

The Catholic Advocate

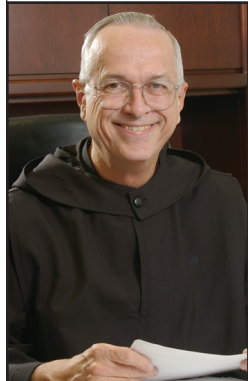


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Looking below the surface of Advent season

Father Albert Holtz employs a contemplative perspective in order to see deeper meanings.

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Like wow, a 'far-out' time in Alabama

Immaculate Conception High School students Yanique Perkins and Tanysha Flood enjoyed going into orbit.

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A 'statement of faith' to house hope, reflection

Special windows illuminate mausoleum

BY MICHAEL C. GABRIELE
Editor

COLONIA — Most Rev. Dominic A. Marconi, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Newark, celebrated Mass Nov. 8 to dedicate Saint Gertrude Chapel Mausoleum of the Crucifixion.

In addition to creating a visually stunning sacred space for families to remember their loved ones, the chapel mausoleum now serves as the permanent archive and exhibition site for three vintage stained-glass windows that previously were part of the now-closed Saint Brigid Parish, North Bergen. A fourth window installed at the chapel—the Nativity scene—offers an interesting sidebar of “rediscovered” liturgical art history.

Father Manuel D. Rios, who previously served at Saint Brigid and now is the pastor of the merged Saint Rocco/Saint Brigid Parish in Union City, worked with the archdiocesan Patrimony Committee to have the windows relocated to the mausoleum. Gilbert D'all Ava, a renowned stained-glass artist and resident of Clifton who died three decades ago, produced the three Saint Brigid windows (The Resurrection, The Last Supper and the Holy Family).

However, because of the chapel mausoleum's architectural design, a fourth window was required. Working with representatives of the archdiocesan Catholic Cemeteries group, Judy Van Wie, the president of Hiemer and Co., a stained-glass studio in Clifton, provided research on D'all Ava and was able to locate a never-executed window design (the Nativity scene), which was in a style and time frame similar to the three Saint Brigid windows.

Van Wie, who knew D'all Ava, described him as a devout Catholic, a member of Sacred

Heart Parish in Clifton, and a noteworthy liturgical artist of his era who died in his late 40s at the height of his creative powers. She said while the visual sweep of his lines echoed a Byzantine style, D'all Ava depicted traditional religious subjects in a contemporary style. He also demonstrated artistic innovation through his techniques of shading and shadows of stained-glass images.

Andrew P. Schafer, executive director of Catholic Cemeteries, said the chapel mausoleum serves as a sacred place to both console and inspire families. “Our cemeteries are fields of hope,” Schafer declared. “The new mausoleum at Saint Gertrude is an extension of that hope. When people visit the mausoleum, they will see the life of the risen Christ in the stained-glass windows. Families that choose a Catholic cemetery are making a statement of faith to the generations to come.”

*“Our cemeteries
are fields of hope.”*

— Andrew P. Schafer

“As Catholics, we believe that those who have died remain part of the community, part of the body of Christ,” Archbishop John J. Myers wrote last year in a column for *The Catholic Advocate*. “Our liturgy, our funeral practices, and our commitment as Church to maintaining places of final rest for all who have died in Christ are a sincere and solid expression of the respect and reverence. We hope that all of our family members who have gone before us are, indeed, now part of the Communion of Saints, and that we too will one day join them.”

According to information provided by Catholic Cemeteries, the

mausoleum contains 3,200 crypts and 800 columbarium niches. The facility, constructed of classic materials such as marble, granite and pine, is based on ancient designs of cruciform churches.

Planning and development for the multi-million dollar, 50,000-square-foot mausoleum was launched four years ago. Construction began in April 2006 and was completed last July. In addition to Hiemer and Co., key contractors for the building project included Mid-Atlantic Contractors Inc., New Gretna; C.H. Schwartner & Son, Bala Cynwyd, PA; Rissi Associates Architects, Wynote, PA; J.W.T. Excavating Contractors, Holmdel; Edward T. Czuba (architect and planning), South Orange; The Gil Studios Inc., Brooklyn, NY; and Inspired Artisans, Milwaukee.

The chapel mausoleum is part of a major capital investment program at several northern New Jersey sites being managed by Catholic Cemeteries. Schafer said the group recently began construction on a two-story chapel mausoleum at Holy Name Cemetery and Mausoleum in Jersey City, which eventually will host monthly masses. A new chapel and garden mausoleum is being built at Maryrest Cemetery in Mahwah, while construction is more than 70 percent complete at an expansion of mausoleum space in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, East Hanover.

Catholic Cemeteries maintains 10 cemeteries and four mausoleums throughout northern New Jersey. Catholic Cemeteries is a long-standing ministry of the Church, which is demonstrated in the ritual of the Order of Christian Funerals. Associates of the archdiocesan group recognize the deep religious significance of their corporal work of mercy, dedicated to the respectful care of the deceased and the support of families.



Advocate photos — M. Gabriele

Led by Matthew Earrusso, a graduate of Seton Hall University, South Orange, Hiemer & Co., a studio in Clifton, created the stained-glass nativity scene (top), based on vintage drawings by artisan Gilbert D'all Ava. The “rediscovered” Nativity window joins three other previously executed windows by D'all Ava, which have been installed at Saint Gertrude Chapel Mausoleum of the Crucifixion. The two-story chapel contains a large, suspended crucifix (bottom photo), while the building is designed to maximize outdoor light that creates a dramatic interior environment for reflective prayer.



Career workshop to meet Dec. 7

RIDGEWOOD—A workshop to help those seeking employment will be held on Sunday, Dec. 7, noon, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, 1 Passaic St.

The parish's Career Resources Ministry forum is free and open to the public. Parish membership is not required. The workshop offers help on interviewing skills, networking strategies and resume preparation. Those attending the Dec. 7 forum should bring an up-to-date resume.

Ed McCabe, a career coach/senior counselor/master trainer at Lee-Hecht-Harrison, and

Carol Shea, vice president of information technology recruiting at Berman, Larson, Kane in Paramus, lead the career ministry team. Msgr. Ronald J. Rozniak is the pastor Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish.

Earlier this month *The Catholic Advocate* featured the group and its ministry in a page-one article (see the Nov. 12 edition). More than 50 people attended the Nov. 16 workshop.

“It is a full-time job trying to find a full-time job,” Shea said. Contact Shea at (201) 447-4215 for details.

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FREQUENCY FOR THE YEAR
 The Catholic Advocate continues to be a bi-weekly publication. Publication dates for 2008 are December 10, 24.

Publication dates for 2009 are January 7, 21; February 4, 18; March 11, 25; April 8, 22; May 6, 20; June 10, 24; July 15; August 12, 26; September 9, 23; October 14, 28; November 11, 25; December 9, 23.

NJPA



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Finding 'shelter' in a turbulent storm, women receive support, reject abortion

Havens provide options for life in troubled time

BY MELISSA MCNALLY
 Staff Writer

Embarrassed, alone, confused and afraid. For young women who endure the many trials from an unplanned pregnancy, these emotions can make the decision to have their child extremely difficult. The women, some of whom are only 15 years old, often defy their families and friends by carrying their child to term.

In the Archdiocese of Newark, places like Several Sources Shelters in Ramsey (www.severalsources.net) and Good Counsel Homes in Hoboken (www.goodcounselhomes.org) provide a safe haven for the young mothers who, in making the brave decision, are unsure what the future holds for them and their child.

Founded by Kathy DiFiore nearly 30 years ago, Several Sources has four residential shelters in the state, including two in Ramsey and one in Washington Township, for pregnant women in crisis. There is also a 24-hour national hotline to assist these women. A faithful Catholic, DiFiore's primary goal at the shelter is to have the women keep their child.

"Our number-one goal is [for the women] not to abort their babies. A majority of those that come to the shelter are contemplating abortion because of their parents and loved ones," she explained.

In the shelters, there are up to three mothers with their children and staff, including house mothers. The average person in the shelter is 16 to 19 years old. The women stay at the shelter for up to a year, although some stay longer. They go to local high schools to complete their education, and receive training on how to care for their child. This year, through the generosity of Several Sources donors, three young mothers graduated college.

"The focus is always on the mother and child relationship," DiFiore said.

Women-in-crisis pregnancies are a worldwide epidemic. Several Sources shelters are currently filled with women and there are four on the waiting list. DiFiore also counsels women online at www.lifecall.org, which reaches out to women as far as Australia and England. The hotline (800-NOABORT or 662-2678) receives thousands of calls from around the country. DiFiore said the shelter has had a mother as young as 12 years old.

"The lives of these young women are so complex. Women who go against the tide and

keep their baby become their baby's hero. They are willing to leave their family and go to a shelter. I can't help but admire them. They are changing the 'culture of death' into a culture of life and I want to help them have a better life," DiFiore explained.

The main concern of the young, expectant mothers at the shelter is embarrassment due to social stigma and the judgment of others. "The family is also embarrassed and feel ashamed," she said. "However, when the baby is born, the young woman's family usually reconciles. The older mothers (those over 18) are concerned with their education and are worried that they can't finish school."



Submitted photo

Kathy DiFiore, a member of Saint Paul Parish, Ramsey, and founder of the Several Sources Shelters, is surrounded by her many friends. DiFiore received the Supporting Our Aging Religious (SOAR) Mother Seton Award on Oct. 7, honoring her three decades of service. While many people of faith focus on debates concerning stem-cell research and Supreme Court verdicts, crisis shelters operate—literally and spiritually—on the front lines of fateful life decisions.

Across the demographic, the young mothers face economic constraints as well as unsupportive boyfriends or husbands. "The young fathers usually do not want to have a child. I wish there were more young men who are responsible. The women also say 'I can't afford this baby now' or 'it isn't the right time.' I have been in this business for 28 years now and I have heard just about everything," DiFiore said.

Unconcerned with statistics, DiFiore says

she works in her own "microcosm" and does not focus on demographic trends, but treats each woman as an individual. "I hate the word 'dysfunctional'. Every baby and mother is a child of God. The day I think about statistics and I put these young women in categories, then I should get out of the business; then I won't be doing it from my heart. I never want to be a bureaucrat in the pro-life movement. I want these young women to reach out to me as a friend," DiFiore emphasized.

Since she opened the shelter, DiFiore believes the title of "unwed mother" is less stigmatized and parents are open to being more compassionate. However, some parents are harsh with their daughters, forcing them out of their home. This negative reaction to unplanned pregnancy can be related, DiFiore surmises, to parents who have had abortions in the past.

"Some mothers are self-actualizing and, because they had an abortion, see no reason why their daughters can't go through with it," she said. "This mean-spiritedness is the mother confirming to herself that she did the right thing in her own life."

When the young women come to the shelter, it is an adjustment. There are no cell phones and the young women shop and cook for themselves while supervised. They also see weekly outside counselors to help "stabilize relationships" to help them cope with stressful, life-altering situations. Each residence forms a complex community, a family of women facing the same issues.

"The young women form a 'sorority' of life. There is a common bond. Each house has a different personality depending on who lives there. Each shelter is a whirlwind dervish, a smorgasbord of ethnicities. There is no way to keep up with it all," DiFiore said with a laugh.

After the women leave the shelter, some stay in touch, even thought this is not a requirement of the program. During Mother's Day and Christmas, DiFiore receives letters and pictures of the mothers and the children they helped save. "We encourage them not to forget about us."

Good Counsel Homes shares the mission of Several Sources Shelters and is an advocate on behalf of single mothers and their children. Co-founded in 1985 by Father Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R., and Christopher Bell, more than 3,500 women and children have been helped by the organization.

Today, Good Counsel operates five homes in New York for young mothers and their children. Although there is no longer a shelter in

Continued on page 17



CNS photo

Most Rev. David Arias, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Newark, passes ballots during a vote Nov. 11 at the annual fall meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. He attended the meeting with Archbishop John J. Myers and other representatives from the archdiocese. Bishop Arias, the first Hispanic auxiliary bishop in New Jersey, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his episcopal ordination earlier this year (see *The Catholic Advocate*, April 9).

Pope cites need to aid poor children

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—More must be done to remedy the poverty, conflicts and neglect that lead to the suffering or death of millions of children around the world, Pope Benedict XVI declared.

The pope said he hoped the gross imbalances between developed and underdeveloped countries and the rich and poor would be “repaired as soon as possible with resolute action in favor of our smallest brothers and sisters.”

Many children around the world urgently need help, the pope said Nov. 15 during a private audience with participants of a Vatican-sponsored conference on “The Pastoral Care in the Treatment of Sick

Children.” Participants in the Nov. 13-15 conference discussed ways the Church and Catholic healthcare workers could address the medical, pastoral and spiritual needs of sick children and their families.

“I am thinking above all about the little ones who have been orphaned or abandoned because of poverty and the breakdown of the family. I’m thinking of the young innocent victims of AIDS or war and the many armed conflicts under way in different parts of the world; I’m thinking of the infants who die as the result of poverty, drought and hunger,” the pope said, noting that 4 million newborns die within the first month.

U.S. bishops oppose ‘evil’ in Freedom of Choice Act

BALTIMORE (CNS)—Fears about laws and changes in regulations on abortion that might advance under a new Democratic-run Congress and White House were the central focus of a statement approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Nov. 12 during their annual fall meeting.

The statement focused on concerns about the possible passage of the Freedom of Choice Act, calling it “an evil law that would further divide our country” and adding that the Church “should be intent on opposing evil.”

In a January 2008 statement, then-candidate Barack Obama said he would support passage of the Freedom of Choice Act. The latest version introduced in April 2007 would establish federal protection of abortion, regardless of what state laws might exist.

The bishops’ statement warns against interpreting the outcome of the Nov. 4 elections as “a referendum on abortion” and says “aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans.”

The final version was written under the supervision of Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, USCCB president. It starts by saying the U.S. bishops “welcome this moment of historic transition and look forward to

working with President-elect (Barack) Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all.

“We want to continue our work for economic justice and opportunity for all; our efforts to reform laws around immigration and the situation of the undocumented; our provision of better education and adequate health care for all, especially for women and children; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad.”

The statement went on to explain Church teaching considers life as a gift from God and that “a good state protects the lives of all.” It said *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court ruling overturning nearly all restrictions on abortion, was “a bad law. The danger the bishops see at this moment is that a bad court decision will be enshrined in bad legislation that is more radical than the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself.”

The statement elaborated a range of concerns about the proposed Freedom of Choice Act, including concerns that it would “deprive the American people in all 50 states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry.” It said the bill “would coerce all Americans into subsidizing and promoting abortion with their tax dollars.”

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK
CATHOLIC CEMETERIES

5th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FOOD COLLECTION

We will once again be accepting any non-perishable food items for distribution to food pantries for those less fortunate people in the Archdiocese.

Your donations may be dropped off during business hours in the office of all Archdiocesan Cemeteries and Mausoleums between

Monday, December 1st thru Monday, January 5, 2009

The ministry of Catholic Cemeteries operates under the auspices of the Catholic Church. It is important to recognize that the burial of the dead is only one of the Corporal Works of Mercy.

The Church encourages frequent cemetery visits and prayers for the dead.

Visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry are also works of mercy to also be encouraged. Performing them on behalf of our deceased loved ones are Mitzvah (*wonderful gifts that cannot be repaid*) and truly honor the memory of the deceased in a tangible way.





Advocate photo – Ward Miele

MASS SALUTES LAW ENFORCEMENT—The Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark was filled Nov. 14 for the 16th annual Blue Mass for Law Enforcement celebrated by Archbishop John J. Myers. The Mass honored the families of five officers who lost their lives in the line of duty during the previous year, a list that included Police Officer Kenneth A. Santucci of the Belleville Police Department; Police Officer Thomas Raji of the Perth Amboy Police Department; Lt. Christopher Zerby of the North Brunswick Police Department; Dept. Sgt. 1st Class Dwayne M. Kelley of the New Jersey State Police; and Ret. Police Officer Carmen De Gregorio of the Millville Police Department. Archbishop Myers said law enforcement is a profession that calls for “sacrifice and love.” Often, he stressed, officers are the “first responders” to some of life’s “most horrific” moments. Describing their mission as a special calling, the archbishop noted that every day they put their lives at risk. He concluded his homily saying “you are heroes; be safe and may God protect you.”



Advocate photo – Melissa McNally

ONE-HUNDRED BLESSINGS TO COUNT—Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Linden, marked the start of its centennial celebration on Nov. 15 with a special Mass. Father Benedict Worry, O.S.B., pastor, Abbot Giles Hayes, O.S.B., of Saint Mary’s Abbey in Morristown, and Most Rev. Dominic A. Marconi, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Newark, concelebrated the Mass. Saint Elizabeth, the patron saint of the parish (pictured statue), was a princess—the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary. A faithful Christian, she spent her time nursing the sick and taking food and clothing to the poor.

DISCOVER THE INSPIRATIONAL STORY THAT IS CAPTURING THE HEARTS OF AUDIENCES AROUND THE WORLD

NBC REEL TALK

“ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR.”

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PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
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November 29

Benedictine Academy, Elizabeth, "Five-Year Club Reunion," 2-4 p.m., RSVP at (908) 352-0670 ext. 105.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Nutley, craft boutique and bake sale, also on Nov. 30, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., (973) 667-2580.

Official Appointments



Archbishop John J. Myers has announced the following appointments:

ARCHDIOCESAN AGENCY/MINISTRY

Reverend Michael M. Walters, Pastor of Holy Spirit/Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in East Orange, was appointed Director of the Ministerial Development Center of the Archdiocese of Newark with residence at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, South Orange, effective Nov. 5.

DEACON

Deacon Eduardo J. Pons, of Saint Augustine Parish, Union City, was appointed deacon at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark, effective Nov. 16.

November 30

St. Joseph Parish, Oradell, "Taste of Silence," 7 p.m., also on Dec. 1 and Dec. 2, (201) 261-0148.

December 1

Holy Trinity Parish, Westfield, prayer and remembrance service for World AIDS Day, 7:30 p.m., (908) 232-8137.

New Jersey Blood Services, blood drive, at Knights of Columbus Council 1711 in Westfield, 2-7:30 p.m., call Marie Forrestal at (732) 616-0798.

December 2

New Jersey Center of Divine Mercy, Parish of the Transfiguration, 212 Hunterdon St., Newark, guest speaker Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., 6 p.m. For additional information call (973) 642-4217 or (973) 732-2820.

December 3

Office of Family Life Ministries, Newark, annulment information meeting, at Our

Lady of Mercy Parish in Jersey City, 7:30 p.m., (973) 497-4327.

Holy Spirit Parish, Union, Holy Hour for Life, 7:30 p.m., (908) 687-3327.

December 4

St. Vincent's Nursing Home Auxiliary, Cedar Grove, Sleigh Bell Luncheon, at Mayfair Farms in West Orange, 10:30 a.m., cost: \$50, call Connie Love at (973) 509-3943.

Senior Care and Activities Center, Montclair, Holiday Open House, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., (973) 783-5589.

Xavier Retreat Center, Convent Station, Samaritan women retreat information meeting, 10 a.m. - noon, \$20 per session, (973) 290-5100.

December 5

Resurrection Parish, Jersey City, memorial service for Bishop Michael Ugwuja Eneja, 7 p.m., at 219 Third St., call Father Felix Ugwuozor at (862) 224-1967.

December 6

The Sodality of the Children of Mary of St. Teresa, Jersey City, Mass at Casino in the Park, at 10:30 a.m., annual

Spiritual Exercises in Sloatsburg, NY

Silent Ignatian Retreats preached by the Priests of Miles Christi in Sloatsburg, NY.

Men-December 12-14, 2008

Women-Feb. 27-Mar. 1, 2009

Spiritual talks, Eucharistic adoration, daily Mass and Rosary.

Contact Julie McGurn at newyork@spiritualexercises.net, or at (973) 408-9042.

Christmas luncheon to follow, call Katherine T. Crossan at (201) 689-1471.

Lumen Center, Caldwell, "Preparing for Christmas: The Heart of God Made Visible in Our World Today," 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., cost: \$35, (973) 403-3331 ext. 25.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Bloomfield, "Ready for a Positive Change in your Life," presentation by Dan Tomasulo, 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., RSVP by Dec. 3, call Anna at (973) 338-9538.

Office of Family Life Ministries, Newark, support group for fathers whose children have died, at Notre Dame Parish in North Caldwell, 10 a.m., (973) 497-4327.

Immaculate Conception Parish, Montclair, New Jersey Choral Society concert, also on Dec. 7, 8 p.m., cost: \$20 for adults/\$17 for students and seniors, (201) 379-7719.

St. Mary Parish, Closter, Magnificat (ministry to Catholic women) prayer breakfast, 9 a.m., cost: \$20, (201) 265-2738.

Saint Joseph School, East Rutherford, will sell 12 inch, decorated Christmas wreaths at all masses the weekend of Dec. 6-7. Masses are Saturday at 5:30 p.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Cost \$13. To pre-order call the school office at (201) 939-3193 or e-mail to sjsr@comcast.net.

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December 7

St. John the Baptist Parish, Hillsdale, Christmas concert, 4 p.m., (201) 664-3131.

Sacred Heart Parish, Newark (Vailsburg), "Hymn to Christmas," 2 p.m., cost: \$15, (908) 315-3663.

St. Joseph Regional High School, Montvale, Christmas craft show, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., cost: \$2, call Sue Scova at (201) 391-2099.

Knights of Columbus Council 5427, Washington Township, "Frosty Breakfast" with Frosty the Snowperson, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., cost: \$5 for children under 16/\$20 for adults, (201) 664-0422.

New Jersey Blood Services, blood drive, at St. Genevieve Parish in Elizabeth, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., call Marie Forrestal at (732) 616-0798.

December 8

St. Michael Parish, Cranford, night of prayer for the sanctity of all human life, Mass at 7:30 p.m. followed by Eucharistic Adoration throughout the night, (908) 276-0360.

December 9

Lumen Center, Caldwell, "The Not-So Sudden Death of Thomas Merton," 5-7:30 p.m., (973) 403-3331 ext. 25.

December 10

Xavier Retreat Center, Convent Station, Hildegard of Bingen discussion, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., \$30 per session, (973) 290-5100.

December 11

Ascension Parish, New Milford, "St. Peter by the Sea" concert, 8 p.m., at the Bergen Academies Auditorium in Hackensack, cost: \$50 for patrons/ \$30 general admission/ \$15 for children, (201) 836- 8961.

When **Jesus** turned around and noticed them following Him,

He asked them,
"What are you looking for?"

They said to Him,
"Rabbi, where do you stay?"

"Come and see,"
He answered.

John 1:38-39

Have you considered following after Jesus as a Priest, Sister or Brother...?



Fr. John Gabriel
Vocations Director
The Vocations Office
171 Clifton Avenue
P.O. Box 9500
Newark, NJ 07104-0500
(973) 497-4365

BIBLE



How to report abuse

The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all 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.

Individuals who wish to report an allegation of sexual misconduct may do so by calling the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection at (201) 407-3256.

Priests, Deacons, Religious and Laypersons interested in **Prison Ministry**

are invited to call Director of Prison Ministry, Deacon Gregory C. Quinn (973) 618-3302 or email him at gquinn@caldwell.edu

"...[I]n Prison and you visited me."
MT 25:36



Join in prayer against abortion

Tragically, the battle to bring an end to the evil of abortion is not getting any easier.

Prayer is an effective way to stop the slaughter that has taken thousands of innocent lives since the infamous U.S. Supreme Court Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 that made abortion legal.

To that end, the Archdiocese of Newark through its Respect Life Office, will once again participate in the annual National Night of Prayer for Life. Established 19 years ago, the local Church has taken part for the past decade.

Scheduled to run from 9 p.m. on Dec. 8 to 1 a.m., Dec. 9, the time frame is intentional. It was on the Feast of Immaculate Conception, then celebrated on Dec. 9, when Our Lady of

Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the unborn, first appeared to Saint Juan Diego. The National Night of Prayer for Life bridges these two feasts in a powerful petition to Our Blessed Mother through prayers for the sanctity of all human life.

The essence of the effort is to lift up our hearts in prayer across the country. The hours were selected to coordinate with the nation's four different time zones so that an hour of unity, locally from midnight to 1 a.m., can take place. The pro-life service will also include exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 20 decades of the rosary, prayers to Saint Michael, mediation and hymns. It will be a power experience of spiritual togetherness.

Parishes have already been notified. It can only be hoped as many as possible become involved with the National Night of Prayer for Life. The killing has to stop.

Catholics abound in NJ

When it comes to the number of Catholics within its borders, New Jersey is among the national leaders. Way to go Garden State!!!

That intriguing fact was contained in a recent e-mail from the media relations office of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops citing this year's Official Catholic Directory. The information was sent out in response to media inquires.

A look at the complete list is intriguing. Percentage wise, New Jersey with 41 percent of its residents of the Catholic faith, trails only Rhode Island that comes in at 59.5 percent. Of course our home state has far more Catholics when it comes to overall population compared to tiny Rhode Island. Third is New York with a 37.1 percentage. To be honest, it feels rather good to beat the Empire State.

By contrast the states with the smallest percentage of Catholics are Mississippi at 3.7 percent, Alabama 3.3 percent and Tennessee 2.3 percent.

It is with some pride that those of us in the Archdiocese of Newark can reflect on the fact that we make up a significant chunk of that 41 percent.

CHE charts growth to sustain healthcare in Newark

When Archbishop John J. Myers joined friends and supporters of Saint Michael's Medical Center on Oct. 17 to celebrate the transfer of the hospital's religious sponsorship to Hope Ministries and Catholic Health East (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Oct. 22), he offered his blessing and applauded the promise of new life for the 141-year-old Newark hospital.

The event was the culmination of a transition process unveiled earlier this year (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Jan. 23) that will help ensure the continuity of the hospital's Catholic healthcare mission and will see a capital investment of \$130 million in facility, technology and equipment upgrades for Saint Michael's.

"One of our core values is a preference for the poor," Robert V. Stanek, Catholic Health East (CHE) president and chief executive officer said in his remarks at the Oct. 17 ceremony. "In New Jersey, we operate hospitals in Trenton and Camden—two of the state's most challenged inner-city communities. Other cities we serve include Miami, Atlanta, Philadelphia and Buffalo."

CHE's expertise and financial strength enable it to operate hospitals that might otherwise fail to remain economically viable, particularly in urban communities. As such, CHE has pledged to support growth at Saint Michael's Medical Center in order to serve the expanding healthcare needs of the community.

Expansion and investment will be necessary as CHE estimates that annual admissions at the Newark facility will reach 16,400 by the end of 2009—a 60-percent increase from levels in 2007. Numerous renovations to accommodate the anticipated growing volume of patients already have begun. Well-appointed new patient rooms on the hospital's seventh and eighth floors offer enhanced privacy and comfort in a more home-like setting, and the completion of the second phase of construction in these areas is expected by year end. The hospital also is preparing to begin a comprehensive overhaul of its emergency department.

In September, the hospital added internationally renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Richard Boiardo to its medical staff (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Oct. 22). With the recruitment of Boiardo, a board-certified physician with expertise in the fields of sports medicine and joint replacement, Saint Michael's is poised to develop a regional center of excellence for orthopedic care.

"In addition to readily visible improvements at Saint Michael's Medical Center, a number of positive changes



Advocate photo — M. Gabriele

In a gesture that symbolized the transfer of sponsorship, the official seal of Saint Michael's was handed off to CHE executives during the Oct. 17 ceremony in Newark. "Compassion, charity, and reverence for life—these are the shared values upon which the mission of Saint Michael's will be sustained," Alexander J. Hatala CHE-NJ's president and chief executive officer, declared.

have been taking place behind the scenes thanks to our new affiliation (with CHE)," Robert H. Evans, the hospital's chief executive officer, said. Saint Michael's is improving its efficiency and productivity while adding new medical equipment to support a sustained commitment to patients, he noted.

Stanek appointed Alexander J. Hatala, president and chief executive officer of Camden-based Lourdes Health System, to oversee the due-diligence process and the subsequent transition of Saint Michael's Medical Center to Lourdes Health System, a unit of CHE.

Soon after welcoming Saint Michael's Medical Center into the system, CHE established Catholic Health East New Jersey (CHE-NJ)—its first statewide healthcare system. Stanek then named Hatala to serve as CHE-NJ's president and chief executive officer. Now the largest Catholic healthcare system in the Garden State, CHE-NJ comprises Saint Michael's Medical Center, Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center, Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County, and Saint Francis Medical Center in Trenton.

"Key shared services and coordinated advocacy efforts will enable CHE-NJ hospitals to operate more efficiently,

to have a stronger voice in promoting improved access to healthcare for the poor and uninsured, and to operate in financially challenged environments," Hatala explained. "We will remain focused on serving New Jersey's cities, while building upon our hospitals' leadership in cardiac care and cancer care.

"Our four hospitals share the Franciscan roots of their founders," Hatala continued. "Saint Michael's Medical Center was founded in 1867 by the Sisters of the Poor of Saint Francis. Only a few years later, the Sisters of Saint Francis of Philadelphia founded what is now Saint Francis Medical Center. And in the late 1940s, it was the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany who planted the seeds of Lourdes Health System."

The hospital recently observed the Feast Day of Saint Michael the Archangel with a ceremony in the facility's central courtyard. That day, the hospital welcomed its new vice president of mission integration, Corinne Francis—a CHE veteran who previously served in the same capacity at Saint Anthony's Health Care in Saint Petersburg, FL.

"On Sept. 29, 1869, the City of Newark celebrated the laying of the cornerstone for a new building for Saint Michael's Hospital," Francis stated. "Exactly 139 years later, the staff and physicians of Saint Michael's gathered to remember that day with a prayer service and blessing of the hospital and its mission team."

Symbolic of the hospital's rich history of charitable care, guests of honor at the Oct. 17 transfer ceremony included Sister Pauline Sweeney and Sister Rita Kerr of the Sisters of the Poor of Saint Francis, the order that founded the hospital, as well as George O'Connell, chair of Hope Ministries—the hospital's new sponsor and one of the 11 religious communities that sponsor the regional health corporations of CHE.

One of the nation's largest Catholic healthcare systems, Newtown Square, PA-based CHE was founded in 1998. The CHE group includes 33 acute-care hospitals, four long-term acute-care hospitals, 36 freestanding and hospital-based long-term care facilities, 12 assisted-living facilities, five continuing-care retirement communities, eight behavioral-health and rehabilitation facilities, 25 home-health/hospice agencies, and numerous ambulatory and community-based health services. CHE facilities employ approximately 54,000 full-time employees as partners in ministry.

(Editor's note: This is a guest article written by representatives of Catholic Health East.)

Discerning where justice ends and charity begins

First, I am writing this article after the election lest anyone might think it has some political motive. Secondly, this is my small attempt to address a subject that is not separate from my life. The work of social justice has occupied a large part of my priesthood both with the labor movement and in the area of affordable housing and tenant protection.

As I write, I gaze over at a bookshelf in my room that is filled from one end to the other with books and pamphlets that contain encyclicals of the popes, statements from the bishops of the United States and the writings of priests and scholars like Msgr. John Ryan and Msgr. George Higgins. One large book in particular is called *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, edited by Judith A. Dwyer. This type of literature has almost been like scripture to me in forming my attitude toward society.

And yet I must confess that now in our modern complex society it is not easy for anyone to discern clearly where justice ends and charity begins. Let me explain.

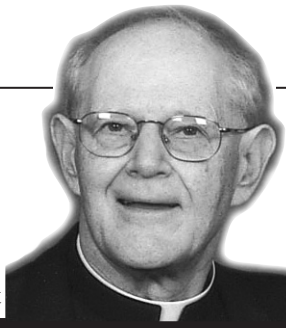
Capitalism, whether Catholics recognize it or not, comes to us from the Protestant work ethic. Calvin was convinced of predestination. You were born for heaven or hell. Material success in the world was a sign that God loved you and that salvation was yours.

Max Weber, a scholar, in a book called *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* demonstrated the

The Catholic Church has never condemned capitalism. She has always defended private property and the right to profit from labor.

VOICES

By Rev. Msgr. John Gilchrist



philosophy of capitalism. Weber's book tells this story: "When each person pursues his or her own self-interest, the common good is enhanced. Economic self-interest is the key to prosperity for all. With profit as a motive everyone will benefit." Ben Franklin himself taught the virtues of capitalism. Austerity, honesty, industry, frugality and thrift rank equally with faith, hope and charity as virtues to be pursued.

The Catholic Church, in all of her pronouncements, has never condemned capitalism. Through her parishes and religious communities the Church has always pursued the corporal works of mercy in schools, orphanages, hospitals and charitable organizations. These were regarded as works of charity and love. Yet, she has always defended private property and the right to profit from labor.

However, as society has developed, the role of the state in the service of the poor has grown and become more established. Privileges of earlier times have become "entitlements" now. For example, the state has the obligation to see that its citizens are well fed, well housed, properly educated, given medical care and protection at work and in old

age. These collective tendencies are simply taken for granted as the proper role of government.

The question arises: Just how far should these benefits go? Remember that Saint Paul said that "if one will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thes. 39).

When the bishops of the United States (Nov. 13, 1986) issued a pastoral letter entitled "Economic Justice for All," they were following the lead of a statement of the Latin American Bishops that called for "a preferential option for the poor" (Puebla, Mexico 1979). The bishops called for an expanded version of civil, political and economic rights in the United States.

Thus we come to the discussion of "entitlements." Where does justice end and charity begin? Pope John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work) (1981) stated that "just efforts to secure the rights of workers should always take into account the limitations imposed by the general economic situation of the country."

Communism and socialism have both been attempted. The first failed utterly. The other has been proven to drag down the progress and welfare of the whole society as is evident in many countries both in Europe and the East.

There must be justice and fairness. People who work hard should not be forced by the state to hand over an undue amount of their hard-earned wages to let the state distribute them as it so desires. Charity is one thing; justice is another. It is often difficult to ascertain where one begins and the other ends.

Catholic theologians and economists did not universally accept the statement of the bishops of the United States. So the debate will continue. Catholics, in this matter, have a right to speak their mind.

(Msgr. John Gilchrist is pastor emeritus of Holy Cross Parish, Harrison.)

Defining 5 talking points for Muslims, Catholics

Father Christian Troll, a German Jesuit, is one of the Catholic Church's leading students of Islam and a key figure in the Catholic-Islamic dialogue launched by Pope Benedict XVI's September 2006 Regensburg Lecture. Speaking recently at Cambridge University, Father Troll laid out a series of questions that must be faced in any serious conversation between Catholics and Muslims:

1. Liberation through conversion and repentance: Can Catholics and Muslims speak frankly about such "abiding realities" of the human condition as "forgetfulness of God and rebellion against him, or oppression in the sense of exceeding the appropriate limits of behavior in dealing with others, while violating their essential human rights?" Is instruction in the dual commandment of love of God and love of neighbor sufficient to overcome the human propensity for wickedness toward the "other"? Or is something more required—that is, do Christians and Muslims "share an awareness of our need to be liberated by God into the freedom of His gift of love?" Are we agreed that we must all repent of the times when coercion has been used to advance the cause of God? Is self-criticism part of the spiritual self-awareness of both Christians and Muslims?

2. Faith and reason: Is it possible for Catholics and Muslims to study their sacred texts with piety and "critical rigor"? Is it possible to create a "critical Christian-Muslim scholarship marked by the will to understand out of love?" Does the application of modern scholarly methods to analysis of the origins and character of ancient texts involve a betrayal of faith?

3. Human rights: Do we agree that God Himself has inscribed human rights "into the nature of man"? Are we agreed that "human rights and divine rights cannot be played off one against the other"? If what we mean by

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

By George Weigel



"human rights" is the recognition and protection of the "minimal conditions" under which "the human dignity...due to the human person as creature of God" is protected, then can we agree that "to recognize and respect human rights is nothing but obedience to the will of God"? Is the protection of human rights thus a fulfillment of the dual commandment of love of God and love of neighbor? If "Islam" means "submission to the will of God," and if respect for the dignity of the human person is of the will of God, then does Islam by its very nature require Muslims to recognize basic human rights? (And if that is not the case, why isn't it?)

4. Religious freedom: Doesn't love of neighbor require, as a religious obligation (and not merely a practical political accommodation), respect and legal protection for the religious convictions of others, so long as those convictions do not compromise the common good? Do Muslims agree that that principle holds even if Muslims regard what the "other" believes is false? Can we agree that the institutional separation of religious and political authority is good for the state (because it prevents the state from sacralizing

itself) and for religion (because it prevents the misuse of religion for political purposes and creates social space for faith and the workings of conscience)? Christians now recognize that the attempt to create "Christian states" was a failure that involved "great costs on all sides." Are Muslims prepared to recognize that the attempt to create "Islamic states" will likely lead to the same bad results, for both justice and faith?

5. Violence and reciprocity: Can Islam understand its faith in such a way that Muslims reject violence in the name of God, not only in terms of a cleansing of conscience about the past, but as a commitment to the future? Can this commitment extend to those who leave the House of Islam for other faiths? The Koran teaches that no one may be forced to believe; can Muslims agree that that principle "only comes to fruition if it guarantees the freedom also to abandon the faith, to understand it differently, or even to despise it"? As Father Troll asks, "Am I right to think that it is only God's affair to judge the weight of such matters?"

That is interreligious dialogue for adults.

(Editor's note: Pope Benedict XVI met with Muslim and Catholic scholars Nov. 4-6 at the Vatican—see The Catholic Advocate, Nov. 12. George Weigel is a distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.)

Is it possible to create a critical Christian-Muslim scholarship marked by the will to understand out of love?



Submitted photo

ALL SAINTS DAY PARADE—As part of an All Saints Day program at Assumption Academy, Emerson, all 240 students participated in a schoolwide assembly, which reflected their study of the saints in religion classes. One highlight of the assembly was a parade of the saints, which included (left to right) first graders Catherine Thomas (Saint Catherine of Siena), Sean Salcedo (Saint Patrick) and Michael Pressimone (Saint Michael). Fifth graders staged a puppet show, sixth graders gave short talks and seventh and eighth graders developed Power Point presentations on the beatification process. Dr. Maria Cleary, principal of the academy, organized the event.

Fr. Walters selected to guide ministerial development center

BY WARD MIELE
Managing Editor

NEWARK—Father Michael M. Walters, pastor of Holy Spirit/Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in East Orange the past decade, is the new director of the archdiocesan Center for Ministerial Development. Archbishop John J. Myers recently appointed Fr. Walters for the post.

The Christian Foundations for Ministry program, explained its new director, “trains lay people for part-time positions in parish ministries.” Fr. Walters cited Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programs as examples. The training involves “any type of ministry in which a person does not have to be ordained,” he explained.

To become certified, Fr. Walters added, requires a three-year training program that includes some classroom work but is primarily “experiential, geared to the adult learner.” The program currently has some 300 members throughout the archdiocese.

Ordained in 1981, Fr. Walters attended the seminary at the American College of the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. He succeeds Sister Virginia Stanton as the director of the archdiocesan center.

The new foundation year, he said, begins in September but it is really “a continuous cycle, someone can take part during any time of the year.” Fr. Walters can be reached at his office in the Archdiocesan Center in Newark at (973) 497-4350 for more information on the center.

Dedicated to adult faith formation, the archdiocesan Center for Ministerial Development emphasizes that spirituality and growth can be realized anywhere, by anyone, in any walk



Father Michael Walters

or stage of life, according to information provided on the Archdiocese of Newark's Web site (www.rcan.org). The goal of the ministerial development experience is to help each person embrace more fully his or her own life situation by bringing the good news of the Gospel into its midst.

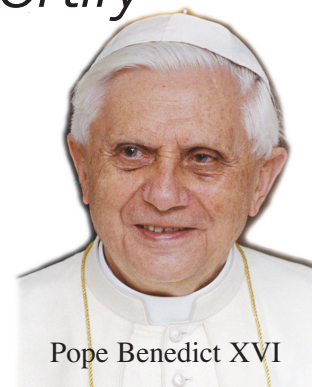
Courses held in fall, winter and spring cycles and offered at various parishes throughout the four counties of the archdiocese. Classes typically meet for two-hour sessions once a week, combining instruction with prayer, reflection and small-group sharing. Sessions are designed to focus on theological reflection.

Classes for Christian Foundations for Ministry (CFM) are offered in English, Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Spanish languages. CFM leads to recognition, celebrations and designation of those completing the three-year process with an archdiocesan Certificate of Completion and recommendation for specific ministries both within and beyond the parish communities.

A one-on-one discernment session is available for third-year participants who want to explore further ministerial opportunities. Participants completing the program are recognized at an archdiocesan commissioning ceremony presided over by Archbishop Myers or an auxiliary bishop of Newark.

THE POPE SPEAKS

Church should fortify faith values in politics



Pope Benedict XVI

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Catholic Church must strengthen its efforts to educate and assist lay Catholics involved in politics so that the positions they hold and the policies they promote reflect the values of the faith they profess, Pope Benedict XVI said.

The pope's comments came in the wake of the recent U.S. presidential elections. As reported, the pope sent his personal congratulations to President-elect Barack Obama (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Nov. 12).

Meeting members of the Pontifical Council for the Laity Nov. 15, the pope emphasized the need to educate lay Catholics to play their proper role in building a world of justice, charity and protection of human rights.

“In a special way, I reaffirm the necessity and urgency of the evangelical formation and pastoral accompaniment of a new generation of Catholics involved in politics, that they would be coherent with their professed faith,” morally upright, professional and passionate about serving the common good, he said.

Laypeople are called to fulfill their mission as followers and witnesses to Christ in government, social life, workplaces, schools and families, the pope said.

“Every environment, circumstance and activity in which we hope will shine the unity between faith and life is entrusted to the responsibility of the lay faithful, moved by a desire to communicate the gift of encountering Christ and the certainty of the dignity of the human person,” the pope said.

In a world where so many people are not aware of the beauty of the truth and the joy of being Christian, he said, the Church relies on laypeople to share “the treasure of grace and holiness, charity, doctrine, culture and works that make up the Catholic tradition.”

Pope Benedict also praised the council for the laity's commitment to promoting the dignity and participation of women in the Church and in the world.

“Man and woman, equal in dignity, are called to enrich each other in communion and collaboration, not only in marriage and family life, but also in society,” he said.



Advocate photo – M. Gabriele

BRAZILIAN MISSIONARIES—Most Rev. Edgar M. da Cunha, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark, celebrated Mass at Saint James Parish on Nov. 16 to mark the final blessings of an evangelization campaign dedicated to families of Brazilian origin that reside in the Ironbound section of Newark. Brazilian Redemptorist missionary priests (pictured, left to right) Father Roque Sotil Gabriel and Father Ademar Ferreira-Maia, visited the Newark parish to organize neighborhood spirituality groups, much like they do in their homeland. Themes include spiritual reconciliation and renewal of Baptismal promises. “We are a missionary congregation and our thrust is evangelization,” Father Clement Krug, parochial vicar at Saint James, said.

From

rotted mattress as mosquitoes swarmed around them. Inbranie fervently prayed as the smell of smoke and burnt wood wafted throughout the coop. "God, please protect us," Inbranie sobbed. "It's only the girls and I in here. We have nothing... we have nothing."

The Persauds were not only left unprotected from the elements, but vulnerable to thieves, looters and worse. Concerning the safety of her children, Inbranie said, "They're afraid 'cause anyone can come in on us. I can't sleep. Anything I hear I just jump up. Who am I gonna turn to for help? There's no neighbor I can call out to."

"Mommy, when are we gonna come out of here?" 5-year-old Lotoya Persaud frequently asks her mother. "I don't know what to do," her tearful mother responds. "I ain't got nothing."

*"This, rather,
is the fasting
that I wish...
sheltering the
oppressed..."*

(Isaiah 58:6a, 7b)

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You can help Food For The Poor build a single housing unit for just \$2,600 — and the benefits for those you will help are beyond measure. The homes we build are

Upon returning from church, the Persaud family discovered that soot and ash were all that remained of their home in Guyana — it had been consumed by a fire. In a desperate attempt to find shelter, Inbranie Persaud and her two daughters transferred chickens they were raising from a large pen to a smaller chicken coop.

The large pen then became their only shelter from the elements. Here Inbranie and her girls would

find little rest and even less peace. In a matter of two hours, this poor family's source of shelter went from little to nothing.

The girls continuously cried while their mother prayed over them the first night in the coop. The entire family slept on a



**"God, please protect us,"
Inbranie Persaud sobbed.
"We have nothing... we have nothing."**



little to nothing

After their home was destroyed by a fire, the Persaud family has been forced to live in a chicken coop.

basic, but they provide shelter from the elements and protection from other dangers. For the poorest of the poor, receiving the keys to a new home may be the most important event in their lives.

Founded in 1982, Food For The Poor works to end the suffering of the destitute by providing food, clean drinking water, basic shelter, medical supplies and education to our poorest brothers and

sisters in the Caribbean and Latin America. We strive to effectively and efficiently serve those in desperate need; more than 96% of all donations received go directly to programs that benefit the poor.

Inbranie found the remnants of her church hymnal amid the rubble of her former home. Standing atop its vacant grounds, Inbranie said, "I'm praying that we can come out of this [chicken coop] as fast as we can. I

really, really need help. I thank God for anyone who can help me."

The brochure enclosed in this publication contains more information on how you can help suffering families in need of safe housing. Every gift will make a tremendous difference to families in great need.

Please be a caring neighbor to families like Inbranie's by sending a

gift for housing today. One gift can alter the future of an entire family.

"Lord... When did we see You a stranger and welcome You..."

(Matthew 25:37b-38a)

Your gift of \$2,600 will build a home for a destitute family.

It costs only \$2,600, or a pledge of \$174 a month for 15 months, to build a new home for an unsheltered family. Other gifts will help build a new home by providing essential parts such as a roof or locking doors. Your gift can help answer the prayers of a desperately poor family that prays for safe shelter. Through your compassion and generosity, you can replace despair and fear with hope and human dignity.

Please, be as generous as you possibly can and send a gift to help provide a home for those in dire need. Please use the postage-paid envelope in the brochure located in this publication to send your gift today. May God bless you for your compassion.



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Meet Our School



Spirited future leaders thrive

Mother Seton Regional High School, founded in 1963, is committed to the “complete education” of the 425 young women who attend the Middle States Association accredited institution. Affiliated with the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, the mission of the Catholic girls’ high school is to “challenge, empower and inspire” its students and have them excel in “academics, personal growth and service to others” while learning in a diverse environment.

Sister Regina Martin, S.C., is proud of every student and stresses the importance of forming smart, capable young women. “They really are delightful girls,” she said. “These young women are the future of the Church and the future of our families.”

The school promotes “academic excellence and Seton Spirit,” a motto that is displayed throughout the halls. Assistant Principal Joan Barron believes the “Seton Spirit” is difficult to explain, but is felt throughout the school. “We focus on the student and their individual potential. You definitely catch the Seton Spirit quickly when you enter here.”

Academic excellence can be seen in the graduating class, where there was 100-percent college acceptance. The graduates were awarded over \$9.6 million in scholar-

ships to nearly 75 percent of the class. Two Mother Seton students—Kathleen Tower and Stephanie Wazzskiewicz—earned “Commended Student” status in the 2008 National Merit Program. Recent graduate Jackie Somogyi was a National Merit Scholar semifinalist.

Extra-curricular activities such as sports and arts programs give students a well-rounded education. That education also includes time-management skills and learning to interact with students outside the classroom. “The students are really interactive with each other and with faculty. Involved students don’t feel isolated,” Barron explained.

Seasonal activities, such as “Deck the Halls,” where 150 girls stay after school to decorate the facility for Christmas, foster school spirit. A major event for the year is Spirit Week, which this year began on Oct. 10. Points are tallied and the winning class receives bragging rights for the rest of the year. “There is no prize,” Sr. Regina said. “They are their own reward.”

Education in a same-sex environment allows the young women to fully express themselves, Sr. Regina believes. “The girls have a chance to excel. We focus on getting them to stand up for themselves. Camaraderie at this age is very important. These young women are leaders in offices

and are not afraid to show us who they are.”

Senior Meredith Lubas, 16, is student council president and captain of the school’s dance team. Serving as a student ambassador, Lubas visits local grammar schools to promote Mother Seton.

“This school is definitely unique. You want to be involved and the faculty gets involved as well. With all girls, you focus on yourself as an individual.”

Focused on a career in nursing, Lubas believes Mother Seton has equipped her for the future. “This school has definitely prepared me for the real world. You feel like you are on a level playing field with others around you.”

The connection between students and faculty was important throughout her jour-

ney in high school. She has fond memories of the spring “lock-in” where students and faculty spend the night at the school.

“It’s like a giant slumber party,” Lubas explained. “We all watch movies and there is a big campfire. The whole school is invited.

Junior Rachel del Valle, 15, is also a student ambassador and is on the school’s forensics team. Last May, she competed in a national forensics meet in Appleton, WI. “At the meet, I wasn’t really nervous. You learn to develop poise and how to talk to people.”

Another member of the forensics team, sophomore Deandra Cadet, 15, is involved with the school play. She appreciates the diversity at her school and learns from other students everyday.

“There are so many different kinds of people here. I love cultures and international relations. We have a cultural assembly where students dance, sing and perform in front of the school. It’s great to showcase your own culture.”

Mother Seton Regional High School
1 Valley Rd.
Clark, NJ 07066
Ph: 732-382-1952
www.motherseton.org



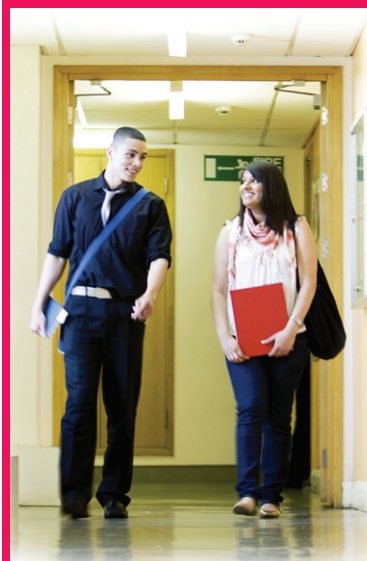
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Long, loving look below surface of the holiday season

BY FATHER ALBERT HOLTZ
Special to The Catholic Advocate

For most Americans the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day evokes a variety of images. There are the Norman Rockwell visions of excited children opening presents under a Christmas tree, of joyful family dinners and of horse-drawn sleighs on snowy country roads.

However, there are also less-pleasant images: overcrowded shopping malls, crammed parking lots and exhausted people who can't wait for the holidays to be over.

It is ironic that the "holiday season" coincides exactly with Advent—the Church's season devoted to quiet, reflective waiting and patient preparation of our hearts for the coming of Christ.

So when I was asked by a publisher to do a book about Advent, my first thought was to write something critical of the way we presently celebrate the holiday season, bemoaning the secularism, materialism and busyness that make it so hard for us to experience the true religious spirit. But very quickly another more appealing approach for a book suggested itself, one that comes more naturally to me as a Benedictine monk: to try

"seeing" the holidays instead of just "doing" them.

As a monk I've been taught to pay a lot of attention to "seeing" rather than to simply "doing;" that is, I try not to get so wrapped up in activities that I forget to reflect on the meaning of what I am doing. This is part of the reason that I spend time each day in *lectio divina* (holy reading), which entails a slow, meditative reading of scripture, listening for what a particular passage, phrase or word might be saying to me personally. While I'm doing this reading, I keep asking myself: "What is the Lord telling me in this particular passage?"

Over the years this questioning has become a habit, which carries over from holy reading into the rest of my life. For example I might ask myself: "What could the Lord be trying to teach me as I'm sitting here with this flat tire on the Garden State Parkway?" In other words, I try to cultivate a contemplative stance toward everyday events and the people around me, trying to see in them a deeper meaning, a message from God.

My favorite definition of contemplation is "a long, loving look at the real." The practical starting point for this kind of careful looking at reality is a pair of assumptions laid down by Saint Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480–ca. 546). His "Rule for Monks" still provides

the basis for the monastic life that Benedictine men and women follow, focusing on two fundamental principles. The first is God is present everywhere. For example, the monastery's tools should be treated with the same reverence as the sacred vessels of the altar. The second is Christ is present in everyone we meet—thus the Benedictine tradition of hospitality and the special care to be shown towards the sick, the poor and the elderly.

I decided that if the overwhelming reality in our lives during November and December is the inevitable busyness of the holidays, then rather than criticize this state of affairs, I would instead take a long, loving look

at some of the everyday things that make up the holiday season—from traffic jams to Christmas cookies. I set about writing my book of Advent meditations with the conviction that Saint Benedict was correct; that I would find in the busy, seemingly secular realities of the holidays plenty of deeper messages and spiritual meanings.

I was delighted with the results. The more meditations I wrote, the more I experienced the wisdom of Saint Benedict's two assumptions, and my careful loving looks at very ordinary things did indeed yield some beautiful insights about Advent and Christmas.

Continued on page 14



Father Albert Holtz

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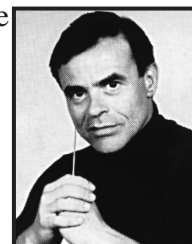
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Contemplation

Continued from page 13

Ultimately I wrote 37 reflections—one for every day from the first Sunday of Advent through Jan. 1. These reflections have now been published by New York-based Morehouse Publishing as a book entitled: “From Holidays to Holy Days: a Benedictine Walk Through Advent,” (Web site: www.morehousepublishing.org)

I would like to share the first meditation, one that had occurred to me many times over the years. It has to do with those holiday banners that decorate lampposts along certain streets during the holidays.

I’m driving down South Orange Avenue from Norfolk Street toward the center of downtown Newark when I notice how the holiday banners of candles,

snowmen and giant snowflakes on the lampposts lining both sides of the street form a colorful corridor. I smile at a vivid childhood memory of the Christmas decorations on South Orange Avenue in Vailsburg reaching across the roadway on wires to create a welcoming pathway of lights and garlands, like a festive outdoor tunnel leading everyone toward Christmas.

In the ancient days, when a king or an emperor was coming to visit a province, the roads along the route would be decorated in honor of the visiting dignitary and the citizens would come out of the city to escort the honored visitor through their gates. Such an official visit was called a *parousia* in Greek. In the New Testament, the word *parousia* came to refer to what would eventually become one of the most important themes of the Advent season: the second coming of Christ as King at the end of time. During Advent the Church celebrates the fact that for those who are prepared, the *parousia* will be a time of glory and reward, of resurrection and blessing.

As I continue down the banner-lined avenue, I wonder if Jesus will make His triumphal way down a street like this at His final

coming. I start to imagine the victorious Christ entering Newark along this long parade route—the curbs of South Orange Avenue lined with crowds shouting and clapping, waving and welcoming the Lord into our city as He comes not just on a royal visit but to deliver us all at last from the grip of sin, suffering and death.

Any ‘long, loving look’ at everyday life begins with the assumptions that I will find God present in each event and find Christ present in every person I meet.

In the distance, Newark’s skyline stands against a great bank of white clouds that glow in the mid-morning sunlight. Jesus’ words come to mind right away: “You will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and com-

ing on the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64). Maybe He will come riding on some mighty clouds, like those just above the Prudential building.

But as I drive past the last banner, I change my mind. No—I decide that I had it right the first time: the Lord will certainly come right down South Orange Avenue, welcomed by cheering crowds along a colorful corridor lined with holiday banners.

During the Advent and Christmas season, I encourage everyone to find a moment for quiet seeing instead of busy doing, for taking a careful, loving look at the people and events that fill your life. I pray that you may find in these moments the true message of this holy season: God is living among us and constantly offering each of us the gift of boundless, surprising, self-sacrificing love.

(Editor’s note: Father Albert Holtz, O.S.B., is a graduate of Saint Benedict’s Prep. He serves as Benedictine monk of Newark Abbey, where he is Novice Master and Director of Oblates. He is the author of five books of meditations and “From Holidays to Holy Days: a Benedictine Walk Through Advent” (2008) from Morehouse Publishing.)

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Knights planning food drive

WASHINGTON TWP.—Knights of Columbus Council 5427 will hold its annual food drive of non-perishable food items for local pantries on Saturday, Dec. 13. Personal hygiene items, such as shampoo and soap, also are being accepted.

Area residents interested in making donations can leave items in a bag at their front door before 10 a.m. on the day of the drive for collection by volunteers. Items also can be dropped off at the member’s room entrance at the rear of the Knights’ building located at 79 Pascack Rd.

Monetary donations also will be accepted and can be mailed to the Knights of Columbus Food Drive, 79 Pascack Rd., Washington Township, NJ 07676. Contact Jim Duthie at (201) 664-5313 or the Knights of Columbus Hall at (201) 664-0422 for more information.

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EAST ORANGE—The Orpheus Club Men’s Chorus of Ridgewood will perform Sunday, Dec. 14, 4 p.m., at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 200 Midland Ave., East Orange.

The chorus consists of 45 members under the musical direction of John Palatucci who has been with the group for nearly two decades. Ron Levy is the club’s pianist. In recent years Palatucci has extended the scope of the chorus’ repertoire to include, jazz, popular Broadway tunes, American and international folk songs and intricate classical choral pieces.



Submitted photo

The Orpheus Club Men’s Choir will perform Dec. 14, 4 p.m., at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, East Orange. To reserve tickets, priced at \$15, call the parish center at (973) 675-4444 or visit the church during weekend masses.



Submitted photo

HELPING THOSE IN NEED—Students at Saint Joseph Regional High School, Montvale, collected nearly 100 bags of groceries including cereal, pasta, canned goods and whole turkeys during the first two weeks of November for the school’s Thanksgiving Food Drive. Volunteers from the Office of Concern at Saint Cecilia’s Parish, Englewood, picked up the items gathered by the students and delivered them to needy families throughout the archdiocese.

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Immaculate Conception students experience adventure 'in orbit'

MONTCLAIR—Last summer, Immaculate Conception High School students Yanique Perkins and Tanysha Flood could not have been further from home. As a matter of fact, they were absolutely out of this world.

Actually, the students spent a week in "earth orbit," simulated at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL (Web site: www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall), the site where many rockets in U.S. space program are built.

The two students traveled to "Yellowhammer State" on a grant provided by a donor from the Archdiocese of Newark's Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC) (see related story on page 23). The SFIC provides children in need with the opportunity for a quality, values-based education through partial tuition scholarships to attend Catholic elementary and high school within Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union Counties.

Through an SFIC donor-designated program like Space Camp, low-income high school students have been attending Advanced Space Camp Academy for over 10 years.

Mark Walchak, senior manager of global packaging technologies for pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc., New York, provided the funds for the SFIC's Space Camp program. Walchak established this program at SFIC after his own experience at Space Camp with his daughter, in order to share the educational opportunity with students who could never afford such a program. He said his hope is that the experience will motivate archdiocesan students to pursue a career in science.

In addition to Perkins and Flood, science scholars



Submitted photo

Immaculate Conception High School seniors Tanysha Flood (left) and Yanique Perkins spent a week of their summer vacation in an "orbit" simulated by NASA.

from Saint Mary of the Assumption High School and Benedictine Academy (both in Elizabeth) were invited to attend one week of Space Camp. The archdiocesan students joined teenagers from around the country in watching videos of moonwalks, the space shuttle and the Pathfinder orbiter.

Things suddenly became interesting when their high-tech hosts recreated a series of mock crises at the orbiting International Space Station. NASA placed teams of students in a space-mission simulation and instructed them to react to situations that would occur at the space station.

Woodcliff Lake parish to host Christmas show

WOODCLIFF LAKE—Our Lady Mother of the Church Parish, 209 Woodcliff Ave., will present "A Christmas Celebration III, A Musical Experience of Joy, Peace and Love—From

Broadway to Galway" on Saturday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.

The concert, to be held in the church, will feature the Irish tenor, Ciaran Sheehan, the soprano Gay Willis and The Strings of Tara and

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Tickets are priced at \$35 per person. Call the parish at (201) 391-2826, or Irish Eyes, 1 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, at (201) 445-8585 to make reservations.

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Shelters

Continued from page 3

Hoboken, mothers in need are given material goods such as food, diapers and clothing from the main office. The young women are also referred to their shelters in New Jersey.

Good Counsel Homes offers a life-skills program that prepares the mothers for independent living and career development. Chris Bell, executive director, said 20 percent of the mothers in residence are from New Jersey and about half of the women already have a baby. Those women who are pregnant typically are at the end of their second trimester. The average mother in the shelter is 21 years old and many have not graduated from high school. Good Counsel Homes lets them continue their education to further their academic and employment goals.

Many of the women in the shelters have had at least one abortion. Bell said some did not know they had an option to go to a crisis pregnancy center. "They think of abortion as an 'unpardonable sin' and they cannot be forgiven. There are places to go for healing the emotional and spiritual scars."

Good Counsel Homes has a post-abortive counseling and referral program known as Lumina (phone 877-586-4621) that helps to heal the painful scars. He said most of the women are at the shelter with an "atonement baby," as a way to atone for a previous abortion. Like Several Sources, the young women are allowed to stay at the shelter for a year, but some chose to stay longer.

The Holy Spirit is at work in all of the homes, Bell believes. "I take

no credit for it," he said. "With God's help and prayer, we do the right thing. We can witness miracles everyday, whether it is a baby being born or a young mother studying for an exam. God is speaking with us all the time."

"Women who go against the tide and keep their baby become their baby's hero. I can't help but admire them. They are changing the culture of death into a culture of life."

— Kathy DiFiore

Bell cites an increasingly "decadent culture" for the numbers of unwed mothers in the country. Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) also have been on the rise since the inception of the organization. "A horrible, growing trend is the epidemic spread of STDs. About 80 percent of our young mothers have or were recently infected with at least one STD," Bell said.

Despite the many challenges, he believes that there are people fighting for the lives of young women and their children. "I believe that where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. The strength of the faithful helps Good Counsel Homes continue."

Father Joseph Meagher, the director of the Archdiocese of Newark's Respect Life Office,

believes that crisis-pregnancy shelters provide a great service to young women in need. Last year, Fr. Meagher spoke at a luncheon to benefit Birthright of Essex County (www.birtheright.org), a non-profit crisis pregnancy center in Bloomfield (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Feb. 21, 2007). Birthright provides free, confidential community and social services such as maternity homes, pre-natal care programs and free baby clothes.

Crisis pregnancy homes give women the opportunity to choose life that they would not have otherwise, according to Fr. Meagher. "These homes offer choice in the midst of a great challenge these women face," he said. "Once a child is conceived, there is a whole new reality. The pregnancy shelters are a concrete expression that God is always with them. The baby becomes as it always is—a blessing."

Earlier this year, in his Respect Life column (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Jan. 9), Fr. Meagher decried the "holocaust" and toll of abortion: 48 million "legal" surgical abortions since 1973.



Submitted photo

Maria, who came to the Several Sources Shelter at age 15, holds her six-month-old daughter, Lucia.

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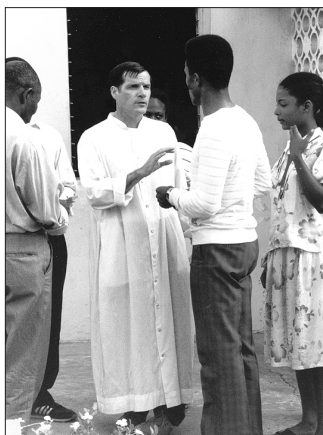
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ing St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the
Sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours.
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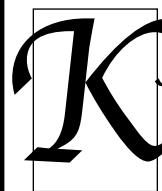
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SACRED HEART ANNIVERSARY— Sacred Heart Elementary School of Jersey City celebrated its 95th anniversary with a gala dinner and reception Oct. 26 at the Harborside Club Atrium. The gala raised over \$225,000 for the school's endowment fund. There were 250 people in attendance, representing Sacred Heart alumni, friends, faculty and parishioners of Saint Elizabeth. The evening program included awards and proclamations presented by the City of Jersey City and the New Jersey State Senate, followed by speeches and entertainment by the students of Sacred Heart School. Enjoying the golden sunset on the promenade of Harborside Club are (left to right) Msgr. Thomas O'Leary; Msgr. Donald Guenther; Sister Frances Salemi, SC, the principal of Sacred Heart School; Msgr. Robert Harahan; and gala chairs Christie and Tony de Nicola of Franklin Lakes. Tony de Nicola, a member of the archdiocesan Finance Council, serves on the board of Sacred Heart.

Holy Trinity wins 'gold' at olympics

WESTFIELD — In a repeat performance, Holy Trinity Inter-parochial School won first place in the 36th annual "Scholastic Olympics" hosted by Roselle Catholic High School, held Oct. 22.

Last year Holy Trinity also captured the overall top spot in the academic competition for eighth graders. Sixteen area Catholic elementary schools competed in the event and individual winners received Roselle Catholic scholarships.

Courtney McGovern and Kevin Sheridan won first place awards in English and Sean Puzzo captured first place in religion. Catherine Serzan was awarded first place in the forensics and first place was awarded to James Gilmartin in history.

Liam Hughes placed second in art. Third-place awards went to Hannah Clark and Kelly Glennon in current events and to Brian Cattaffe in science. Other Holy Trinity team members included Caroline Massa, James Potter, Lauren Monaco, Mary McDermott, Amanda Williams, Grace Kelly, Gregory Gagliardi and Douglas Tortorici. Eighth grade teachers Pat Byrne and George Polasky served as moderators for the Holy Trinity Team. Sister Maureen Fichner, S.S.J., is the principal of Holy Trinity (Web site: www.htisnj.com).

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Caldwell College to present Christmas Spectacular Dec. 5

CALDWELL—The Caldwell College Choir and Wind Ensemble will present a "Christmas Spectacular" concert Friday, Dec. 5, 8 p.m. in the student center auditorium.

Tickets are priced at \$10 per person. Contact the college's music department at (973) 618-3520 or (973) 618-3326 for reservations.

The choir will sing carols, spirituals, an opera chorus and selections from Bach and Rutter. The wind ensemble, joined by the High School Honors Band, will perform "O Magnum Mysterium" and "Quest for Peace."

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First Friday: 7:00 pm followed by Benediction

Holy Days: 9:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

• Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 7:00 p.m. •

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Parishes make plans to support Retirement Fund for Religious

NEWARK—Parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Newark will participate in the 21st annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which runs the week-end of Dec. 13-14.

Coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C., (Web site: www.usccb.org/nrro) the collection will address what is a projected \$9 billion retirement liability of Catholic religious orders.

Sister Margaret Thomas McGovern, O.P., who celebrated 60 years with the Sister of Saint Dominic of Caldwell last year, serves as the archdiocesan delegate for the religious and the local coordinator for the retirement fund's annual appeal.

Local religious communities that received grants through the national appeal include Saint

Dominic, Caldwell; Augustinian Recollects, West Orange; Dominican Nuns, Summit; Order of Friars Minor Capuchin and Dominican Nuns, Union City; Augustinian Recollect Sisters, Irvington; and Marist Brothers, Bayonne.

Ginny Cunningham, a consultant and project manager of the Retirement Fund for Religious, said the Archdiocese of Newark last year contributed \$646,276—nearly 4 percent below the previous year.

Last year the appeal distributed \$23 million in basic grants that benefited 482 of the nation's Catholic religious institutes of women and men. Since the first national annual appeal took place two decades ago, NRRO has raised more than \$550 million.

The Retirement Fund for Religious collection has been the most successful appeal in U.S. Catholic Church history.



Sister Margaret Thomas McGovern

Donations have enabled NRRO to seed and stabilize retirement funds at religious institutes, leverage local fund-raising, and assist capital campaigns. Grant awards have assisted investment and supported collaboration among religious institutes and helped ensure quality of life and adequate healthcare for thousands of women and

men religious formerly at risk.

However, Cunningham noted that since 1988 "the gap between assets available for retirement and the cost of living/health care for elderly women and men religious has widened from \$2 billion to \$9 billion and is expected to grow."

By 2023, the combined Social Security benefits of all retired religious is projected to be \$184 million a year, but cost of care will total more than \$1.6 billion annually, she cautioned.

There are more than 37,000 Catholic religious are now past the age of 70 throughout the United States. Some 4,900 women and men require skilled nursing care. Cunningham underlined the fact that while costs for care in a skilled nursing facility in the United States averages more than \$55,200 annually, "religious institutes have kept their average cost of skilled nursing care to \$51,361."

Ninety-five percent of donations are awarded to religious institutes through basic grants. The groups' annual reports can be viewed online by visiting the Web site: www.retiredreligious.org.



Elizabeth Weishapl

Trinitas honors Weishapl

ELIZABETH—Elizabeth Weishapl, who has devoted more than 37,000 volunteer hours to Trinitas Hospital during the last 30 years, was honored recently as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program's (RSVP) Volunteer at the annual Senior Corps/RSVP luncheon.

Weishapl is a member of the board of the Trinitas Hospital Auxiliary and has been involved in numerous activities that benefit the hospital. Serving as chairperson of fund-raising for the auxiliary, she plans vendor sales, cake sales and recreational bus trips.

She is active at Holy Spirit Parish, Union, as a eucharistic minister, a member of the Rosary Society Welcoming Committee, and trip coordinator for the 60-Plus Club. A resident of Union, Weishapl also served as a volunteer at Union Hospital until it closed last year. She recruited a large number of that hospital's volunteers to join the Trinitas volunteer effort. For this and many other activities, she was recognized with the Morris Rudner Volunteer Award.

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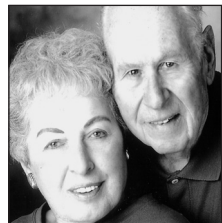
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ROLLING UP THEIR SLEEVES—

More than 90 faculty and students at Don Bosco Prep, Ramsey, took part in a recent Red Cross blood drive at the school. Organized by students David Bishop and Ryan Kozar, the event was conducted with the help of 32 student and faculty volunteers. Among those donating was Don Bosco senior William "Billy" Kenny.



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Blood drive set Dec. 10

NEWARK—Saint Michael's Medical Center will hold a blood drive Wednesday, Dec. 10, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Mother Schervier Hall, 268 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The blood drive is co-sponsored by The Blood Center of New Jersey, which will give each donor a \$15 gas card. To donate blood, a person must be at least 17 years old. Donors are advised to eat a meal before giving blood.

Rodriguez garners NJSOP award

HAMILTON — The New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians (NJSOP), at its annual convention in Atlantic City, named Dr. Rodolfo Rodriguez of Ridgefield Park optometric “Physician of the Year.”

A graduate of Essex Catholic High School and Seton Hall University, South Orange, Rodriguez is certified in oral ther-



Submitted photo

Dr. Rodolfo Rodriguez, left, a product of archdiocesan schools, is this year’s recipient of the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians’ “Physician of the Year Award.” Making the presentation at the organization’s recent annual convention is Dr. Michael Veliky, president of NJSOP.

apeutics as well as the treatment and management of ocular disease. He has been a NJSOP member 26 years and serves on the organization’s board of directors.

Licensed in optometry since 1982, Rodriguez received his doctorate from the State University of New York, State College of Optometry. In 1977 he earned a bachelor of science degree in biol-

ogy from Seton Hall University.

Rodriguez is president of the Hudson County Society of Optometric Physicians in addition to being a member of the American Optometric Association, American Public Health Association and several other professional groups. He is an assistant clinical professor at the State University of New York, State College of Optometry.

According to NJSOP (Web site: www.njsop.org), the Physician of the Year award is in recognition of someone who demonstrates a mode of practice that shows deep commitment to patients. In addition the recipient must have shown concern and involvement to NJSOP and made a significant contribution” to the community.



FIGHTING BREAST CANCER — Lois V. Greene, director of the Cathedral Regional Cancer Center at Saint Michael’s Medical Center, Newark, was among 700 guests at the recent Susan G. Komen Fight for the Cure North Jersey Affiliate’s 12th annual “Pink Tie Party,” which was held at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. The gala raised funds for breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment programs for the medically underserved and uninsured. Greene serves as president of the board of trustees for the Susan G. Komen Fight for the Cure North Jersey Affiliate. Launched in 1982, Susan G. Komen Fight for the Cure has become the world’s largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists. To date nearly \$1 billion has been invested making the organization the largest source of nonprofit funds in the fight against breast cancer.

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SFIC taps Gerard O'Connor to direct scholarship effort

NEWARK—Gerard T. O'Connor, a career executive with 20 years of experience in the fields of fund-raising and development, has been named executive director of The Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC), affiliated with the Archdiocese of Newark.

A member of Saint Joseph Parish, Maplewood, O'Connor will guide the daily operations of a 25-year-old organization committed to providing educational opportunities and choice for economically disadvantaged children.

His responsibilities will include creating development initiatives for the organization as SFIC strives both to meet current requests for tuition assistance and ever-growing demand for financial aid for attendance at private and parochial elementary and secondary schools. In the past four years, the SFIC has made available more than \$8 million in scholarship awards.

"Throughout my career, I have seen clearly that people involved in Catholic school education are committed to their mission, and that inner-city children who attend Catholic schools acquire the skills, character and determination required to be successful not only in school, but also in life," O'Connor said.

"I'm proud that last year the fund was able to make the dream of a Catholic school education a reality for some 2,000 children in Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties," he continued. "At the same time, however, we were not able to help more than 1,500 others who applied for scholarship assistance. My immediate goal is to enlist the support and commitment of new donors to the fund so that we can say 'yes' to even more children and parents."

"Gerry O'Connor's experience not only in fund-raising, but also in creating key programs to enhance organizational development, make him a natural choice for executive director," Joseph J. Oakes, III, board chairman of the SFIC, said.

Prior to joining SFIC, O'Connor served as senior vice president for development of the New Jersey Network (NJN) Foundation, and was responsible for implementing the first major-gift program for NJN members and viewers. From 2001 through 2004, he worked as executive vice president of Trinity Fund Raising Consultants, Commack, NY, an organization that designs and manages capital campaigns and programs for Catholic institutions nationwide. He also served in a similar capacity with The Martin J. Moran Co., New York, a national development consulting group specializing in assisting Catholic institutions in meeting capital and other development needs.

A resident of Maplewood, O'Connor holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business management from SUNY College at Old Westbury, NY, serves as a member of the Development Committee and co-chair of the "Opportunity of a Lifetime" capital campaign at Mount Saint Dominic Academy, Caldwell.



Gerard T. O'Connor



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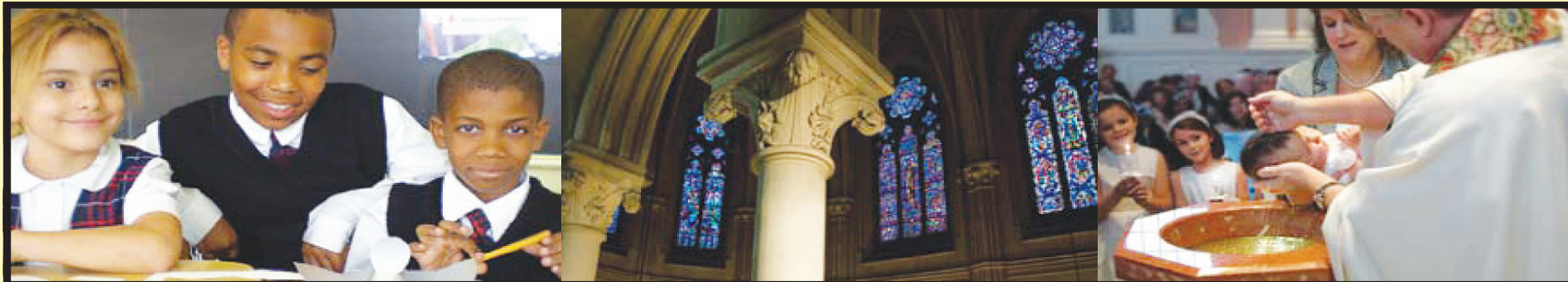
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