



The Catholic Advocate



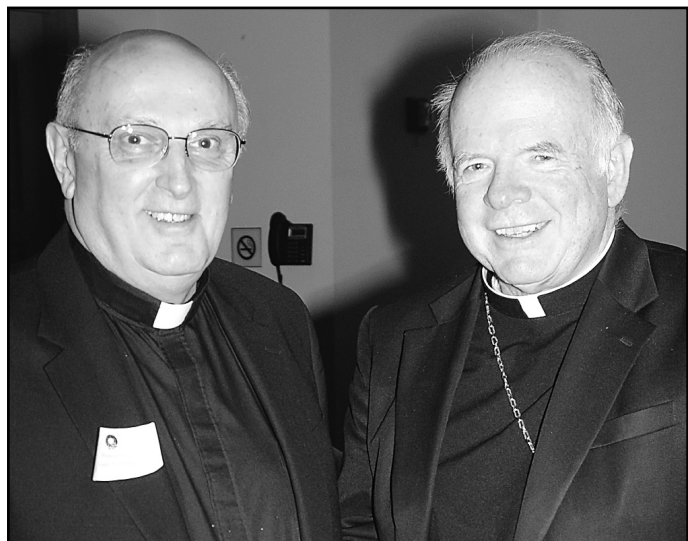
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Vol. 54, No. 26

Wednesday, December 21, 2005

*Oh come let us
adore Him!*



Advocate photo — M. Gabriele

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON—The annual Christmas luncheon for retired priests was held at the Archdiocesan Center on Dec. 14, attracting a hungry crowd of over 100. Pictured above are Msgr. Louis F. Fimiani, (left), who retired last August and most recently served as the pastor of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Roseland, and Bishop John W. Flesey, the regional bishop for Bergen County and the pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament, Franklin Lakes. Msgr. Edward G. Bradley, an instructor at Seton Hall Prep and the archdiocesan director of the ministry to retired priests, organized the gala luncheon, which was hosted by Archbishop John J. Myers. Archbishop Emeritus of Newark Peter L. Gerety, Bishop Thomas A. Donato, the regional bishop for Hudson County, and Bishop Dominic A. Marconi, auxiliary bishop of Newark emeritus, were among the luminaries enjoying the sumptuous meal and fellowship. Well-placed sources indicated that all in attendance had a splendid time.

SHU fundraiser earmarks student victims of Katrina

SOUTH ORANGE— More than \$17,500 earmarked for the educational needs of school children displaced by Hurricane Katrina was raised at a recent wine-tasting held by Seton Hall University's College of Education and Human Services.

Organized by Father Kevin Hanbury, Associate Dean for College Affairs, some 165 guests attended including Seton Hall President Msgr. Robert Sheeran, College of Education and Human Services Dean Joseph DePierro, faculty, alumni, graduate students and other friends of the university.

Proceeds will support the needs of children who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina and are now attending classes in the East Baton Rouge Parish School District.

In the aftermath of the New Orleans flood, Seton Hall Ed.D. candidate Michael Comeau, a principal in East Baton Rouge, provided the university with a first-hand account of how that dis-



Father Kevin Hanbury, center, with several alumni who lent their support.

trict is challenged with the task of assimilating large numbers of children whose homes, schools and entire communities were destroyed.

Through the wine tasting and a series of other activities, the College is helping to ensure that those children are able to continue their education without further disruption. A school supplies collec-

tion drive was held in September. A raffle for prizes including a carnival cruise vacation, a plasma TV and a Bose entertainment system is underway.

To support the raffle or make a donation to the Seton Hall College of Education and Human Services Katrina relief effort, contact Father Hanbury at (973) 275-2854.

Stewardship

Why not celebrate a countercultural Christmas?

BY DANIEL CONWAY

Special to the Catholic Advocate

This year, let's celebrate a countercultural Christmas.

Instead of observing the winter holidays of overspending, overeating and overdoing, let's find a better way to celebrate the Lord's birth.

What would a countercultural Christmas be like? Certainly it would be more Christ-centered and less commercial. There would be less stress and more joy, less loneliness and more genuine togetherness. Spending would be more reasonable.

There would be more warmth and hospitality, and Christmas cheer would be distributed more equitably between the haves and the have-nots. Above all, "peace on earth" would be much more than mere wishful thinking.

Pope John Paul II, in his 1999 Apostolic letter ("The Church in America"), offered some insight into "the personal style of Jesus Christ" that could be very helpful to us as we seek to celebrate a countercultural Christmas.

Speaking first to his brother bishops, the late pope said, "Conversion demands, especially of us Bishops, a genuine identification with the personal style of Jesus Christ, who leads us to simplicity, poverty, responsibility for others, and the renunciation of our own advantage, so that like Him and not trusting in human means, we may draw from the strength of the Holy Spirit and of the Word all the power of the Gospel, remaining open above all to those who are furthest away and excluded." (CA 28)

Assuming that a countercultural Christmas would mirror the personal lifestyle of Jesus Christ, I think we can say that it would be a whole lot simpler. The first Christmas was radically simple. Weary travelers find

shelter in a stable. A child is born, and his parents are greeted by poor shepherds (outcasts living on the margins of their society) and angels who proclaim "Peace on earth. Good will toward all." Family, hospitality and solidarity with all humankind are the profoundly simple themes that surround the Lord's birth.

Poverty, not excessive spending, would be characteristic of a countercultural Christmas. We understandably think of poverty as a purely negative thing. No one wants to be poor—to have less than we need to live a full and productive life. And yet, the Lord constantly challenges His disciples to give up everything in order to live a richer and more rewarding life with Him.

We Christians believe that a freely chosen poverty (as opposed to the kind of poverty that is imposed on us by forces beyond our control) is liberating. It frees us from stress and anxiety. It helps us to "let go" of our dependence on possessions, status and inappropriate relationships. Like the infant Jesus, we let go absolutely and entrust ourselves to God's provident care. We become poor in spirit, stewards of all God's material and spiritual gifts.

A countercultural Christmas would surely focus our attention on the needs of others. We would become more responsible for the well-being of family members, neighbors and all those who are "furthest away and excluded." Christmas should not be an occasion for selfishness. It is, first and foremost, a time for thinking about others.

Generosity is the spirit of Christmas. Self-giving and solidarity with others are the twin antidotes to depression, loneliness and the soul sickness that affects so many of us at this "jolly" time of year. As Charles Dickens reminds us

in the annual retelling of his "A Christmas Carol," self-centeredness makes us miserable; self-giving sets us free.

Christmas would be radically countercultural if we could find a way to bury the calculus of self-interest that we carry with us all year long. "What's in it for me?" is not a question for Christmas—or for any other time of year. Holiday advertising (which seems to begin earlier each year) encourages us to covet things (material possessions, status symbols, sensual pleasures).

The insatiable desire for more is the very opposite of a Christmas virtue. A countercultural Christmas would focus

our attention outward—away from ourselves—towards those who truly need and deserve our attention.

Instead of asking: "What's in it for me?" the Christmas question is always

"What can I do for you—this Christmas season and throughout the New Year?"

It won't be easy to celebrate a countercultural Christmas. It goes against the grain of our modern inclinations and experience. And yet, one of the greatest gifts of this holy season is to see things differently—with the eyes of Christ who was simple, poor, responsible for others, and unconcerned about His own advantage.

This year let's be more Christ-like. Let's have a joyous, countercultural Christmas and a generous, stress-free New Year!

Daniel Conway is the president of RSI Catholic Services Group, Dallas. His reflections on stewardship are available in several publications. For more information, call toll-free (888) 544-8674. Copyright © 2005 Daniel Conway. Used with permission.



Chapel meets spiritual needs of port seamen

BY CLAUDIA TALLEDO
Special to the Advocate

NEWARK—It's not the first place one might look for God, but He is most ably represented at the Port of Newark.

Father Mario Balbi, 85, has enjoyed every day of his life as a Roman Catholic priest for the last 57 years. But his most passionate assignment has been his 30-year dedication to seafarers of the world as a Port Chaplain; first in the Port of Savannah Georgia and now in the Port of Newark.

A member of the congregation of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Father Balbi relocated to Newark Port in 1991 when the on-site chapel was housed in temporary quarters. For nearly 20 years, the center of the Roman Catholic Church's ministry was the double-wide trailer, but the deteriorating conditions, combined with the current and expected growth of the port's Catholic ministry, made a new home crucial.

Today, with the customary sights of a busy seaport as its backdrop, the Stella Maris chapel, Latin for "Star of the Sea," one of the many names by which the Blessed Mother is called, has a permanent home at 114 Corbin St. in Port Newark and brings spiritual nourishment to the 8,000 Catholics who work aboard ships and in sea related occupations.

Port operations these days are expanding, bringing in more ships and crews from largely Catholic regions like Latin America and the Philippines. Father Mario and other priests spend a typical day boarding as many as 10 ships to provide counseling and administer sacraments to seamen far from home.

The modest exterior of the chapel belies the beauty of its interior. However, the grounds contain an impressive tribute to the World Trade Center as well as a statue of the Stella Maris, carved from marble harvested from the same Italian source as masterpieces by Michelangelo.

Inside, an oil portrait of the Stella Maris, also imported from Italy, a ceremonial brick obtained directly from the Vatican, and stations of the cross carved by a prisoner in Sing Sing Correctional Prison, Ossining, NY, are just a few of the personal touches of which Father Mario is most proud.

As a chaplain of the Apostleship of the Sea, Father Mario is committed to "caring for the bodies and souls of seafarers and their families" regardless of religious affiliation, many of

whom commit to contracts, which keep them at sea without family contact for more than nine months of the year.

While the old trailer held barely 60 people, the new chapel holds more than 100. Mass is celebrated at noon Monday through Friday at the chapel which brings an oasis of calm to port workers at lunchtime. The chapel also offers masses over the weekend at 8 p.m. on Saturday and at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays.

Every June, on the Feast of SS. Peter and St. Paul, Father Balbi

gathers representatives of local religious communities for a blessing of all ships in Port Newark on that day. The blessing is a highlight of the year at the port.

Father Mario is always available for the people from the port. "This is the Church on the move, there are no hours no times; I am always there for whoever needs to talk to me" Father Mario is at the port seven days a week and ready for people to talk for confession. He is willing to listen to confessions from sailors in the ships when they

cannot come to the chapel. Any place is good for him.

Located on land donated by the Port Authority, the chapel was built largely with donations of money and labor from workers from FAPS, a company that preps thousands of cars that come through the port from Europe,

Asia and from other port-area organizations and private individuals. The late owner of FAPS, John LoBue, promised a new chapel to Father Mario shortly before he died.

"He had a vision of a better port," Father Mario said. "A better, cleaner and safer place."

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"Baby Karen" was saved from abortion and born on 7-8-05. We struggle to keep our prolife shelters open to provide a choice for over 200 pregnant women who call our hotline monthly. Your contributions can help save many of God's innocent preborn children."

Kathy DiFiore-Founder

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Jesús se volvió, y al ver que lo seguían les preguntó:

—¿Qué están buscando?

Ellos dijeron:
—Maestro, ¿dónde vives?

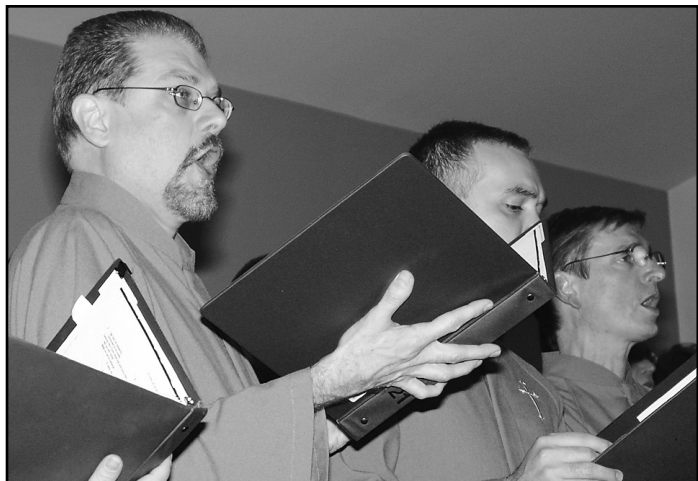
Jesús les contestó:
—Vengan a verlo.

San Juan 1:38-39

¡Ha usted considerado seguir a Jesús como un sacerdote, hermana o hermano...?

Contacto:
Padre Brian Plate
Director de Vocaciones

La Oficina de Vocaciones
(973) 497-4365
171 Clifton Ave., P.O. Box 9500
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Advocate photo: M. Gabriele

ST. CASSIAN CANDLELIGHT SING—The St. Cassian parish choir, under the direction of David E. Fedor, held its seventh annual candlelight carol sing on Dec. 4. The performance at the Upper Montclair church featured traditional Christmas selections as well as African, Austrian, Spanish, Ukrainian and French carols. Joining the choir was an orchestra that included organ, harp, flutes, percussion, trumpets, French horn and trombones. The audience was invited to light candles prior to the singing of Silent Night. Father John G. Judge is the pastor of St. Cassian.

Pastor assigned to new parish

PLAINFIELD—Reverend Frank Rose, pastor of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, Plainfield, and administrator of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, Plainfield, has been appointed pastor of the newly created St. Bernard and St. Stanislaus Parish effective immediately.

Father Rose attended Farleigh Dickinson University and the American Academy-McAllister Institute of Funeral Science. Prior to entering Immaculate Conception Seminary, he did private counseling and was operations director of Leber Funeral Home, Union City.

After his 1990 ordination, Father Rose was assigned to St. Paul Parish (Greenville) Jersey City. In 1994, he was named parochial vicar with special administrative responsibilities of St. Joseph of the Palisades Parish, West New York.

Father Rose was later named administrator of St. Joseph Parish before being appointed pastor of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, Plainfield, in 1999.

In 2000, Father Rose was appointed administrator of Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish, Plainfield.



Advocate photo: Brian Fores

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!—The choir of Sacred Heart School, located in the Vailsburg section of Newark, was invited to sing at the annual Newark Christmas tree lighting ceremony this year. Here, Myron Smith, choir director, prepares the students for the big performance.

Apostolic Nuncio Wyckoff bound

WYCKOFF — The Most Reverend Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United States, will preside at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ at midnight on Christmas Eve at the Church of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, 700 Wyckoff Ave.

Official Appointments

Archbishop John J. Myers has announced the following appointments:

PASTOR

Reverend Aurelio Yanez, Parochial Vicar of Immaculate Conception Parish, Elizabeth, has been appointed Pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Hillside, effective Feb. 2.

ADMINISTRATOR

Very Reverend Robert A. Antczak, V.F., Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Jersey City, has also been appointed administrator of Our Lady of Mercy and Our Lady of Sorrows parishes, Jersey City, effective Dec. 3.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

Reverend Lope Florente A. Lesigues has been appointed Parochial Vicar of the Church of the Presentation, Upper Saddle River, effective Nov. 5 through June 30, 2006.



Reverend Marianito B. Ortiz has been appointed Parochial Vicar of the St. Anne Parish, Jersey City, effective Dec. 6.

Reverend Hippoleto Toppo has been appointed Parochial Vicar of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Maywood, effective Dec. 15 through Feb. 15, 2006 and again for the summer assignment from June until October 2006.

RETIREMENT

Reverend William L. Gyure, Chaplain at Mountainside Hospital, has been granted retirement on medical disability, effective Jan. 1.

December 21

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Jersey City, Christmas Novena (Simbang Gabi), 7:30 p.m., through Dec. 23, (201) 332-2237.

December 30

St. Phil's Singles, Livingston, dinner at Panera Bread, Denville, 7:30 p.m., (973) 248-9245.

December 31

St. John the Apostle Parish, Linden, New Year's Eve Celebration, 9 p.m., Mass at 10:30 p.m., (908) 486-6363.

January 1

St. Elizabeth Parish, Wyckoff, New Year's Day Gala, The Brownstone, Paterson, 3-7 p.m., featuring vocalists Barbra Russell and Ron Sharpe with full orchestra, (201) 891-1122.

Holy Spirit Parish, Union, Holy Hour for Life, 7:30-8:30 p.m., (908) 964-7653.

January 6

Stella Maris Retreat Center, Elberon, retreat, Jan. 6 at 5:30 p.m.- Jan. 8 at 1 p.m., Cost: \$100, (732) 229-0602.

January 7

St. Mark Parish, Rahway, Christmas party, at Gran Centurions, Clark, 6 p.m., Cost: \$30, call Anne (908) 272-8796 or Nina (732) 381-1298.

January 8

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish, Roseland, Baptism, 2 p.m., (973) 226-7288.

January 22

Sacred Heart School, Lyndhurst, communion breakfast, 9 a.m., Cost: \$20 for adults, \$15 for children, ticket deadline- Jan. 9, (201) 939-4277.

Other

St. Philomena Parish, Livingston, Mass for Life, first Friday of every month, 7 p.m., (973) 992-0994.

Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark, Cathedral Choir's "Salve Mater" recording, Cost: \$15, (973) 484-2400.



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Freshman for a Day

SCOTCH PLAINS—The Union Catholic High School Freshman for a Day Program is having its most successful year to date.

To date almost 200 eighth grade students from Union, Essex and Middlesex counties have participated.

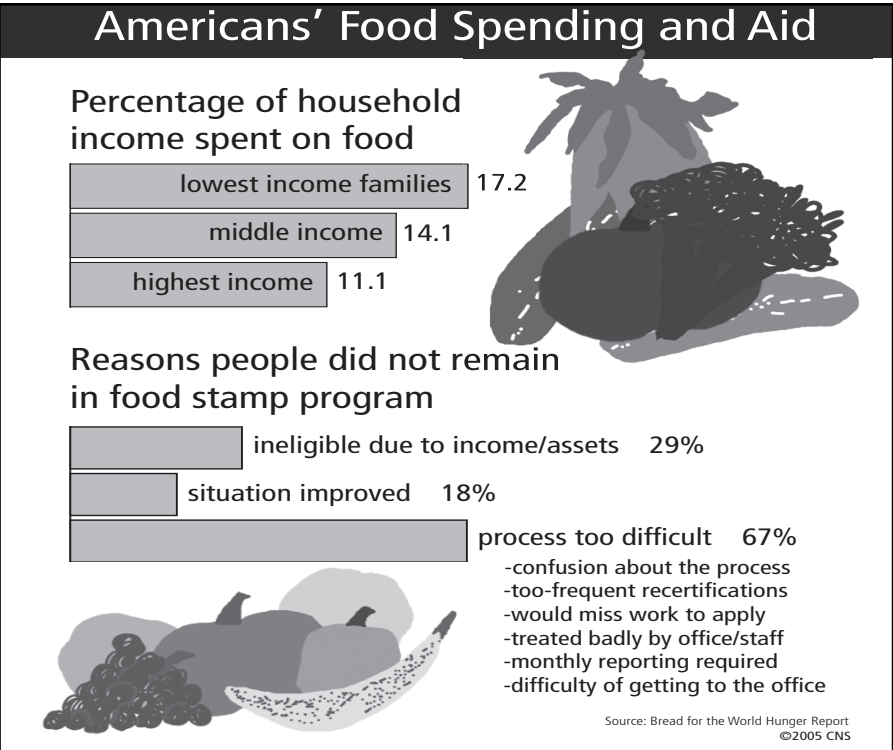
A prospective student spends a day with Union Catholic students providing the opportunity experience a typical day.

Most of the eighth grade visitors have cited the program as among one of the most influential factors in deciding what high school to attend.

Many Freshman for a Day students agree that their favorite part was meeting the teachers and students. Visiting students are able to experience a high school environment as they participate in classroom lessons, maneuver the hallways between classes and eat in the cafeteria.

The Laptop Learning Program has put Union Catholic at the forefront of integrating technology into the curriculum. Visiting students have the opportunity to see for themselves that their learning experience will not be limited to the walls of a classroom through the utilization of laptop computers, a wireless network and SMART board technology.

To schedule a Freshman for a Day visit (908) 889-1600, ext. 302 or 328.



Although the U.S. economy is growing, the number of poor in the country is rising. The nation's poorest families spend a disproportionately higher percentage of their income on food than do families that earn more. Meanwhile, people who have received food stamps tend to drop out of the program because they find it too difficult to meet the requirements to participate.

Pick politicians who respect life

Editor,

A recent mailing by Priests for Life states that "the pro-life candidate for president won 79 percent of the 26.5 million evangelical votes...and 52 percent of the 31 million Catholic votes."

Why such a low percentage of Catholics compared to evangelicals? The protection of life should be the primary consideration for Catholics in choosing candidates, because if a politician does not respect the life of an innocent little baby, he will not respect your life.

The individuals we choose to represent us will determine who will preside as judges. And only judges who respect the Constitution and the right to life will end the tyranny of abortion and other social ills that negatively effect our traditional Judeo-Christian culture.

Deanna Hohmann
West Caldwell

Understanding legal and moral judgments

Editor:

The selection and approval process of Chief Justice John Roberts and now Judge Samuel A. Alito Jr. has given us the opportunity to educate ourselves in the legal and moral judgment of our founding fathers 229 years ago.

In the preface of the CATO Institute's Booklet: *The Declaration*

of *Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America*, Roger Pilan, director of CATO's Center for Constitutional Studies, writes that the founders state in the Declaration it was "necessary to dissolve the political bands" and "to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature's God entitled them."

Mr. Pilan states, "The most important line in the Declaration is 'We hold these truths to be self-evident.' Grounded in reason, 'self-evident truths' invoke the long tradition, which holds there is a 'higher law of right and wrong from which to derive human law and against which to criticize that law at any time. It is not political will, then, but moral reasoning, accessible to all that is the foundation of our political system.'"

The scholarly legal reasoning of Chief Justice John Roberts and Judge Samuel A. Alito Jr., published by the media are perfect examples of being grounded in moral reasoning, accessible to all and not originating in political will.

Our Founding Fathers' foundation is as current and alive today as it was 229 years ago and will remain current as long as God creates human beings.

Robert T. Lee
Elizabeth

The Catholic Advocate welcomes letters from readers. Due to space and time limits, there is no guarantee that a letter will run. Readers' opinions do not necessarily represent the opinion of the newspaper or the Archdiocese. All letters must be typed, and are subject to editing. Include name, address and daytime telephone number.

Send to: The Catholic Advocate, P.O. Box 9500, Newark, NJ 07104-0500 or email mielejos@rcan.org

The true meaning of Christmas

A common lament this time of year is that the true meaning of Christmas is being lost to rank commercialism. Not in the Archdiocese of Newark.

The faithful of all ages in parishes throughout the Church of Newark are working hard to ensure that the less fortunate can celebrate Christ's birth with a nourishing meal, gifts under the tree and clothes on their back.

Among the projects marking the season are Giving Tree programs, tree and wreath sales, food pantry donations, clothing collections, helping out at homeless shelters, visits to long-term hospital and nursing home patients and providing food and gift certificates. In many instances the emphasis is on the inner city.

Contrast that to the bizarre behavior of shoppers across the country the day after Thanksgiving trampling each other at the crack of dawn to be the first into the malls.

To a significant degree, the success of such efforts depends on both the compassion and generosity of the public. There are still a few days left so buy a few extra cans of food for the local pantry, go through the closet for some good clothing or simply donate needed cash to one or more of the parish programs.

The happiness and holiness of Christmas should be able to be celebrated by all of God's children.

Reaching out to Generation Y

Catholics between the ages of 18-35, the Archdiocese of Newark wants you!

Plans are under way at the Young Adult Ministry office for a series of events in January and February dubbed "Young Adult Month."

Perhaps it is a result of the chaotic and pressure-packed times in which this important age group lives, but they have been conspicuous by their absence in the pews.

Known as "Generation Y" (the children of the Baby Boomers), the need for many of them to return to the Church is crucial. This transitional age group to a significant degree must provide the framework for the Church's immediate future.

Young Adult Month has four distinct components designed to relate to this age group: community, service, Word and worship.

Among the highlights is Theology on Tap, a national program in which young adults socialize at a favorite bar or restaurant to discuss issues relevant to their faith. Another major event is the Young Adult Search retreat Jan. 20-22 at the Archdiocesan Youth Center in Kearny. For additional information on all of the events call (201) 998-0088.

Young adults will be a "lost" generation to the Church only if they want to be. The Archdiocese of Newark is doing all it can to prevent from happening. But it will require these 18-35 year olds to take the initiative and rediscover their faith.

A question box about faith and practice

Today's Question: I understand that the Nicene Creed was written to emphasize or expand on our belief in the divinity of Jesus. Why does it omit "the communion of saints"? – Jim Dette, St. Augustine, Union City.

While legend associates the formation of the Apostles Creed with the feast of Pentecost, it would appear that it was actually formed between the 3rd and 9th centuries, probably taking its final form in the 9th century. Saints Ambrose and Augustine attested to it in the 4th Century. Its authorship comes from being the summary of apostolic teachings, not from being written by the Apostles. The earliest forms did not mention the communion of saints, but this doctrine was reaffirmed at the Second Council of Nicea in 787.

The original Nicene Creed was approved at the First Council of Nicea in 325 in response to the Arian heresy. However, the Profession of Faith we make at Mass is more accurately the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, a prod-

What's the Matter?

By Rev. Msgr.
Richard J. Arnholts



uct of the First Council of Constantinople in 381. Theologically, it is more sophisticated than the Apostles' Creed and the original Nicene Creed.

There were multiple Creeds circulating in the Church by the 4th Century, probably originating in local Baptism rituals and basically the same but having occasional variances, like the phrase "communion of saints," which also appears in our baptismal profession of faith today.

The Catholic Advocate will make some editorial modifications in the new year. While this question box feature will conclude with this issue, Msgr. Arnholts will write a monthly column on a variety of topics illustrating faith in everyday activity.

The secular humanist war against Christmas

There is a great cultural war that is slowly developing from sea to shining sea in these United States. It is a contest between two great forces that are almost foundational to our society as a democracy.

On one side stand the traditional Judaeo-Christian values of the vast majority of our society. This nation was founded on religious communities in pursuit of religious freedom. Every one of our original colonies had a religious beginning, whether it was with the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock, or the Quakers of Pennsylvania, or other Christian sects.

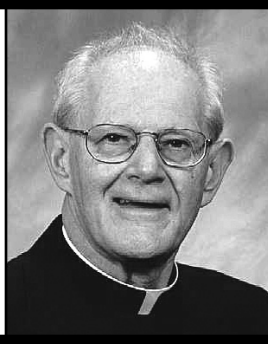
All agreed that they wanted freedom to pursue their own particular idea of Christianity. So eventually they rejected a state religion in favor of a personal form of Christianity. But without exception, it was a given that the Christian faith itself was foundational to public life. It was part of the warp and woof of the original American spirit.

Thus, ever since the beginning, religion had a respected place in the public square, but no faith was designated as the state religion.

At the same time, however, the forces of secular humanism have been attempting to drive a wedge between church and state in America. These products of the "Enlightenment" have utilized law to secularize as much of society as they are able. The goal is the

Voices

By Rev. Msgr. John Gilchrist



lifestyle that currently exists in France: a purely secular state.

Today, the promoters of secularism wish to transform the market place as well as the state into a secular domain. At present, the object of the secular humanist campaign is to obliterate any visible form of Christmas in the public square.

"Happy Holidays" has replaced "Merry Christmas" in shops and malls. The crib is gone; Santa Claus is "in." Christmas carols are gone,

replaced by "Jingle Bells."

But we who are Roman Catholic need to step back. Today, the Nativity is what it always has been for us: a time for personal spiritual reflection on our faith.

The Nativity is what it always has been for us.

Christ came 2,000 years ago. Christ comes to us at this time of the year in a spiritual rebirth within our hearts. We welcome Our Lord anew through the gospel and Eucharist in the liturgy.

We also believe that Christ will come again on the last day when He comes on the clouds of heaven with the angels of God in majesty to judge the world.

The Prince of Peace can bring peace to our hearts and our homes if we are open to His presence. Nothing has changed.

Yes, the spirit of materialism lives outside in the artificial world of commerce. But the spirit of Bethlehem can still live on in a quiet place. That place is in our hearts, in our homes and in our church. We must seek Jesus there, not in Macy's or Wal-Mart.

Listen to what God thinks of the materialistic society: "Why this tumult among the nations, among the peoples this useless murmuring? He who sits in heaven laughs; The Lord is laughing them to scorn."

Psalm 2: 1,4.

So let the cultural war rage on. The secularists will never succeed. The Prince of Peace puts them all to shame by His reign of truth and love. As in Bethlehem, all outside is noise and empty activity. Inside the cave, all is quiet and peace, for God is there.

Rev. Msgr. Gilchrist is pastor of Holy Cross Parish, Harrison.

Exaggerated love: truths that go beyond reason

Ten years ago, on the evening of Dec. 6, 1995, Pope John Paul II changed my life.

In May of that year, I had begun talking with his press spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, about the necessity of a reliable papal biography, and the possibility that I might take on such a project. Over dinner on Dec. 6, and after Father Richard John Neuhaus had raised the point, it was John Paul himself who made it rather vigorously clear that he thought I should write the story of his life and pontificate.

He thus set me off on the 10-year adventure that has continued beyond Witness to Hope to the recently published God's Choice, which tells the story of John Paul's death and the election of Joseph Ratzinger as his successor.

"What struck you most about John Paul II?" is a question I've been asked innumerable times. Every year, Christmas reminds me of the late pope's profound faith in the Incarnation. Karol Wojtyla loved the Christmas season and made it last as long as possible. According to Polish custom, the decorations stayed up and the carols were sung right through to Feb. 2, the liturgical feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

This affection for Christmas was far more than ethnic habit, though. It grew from John Paul's deep-set conviction that in the birth of Christ we meet, in the flesh, the exaggerated infinity of God's love.

Creation displays the boundlessness of that love—that's what Christians see, that's the "design" we perceive, when we look at the natural world. The Incarnation both confirms and takes us far beyond that perception: here, in the child born to Mary of Nazareth, we see the measureless love of God in the flesh, as one of us.

The Catholic Difference

by George Weigel



Like the Magi, we come to understand that God's love is not just infinite; its infinity is exaggerated, spilling beyond the Infinite to embrace the finite, so that what is flesh and finitude is drawn up into the infinite life of Love itself. It's because of the manger that we can say, with the apostle John, "God is Love."

Like John Paul II's, Benedict XVI's pontificate will be Christ-centered. Pope Benedict may stress the "scandal" of the Incarnation: the "stumbling block" and "folly" that some find in the claim that the Creator God entered the world in the person of his Son, so that the Son, through his obedient death, might reconcile the world to Love itself.

Yet Pope Benedict will also insist that this scandal, which has challenged humankind since St. Paul posed it to the Corinthians, is not a scandal against reason. The mystery of the Incarnation, and the

scandal of the Cross, to which the Incarnation inexorably points (as old Simeon will remind Mary on Candlemas), is beyond reason. It is not irrational, but the "reason" within the mystery and the scandal can only be grasped in an act of love.

Which is, after all, the Christian meaning of "mystery." The mysteries of the faith are not puzzles to be solved, in the manner of P.D. James's Adam Dalgliesh. The "mysteries" (as the early Church Fathers called the truths into which the newly baptized were initiated) are truths beyond reason, much like the truth of Christ's real presence in the Holy Eucharist. And beyond reason is not, as some 21st Century thinkers insist, the realm of the irrational; beyond reason, although not against reason, is the realm of love, in which, as St. Paul reminded those boisterous Corinthians, we know even as we are known.

That is the truth on which John Paul II staked his

life. That is why every encounter of his papacy, from meetings with Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev to an audience for the Italian Union of

Hairdressers, was an expression of his commitment to invite everyone to St. Paul's "more excellent" way: the way of divine love, a love of exaggerated infinity.

That's what I remember about John Paul II at Christmas. That's the great message he took to the world, as his worthy successor now does in his turn, and in his distinctive way.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Christmas reminds me of the late pope's profound faith in the Incarnation.

Death of John Paul II, a transition

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The death of Pope John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI last April marked a critical transition for the Church and attracted the interest of the entire world.

For Catholics, the passing of Pope John Paul at age 84 signified the end of an era. His 26-year pontificate was historic in terms of pastoral outreach, social involvement and global political impact.

To many, the Polish-born pontiff made the deepest impression in his final days, at the end of his dramatic struggle with infirmity. Few will forget the pope's last public appearance at his apartment window three days before his death, when he tried to speak to the crowd but the words would not come.

The pope, who had Parkinson's disease, took a turn for the worse in early February when he experienced a breathing crisis and was rushed to Rome's Gemelli hospital. Eventually, doctors had to perform a tracheotomy. His recovery was slow, and at the end of March a feeding tube was placed through his nose to aid nutrition.

On March 31, the pope suffered septic shock and heart failure. He was treated with respiratory equipment in the Vatican, slipping in and out of consciousness, as the Vatican prepared the world for his death.

Immediately, people began streaming toward St. Peter's Square to pray outside the pope's window, in a spontaneous vigil that kept growing by the hour. When the pope's death was finally announced late April 2, more than 100,000 pilgrims were in the square.

The pope's death set in motion a period of official mourning and reflection that culminated in the election of

his successor. Time-honored traditions were followed, but in some ways this papal transition was like no other in history.

For one thing, more than 2 million mourners filled the area around the Vatican when the pope's body was laid out in St. Peter's Basilica for public viewing. People waited up to 12 hours to pay their respects, and many took photos on their cell phones when they approached the papal bier—a practice that broke traditional rules but was tolerated by Vatican guards.

Another change was the unprecedented global media coverage. Networks devoted hours of broadcast time to the accomplishments of Pope John Paul and to the choices facing the College of Cardinals.

The pope's funeral April 8 was attended by kings, queens, prime ministers and presidents—including President George W. Bush—and by representatives of other Christian churches and non-Christian faiths.

On the afternoon of April 18, the cardinals processed into the Sistine Chapel. After swearing an oath of secrecy, the voting began. The first smoke was black.

The next morning's two ballots were also inconclusive.

Late in the afternoon of April 19, as the world waited and watched, whitish-gray smoke began to pour out of the Sistine Chapel smokestack. Some 15 minutes later, the pealing of the St. Peter's Basilica bell confirmed that a new pope had been elected.

Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez, the papal chamberlain, then appeared on the main balcony of St. Peter's to announce that Cardinal Ratzinger had been elected pope and would take the name Benedict XVI. Pope Benedict called himself "a simple, humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord."

*"A simple, humble worker
in the vineyard of the Lord."*

Penance and peace on earth

Readings: Isaiah 9:1-6; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14.

Millions send Christmas greetings without averting fully to the Mystery being celebrated in the Mass of Christ. However, as Dec. 25 draws near, Catholics realize that the "Holiday Season" takes its meaning from the holy day that evokes memories, an avalanche of reminiscences from each stage of our lives.

We remember the birth of Christ most adequately when we enter into the Paschal Mystery, re-presented in the Eucharistic liturgy. The coming of Jesus brings new hope, but we must never forget the cost!

"On Christmas Day I weep
Good Friday to rejoice.
I watch the Child asleep.
Does He half dream the choice
The Man must make and keep?"

(Vassar Miller, 1924-, *Christmas Mourning*)

In the Eucharistic sacrifice, we focus on the moment of the self-giving that epitomized the life of obedient love expressed in the words of the psalmist: "Behold, I come to do your will, O God" (Ps 40:8, cited in Heb 10:7). Ideally, this declaration should be a natural development of biblical faith, but only Jesus could make it the leitmotif of his entire life.

The poet might move on to the triumph of Christ's resurrection, but chose to recall the need for pardon and new life in Baptism.

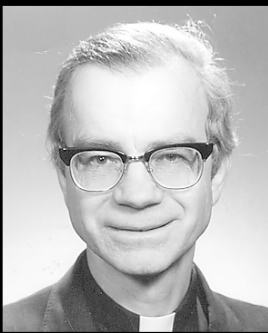
"Slay me, pierced to the core
With Christmas penitence
So I who, new-born, soar
To that Child's innocence,
May wound the Man no more."

(Miller)

Sunday Readings

Christmas
Midnight Mass
(December 25, 2005)

By Father Lawrence Frizzell



The seasons of Advent and Lent provide occasion for a renewed awareness of our sins and the call "to reject impious ways and worldly desires so that we may live temperately, justly and devoutly..." (Tit 2:12).

With a lively faith in the unity of God's plan of redemption, the Church harks back to the prophets and psalmists to find hints of the ultimate gift in the person of his Son. Indeed, the biblical message had meaning for each generation that heard the Word, but it also takes on deeper significance as it becomes part of the larger picture.

The Christian might express the liturgical use of the Scriptures as follows:


"Jesus I love to trace
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of thy grace
The same in every age!
O grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light vouchsafed to me!"

(William Cowper, 1731-1800, *Old Testament Gospel*)

God's will, made known to Moses and the other great teachers of Israel, should be the basis for all our human

The Pope Speaks

Pope Benedict XVI



God's omnipresence

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we focus our attention on Psalm 139 (138) which reflects on the God who is everywhere and knows everything.

This meditation on the Lord and His creation celebrates the mystery of the transcendent God who is also near to us. Indeed, this salvific presence is fundamental and is capable of embracing all existence and all history.

The knowledge referred to in this psalm is more than intellectual understanding. It is a biblical knowledge which is a communion between the one known and the one who knows: The Lord is, therefore, in an intimate relationship with us whenever we think and whenever we act.

God is present in all of space and time: He is in the heavens and in the depths of the earth; He is in the light and in the darkness. We conclude by contemplating the words of Theodoret of Cyr who realized that even while proclaiming the wisdom of the Creator, we cannot help but acknowledge the astonishing nature of the Lord's wisdom which is too lofty for us to understand. "If such is the grandeur of creation, how infinitely great must the Creator be."

relationships. Then would divine law be the foundation for settling disputes rather than force of arms. "One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war any more" (Is 2:4).

The same prophet recalled the divine promise to David: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever" (2 Sam 7:16). In times of trial and oppression these words became a beacon of hope for Israel.

The Son of David received titles that described his intimacy with God, the basis for his authority and creativity in dealing with conflict. "They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace" (Is 9:5).

St. Luke draws attention to such divine promises when he describes the place and circumstances of Jesus' birth. Bethlehem, however, was so ensnared in the details of daily life that people missed the marvel in their midst.

"Strange news! A city full?
Will none give way to lodge a guest that comes not every day?
No inn, nor tavern void?
Yet I descry One empty place alone, where we may lie:
In too much fullness is some want: but where?
Men's empty hearts: let's ask for lodging there.
But if they not admit us, then we'll say their hearts, as well as inns, are made of clay."

(John Suckling, 1609-1642, *Upon Christ His Birth*)

Peace on earth must begin with a change of our heart. This begins the process whereby we receive and respond to abundant signs of God's mercy. Then we are able to carry the Prince of Peace to places most in need of his healing and his ordering of all things toward wholeness.

Father Lawrence Frizzell is Director of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University.

A 'personal home' for every immigrant

BY FATHER TOM DEVINE O.A.R.
AND MELISSA MCNALLY

St. Augustine Parish dates from 1886. At different stages of its history, the parish has responded to the needs of the recently arrived immigrant groups in their moment of greatest need. People from Germany, Italy, Ireland and others for generations made it their personal home.

Today, the parish continues to respond to the dominant need of the community, treasuring the many strands that make up its past, while reaching out to its predominantly Hispanic population. This transformation began back in the early 60s with men like Father Michael Feherty who worked with the Cuban community that was then being established in Union City.

Over the years, Catholics from South and Central America flocked to St. Augustine Parish in the knowledge that they and their families could feel spiritually at home. Apart from the many celebrations of our local Church, there are celebrations that take place over the year such as Our Lady of Cuba and Our Lady of Peru.

In December, the parish celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which is one of the major events of the liturgical year for St. Augustine Parish. On Oct. 12, the Guadalupan torch was lit at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Over the following two months "runners" carried the Torch up through Mexico to the U.S. border. From there, they braved the scorching sun and blustery winds, hail, rain and snow, tornados and storms, as they made their way, step by step to St. Augustine Parish in Union City on Dec. 11.

On the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, there is a Fiesta Mass followed by the "Mañanitas" at midnight, a tradition that draws over 1,000 devotees of Mary every year, many with statues and pictures of the "Morenita" to be blessed. At dawn the next day, the runners set out on the final leg of their 4,000-mile odyssey to St. Patrick's



St. Augustine Parish, founded in 1886, has one of the largest Hispanic communities in the Archdiocese of Newark.

Cathedral in New York City where a Community Mass in honor of the Empress of the Americas was celebrated.

The parish is blessed with a kaleidoscope of ministries, prayer groups, youth clubs and more with some being bilingual and the rest in either English or Spanish. The young adults group Luz de Dios is committed on many fronts of parish life, such as organizing retreats, jamborees, dramas and concerts. The youth group is also involved in the Sunday Liturgy, as well as an ongoing program of faith development.

Luz de Dios is always ready to jump into the fray to respond to any emergency, such as fixing the floors or the church basement, directing traffic on Sunday morning or shoveling snow from the entrances to the church and parking lots at midnight.

A youth group was launched in October and contains 13 to 18-year-olds. The group is already looking for ways to get involved in shaping the parish and will be making a major impact on the

Christmas decorating of the church over the next days.

Maria de los Angeles Garcia teaches young students at St. Augustine Parish and has been a parishioner for 30 years. "I love working with young people. They are open, sincere and they invigorate me. The young adult students are great. They are even evangelizing at their schools and the community continue to support them."

Every evening, there is a group occupying the rectory, such as Alcoholics Anonymous,

Saint Augustine, Union City

Narcotics Anonymous and Parents of Autistic children. The auditorium/gym is a veritable beehive of activity, not only because of it is continuously used by the 320 students at St. Augustine Parish School, but because the CYO basketball and cheerleading teams use it almost daily.

The Sisters of Charity have operated St. Augustine Parish School for over 100 years and the school was the first in the Archdiocese of Newark to be accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and is registered as a Multiple Intelligence School by Harvard University.

Sister Roberta O'Hea has been the steady hand at the helm of the school for 26 years.

"Everyone who visits St. Augustine Parish School comments on how it's a happy place," Sister Roberta said. "If you need it, we gave it here at the school. It is a close-knit school with a family spirit. Those who attend St. Augustine Parish School never forget it and many of them come back and visit."

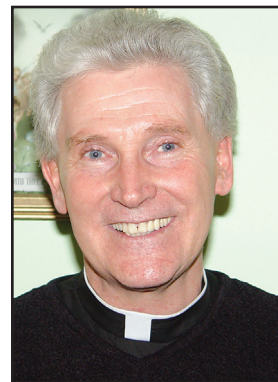
There are three priests serving the parish community; Father Julio Espinosa O.A.R., Father Blas Montenegro O.A.R. as well as two deacons, Eduardo Pons and Eduardo Donosso.

"St. Augustine Parish is like the United Nations, we have so many nationalities represented here. Even people who have moved away call us and come to Mass. The Holy Spirit brings the people to us," Father Pons said.

The priests are members of the Augustinian Recollect Order that arrived last year at the parish. The Augustinian Recollects are spread across the globe in a multiplicity of different missions. They serve in the Amazon, China, Sierra Leon, and in virtually all Spanish-speaking countries.

The deacons, among other responsibilities, coordinate the catechetical program, the 70-member RCIA program and lead the Baptism preparation team, as more than 1,000 children are baptized every year. The CCD program has more than 900 students.

Meet the Pastor



Father Tom Devine O.A.R.

Birthday: March 2, 1943

Hometown: Boyle, Ireland

High School: Blackrock College, Dublin, Ireland

Seminary: Augustinian Recollects, Navarra, Spain

Undergraduate: University College, Ireland

Graduate School: University College, Ireland

Ordination: July 21, 1968

Hero: St. Thomas More

Favorite Saint: St. Frances De Sales

Favorite Sport: Tennis

Favorite Food: Tiramisu

Favorite Subject in School: Philosophy

Favorite Movie: Shadowlands

Last Book Read: *Forgotten Among Lilies* by Ronald Rolheiser

Occupation if I Weren't a Priest: Airline Pilot

The parish has over 50 Spanish-speaking Eucharistic Ministers and 12 English-speaking who have parallel monthly formation programs and regular spiritual retreats. Aside from their Sunday duties, the ministers take Communion to sick and elderly in their homes, hospices and hospitals.

The parish periodically sponsors a marriage preparation course, which has the participation of a psychologist, a medical doctor and experienced couples as well as the priest to give a well-rounded understanding of a sacramental marriage.

Pro-life group members are well aware of their role as educators. Recently, they set up a special parish wide celebration with procession on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 7) to pray for an end to abortion.

St. Augustine Parish has always been able to adapt to the need of the community. It makes sure that the community feels like one big family. Hopefully, the people feel that St. Augustine Parish is always there for them.

St. Augustine Parish is located at 3900 New York Avenue, Union City, 07087.

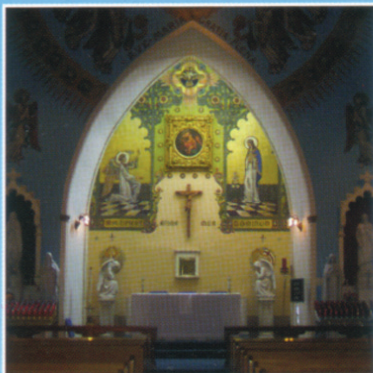


Candles lit by devoted members of St. Augustine Parish illuminate the church.

Advocate photos: Melissa McNally

MADONNA CHAPEL MAUSOLEUM

On the grounds of Madonna Chapel Mausoleum stands a graceful 150 year-old Catholic church. The 11:00 Mass on the last Sunday of each month offers a special remembrance for all who are lying within our mausoleum awaiting the resurrection. You are invited to attend this Mass whenever you like, and to add your prayers to those of the community.



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Top teams in SFIC tourney

NEWARK — The third annual Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC) Basketball Festival, presented by Aeropostale, will take place on Saturday, Jan. 7 at the Yanitelli Recreational Life Center on the campus of Saint Peter's College in Jersey City. It will feature a unique quadruple-header with some of the best high school basketball in the country.

The first game will showcase St. Anthony (Jersey City) against Jersey Shore power Christian Brothers Academy (Lincroft) at 10 a.m. while the second contest will feature St. Benedict's Prep (Newark) battling Paramus Catholic High School at 11:40 a.m. The rest of the festival will feature St. Patrick's (Elizabeth) against Paramus Catholic at 1:20 p.m. while the final game will pit St. Peter's Prep (Jersey City) against Roselle Catholic High School at 3 p.m.

"We are extremely pleased to have a great group of schools, players and coaches supporting the Scholarship Fund," explained Bill Fitzpatrick, the Event Director of the Festival and a trustee of the SFIC.

Commenting on the upcoming competition, Lorraine Cunningham, executive director of SFIC said "we are grateful to Aeropostale, the participating high schools and Bill Fitzpatrick for putting together this very worthwhile event. The funds that are raised provide SFIC with the resources needed to help more students of low-income families to attend schools of the caliber play-

ing in the basketball festival. This opportunity is vital to the character development and academic achievement needed to support a successful life."

Several of the participating high schools are favorites to reach the New Jersey Tournament of Champions. Christian Brothers Academy is coming off an impressive year (26-3), with their only losses coming from Tournament of Champions winner Seton Hall Prep (West Orange), St. Patrick's (runner-up), and St. Anthony, who defeated the Colts at last year's SFIC basketball festival.

Founded in 1983, SFIC has raised over \$19 million to provide need-based scholarships to inner-city youngsters who seek alternative educational opportunities at independent and parochial schools. This very exciting basketball event will benefit the many scholarship recipients.

The SFIC Basketball Festival is exceptionally pleased with the support of the schools and sponsors. "We could not raise this scholarship money without the help of many, many people including our loyal teams and our presenting sponsor Aeropostale," explained Fitzpatrick. "This is a team effort and we give the fans some great high school basketball with four games."

For additional information about the Basketball Festival, log onto the event's website www.BasketballFestival.com and or call the Scholarship Fund office at (973) 497-4279.



The second-annual Christmas Food Collection of Catholic Cemeteries group of the Archdiocese of Newark runs through Jan. 1, 2006.

Catholic Cemeteries continues food drive

NEWARK—The Catholic Cemeteries group of the Archdiocese of Newark is moving forward on its second-annual Christmas Food Collection. The drive, which began last month, runs through Sunday, Jan. 1, 2006.

Catholic Cemeteries will collect non-perishable food items (canned goods, dry pasta and rice, bottled juices and drinks, etc.). Residents are invited to drop off items at the offices of any archdiocesan cemetery or mausoleum. Donated items will be given to local food pantries. Cash donations also will be accepted.

Andrew P. Schafer, executive director of the archdiocesan Cemeteries Office, said his organization recognizes that burial of the dead is only one of the corporal works of mercy. Feeding the

hungry is another, and such a gesture of mercy in the name of a deceased loved one is a meaningful gift that honors the memory of the deceased in a tangible way, he said.

Drop-off locations include Maryrest Cemetery, Mahway; Gate of Heaven Cemetery and Mausoleum, East Hanover; Saint Gertrude Cemetery/Good Shepard Mausoleum, Colonia; Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum, North Arlington; Holy Name Cemetery and Mausoleum, Jersey City; Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, East Orange; and Christ the King Cemetery, Franklin Lakes.

Contact Lucy Sanchez or Pat Magistro at 973-497-7981 at Catholic Cemeteries for further information.

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Church
Franklin Lakes

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Church
Jersey City

St. Anthony of Padua
Church
Jersey City

A Blessed Christmas to All— *Come, let us adore Him...*



Our Lady of Sorrows Church
Kearny

Queen of Peace Church
North Arlington

St. Anthony of Padua Church
Belleville

St. Joseph Church
Lodi

St. Gabriel the Archangel
Church
Saddle River

St. John the Baptist Church
Jersey City

St. Lucy Church
Newark

St. Mary Star of the Sea
Church
Bayonne

St. Philomena Church
Livingston

St. Theresa Church
Kenilworth

St. Vincent DePaul Church
Bayonne

Vander Plaat Vermeulen
Memorial Home
Franklin Lakes

St. Bartholomew the Apostle
Church
Scotch Plains



FOR THE HUNGRY—Archbishop John J. Myers visited Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Verona recently and helped its young people prepare food for shipment to St. John's Soup Kitchen in Newark. Next to the archbishop are, left to right, Father Michael Hanly, pastor, and Deacon Michael Maione. Collecting the food were the parish's 24 Confirmation candidates, 40 youth group members and 15 adults.

'Fast Track' instant decision week Jan. 9-13

MORRISTOWN—The School of Graduate and Continuing Studies at the College of Saint Elizabeth (CSE) will hold an Undergraduate and Saturday Fast Track Instant Decision Week Jan. 9 to 13 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the lower lobby of Henderson Hall.

Advisors will be available to discuss admission eligibility a variety of adult undergraduate programs. Participants should bring a transcript.

Included are the undergraduate Saturday Fast Track programs in communications and management as well as the graduate management program. To schedule an appointment call (973) 290-4115 or email the school@cse.edu.

The Saturday Fast Track undergraduate degree programs in communications and management can be earned in less than two years. It is designed for those at least 23 years old with five years of post high school experience and a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree. A graduate degree in management is also offered and can be completed in a year.

Applications are being accepted for Saturday Fast Track programs in communications and management that begin next month. Space is limited and early applications are encouraged.

For additional information visit www.cse.edu/fasttrack.

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Please bring your transcripts!

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www.cse.edu

For more information email religion@cse.edu or call 973-290-4600.

This is the season of hope, of joy, of faith. May you gather together with your loved ones this Christmas, and truly celebrate all that you have, and all that you feel.



From Our
Family to
Yours...

Merry
Christmas



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Breast cancer survivors share experiences, offer hope

ELIZABETH—Breast cancer tests a woman's personal strength and also reminds her that family, friends and business associates can be a tremendous support when surviving the disease.

This was the primary message of a seminar, "Celebrating Survivors!" held recently at Trinitas Hospital in conjunction with the observance of national

Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Barbara Waters, Education and Outreach Coordinator of the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation North Jersey Affiliate, spoke of the efforts of the Foundation to advocate for a cure for cancer. Waters, a 20-year survivor, shared her personal experiences with an audience of approximately 50 people.

As the major source of funding of cancer research, the mission of the Foundation is to eradicate cancer as a life threatening disease, said Waters. "We are on Capitol Hill all the time, lobbying for cancer survivors," she stressed. "We are fighting for equal access to cancer treatment for all women."

Several members of the audience shared their stories of combating cancer. They described how they first coped with the diagnosis, the importance of having a positive attitude and the value of getting emotional support from others.

Carol Wolf, certified nursing assistant in Trinitas Hospital's cardiac unit said that her cancer spread so rapidly from one breast to 12 lymph nodes at age 49, that she immediately purchased a wig when she lost her hair following

her second chemotherapy treatment. "I did that because I was determined to survive." She explained that when first diagnosed five years ago she often felt extremely weak. But, she continued to go to work during the course of her illness. "It was difficult but I got through it."

Another cancer survivor agreed with the importance of mammograms but also emphasized that breast self-examination is equally important. While taking a shower before going to work one day, Carol Birritieri, respiratory therapist at the hospital's Sleep Disorders Center, detected a breast lump that had not surfaced in a routine mammogram. She followed up with her doctor and encouraged the audience to keep after their doctors, saying "Don't

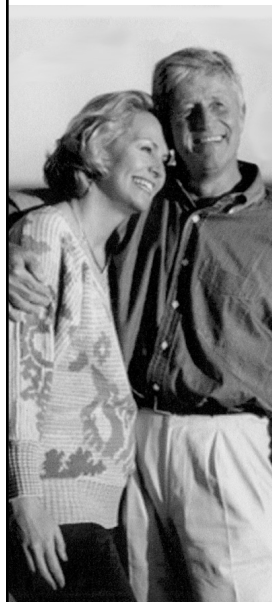
stop until you are content with the answers you are getting." She also stressed that a support network of family and friends was crucial to facing the disease. "With the loss of my mother-in-law to breast cancer, my husband and children were understandably worried about me, so as a family we had a lot to work through. If it hadn't been for family and friends, I wouldn't be standing here right now."

Diagnosed in the early 1990's with breast cancer, Ann Baran, Trinitas Hospital Senior Vice President of External Affairs & Hospital Services, said she has gone through several bouts of the disease which now effects her lungs. She explained that she is in the advanced stages of breast cancer. Baran added that her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer 20 years ago and, although she had a radical mastectomy, she is still alive at age 87.

Part of Baran's message was that breast cancer survivors can cope best if they deal with the disease early. Coping for her meant that work became her "refuge" and a means for her "to feel normal." She commented that support of family, friends and colleagues helps since, "When you have cancer, you have no control. It's out of your hands and you simply just have to be able to manage it." She explained that she undergoes tests every three months to monitor the stages of her condition.

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Hospital scores a national first in survey of services

TEANECK—Holy Name Hospital is the first hospital in the nation to receive J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital Awards for Inpatient and Emergency Service Excellence as well as Emergency Service distinction.

J.D. "Dave" Power III presented the double trophy distinction to Michael Maron, Holy Name Hospital president and chief executive officer at a recent awards ceremony before a crowd of more than 250 staff members, physicians and local dignitaries. Power founded J.D. Power and Associates 35 years ago.

"This recognition places Holy Name among an elite group of hospitals across the nation that exceed the national benchmark for service excellence," said Maron. "These awards are especially meaningful because they represent the sentiments of the patients we care for every day. It is something we are very proud of."

The service excellence distinctions were determined by surveying the most recently discharged patients from Holy Name on their perceptions of their hospital stay and comparing the results to national benchmarks established by the annual J.D. Power and Associates National Hospital Service Performance Study and Emergency Performance Study.

The telephone-based research conducted with Holy Name Hospital inpatients and emergency department patients focused on five key drivers of patient satisfaction with their overall hospital experience. These drivers included: dignity and respect; speed and efficiency; comfort; information and communication; and emotional support.

According to J.D. Power and Associates, only 20 percent of the hospitals in the nation can qualify to achieve these distinctions. Holy Name Hospital exceeded the national benchmark study score for overall inpatient satisfaction and emergency department satisfaction by a notable margin. The hospital performed particularly well compared to the national studies in the area of speed and efficiency with which the staff delivered care to their patients and for treating both hospital and emergency room patients with dignity and respect.

In regard to people that were hospitalized, the hospital received high ratings relative to the national study on the avail-

ability of the doctor, the speed and efficiency of the admissions process, and courtesy of the nurses and discharge personnel.

The emergency room performed particularly well on the accuracy and completeness of the case information communicated to the doctor. The nurses in the emergency room also received strong ratings from patients in the area of taking the initiative to provide services without being asked. Emergency department patients also gave the hospital relatively high ratings for dignity and respect, as reflected in the courtesy of the radiology staff and doctor.

Additionally, both hospital patients and emergency department patients were asked to rate their level of trust and confidence in the hospital after their most recent stay. Among Holy Name

Hospital inpatients and emergency department patients, 57 percent indicated they have more trust and confidence in the hospital and emergency room department after their most recent stay. Furthermore, Holy Name Hospital patients are more likely to experience increased trust and confidence in their hospital because of their experience, as compared to the national average.

With centers of excellence in cancer care, cardiac services, dialysis treatment, women's health care, and neurology services, plus a host of other state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment, and health management services, Holy Name Hospital provides health care across a continuum that extends from prevention through treatment and on toward recovery and wellness.



J.D. Power and Associates founder J.D. "Dave" Power III (left) presents Holy Name Hospital president/CEO Michael Maron with unprecedented double trophy distinction in Inpatient and Emergency Service Excellence.

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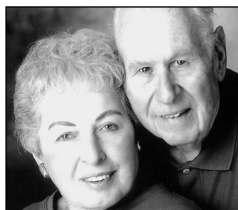
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