Contributions will fund technology upgrades, sanitizing operations, building reconstruction to support CDC in-person compliant learning, faculty support, and expansion of staff. Additionally, the initiative hopes to replace lost tuition revenue due to enrollment fluctuations during the pandemic, as well as lost revenues resulting from the inability to gather at social fundraising events. Members of the newly founded Shamrock Society are committed to matching donations made towards the $100,000 goal before the end of this calendar year. The Call to Arms raised over $60,000 in the first three days of the campaign.

The “Call to Arms” campaign was inspired by Thomas Paine’s historic quote that “These are the times that try men’s souls: the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in a crisis, shrink from service.” As we enter a trying winter, the fundraisers are asking the community of St. Patrick’s School to step up and answer the Call to Arms. In this case, “arms” refers to hugs and support for the faculty, students, and families of St. Patrick’s School.

The campaign is the precursor to a revived St. Patrick’s Annual Fund to finance long-range building needs and school initiatives. Chairperson Barbara Gutierrez-Smith shared “The organizers are heartened by the initial response to the campaign. We hope that each member of our community makes a meaningful gift, recognizing that it will be different for each family, and that we ultimately have 100% participation in this Call to Arms.”

Sharing A.J.’s Joy

In its third year, St. Patrick’s School conducted a toy drive to benefit the Johns Hopkins Children’s Center in Baltimore. In memory of A.J. Koller, more than 800 toys were collected to be shared with the young patients. A.J. Koller, the son of Kindergarten teacher Melanie Koller, was born in 2004 with Alagille Syndrome, a multi-organ disorder. His childhood was filled with multiple doctor appointments, procedures, and heart surgeries but also trips to the beach, amusement parks, special times with family and friends, and many movie nights. Known for being a loving brother and a good friend, A.J. sadly passed away on September 14, 2014 at the age of ten. To celebrate his memory and share A.J.’s joy with other children battling illness, the Koller family has organized this yearly toy drive every year since 2015. Since that time, more than 5000 toys have been collected and distributed at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center.

ST. PATRICK’S PUMPKIN PATCH

Like magic, a pumpkin patch sprouted in the side yard of the school! Students enjoyed choosing pumpkins and painting them to decorate the hallways of the school. Thanks to the HSA for organizing and sponsoring this event.

Pope: ‘No pandemic can turn off the light of Christmas’

Pope Francis invites Christians to open their hearts to the light of Christmas and reach out to those in need.

There is no pandemic or crisis that can turn off the light of Christmas, Pope Francis affirmed, as he greeted the faithful present in St. Peter’s Square and following through the media during the Sunday Angelus on December 6.

Noting that the Vatican’s Christmas tree has been erected in the Square and that the Nativity Scene will soon be unveiled, the Pope said that in many homes “these symbols of Christmas are being set up to the delight of children,” and also to the delight of those who no longer are children. “They are symbols, or signs of hope, especially during this difficult time,” he said, and he invited Christians not to stop at the symbols, but to go beyond and understand their meaning: “Jesus, the love of God, who was revealed to us to reach that goodness which has been poured out on the world.”

And assuring us all that no pandemic or crisis can “turn off that light,” Pope Francis said: “Let us allow it to enter into our hearts and reach out toward those who are most in need.”

Thus, he concluded: “God will once again be born in us and in our midst.”
Concerns Commission

By Liz Weiss, CTK Social

‘The Giving Tree’ Returns

For over 20 years, The Social Concerns Commission of Christ the King has coordinated “The Giving Tree” program to help needy families at Christmas. Volunteers make over 200 paper ornaments to hang on the Christmas tree in the church. Each one requests a gift card for a child or groceries, or a cash donation. At the beginning of Advent, parishioners choose ornaments from the tree.

Last year, Christ the King parish helped over 140 children and 43 families with gift cards and grocery cards over the Holiday Season. This year, because of the pandemic, there is an even greater need. Unfortunately, not as many people can attend Mass because of health concerns. Parishioners who are unable to attend church, but want to help, can send in a check to Christ the King parish designating it for The Giving Tree program.

Father Steve and the Social Concerns Commission thank everyone in advance for their generosity. As St. Matthew wrote, “Whatever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me.”

Choir Celebrating the Feast of Christ The King

By Liz Weiss, parishioner with Froilan Manansala, Music Director

Father Steve Carter, pastor of Christ the King, and the choir who sings at the English language Masses celebrated the Feast of Christ the King on November 22. The choir is very generous with their volunteering. The singers provide wonderful music for several Masses each week. Froilan Manansala is the Choir Director. Here they are with Father Steve for the group picture on the Feast day for our parish, the last Sunday of the Liturgical year.

Holy Cross Faith Community Nurses Give Flu Shots

On Sunday, November 1, Christ the King parishioners were blessed with a visit from nurses of the Holy Cross Faith Community Nurse Program. Liz Weiss, a parishioner received a call from a community activist, Pat Tyson, about Holy Cross’s interest in reaching out to our community to give Flu Shots. Liz called Father Steve Carter, our pastor. He was very enthusiastic. Liz contacted Meg McKenna, the Director of the program at Holy Cross, and a date was set.

National Collection Helps Religious Orders Care for Their Elderly Members

The 33rd annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be held in most U.S. Catholic parishes Dec. 12-13. Coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the appeal assists hundreds of religious order communities in providing for the ongoing needs of their aging Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

The U.S. bishops initiated the collection in 1988 to address the significant lack of retirement funding among U.S. religious orders. Distinct from retired priest collections held in respective dioceses for the care of retired diocesan priests, this annual collection benefits eligible religious orders to help underwrite retirement and health-care expenses for nearly 30,000 elderly religious.

The 2019 appeal raised $26.2 million, and this past June, the NRRO distributed $25 million in financial assistance to 341 religious communities across the nation. The beneficiary religious order communities combine this funding with their own income and savings to help furnish day-to-day necessities, including medications and nursing care, and the distributions may be applied toward immediate retirement needs or invested for future eldercare expenses.

“We are humbled and incredibly grateful for the ongoing generosity of the Catholic faithful and the annual appeal,” said Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM (Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary), who serves as the NRRO’s executive director. “And we are committed to ensuring the broadest and most beneficial use of these donations.”

The retirement-funding deficit is rooted in low salaries and changing demographics. Traditionally, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests—often known collectively as “women and men religious”—were engaged in ministry for little to no pay. As a result, many of their religious communities lack adequate retirement savings. Elderly religious are also living longer and, according to NRRO data, outnumber younger, wage-earning religious by nearly three to one.

Like many other Americans, reli-


**Award-Winning Student Missionaries in Action**

**Come Holy Spirit!** The dedicated students of FIAT (Faith in Action Team) at Holy Redeemer Middle School have received a certificate of recognition for answering the ADW Office of Mission’s challenge that was issued last year on October 1, 2019 at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. That challenge was to live out the call to evangelize through prayer, sacrifice and service beginning in the 2019-2020 academic school year. During Holy Redeemer’s Spirit Week last year, the group kicked off their missionary year with a prayer service invoking the Holy Spirit.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the group then served local nursing homes by singing Christmas carols and making cards for the various feast days throughout the year. They served the marginalized by making snack packs for those experiencing homelessness and delivered toiletries to residents of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Washington, D.C. where they met up with an old friend, Monsignor Bazan. The Covid shut-down in March did not hold this dedicated group back from their mission to pray. Using their creativity and with the help of Marianne Green, Technology teacher at Holy Redeemer, they put together a YouTube video of the “mission rosary,” where students prayed for different areas of the world. This was one of many activities that brought the school together during the spring quarantine.

The group continues this call in the current academic year despite the challenges of Covid restrictions. They recently led the school’s participation in the Holy Redeemer parish drive to support our sister parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Togo, West Africa, by collecting school supplies throughout the month of September. Eighth-grader Eliza D’Albora gathered several of her classmates outside to make rosaries to be sent to Togo as well, and parishioners donated furniture, sports equipment, office supplies and more. Finally, all 500 boxes of donations were packed on a shipping container one sunny October Saturday morning. The container is currently on its way to West Africa and will be received by our sister parish very soon.

We can’t wait to see how these young people continue their call to evangelize through prayer, sacrifice and service throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

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**Grandparents’ Day in a Virtual Way**

**By Mark Crimmins**

Grandparents’ Day is the day when Holy Redeemer typically packs grandparents into the school to celebrate and sing with students in preschool through eighth grade, but we could not pack them in this year. Initially, this seemed like a disappointment. However, our Virtual Grandparents’ Day turned out to be a uniquely personal and heartwarming event. Students and grandparents were able to showcase their personalities and inside jokes in a special way. Students were filmed greeting their grandparents individually, and thanking them for things like going shopping, spending time at pools, enjoying vacations at the beach, cooking special foods, going boating, and gathering to watch movies. Through the videos, we also learned that Holy Redeemer grandparents share lots and lots of ice cream with their grandchildren!

Students included personal touches such as, “I like eating lunch on the porch and talking about ducks with you;” “I like to garden with Mimi;” “I love grandma because she lets me stay up late;” “I like catching crabs with Lolo;” “I like Susu and Pop because they make me Toaster Strudels;” and “I like golfing with Pop because they make me Toaster Strudels.”

PreK student Charlie Fullenwider reacts to his Grandparents’ telling a joke.

PreK students Calla Sparkar, Eloisa Herber and Alex Velliky are entertained by recorded greetings from grandparents of their classmates.

Students included written messages of love to each grandparent. Much to the students’ delight, many grandparents also sent in jokes, wore Groucho Marx glasses, wore masks of their grandchildren’s faces, sang songs, and reminisced about past grandparents’ days at Holy Redeemer. One grandparent video even included an alligator in their backyard!

Most students did not know about the Grandparents’ greetings that were being compiled, so the videos were a surprise on the day before Thanksgiving break. When watching them in class, along with the smiles and love that were evident, conversations grew. PreK children, when watching their class-specific Grandparents’ video, reacted with squeals of delight, “Hey, that’s my Nana!” “Hi, Grandpa!!” and asked if they could “watch that movie again”. Older students asked others about the ducks on the porch and if they had ever seen the alligator at their grandparents’ house. Students cheered each other as they spoke in different languages to their grandparents. Students and grandparents sent greetings in French, Spanish, Hebrew, Greek, Italian and German. Instead of pre-planned on-stage performances and classroom activities (which were certainly missed), students spoke from their hearts, relaying messages and memories. While this event originally felt like it was keeping us apart, in the end it brought us closer together.

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**“Strength & Dignity” Virtual Spiritual Series for Women – January 6 – 27, 2021**

The Archdiocese of Washington’s Office for Family Life is sponsoring a virtual spiritual series for women hosted by the Council of Catholic Women based on St. John Paul II’s encyclical “Mulieris Dignitatem” on the dignity and the vocation of women. Read and discuss the nine sections of the letter during four consecutive Wednesdays to better understand God’s beautiful design for women, and their essential contribution to the world. 

**Dates:** Wednesday evenings from January 6 – 27, 2021

**Time:** 7:00pm – 8:30pm

**Location:** Virtually

**January 6 — Sections 1 – 3: Introduction, Theotokos (Mother of God), Image and Likeness of God**

**January 13 — Sections 4 – 5:** Eve-Mary, Jesus

**January 20 — Sections 6 – 7:** Motherhood – Virginity, The Church

**January 27 — Sections 8 – 9:** The Greatest is Love, Conclusion

**January 27 — Sections 10:** The Church

The fee for all sessions is $12.00 which includes the materials that will be mailed to the address indicated in the registration. Register at: https://adw.org/event/strength-and-dignity-virtual-series-jan-2021/english/

For more information, contact the Archdiocese’s Office for Family Life at 301-853-4546 or visible-sign@adw.org.
St. Michael the Archangel Sodality Honored Mary and the Holy Rosary in October

By Cynthia Lewis

St. Michael the Archangel hosted two virtual events to celebrate the Month of the Holy Rosary. Mrs. Myra Pepito, a parishioner, contacted the Sodality with her annual invitation to participate in the nationwide Rosary Rally hosted by America Needs Fatima. Her organization seeks to spread the message of Our Lady of Fatima’s apparition through “public square” Rosary events. In past years, the Sodality’s observance has occurred at Mary’s statue in front of the Parish Rectory. Featuring Myra’s photo of “Mary’s Garden” at her home as the inspiring visual focus, the virtual Rosary Rally convened at noon on Saturday, October 10, 2020. The band of Sodalists and parishioners joined a multitude of others praying across the country. The Rosary ended with the inspiring Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the prayer of Total Consecration by St. Maximilian Kolbe.

Additionally, the Sodality’s annual “Tea with Mary Under the Tent” was presented virtually on Sunday, October 18, 2020. Under normal conditions, the Sodality would have offered refreshments on the church’s plaza and invited parishioners to take a Rosary and literature on Mary and the Rosary prayer. This year, Sodalists asked visitors to have a cup of tea for a virtual visit. Deacon Curtis Rodney opened with prayer and a moving testimony of how Mary had influenced his life. Immediate Past Prefect Vera Joseph shared spiritual gems from the classic book *The Secret of the Rosary* by St. Louis de Monfort. In the book, “The Many Faces of Mary” Prefect Ingrid Denis led a captivating tour of Mary’s images and titles around the world. At the conclusion, Sodalists Linda Jordan and Mardi Maher expounded on commonly asked questions about Our Blessed Mother. Both were well-received events to honor Mary.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

By John Webster

On November 5, 2020, St. Michael the Archangel Church hosted an online workshop on “The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.” The workshop offered an overview of the key themes and principles of Catholic Social Teaching with a detailed emphasis on work as a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. Several St. Michael’s parishioners attended the workshop and were enlightened with the message that in work and life, everyone and everything are connected.

Sustainability Tips: Washing Your Clothes

By Jason Giovannettone

You can reduce your contribution to carbon emission by washing your clothes in cold water instead of hot. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the US residential sector contributed about 21% of the total national carbon dioxide emissions in 2005. Of this percentage, activities related to the laundry cycle accounted for 18% of the residential emissions (which translates to 3 – 4% of the total US remissions).

Along with emissions, there have been concerns about the chemicals present in washing detergents. Not only will harmful chemicals present in the detergent get released into the environment, but they can also leave residual traces in our clothes and come into direct contact with our skin. People have begun to use homemade detergents, but that is not an option for everyone. There is no easy solution here, but the Environmental Working Group (EWG) rated a myriad of different types of cleaning products, including laundry detergent, which can help you decide what is the best choice for you and your family.

St. Michael the Archangel recently completed restoration of its pews, creating a beautiful space for parishioners to worship.
It is the path to drawing closer to profound relationship with Jesus Christ: a life marked by prayer. For a life of prayer, we may nourish our relationship with Jesus Christ; a life of prayer, the Church is at the service of the mission of prayer. Prayer is the key for us to be able to enter into dialogue with the Father: prayer.

The Pope's prayer during the pandemic

The Pope himself is a man of prayer, and in his December prayer appeal bears witness to this with images taken from the most emotive moments of 2020: the prayer service for the pandemic in an empty St. Peter’s Square; a pilgrimage of the crucifix of San Marcello in Via del Corso, in the middle of Rome; and moments of recollection before the Byzantine icon of Salus Populi Romani at the Roman Basilica of St. Mary Major. Jesus Christ: a live marked by prayer

For Pope Francis, prayer cannot be reduced to just a space or moment of interior contemplation. “By praying, we change reality. And we change our hearts,” he says always produces a change. “We can do many things, but without prayer, it does not work,” he says. In the General Audience on 4 November, he also took advant-
gage of the opportunity to explain Jesus’ life of prayer. “During his public life, Jesus constantly availed himself of the power of prayer. The Gospels show this to us when he retired to secluded places to pray. These are sober and discreet observances that allow us only to imagine those prayerful dialogues. They clearly demonstrate, however, that even at times of greater dedication to the poor and the sick, Jesus never neglected his intimate dialogue with the Father.”

Prayer as the heart of the Church’s mission

Today, the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network connects millions of Catholics around the world from diverse countries, cultures, and social and ecclesial contexts, through prayer: not just through The Pope Video, but also through the prayer platform Click to Pray and the Camino del Corazón, a path of prayer for the mission. The Pope Video this month concludes with Pope Francis’ invitation to prayer, observing a few moments of silence, during the Audience with the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network on its 175th anniversary.

Fr. Frédéric Fornos, S.J., International Director of the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, remembered the occasion: “It was one of the most intense moments of the celebration. The Holy Father presided a long period of prayer, in Paul VI Hall, in an imposing climate of silence and recollection with more than 5,000 people. And there, he left it very clear that prayer and the mission of the Church are indissolubly united. The mission of the Church is at the service of the challenges of the world, and this is not possible without prayer. Francis summarized it quite simply: ‘The heart of the mission of the Church is prayer.’ For many, prayer is reduced to a peaceful time or one of reflection, but for those who discover its depth, it’s the heart’s inspiration. Prayer opens us to Love, which has a face: Jesus Christ, who leads us to the Father. Often, it’s fruits and its fecundity aren’t immediately visible. Like the seed in the dirt, it takes time… but its fecundity is immense, as the Gospel says: it produces thirty-, sixty-, and even a hundred-fold ( Mk 4:20). Prayer is essential for the mission of the Church. In the spirit of silence, everyone, each one in his or her heart, consents to the prayer platform Click to Pray and in his December prayer intention, which he recalled to us at the close of the Audience, that Jesus Christ may always be nourished by the Word of God and by a life of prayer.”

DECEMBER: FOR A LIFE OF PRAYER

The text of the December 2020 prayer intention: The heart of the Church’s mission is prayer. Prayer is the key for us to be able to enter into dialogue with the Father. Every time we read a short passage from the Gospel we hear Jesus speaking to us. We have a conversation with Jesus. We listen to Jesus and we reply. And this is prayer. By praying, we change reality. And we change our hearts. Our heart changes when we pray. We can do many things, but without prayer, it does not work. We pray that the personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

December: for a life of prayer

December 2020:

- For a life of prayer, Jesus constantly availed himself of the power of prayer. The Gospels show this to us when he retired to secluded places to pray.
- Silence is an important aspect of prayer, as it allows us to connect with our inner self and with the divine.
- Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of prayer in his December prayer intention.
- The Worldwide Prayer Network connects millions of people from diverse countries, cultures, and social contexts through prayer.
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- The mission of the Church is at the service of the challenges of the world, which is not possible without prayer.
- Pope Francis encourages us to pray daily, as prayer is essential for the mission of the Church.

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- The mission of the Church is at the service of the challenges of the world, which is not possible without prayer.
- Pope Francis encourages us to pray daily, as prayer is essential for the mission of the Church.
Saint Francis International School is having a very busy 11th year! During the summer, SFIS held a Virtual Summer Academy in place of its normal summer programs while also continuing to coordinate distribution of free food for children and families in the neighborhoods around the school. In total, SFIS prepared and distributed 56,970 free meals for children from March to August. Throughout the summer, SFIS staff and volunteers worked with World Central Kitchen to distribute over 40,000 free dinners in Langley Park and worked with the PG County government to distribute 30,000 boxes of free produce.

The effort to care for the physical needs of students and their families has continued throughout the fall. On Mondays, school staff distributes around 2,000 free meals for the week for students via a drive-thru. Saint Francis’ librarian organized thousands of book donations and every student in the school also received a bag of free books to take home with their free meals one Monday in October.

St. Camillus parishioners have been stepping up to support the students at SFIS. The St. Francis Builds ministry gathered on a Saturday morning in November and built desks to give to students who need them at home; the Desks by Dads project donated chairs to go with the desks which were built according to their designs. In December, the Knights of Columbus of Holy Family Council #5547 donated 100 winter coats to be given to SFIS students in need.

On December 1st, for #GivingTuesday, SFIS raised over $20,000 to help families struggling meet their financial obligations. That included a special $10,000 gift from the Favret family of siblings who all attended St. Camillus School and wanted to honor the value of their Catholic education. Loretta Favret currently serves as the principal of Little Flower School in Bethesda.

All of these efforts are happening as Franciscan Fr. Brian Jordan settles in as the pastor of St. Camillus and canonical administrator of SFIS. Fr. Brian takes over from Br. Chris Posch who died of pneumonia in July. Fr. Brian’s name might sound familiar, he was also pastor of St. Camillus from 1990 to 1996. During his tenure St. Camillus School was awarded a Blue Ribbon from the US Department of Education.

COVID-19 continues to have its highest impact in the ZIP Codes surrounding SFIS. The 20783 ZIP Code in Prince George’s County, which is adjacent to the St. Camillus campus, has the highest rate of coronavirus infection in the entire metropolitan area. Over the course of the pandemic, COVID-19 has been experienced by numerous student and faculty families, including the loss of three fathers and several grandparents and other family members to the disease.

Despite these challenges, the SFIS faculty and staff is finding ways to keep all students learning and growing through distance education. Students have been provided with Chromebooks and learning materials, including science experiments, are distributed on Mondays along with the free food. Students have also been getting the opportunity to participate in optional in-person activities in the county park across from the school. These activities include PE and class picnics. SFIS has also had a large number of social distanced and video events like a dance contest, pumpkin decorating contest, and virtual grandparents’ day.

Saint Francis International School is devoted to its mission despite any challenges, but help is always appreciated. Alumni and friends are especially invited to support SFIS during this crisis by donating online at www.mightycause.com/covid19help.