



Parish Times

Back-to-School
Issue

OCTOBER 2020

Living the Faith Together

FREE

Building Legacy

I hope this edition of Our Parish Times finds you and your loved ones well. You remain in my prayers. In this column, let's reflect on the legacy current Catholics will leave to future generations of Catholics as we make our way through multiple historic challenges. Like other periods in its long history, the Church faces grave prospects. Through the most difficult times, it was the responsibility of earlier Catholics to preserve the faith and sustain local Catholic communities. Previous generations of Catholics responded with inspiring preachers, faithful martyrs, reflective theologians, determined crusaders, brave missionaries and uncompromising advocates for social justice and charity. Their teaching, personal example and good works are the legacies they contributed to future generations of the Church. As we face adversity in our Church and local parishes today, what will our legacies be?



Chuck Short

The life of an accomplished local priest, Msgr. Thomas Kane, may help us reflect on our response. Msgr. Kane died in August at

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We Can Count on It

The seasons change regardless. No matter how much turmoil exists in the world - pre-election anxiety and animus, pandemic fatigue, distance learning travails, and uncertainty about what will come next - the seasons change. God gets out his crayons and covers everything with amber, burnt umber, and burgundy. We feel a chill in the morning as we walk out the front door, and there might even be a tiny bit of frost on the windows. We wear a big sweater on the way to work and, as the days goes on, we are surprised by how warm we are. Apples have an extra crisp, and pumpkins are lined up in storefront windows.



Patricia McGann

The predictability of the changing season serves as a reminder that no matter how much we catastrophize the state of our world, there are still things we can count on. It's good for us to review all of those "dependables" in our lives. It's good for us to take a minute and appreciate that there are some things that will always remain.

No matter how much we disagree about politics, we can still find unconditional love in our families - and if we do the hard work it takes to avoid or at least diffuse disagree-

Continued on page 11

St. Michael COVID-19 Testing Drive

By Helder Hernandez

While we continue to navigate the pandemic, we as Catholics must meet these challenges with compassion, prudence, empathy, faith, and justice. Compassion to walk with the most vulnerable, prudence to abide by the CDC guidelines, empathy to care for the suffering, and faith to embrace our spirituality to help confront the health, social, and economic disparities.

The CDC found increasing evidence of long-standing systemic health and social inequities that place communities of racial minority groups at increased risk from COVID-19. Pope Francis encourages us to be attentive to those who suffer, to avoid "attitudes that run counter to harmony," and to keep away from the throwaway culture where people focus only on the things that impact them. We cannot forget the essential interconnectedness of humanity that highlights the human family as having common origin in God, common home, and a common destination in Christ that should turn into solidarity.

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St. Michael's partnered with the Latino Health Initiative of Montgomery County to host a COVID-19 testing drive for free with no medical order necessary.

De Chantal Feeding the Hungry During these Unprecedented Times

Three ways De Chantal Parish has been feeding the community this summer

By Maria Cornelius

St. Jane De Chantal Parish has been participating in programs to provide food for those who are less fortunate for over 40 years. With the recent pandemic, and the increased number of people in need of help, De Chantal has risen to the occasion, showing a tremendous amount of compassion and generosity.

Parishioners of St. Jane De Chantal have been proudly preparing lunches for So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.) since 1979, currently feeding between 300-500 of our neighbors in need with each meal. S.O.M.E. is an interfaith community-based organization that uses a holistic approach to help meet the daily needs of the homeless and poor in the DC area. DeChantal's S.O.M.E. Ministry, composed of over 70 parishioners, provides lunch whenever there is a need on the fifth Wednesday of



De Chantal parishioners collected food in the church parking lot on Saturday mornings

the month, roughly 4 to 5 times per year. For each meal, a diverse group of members of our parish work together to coordinate, cook, bake, and deliver lunch to S.O.M.E. in Washington DC.

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Two Montgomery County Parish Schools Receive 2020 National Blue Ribbon Distinction

On September 24, two Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington were recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools - and both were in Montgomery County. The Department of Education recognized 367 schools, and among the 50 non-public schools named, the two Archdiocese of Washington Catholic schools are:

Our Lady of Mercy School in Potomac
St. Peter School in Olney

This year marks the second Blue Ribbon award for St. Peter School (2012, 2020) and the third award for Our Lady of Mercy (1999, 2009, 2020), the first three-time recipient in the archdiocese. See their Blue Ribbon School articles on page 3.

The National Blue Ribbon designation is given to public and non-public schools across the country based on their academic excellence or progress as America's most successful schools. The awards are given annually by the United States Department of Education. In this 38th year of the program, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington have received the Blue Ribbon designation a total of 49 times

In light of the ongoing pandemic, both of our awardees are celebrating their Blue Ribbon designation virtually in accordance with guidance and guidelines from the United States Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Archdiocese of Washington.

OPT

Catholics Invited to Live the Gospel of Life

October is Respect Life Month, and Archbishop Joseph Naumann, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued a statement encouraging Catholics to allow "the Gospel of Christ to touch and transform our own hearts and the decisions we make." Archbishop Naumann's full statement:

"As Catholics in the United

States, we will soon mark our annual observance of October as Respect Life Month. It is a time to focus on God's precious gift of human life and our responsibility to care for, protect, and defend the lives of our brothers and sisters.

"This year's theme, 'Live the Gospel of Life,' was inspired by the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *The Gospel of Life*.

Pope John Paul's masterfully articulated defense of the right to life for children in their mothers' wombs, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the marginalized is more relevant today than ever before.

"Last November, the U.S. bishops reaffirmed that 'the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed.' While we noted not to 'dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty, and the death penalty,' we renewed our commitment to protect the most fundamental of all human rights – the right to live.

"This past January, I shared with Pope Francis that the bishops of the United States had been criticized by some for identifying the protec-

tion of the unborn as a preeminent priority. The Holy Father expressed his support for our efforts observing that if we fail to protect life, no other rights matter. Pope Francis also said that abortion is not primarily a Catholic or even a religious issue, it is first and foremost a human rights issue.

"The Gospel of Life provides a blueprint for building a culture of life and civilization of love. The important work of transforming our culture begins by allow-

ing the Gospel of Christ to touch and transform our own hearts and the decisions we make. May we strive to imitate Christ and follow in his footsteps, caring for the most vulnerable among us. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, may Our Lord grant us the grace to live courageously and faithfully his Gospel of life."

New parish resources have been developed around the theme of "Living the Gospel of Life" and are available at www.respectlife.org. **OPT**

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REGISTER AND PLAN TO VOTE

Prepare to Vote

Maryland voters may choose to vote in person or to request a mail-in ballot this year. Please check dates carefully as well as your voting location, which may have changed.

Step 1. Register to vote for the Presidential General Election by Oct. 13.

If using Maryland's Online Voter Registration System, you have until 9:00pm to submit your application.

- To register online visit: www.mdcatholic.org/elections

- Not sure if you are registered? Visit: www.mdcatholic.org/elections

Step 2. Decide how you want to vote this fall.

- By mail (your online request for a mail-in ballot must be received by Oct. 20. Visit: www.mdcatholic.org/elections)

Please note: You will receive your ballot by mail, or by download, if requested. Completed ballots



must be mailed by Nov. 3 or dropped off at your local board of elections office, an early voting center, or election-day voting center. Ballot drop-off boxes may also be available.

- In-person early voting (Oct. 26-Nov. 2). For voting sites in the jurisdiction where you live, visit: www.mdcatholic.org/elections

- In-person on Election Day at any of these voting sites in the jurisdiction where you live: www.mdcatholic.org/elections

Step 3. Inform your conscience, learn about the candidates, then vote.

Source: Maryland Catholic Conference

The Violence of Abortion

By John Naughton

The headline on the article about the horrendous injuries to two women from their late-term abortions at Leroy Carhart's abortuary was "Violence against Women and Children Continues in Bethesda." (OPT, August 2020).

While these two women regrettably suffered severe, permanent injuries, every abortion does violence in many ways.

First, abortion does violence to God's infinitely loving gift of life. The baby's life, so marvelously created in a process that is breathtakingly awesome, is snuffed out.

Abortion violates God's commandment, "Thou Shall Not Kill", and the Catholic Church's teaching that all life is sacred.

Second, abortion does violence to the dignity of women and God's wonderful gift of motherhood. "A mother is the most important person on earth." (Cardinal Mindzenty's tribute to mothers.)

Third, practitioners do violence to the truth by misleading women into thinking abortion will solve their problem and misleading women about all aspects of abortion, e.g. the baby is just a mass of tissue, feels no pain and abortion is completely safe.

Fourth, abortion does violence to women's health. Many women are physically injured, some very severely during both surgical and drug induced abortions; some have died. Latent physical health impacts include increased risk for breast cancer whereas giving birth reduces the breast cancer risk. Subsequent premature births are a risk and can

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Make Sure you Vote

By Anthony Bosnick

I've been voting now for many years. I think that this is the most challenging election I have ever voted in. I'm not crazy about any of the candidates on the national level. I'm strongly pro-life (opposed to abortion and euthanasia). I embrace the Church's understanding of issues such as immigration, opposition to the death penalty, overcoming racism, building a fair tax system, promoting health care for all, care for creation.

I have found wisdom in the Church's teachings and life through following them. So, I try to understand and embrace these social and moral teachings as closely as possible.

Faithful Citizenship

Every four years since 1976, the Catholic bishops of the United States through the USCCB have published a guide for Catholics regarding the upcoming national elections. It is

now called "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States." The purpose is to help "everyone . . . participate in public life and contribute to the common good" (FC, p. vii).

Quoting Pope Francis, the bishops write: "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" (FC, p. vii).

Participation in public life is rooted in our call to build the kingdom of God on earth and to grow in holiness. Following Jesus as committed disciples requires that we embrace his teachings and live them out. Our Catholic faith calls us to put into practice in practical ways what we hear proclaimed.

Not a Voting Guide

"Faithful Citizenship" provides principles to guide us based on Catholic social and moral teaching. It is *not* a voting guide. It doesn't tell us what to do, but calls us to evaluate the candidates and their positions and vote in light of Church teaching. It focuses on the importance of promoting: 1) the dignity of the human person, 2) subsidiarity, 3) the common good, and 4) solidarity (FC, para. 44-56). Space does not permit us to look at these four principles now, but we will do so in the next issue of *Our Parish Times*.

Catholics often face difficult choices when voting. "Faithful Citizenship" reminds us that "A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide . . . racist behavior, *if the voter's intent is to support that position*" (emphasis added). This is called

"formal cooperation in grave evil" (para. 34).

This is challenging. "There may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position even on policies promoting an intrinsically evil act may reasonably decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons." The bishops continue: "Voting in this way would be permissible only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil" (para. 35). The bishops know that "As Catholics we are not single-issue voters" (para. 42).

"Faithful Citizenship" is relatively short at 43 pages. You can read it by searching for "Forming Consciences USCCB". The document and many resources explaining it are available online.

The November Election

The election will be here before you know it. Many are concerned

about voting around crowds at polling places. Maryland has made it easy to register online and request mail-in ballots. Visit this web site for more information: <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration/InstructionsStep1>

As U.S. citizens and as Catholics, voting is an important duty. Voter registration for the General Election closes on October 13, 2020. If you are voting by mail, your mail-in ballot *request* must be received by the Board of Elections by Tuesday, October 20. Election Day is Tuesday, November 3. Visit the link above for details.

This is not an easy election. For guidance, reflect on the candidates and the issues in light of Catholic social and moral teaching. Spend some time reading "Faithful Citizenship," especially paragraphs 34-38. It will be a challenge to vote, but hopefully you will have more clarity and surety in your choices.

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Thank you, Good Samaritans!

The article *A Neighbor Appeals for Help* on the front page of the August/September issue described the situation of Patrick Durkin of Rockville. Patrick, paralyzed from the neck down as the result of an accident 11 years ago, was in danger of being denied coverage for the skilled nursing that

enables him to live at home by his Medicare supplemental insurance plan.

Patrick writes to thank all you have helped him:

"My family, nurses and I would like to thank you for the generous support you have provided during this difficult situation. Because of

your help, I am still in my home with my nurses. My health is good and I am praying that all paperwork is processed quickly with a positive outcome. I have made headway in my journey to remain in my home with government support. Please continue to pray for me. I believe God answers prayers and opens

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Principal Kristen Cocozzella and Vice Principal Neslon Abreu celebrate the announcement of the 2020 National Blue Ribbon School Award

Saint Peter's Recognized as a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School

By Mary Randles

Saint Peter's is celebrating in a big way! On September 24, the school was designated as an Exemplary High Performing National Blue Ribbon School for 2020 by the U.S. Department of Education. This prestigious award recognizes academic excellence and is presented annually to only 50 non-public schools in the nation. Saint Peter's is repeating this accomplishment, having been awarded the Blue Ribbon in 2012.

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A Third Blue Ribbon for Mercy!

We are incredibly excited to be named a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School! This is Mercy's third Blue Ribbon award: 1999, 2009, 2020. We are proud to be the only elementary school in the state of Maryland, public or private, to achieve the distinction of being selected for this award three times. Recognized as an "Exemplary High Performing School" the award "affirms the hard work of educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content."

On the day we were awarded the Blue Ribbon, we were also celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy! We reflected with joy on our 60-year tradition of instilling Christian values while providing quality

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Principal Doreen Engel with the school's mascot, Pride the lion, and Mercy's pastor Fr. William Byrne with Zélie.

OUR Parish Times

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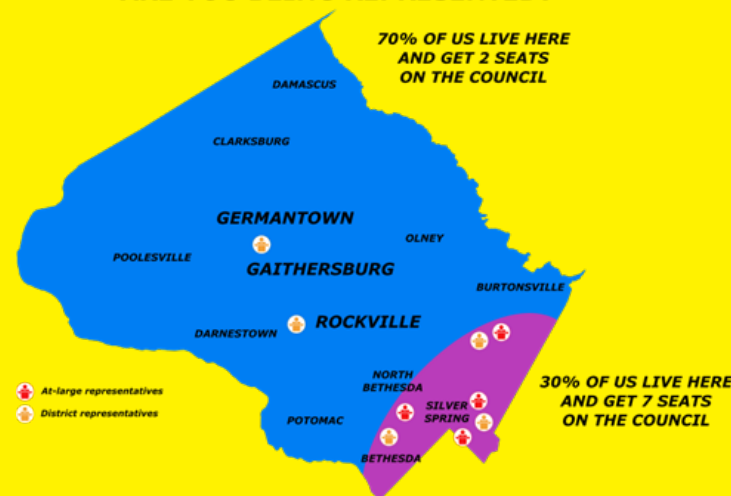
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Archbishop Gregory confirms Caroline Botti. Her brother James is her sponsor. Caroline chose St. Elizabeth of Hungary because she built a hospital to care for the poor and sick. Photo by Doug Johncox

Msgr. Filardi blesses Victory Haven, with 72 units of low-cost housing for seniors in Damascus, offered by Victory Housing and the archdiocese. The four-story apartment building is near St. Paul Catholic Church and near the town library and senior center. Kelly Gardiner, resident manager, is proud of the residence. "It's beautiful, of course, but it's the people who make who make it. We have wonderful residents, who look out for each other and support each other." Photo by Graham Pearson



Archbishop Gregory's Only 2020 Confirmation

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

"You will never be able to realize all of your promise unless you are filled with the Spirit of Hope and Potential. You need the power of God's own Spirit to help you to become the people you are destined to become. Confirmation is the Sacrament of Possibility, of Potential, of Promise." – from Archbishop Wilton Gregory's homily at St. Paul

The pandemic interfered with confirmation schedules around Pentecost, so the 51 confirmations at St. Paul in September were only ones that Archbishop Wilton Gregory administered this year, and his first in the Archdiocese. However, he assured everyone, he had done this 140,000 times before 2020, and he knew what he was doing.

The requirements of social distancing during the Covid-19 crisis made it impossible to pack inside everyone who wanted to be there. Families waited outside in the parking lot while candidates and their sponsors only were inside. With only three people in each pew – built for nine – and every other pew

left empty, the church looked rather empty even when it was filled to legal capacity. But the spirit of the event was still vibrant: the young candidates looked and sounded alert and prepared.

The patron saints chosen by the confirmed seemed to reflect an awareness of the pandemic. Seven young men chose St. Sebastian as their patron saint; he was a third century martyr, and a patron saint of people suffering through a plague. (Megan McQuin, who helped the students prepare for confirmation, adds wryly that St. Sebastian is also the patron saint of athletes, and Damascus takes sports seriously.) Five young women chose St. Elizabeth of Hungary; she was a 13th century countess, daughter of the king of Hungary, who poured out her wealth serving the poor, and is a patron saint of hospitals and of Catholic Charities.

The archbishop's respect and affection for the young in the church was clear: "In spite of the noise, confusion, and unpredictable moments you introduce into our lives, you remind us that God's Spirit is to be found in such energy and promise."

OPT

Thanks, Fr. Pierce!

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

Fr. Joseph Pierce, a scholarly pastor who led the congregation in praying the psalms every day before Mass, left St. Paul's after 12 years of service. He was transferred to southern Maryland, to St. John Vianney in Prince Frederick, Maryland.

Fr. Pierce oversaw the construction and opening of a new parish center for large parish events and

for religious instruction. Like the church, the parish center has large windows overlooking Maryland's rolling hills.

Ginny Clifford, a long-time parish stalwart, praised Fr. Pierce's care for the parish during the Covid crisis. "He was careful to make the sacraments available to everyone as well as possible. He was very aggressive about protecting people with social distancing and masks, but also protecting people's spiri-

tual lives – keeping people in touch with the sacraments, with Mass on TV, Mass with safe distancing when possible, confessions. He built a team of parishioners to stay in touch with anyone who might be in trouble because they were isolated. He cared about us."

Ann Barbagallo adds that when Fr. Pierce preached, he shared his own experiences that made it easier to understand the words of Jesus. And he had a gift for dealing with people in crisis, especially death. He helped individuals and their families, with tenderness.

He accepted the challenge of continuing to support the medical clinic in El Rosario, Honduras, built by parishioners inspired by Joanny Figueroa, who lived in Maryland for some years, and provided nursing care to several aging parishioners. When Joanny returned to her home in Honduras, she kept contact with friends at St. Paul; and over the years, she enlisted and coordinated steadily growing teams of medical professional and other volunteers trekked south to offer social services, especially a medical clinic that served tens of thousands of poor Hondurans. Year after year, in the spring, Fr. Pierce prepared for the mission trip, worrying – and then returned jubilant.

OPT



Fr. Pierce, jubilant in green, is shown with a team at St. Paul's Clinic in Honduras, including Sherrie Wade, Maureen Appleby, Charles Appleby, Melanie Raum, Madeline Feltus, and others.

Welcome, Msgr. Filardi!

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

In June 2020, Archbishop Gregory assigned Msgr. Edward Filardi as the new pastor of St. Paul. He came here from Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Bethesda.

There had been rumors for years that he wanted to come to Damascus. And he says that several months before the transfer, former pastor Fr. Peter Sweeney told him that in his opinion, Fr. Filardi would be a good fit for the parish, and urged him to talk to the person in charge of placing pastors. Fr. Filardi asked Fr. Sweeney if he would talk to the archdiocese officials about it. But neither of them acted on it; archdiocesan officials came to the same conclusion – this is a good fit – without the helpful advice of either priest.

Msgr. Filardi says he was attracted by the beauty of the church and its surroundings, but more by the people he knew here.

Did the place match his hopes? After some months on the job, he is still surprised and delighted by the beauty of the area – the open land, the hills and trees, the gentle morning fog. There's a lot of work to do, but in some ways it's like being on a retreat, in a tranquil place that inspires prayer.

Did anything here startle him? He says that he was surprised that the church is locked all day, except during Mass and other services. He doesn't want to make changes too fast; he intends to listen and learn for months more. But he's got his eyes on those locks.

Does he have plans? He intends to serve the people here, and that

begins with getting to know us. He didn't arrive with any great scheme that he is planning to impose. For now, he's trying to find the best way to re-open as much as possible as we learn our way through the pandemic. He's focused on how we bring people back together.

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Fr. Filardi has many old friends in St. Paul Church. In 2000, Cathy Roth collected 13 young people to go to World Youth Day, with Fr. Filardi as chaplain. The pilgrims brought a "firstday card" for the Holy Father. Pictured with Fr. Filardi are five Cavanaugh-O'Keefes, Jimmy Creegan, Katie Graham, and Tom Johncox, all from St. Paul – plus Paul and Rebecca Mullan, Caitlin Lipovski, and others. Photo by Alexander Vernon

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John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe
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HUNGRY

Con't from page 1

A newer group, referred to as the Sandwich Ministry, started in April 2020 with just a few individuals making sandwiches to deliver to food pantries. By word of mouth, the group slowly grew. In May, a group of parishioners from St. Martin's Cloak decided to participate, which doubled the size of the group. Now, 5 months later over 30 volunteers meet in the church parking lot every Friday morning to collect and distribute the sandwiches and three crates of apples, purchased at cost from Grosvenor Market, to Shepherd's Table, Dorothy Day Place, the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, and S.O.M.E. The average number of sandwiches distributed each week is 600-700 – a total of over 12,000 since April. The initial goal was to continue through June, but because of the momentum and willingness of volunteers, we hope to continue for the next several months.

Another wonderful program which developed to meet the growing needs in our community was the organization of two Food Drives, sponsored by St. Martin's Cloak and supported by both the SOME program and our Sodality. The first drive, held in June, received approximately 650 lbs. of food that was split between Bethesda Help and the McKenna Center

in Washington, DC. The second drive, held on September 12, which was widely publicized throughout the St. Jane De Chantal community was very successful collecting over 2,400 lbs. of food. The donations were divided between, Bethesda Help, Catholic Charities, Sacred Heart (our sister parish in DC), Mother Teresa Convent, and S.O.M.E. We were humbled by the generosity shown by members of our parish, as well as members of



De Chantal parishioners sorted the pounds and pounds of food in Caulfield Hall

the community.

As Father Geise often says, De Chantal is located in the "heart of Bethesda". The generosity and compassion of our members has shown that their hearts are focused on the many people in our community that are in need.

If you'd like more information about volunteering for any of these programs, you can send an email to mariagcornelius@gmail.com

OPT

Sodality Dedication of the Gertrude White Memorial Bench

Gertrude White was a lifelong member of Saint Mary's Church and Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Barnesville, Md. She grew up and lived in Germantown, Md., for her entire life. She was 97 at the time of her death in 2018.

Gertrude was tireless in working to collect contributions for the church dinner fundraisers. As the dinners neared, she would be seated outside of church before and after every mass to collect contributions from parishioners. She was "always at her post" in support of Saint Mary's, and seemed to know every-

In memory of Gertrude, Our Lady of Fatima Sodality has installed a lovely granite bench in front of Saint Mary's Church to honor her almost 100 years of membership, help and support. Her constant love



Our Lady of Fatima Sodality honors deceased Sodalist, Gertrude White, whose lifetime of service to Saint Mary's included collecting monetary donations before and after every weekend mass prior to our annual "famous dinners".

and attention to our parish is sorely missed, but we can now sit on her

bench and remember her fondly.

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On September 27, 2020, following the 10 am outdoor mass: Pastor Kevin O'Reilly blesses the granite bench donated by Our Lady of Fatima Sodality in memory of Gertrude White.

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Above: It was such a special moment to share socially distanced morning prayers with our seventh and eighth-grade students as they returned to campus. These student leaders make us so proud!



Above: Our St. Elizabeth third graders wasted no time getting back to work this school year.

At right: Ms. MacArthur's Kindergarten class took their art class outside on this beautiful day. So many colorful displays created by sidewalk chalk adorned the outside of our school.



Above: Our Home and School Association welcomed each of our new students this summer with a yard sign and a St. Elizabeth Saints goody bag. We appreciate our volunteers so much!



At left: Third graders worked on their hula hoop skills while enjoying a nice outdoor break.

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Pastor

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St. Elizabeth School Principal

Mary Penny

301-881-1824

Victoria Wesley

OPT Editor

301-881-1380

MERCY

Con't from page 3

education. The Blue Ribbon award represents the dedicated and collaborative efforts of school leadership, faculty, and families, both past and present, to ensure our mission of excellence in Catholic education. We look forward to celebrating with our staff, students, and parents over the next few weeks.

The entire Mercy community sends a joyful shout-out of congratulations to St. Peter's School in Olney for their National Blue Ribbon award!!

Online Campaigning and Voting for our School's Student Council

Our school is successfully using our YouTube channel for morning announcements and student council elections.

By Catherine Tomsbeck

Students at St. Jane de Chantal School are well into the first quarter of this school year. The Hybrid-School system has proven quite successful. The familiar routines of school are what we all enjoy even when they become virtual events. Morning prayers and announcements are broadcast daily on deChantal's YouTube channel allowing all students the chance to participate.

The tradition of electing student council members was also modernized. Candidate speeches were available on video and elec-

tronic voting with immediate tabulations allowed the entire school to participate. This year the school elected eleven eighth graders to lead our school. The 2020-21 de Chantal Student Council members are: Anderson Bishop, Clare Daniels, Sydney Debnam, Grace Gaenzler, Quinn Gozycki, Andrew Hoffman, Aria Jefferson, Patrick Kelley, Caroline Kirvan, Lilly Owens, and Tommy Shaffer. These students will work closely with Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Kish, and Mr. Molloy to create memorable student events throughout the school year.

OPT

St. Jane de Chantal Sodality Fall Events

By Helen Bollwerk

In spite of the many complications arising from Covid-19, the St. Jane de Chantal Sodality is forging ahead with its 2020-2021 year. Although some of its traditional fall events such as the Lasagna Dinner and parish Communion Breakfast have had to be postponed, Sodality is moving forward with its signature fall charitable projects and has reimagined them for the pandemic era.

As it has for several years, the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Unit of Sodality will sponsor a parish school supplies drive to benefit the religious education program of DeChantal's sister parish, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington, DC. Instead of bringing items to the church for the collection, however, St. Jane de Chantal parishioners will be able to order them online from a Wish List that the Shrine's religious education staff has created and shared with Sodality. The goods will be shipped directly to the Shrine to enrich the children's experience in their socially-distanced religion classes.

In November, the Sodality will gear up for its annual Giving Tree project. A much-loved highlight of the Advent season at DeChantal for many years, the Sodality's meticulous organizational framework has enabled the parish to provide Christmas gifts each year to the hundreds of clients of some 18 charitable organizations. Traditionally, the gift requests would appear on colorful Christmas gift tags created by Sodalists and displayed on trees in the church gathering space. Parishioners would take the tags of their choice, purchase the requested items, and return them to the church in festive Christmas gift bags so that Sodalists could sort and organize the gifts for delivery to the various organizations. This year, however, mindful that it will be wise to

avoid crowded stores during the holiday season, the Sodality has revamped its process.

The 2020 Giving Tree will support some charitable groups with gift items and others with monetary donations. The Giving Tree chairs will create an online Wish List encompassing the specific gift requests it receives for the needy. Parishioners will be able to make contactless purchases of their preferred items, and the gifts will be shipped to the Sodality for packaging and sorting in preparation for delivery to the charities. Parishioners will also have the option of making financial donations to the Giving Tree project by check or via Faith Direct to support other charities. The monetary donations received will be combined, and the proceeds will be divided among those organizations. The world has changed greatly this year, but the Sodality is dedicated to finding ways to change with it and carry out its mission of enabling the parishioners of St. Jane de Chantal Church to assist those in need.

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St. Jane de Chantal Parish

9601 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD

Fr. Samuel C. Giese

Pastor

301-530-1550

St. Jane de Chantal School

Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton

301-530-1221

Michelle D'Amour Flynn

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The SRS Community Embraces New Blended Learning Routines

By Gabriela Herrera Gugiu

The start of our 2020-21 school year may have looked a bit different, but the joy of being back together—whether in person or virtually—was priceless.

Of the 91 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington, nearly half reopened this academic year following a blended (hybrid) learning model. At St. Raphael School and St. Raphael Nursery School, parents made a choice between distance learning and in-person instruction with adherence to strict health and safety measures.

Over the summer, a team of staff members and health-care profes-



Sporting their SRS masks, siblings Nicholas and Alina arrive for the first day of in-person classes at St. Raphael School. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia



John from St. Raphael Nursery School's 4-plus program has a smile that lights up the room. Photo by Susan Wooten



WebEx connects a preschooler virtually with her classmates at St. Raphael Nursery School. St. Raphael parents choose between distance learning and in-person instruction for their children. Photo by Natalie Coene

St. Raphael Parish St. Raphael School

1513 Dunster Road
Rockville, MD

Rev. Michael Salah, Pastor

Teri Dwyer, Principal

MJ Zafis-Garcia,
OPT Editor

301-762-2143

www.straphaels.org
www.straphaelschoolmd.org
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram:
@SRSRockville

sionals designed a comprehensive plan for St. Raphael School and Nursery School to reopen safely for the 2020-21 school year. This included new facility arrangements, technology integration, cohort planning, daily health surveys and temperature checks for all grade levels, and so much more.

At SRS, virtual and in-person students are taught at the same time, with students following lessons either from their desk in the classroom or from their desk at home via a WebEx online platform.

"Each day is a gift," said Principal Teri Dwyer. "The work we did over

the summer was worth it the second we saw the children connected and here in school with smiles on their faces, even behind their masks."

With a new normal underway, SRS and SRNS remain committed to their Catholic identity and academic excellence with first Communion and confirmation planning back in full swing and high expectations of our students in the classroom.

Together with our core values of "Fides et Ratio" (faith and reason) marked on the school's crest, the uniforms are a reminder that both principles are necessary for life,

growth, and renewal. This school year is certainly no exception.

St. Raphael Golf Classic

While many of St. Raphael School's traditional beginning-of-school festivities and events were held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, the 12th annual St. Raphael Golf Classic was played on Oct. 2 at Bretton Woods in Germantown. The Golf Classic Committee and the staff at Bretton Woods were committed to the safety of participants and adhered to state and county guidelines for COVID-19. Players of all levels enjoyed 18

holes of fun and friendly competition. We extend a special thanks to event co-chairs Angela and Mike Mussio, our sponsors, and community of volunteers for their support. Follow us on Facebook for pictures of the event at www.facebook.com/SRSRockville.

Upcoming Events

- First Communion and Confirmation Oct. 17
- Angels on the Run 5K (reimagined) Nov. 7

For more information, visit www.straphaelschoolmd.org.

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St. Raphael Sodality Events for October

On October 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, we will pray the rosary at 7pm via Zoom and then hear about the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima from fellow Sodalist, Anne Marie Begley. Anne Marie recently participated in a ten day pilgrimage to Fatima and is looking forward to sharing her pictures and discussing what she learned about Mary's apparition that still has meaning for the world today. The Zoom link to join this meeting will be sent to Sodality members prior to the meeting.

On October 13 we will celebrate the Fatima apparition and the Miracle of the Sun at 9am Mass, followed by the recitation of the rosary.

On October 28 at 7pm we will pray a Patriotic Rosary via Zoom for the upcoming election and peace in our country. We will pray for the conversion of our country, for the leaders of our government, and a Hail Mary for the people of each state.

St. Louis de Montfort said, "If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins, you shall receive a never fading crown of glory. For even if you are now on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the devil... sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and save your soul. If you say the Rosary devoutly every day of your life."

This year Forty Days for Life is September



In October, St. Raphael Sodality celebrates the Holy Rosary and the Miracle of Fatima.

26 through November 1. St. Raphael's Sodality members are invited to join our Knights of Columbus to pray the rosary on Saturdays from 10am-11am during the 40 Days for Life in front of the Carhart Abortion Clinic, Wildwood Shopping Center, 10401 Old Georgetown Road. Sodality members can meet us there or carpool after 9am Mass.

Although they are not able to meet in person, members of our Rosary committee continue to make rosaries at home for those in need. We recently donated 500 rosaries to Walter Reed Hospital, 500 to Holy Cross Hospital, and 500 for Father Raymond from Holy Cross Hospital to take to Nigeria.

St. Raphael's church continues to have Eucharistic Adoration

every Thursday from 9:30am through 7pm. Please come visit, adore, and spend time with Our Lord.

We invite all women of the Parish to join Sodality. Please send your Membership dues for the 2020-2021 year to Aleta Phillips: 304 Winter Walk Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Dues are \$25 through October 31 and \$30 after that date. Make your check payable to St. Raphael Church and note Sodality dues in the memo line.

We look forward to resuming our regular in-person meetings and service projects for the Parish soon, but we are continuing the good work of Sodality via Zoom in the meantime. The links to each Zoom meeting will be sent in advance.

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You Can't Mask Grace

First Holy Communion and Confirmation at Our Lady of Lourdes

Sometimes the wait makes life that much sweeter! Students from Our Lady of Lourdes school and parish recently received their long-awaited Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation, both of which had to be postponed due to Covid-19 closures.

On Saturday, August 1, fourteen students from Our Lady of Lourdes received their First Holy Communion. They were well prepared in second grade by Monsignor Edward Filardi and their teacher, Ms. Chelsey Hipp. The girls were dressed beautifully and the boys looked sharp in



Students who received First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Lourdes



Father Rob Walsh, recently confirmed Lillian Maria Capizzi, her sister Anna Sophia Capizzi, and Father James Morrison

their church clothes for this special occasion. Teachers, families, and even our new priests Father Rob Walsh and Father James Morrison were in the church to celebrate with the students.

On Saturday, September 19, 44 students were confirmed in the Catholic Faith. Fr. Rob Walsh confirmed the students, and Fr.

Continued on page 18

New Teachers Bring Respect for Tradition and Fresh Ideas to Our Classrooms

One of the blessings of a new start to elementary school each year is the sight of fresh faces joining a longstanding community. This year, four new teachers have joined the faculty of Our Lady of Lourdes. Each has come to Lourdes to embrace our traditions of Faith, excellence and service, and each brings a new set of eyes and new energy into our school community.

Mrs. Mary Campbell teaches third grade and has recently moved with her husband to Bethesda from Wisconsin. This will be Mrs. Campbell's fifth year of teaching and her first year teaching in Maryland. Mrs. Campbell has always felt called to be a teacher and she is excited to be part of a great team at OLOL.

Mr. Kevin Stoll is a recent graduate of the University of Maryland, and he will be teaching middle school English language arts and history. When he was a student at Maryland, Father Rob Walsh was the Campus Chaplain, so they are looking forward to working together again!

Mr. Brendan Keane was most recently a member of the Bethany Beach Patrol and an intern at Nationals Park. This year he will be teaching middle school math and religion. Mr. Keane was drawn to Our Lady of Lourdes because of the mission of the school to form

students in the Catholic faith. He describes his students as "phenomenal" and "eager to be great," and he aims to help them "become saints, one day at a time."

Ms. Anna Sophia Capizzi is an Our Lady of Lourdes graduate, which is a special blessing for our community. A recent graduate with a degree in Biology from Haverford College, where she was a member of the women's basketball team, Ms. Capizzi is teaching middle school science this year. Ms. Capizzi and her four sisters are all graduates of Our Lady of Lourdes, her brother is in the sixth grade, and she and her family are longtime members of the parish. When asked about why she was drawn to return to OLOL, she explained, "I continue to be inspired by the emphasis on faith and excellence that Our Lady of Lourdes school provides [...] I am looking forward to teaching science and being part of such a vibrant and growing community."

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Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

7500 Pearl Street
Bethesda, MD

Fr. Walsh, Pastor
301-654-1287

Ms. Amy Moore, Principal
301-654-5376

Enjoying the Outdoors at OLOL

Our Lady of Lourdes School reopened for in-person learning in grades preschool through eighth on September 8. Since then, the OLOL faculty and students have taken advantage of the beautiful fall weather as much as possible. While Our Lady of Lourdes is an urban school in the heart of downtown Bethesda, there are plenty of quiet green spaces, decks, gardens, and play areas outside for the children to enjoy.

The majority of students are learning in person Tuesday through Thursday, and they enjoy a daily outdoor P.E. class. Snack times, lunches, recesses, and often class instructional time have been spent outside. Many of the classes employ beach towels, hula hoops, or yoga mats to help the children spread out safely and enjoy a mask break and some fresh air. Teachers are using portable white boards,



Our Lady of Lourdes Sixth graders enjoy an outdoor lunch on the playground

clipboards for students, and other creative ways to bring classroom learning into a more open-air environment. Each class has a designated outdoor area for learning so that teachers can feel free to use them as much as possible and class cohorts can stay safely spaced apart. While these have certainly been unusual circumstances under which to teach, the faculty of Our Lady of Lourdes is learning to stretch their teaching methods in new ways that will improve their teaching for years to come.

The flexibility and joy of the Our Lady of Lourdes community has truly been on full display this September. Everyone has done a wonderful job adjusting to the changing circumstances while keeping the school's mission and values at heart.

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A little rain doesn't stop a fifth-grade walk during P.E. class!

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Back in the Groove

Students here at Holy Redeemer in Kensington now have a month of school under their collective belts and we are all so happy to be back. When asked why, PreK 4 student Natalia Pathak responded that she “had never been to school for a long time ago. I learn lots of new things and do some art.”

Like so many schools in the area, Holy Redeemer has repurposed common areas to become new classrooms, instituted many new safety protocols and procedures and introduced new technology for our distance learners. With almost every aspect of our school

day reworked, faculty and staff are thrilled to be back to doing what we have been called to do: reaching, teaching and caring for our students. Here’s a look inside (and outside) of our classrooms over the past month:

PreK learned about colors and numbers, often even dressing in the color of the day to reinforce these concepts. Other students learned how to skip on the playground “Knee up, hop! Knee up, hop!”

Kindergarten painted 7 panels for each day of the Creation Story in Religion class, and tended to their outdoor garden which had been planted in the spring, includ-



Kindergarteners Sloane and Gabe check progress in their garden.



Fourth-grader Maria Argeris creating her index card STEM structure.



PreK students Sonny, Gabriella and Caroline practice the fine art of skipping.

ing tomatoes, pumpkins and watermelons!

First grade has had fun learning and writing about ducks.

Third grade recently had a spelling “test” by writing given words in shaving cream on their desks.

Fourth grade celebrated International Dot Day with some fun STEM activities, creating structures with index cards.

French students in the lower school learned new songs about colors and numbers.

Ms. Bombara, our school counselor, has been busy catching up with students (from a safe distance of course) and sharing SEL (Social Emotional Learning) tools with students and staff.

Thanks to hard work and tre-



Third-grader Ellie Paparizos spelling words in shaving cream.



Third-grader Nora Merwald and friends spelling words in shaving cream.

mendous support from our parish community and the Archdiocese,

we feel so blessed to be “back in the groove”!

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Holy Redeemer Parish

9705 Summit Avenue
Kensington, MD

Rev. Mark Hughes
Pastor

301-942-2333

Holy Redeemer School

Mr. Thomas Corrigan,
Principal

301-942-3701

Cardinals Soccer Clinic Returns

The Holy Redeemer Athletic Committee believes it is vitally important to get our kids back outside and active, and to do it in a way that is safe for them and our entire community. To that end, HRAC is offering instructional soccer clinics this fall for young parishioners, ages 3 through second grade.

To keep everyone safe, clinics

have been divided into smaller groups than we have typically had in past years. Coaches and players wear masks, and everyone is instructed to stay appropriately spaced while being active and having lots of fun!

The 3, 4, & 5 year old players make their way through stations designed to focus on specific soccer skills which culminate in what is



PreK student Andrew Garayta is ready to go play soccer!

usually their first organized soccer scrimmage. Parent volunteers make

the whole thing run like clockwork. We held our first clinic for younger players in late September on the William Holt Plank, Sr. Field at Holy Redeemer, and it was a great success. Kids, parents and coaches alike were all thrilled to be outside and enjoying some competitive sports. Our first and second grade players will also focus on skill development with a heavy emphasis on scrimmages. They can’t wait to get started in early October.

Thanks to all the parents who continue to show support and cooperate with our guidelines, and especially those who have volunteered to assist with instruction at the clinics. They really help make it a lot of fun for the kids after they’ve been cooped up inside for so long!

Go Cardinals!

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Coach Garayta leads a group of young Cardinals at their opening instructional soccer clinic.

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Community Building Done Virtually!

Although Mercy has been able to open in-person, we are not able to hold the schoolwide social events that are so much fun for our community, such as Friday Night Lights and our second Annual 5K Race. Instead, we are reimagining traditional activities to be held virtually. Later in October, we will produce our first ever Virtual Talent Show, highlighting the many

talents and skills of our students and staff. We are also planning a virtual 5K Race/Walk as a way to prepare runners for the real race which will hopefully be held in person next Spring.

Mercy CYO runners have been training this fall, and will be participating in several virtual cross country races over the next several weeks.

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Virtual Open House

Mercy will be hosting a Virtual Open House on Thursday, October 8, from 9-10:00 am. Parents will be invited to RSVP through a link on the school website. Along with a video tour of the campus, presentations will be done via zoom and will be customized based on the family profiles.

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A Special Sunday

Sunday, September 27 was a day that was welcomed by a group of about eighty Mercy Parishioners who gathered for an outdoor Mass. Spirits were lifted for a number of reasons, some people were joyfully greeting friends they had not seen in person since March, the school grounds were decorated with large blue ribbons in honor of Mercy's third recognition by the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, and the real highlight of the day, which was the ability to take part in Mass in person and receive Holy Communion.

Everyone wore their masks and chairs were spaced on the parking lot for social distancing.

The outdoor Mass was well received by the crowd. It was a blessing for people who are not comfortable being in indoor groups.

When Father Bill asked for applause to indicate whether people were interested in having another outdoor Mass, people clapped enthusiastically. Even the weather cooperated with no rain!

OPT

Our Lady of Mercy Parish

9200 Kentsdale Drive
Potomac, MD

Fr. William Byrne, Pastor
301-365-1415

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

Gerry Burgess, OPT Editor
301-330-5676

More Our Lady of Mercy News on Page 3

McGANN

Con't from page 1

ments, certainly our family members will be able to like us as much as they love us.

Rather than placing blame for college parties, school openings and closings, or new outbreaks - maybe we can look at things a little more broadly. Our Social Studies teachers would remind us that history is not and never has been linear - that we are in the middle of history, and what we write about yesterday does not necessarily translate to a script for today. We know that not one of us could have or would have predicted a 2020 pandemic, and that knowledge can relieve us of anger and allow us to ride it out. Understanding that no matter who wins the election, and no matter how much the politicians and the

press predict disaster and chaos, we still live in the land of endless opportunities - a "shining city on a hill." Of course, we have work to do - we need to continue to fight to protect precious life at its beginning and its end. We need to find a way to expand our reach to include those who are inexplicably marginalized, but our country remains a place committed to the ideal. We are united in our belief that we can be a country where each of us can and should contribute - a place where we are free to worship, to have an opinion, and to raise our children as we see fit.

Of course, the most important constant in our lives is the knowledge that God has not and will not abandon us. The awareness that, while He may not always give us what we want, He will always give us what we need.

OPT

TESTING

Con't from page 1

St. Michael the Archangel Parish consists of roughly 10% African American, 9% Asian, 11% Nigerian, 9% Caribbean, 21% European, and 40% Hispanic families. In response to the need in the community, St. Michael's partnered with the Latino Health Initiative

of Montgomery County to host a COVID-19 testing drive for free with no medical order necessary. The event was very well received and 50 parishioners attended. Those who were tested were also provided with health initiative take-away bags that included mask shields, hand sanitizer, and booklets informing on safety and precautionary measures.

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and be that well."**

-St. Francis de Sales



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Scouting safely with Saint Bernadette Boy Scout Troop 440

Proudly serving St. Bernadette's Parish, School and the Community

By Laura Nichols

Boy Scout Troop 440 has been going strong, Covid-19 style. Through innovative zoom or outdoor in person (masked) events, they have continued to connect weekly and even camped more than six times since our world took a turn in March (though sometimes in their own backyards). The troop leadership established a Covid-19 framework to continue safely with scouting in the current environment. One of the biggest benefits of this small troop is their ability to engage and connect relatively



Saint Bernadette Troop 440

easily and safely because of their numbers.

Do you have a son in grades 6–12 who loves outdoor adventures?

Come and meet the boy scouts of Troop 440 at St. B's. Join us on October 13 from 6-7pm in the grass behind St. B's (near the back doors of the school) for a socially distant, mask required scout meeting to learn more about our exciting and affordable activities (camping, hiking, fire building, whittling and more!), as well as how to earn service hours while having fun with friends safely.

Please RSVP to Scoutmaster Stuart (troop440scoutmaster@gmail.com) if your son wants to attend!

***Masks are required and please bring your own chair.

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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

Saint Bernadette Parish Welcome New Parochial Vicar

On July 8, Saint Bernadette Parish was thrilled to welcome Fr. Michael Russo in his official role as parochial vicar. Fr. Russo is no stranger to Saint Bernadette as he spent the previous year in residence serving our school and parish. Fr. Russo was born in Boston but was raised a few minutes into the suburbs in Waltham, Massachusetts. He came to DC to study History and Classical Studies at The George Washington University



Fr. Michael Russo

graduating in 2013.

After that, God had a different plan in mind and he entered seminary. He completed seminary studies at Theological College and Catholic University and was then assigned to Saint Bernadette. Fr. Russo shares, "You may see me out on walks (nothing too adventurous), otherwise I tend to spend my time reading. It is a joy and blessing to be able to serve this great Parish and School community."

OPT



St. Bernadette Launches Pre-K 4's Program

As we celebrate our 73rd anniversary as a school rich with tradition, academic excellence and community strength, we are so pleased to demonstrate our continued growth with the launch of our Pre-K 4's Program. We are proud to welcome our littlest bees to The Hive!

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The Holy Cross Family Works Together to Reopen for the School Year

Holy Cross School was a beehive of activity in the weeks leading up to its opening for the 2020-2021 school year, both on and off campus. "The work truly never stopped over the summer. Weekly Zoom meetings with the faculty and staff, and frequent communication with school families kept everyone apprised of the ever-changing plans for the upcoming school year," confided Mrs. Kane. "We were going to be ready, no matter what the final plan would be."

When the decision was reached that in-school learning was possible, a hybrid model of instruction was developed to meet the needs of all Holy Cross families. "Communication

Above: First Grade students take to the driver's seat during class time in their own customized Jeeps.

At right: A donation of three hundred paper bags from Giant Food Store #106 in Cabin John were used to gather and distribute student supplies and textbooks for students who are distant learning.



Above left: The Home and School Association welcomed teachers at the beginning of the school year with a thank you sign in front of the school building.



Above right: Several teachers enjoy a planning session in August under the canopy of an outdoor classroom space. Caption for: First Grade Jeeps.jpg



with school families was key to determining what would work best," continued Mrs. Kane. "After it was confirmed that we could re-open, we rolled up our shirtsleeves, and got to work preparing the campus to meet all of the requirements set forth by the CDC, the Montgomery County Health Department, and the Archdiocese."

What made it work? "Our faith is at the center of it all," Mrs. Kane reflected. "Teaching is not just a job at Holy Cross—it is our vocation. We put our hearts and souls into the mission of educating our students.

Extended family rallied to help us. And, of course the support of our school families was essential."

One task required a monumental effort: getting student Chromebooks ready for all students. Holy Cross Technology teacher, Mr. Brady Gradowski, enlisted the help of his significant other, Kamy Alves to make that happen. "I could not have done it without her. She was amazing. We spent many long days getting it all done."

Mr. Joe Falcone and Mr. Paul Lockwood, the husbands of our Kindergarten and Second Grade

teachers, respectively, also put their expertise in technology to set up those classrooms for virtual learning by installing webcams or other equipment.

Mr. Falcone also arranged for a donation of 300 paper bags from Giant Food Store #106 to hold the supplies that were picked up by students who are distance learning. We are grateful for their contribution!

First Grade teacher Miss Mary Overly cleverly transformed each desk in her classroom into Jeeps. "The mandated plexiglass desk shield at each desk served as the inspiration. We added headlights, and wheels, along with the bottle holders." She enlisted the help of her dad Mr. Robert Overly, to drill holes into and attach plastic water bottle holders to each Jeep. One first grader driver enthusiast-

Continued on page 14

Holy Cross Parish

4900 Strathmore Avenue, Garrett Park, MD

Fr. Robert Buchmeier, Pastor
301-942-1020

Holy Cross School
Lisa Maio Kane, Principal
301-949-0053

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



Marina Silva, a part-time teaching assistant in third grade, is a 2012 graduate of Holy Cross School. She was happy to return to Holy Cross to help with the fall reopening of the school campus.

Meet Miss Silva!

Holy Cross School is pleased to welcome Miss Marina Silva, a Class of 2012 alumna to our staff as a part-time teaching assistant in Third Grade! After graduating from Holy Cross, Miss Silva attended Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School. She is a Class of 2020 graduate of Elon University where she earned her Bachelor's degree in sports management. Miss Silva states that coming back to Holy Cross has been a comfortable and supportive transition, especially since her mom has worked here for several years as the school's Librarian! Miss Silva reports that she is enjoying her experience even more than she expected and states, "I feel so help-

ful every day, and I know that the kids are very happy to be at school and have some normalcy in their day." She has enjoyed telling the Third Grade students about some of her favorite memories from her time as a student at Holy Cross which include dress down days and Field Day. Miss Silva states that the foundations set at Holy Cross prepared her for her future by helping her to earn admission to a very competitive high school and then to the college of her choice. She states, "At Holy Cross I began wanting to do my best in school and to enjoy learning in all capacities."

Miss Silva is ultimately looking forward to finding a position with a professional sports franchise in Washington, D.C. when the job market improves in her field of interest. Principal Lisa Kane states, "We are delighted to have Marina's assistance in Third Grade. At Holy Cross, we love when alumni come back to visit, however, we love when they come back to work with us even more!"

Meet Mrs. McGrath

Mrs. Mary McGrath, who has twenty-five years experience in education, has joined Holy Cross as our new Third Grade teacher. She has taught in both Catholic and public schools, and across all grade levels from Pre-Kindergarten to high school. "I am passionate about educating students of all age groups," says Mrs McGrath.

Continued on page 31



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St John the Evangelist School News

As St. John the Evangelist School navigates through our first few weeks of school, we are proud to be doing what we do best – educating the youth of our parish and community. Whether learning online or in our classrooms our students and teachers are enjoying the rewards of lessons well-planned and executed. Lively discussions, animated presentations, and focused activities are once again the norm.

But we do look a little different these days. Beside temperature-taking stations in the morning and six-foot markers on the floors, classrooms are configured differently. Before we started school this year, teachers tried out the new arrange-

ments, trying to get a sense of what the students would be experiencing. The older students are in their individual “pods” and the children in Kindergarten still sit on the color squares on the carpet, but they are farther apart.

Our music teacher, Mrs. Ruppert, had to expand her creative sphere to bring the beauty of music to her students. Each Junior Kindergartener has a personal set of drumsticks and an upside-down pail to learn the basics of rhythm. Mr. McTighe has reinvented some popular games to incorporate physical distancing in his PE classes.

Keeping the school clean and sanitized has become a priority for everyone, students and teachers alike. When our facilities manager was off for a few days, our pastor, Father Calis, and our Parochial Vicar, Father Jan Pietryga, were at the school during recess and at the end of the day sanitizing the classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas. Everyone pitches in to maintain our safe environment.

After waiting over five months, our school and parish youth finally were confirmed on September 18 in two separate services. Bishop Roy Campbell presided over the beautiful ceremonies which were the culmination of the young adults’ year-long journey of faith.



At left: Confirmation candidates



Below: Teachers testing out the view



Above: Kindergarteners sitting on colored squares.



Above: Father Calis cleaning desks.



At left: Fourth graders in their “pods”



Above: Junior kindergarten learning rhythm.

At left: Father Jan spraying sanitizer in the school.



St. John the Evangelist Parish
10103 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD
301-681-7663

Rev. Joseph Calis
Pastor

St. John the Evangelist School
Mrs. Margaret Durney,
Principal
301-681-7656

Monica M. Bradford
OPT Editor
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- ✓ **Financial assistance & scholarships** available for families who qualify.

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HOLY CROSS

Con't from page 13

cally exclaimed, “Come on I’ll take you for a ride!” when Mrs. Kane visited the classroom. And, because the plastic water bottle holders were such a practical addition, Mr. Overly also made a set for the Kindergarten classroom.

Resource teacher, Mrs. Katie Shaffer, recruited her husband, Mike, to work with Middle School Social Studies teacher, Mike Cilano to hang a retractable tarp to act as a roof for the outside learning space. The teachers were the first to use the space during the teacher planning weeks in August.

Second Grade paraeducator, Mrs. Lorraine Branson’s husband, Stephen, supplied the extra safety equipment we needed for our multiple carpool lines for morning drop-off

and afternoon dismissal.

The outpouring of support from our school families was incredible. A cheerful “Thank You Teachers!” sign, courtesy of the Home and School Association, greeted the faculty on the first day of teacher planning week. Another family, recognizing the dedication of our faculty and staff to our goal of providing a safe, happy learning environment, delivered a bouquet of Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts gift cards. A school family donated a hand sanitizer station for the playground area.

“When we are confronted with great challenges, we are often blessed by witnessing the uncompromising generosity and kindness that surrounds us,” shared Mrs. Kane. “That’s what we witnessed at Holy Cross. We always say we are a family, but the past few months have been a reminder that those are not just words. We really are a family.”

St. Bartholomew Welcomes Three New Teachers

Three new teachers join the St. Bartholomew faculty this year. While their backgrounds are diverse, they all share a love of Catholic education. Michelle Chin is heading up the school's new PreK program for three-year-old children. Brianna Moore, who attended St. Bart's as a child, is now at the helm in 2nd Grade; and Christina Preston is the new 6th Grade homeroom teacher and Upper School Social Studies teacher.

Mrs. Preston grew up attending Catholic elementary and high school in New York. The daughter of a Catholic school teacher, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and a Master's in Elementary Education and Special Education.

"Teaching brings me so much joy," she comments. "I love to see students grow in confidence and creativity. I chose to teach in a Catholic school because I want to be part of a community that centers on the power of God in their lives."

Second Grade teacher Mrs. Moore is a native of Bethesda who attended St. Bart's for her early elementary years. Favorite



PreK-3 teacher Michelle Chin keeps children engaged while they maintain a safe distance.

memories include the Christmas pageant and relay races at field day. She credits her 3rd Grade teacher Mrs. Bergin with inspiring her to want to be a teacher. She has been impressed with how connected second graders feel to one another.

"This group of children enjoys each other's company immensely," Moore comments. "It's a testament to St. Bart's that they have bonded and feel like a family."

She adds that she is look-

ing forward to special second grade projects and the children receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion.

In the PreK-3 classroom, Michelle Chin finds the students are off to a great start. With eight years of teaching experience and a degree in Education, Chin believes PreK-3 is an essential part of a child's development.

"For most students, this is their first time being in a school setting," she says. "Hence, it is my number one goal to develop a love of learning and good character traits among my students."

With all St. Bart's grades currently offering both in-person and virtual streaming options for students, the new teachers have jumped into a uniquely challenging situation. With strong safety precautions in place, they are finding success teaching in this new normal.

"I have been testing out lots of different technology tools and platforms," says Ms. Preston. "I want to reach all of my students equally, whether they are in-person or virtual. It has been fun learning about different teaching tools."

OPT

Fr. Santiago Martin New assistant at Saint Barts

I am very glad to begin my new assignment at St. Bartholomew parish. I have been ordained a priest for five years, and St. Bart's is my fourth parish assignment. My first parish as a recently ordained priest was in Germantown, Elizabeth Ann Seton. My second parish was Our Lady Help of Christians in Waldorf, Maryland, and then I was at St. Michael the Archangel, in Silver Spring.

I have been living for 15 years in the United States. I began my Seminary formation on October 25th, 2005. I was born and raised in Segovia, Spain. Segovia is a beautiful roman little touristic city which is located northwest from Madrid, capital of Spain. I am the second of two children, and my sister is married with four children.

Before experiencing the call to the priesthood, I worked for two years as a primary school teacher of Physical Education, so sports were part of my life. After responding to the call from God I came to the United States of America where I spent ten years of formation in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary of our Diocese. I was ordained a priest by Cardinal Donald Wuerl in June 2015. I belong to an itin-



Fr. Santiago Martin

erary of Faith and Formation called the Neocatechumenal Way which has spread all over the world and has a strong input in evangelization. Thanks to this instrument of the Church supported by all the popes from Paul VI to our Current Holy Father Francis I have

grown in the faith and discovered my vocation to the priesthood.

I am really grateful to God and Fr. Knestout for giving me the opportunity to be here with all of you in St. Bart's. I hope that my time here would be a learning experience through which you help me to grow in my priesthood as well as I hope my ministry leads you all to Christ the source and summit of our spiritual lives.

OPT

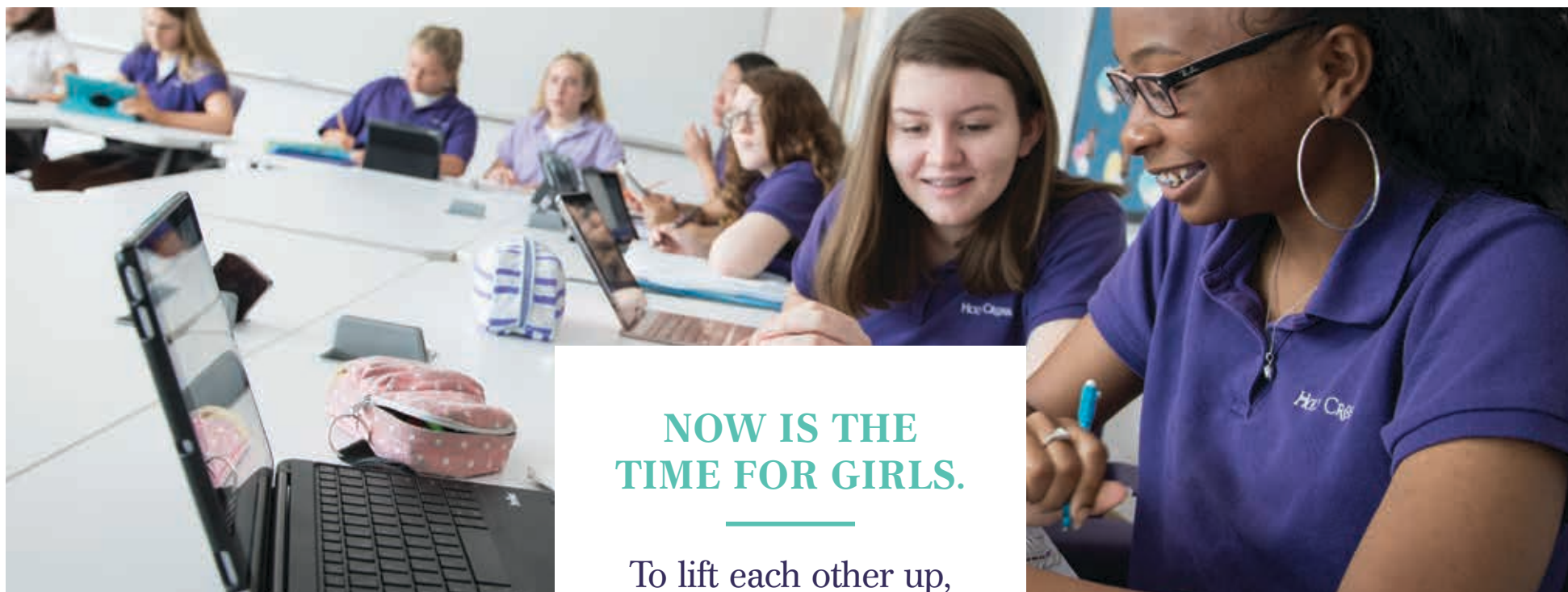
St. Bartholomew Parish

6900 River Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

Rev. Mark Knestout, Pastor
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St. Bartholomew School
Frank English, Principal
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Freshman Early Decision Appl. Deadline **DEC 12, 2020**

Financial Aid Application Deadline **DEC 2020**

Admission Notification **FEB 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **Mid-March 2021**

Freshman Class Size: 125 • Tuition: \$15,232 • PRO DEO ET PATRIA • www.achsd.org

the Avalon School

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Avg. Class Size: 15 • Academic Kindergarten Half Day \$4,100 Full Day \$8,275 • Gr. 1-2 Lower \$8,275 • Gr. 3-5 Elementary \$13,200 • Gr. 6-8 Middle \$14,700 • Gr. 9-12 Upper \$17,000

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Competitive Athletics Program

Open House Sunday, November 1
2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Steps to Admission:
• Application
• Shadow Visit
• Teacher Recommendation
• Transcript
• Family Interview

Application Deadline **Rolling Admission**

Notification of Admission **Rolling Admission**

For information: Istvan Teleki @ 301-963-8022

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Richard B. McPherson President and Head of School
Helen Williams Director of Admission

10401 Armory Avenue, Kensington, MD
301-949-7997 • www.brookewood.org

Average Class Size: 12 • Tuition: Grades 1-2 \$8,750 Grades 3-5 \$13,200 Grades 6-8 \$14,700 Grades 9-12 \$16,700 • For more information: Helen Williams 301-949-7997

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Shadow Visit
Application
Transcript
Recommendation
Family Interview

Application Deadline **Rolling Admission**

Notification of Admission **Rolling Admission**

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Open House Sunday, Nov. 1
11:00 a.m.

Entrance Exam: Archdiocesan HSPT required

Freshman Application Deadline **December 15**

Financial Aid Application Deadline **December 15**

Freshman Notification of Admission **Feb. 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **Mid-March 2021**

Freshman Class Size: 215 • Tuition: \$19,750 • Application / Financial Aid: Admissions Office 240-764-2211

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Virtual

Entrance Exam: Archdiocesan test results required.

Schedule a Virtual Shadow Day Online

Application Deadline **December 10**

Archdiocesan Financial Aid Application Required

Notification of Admission **February 18**

Registration **March 14**

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Duke • Princeton
Penn • Stanford

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Georgetown Prep will host virtual events this fall. Look for more information on the School's website www.gprep.org

Admissions Process:
Please visit www.gprep.org to set up your admissions account. Also, be sure to set up your Hoyas-for-a-Day visit.

Application Deadline **Jan. 8, 2021**

Supplemental & Aid Deadline **Jan. 22, 2021**

Notification of Admission **March 5, 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **March 19, 2021**

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Freshman Application Deadline **Dec. 4, 2020**

Financial Aid Appl. Deadline **Jan. 4, 2021**

Freshman Notification of Admission **Feb. 25, 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **Mid-March 2021**

Freshman Class Size: 130 • Tuition: \$32,600 • Financial Aid: Janet Keller @ 202.337.3350 ext. 2241

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Mr. Thomas K. Every II, Headmaster
Mr. Andrew C. Bataille, Dean of Admissions
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Entrance Exam: Archdiocesan test results are required.

Application Deadline **December 14**

Financial Aid Appl. Deadline **Jan. 11, 2021**

Notification of Admission **Feb. 25, 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **March 12, 2021**

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7:00 p.m. Webinar

Freshman Application Deadline **Dec. 11, 2020**

Freshman Financial Aid Appl. Deadline **Dec. 11, 2020**

Freshman Notification of Admission **Feb. 19, 2021**

Freshman Registration **Friday, March 12, 2021**

Tuition \$25,400

Area High School Open House Dates



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Meghan Burke Cross Director of Enrollment Management
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Entrance Examination
Online strengths assessment

Application Deadline & Financial Aid Appl. Deadline
Grade 9
December 11
Grades 6-8
February 1

Notification of Admission:
UPPER SCHOOL
End of February
MIDDLE SCHOOL
Mid March

Reg. Deposit Due:
Mid March

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Entrance Exam HSPT
Scholarships Available

Application Deadline **Dec. 11, 2020**

Financial Aid Appl. Deadline **Jan. 4, 2021**

Notification of Admission **February 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **March 12, 2021**

Freshman Class Size: 100 • Tuition: \$27,800 • Financial Aid: 301-942-2100

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Mr. Patrick Granfield, '99
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11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Benedictine School

Entrance Exam Dates
November 21
December 19
January 16
February 13
Exam also offered by appointment

Application Deadline **Rolling**

Financial Aid **Feb. 2, 2021**

Notification of Admission: **Feb. 22, 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **March 15, 2021**

Freshman Class Size: 41 • Tuition: \$29,800 Middle; \$30,800 Upper • Financial Aid: Ms. Ieva Young @ iyoung@saintanselms.org

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Open House VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE OCTOBER 25

Entrance Exam
Archdiocesan HSPT results are required.

Application Deadline **Dec. 4, 2020**

Financial Aid Appl. Deadline **Jan. 31, 2021**

Notification of Admission **Late Feb. 2021**

Registration Deposit Due **Mid March 2021**

Tuition: \$21,490

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Will Knotek, Principal
Kelly Weeks
Director of Enrollment
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VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE Sunday November 1
1:00-3:00PM

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HSPT or Institutional Testing Required

Priority Application Deadline December 18

Financial Aid & Scholarship Deadline **December 18**

Notification of Admission **February 18**

School Size: 289 • Tuition: \$17,410 • Financial Aid: Kelly Weeks kweeks@saintjohnsprep.org • www.saintjohnsprep.org

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113 ST. MARY'S PLACE, LAUREL, MD 20707
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Visit the web site for 2021-2022 application!

Admissions Application Deadline **Dec. 11, 2020**

Financial Aid Application Deadline **Jan. 1, 2021**

1:11 Teacher Student Ratio

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www.stoneridgeschool.org

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Exchange Program
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Open House Upper School
Sun Oct 18 12:30pm
Thurs Oct 29 6pm
Tues Nov 17 6pm

Required Entrance Exam: SSAT
Register at www.ssat.org (School Code: 7494)

Application Deadline **Dec. 4, 2020**

Financial Aid Deadline **Jan. 15, 2021**

Decision Notification **Feb. 26, 2021**

Contract Due Date **March 12, 2021**

Freshman Class Size: 96 • Tuition: \$38,950 • Financial Aid Available

THE HEIGHTS SCHOOL

10400 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac, MD 20854
Alvaro J. de Vicente, Headmaster
Richard S. Moss, Director of Admissions
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SHORT

Con't from page 1

age 93. Msgr Kane was a builder. He lived his life with the future in mind, especially children. He founded the parish of St Nicholas in Laurel, Md, and led that young community in building its church. In 1994, Cardinal Hickey decided to construct a new Catholic school in Darnstown where the population was rapidly growing. He called upon "Fr. Builder" to coordinate the fundraising and construction of the Mary of Nazareth School, the first new Catholic school to be opened in 30 years. Msgr. Kane was not done yet! He built yet another suc-

cessful Catholic school while pastor at St Patrick's in Rockville.

Like Jesus, Msgr. Kane was a carpenter. With his own skilled and loving hands, he built legacies, including an enduring conference room table used by the last several Archbishops of Washington around which important decisions affecting the future of the Archdiocese are made. Notably, it's a very large table with seats for many to join the discussion. He crafted an outdoor "Stations of the Cross", still a place of reflection for St Patrick's parishioners. For the new St Patrick's school, Fr. "Builder" made the cross for the school lobby and pedestals for the statues of Mary in each of the classrooms which remind stu-

dents each day that they are loved by Msgr. Kane. Without question, "Fr. Builder's" legacy is that he left Catholic communities stronger and better prepared for the future than he found them.

The pandemic has forced the closing of most churches and ministries, devastated parish finances and weakened parishioner's spiritual engagement. Effects of the deadly virus, at a time when recent Church scandals left many Catholics saddened and deeply distrustful, have created a major crisis for the Catholic faith and many communities. Catholic parishes are "at the cross", the true test of "salt". Parishioners can choose inaction and witness continued deterioration, or we can demon-

strate that our salt is still effective, pick up the cross, and take resolute steps to reconsecrate an enduring Church and local parishes. Our legacy to our children and grandchildren and other Catholics who follow us, will be determined by our efforts at this difficult moment to assure they inherit stable, sustainable, and active Christian spiritual homes.

To reconsecrate is not simply to rebuild what was, but rather to envision relevant faith communities which inspire Christian ideals of worship, love, and service. Parishes will need true disciples of Jesus to assume this great burden; distant followers won't get the hard work done.

Consider these three objectives: Renewed commitment to the financial security of parish life. Long absences from Mass have significantly reduced parish revenues. Frustration and anger about Church scandals have led faithful Catholics to withhold financial support dramatically affecting parish income. Yet, in most cases parishes are not at fault.

Recommitment to parish stewardship for the physical facilities of the parish community. With deep losses in revenue and aging or outdated infrastructure, many parishes have not been able to sustain their buildings and grounds leading to deterioration and more costly repairs in the future. This burden should not be part of a legacy left to future Catholics.

Most importantly, reconsecration of our spiritual infrastructure. Future generations rely on us to convey to them a Catholic faith in which they can believe and take comfort. One that is inclusive and accessible to all and truly reflects the Word of God; a faith that cares deeply for each Catholic and enables people to love and care for each other and the world in which we live.

Finally, related to legacy, **please vote** in the coming election! Most agree that the outcome of the national election will hugely impact the future direction of our country. But note also that there are **several very important local ballot questions to decide the future of Montgomery County** on your ballot this year. The nature of our government and its ability to pay for public services is being questioned. Please take the time to study these questions carefully and choose a response that best reflects your hopes to convey effective, compassionate, and just government to future residents of the County.

Be well and God Bless!
Chuck Short

OLOL

Con't from page 9

James Morrison concelebrated the Mass with him. The students had spent their whole eighth grade year preparing with Monsignor Filardi and their teacher, Mrs. Patricia Stallsmith. Mrs. Stallsmith has recently retired, but she returned to Lourdes to be with her students on this important day. Many other teachers and family members were in attendance. Even several graduates from the class of 2020 who were not receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation attended in order to show their support for their friends.

The children of Our Lady of Lourdes have certainly learned the importance of not taking our Catholic Sacraments for granted, and they will surely cherish the memories of these days in the years to come. In times of challenge, our faith has certainly strengthened the Our Lady of Lourdes school and parish community and brought its members closer together. Even the masks could not hide this joy!

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Resurrection Welcomes Transitional Paulist Deacon Rich Whitney

On September 6, Seminarian Rich Whitney became Transitional Deacon Rich! Deacon Rich will be spending his Diaconate year at Resurrection. In his role, Deacon Rich will be assisting with weekend Liturgies, Baptisms, RCIA, Religious Education, and of course, other duties as assigned. Deacon Rich first came to Resurrection as a Paulist Seminarian under the guidance of Father Frank DeSiano, CSP in January of 2017.

Deacon Rich, originally from Boston, is an avid juggler and before joining the Paulist was a theatre stagehand who returned to Catholicism twelve years ago. Deacon Rich's hobbies consists of video games, music and quality hammock time.

Asked what his goal is in his role as Deacon Rich, he responded,



Transitional Deacon Rich Whitney

“Even before the pandemic but more acutely now we’ve really lost our sense of community. This makes it even harder for us to answer those existential questions: who am I? Why am I here? How do I make my mark on the world? What am I called to do? It’s a real struggle to manage in this world without a sense of meaning and, in my experience that can lead to despair and a desire to numb the self. It’s easier than ever to do that with all the gadgets and distractions we have today. Our smartphones

are carried around with us everywhere we go and they have music and games and social media and work and a great ability to keep us entertained while we’re isolated. That pain of isolation never goes away and we need to find more and better distractions. I think that’s why we’re seeing spikes in addiction and suicide rates recently. I spent nearly two decades trying to escape that pain through alcohol, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines so I feel like I can safely say that I understand that pain. I can honestly say that the experience of that pain and the depths of despair are horrible and, for me, the worst part was feeling lost, unloved, and not being able to see an exit anywhere when the reality was that there were exits

and people who loved me still; I just couldn’t see. It’s hard to believe in love when we’ve forgotten how to love our own selves. I’d like to spend this year finding new ways to reach out to those brothers and sisters who have lost hope and be there to remind them that hope is always available. Love too. So, you know nothing big. Just starting plans for changing the world, exactly as Jesus calls us all to do.”

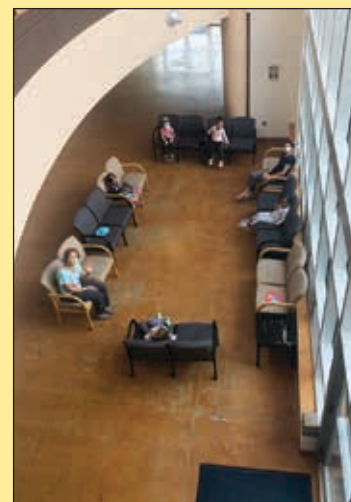
Deacon Rich expects to be ordained as a priest by fall of 2021.

OPT

Resurrection Preschool Opens with Fun and Safety

Ms. Susan Quinn, Director of the Resurrection Preschool and her aid, Mrs. Kim Hicks (both pictured with the 4-year old class) have been working with students to learn basics, about the wonders of the Lord, and social distancing (just to name a few) all while having fun. The Resurrection Preschool currently has ten students – five 3-year olds and five 4-year olds. The 3s (as they are called around campus) meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the 4s meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In school for just about a month now, they are learning the alphabet by “Yoga with Letters” (making the letter using your arms, legs and bending as needed) and painting with veggies and fruits. For example, they have learned about the letter B by painting with bananas and broccoli.

For Covid-19 safety, everyone has their temperature taken before they enter the school. Everyone is required to wear a mask except while eating and social distancing norms have been put into place – even with restroom breaks. On the bottom floor of the Rev. Robert Keffer Parish Life Center, a sitting area is outside of the restrooms that the students use. The chairs are in a square and every section has a round sticker with a letter on it. Students sit in the chairs with the



Ms. Susan and Ms. Kim with the 4-year old Preschool Class

stickers and while they wait for their classmates to finish (they go in one at a time), they learn about the letter. Whatever letter sat on, everyone has to name nouns that start with it. So, if you sit on the letter B, you can say bananas, broccoli, or balloons. Students have the same fun as in classes before, just a little different. The Preschool, restroom, and area where they eat their lunch is sanitized and cleaned several times a day, every day. There are still openings at the Preschool for the 4-year old class. Call the Resurrection Preschool at 301-236-5200 to get more information and for a tour.

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Mary of Nazareth

An Institution at Mary of Nazareth Retires

By Michael Friel, Principal

Mrs. Jacqueline Scaletti has decided to retire after twenty-four years of teaching third grade at Mary of Nazareth School. Over the years Mrs. Scaletti has had a tremendous impact on our entire school community. We will dearly miss her zest for life, enduring spirit, unbridled energy, and unyielding faith. High academic standards, thorough feedback, and requiring your best effort are all hallmarks of her approach to teaching. Students reached their greatest academic potential in third grade with Mrs. Scaletti whether they liked it or not. Regardless of which category you fell into, an appreciation for Mrs. Scaletti always manifested itself in life, long friendships, return visits, and unwavering respect. Mrs. Scaletti is nothing less than a Mary of Nazareth School institution, and a beacon of our school’s growth and



Mrs. Scaletti is pictured here with Mrs. Peggy Clifford, composer of our school song ‘Mary of Nazareth’. Mrs. Scaletti and this song are institutions which have had an indelible and lasting impact on our school community.

success.

Known for her New England roots and love of Patriots, Red Sox,

and Celtics, Mrs. Scaletti truly is one of a kind. We are grateful for her years of service to Mary of Nazareth School and for the impact she has had on us since 2003. We salute Mrs. Scaletti for a remarkable career and wishing her all the best in a well-earned retirement.

OPT

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Roman Catholic School
14131 Seneca Road, Darnestown,
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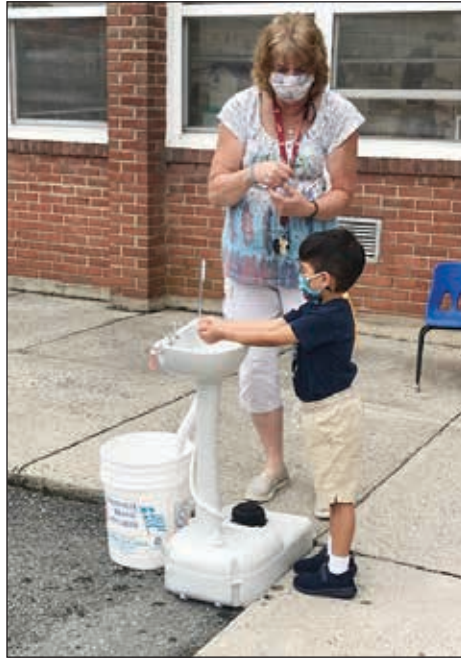


Saturday Volunteers

Thirteen parents gave their Saturday, on September 19, to lend a hand to benefit their children and all of St. Mary's School. One group of parents painted our newly renovated health isolation room and faculty lounge kitchen to give it a freshened appearance while another group focused on the outside playground area. Parents had several projects on the playground to complete. They painted socially distanced dots on the blacktop for students to sit in groups and new game boards for four-square and hopscotch. We thank these parents for their time and effort in building our #ADWCommunity! #whystmarysrockville



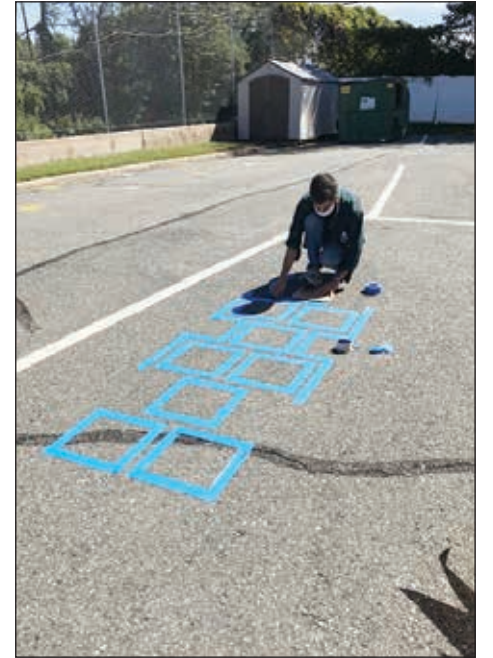
Dads had their own creative flair when they created their own hopscotch boards with dots.



Mrs. K helping a student with our new daily routine before we come to the preschool classrooms!



Nothing will stop Mrs. Morgan from greeting our students at their morning health screening!



A fresh coat of paint revived the St. Mary's Playground for all of our students to enjoy their extended recess times during the school day.

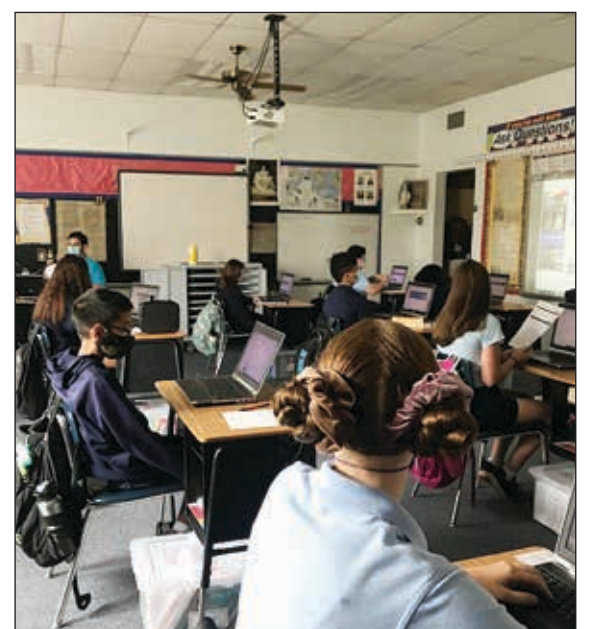


St. Mary's School Welcomes Mrs. Means

St. Mary's School is happy to welcome Mrs. Jacqueline Means to the St. Mary's faculty as the second grade teacher. Mrs. Means has worked in the Archdiocese of Washington for 13 years as an instructional assistant and teacher. She is completing her Master's in Special Education this fall at Loyola University in Baltimore. Mrs. Means enjoys crafting, reading, and spending time with her family. She is looking forward to the time she will spend preparing our second graders for their sacraments.



Morning health screenings



Eighth grade in person and virtual students zooming with Mr. Curley as they learn all about their Google Classroom.

St. Mary's Parish

520 Veirs Mill Road
Rockville, MD

Msgr. Robert Amey,
Pastor

301-424-5550

St. Mary's School
Mrs. Debby Eisel,
Principal

301-762-4179

Mrs. Debby Eisel,
Parish Editor
301-762-4179



So happy together: Middle school students enjoy a mask break at recess.



Our youngest scholars show their patriotic spirit wearing Red, White, and Blue on Star Spangled Banner Day!

It pays to advertise in Our Parish Times

Green Mondays

by Jason Giovannettone

Pouring used cooking oil down the sink drain has several harmful environmental effects. It damages your home's pipes, clogs public pipes, and causes sewage tunnel systems to overflow. If used oil is disposed improperly in your trash, it can leak and attract pests, which causes major issues for garbage trucks.

To dispose of used cooking oil in an environmental-friendly manner, first let it cool down. You can also place it in the freezer to solidify or mix it with corn starch, cat litter, or flour for easier handling. Place the

cooled or frozen oil in a non-breakable, sealed container. It can be a plastic container, a biodegradable Ziplock/garbage bag. Avoid using a plastic bag because they can easily tear and cause problems mentioned above. Place the container in your waste bin or the biodegradable bag into your compost bin. You can even bring used oil in bottles to a recycling center that accepts them (e.g. MoCo Recycling Center).

Instead of disposing or recycling the oil, you can reuse it. Some ideas include:

- Reuse it to fry food if it still smells good (or up to 2-3



For more sustainability tips, you can sign up at www.gwiacademy.org.

- times)
- Make soap
- Add it to your compost pile if the oil was used to cook plant-based foods

- Use it as a non-toxic pesticide
- For more sustainability tips, you can sign up at www.gwiacademy.org.

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Michaelmas in the Midst of COVID-19

by Helder Hernandez

After enduring many weeks of stay-at-home orders and the continued pleas of the faithful for access to spiritual strength and nourishment of the Sacraments, churches laid out their strategic plan, abiding by community and health guidelines, to resume services and their essential activities.

St. Michael the Archangel's patronal feast day, Michaelmas, is one of our essential activities. Michaelmas traditionally starts with a community building event, follows with a bilingual Mass, and continues with fellowship including multicultural potluck and cultural performances by the communities that make up our diverse parish.

This year's Michaelmas theme was Defend Us in Battle, aimed to provide parishioners and the community a light of hope and to encourage us to live not in fear. We must ask St. Michael the Archangel to defend us in battle from the virus, uncertainty, unemployment, hunger, racism, division, and assaults on grace.

Our celebration included a bilingual Mass that 110 parishioners physically attended and many more via livestream, a call to donate non-perishable foods for the month of September, and an invitation for two upcoming events: a dialogue on the pastoral letter against racism on October 17, 2020 and a forum on immigration on November 7, 2020. Both events are part of the patronal feast of St. Michael and support the Catholic Social Teachings of Life and Dignity of the Human Person, Option for the Poor and the Vulnerable, and Solidarity.

OPT

St. Michael's Parish

805 Wayne Avenue
Silver Spring, MD

Rev. Msgr. Eddie Tolentino,
Pastor

301-589-1155

Edwin Méndez,
OPT Editor

301-589-1155

September 11th Flag of Honor and Flag of Heroes

By SK Stephen Paul Holowenzak, PGK, PFN

Friday, September 11, 2020 marked the 19th anniversary of the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack on US soil. St. Michael the Archangel celebrated Holy Masses from September 11 through September 14, 2020. All Masses were dedicated to 9/11 victims, first responders, and their families as a lasting memory and tribute.

Msgr. Eddie Tolentino and Father Jose Rodriguez led members of the congregation in English and Spanish to honor the lost and fallen, all of whom made the ultimate sacrifice for God, country, and its diverse people. At each Mass, all present honored the fallen with two specially created 9/11 flags displayed by the altar. The flags were donated by SK Stephen Holowenzak, on behalf of the Knights of Columbus



Msgr. Eddie Tolentino holding the 9/11 Flag of Honor with the individual names of 2,800 (9/11 - Honorees)" and SK Stephen Holowenzak, PGK, PFN holding open the Flag of Heroes.

Council #15084. In brief, this is what they represent:

The Flag of Honor is created from the names of those who perished in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The Flag of Heroes is created from the names of emergency services personnel who gave their lives to save others on 9/11. Now and forever these flags represent their immortality. "We Shall Never Forget Them."

The designer of the flags Mr. John Michelotti (2010) tells us that "the Flags are tangible historical markers, because they contain the printed names of each victim and responder." As each name is said followed by a single bell ring at America's national memorial events tell the world that the "Light of Honor and Courage will Never Dim." Here at St. Michael's Church and Knights of Columbus Council #15084. We will never forget.

OPT

Fr. Philip Ilg, vested his father at his ordination. "It has been a great gift to have my son, Philip, pray over me and vest me on my ordination," said Fr. Edmond.



Newly Ordained Priests Visit St. Michael's

By Damien Kawakami

Fr. Anthony Palombo and Fr. Edmond Ilg, two newly ordained priests from the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, visited St. Michael's to cel-

brate a Mass of Thanksgiving in gratitude for their ordination and for all that the Lord has done in their lives.

Fr. Anthony Palombo wanted to

Continued on page 22

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In Appreciation of Mr. Leon Holley

By Liz Weiss, CTK parishioner and Paul Lamoreaux, CTK parish editor with Anthony Afrifa-Kyel and Jean-Paul Togbe, CTK ushers

This fall, Christ the King Parish lost one of our longtime parishioners, Mr. Leon Holley. Mr. Holley was an usher at the 10:30 AM Sunday Mass for many years. Always dressed in his 'Sunday best', he was ever helpful with a smile.

Mr. Holley was a World War II veteran. Fr. Steve Carter presided at a very moving graveside service. To begin, the bugle call 'Taps' was played. Leon's children were presented the American Flag from 2 active military men.

Anthony Afrifa-Kyel, a fellow usher shares his thoughts: "When it comes to Mr. Leon Holley, I have nothing but love, admiration and utmost respect for everything he stood for. Mr. Holley took me under his wing as an usher for the Parish, circa 1997. I was 14 years old at the time. From that time on, our relationship continued to grow. He became a father figure, a great friend and a great example in faith, especially as a fellow



Mr. Leon Holley, longtime parishioner

African American man. He was the epitome of humility, respect, love and positivity to

all. Due to how humbly he carried himself, one would never guess how decorated and accomplished and individual he was; after several deep conversations with him, I would always admire and marvel how wonderful an individual he was. I humbly hope I can, at the very least carry an iota of his legacy here at Christ the King with younger up and coming boys/men to serve the Parish community with utmost respect and dignity, the way Leon Holley did. His death is a huge and irreplaceable loss, and I will always love, miss him, and cherish the beautiful memories he shared with me. May the Lord welcome him with open arms and continue to bless his children and grandchildren he left behind, Amen."

Another fellow usher, Jean-Paul Togbe remembers Mr. Holley: When I first started going to Christ the King, I didn't really know Mr. Holley. He later on recruited me into the usher ministry and our relationship grew from there. I learned that he was the head usher and that he had been going to Christ the King for decades. I learned that he was in the military, that he served a couple of deployments over-

seas. I learned that he had a beautiful family, beautiful children and grandchildren. I came to know his children as well, and how dearly they loved their father, and he came to know some of my family as well. I fondly remember the times he would give me career advice when I was going through graduate school, or when he would tell us stories about when he was stationed in Germany during his military service. I remember the times he would tell us about how his neighborhood or the church has changed over the years, or when he would just invite me for a drink and chat session where I could learn from his life long experience on various issues. He became more than just the head usher at Christ the King to me, he became a father figure. I still can't fathom the fact that he is no longer with us. His absence left a hole not just among us that knew him closely, but also among the Christ the King community. As sad as I am that he is no longer with us, I also believe that he left us for a better place. May our Lord accept him in his eternal peace.

OPT

ALPHA being hosted at Christ the King

By Katy Ward, CTK young adult group

Christ the King's Young Adult group is hosting Alpha beginning on Wednesday October 14 at 7 pm, both in person and virtually. Alpha is an opportunity to explore life and the Christian faith in a friendly, open, and informal

environment. It is held in churches, bars, coffee shops and homes worldwide. Essentially, Alpha is a safe place to explore life's biggest questions. Alpha was created in England and is a 14-part video series. A meal is shared, followed by the film and time for discussion. Alpha is about relationships,

revolving around a small group and the friendships formed. It is a journey taken together. Everything we do with Alpha is designed to create a welcoming environment, and when sharing in a common faith journey and in each other's lives from week to week, friendships are created that last beyond Alpha.

All are welcomed to join, at any point in the series!

Please register at: <https://tinyurl.com/yxrvkrcc>

Zoom details to be sent to registered adults.

Email: ctkyoungadults@ctk-catholicparish.org

Instagram: [ctk_y_adult](https://www.instagram.com/ctk_y_adult)

OPT

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

Fr. Stephen J. Carter,
Pastor

Paul Lamoreaux,
OPT Editor

St. Michael

PRIESTS

Con't from page 21

be a priest since he was a child. Although his faith was shaken when his father, a firefighter, died during the September 11 attacks, a trip to Israel restored his faith. At the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Washington, DC, his faith was challenged again when his mother died of cancer. He moved back home and finished his studies in Newark. He was ordained priest June 21, 2020 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Fr. Anthony remarks, "Only in the church have I found a relevant answer to my sufferings, and I want to minister to those who are suffering."

Fr. Edmond Ilg became a father in a new way when he was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark on Father's Day. Edmond's son, Fr. Philip Ilg, vested his father at his ordination. "It has been a great gift to have my son, Philip, pray over me and vest me on my ordination," said Fr. Edmond. Fr. Edmond never thought he would become a priest because he had a wife and a successful career as a chemical engineer. After his wife died of cancer in 2011, he felt the call to a new vocation. The father and son priests are grateful for the Neocatechumenal Way, which God's instrument used to save their family.

OPT

Congratulations SK Stephen Holowenzak!

By SK Michael Spraggins and St. Michael the Archangel Knights of Columbus Council #15084

St. Michael's KoC Council #15084 congratulates SK Stephen Holowenzak PGK, PFN on his 23th Anniversary in the Knights of Columbus, for his service to God and His people in Maryland, and the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, Chapel Communities globally. This year marks Dr. Holowenzak's 50th Anniversary (1970-2020), Educator, Catholic University of America (1974), PhD. and University of Maryland Global Campus, Professor Emeritus, Adult Continuing Education.

His work in Education and ser-

vice in Knights of Columbus to Our Lord encompassed Active Duty and Civilians in U. S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines on missions in Europe, Middle East, and Asia (Desert Shield / Desert Storm, Operation Provide Comfort; Operation Northern Watch; Multi-National Force and Observers; the Peace Implementation Force; Operation Joint Endeavor). He was recognized by U.S. Commands for his work and contributions on these missions to U.S. troops and Catholic/Christian communities. Most recently, Dr. Holowenzak was the recipient of the 2019-2020 Marquis Who's Who in America Lifetime Achievement in Education (2019-2020).

OPT



St. Michael's KoC Council #15084 congratulates SK Stephen Holowenzak PGK, PFN on his 23th Anniversary in the Knights of Columbus.



St. Michael's is at the midpoint of beautifying the church nave by restoring its pews.

It pays to
advertise in
Our Parish
Times

2021 Social Security COLA Likely To Be About 1.3%

Announcement expected October 13

Social Security recipients are likely to get a 1.3 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2021, making it the second lowest ever paid, according to The Senior Citizens League (TSCL). "Our forecast is based on CPI data through August, and there is still one more month of consumer price data to come in before we get the official announcement in October," says Mary Johnson, Social Security policy analyst for The Senior Citizens League.

Should the forecast prove to be correct, this would make the 5th time since 2010 that there will be an extremely low, or even no, annual inflation adjustment. "This is more evidence that our system to adjust benefits for inflation, is broken," Johnson says.

The COLA was zero in 2010, 2011, and 2016. It was just 0.3% in 2017. Since 2010, annual COLAs have averaged just 1.4 percent. That's less than half the 3 percent that COLAs averaged between 1999 and 2009. This has occurred at the same time that other costs experienced by retirees, particularly for health-

care and housing, have grown several times faster than the overall rate of inflation. But those costs have not been accurately reflected in the COLA.

Why not? One major reason has to do with whose "market basket" the government is using to measure inflation and to calculate the annual adjustment. Under current law, the Social Security COLA is determined by the percentage of change in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). That market basket belongs to younger working adults under the age of 62 and doesn't include the households of people who are retired.

The CPI-W gives greater weight (or mathematical importance) to consumer items purchased more frequently by younger people like gasoline and electronics. Conversely, the CPI-W gives less importance to housing and medical expenses, two expenditure categories which form the biggest share of spending in households of older consumers. Those two categories

Continued on page 31

Active Aging Week

Celebrating aging and the benefits of active living at any age, Active Aging Week showcases the capabilities of older adults as fully participating members of society. This campaign also spotlights role models that lead the way. Learn how you can join with thousands of Active Aging Week supporters to help change the way we age.

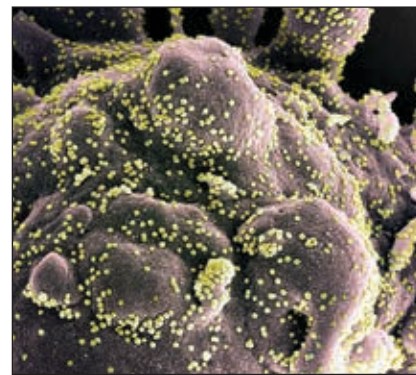
Initiated in 2003 by the International Council on Active Aging®, the weeklong campaign calls attention to and wholeheartedly

Continued on page 31



Investigational COVID-19 vaccine well-tolerated and generates immune response in older adults

A Phase 1 trial of an investigational mRNA vaccine to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection has shown that the vaccine is well-tolerated and generates a strong immune response in older adults. A report published September 29 in the New England Journal of Medicine describes the findings from the study, which was supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19 disease.



Colorized scanning electron micrograph of an apoptotic cell (gray) heavily infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus particles (yellow), isolated from a patient sample. NIAID

The experimental vaccine, mRNA-1273, was co-developed by researchers at NIAID and Moderna, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Phase 1 trial began on March 16, 2020, and was expanded to enroll older adults about one month later. Older adults are more vulnerable to complications of COVID-19 and are an important population for vaccination. Understanding how the vaccine affects older adults is a critical part of measuring its safety and efficacy.

In its expansion to include older adults, the trial enrolled 40 healthy

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Winners of the Star Council Award-OLQP Knights of Columbus St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634, after Holy Mass on Sept. 13, 2020: GK David Birely, SK Richard Okreglak, Chaplain & OLQP Pastor Rev. Jerzy Frydrych S.Chr., SK Andy Michaels, SK Terry Roberts, SK Aleksander Macander.



Billboard Project (in background) at OLQP with St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus, 2019-2020 winners of the Star Award- SK Richard Okreglak, SK Andrzej Migasiuk, GK David Birely, Deputy GK Franklin Morton, SK Stefan Witczak, SK Andy Michaels



Congratulations to the Star Council Winners! St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 Knights of Columbus with family and friends after Holy Mass at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish in September, 2020: SK Richard Okreglak, GK David Birely, SK Stefan Witczak, Deputy GK Franklin Morton, SK Bogdan "Bob" Dowlut, SK Andy Michaels.

OLQP Knights of Columbus Win Top Star Council Award!

By Bozenna Buda, ED

Council 16634 Saint Maximilian Kolbe of the Knights of Columbus at Our Lady Queen of Poland and St. Maximilian Kolbe (OLQP) Parish in Silver Spring, MD, has won the Star Council Award, the Top Award bestowed by the Supreme Council. Achieving this award is a mark of distinction and prestigious recognition granted to only a few councils around the world. OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych, S.Chr., is the chaplain of Council 16634.

The congratulatory letter from the Supreme Council noted that, "Council 16634 has earned the 2019-2020 Star Council Award, recognizing excellence in program activity, membership growth (200.00% of

quota)" and service, among many achievements. Additionally, "[d]uring this challenging year, your council adapted and continued to stand in the breach; serving your brothers, families, parishes and communities. The Supreme Council is pleased to recognize these achievements and acknowledge the hard work of you and your brother knights. "The Award comes with a plaque which is being sent to the Council

The Knights of Columbus is a global Catholic fraternal service association with nearly two million members in more than a dozen countries. It was founded in 1882 in Connecticut by Fr. Michael J. McGivney, who is scheduled to be beatified later this year. The Knights

are active with families and in local and parish communities. Pope John Paul II, in his August 1985 message to the Knights of Columbus, wrote that, "To think of you, the Knights of Columbus, prompts in me grateful sentiments for your constant loyalty to the Church and for your numerous programs of charity and fraternal service...And I know too of your dedicated involvement in your local Churches and parishes, and of all your untiring efforts on behalf of evangelization, family life, the handicapped and the unborn." [See http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1985/august/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19850807_cavaliericolombo.html].

The Knights of Columbus St.

Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 at OLQP was instituted in February, 2017, at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C. The Council is named for one of the patron saints of the parish who was martyred during World War II in the Auschwitz German Concentration Camp.

OLQP Council 16634 members, in their three years of existence, have distinguished themselves by providing exceptional and dedicated service beyond the expected standards for Knights of Columbus councils. Their activities, to name a few, include regular donations of food to those in need, donation of critically needed blood platelets to a medical center, and active support for life. They participate in liturgi-

cal activities, parish and diocesan events, including "Walk with John Paul II" pilgrimages from OLQP parish to St. John Paul II National Shrine. For the past three years, they have joined with OLQP parishioners to help prepare and host the Wednesday Night (annual) Polish Dinner for university students at the Catholic Student Center at the University of Maryland.

Recently, in addition to their other responsibilities, they have taken on the much-needed task of refurbishing the outdoor information billboard near the church.

Congratulations to our OLQP Knights of Columbus St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634 on their service and accomplishments! Szczesc Boze!

OPT

2020, The Year of the 100th Anniversary of St. John Paul II's Birthday

By Bozenna Buda, ED

This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birthday of St. John Paul II who was born Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland, on May 18. He was born in the same year as the "Miracle on the Vistula River" 1920 historical event when the Polish army defeated the Russian Bolshevik army and stopped the spread of Communism to western Europe and beyond. He survived the German and Russian occupations of Poland and was steadfast in his Catholic faith, becoming a priest, bishop, and then a cardinal. He pointed out that, "Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."



The bust of our beloved Pope St. John Paul II is located on the grounds of Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish. The bust was a gift from grateful OLQP parishioners on the 25th anniversary of the existence of OLQP Parish, thanks to JP II. During 2020, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of St. JP II's birthday. Pictured are several OLQP Council 16634 Knights of Columbus, 2019-2020 winners of the Star Award: Deputy GK Franklin Morton, GK David Birely, SK Stefan Witczak, Dr. Edwarda Buda-Okreglak, SK Richard Okreglak, SK Bogdan "Bob" Dowlut, SK Andy Michaels.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II in October, 1978. He is known for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and included the letter "M" on his papal coat-of-arms. His motto was "Totus Tuus" ("I am completely yours") as his personal consecration to Mary. He was instrumental

in the fall of Communism in Poland and Eastern Europe. In his travels throughout the world, he spread God's love to all. He instituted the feast of Divine Mercy and started World Youth Days. OLQP parishioners erected a bust of JP II on the grounds of the parish some years ago and his relic is present



Happy 100th birthday, St. John Paul II! Polish Scouts (Polish Scouting Organization-ZHP, Md.-WashDC metro area) and OLQP parishioners (and brothers) Artyom and Daniel have been working diligently from home, learning everything about JP2 in 2020, the 100th anniversary of St. John Paul II's (Karol Wojtyla's) birth. They are pictured with the papal coat-of-arms of JP II. The "M" stands for Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom JP II was devoted.

in our church. Our Polish Scouts (Polish Scouting Organization-ZHP MD-Wash DC metro area) have been learning details about JP II's life and reproduced his papal coat-of-arms in their merit work.

St John Paul II continues to inspire us through his life and his writings, as in this message for the 12th World Youth Day, "Dear young people, like the first dis-

ciples, follow Jesus! Do not be afraid to draw near to Him, to cross the threshold of his dwelling, to speak with Him, face to face, as you talk with a friend." [See http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/youth/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_15081996_xii-world-youth-day.html]

Happy Birthday, St. John Paul II!

OPT

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St. Francis Parishioners See Much-Needed Facility Enhancements Finally Break Ground

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

After more than a dozen years on the drawing board, a long-planned facility enhancement at St. Francis of Assisi Church broke ground August 27, albeit in a much different form than what was once envisioned.

As Fr. John Dillon plunged a shovel into the ground on the north-west corner of the church property, Deacon Jim Datovech – the parish's permanent deacon who shepherded the project through its final stages – expressed a sentiment likely shared by many of the suburban parish's members: "It's been a long time coming!"

The project originated in the mid-2000s, when local parishes participating in the archdiocesan Forward in Faith campaign could keep a percentage of donations for capital projects. The parish raised \$1.45 million in earmarked funds,



On August 27, Deacon Jim Datovech hands Fr. John Dillon a ceremonial shovel to break ground on the parish's facilities enhancement project, as members of the architectural firm, general contracting company, project management firm and Building Committee look on.

with plans to construct a two-story building housing classrooms for the Religious Education program.

However, over the course of time as the church's membership declined, the scope of the project

also changed. In 2017, the Pastoral Council and the Finance Council voted to embark instead on much-needed facility enhancements, including repair and replacement of the church's roofing systems; a new meeting room off the Gathering Space; an elevator connecting the church with the Parish Center; a new sound system; repair of the church parking lot and replacement of its lighting.

In April, the dormant project took on a new life, as it went out for bid. The parish Building Committee selected JFW, Inc. as the project manager and Corbett Construction as the general contractor. After Fr. John informed parishioners of the changed project scope, he and Deacon Jim hosted two virtual town hall meetings on April 30 so church members could see design plans, a rendering of the 676-square foot meeting room and ask questions. In August, the Archdiocese gave the

project its final stamp of approval and Montgomery County approved the building permits.

On August 27, Susan Mullineaux, president of DCMM Architects, noted that the groundbreaking for such a long-awaited project is always exciting for a church community. "Even with a project that's not large, we know how much it means to a parish and how long it takes to raise the funds," she said.

As Fr. John shared a recording of the groundbreaking to parishioners over Zoom on August 30, the faces shown in the participant grid reflected satisfaction and pride for the project projected to be completed in March 2021.

"It's a great day," Fr. John said. "[The construction] is a temporary inconvenience for a permanent improvement."

OPT

Religious Education Program Goes All-in on At-Home Catechesis in 2020-21

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

When COVID-19 widely paused parish life last spring, St. Francis' Religious Education Program rallied to offer a streamlined at-home model of catechesis that focused families on the home as church. With the benefit of experience behind her, Director of Religious Education Susan Anderson is now embarking on a more robust at-home model that will incorporate structured resources, catechist support and regular online meetings during the 2020-21 program year.

The decision to go all-in on an at-home model of catechesis emerged after Anderson realized how challenging this time of pandemic is for families. This, coupled with the challenges of meeting health and safety protocols for in-person classes and the social distancing requirements of smaller class sizes, pointed Anderson to refining the process she began last spring.

"We wanted to design a program that offered strong support to parents, connections with the parish community and support for teaching the faith at home," Anderson said.

This fall, the Religious Education program provided each participant with an At-Home Catechesis kit that included a textbook and Bible, as well as parent lesson guides. Catechists are acting more as coach and facilitator this year, convening



St. Francis of Assisi's Religious Education Program compiled At-Home Catechesis kits for each participant in the 2020-21 Religious Education program, which will be used by parents to help form the faith of their children at home.

parents in online meetings, small groups and through outreach.

The change in program model appears to be doable for families, based on initial enrollment numbers. Current enrollment is 200 students, which is 80 percent of last year's program numbers. Of that, elementary-aged students are returning in lower numbers compared with a year ago, while middle school students are returning strongly. Every child who participated in last year's Special Needs program opted to return.

Anderson said she hopes children and parents will continue experiencing the essentials of the religious education program this coming year: opportunities for prayer, strong connections, and resources to support growing in faith. That said, Anderson added that at-home catechesis encourages use of the Bible alongside textbook lessons, which can be shared within the family setting. It also allows families to strengthen their faith through shared mealtimes, faith-based conversations, and communal Mass and sacraments.

"While the resources and support we are providing have a structure, content and purpose, their true value is in the support that I hope they will give to living and sharing out our Catholic faith this year," Anderson said.

Clare Bolek, the mother of two children

Continued on page 31

Parish Ministries Continue Gathering Creatively in Socially Distanced World

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

When Archbishop Wilton Gregory closed churches to in-person liturgies last spring because of COVID-19, all but a few of St. Francis of Assisi's core ministries came to a standstill. But, thanks to online technology platforms and a commitment to gather, several ministries are continuing their missions and safely building community despite the pandemic.

St. Francis' ministries fall under the categories of liturgical, community building, faith formation, service, and administrative groups. Those connected with the liturgy went largely dormant, but new ministries emerged in the socially distanced new world, including virtual Rosary groups and Morning and Evening Prayer groups. After parish staff moved the St. Martin's Food Pantry bin to the Rectory porch, members of that ministry resumed their twice-weekly transport of donated food to their sister parish.

Established ministries, such as the Haiti Ministry, the St. Vincent's de Paul Society, and the Adult Choir also began meeting over Zoom to continue their service and maintain community.

The Saturday Morning Spiritual Reading Group – a diverse group of parishioners who meet on Saturdays to discuss books, Scripture, encyclicals and videos – resumed their regular meeting time in late March, once a member offered use of his personal Zoom account.

Ministry Coordinator Trish Olin said, because of Zoom's Gallery View feature, it's easier to see everyone's faces and recognize when someone wants to speak, as well as appreciate participants' reactions than when meeting in person.

She said the group has enjoyed using the Screen Share feature to share instrumentals and songs, DVDs, written materials, prayers, and art. "It has been so enriching to be able to make use of such a variety of resources," Olin said.

For liturgical ministries, members exerted



On September 27, Joyful Greeter Agnes Nagadaya stands ready to check in and greet attendees arriving for the parish's 12 pm Sunday Mass. The Joyful Greeters Ministry is one of several liturgical ministries that began serving again when the church reopened June 21.

more effort to continue meeting since their reason for existing – the Mass – was on hold.

Helen Hayes, ministry coordinator for the Joyful Greeters Ministry, whose members stand at church doors to smile, greet, and

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Family Faith Formation Parade

This year, Family Faith Formation at Mother Seton Parish is starting virtual classes. The first material pick-up took place on Sunday, September 20, in the church parking lot. Parents drove by to pick up October's materials. Family Faith Formation is for students in PRE -K through sixth grade, and students in seventh and eighth grade preparing for Confirmation. RCIC is for students in grades 3-5 who are out of cycle for sacraments. We also have an Adaptive Needs Program for any school age student who learns best with multi-sensory lessons adapted to their learning style.

We want to thank all the volunteers, for providing assistance with this worthwhile project, including The Knights of Columbus, Father Horace B. McKenna, SJ Council. Leo McDonald, Chris Lind, Frank Uyakonwu, John Alpala and Don Kinler.

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At left: Knights of Columbus

At right: Mary Beth DeLuzio & Cathy McTighe



At left and above: Thank you volunteers



The birthday boy with Fr. Lee Fangmeyer and Fr. Phil Ilg

Happy Birthday Fr. Lou Faust

Our dear Fr. Lou Faust celebrated his 81st birthday in September. It was a wonderful moment for the Mother Seton Parish staff to come together. We also celebrated other staff members birthdays as we have not been able to do so since the start of

the pandemic. July birthdays for Dominique Seraphin, Fr. Phil Ilg and Mary Beth DeLuzio. August birthdays for Ruth Chavez and Deacon Raul Calvo. Other people celebrating their birthday in September were Cathy McTighe and Brenda Rosado.

A special thank you to our ever-thoughtful pastor, Fr. Lee Fangmeyer, who always takes the time to make all the staff at MSP feel appreciated and special.

We also had a Birthday Parade! Parishioners had the opportunity to congratulate Fr. Lou in a drive-by parade in his honor. Cars were decorated, gifts and greetings were given. The birthday boy, always with his joyful smile, was thankful and happy. God bless you Fr. Lou.

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Mother Seton Parish Quilting Angels

Mother Seton Parish Quilting Angels have been busy during the pandemic. Completed quilts have been blessed and distributed to different organizations. A Quilt of Valor was presented to Sergeant First Class Matthew Sanders at his home.

Quilts were also given to the Rockville Women's Center. Karla Martinez, Effecting Parenting Program Coordinator at the Rockville Women's Center thanked the MSP Quilting Angels, "Thank you for the wonderful quilts you brought to RWC. Our expecting and new mothers will be blessed by your kindness. Your donation of quilts is always needed and given freely to women who are participating in one of our educational programs such as our Effecting Parenting or Childbirth classes. It is because of generous supporters like MSP Quilting Angels that we can freely share the love and wisdom of Christ while also meeting practical material assistance. God bless you for investing in us and serving women and families in need."

To learn more about the MSP Quilting Angels you can go to www.mspquiltingangels.org. If you sew and would like to join our group please email us at wecare@mspquiltingangels.org. We create Quilts of Valor and we create Quilts for Kids with Cancer and other serious illnesses.



Above: Quilt of Valor Presentation

Below: Sergeant First Class Matthew Sanders



St. John Neumann Loaves & Fishes

By Rus Wester

SJN parishioner Mary Louise Mahoney has generously given her energy and business know-how to a multitude of fundraising activities of SJN parish life these last few decades: Indoor and outdoor yard sales, bake sales, medical equipment procurement, supporting Little Sisters of the Poor in DC, dinners with our Rectory Priests, SJN parish expansions, major raffles, funding for seminarians, and significant work for the SJN Council of St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Mary Louise's latest charitable endeavor: Feed the Parish and BEYOND...during the pandemic!

And what has she learned from this experience, after a short six months? "Well, I was surprised at how many people needed food," said Mary Louise. "When Monsignor Panke asked 'Can you open a food pantry', we had no knowledge of how to predict the entire parish's response that would quickly lead to my going out and buying 60 huge storage bins."

SJN Loaves & Fishes is feeding between 500 and 600 people a week and that's from their Saturday distribution of non-perishables and fresh vegetables. Then every other Wednesday they provide food for another 300 people. The need is great, and requests for food have not diminished.

"Our Pastor, Msgr. Panke has had an active hand in helping this new ministry," said Mary Louise. "And his sister, Marianne, helps us by organizing food drives in NW Washington parishes. Once a month they bring great quantities of food out to Montgomery County. Last time they delivered three large SUVs full of food. They've been very generous and

**Collecting Food Donations at
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**Distributing Food at SJN Church
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**Saint John Neumann Church
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Gaithersburg, MD 20882**

Marianne's the sweetest."

As you can imagine, there are a lot of parishioners supporting this new parish ministry---in the weekly logistics of donations, food collecting, packaging and distribution. "Of that extensive list of helpers, long-time friend Jim Martin has been with me since our start in March of this year," said Mary Louise. "My two side-kicks, Sharon Strednak and Pat Ramtahal have coordinated a large group of faithful volunteers who show up every Friday and Saturday to make our pantry very effective in feeding so many. I'm just amazed at how it just keeps working for us!"

If you know someone who needs help, refer them to St. Vincent de Paul Society at: 301-525-3909. Or go to SJN website to learn what foods are needed: www.saintjohnneumann.org. If you prefer, food gift cards are also gratefully accepted on Saturdays at SJN church.

Thank you to all who have donated food, their time and funds to the pantry in the past months. Please continue to donate as much as possible. We really need your support.

OPT



Welcome, Fr. Stefan Yap

By Rus Wester

SJN Pastor, Monsignor Robert Panke, started the welcome of Father Stefan Yap as our new Parochial Vicar: "Saint John Neumann Parish is very blessed to include Father Stefan in our parish family", said Monsignor. "He brings a great joy that stems from his strong relationship with Christ. Among his many duties and responsibilities, he will be working a lot with our youth and young adults to enliven their faith in the Lord and our Church."

In early July of this year, SJN parish renewed its relationship with Fr. Stefan by staging a drive-by welcome for him. It was just five years ago that Fr. Yap served our parish as summer seminarian with Father Joe Rogers and Fr. Dave Wells.

Born in New York and raised on Long Island and in New Jersey, Father Yap went to college at the University of Maryland College Park, finishing with a B.S. in Mathematics and Statistics. It was during his time at UMD that he heard the call to the priesthood. Close friendships made at Maryland's



Monsignor Robert Panke

Catholic Student Center played a major role in bringing him closer to God. Father Yap recalls: "CSC Chaplain, Fr. Rob Walsh, strongly influenced my growth in faith through frequent reception of the sacraments and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament."

After college graduation, Father entered seminary for the Archdiocese of Washington and spent two years at St. John Paul II Seminary and studied theology at Mount St. Mary's Seminary.

Father Stefan was ordained this year on the Feast Day of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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Father James Morrison's First Mass

By Rus Wester. Photos compliments of The Holy Ruckus.

I have been writing about Jamie Morrison since 2010, the year he declared his personal ministry as social activist and weekly protestor to end abortions at a local Germantown, Maryland facility. It was a time when Jamie's mother, father, brothers and sisters joined hands with thousands who brought awareness to and prayed for an end to abortion during the 10-day "Summer of Mercy" Pro-Life event staged around the Leroy Carhart abortion business.

Over 3,000 Catholic and non-Catholic participants attended Summer of Mercy. Masses were celebrated, rosaries and other prayers were offered for pregnant mothers and their babies, and for the conversion of Carhart and his staff. Jamie was present and very active!

"He had been there, week after week, to help save babies and their mothers from abortions," recalls his father, Dr. Eric Morrison. "Jamie is rich in passions. Whatever he chooses to do, it's with tremendous energy and emotion."

The final day of the Summer of Mercy (August 14, 2011), over 600 people came to protest in solidarity and to participate in creating a



The Elevation of the Consecrated Host at Father James Morrison's First Mass, June 21, 2020.

human cross along the streets of Germantown. Jamie was up front, leading the youth of several parishes down Wisteria Drive to the intersection where the human cross of mercy would come together.

As he drew his large following down the street and to the climax of Summer of Mercy, Jamie seemed to know that this might be the last major activist work he'd be doing that summer, before embracing his next major work, that of entering the seminary.

August 2012: The oldest son of the Morrisons entered Blessed John Paul II Seminary (today, known as Saint John Paul II Seminary).

At year number two of his studies, Jamie hosted twenty-eight of his fellow seminarians and 10 young men discerning the priesthood for a SJN Parish Mass and special lun-

Continued on page 32

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Msgr. Robert Panke
Pastor

Rus Wester
OPT Editor

New Faces at St. Martin's Bring Inspiration and Dedication

By Anne Gemunder

The fall season brings crisp weather, changing leaves, and a busy schedule for the many ministries at St. Martin's parish. There are several new faces leading important efforts for our church and school community. We are excited to welcome Father Francisco Rodriguez, parochial vicar; Sister Providencia, family ministry counselor; and Mr. Christian Stokes, fifth grade teacher. They bring new energy and enthusiasm to their varied responsibilities and look forward to contributing to our large, faith-filled community.

This is Fr. Francisco Rodriguez's first pastoral assignment as a diocesan priest. He was ordained this past June at St. Catherine Labouré Church in Wheaton. Fr. Kiko, as he prefers to be called, was born and raised in

Newark, New Jersey. He is the seventh of ten children. His parents are from Granada, Spain and Spanish is his first language. Fr. Kiko's formal journey toward priesthood began as a seminarian at Catholic University, and he continued his formation at Redemptoris Mater Seminary. He has stepped into the life of our parish with a warm smile and an eagerness to serve. His responsibilities at St. Martin's are broad, serving all the faith needs of the parishioners by celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, and providing pre-nuptial counseling and spiritual direction. "St. Martin's is a busy community from morning until night; it has really kept me on my toes," he explained. "I look forward to helping more parishioners understand and grow in their faith, as they come back to the church since the beginning of the pandemic."

Sr. Maria de la Providencia Negrón Díaz,

a Dominican Sister of Fatima, arrived at St. Martin's from Yauco, Puerto Rico where she had been assigned to care for the sick and elderly Sisters at the motherhouse. She is in her second year of Juniorate, focusing on religious and apostolic formation in her path toward Perpetual Vows. She was born in Aibonito, Puerto Rico and raised in Kissimmee/Orlando Florida. Sr. Providencia will be working with Sr. Mariana with Family Ministry. Their many responsibilities include instructing the family into the faith through the sacraments, retreats, talks, and counseling. "St. Martin's is a friendly community with a strong desire to grow in faith," said Sister. She added, "I am grateful for the opportunity to work in this community and I hope to bring the light of Jesus Christ to all with my testimony of life."

Mr. Christian Stokes is our new fifth grade

teacher. He was born and raised in Tampa, Florida, and he earned his degree in biology at Stillman College in Alabama. He comes to us with four years of middle and high school teaching experience, but even more years of coaching sports. Mr. Stokes was a three-sport high school coach (football, basketball, and track) when he was not in the science lab teaching his students about dissection and cell structure. This year, he has found collaborating through Zoom meetings to be a great opportunity to learn to adapt well to new environments. "This is a great community where not only is everyone eager to learn but they have a deep concern for those around them," he said appreciatively. He added, "I look forward to offering my fifth-grade class the opportunity to meet challenging tasks individually and as a team."

OPT

The Church Buildings of St. Martin's Parish



Over the past 100 years, St. Martin's Parish has worshipped in 3 different spaces: the original mess-hall chapel from the 1920s, the auditorium of the original St. Martin's School building, and the current church building. Photos courtesy of St. Martin's Parish.

By Carolyn Silvey

In its first 100 years, the community at St. Martin's has worshipped in three different spaces.

The original St. Martin's chapel, as founding pastor Fr. Cuddy called it, was actually an army mess hall from Camp Meigs that was relocated to our property in late 1920. Camp Meigs was located in northeast Washington, DC, near present-day Gallaudet University. Originally a facility for the DC National Guard, it was leased by the US Army in September 1917 as the

United States entered World War I for use as a training camp for the Quartermaster Corps. After the war ended, the Camp was ordered abandoned in May 1920. Fr. Cuddy had served as an army chaplain during the war and used his army contacts to have the now-surplus mess hall buildings from Camp Meigs transferred to Gaithersburg to become our first worship space.

The mess-hall church was used until 1942. The parish community continued to grow and could no longer fit into the small mess hall building. Under the direction of Pastor John H. Twamley, S.S., masses were moved into the school auditorium, which occupied the entire ground floor of the school building. All the work to convert the auditorium into a suitable worship space, such as creating and decorating a sanctuary space on the stage, was done by parishioners, following designs made by the pastor of St. Vincent's in Baltimore. The parish registers note that the "First mass in the school auditorium chapel was said September 27, 1942, the



Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost."

At the 25th anniversary mass for the parish, in February 1946, the children from St. Martin's school presented to pastor Fr. Paul Meyer a silver bell with \$25 attached. Oral histories say that the children's \$25 plus the collection from that anniversary mass (\$208) was the beginning of the building fund for a new church.

Fundraising for a church building began in earnest in the early 1950s. Ground for the new church was

finally broken in December 1956. At the ceremony, Mrs. Theresa Selby turned over the first shovel of earth. As a young woman back in 1914, Mrs. Selby had been a part of the group of church ladies who helped to buy this property.

The church was completed in less than a year. It was built of brick, with limestone trim, and seated 500 people. The altar and its relics were dedicated on Nov 11, 1957 by Auxiliary Bishop Philip Hannan. The church itself was dedicated

by Washington Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle on the following Sunday, Nov. 17, 1957. He also laid the cornerstone. Church records include the dedicatory inscription issued in Latin, describing our relics. St. Martin's altar contains "the relics of the holy Martyrs Eudoxius and Honestus; with those of St. Francis Xavier, Confessor and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, Virgin, also included".

Since 1957, the church interior has undergone several renovations. After Vatican II, a second altar was added facing the people, the communion rails were removed, and

a raised floor for the altar extended into the nave of the church. The choir stood behind the altar. More recent renovations included installing rails in front of the statuary niches and removing the raised floor of the nave, as the altar was previously moved back into the sanctuary. Thus, for our Centennial celebrations the church interior will closely match its original design from 1957 – when it was built by Fr. Meyer to "give God His own house" in our community.

OPT

St. Martin of Tours Parish

201 South Frederick Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD

Fr. David G. Wells,
Pastor
301-990-3203

St. Martin School
Stephen Lamont, Principal
301-990-2441

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

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

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

Pantry is located at 12701 Veirs Mill Road, Rockville
Donations Needed and Donation Drop-Off Schedule

Regular staffed drop-off days and times are on Sunday from 2–5 p.m. and Thursday from 6–8:00 p.m.

Please note that if you are not able to make a donation drop off on Sunday or Thursday with the regular pantry volunteers present, you may leave the donation on a table labeled "Food Pantry" in the Breezeway during regular daylight hours (the Breezeway is locked every evening).

The most needed items for the pantry are:

- canned tuna and chicken
- canned soups
- canned fruits, vegetables and tomatoes
- canned pork and beans

- small bags of beans and rice
- small bags or boxes of pasta
- peanut butter, jelly and jams (plastic jars)
- and cans of oatmeal
- boxed pasta and pasta sauce (plastic jars)
- fruit juice (plastic jar)
- paper towels
- toilet paper
- Wish list items:
- diapers
- baby wipes
- baby formula
- feminine hygiene products
- deodorant
- travel size soap, shampoo, and toothpaste

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

OPT



10,000 Grocery Bags Donated to St. Stephen's Pantry

The Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' Association of the United States and Canada (OPCMIA), a labor union located in Columbia, Md., representing Plasterers, Cement Masons, Shop Hands has donated 10,000 grocery bags to the St. Stephen's Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude. St. Stephen's Food Pantry volunteers and recipients are very grateful to General President Stepano and the OPCMIA for their generous donation.

OPT

Shrine of St. Jude Baby Bottle Campaign

By John Naughton

The Shrine of St. Jude will once again sponsor a Baby Bottle Campaign during October – Respect Life Month – to help Shady Grove Pregnancy Center (SGPC) continue their outstanding work of helping women with difficult pregnancies in every way possible.

The campaign will begin the weekend of October 3/4, and bottles will be collected October 31/November 1.

To eliminate any COVID-related concerns anyone may have in handling cash or used baby bottles, there will be three ways parishioners and others may contribute to the campaign.

- First, parishioners and others may contribute via SGPC's virtual campaign site at <https://give-direct.org/donate/?cid=14743>.
- Second, donation jars will be placed on the baby bottle distribution tables at weekend Masses for parishioners who wish to make cash or check donations without taking a baby bottle.
- Finally, there will be the traditional use of baby bottles that parishioners may take home to fill and return several weeks later with their change, cash, and check donations. Note that the baby bottles were cleaned and sealed in boxes late in 2019 before the virus struck. Additionally, hand sanitizer will

be provided at the bottle distribution tables.

Over the past 20 years, St. Jude parishioners have been extremely generous in their support of SGPC, donating \$125,000 via Baby Bottle Campaigns. This year's goal is \$12,000. What will happen in the year of COVID-19? We hope the St. Jude community and others will be as generous as they have in the past, using the method of contributing they feel most comfortable with and that they continue to pray that women considering abortion receive life-affirming care and support to help them choose life for their children.

OPT



Sister Therese Ann Rygiel. Photo by a St. Jude parishioner at her farewell ceremony, May 2016.

Sister Therese Ann Rygiel Dies at 87

The following obituary by The Kopicki-Bradley Funeral Home Inc., Reading, Pa., was published in the Reading Eagle, August 30 and 31, 2020.

Sister Therese Ann Rygiel, 87, of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Third Order Regular of St. Francis, died of natural causes on Sunday morning, August 30, 2020, at Manor Care in Sinking Spring, PA. Born in Paszowa, Poland, she was a daughter of the late Nicholas and Maria (Rudzik) Rygiel. Sister Therese Ann entered the Bernardine Order on August 11, 1950 and

was in her 71st year of religious life. Sister earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art from Madonna College, Livonia, MI, a Master of Arts in Art from The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and a Master of Arts from St. Mary's College of California, St. Mary's College, CA. She served her ministry in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Poland, South Dakota, and Texas as an Elementary and secondary teacher, principal, superior, as a tutor and substitute teacher, in mission effectiveness, and as a local minister. Sister's time at the Shrine of St. Jude was taken up with the children, especially the Special Education classes she tutored with the Religious Ed children who either had autism or missed the class for First Holy Communion or Confirmation. Sister had a wonderful singing voice, loved baking and preparing goodies for the Sodality Bake Sales, and stayed in Church each Sunday to greet and talk with all babies and children. Sister is survived by her sister Barbara Rygiel of South Pasadena, FL.

OPT

What's New at St. Jude?

Over the last few months, some welcome changes have been made to the Shrine of St. Jude and St. Jude Regional Catholic School buildings and campus.

These changes include:

- A new pedestal for Mary in the Madigan Hall garden replaced the old crumbling pedestal.
- A new stone walk was installed on the outside entrances to Madigan Hall.
- The outside cross wall panel near the kitchen received a fresh coat of paint.
- Solar panels have been installed on the school roof and the solar control panel was installed outside the Thaddeus Room.
- A new Parish Office sign was mounted.
- A plaque dedicated to those parishioners who were major contributors to the Sanctuary renovation last year was installed outside the Sacristy door.
- A portrait of the Madonna and the child Jesus with the child St. John the Baptist was hung on the Sanctuary wall (pictured above).
- The Sacred Heart of Jesus statue in the vestibule of the Thaddeus Room was painted.
- Automatic door openers were



Changes to the Shrine of St. Jude buildings and campus: Left, a portrait of the Madonna and the child Jesus with the child St. John the Baptist was hung on the Sanctuary wall. Right, a beautiful new outside sign marks St. Clare Chapel. Photos by Tom Roach



- built in the Breezeway.
- The altar server tables and chairs in the church sanctuary have been refinished.
- Two new chests of drawers have been placed at the main church entrance.
- A new Baldacchino was installed over the newly repaired and

- refinished tabernacle.
- The Monsignor Lauriola plaque was moved to the church's side entrance next the founding members roll.
- A new statue of the Blessed Mother was installed on the wall of main church entrance.

Continued on page 31

Shrine of St. Jude Parish

12701 Veirs Mill Road
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St. Jude Regional
Catholic School

Mr. Glenn Benjamin, Principal
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Maureen Martin,
OPT Editor

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Volunteers built desk dividers that will be used to assist with physical distancing in classrooms

Saint Peter's Begins School Year with Distance Learning

By Erin Pant

The 2020-2021 school year is well underway at Saint Peter's. All students began the year participating in distance learning, with plans for in-person learning to return in phases.

Faculty and staff worked tirelessly throughout the summer to prepare for the new school year.

Their efforts included staying up to date on all national, state, and local health guidelines, securing personal protective equipment, and making necessary adjustments to the building and classrooms to ensure safety. In addition, new technology and platforms had to be acquired, learned, and tested, and the internet speed on school grounds was updated.

During the week of August 31, orientation sessions were held for all grades. Students could attend a small group in-person session or virtual session. The orientation sessions were a chance for students to meet their teachers and gain an overview of what to expect for the year ahead. It was also the first-time students had been back in the building since March.

"It was wonderful to finally see students back on our campus.

Their joyful energy has been greatly missed," said Principal Kristen Cocozzella.

Staff continue to test new technology and prepare the building in anticipation for the return of students. Parent volunteers gathered on two Saturdays to construct desk dividers that will be used in classrooms to aid in physical distancing.

Students who opt to return for in-person learning will do so in three phases, the first phase welcome backs pre-K through third grade on September 28, fourth and fifth grade are targeted to return in mid-October, and sixth through eighth grade tentatively returning by the end of October. Students who choose to continue distance learning will participate in live stream of in-person classroom lessons so they can participate in discussion real-time.

"I'm extremely appreciative of our parents, our students, our teachers and staff during these challenging times," said Cocozzella. "The Lord has brought us all together as a school and he is the center of all things at Saint. Peters. With him all things are possible and that has been so evident during this time."

OPT

Meet Our New Faculty & Staff

Saint Peter's welcomes six new staff members. We asked each of them to share a little bit about themselves and what they are most looking forward to this school year.

Mrs. Cindy Salah

Mrs. Cindy Salah, Kindergarten Teacher

I am a St. Peter's parishioner. I recently celebrated my 24th Wedding Anniversary. Kindergarten is my favorite grade to teach! I have had a welcoming and caring experience at Saint Peter's. I feel like I've joined a very special family of educators. I am looking forward to building strong relationships with my students and their families.



Mrs. Maeve Williams

Mrs. Maeve Williams, Kindergarten Paraeducator

I attended Saint Peter's when I was younger and am thrilled to return as a paraeducator. I am completing a degree in history and in my free time I like to run. I am very excited to be working with kindergarten. I am most looking forward to the kids coming to school!



Mrs. Eunice Pak

Mrs. Eunice Pak, Grade 4 homeroom, Grade 4/5 math I am a native Marylander and a mom to children in Fifth and Second grades, and pre-K. I feel blessed to have been part of the St. Peter's community for seven years and now

the opportunity to teach at the school is an added blessing. As a yoga and mindfulness educator, I am already enjoying bringing calming (and energizing!) practices into my classroom, too! We are in a time of testing of our faith and resilience. I'm looking forward to working with our school community to bring peace and trust in the Lord and His guidance for our young children and our families.



Ms. Allison Stoerr, School Counselor

I am from Buffalo, New York, and just moved to the Maryland area one month ago to start my career at Saint Peter's. I love talking to people, listening to all kinds of music (except country!), and exploring all that Maryland has to offer – I have never been before! What is important to me as a counselor is instilling a level of empathy and cultural awareness in students as well as teach healthy coping skills. I am most looking forward to being with the students, hopefully face to face soon! I feel so lucky to be at Saint Peter's working with such a wide age range of kids and I can't wait to grow in my profession as school counselor.



Ms. Caitlyn Woodham

Ms. Caitlyn Woodham, Grade 5 Home room, Grades 4/5 Social Studies

This is my first year as a teacher! I graduated from St. John's University in May 2020. I really enjoy running and knitting. I am looking forward to an enjoyable school year and to continue to get to know the school community!



Ms. Erin Farrell, School Secretary

I am a St. Peter's alum and excited to be walking these halls again. I graduated from the University of Dayton and prior to coming to St. Peter's I worked at the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. I look forward to getting to know the students and families. I have had the privilege of experiencing St. Peter's as a student and now as a faculty member. I grew up at this school and met many of the people I am still friends with today. I am excited to be part of the faculty and work with some wonderful people and familiar faces.



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Pastor
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stpetersolney.org

St. Peter's School
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More St. Peter News
on Page 3

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PROGRAM

Con't from page 25

in kindergarten and second grade, said she is grateful the parish is

NEW

Con't from page 29

- The outside concrete damaged sidewalk/surface to both doors to Madigan Hall were being

offering this level of catechetical support to families. After she and her family watch the virtual Sunday Mass each week, they plan to eat lunch, discuss the Mass readings, and complete a lesson for the com-

ing week.

"We plan to be looking for God all around us and to really think about what God is trying to tell us in the good times and in the bad," Bolek said.

OPT

replaced.

The St. Clare Chapel has been undergoing a complete renovation, inside and out, including: new floor tiling, new lighting, new tapestry of St. Clare and St. Francis, new outside chapel sign (pictured above),

new HVAC, a repaired and painted ceiling as well as a redesigned vestibule/entrance, painted altar trim with a gold highlight, and a newly painted entrance door. New style seating is on its way.

OPT

GATHERING

Con't from page 25

bid farewell to Mass goers, said her group remained inactive when the church closed. Since the church reopened its doors June 21, a core group of greeters has returned to serve each week.

Greeters are now specifically tasked with checking in attendees, who must pre-register to attend one of the church's three in-person

weekend Masses. "Having parishioners' names in print and signing them in has helped greeters to get to know our parishioners more personally, which has been wonderful," Hayes said.

The 11:15 Contemporary Ensemble, whose mission is to lead music at the 11:15 am Sunday Mass, has continued meeting on Tuesday evenings via Zoom. However, since congregational singing has been linked to transmission of the virus, the ensemble

is still waiting to sing in church. As an ensemble singer and/or instrumentalist, there is such a longing to be in a group and to use their gifts to praise the Lord together, said ensemble leader Sue Madison. For now, the group continues to learn music, review their favorite songs, pray together, and support each other.

"It has been very difficult not to be together in-person making music during this time," Madison said. "But we pray we will be able to do it again soon."

OPT

COLA

Con't from page 23

ries have increased rapidly over the past decade but are not accurately reflected in COLAs. If that weren't enough, the COLA doesn't include Medicare premiums. Research for The Senior Citizens League has found that Medicare Part B premiums are one of the fastest growing costs in retirement.

The COLA is intended to protect the buying power of Social Security benefits from eroding when prices go up. But when the annual inflation adjustment doesn't go up in sync with rising costs, the buying power of benefits erodes. That chips away at the standard-of-living of all benefit recipients. Research by Johnson has found that Social Security benefits have lost about 30 percent of buying power over the past 20 years.

TSCL is working to ensure that Members of Congress are made aware that there could be an extremely low COLA in 2021, and that corrective action will be needed, especially to address the potential of surging Medicare premiums. TSCL is proposing an emergency COLA of at least 2.5 percent. The Social Security COLA is expected to be announced October 13, 2020.

OPT

ACTIVE AGING

Con't from page 23

ly celebrates the positivity of aging today. It showcases the capabilities of older adults as fully participating members of society and spotlights the role models that lead the way.

Active Aging Week challenges society's diminished expectations of aging by showing that, regardless

of age or health conditions, adults over 50 can live as fully as possible in all areas of life—physical, social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, vocational and environmental. The objective of the annual health-promotion event is to give as many older adults as possible the means to experience wellness activities and exercise in a safe, supportive environment. It also promotes the benefits of healthier, more active

lifestyles across the life span.

Montgomery County is excited to celebrate International Active Aging Week! Residents 50+ are invited to safely attend our programs that help you Go, Grow and Get Active! Explore the FREE activities offered by agencies throughout the county by viewing the senior calendar at: montgomerycountymd.gov/senior/calendar.html

OPT

ABORTION

Con't from page 2

seriously affect the baby's health e.g. cerebral palsy, epilepsy, etc.

Fifth, abortion does violence to women's psychological health. Women who don't seek God's infinite, loving mercy and forgiveness are beset by guilt which can result in suicide, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, frigidity, and child abuse. "Can a mother forget her baby?" Isaiah 49:15

Sixth, abortion does violence to the black race. It is one of the most horrific examples of racism. The Birth Control League, later renamed Planned Parenthood, was founded in 1919 by the eugenicist, racist Margaret Sanger whose goal was to eliminate the black race. Planned Parenthood continues her racist goal by targeting black women for

abortion with almost 80% of their abortuaries in minority neighborhoods. Planned Parenthood's century long racism has resulted in 40% of abortions being done on black women who comprise only 13% of our population. Black women are aborted at three times the rate of white women.

Seventh, abortion does violence to marriage, God's plan for raising families. Planned Parenthood's promotion of abortion includes teaching teens that premarital sex is fine. Many of the resulting teen pregnancies are aborted, but many result in out-of-wedlock births.

Eighth, abortion does violence to black families. Over 70% of black children are born to single moms and the children don't have the guidance, encouragement and discipline of a full-time father. Dr. Dobson of Focus on the Family some years ago did a poll of incar-

cerated black men and found over 90% did not know their father or hated him.

Single parent families suffer more crime, poverty, school dropouts, child abuse, and abortion. Single parent families often lack the resources to provide a good education for children who have to take lower paying jobs. Thus, PP's racism results in life long educational, social and economic discrimination of blacks.

Finally, abortion does violence to society. The anti-child, anti-family attitude has driven the U.S. birth rate way below the population replacement level. Our society is slowly dying. Many prayers and good works are needed to reverse the violence of abortion.

"The future of society passes by way of the family." (Saint Pope John Paul II)

OPT

THANK YOU

Con't from page 3

doors at just the right time.

I have been informed that the process may take an additional 30-60 days to be finalized. Please continue to pray for me as I thank God for all of you. I would appreciate continued financial support from anyone who is able to help me

bridge the gap during this time. I have faith that God is with me and will sustain me in any situation. He has given me 11 extra years of a new life, which I have dedicated to Him."

Tax-deductible contributions can be made to help cover the cost Patrick's home nursing until his supplemental insurance situation is resolved. This is the link: <https://helpopelive.org/campaign/1072/>

OPT

McGRATH

Con't from page 13

Mrs. McGrath took a hiatus from teaching to raise her children, but she continued to use her time and talents to support her passion of a Catholic school education. She was active on the Parent Board at her children's school, and raised funds for the Endowment Trust Fund at St. John of the Cross School and, as chairperson of the auction commit-

tee, for St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago. She also coached Special Olympics Track at Lyons Township High School in La Grange, Illinois.

Mrs. McGrath and her husband relocated to Maryland from the Chicago area last year. They are the parents of four grown children, one of whom teaches at Gonzaga College High School in D.C.

We are pleased that Mrs. McGrath brings her many years of experience and enthusiasm to the Holy Cross community.

OPT

VOTE

Con't from page 3

If it isn't a challenge, we are likely missing something.

Above all, exercise your right to vote. And reflect on the issues guided by Catholic moral and social teaching.

J&A Meetings by Zoom

For the time being, the Justice

and Advocacy Council, which represents the Catholic Church at the county level, is meeting by Zoom. We invite you to join us for the next meeting on October 28 at 7:30 p.m. For more information and a Zoom link, contact Larry Couch (larrycouch1@gmail.com).

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

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ST PETER

Con't from page 3

To be considered for the award, all students must test in the top 15th percentile or higher in the state on a nationally normed standardized test. The focus of Saint Peter's 2012 application was its Arts programs – dramatic, visual, and musical. Since 2012, Saint Peter's has continued to meet the testing benchmarks each year, a testament to the commitment to excellence by the administration, the dedication of the faculty, the hard work of the students, and the support of the school families.

The focus of Saint Peter's 2020 application is the school's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program and partnership with Project Lead the Way (PLTW). The partnership with PLTW began in 2014, focusing on the selection of a STEM Coordinator for the school and introducing PLTW STEM modules in grades K-5, believing that it was best to institute a new program and culture at the school's earliest years, and then grow the program. Saint Peter's School was the first elementary school in the state of Maryland to adopt the Project Lead the Way elementary program, Launch. Teachers in grades K through 5 were trained and the STEM modules for these grades were integrated into the science curriculum. As an example, in the

third-grade module, the students learn about the forces involved in flight, as well as Newton's Laws of Motion. They design, build, and test an experimental glider to learn how air and other forces affect its flight.

More recently, Saint Peter's middle school science teacher was trained in PLTW's Gateway program – the curriculum involves the study of green architecture and electricity through “the magic of electrons”. The melding of the STEM program and our visual and performing arts program, enriched with our Catholic faith, has segued into the Saint Peter's STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) program. In September of 2019, the school opened its own STREAM Lab, or maker's space, providing a place for students to explore, investigate, build, design, and experiment.

Saint Peter's STEM program and STREAM Lab could not have become a reality without the support of the school's parent community. By fundraising for the program materials, volunteering to staff the STREAM Lab, and enthusiastically supporting the school's innovative programs, the school and parent community have formed a partnership that fosters student growth, helping to fulfill Saint Peter's mission to help every child grow and thrive spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially, and intellectually.

OPT



Thanks to volunteers, school decorations celebrating fall and the National Blue Ribbon Award welcomed students back to their first day of in-person learning on September 28.

VACCINE

Con't from page 23

volunteers: 20 adults ages 56 to 70 years, and 20 adults ages 71 years and older. Ten volunteers in each age group received a lower dose of the vaccine (25 µg), and 10 volunteers in each age group received a higher dose (100 µg). After approximately one month, volunteers then received a second dose of the same vaccine at the same dosage. Throughout the study, volunteers attended clinic visits to track their responses to the vaccine and assess safety.

Overall, the researchers found that the investigational vaccine was well-tolerated in this older age group. Although some volunteers experienced some transient adverse effects, including fever and fatigue

after vaccination, the researchers found that they also exhibited a good immune response to the vaccine: the blood of vaccinated volunteers contained robust binding and neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. Importantly, the immune response to the vaccine seen in older volunteers was comparable to that seen in younger age groups.

The study will continue to follow the older volunteers for approximately a year after second vaccination to monitor the long-term effects of the vaccine. According to the researchers, these Phase 1 trial results further support testing of the investigational vaccine in older adults in an ongoing large Phase 3 trial.

Source: National Institutes of Health

OPT



Morrison family celebration after Father James Morrison's First Mass: (l. to r.): Sophia, Anna Marie, Fr. James, Jamie's mother Grace, Jamie's father Eric, Nicky (ordained Deacon during brother Jamie's Priestly Ordination) Isabelle, Danny (seminarian for the Archdiocese of Washington, studying at St. John Paul II Seminary), and Thomas.

MASS

Con't from page 27

cheon. Jamie was encouraged to speak to the group about his own journey to the seminary. “God did not speak in a text message, words in the sky, or a voice like Morgan Freeman,” he noted. “For me, He spoke through an overwhelming sense of peace, inexpressible joy, and a desire to serve His Church. I’ve never been happier.”

Fast Forward to June 20, 2020 — Ordination Day

Mary Beth de Ribeaux,

Coordinator of the SJN St. John Paul the Great Vocations Society attended Fr. Jamie's First Mass and afterwards shared: “The Morrison boys are the fruit of the prayers of so many people in our parish and they are a blessing to our parish and also a gift to the Church as a whole. It will be such a delight to see Jamie's ministry as a priest to blossom in the years to come. I'm confident that he will touch so many people's lives in positive and beautiful ways, as he draws them closer to Our Lord and Our Lady.”

“What a great gift to witness the priestly ordination of Father

Jamie Morrison, a true son of Saint John Neumann parish. It has been a blessing to watch Fr. Morrison grow in his faith, his relationship with Christ, and his understanding of the gift of a call to the priesthood. Father Morrison will bring a tremendous zeal for the faith and inner joy to the faithful at his first assignment at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Bethesda.” Msgr. Robert Panke, SJN Pastor

(Editor Note: Produced by The Holy Ruckus, this family video may possibly be one of the sweetest you'll ever see: <https://youtu.be/Rvf9yLKK0ss>)

OPT

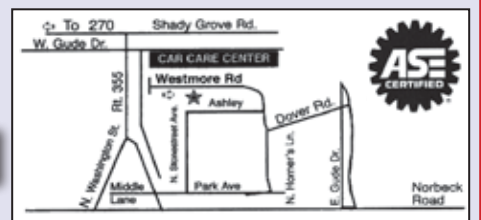
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