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The Catholic Advocate



The community newspaper of the Archdiocese of Newark

Ordination Class of 2018



On Saturday, May 26, nine new priests will be ordained by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark. The Class of 2018 includes (front row, left to right) Father Juan Carlos Velasquez Ducayin; Father Gabriel Perdomo; Father Diego Navarro Rodríguez; (back row, left to right) Father Sebastian Valencia Obando; Father Marco Vitrano; Father Marcin Fuks; Father Jakov Vidov; and Father Anthony R. Di Stefano. Father Joseph Anthony Furnaguera, inset, was in Rome when this photo was taken.



Advocate photo-Robert Sciarino

Cardinal Tobin and pastors explore 'toolbox'

By **Jonathan Azzara**
Public Relations Specialist



Dr. Barbara Anne Cusack, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, discussed canon law for pastors.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., joined a group of pastors and priests from the Archdiocese of Newark for the Toolbox for Pastoral Management, a weeklong seminar held at Seton Hall University.

The seminar, which ran from April 30 to May 4, was designed to enhance the pastoring skills of parish priests. Its syllabus was based on research conducted by Alverno College for the Archdiocese of Chicago, but for this event it was customized to address the demands faced by pastors in the Archdiocese of Newark.

The seminar was organized by the Archdiocese of Newark Office of Continuing Education of Priests, Seton Hall University and Leadership Roundtable—a Washington, D.C.-based organization that strives to strengthen the management, communications, finances and human resource development of the Catholic Church.

Throughout the week, several important topics were discussed, such as canon law, leadership development and intercultural competencies. Experts in several fields, including Dr. Barbara Anne Cusack, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, led the lectures.

"People belong to parishes where they feel a sense of membership," Cusack said. She emphasized that parishes should be a welcoming community of Christian faithful that many individuals seek.

During each lecture, pastors and priests were encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussions. At the conclusion of each day, all attendees participated in an evening prayer.

Additional speakers included Dr. Robert



Advocate photos-Jonathan Azzara
Cardinal Tobin addressed a group of priests at the Toolbox for Pastoral Management seminar at Seton Hall University.

West, assistant professor for accounting & information systems at Villanova University; Mark Mogilka, pastoral planning consultant for Meitler; and Peter Denio, coordinator for the Toolbox for Pastoral Management for Leadership Roundtable.

For more information about Leadership Roundtable, visit www.leadershiproundtable.org.

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Opening date set for Mercy House

In the April issue of *New Jersey Catholic*, we introduced readers to Mercy House, a new ministry within the Archdiocese of Newark's Respect Life Office.

The facility located at Blessed Sacrament Parish Convent at 620 Clinton Ave. in Newark now has an official opening date. On Friday, June 22, an opening celebra-

tion will be held at 10:30 a.m., including a blessing by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

The mission of the house is to provide a welcoming space for individuals and families in need, as well as provide emotional support and healing for those dealing with addiction, abusive relationships, an unplanned pregnancy or abortion. Cheryl Riley, the director of the Respect Life Office, helped create this new resource for the community.

"It will hopefully give them a place to go where they feel loved and welcome without being judged," Riley said.

Since being approved by Cardinal Tobin in January, volunteers have been hard at work sprucing up the convent and sorting through donated clothes and items.

Mercy House will be open on Tuesdays and Saturdays to start. If the need is more, the hours will increase.



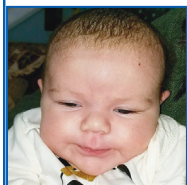
All are welcome to attend the opening. To RSVP or to learn more about volunteering or making donations, please contact Cheryl Riley at 973-497-4350 or email cheryl.riley@rcan.org.



Submitted photos

For months, volunteers, like the Friends of Delille, have helped prepare Mercy House for its opening by cleaning and sorting donated goods.

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GREECE (<i>Athens & Greek Islands</i>)	SEPT. 17- OCT. 6	Fr. Benny Prado
ITALY (<i>San Giovanni Rotondo, Avellino, Rome</i>)	SEPT. 20-29	Fr. Owen Moran
SPAIN & PORTUGAL (<i>Madrid, Granada, Lisbon</i>)	JULY 9-20	Fr. Armand Mantia
SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA and GERMANY	JULY 8-17	Bp. Arthur Serratelli

2019

HOLY LAND	JAN. 2-11	Bp. Arthur Serratelli
HOLY LAND	JAN. 14-23	Fr. James Brown
HOLY LAND	Feb. 3-12	Fr. John Madrid
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Cardinal, Archdiocese of Newark sign climate declaration

At the request of Bishop Richard Pates, episcopal liaison to the Catholic Climate Covenant, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., and the archdiocese have signed the U.S. Catholic Climate Declaration.

The declaration reads, "As Catholic communities, organizations and institutions in the United States, we join with state, tribal and local governments, as well as businesses, financial institutions and other faith organizations, to declare that we are still in on actions that meet the climate goals outlined in the Paris Agreement."

In 2001, the U.S. bishops said "global climate is by its very nature a part of the planetary commons," and that prudent action must be taken to protect it (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*, 2001). On numerous occasions, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have called for an international climate change agreement.

"[A]t its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about

partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both 'the human environment' and the natural environment. It is about our human stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those who come after us" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*, 2001).

The Paris Agreement was accepted by 195 nations in December 2015 and provides a framework for the reduction of carbon emissions to limit the increase in the global average temperature above pre-industrial levels and to avoid the most dangerous effects of climate change.

On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the only nation to do so. In response, the U.S. bishops declared, "The president's decision not to honor the U.S. commitment to the Paris Agreement is deeply troubling" (USCCB Statement on



CNS Photo

Pope Francis, who met with President Trump during a private audience at the Vatican last year, has criticized the U.S. for pulling out of the Paris Agreement.

the President's Withdrawal from Paris Agreement, June 1, 2017).

In signing the document, Cardinal Tobin stated: "The Archdiocese of Newark joins with other institutions from across American society to ensure that the United States remains a global leader in reducing emissions. We call for the adminis-

tration to join the global community and return to the Paris Agreement."

The cardinal also has urged all Catholic parishes, schools and institutions within the Archdiocese of Newark to sign on to the Catholic Climate Declaration individually.

To view the declaration, visit www.tfaforms.com/4668211.

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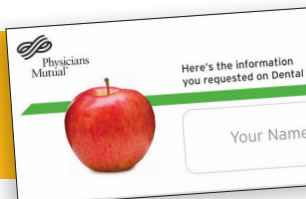
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Learn about *Gimme Liberty*, a new movie being written, directed and produced by Ron Krauss, as a prequel to *Gimme Shelter*, a feature film about Several Sources Shelters. Since January 2014, *Gimme Shelter* has expanded our baby-saving work to MILLIONS of people around the world. This powerful film was based on the true story of a homeless, desperate young pregnant woman we brought into our Several Sources family.

Gimme Liberty will focus on the David & Goliath challenge between Several Sources Founder Kathy DiFiore and the State of New Jersey in the mid 1980's when she was fined \$10,000 and faced a possible prison sentence for sheltering pregnant women as well as mothers and their babies in her own home. With the help of St. Teresa of Calcutta, the housing law in New Jersey was changed, allowing Several Sources Shelters to flourish.

If you want to help Several Sources in any way or be involved in our new baby-saving movie, come to our Open House. Get a free Gimme Shelter DVD and a signed copy of Kathy's book, *Gimme Love...Gimme Hope...Gimme Shelter*.

Be educated on how the film will be made and how to become a producer or get involved in other ways. Your participation now will help young women choose life for their innocent preborn babies.

Meet the young mother the film *Gimme Shelter* was based on and her infant son, who (at mike) is now 7 yrs old.

Sun. June 24, 2018 2-7 PM
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Call Ginny at 201-818-9033 if you will be attending, or wish to arrange a private visit.

Several Sources Shelters

Children write letters to seminarians

By Kelly Marsicano
Associate Publisher

Letter writing is considered a lost art. But, the Knights of Columbus is using it as a tool to encourage vocations.

Council member John Tirado started the Seminarian Letter Project in the Diocese of Camden in 1999, and it has since grown to other councils across the entire state, including several in the Archdiocese of Newark. Through the project, Catholic school students, children in religious education classes and Knights of Columbus members write letters and cards to seminarians.

"They really appreciate the words of encouragement and prayer," Tirado said. "They just appreciate people thinking of them."

The letters get sent to men on the path to priesthood at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University in South Orange, as well as to seminarians across the country and even to Rome.

"They're making huge sacrifices



Submitted photo

Students at Notre Dame Academy in Palisades Park, who previously participated in the project, show off the letters they wrote for seminarians.

and it's all for God. We want them to know how important they are," explained Tirado. "Our priests are aging, the average age has increased; the population of priests is much smaller than it was. This is my effort to help with the situation."

Since its inception, tens of thousands of letters have been mailed. The local Knights councils that participate have a coordinator who works with school principals and directors of religious education to get children involved. Knights member Neal McGarrity is responsible for the program at Immaculate Conception

Parish in Secaucus and Hoboken Catholic Academy. They typically send letters out around Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Priesthood Sunday. McGarrity said the seminarians they write to are grateful for the letters since many aren't from the United States and are away from their families while they study.

"Many say it's good to see the children are praying for vocations," McGarrity said. "We try to teach [the children] the importance of vocations, why we need our priests and religious."

"I believe the program is import-

ant to these men. They need support and encouragement," added Linda Meyer, the director of religious education at Immaculate Conception. "The children feel they are too young to make a difference, and this is an opportunity to show them that, even at a young age, they can make a difference."

In one letter, a student wrote: "Thank you for dedicating your life to us. To return the favor, I will try my best to pray daily for you. Thanks again for sacrificing your life to the service of God."

Often, the seminarians send thank you notes in response. "I write this with immense gratitude to you and your CCD students ... for sending me wonderful cards and letters. You make me feel so blessed and inspired," wrote one seminarian.

The project has also received international and national recognition, including a blessing from the Vatican, a letter from the White House and an award from the National Catholic Educational Association for its innovative approach to furthering the mission of Catholic education.

For more information or to participate in the program, please contact John Tirado at 609-206-8790 or email jtslpx@gmail.com.




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May 18

St. Joseph by the Sea, South Mantoloking, "Loss, Change, Transformation, Fulfillment" retreat for women, through May 20, presented by Paulette Cicero, \$215, 732-892-8494.

Community of God's Love, Rutherford, screening of Bishop Robert Barron's "Catholicism: The Pivotal Players" DVD, session will focus on Michelangelo, light supper at 7 p.m., viewing at 8 p.m., 201-935-0344 or email secretary@thecgl.org.

May 19

Koinonia Academy, Plainfield, Life in the Spirit seminar, 10:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., and May 20 from 2:30-4 p.m., call 908-301-6144 or email info@peopleofhope.net.

Knights of Columbus Council #3428, North Arlington, beef-steak dinner, 6:30 p.m., \$50 per person, tickets in advance only, 201-998-0626.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Wallington, Mass of Anointing, 10:30 a.m., 973-778-7405.

May 23

Pastoral Familiar Hispana (Hispanic Family Life Office), Archdiocese of Newark, family reflection in Spanish, "Healing the Relationship Between Parents and Sons/Daughters," a bilingual track for adolescents available, 7-9:30 p.m. at the Archdiocesan Center in Newark, call 973-497-4326 or email yamilka.genao@rcan.org.

Archdiocesan Youth Retreat Center, Kearny, annual gathering on youth ministry, 6:30 p.m., featuring presentation by Roy Petitfils "Ministering Faithfully to LGBTQ Youth and Young Adults," call Rich Donovan at 201-998-0088 ext. 4150 or email richard.donovan@rcan.org.

May 30

Pastoral Familiar Hispana (Hispanic Family Life Office), Archdiocese of Newark, family reflection in Spanish, "Healing My Relationship with God and Myself," 7-9:30 p.m. at the Archdiocesan Center in Newark, call 973-497-4326 or email yamilka.genao@rcan.org.

June 1

Caldwell University, early childhood conference, featuring workshops and presentations for current and future educators, registration at 8:30 a.m., conference 9 a.m.-2 p.m., email Audrey McGowan at amcgowan@caldwell.edu or Debbie Giordano at dgiordano@caldwell.edu.

June 2

Office of Family Life Ministries, Archdiocese of Newark, "A Day

of Comfort and Hope" retreat for bereaved parents, at Notre Dame Parish in North Caldwell, 9 a.m., call Lauren Egan at 973-497-4327 or email lauren.egan@rcan.org.

June 14

Loyola Jesuit Center, Morristown, "Evening in the Loyola Prayer Gardens" fundraiser, 6:30 p.m., \$40 per person, \$75 per couple, includes dinner and 50/50 raffle, visit www.loyola.org, email retreathouse@loyola.org or call 973-539-0740.

Immigrant workshop to offer tools for parishes

All pastors and members of their parish staffs are invited to a workshop on Serving Immigrant Communities on June 12 at 10 a.m. in the auditorium of the Archdiocesan Center in Newark.

Representatives of Faith in New Jersey (FINJ), a statewide network of clergy and congregations working to promote immigrant, racial and economic justice, will provide a two-hour workshop on concrete steps that parishes can take to stand in solidarity with the immigrant community at a time when many families face the threat of being separated via detention and deportation.

For more information, contact Father Timothy Graff, director of the Social Concerns Office, at rev.timothy.graff@rcan.org or 973-497-4318.

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Official Appointments

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., has announced the following appointments:

PASTORS

Reverend Monsignor Michael J. Desmond, pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, Caldwell, has been granted an extension to his pastorate, ending Feb. 1, 2019.

Reverend John Job, parochial vicar of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, Franklin Lakes, has been appointed pastor there, effective July 1.

Reverend Charles J. Miller, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Bloomfield, has been granted an extension to his pastorate, ending June 30, 2019.

CHAPLAIN

Reverend Francisco Maria Cordeiro Mendonca, parochial vicar of St. Philomena Parish, Livingston, has been appointed



chaplain of the Policeman's Benevolent Association, Local No. 263, Livingston, effective immediately.

RELEASED

Reverend James E. Starasinich, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Lyndhurst, has been released to serve as pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Owatonna, Minn., ending July 1, 2021.

RETIREMENT

(All effective July 1)

Reverend Stephen A. Kopacz has been granted retirement.

Reverend Monsignor Dennis J. Mahon has been granted retirement.

Reverend Edward P. Szpiech has been granted retirement.

Symposium on parish renewal energizes leaders

SOUTH ORANGE—Diocesan and parish leaders from the greater New York metropolitan area gathered at Seton Hall University for the Monsignors Thomas Kleissler and Thomas Ivory Symposium on Parish Renewal. The event was hosted by RENEW International in partnership with the Center for Catholic Studies



Cardinal Tobin presents RENEW co-founder Msgr. Tom Kleissler with his own letter of appreciation along with an apostolic blessing from Pope Francis.

at Seton Hall and America Media. More than 200 clergy and lay men and women listened to insights from Catholic thought leaders and engaged in dialogue on topics vital to today's church.

Keynote speaker William Simon, chairman of the nonprofit organization Parish Catalyst and author of "Great Catholic Parishes," addressed the four foundational practices he found in successful parishes. In his research, he found that great parishes share leadership, foster spiritual maturity and plan for discipleship, excel on Sundays and evangelize.

The keynote was followed by four panelists: Chris Lowney, author of "Everyone Leads"; Sister Terry Rickard, O.P., president of RENEW; Father Bismarck Chau, pastor of St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral in Newark; and Leisa Anslinger, director of Catholic Life and Faith.

The panelists answered questions and explored new topics raised in table discussions. Following the panel discussion, a final table session produced a collection of takeaways that was shared with the room.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin,



Submitted photos

Cardinal Tobin with RENEW Executive Director Sister Theresa Rickard, O.P., and RENEW 40th Anniversary Committee Chairman Don Whittam.

C.Ss.R., joined participants and panelists for evening prayer and shared reflections about RENEW and the vision of its founders, Monsignors Kleissler and Ivory, who were present. "As a young priest in Detroit, I knew two things about Newark," the cardinal said. "I knew it was in New Jersey, and I knew it had a wonderful program called RENEW."

At the conclusion of his remarks,

Cardinal Tobin presented each of RENEW's founders with an apostolic blessing as well as his own letter of congratulations and gratitude.

The symposium was one of a series of events in celebration of RENEW's 40th anniversary. The year-long initiative titled Forward at Forty highlights past accomplishments and looks forward to continuing its mission within the church.

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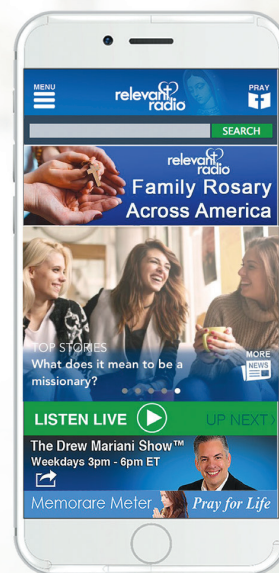
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Cardinal celebrates 50th wedding anniversary Mass

By Kelly Marsicano
Associate Publisher

More than 150 couples from around the archdiocese gathered at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark to celebrate a golden milestone. A special anniversary Mass was held May 6 in honor of couples marking 50 years or more of marriage this year. Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., celebrated the liturgy, which included a rite of sprinkling, blessing of rings and a special prayer over the congregation.

During his homily, Cardinal Tobin reflected on the Gospel reading, "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." (Jn 15:12) He recognized the couples for being a symbol of Christ's love for his church, stating it is a duty to love each other as disciples, reflecting God's own faithfulness. "Each day you receive God's love, and each day you give it away," the cardinal said.

Following the homily, Cardinal Tobin briefly paused the Mass after an older gentleman fell ill and needed medical assistance. The cardinal invited those in attendance to pray for their brother and led the congregation in reciting the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and the Memorare until EMTs arrived. Cardinal Tobin came down from the sanctuary and gave a special blessing to the man and his wife before they left. He then continued with the Mass.

After the celebration, the couples were invited to come forward to receive a pin as a remembrance. Cardinal Tobin graciously met individually with each couple and took pictures with them.

Victor and Rose Salvatore, who were married 50 years ago at Sacred Heart Parish in Bloomfield, said that, after some health issues, they were thankful to reach this milestone. "Wow! We made it," Rose exclaimed.

Thomas and Geraldine Lewis, parishioners of St. Mary in Rutherford, echoed those sentiments and said the Mass was "very special." "You never know if you'll make it to 50," Geraldine said. When asked what the key to a long marriage is, Thomas replied, "Faith and patience."



Advocate photos-Kelly Marsicano



Submitted photo

Students from the environmental science program at the Academy of the Holy Angels recently released 125 fingerling trout into the Saddle River at Rindlaub Park, marking the end of this year's Trout in the Classroom program. This is the fourth consecutive year Erica Pritchard's (center) students have raised and released trout. In early October, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish & Wildlife provided the eggs to AHA. Students observed the fish as they developed from eggs to fingerlings, and cared for the trout at each stage. Before the release, the students performed an assessment of water and organisms within the river.

Congratulations and Best Wishes*To the Class of 2018****Ordination Class to the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

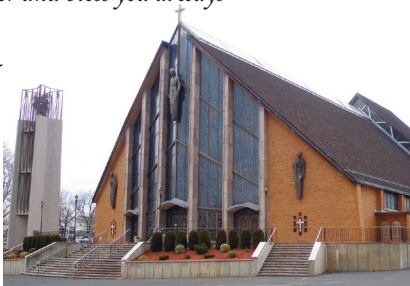
Our thoughts and prayers go especially to

**Fr. Anthony R. Di Stefano and Fr. Marco Vitrano**

Who have faithfully served in our Parish.

*May the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Watch over and bless you always*

Rev. Joseph A. Ferraro, Pastor
Fr. Mauro Primavera &
Fr. Francesco Donnaruma
and the Staff and
Parishioners
of Holy Family - Nutley



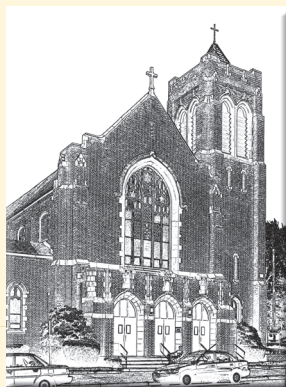
With great affection, the Parishioners
of Sacred Heart Parish, Lyndhurst

*Congratulate***Rev. Mr. Marco Vitrano**

and

Deacon Jason M. Mantich

on your ordination.



*May the Lord Bless you
with abundant grace & make Christ
better known and loved.*



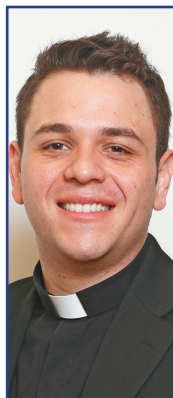
Reverend Juan Carlos Velasquez Ducayin

May God's blessings be upon you at your ordination and throughout your priesthood.

You will remain in our prayers.

Your friends at
Saint Aloysius Church

Newark
Rev. Elky Reyes, Pastor



The Parish Family
of Saint Michael, Cranford
extends prayerful congratulations to
Rev. Mr. Sebastian Valencia Obando
upon his ordination to the priesthood.

*We are grateful, Deacon Sebastian,
for your example of joyful service
of God and His People.*

Ad multos annos!

Rev. Msgr. Timothy J. Shugrue, Pastor



Rev. Anthony Robert DiStefano

"Always remember the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and to seek out and rescue those who are lost."

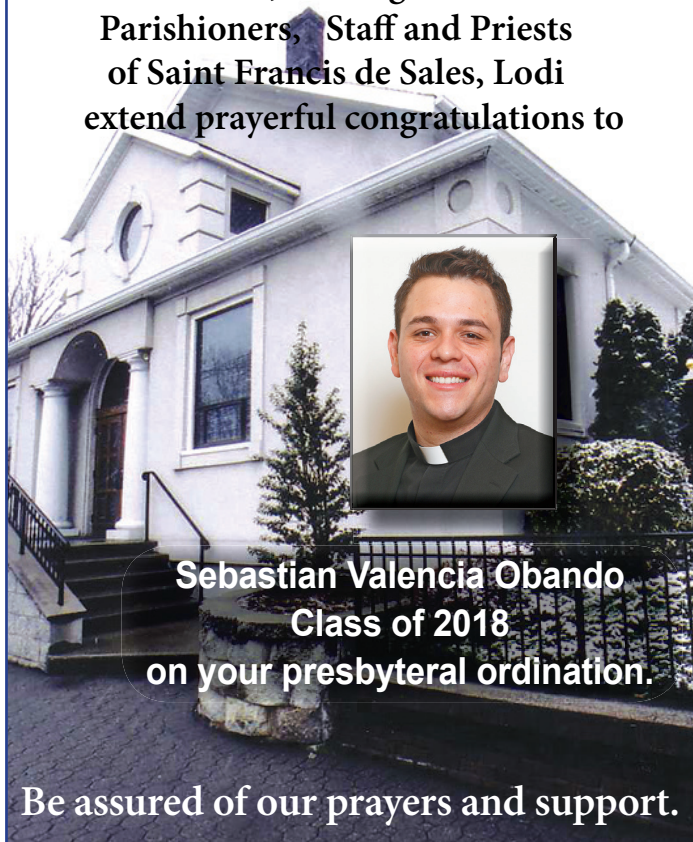
(Rite of Ordination to the priesthood)

**The people of St. Bartholomew's rejoice
in your ordination.**

You will always be in our hearts & prayers.

Very Rev. John J. Paladino, K.H.S., Pastor
Rev. David C. Santos, Parochial Vicar
Priests, Sisters, Deacons & Staff of
St. Bartholomew Church

**Rev. Francisco J. Rodriguez, Administrator,
Parishioners, Staff and Priests
of Saint Francis de Sales, Lodi
extend prayerful congratulations to**



**Sebastian Valencia Obando
Class of 2018
on your presbyteral ordination.**

Be assured of our prayers and support.

Class of 2018 answers the call

By Melissa McNally and Kelly Marsicano

Nine men will be ordained priests of the Archdiocese of Newark by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark on May 26. The Class of 2018 includes a former attorney and a former philosophy professor. The multicultural group reflects the diversity of the archdiocese—three of the men hail from Colombia, with others from Poland, Italy and Venezuela.

The new class will join some 700 other priests in serving the Archdiocese of Newark's 1.5 million Catholics in Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties. The men, ranging in age from 27 to 53, will share the light and love of Christ with the Church of Newark.

Father Anthony R. Di Stefano

Age: 53

Place of birth: Brooklyn, N.Y.

Education: B.A. in history from Rutgers University, New Brunswick; Juris Doctorate from Rutgers School of Law, Camden

Home parish: St. Bartholomew the Apostle, Scotch Plains

After years working as an attorney and establishing his own law firm, Father Di Stefano returned to the church after his mother became seriously ill. He discovered a "new-found love of Jesus Christ" and served as a lector, extraordinary minister of holy Communion and lay assistant coordinator of the RCIA program at his home parish.

Although he had a desire to enter the priesthood as a child, he said his career got in the way of his faith. "As I discerned the sense of calling, I also struggled with feelings of commitment to the people I worked with over 18 years as an attorney and kept telling myself that it would be impossible to leave a career and business after such a long time," he said. "I kept convincing myself that the call that was stirring in my heart could be satisfied with the status quo of balancing both my career and my service to the church and my parish in lay ministry."

Following Hurricane Sandy, Father Di Stefano fully committed to his vocation after someone told him during Mass he had a calling. "I am convinced that the voice I heard was God, himself, asking me once more to answer his call and offer the gift of myself to him in the priesthood just like Jesus Christ offered himself up to the Father."



Father Marcin Fuks

Age: 32

Place of birth: Żyrardów, Poland

Education: B.A. and M.A. in physical education and pedagogy from the University of Łódź, Poland; M.A. in systematic theology and M.Div. in pastoral theology from Seton Hall University

Home parish: St. Aloysius, Newark

For Father Fuks, making the pilgrimage to Sydney, Australia, for World Youth Day in 2008 confirmed his call to the priesthood. "Up until that pilgrimage, I was trying to escape from even considering the thought or possibility of my vocation," he said. "I was finishing my studies, working, having a 'good' life, and I did not plan any radical changes. Nevertheless, in the midst of all of that, I felt some emptiness and being unsatisfied with what I had."

Hearing Pope Benedict XVI speak and meeting young people from the Neocatechumenal Way further cemented his vocation. "I still remember at that moment I felt peace and joy that I never felt before in my life," Father Fuks explained.

A catechist in his native Poland also helped shepherd a young Father Fuks through his teenage years. "At that time, around 15, I was very rebellious against my parents and bored with the whole church thing," he said. "This lady, who was in her 50s, was basically fighting against cancer, a fight that she eventually lost, was an example of true joy and peace that comes from Catholic faith, and because of her witness, I am here today."



Father Juan Carlos Velasquez Ducayin

Age: 33

Place of birth: Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela

Education: B.A. in Catholic theology; M.A. in systematic theology; and M.Div. (master of divinity) from Seton Hall University, South Orange

Home parish: St. Aloysius, Newark

Father Velasquez always knew he wanted to be a priest. His parents, Fausto and Nancy, ensured that he and his three siblings were deeply rooted in faith. "It is difficult for me to think of only one person in my life who God used to bring this vocation to fruition. Since I was a child, God blessed me, giving me so many people to help me in my life; they supported me in many ways in discerning my vocation toward the priesthood," he said.

He credits local catechists, who were like "second parents," for keeping him connected to the church. "Many lay and religious friends who I have encountered during all these years of discernment toward the priesthood, I am sure that without their prayers and their example of a Christian life this vocation with which God has blessed me would never have come to realization," Father Velasquez explained.



Father Joseph Anthony Furnaguera

Age: 29

Place of birth: Summit, N.J.

Education: B.A. in criminal justice and philosophy from Rutgers University, Newark

Home parish: St. James the Apostle, Springfield

Working in prison ministry had a significant effect on Father Furnaguera's life. While in his discernment year, he visited and prayed with inmates. "They were always very gracious for our visits and would often look forward to our time together," he recalled. "I'll never forget the night that a gentleman asked me if God could forgive him for what he had done. He told me that he was on trial for murder, explained the circumstance of the case, and (said) his one question was if God was capable of forgiving him. I saw in his eyes that it wasn't just a provocative question or false piety to buy my time, he was serious."

Father Furnaguera prayed that God would work through him to help the inmate find reconciliation and love. "I cried that night because I wanted him to confess his soul's deepest sorrow and I wanted to reach my hand over his head and tell him with the authority of Christ, 'I absolve you from your sins.' I knew that he needed to hear those words spoken to him. I realized that we all need to hear those words."



Father Sebastian Valencia Obando

Age: 27

Place of birth: Medellin, Antioquia, Colombia

Education: B.A. in philosophy and Catholic studies from Seton Hall University

Home parish: St. Francis de Sales, Lodi

According to Father Valencia, his mother, Adriana, always knew her eldest son would become a priest. "My mother says I have shown admiration for priests and their ministerial role since an early age, and I have also expressed in numerous ways a desire to be like them. As a child, I remember actively participating in any parish event as an altar server at my home parish in Colombia."

Father Valencia said the pastor of St. Gabriel of Sorrow Parish in Medellin, who "radiated love and passion for the priesthood," particularly inspired him. "His kindness and sympathy inspired many of us to work with him for the sake of the parish and the neighborhood. His good example nourished the dream of making me a dedicated working priest."

As a teen, Father Valencia helped in the catechetical formation of children and was later drawn to the "dynamism" of the charismatic renewal movement. "The movement, from where I acquired my spirituality, confirmed the vocation to the priesthood, enriched my desire to follow the call and strengthen the gift of perseverance on this journey toward the priesthood," Father Valencia explained. "The charismatic spirituality and seminary formation contributed a lot to form the man and servant who I am."



Father Gabriel Perdomo

Age: 33

Place of birth: Puerto Boyacá, Colombia

Education: B.A. in philosophy from Seminario Nacional Cristo Sacerdote in Yarumal, Antioquia, Colombia

Home parish: St. Peter the Apostle, River Edge

As a teenager, Father Perdomo realized he had a passion for helping others. At age 13, he was involved in a special Christmas program designed to help poor children. "Through that program, some parishes offer the opportunity to children to pray the novena around the manger and (learn) catechesis about the Christmas season," he explained. With the assistance of priests and deacons, he worked with children and "played the role of professor" for nine days. "At the end of my first experience, I felt really happy for all the work that (we) did with the children of my parish."

Because Father Perdomo worked so well with children, his pastor invited him to teach catechesis every Sunday. He also found a group of young adults who helped prepare breakfast to share with poor children.

"Through those activities, I realized that life has value when we put our capabilities and gifts received from the Lord to the service of others," Father Perdomo explained. "We cannot be selfish with all the blessings that we have received in our lives, we are called to spread love as Jesus commanded and that love must be given in a real way."



Father Diego Navarro Rodríguez

Age: 36

Place of birth: Albania, Caquetá, Colombia

Education: B.A. in philosophy from Universidad San Buenaventura, Colombia

Home parish: St. Mary, Nutley

A former philosophy professor, Father Navarro took nearly 20 years to complete his priestly formation. In 1999, he entered the seminary, studied for two years and then left. In 2001, he entered the Benedictine Monastery of Tibatí, located in Bogotá, Colombia, and left in 2009.



In 2012, Father Navarro came to the United States for a year of formation at Emmaus House in Newark. A year later, he entered Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University.

"I entered the seminary immediately after high school," he explained. "After two years of studies, I felt the priesthood was not what I wanted at that moment. However, when God calls, he always keeps calling. I feel I am not the idealistic boy who started his vocational path 20 years ago. Through life experiences, great priests, my family—especially my mother—I have found the guidance, the love and care for my vocation."

Father Navarro said he believes his decades-long journey to the priesthood has made him more mature. "I have accepted my brokenness, my limitations, but also my virtues and my strengths. I believe I am more realistic, less demanding, less judgmental. I understand that God loves me so much that he has allowed me to do what I have done, even running away from him like Jonah did."

Father Jakov Vidov

Age: 38

Place of birth: Zadar, Croatia

Home parish: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Ridgewood

Father Vidov's journey to World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, confirmed his decision to enter the seminary. "After meeting with Pope Benedict, I remember a priest giving a reflection on Psalm 127: 'If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders labor.' At that period in my life, I had a good job, a nice place to live; I had everything that I believed should make me happy, but I was not in peace," he recalled. "Every time I was alone, something was nudging me deep inside."

An only child, Father Vidov attended World Youth Day with a Neocatechumenal community from his parish in Zagreb, Croatia. "Thanks to the words of this priest, I understood, for the first time in my life, that I was trying to live a 'perfect life,' while silencing a voice of God in my heart that was there from early childhood—a voice that was calling me to become a priest."



Father Marco Vitrano

Age: 30

Place of birth: Misilmeri, Palermo, Italy

Home parish: Holy Family, Palermo, Italy

Growing up in a small town with his two older sisters, Father Vitrano's parents, Francesco and Rosella, were faithful Catholics. He credits the Neocatechumenal Way with helping his family grow spiritually.

"The Neocatechumenal Way was crucial for my vocation. I can say that without it, I would never have considered the vocation to the priesthood. I thank the Lord for the gift of the church that gave my life meaning," he explained. Being the only and youngest boy, Father Vitrano felt he was "spoiled" by his mother and sisters. He credits the church for helping change his outlook on life. "I wanted to be number one everywhere and I was willing to do whatever it took. This made me become very judgmental and to view everyone as an obstacle. I thought I was the only righteous one and everyone else was wrong. I believed that it was never my fault but always someone else's," he explained. "I became very alone and introverted until I discovered that God loved me the way I was, that he did not judge me for my sins. This news changed my life. For the first time, I felt loved, free and happy."



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Diego Navarro
Rodriguez



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Reverend Elky Reyes, Pastor
and the Saint Aloysius
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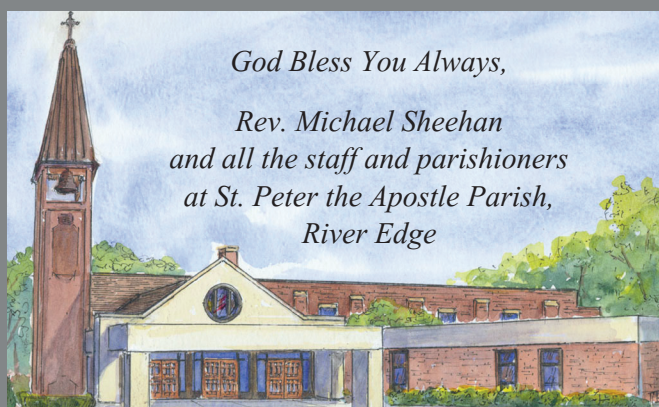


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a life of service to
the people of God.*



God Bless You Always,

*Rev. Michael Sheehan
and all the staff and parishioners
at St. Peter the Apostle Parish,
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Rev. Anthony R. Di Stefano

*With prayers and best wishes
as you are consecrated
to a life of service
to the people of God.*

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Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin,
C.Ss.R., is scheduled to
appear at the following
upcoming events:


Sunday, May 20

Noon
Diaconate ordination
Cathedral Basilica of the
Sacred Heart, Newark

Saturday, May 26

10 a.m.
Priesthood ordination
Cathedral Basilica of the
Sacred Heart, Newark

Monday, May 28

11 a.m.
Memorial Day Mass
Holy Cross Cemetery,
North Arlington

Sunday, June 10

Noon
75th Anniversary Closing Mass
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Parish, Wallington

Friday, June 22

10:30 a.m.
Opening of Mercy House
Blessed Sacrament Parish
Convent, Newark

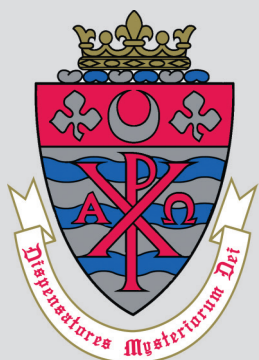
Sunday, June 24

Noon
70th Anniversary Mass
St. Bartholomew Parish,
Scotch Plains



Submitted photo

More than 320 people gathered for the first-ever Catholic Bible Conference offered by the Archdiocese of Newark. The inaugural event was held April 14 at Mother Seton Regional High School in Clark. It featured an opening prayer service led by Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia Msgr. Thomas Nydegger and a keynote address by Father Pablo Gadenz, associate professor of Biblical Studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary. Several workshops were offered in English and Spanish to inspire love for God's word and to increase biblical literacy among the faithful of the archdiocese.



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Reverend Mr. Steve Chun
Reverend Mr. Andrew De Silva
Reverend Mr. Juan Rojas

Reverend Anthony Di Stefano
Reverend Joseph Furnaguera
Reverend Diego Navarro
Reverend Gabriel Perdomo

May God bless you in your future priestly ministry.

Ad multos annos!

Saint Vincent Academy receives \$500,000 grant from Prudential

NEWARK—Saint Vincent Academy is one of 17 nonprofit organizations to receive part of a \$30 million grant from Prudential Financial, Inc. to fund capital campaigns and endowments throughout Newark's five wards.

The all-girls high school will receive \$500,000 to support the "Endowing Our Future" project that will enhance Saint Vincent Academy's financial viability to ensure the continuation of college-preparatory education for women of color and limited means. The annual interest earnings of the Prudential funds will contribute to program development, faculty incentives, building maintenance and student enrollment security.

"Prudential Financial's leadership championing the works of Newark's nonprofits has gone unmatched for decades," said Sister June Favata, S.C., administrative director of the academy. "Here at Saint Vincent Academy, we have enjoyed Prudential's support of our unique programming, special events, a faculty chair and, most recently, the endowment fund. We approach our 150th anniversary with pride and grateful acknowledgement of Prudential's contributions to the academy's continued influence on young women's lives."

With a focus on meeting critical needs of organizations serving Newark communities, the grants are in addition to Prudential's annual grant-making budget and build on the more than \$1 billion the company has committed toward the revitalization of its home city in the past decade alone.

"As a Newark native, I've seen the positive impact made when local government, businesses and community nonprofit organizations work together to improve the city," said Shané Harris, vice president of corporate giving for Prudential. "At Prudential, we recognize that strong and vibrant communities cannot exist without a strong nonprofit sector. These grants are designed to help strengthen the financial stability of these groups so they can continue delivering quality programs that will serve the residents of Newark today and in the future."



Advocate photo-Melissa McNally

On May 1, representatives of the Tri-State Italian-American Congress presented \$25,000 in scholarships to a group of students of Italian heritage from 25 Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. Parents and friends of the scholarship winners, clergy and the schools' faculty were present at the Archdiocesan Center awards ceremony. From left to right, Treasurer/Executive Director of the Tri-State Italian-American Congress Ralph A. Contini; President Louis Vele; Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., and members of the board of directors Vincent P. Brana and Lawrence R. Inserra Jr.

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Walking the footsteps of a future saint

By **Melissa McNally**
Editor

On a pleasant spring day, around 85 pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Newark traveled to New York City to explore the life of Venerable Pierre Toussaint. Born a slave in Haiti, he died a free man in New York and is on track to become North America's first black saint.

The April 28 bus trip was organized by Father Emeka Okwuosa, S.D.V., coordinator for the Archdiocese of Newark's African American, African and Caribbean Apostolate. Working with the Office of Black Ministry in the Archdiocese of New York, the group visited key landmarks of the future saint's life. Attendees toured St. Peter Parish, where Toussaint regularly attended Mass, the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Lower Manhattan and St. Patrick's Cathedral in Midtown, where he is buried.

Toussaint was an instrumental figure in the Catholic community in 19th century New York City. He raised funds for the first Catholic orphanage and began the city's first school for black children. He also helped provide funds for the Oblate Sisters of Providence, a religious community of black nuns founded in Baltimore. Toussaint cared for the sick and the dying when a yellow fever epidemic plagued the city. He was also a successful entrepreneur, and once worked as a hairdresser for New York's elite.

In recognition of his life of service and philanthropy, Cardinal Terence J. Cooke, then Archbishop of New York, introduced Toussaint's cause for canonization at the Vatican in 1968. On Dec. 17, 1997, he was declared "venerable" by Pope John Paul II.

Father Okwuosa said he believed the pilgrimage gave new insight to the man who is an inspiration to his people. "For people from the islands, especially those from Haiti, the trip felt like they were coming home. It is important for us to learn more about our brothers and sisters who are in the process of beatification," he explained.

"I feel closer to Pierre Toussaint (after the pilgrimage)," Bethie Dominique said. "I feel very proud to be Haitian."

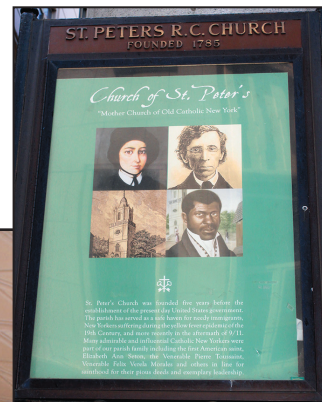
A parishioner from St. Peter Claver Parish in Montclair, Dominique emigrated from Haiti in 1971. She once worked as an educator in New York, teaching elementary school children about Toussaint.

"I've always known what Toussaint stood for and all the good work he did, but when you actually see the places he's been, it is a different experience," she said. "I felt blessed and spiritually motivated."



Advocate photos-Melissa McNally
Father Emeka Okwuosa, S.D.V., kneeling, with the pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Newark in front of the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Lower Manhattan. Venerable Pierre Toussaint helped raise money to build the cathedral.

The group began their journey at St. Peter Parish, where Toussaint attended daily Mass for almost 70 years. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, foundress of the Sisters of Charity, also attended the parish and was his contemporary.



The Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Lower Manhattan was the seat of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York until the current St. Patrick's Cathedral opened in 1879.



Brother Tyrone A. Davis, C.F.C., executive director of the Office of Black Ministry for the Archdiocese of New York, provided insight on Toussaint and Old St. Patrick's.



Newly ordained Father Kareem Smith gave the group a tour of the current St. Patrick's Cathedral.



Father Okwuosa celebrated Mass with pilgrims at St. Patrick's Old Cathedral.



Toussaint, along with his wife Juliette and adopted daughter Euphemia, were buried in the cemetery at Old St. Patrick's. In December 1989, Cardinal John J. O'Connor had Pierre Toussaint's remains transferred to the new St. Patrick's Cathedral in Midtown.



Toussaint was the first layman to be buried in the crypt below the main altar of St. Patrick's Cathedral. The crypt is normally reserved for bishops of the Archdiocese of New York.



St. Patrick's Cathedral, also referred to as "America's Parish Church," welcomes thousands of visitors every week.

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The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all credible complaints of sexual misconduct by members of the clergy, Religious and lay staff of the archdiocese. We encourage anyone with knowledge of an act of sexual misconduct to inform the archdiocese immediately so that we may take appropriate action to protect others and provide support to victims of sexual abuse.

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Archdiocesan schools strive toward inclusive education

By Eileen O'Neill

Catholic education is well respected for its attention to the individual person, as well as its ability to reach out to students at the margins of society. For decades, Catholic schools have worked with parents of children with special needs to provide learning, spiritual and social emotional support. However, some parents of children with learning disabilities have expressed sadness that a Catholic education was not available to their sons and daughters. This was due, in part, to the lack of support services necessary to sufficiently accommodate children with special needs.

To address this concern and to provide an inclusive education opportunity to more students with special needs, archdiocesan officials and the office of the Superintendent of Schools created a task force consisting of school administrators, teachers and learning consultants. The goal of the task force was to design a universal, school-wide plan to support students with different learning needs, including those with Down

syndrome, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorders.

After much research, the task force released the archdiocesan special education initiative. Generous donors, including Linda Graves, founder and president of Blue Sky Data Corporation in Parsippany, supported the program, which launched last school year. The objective is to implement additional support services in all Catholic schools throughout Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties.

superintendent of schools EDUCATION OUTREACH

As coordinator of special education for diocesan schools, I am responsible for overseeing the initiative throughout the four counties—building relationships with parents, teachers and administrators. A certified and state licensed counselor and administrator, behavioral analyst and special educator, I offer support and resources for students and school staff. I assist schools in the areas of individualized intervention plans, counseling, task-relat-

ed behavior analysis, curriculum modifications and adaptations and differentiation in instruction.

One of my most vital tasks is to train staff how to use the Response to Intervention (RTI) system. It is a systematic method to identify struggling students early in order to identify the student's needs and provide interventions immediately. I am so happy with the response I have received and how the schools are using this approach. Archdiocesan schools continue to expand their ability to use the RTI system effectively through teacher training and program development. This helps provide comprehensive services to all students.

In this second year of the program, a cohort of archdiocesan school teachers was admitted to Seton Hall University's Graduate School of Education to complete a master's degree in special education, which includes earning state certification in special education and a New Jersey supervisor certification. In an innovative model, the cost of the master's degree will be shared between the archdiocese, Seton Hall and the teacher. The cohort will use their new skills and expertise to assist the teachers in their spec-



tive counties by modeling best practices, further expanding the use of RTI and being a consistent resource for students with special needs.

When teachers foster an environment that bonds the learners as a community, there is respect for others, trust, cooperation and opportunities to strengthen faith and live it every day. This type of environment naturally supports meaningful progress academically, socially and emotionally. The archdiocese looks forward to continuing to grow our special education program to support all students effectively and successfully.

Eileen O'Neill is the archdiocesan coordinator of special education.

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Gala raises more than \$400,000 for Catholic school scholarships

"Our schools are not like other schools," said Aniyah Brown, a sixth-grader at St. Benedict's Elementary School in Newark. "They are peaceful places; kids care about learning and help each other. I want to go to the Army and eventually become a police officer in Newark. St. Benedict's taught me that I can do whatever I want. I just want to tell all kids that it is possible when you have the right education."

Aniyah, along with more than 50 other student ambassadors from St. Benedict's, welcomed nearly 300 donors and friends of the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC) on April 26 to celebrate the organization's 35th Annual Gala at The Venetian in Garfield.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., spoke intimately about what the organization means to the Archdiocese of Newark. He commended SFIC for being a valuable resource for those greatest-in-need, but saved his most heartfelt gratitude for the donors in attendance.

"We don't educate students because they are Catholic," the cardinal said. "We educate them



Submitted photos

Cardinal Tobin with students from St. Benedict's Elementary School at SFIC's 35th Annual Gala at The Venetian in Garfield.

because we are Catholic."

The gala raised more than \$400,000 in scholarship assistance for children living at or below the poverty level. Since 1984, in partnership with its donors, the Scholarship Fund has provided more than 50,000 partial-tuition scholarships, totaling more than \$40 million, so that children of all faiths and back-

grounds may receive a high-quality, values-based education at private and parochial schools within the archdiocese.

Hugh Weber, president of the Prudential Center and the New Jersey Devils, was presented with the *Vitae Discimus* ("We Teach by Our Lives") Award for his organization's support of inner-city education.

"We didn't have a lot of money growing up," Weber said. "We lived in a tough neighborhood outside of Seattle." He explained how his family, which included four older sisters, sacrificed to send him to a Catholic high school. "When I look into the eyes of the student ambassadors here tonight, I see me and think to myself, 'What if something like the SFIC had been there for me and my family?'"

Polly and Terry O'Toole, parishioners at St. Rose of Lima in Short Hills, received the Archbishop Peter L. Gerety Award, named in honor of SFIC's founder. The O'Toole Family Foundation, established in 2009, annually provides 12 partial scholarships (three for each class year) for students attending Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. In 2014, they established the O'Toole Presidential Scholarship, an endowment that provides two full scholarships each year for SFIC recipients to attend Villanova University. Six scholarship recipients are currently at Villanova, while four more are in local Catholic high schools preparing to attend the university.

"I believe in the power of education," Terry O'Toole said. "I be-

lieve in the power of the American dream. Education opens the doors to opportunities, and we are so grateful to play a small role in helping the American dream come true for some students in the program."

Father Edwin Leahy, honorary dinner chairman and headmaster at St. Benedict's Prep in Newark, introduced SFIC scholarship recipient Jose Garcia-Orozco, an honors student and member of the swim and water polo teams at the high school. Jose shared that the assistance from the Scholarship Fund made it possible for him to attend St. Benedict's. He was recently chosen as an O'Toole Presidential Scholar.

"I want to thank my mother for making this possible," he said. "You moved our family from the Dominican Republic when I was three years old in hopes of providing us a better life. As a single mother, you worked so many jobs and always put us before your own needs. You were the one who reached to the Scholarship Fund on our behalf and sacrificed so much so that I could attend St. Benedict's. And that led us to Mr. and Mrs. O'Toole and this dream. I must give the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children and the O'Toole family my sincere thanks. You have changed my life."

For more information about the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children, call 973-497-4279 or visit www.sficnj.org.



Hugh Weber, president of the Prudential Center and the NJ Devils, is presented with the *Vitae Discimus* award from Cardinal Tobin.



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Sister Angelina Pecoraro, M.P.F.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated April 12 at Villa Walsh in Morristown for Sister Angelina Pecoraro, M.P.F., 97, who died April 9.



Born and raised in Newark, Sister Angelina entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1937. She was invested a year later and made her final religious profession in 1941.

Sister Angelina served throughout the Archdiocese of Newark and the Dioceses of Trenton and Metuchen. She was a first grade teacher for more than 50 years, and was assigned to the following archdiocesan schools: Holy Rosary, Jersey City; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Orange; St. Anthony, Union City; Our Lady of Lourdes, Union City; St. Joseph, East Orange; and Our Lady of Mount Virgin, Garfield.

She also served as principal of St. Nicholas School in Palisades Park and St. Anthony Elementary

School in Union City. In 1993, Sister Angelina was awarded Teacher of the Year. In 1999, she was honored by the NCEA for her 60 years dedicated to Catholic education. When no longer able to teach, she served as an administrative assistant at Our Lady of Libera School, West New York.



Rev. Msgr. John J. Gilchrist

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated April 23 at St. Peter Parish in Belleville for Rev. Msgr. John J. Gilchrist, 88, who died April 18.

An advocate for operating engineers and other unions, social issues and working families, Msgr. Gilchrist was ordained on May 25, 1957.



After ordination, he spent several months at St. Mark Parish in Rahway and was then assigned to St. Cecilia Parish in Kearny, where he served for 21 years. Msgr.



Gilchrist then served at St. Nicholas in Jersey City, and, in 1980, was appointed pastor at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in North Bergen, where he continued for 13 years. In 1993, Msgr. Gilchrist was appointed pastor at Holy Cross in Harrison, where he served until 2007. He also served as dean of North Hudson and as the vicar for Pastoral Life in the Archdiocese of Newark.

Msgr. Gilchrist served as chairperson of the Commission for Interreligious Affairs and developed a tenant advocacy group in Hudson County. He also fought for affordable housing opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS.



Father Robert H. Langdon

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated May 4 at Corpus Christi Parish in Hasbrouck Heights for Father Robert H. Langdon, 87, who died April 29.



Born in Hasbrouck Heights, Father Langdon was ordained May 26, 1956. His parish assignments included St. Paul, Ramsey; St. Mary, Rutherford; St. Joseph, Jersey City; Our Lady of Good Counsel, Newark; Madonna, Fort Lee; and St. Paul of the Cross, Jersey City.

Father Langdon also taught at the Oratory Preparatory School in Summit and volunteered with Catholic Relief Services. Following retirement from St. Paul of the Cross Parish in 2002, he offered Mass at Holy Trinity Parish in Fort Lee on Sundays.

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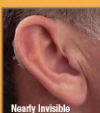
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