

THE CATHOLIC ADVOCATE

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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Family affected by school closing finds new home in another Catholic school

By Esmeralda Cameron
Public Relations Manager

For Tom and Mona Rundle, preparing children to return to school in the fall was never so stressful. But when the Teaneck couple found out their beloved St. Joseph's Academy in Bogota was one of three Catholic schools in Bergen County that would not reopen in September, they were hit with mixed emotions.

"When we first received the news about the closure of St. Joseph Academy in Bogota, we were all so disappointed and surprised," said Tom Rundle. "My entire family loved St. Joseph Academy and the news hit us out of left field. Then we found out that several other schools were also not reopening this fall. It was nerve-wracking at first, and everyone was scrambling for a solution."

The Rundles immediately started their research knowing the only option they wanted for their three sons, Thomas (13), Theron (12) and Mason (9), was to enroll them in another local Catholic elementary school.

"It was a very stressful time. Parents began communicating with each other, asking, 'Where are your kids going?' and 'What are you going to do as a parent,'" Mona Rundle recalled. "We just knew we wanted our children to continue with their Catholic education because their faith formation is very important to us. Our fear was choosing another school that was going to possibly close soon and whether or not we would be able to enroll all three of



Photo courtesy of the Rundle family

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Racism violates human dignity

In November 2018, we bishops of the United States issued a pastoral letter against racism entitled *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love: A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*. Although our conference has spoken out against racism many times in the past, we believed that the increasing incidents of violence and injustice in our nation warranted a renewed commitment on our part to call attention to the evils of racist thought, speech and actions. The events of recent months make this clear teaching more important than ever.

According to our pastoral letter, "Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and—all too often—hatred."

This fundamental truth that all are made in God's image and, therefore, all are equal in the sight of God grounds all Catholic social teaching. Racist attitudes and actions violate human dignity and are deeply offensive to God and to all our sisters and brothers in the human family.

Historically, many groups, such as the Irish, Italians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Poles, Jews, Chinese and Japanese, have been subjected to racial and ethnic prejudice in our country. Many groups are still experiencing prejudice, including rising anti-Semitism, the discrimination many Hispanics face today and anti-Muslim sentiment. Especially significant are the unique experiences of Native and African American communities, which suffered from terrible, systematic abuses in the past and whose effects continue to cause widespread suffering today.

What can we do to overcome the evil of racism and to ensure that the positive steps we take are not eroded over time by a return to racist attitudes and actions? As we write in



Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love:

"Love compels each of us to resist racism courageously. It requires us to reach out generously to the victims of this evil, to assist the conversion needed in those who still harbor racism and to begin to change policies and structures that allow racism to persist. Overcoming racism is a demand of justice, but because Christian love transcends justice, the end of racism will mean that our community will bear fruit beyond simply the fair treatment of all."

When each man, woman and child is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve, a whole host of cultural, economic and political problems will be solved. No longer will individuals or groups feel the need to inflate their egos by condescending or abusive attitudes and behaviors. The results will include stronger families, communities that are at peace with their neighbors and a nation that is healthy and prosperous.

Racism, whether subtle or blatant, is a poison that we cannot tolerate. Our Lord challenges us to refrain from judging one another, to love everyone and to treat one another as we would want to be treated. As Pope Francis teaches (see below): "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life."

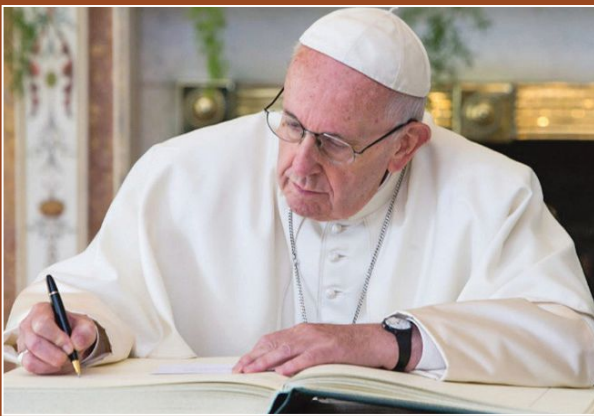
In our pastoral letter, we say: "Racism arises when, either consciously or unconsciously, a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful. Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Mt 22:39)."

Let's pray that the grace of Christ will give us the courage to acknowledge the sin of racism. Let's work hard to eliminate racism wherever it exists today and to prevent it from returning in the days ahead.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

A message from Pope Francis: Words of challenge and hope



I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd. We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.

At the same time, we have to recognize that the violence of recent

nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence, and so much is lost.

Let us pray for the consolation of their grieving families and friends and let us implore the national reconciliation and peace for which we yearn. May Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, intercede for all those who work for peace and justice in your land and throughout the world. (Pope Francis, General Audience, June 3, 2020)

My prayer for you

Mary, friend and mother to all, through your Son, God has found a way to unite Himself to every human being, called to be one people, sisters and brothers to each other.

We ask for your help in calling on your Son, seeking forgiveness for the times when we have failed to love and respect one another. We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism and to build a just society.

We ask for your help in following your Son, so that prejudice and animosity will no longer infect our minds or hearts but will be replaced with a love that respects the dignity of each person.

Mother of the Church, the Spirit of your Son, Jesus, warms our hearts: pray for us. Amen. ✠

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Archdiocese increases church attendance capacity

The Archdiocese of Newark announced Sept. 1 that the attendance limit for its 212 churches in Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties has increased. Based on the latest New Jersey public official guidelines, the number of faithful now permitted indoors for public liturgies and baptisms, weddings and funerals has increased to 150 participants or 25 percent of the church's capacity, whichever is lower. The guidelines remain in place to ensure the safety and well-being of the faithful.

All protocols from Phase Three of the archdiocesan Directives for Re-Opening Churches remain in force. Masks still are required, and social distancing continues to be enforced. Parishes continue to sanitize pews and other common surfaces after each Mass.

Mass attendance remains voluntary. Those who do not feel safe or who have compromising health conditions should not participate at this time.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days remains in place, and many parishes continue to offer livestream Masses on their websites or Facebook pages to maintain a spiritual connection with their parish communities. For a full

list, visit www.rcan.org/parish-mass-livestreams-and-more.

The archdiocese remains committed to the health and well-being of its

people and will continue to monitor trends and consult with the expert guidance of public health, state and federal officials and will adjust restrictions as

appropriate.

More information about COVID-19 protocols is available at www.rcan.org/covid19.



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Profit over safety, especially in pandemic, 'unjust,' says Labor Day statement

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Given the “somber” realities imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, for companies to put profits over safety is “unjust,” said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ committee on domestic justice and human development, in the U.S. Bishops’ annual Labor Day statement.

Even before the pandemic, “a significant number of Americans were trapped in low-wage jobs, with insecurity around food, housing and health care, and with little opportunity for savings or advancing in their career,” Archbishop Coakley said in the statement, issued Sept. 2. “Those same workers have been hit particularly hard, and, it is devastating to say, many have paid with their life. As one New York subway worker put it: ‘We are not essential. We are sacrificial.’”

Archbishop Coakley quoted Pope Francis in his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, saying: “Today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy

kills.”

“What was wrong before the pandemic has been accelerated now,” Archbishop Coakley said. “What may have been hidden to some is now revealed. Against this backdrop, the murder of George Floyd was like lighting a match in a gas-filled room.”

Pope Francis, who is currently writing a series of reflections on the pandemic, noted in an address based on these writings: “We are all frail, all equal, all precious. May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us: the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family!”

“Injustice does not need to have the last word. The Lord came to free us from sin, including the sins by which we diminish workers and ourselves,” Archbishop Coakley said in the Labor Day statement, titled: “Behold, I make all things new”—Rebuilding a Dignified Post-COVID World.”

“Beginning with our own decisions, we might ask when we buy goods from stores or online: Do we know where they came from? Do we know whether

the people who made them were treated with dignity and respect? Was the workplace made safe during the pandemic, and did workers receive a just wage? If not, what can we do to remedy this?” he wrote.

Government has a part to play as well, according to the archbishop. “Policymakers must address the outstanding needs that people have around nutrition, housing, health care, jobs and income support, as I and my brother bishops have written repeatedly. People are hurting, and some of the relief measures of previous legislation are expiring. Congress and the White House should reach a deal that prioritizes protecting the poor and vulnerable.”

Archbishop Coakley also lauded the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), the U.S. Bishops’ domestic anti-poverty program, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

“Founded to do more than meet emergency needs, CCHD supports low-income-led efforts to address poverty, create good jobs and be a force for transformation in families and communities. Over its history, CCHD has dis-

tributed over 8,000 grants worth more than \$400 million to help create grassroots change,” he said. “Pope Francis has made the work of the popular movements that CCHD supports a key theme in his pontificate.”

Archbishop Coakley cited one example of how CCHD-funded organizations have stepped up since the pandemic was declared in March.

“Workers in meat processing plants are faced with dangerous working conditions as companies fail to provide basic protections from COVID-19 or do not make sufficient workplace modifications to reduce risk of exposure to the virus. The CCHD-supported Rural Community Workers Alliance has helped organize workers in rural Missouri, pressuring employers to take these concerns seriously and advancing the dignity of workers,” he said. “These groups, as well as labor unions and other worker associations, make an invaluable contribution to the safety and well-being of workers.”

In addition to practicing solidarity with low-wage workers, “we can offer charitable assistance to all those who have become unemployed during this time by donating to local food banks and Catholic Charities agencies,” Archbishop Coakley said. “Catholic Charities helped 13 million people last year, and the demand has increased 30-50 percent so far during the pandemic and is anticipated to increase.”



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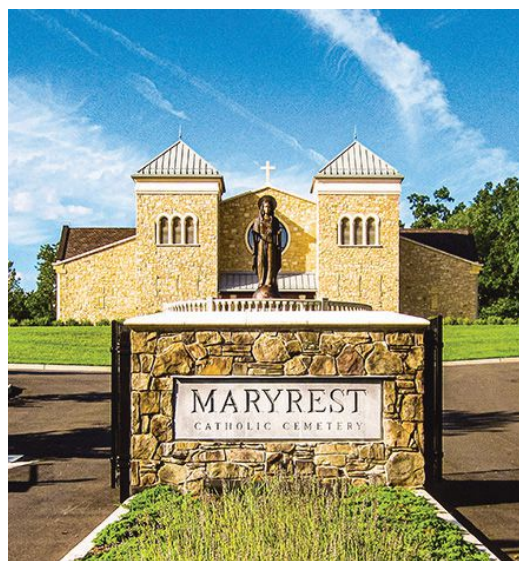
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Parish food pantry provides critical resources for those in need

By Esmeralda Cameron
Public Relations Manager

Before the coronavirus pandemic, catechetical leader Maura Roem from St. Andrew Parish in Westwood would have never thought she would be coordinating her parish's food pantry. When several volunteers could no longer help due to COVID-19 health concerns, she volunteered to take on the extra job responsibility.

"Back in March, the food pantry was definitely not on my radar, but I knew it was important to support this critical ministry, and the need over the last five months has grown beyond our expectations," Roem explained.

The food pantry was originally open twice per month prior to the pandemic. Due to the growing need from the community, the service is now available every Thursday evening. The parish also receives donations of breakfast and lunch bags to distribute.

"During this pandemic, our food pantry has been helping so many people who are underemployed, unemployed and furloughed from work," Roem said. "We are seeing the need grow greater every day. Before the pandemic, our food pantry volunteers would serve 15 to 20 families twice a month. Now we are serving 55 to 65 families each week."



Along with Roem, today, the daily operations of the food pantry are supported by the entire parish staff, including Msgr. Joseph R. Chapel; youth ministry secretary Mary Keegan and her husband, James, who is also a parish trustee; fellow trustee member Frances Borg; and the parish maintenance team.

Msgr. Chapel said he is thankful that he could retain his staff during these uncertain times due to the Paycheck Pro-

tection Program (PPP) loans. "It was essential that we had the PPP resources to keep staff in place in order to be able to continue to provide the critical resources of our food pantry that helps so many in our community who are financially struggling," Msgr. Chapel said. "In order to limit the number of people in contact with one another, the staff took on many good works that were normally run by volunteers."

An active member of the parish for more than 30 years, Borg has seen the staff rise to the challenge during the pandemic. However, many of those helping are older with underlying health concerns.

"If we didn't have the PPP funds, I don't know how we would've been able to continue because so much of the food pantry coordination to receive these donations are possible thanks to our parish staff. It's a blessing to have our maintenance team onsite to help move perishable items into our walk-in refrigerated area," Borg explained.

The team receives donations of perishable items twice a week, including fresh fruits and vegetables from Trader Joe's supermarket, and monthly non-perishable donations from Goya Foods and Catholic Relief Services. The staff bags and organizes the items on Wednesday mornings.

"Thanks to the generosity of donations from parishioners and local businesses, each person who stops by the food pantry is given a bag filled with perishable items and another bag filled with non-perishables, based on the size of the family," Roem said. "The greatest need has been for items sometimes taken for granted: butter, milk, eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables. It's a blessing each time we receive food donations to restock our pantry shelves."

Borg noted that the demographics of the diverse parish community have changed over the years and now serves a growing Hispanic community. "I've also seen many young couples with children who've [recently] lost their jobs. We try to get them the items they need as soon as possible to help support them during this financially difficult time" she said. "It's amazing how many in our community as a result of the pandemic are suffering from underemployment or unemployment."

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics, New Jersey has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. In a press release issued by the State Department of Labor and Workforce Development, \$10.7 billion in benefits have been issued to unemployed and underemployed New Jersey workers, with nearly 1.4 million initial claims since mid-March. Bergen County, which in past years has been ranked as one of the wealthiest counties in the state, has not escaped the financial impact of the pandemic.

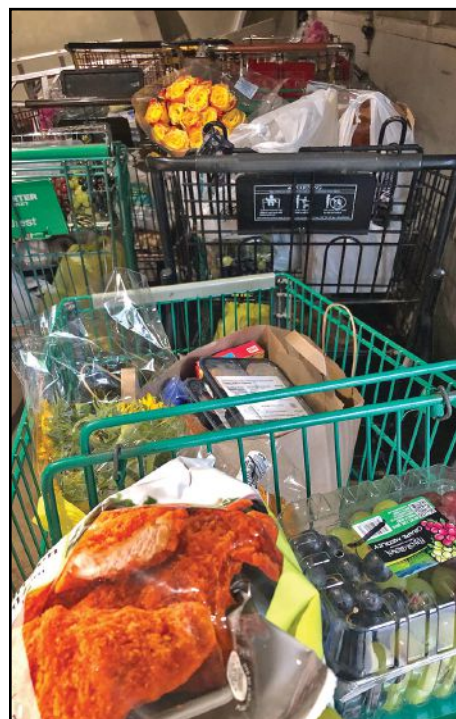
"Part of me is very fulfilled and an-



Photos courtesy of St. Andrew Parish

other part very sad," Borg explained. "There are people coming to us for help who never expected they would have to come to a food pantry. The need is just so great."

When Tropical Storm Isaias hit New Jersey on Aug. 4, St. Andrew Parish and neighboring communities were left without power. It was also the day the food pantry team normally receives large donations of perishable food. Even with the challenges of working in the dark, the staff managed to shelf and bag the donations.



"We still had to provide the critical services of the food pantry to our most vulnerable populations," Borg said. "We actually had at least five new families come to us in one week because the food pantry they normally visited was closed due to the storm."

One woman who has benefited from the food pantry, who prefers to remain anonymous, said the service has been "heaven sent." Back in April, she was furloughed from one of her part-time jobs, cutting her income in half. She also lost power for several days due to the intense storm.

"I've been a parishioner of St. Andrew for about 20 years and I am so grateful for the support I've received from the parish staff. The pandemic has greatly impacted my family," she explained. "I used to go to the food pantry once a month and now I am going every other week. Between the pandemic, my job furlough and the storm, it's been very challenging as a single mother raising two teenagers. My faith and daily prayer have been helping me get through each day."

Through these trying times, Roem believes working at the food pantry has also brought the parish closer together. "I feel we are giving out more than bags filled with food. It's a sense of belonging, letting people know we care about them and giving others faith and hope," she said. "I believe we are all called to be caretakers of the Lord's vineyard."

New homeless shelter to provide improved services for the community

By Kelly Marsicano
Associate Publisher

The Archdiocese of Newark will soon be getting a new state-of-the-art homeless shelter in Jersey City that will provide greater resources and assistance for the marginalized.

The new 60,000-square-foot building will be constructed across the street from St. Lucy's Emergency Shelter, which is operated by Catholic Charities.

Since 1986, Catholic Charities has leased the Grove Street property from the archdiocese. The property consists of the former St. Lucy church building, rectory and school. The school is utilized as a 120-bed homeless shelter for single men and women, and the former rectory serves as a transition home for those afflicted with

AIDS. Five affordable housing units were also constructed across the street on the site of the former parish parking lot. In June 2008, the archdiocesan college of consultors agreed to once again extend the lease to Catholic Charities for an additional 10 years.

"The need for homeless [services] has grown," said John Westervelt, chief executive officer of Catholic Charities. "We're the only shelter in Jersey City, the largest in Hudson County and the oldest in the state of New Jersey."

According to Steve Belloise, the executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Property Management, in September 2015, the archdiocese conceptually approved an agreement between Catholic Charities, the city of Jersey City and 619 Grove Street Corporation, an LLC

formed by developers, for the exchange of property and subsequent development rights, pending zoning, historical and planning board approval, which was ultimately granted this past summer.

The church side of the property will be sold to developers based on increased zoning density provided by the municipality of Jersey City, which has authorized construction of 443 new market-rate housing

units, Belloise said. In turn, on the parking lot side of the property, the developers will construct a new homeless shelter, which will be designed by an architect retained by Catholic Charities who is familiar with their needs and programming.

"The setting will include 150 beds, 14 units of transitional housing for men with HIV, five supportive housing units for homeless families and 15 permanent affordable housing studios," explained Westervelt, noting the bigger facility will also allow for more services and additional staff. "It's a benefit for the homeless people for us to better assist them. And a positive for us to get people moved onto permanent housing, which is the ultimate goal."

Construction of the new shelter is estimated to cost \$15 million, which will be covered by the developers. The contract stipulates that the new building will be completed prior to the razing of the current shelter location. The current residents on the parking lot side will be relocated nearby.

Westervelt pointed out that that was an important stipulation of the deal. "There's no place for us to relocate if we don't have

the new building up and running right away," he said. "Our building would be fully built before they touch across the street."

The property will be sub-divided. The developer will acquire the former church, rectory and school, of which each façade will be incorporated into the new design. The archdiocese will retain ownership of the parking lot side where the



Photos courtesy of Claremont Development

Rendering of the new St. Lucy Emergency Shelter



Rendering of the new apartment building

new shelter will be constructed and subsequently leased to Catholic Charities for 99 years.

"I think overall they'll be ecstatic to be in a new building with more services," Westervelt said of the clients who will utilize the facility.

"Jersey City has been very supportive. The mayor has been very supportive. It's going to be something the community will be proud of," he added.

Groundbreaking is expected to take place before the end of this year. The new shelter is anticipated to open during the second half of 2022. Construction of the market-rate housing units should be completed during 2024.

New cathedral rector reflects on celebrating Mass

Father Bismarck Chau, the new rector of the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, recently reflected in a video on one of the things he loves about celebrating Mass: the people. "It's beautiful to see that each Sunday the congregation is growing more and more," he said.

Father Chau, who began the new role on Aug. 1, also described the Eucharist as the "summit of our faith," and "the core of what we believe."

Here is his entire reflection:

Q: What is one thing you love about celebrating Mass?

A: As a priest, I've been celebrating Mass every day, even during the lockdown. But there's one thing that's missing though: the people. But now it's getting better. It's beautiful to see that each Sunday the congregation is growing more and more. But as a priest, I continue to celebrate the Eucharist and offer it for the people of God. To me, that has been a consolation that not being able to see their faces, not being able to be with them at the Eucharist, I bring them into my heart, and I offer them to the Lord. So, for me it has been a great blessing to be able to celebrate Mass for the congregation, whether in private or now as a community. But they are always in my heart.

Q: Why should we attend Mass?

A: The Eucharist is the summit of our faith, the core of what we believe and exist. It has been almost six months since the lockdown and many of us have not been able to go to church yet. Just remember that Christ is waiting for us. He's waiting for you to come and become one with Him in truly receiving His body and blood. Maybe as we have been away from the church not being able to gather as a community, as a whole and entire community, how hungry are you for the Lord? How hungry are you to receive Him



Advocate photo-Jai Agnisi

and His body and blood—to be one with Him in that intimate relationship with Jesus, our Lord? I invite you, take courage. Come to church. Take all the necessary precautions to be safe. We are doing that for you. Jesus is waiting for you in the Eucharist.

To view the video, visit www.rcan.org/news.

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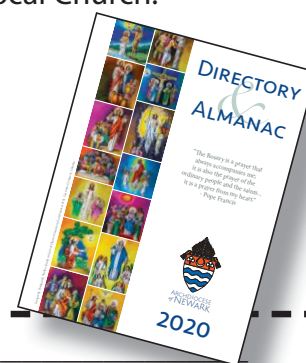
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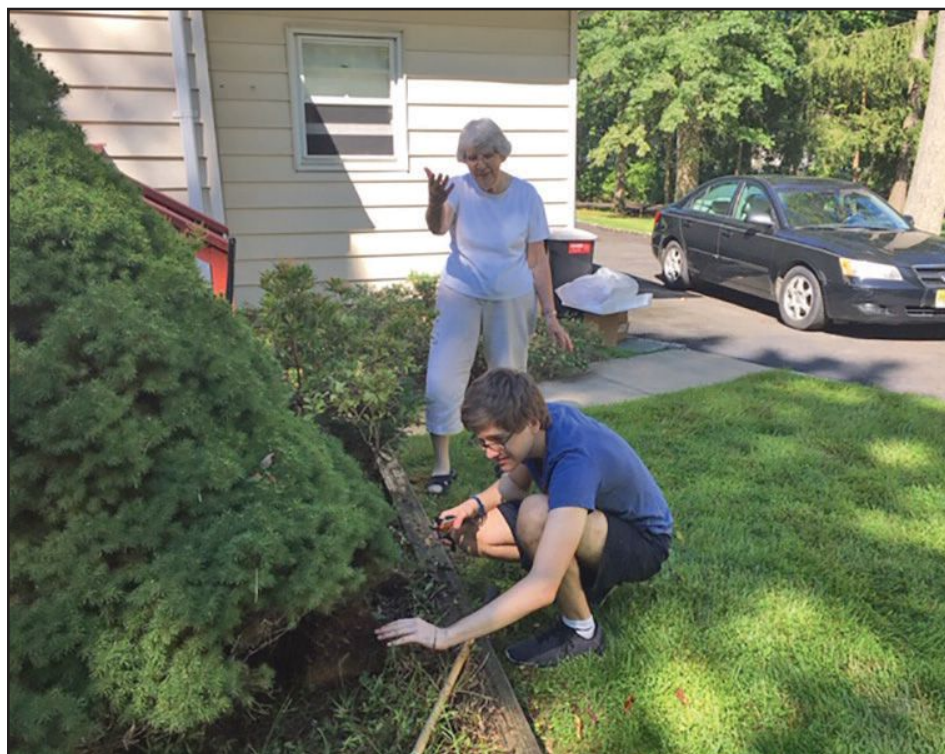
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Teens create mission close to home

By Jai Agnish
Communications Manager

When this year's mission trip to eastern Kentucky was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, teens at Little Flower Parish in Berkeley Heights decided to make their local community their mission instead.

For the past few weeks, several of the young adults from the parish have been volunteering to mow lawns, trim bushes, rake and paint. While it's not exactly "Mission Possible Kentucky," the experience is helping young volunteers live out discipleship locally, said Father Matthew Dooley, the parish's parochial vicar, who organized the summer project.



Photos courtesy of Father Matthew Dooley

"Our hope is to help the teenagers appreciate the good work they do as stirrings of the Holy Spirit in their lives in addition to the volunteer work. That in giving of themselves, they are nurturing the fullness of who God desires them to be," he said.

Once Father Dooley put the word out on social media, the calls started coming in. The group's first project was storm cleanup at an elderly couple's home after Tropical Storm Isaias moved through the area. While the work took about 35 minutes, the group spent another 35 minutes visiting with the couple on their backyard patio.

"This powerful ministry of presence can be more valuable than the cleanup work," Father Dooley said.

The idea was to respond primarily to the needs of seniors in the parish. However, groups of young adults also completed maintenance work at the parish center and painted for the town. Father Dooley celebrated Mass in the parish parking lot to kick off the workday at the parish center.

Some teens struck up "pen pal" relationships with seniors.

"Everybody likes a mission trip because it's a week away. It's fun," Father Dooley said. "All those things are good, but you can do mission work at your home, too."



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Parish catechetical leaders find ways to teach faith from home

By Melissa McNally
Editor

Keeping faith alive during a pandemic can be challenging, especially for families with young children. Rising to the challenge are parish catechetical leaders tasked with helping to teach children about their Catholic faith.

"The parish catechetical leaders had to switch very quickly to virtual learning," explained Ron Pihokker, director of the Archdiocese of Newark Catechetical Office. "They have been very creative."

Parish catechetical leaders typically do not meet during the summer. The Catechetical Office arranges county meetings throughout the year and a two-day retreat in June. But during the pandemic, Pihokker and his team organized monthly virtual county meetings for catechetical leaders. The teachers were "at a loss," he said, and needed more guidance during lockdown.

"There was more cooperation and presence online," he described. "They really hit the ground running."

Parish educators used programs including Flipgrid, Google Classroom and Zoom to create unique learning experiences.

Patty Rodriguez, associate director of catechist formation and enrichment for the archdiocese, echoed Pihokker's sentiment.

"Accompanying the parish catechetical leaders throughout the archdiocese during

this time has been truly lifegiving and fills me with hope for our Church," she said. "It has been inspirational to witness their tireless efforts in serving their parish families. It is a joy and privilege to learn alongside them and offer them support as they are determined to overcome whatever challenges they encounter."

Pihokker explained that religious education classes will remain remote for the fall. "We are all anxious to return to in-person learning, but we are trying to not expose larger groups of kids to the virus," he said. "Religious education programs draw kids from all different schools, heightening the risk of spreading the virus. Many of our catechists are older and some have compromised immune systems. We don't want to endanger anyone for these brief sessions."

The pandemic has been a tragedy, he stated, but also allowed for opportunities for families to become more involved in their children's faith formation. "I often say that catechetics is a three-legged stool—the parish, school and family are all integral to educating children in faith. Catechetics can't exist without the parents' participation. At baptism, the family enters a contract to raise their children in faith," he explained. "Virtual learning during the pandemic has provided an opportunity for both children and parents to share their faith together."

Cathy Hunt, director of religious education at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Ridgewood, joined with two other local parishes to participate in a week-long virtual summer catechetical program.

Hunt and her team collaborated with catechetical leaders Maryann Facciola and Michelle Torpey from St. Catharine Parish in Glen Rock and Pat Keehaghan from Our Lady Mother of the Church in Woodcliff Lake.

From June 24 through July 2, around 800 children participated in the remote faith learning experience. Each day consisted of a virtual classroom program with Zoom webinar lessons pre-recorded by their religious education teachers. There were also at-home components where each student and their families were asked to complete an activity together. Each parish's priests also recorded an opening prayer for each day of the summer program.

"We wanted to do the program in an organized way," Hunt explained. "During May and June, the six teachers recorded 21 lessons on Flipgrid. Each child would watch three videos a day and participate in live virtual music classes. I had 115 kids in my class."

Hunt heard positive feedback, especially about activities that encouraged participation from the whole family. Each student had a list of activities to choose from each day. Suggested tasks included baking cook-

ies for essential workers or playing a quiz game together.

"We didn't want it to seem like school," Hunt said. "The children already had three months of online learning and we didn't want to make them write too much. We wanted to create a fun, hands-on approach to learning. The parents got really involved."

The summer program closed with livestreamed Mass at St. Catharine with all the directors of religious education participating.

The three parishes plan to keep working together in the fall. The program will also be shared with other diocesan catechetical leaders. "There's no need to reinvent the wheel," Hunt explained. "Other parishes should be able to use your lessons and activities. The archdiocesan Catechetical Office did a really excellent job keeping us all connected during the pandemic."

Colleen Jagde, director of religious education at St. Anne Parish in Fair Lawn, has also kept in close contact with her students during quarantine.

"I was driven by the fear that people would lose touch with their faith," she said.

The parish provided YouTube videos of pre-recorded children's Liturgy of the Word. Parish priests would recite the Gospel and homily and send the videos to religious education families.

"We had Together Tuesday where reli-

GOD BLESS SR. REGINA MC TIERNAN

our Catechetical Leader and her team of catechists. Have a wonderful year of teaching the faith to our youth.



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Photo courtesy of Colleen Jagde

The Cevallos family, parishioners at St. Anne Parish in Fair Lawn, made cards for health care workers at St. Joseph Medical Center in Paterson. The project was one of the activities the parish catechetical leaders created for their students.

religious education students would meet with us virtually. We also sent out activities like a sacred scavenger hunt and a Bible discussion with their families. We thought of ways to keep that interest in their faith going," Jagde said.

With 600 students in its religious education program, St. Anne Parish also sent out ideas for service projects, such as collecting socks and dental supplies for Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. The families also had a drive-by Mother's Day and Father's Day blessing. "We tried to keep people engaged with creative ideas to encourage faith dialogue at home," Jagde ex-

plained.

Along with the pastor and parish priests, she continued to meet virtually with "Tuesday's Angels," a group of parishioners with developmental disabilities.

"The group is from age 7-18. The relationship they have with each other is so special that they had to continue meeting, even if it was via Zoom," Jagde said.

She described how the pandemic caught everyone off guard. "At first, I was overwhelmed. It was important to stay connected with families, so I did a lot of livestreams."

Now, there is a whole network of peo-

ple helping out, including a parishioner who volunteers to record the religious education videos.

"With every challenge, there is a gift. I got to know people a lot better and learned how they deal with their everyday challenges. People have been living their faith a lot more through this crisis," Jagde said.

For many parishes, preparation for the sacraments continued remotely and in creative ways.

Back in March, Chi Aquino, director of religious education at St. Paul Parish in Ramsey, wasn't sure what to do with her First Communion class.

"It's always one of the more joyful times," she recalled.

Aquino received a list of addresses and, along with the parish priests, visited the students with posters and balloons. The priests blessed the children and families outside their homes. Out of the 120 First Communion families, about two thirds requested visits over the two-day period.

"It was far beyond what I had imagined. We really needed that. We were all really down. Dealing with the uncertainty of a pandemic gets exhausting," she said. "Some of the families even got dressed up. The visits were so special. Sometimes the neighbors would come out to their driveways and prayed with us."

"The priests were so joyful," Aquino continued. "Who would've thought that spending just five minutes with parishioners would cause such a reaction?"

Aquino is in her third year at St. Paul

Parish, which has about 1,000 students enrolled in religious education. She went from putting together a monthly newsletter to sending it weekly during the pandemic.

"I wanted them to know that we are still here," she said.

Aquino also relied on another way to stay connected. "I love talking with families over the phone. It's so simple, just a conversation, but you hear a whole wide range of struggles," she explained. "Some people haven't really left the house much because they live with elderly family members. My husband, who is a pastry chef, hasn't been able to work since March. We thank God that we have the Church when things get hard."

Aquino is excited for the year ahead. St. Paul plans to host Adoration nights with praise and worship music for middle school families. The church will set up for social distancing with pre-registration to manage the numbers.

On Catechetical Sunday, which is Sept. 20, families will pick up books at St. Paul, and the family project for the month will be holy water fonts for their at-home prayer space. She also plans to create a giant chalk rosary to walk through and pray, ending with an outdoor Mass and a socially distanced pizza party in the church parking lot.

Later this fall, the archdiocesan Catechetical Office will host the annual Catechist Convocation virtually from Nov. 6-8 in both Spanish and English.

Thank you for teaching our children!

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all our volunteer catechists past and present for sharing their faith, time and skills in teaching our children at Holy Trinity Church to believe and grow in God's love!

May the Lord's blessings be upon them and their families now and forever!

Carmela Calabro Dell'Aquila - Catechist Religious Ed Coordinator

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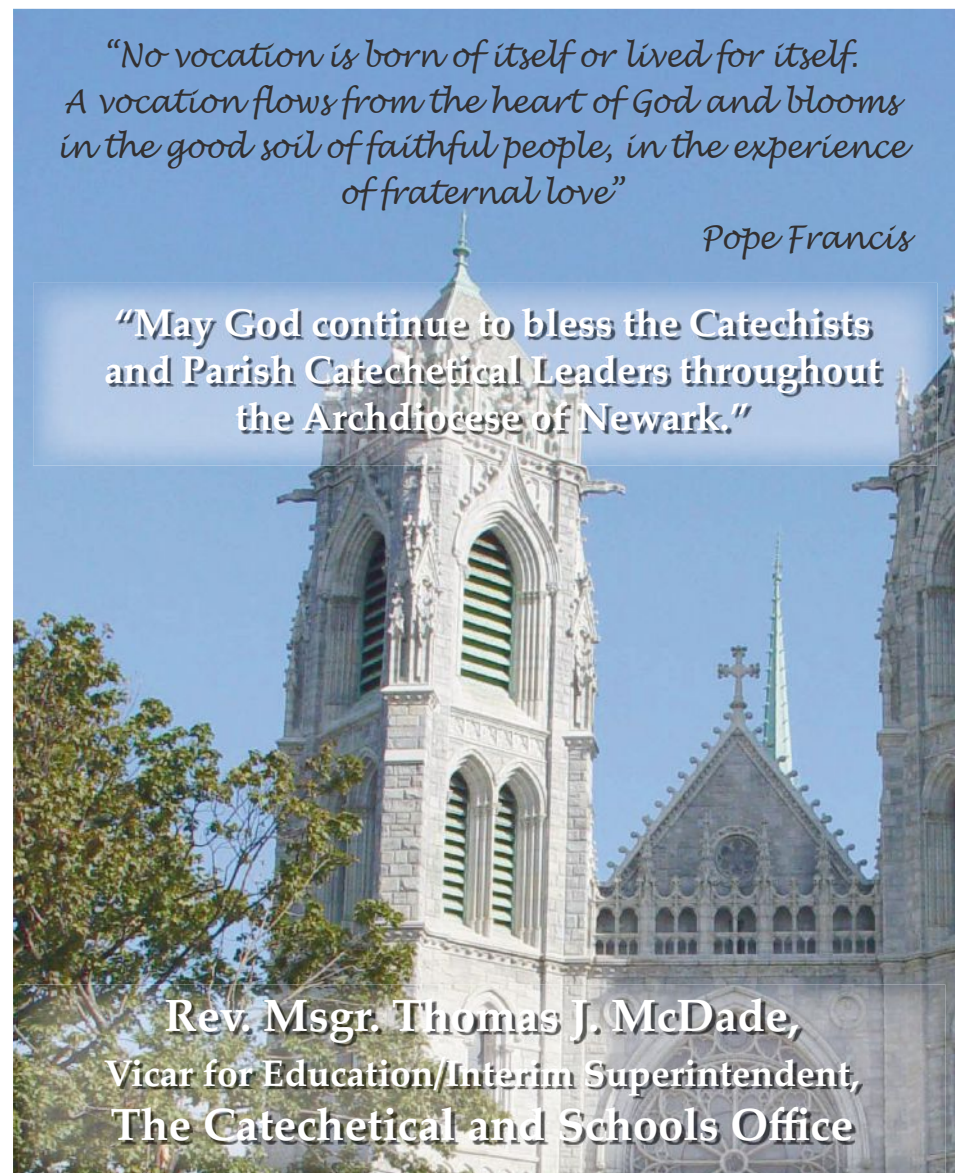


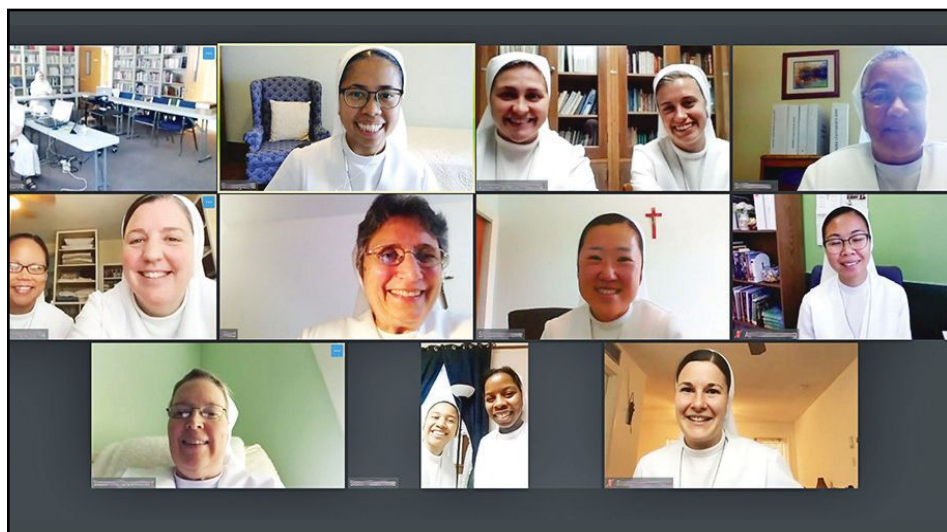
"No vocation is born of itself or lived for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blooms in the good soil of faithful people, in the experience of fraternal love"

Pope Francis

"May God continue to bless the Catechists and Parish Catechetical Leaders throughout the Archdiocese of Newark."

**Rev. Msgr. Thomas J. McDade,
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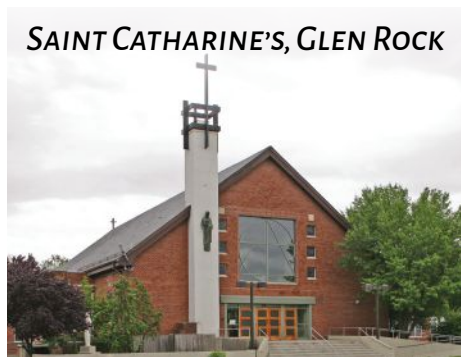




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*Thank you for the catechists who
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joy of the Gospel with our students
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Thank You
Sr. Patricia Dunham, M.P. F. and
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Salesian Sisters to offer virtual 'playground'

The Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco will be offering a "virtual oratory" every Saturday beginning Sept. 19 from 2-4 p.m. for children ages 6 through 14.

The Salesian-style oratory was originated by St. John Bosco in Italy and has traditionally been a place where young people can come to play, pray and grow in their relationship with God and one another. Since many in-person programs are being postponed or modified, the sisters are adapting the concept online.

The sessions will give young people across the country a chance to meet new friends, play games, pray together and engage in wholesome activities through Zoom while guided by the sisters.

Each oratory will begin with prayer, games, singing and an oratory pledge. Breakout group sessions will follow, including such activities as virtual field trips and trivia games.

The sisters are building on the success they had in offering their first-ever virtual summer camp. The positive reaction from parents encouraged the Salesians and highlighted a need for more programs to keep young people engaged in their faith during these uncertain times.

Registration is open and there is no cost to participate. To sign up, visit: www.salesiansisters.org/weekly-virtual-oratory or email salesiansisterscamp@gmail.com.

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Hispanic Heritage Month celebration

To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC) is hosting an outdoor lunch and concert. The event will take place on Sept. 19 at 1 p.m. underneath a decorated tent at St. Michael School in Newark.

The celebration will feature the band Orquesta Yanikeke, which will play music from various genres that define the South American, Caribbean and Central American music scene. Additionally, Dr. Linda Cerino, the principal of St. Michael School, will also announce a student winner of the Bishop Michael A. Saporito Scholarship, a scholarship for a Hispanic/Latino student to attend St. Benedict's Prep in Newark.

"We are excited to come together with the community to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month," said Barbara Cortes, director of Special Events and Community Development for SFIC. "This event is a way to celebrate the diverse Hispanic and Latino communities that are an integral part of this local area, while also highlighting the importance that education has played in the success of these families."

Tickets are \$10. Due to social gathering regulations, space and total guests are limited. Registration is required, and masks are mandatory for entry.

For more information, visit www.sficnj.org, email miguel.flores@rcan.org or call 973-497-4184.



Photos courtesy of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish

Nearly 200 people attended Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish's outdoor feast day Mass at Grundy Pier in Jersey City with a spectacular view of New York City as the backdrop. For some, the Aug. 22 celebration was their first time returning to Mass since the lockdown. Bishop Gregory J. Stoderus, who celebrated the Mass with the church's pastor, Father Bryan E. Page, said it was a wonderful experience on the waterfront. Parishioners brought chairs and the pier was marked to promote social distancing. To view more photos, visit www.olcj.org/news.



OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

CARDINAL JOSEPH W. TOBIN, C.S.S.R., HAS ANNOUNCED THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS:

– PASTOR –

Reverend Victor E. Paloma, pastor of Our Lady of Victories in Jersey City, has been granted an extension to his pastorate, ending June 30, 2021.

– ADMINISTRATORS –

Reverend Tadeusz Jank has been appointed administrator of Guardian Angel Parish in Allendale, effective Sept. 15.

Very Reverend Marc Vicari, V.F., has been appointed temporary administrator of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Belleville, effective Aug. 26.

– PAROCHIAL VICARS –

Reverend Joseph Montes De Oca has been appointed parochial vicar of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Hillside, effective Sept. 1.

Reverend Miroslaw Kusibab has been appointed parochial vicar of St. Genevieve Parish in Elizabeth, effective Sept. 15.

Reverend Marco T. Marroquin has been appointed parochial vicar of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Elizabeth, effective Sept. 1.

Reverend Ralph Siendo has been appointed parochial vicar at St. Mary Parish in Nutley, effective Sept. 1.

– CHAPLAIN/PAROCHIAL VICAR –

Reverend Matthew R. Dooley has been appointed part-time chaplain of Oratory Preparatory School in Summit, effective Sept. 1, while he continues at Little Flower Parish in Berkeley Heights as part-time parochial vicar.

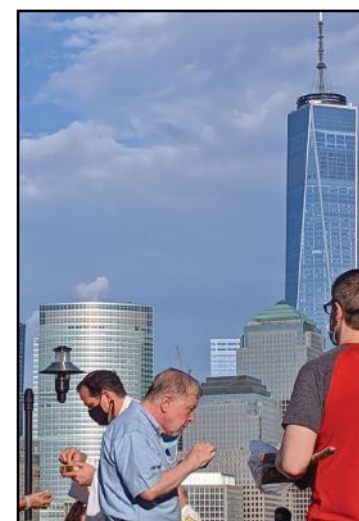
– RELEASED –

Reverend Marco Pacciana has had his release to the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., extended for a period of three years, beginning Aug. 1 and ending Aug. 1, 2023.

Reverend Raul Silva has had his release to the Diocese of Winona, Minn., extended for a period of three years, ending July 1, 2023.

– ITINERANCY –

Reverend Giuseppe Fedele has had his release for itinerancy extended for a period of three years, ending July 1, 2023.





New home

Continued from page 1

our children at the same school.”

Fortunately, they found out about Notre Dame Academy in Palisades Park. While they were in the process of scheduling a tour of the school, the Rundles, along with many other families and business owners throughout Bergen County, lost power due to Tropical Storm Isaias.

“My wife called the school, and we were so happy they responded right away with open arms. We met with the vice principal, who took us on a tour of the school by flashlight because of power outages,” Tom said. “We were all very happy with the school’s technology, curriculum, classrooms and especially the sports programs because my three sons were very active on St. Joseph’s basketball team.”

To date, Notre Dame Academy has enrolled 50 former St. Joseph’s Academy students. Families affected by the closures are receiving transition assistance from the Archdiocese of Newark, including tuition assistance for the 2020-2021 school year.

“The closing of any of our Catholic Schools is difficult. It is like the loss of a family,” said Mark Valvano, the principal of Notre Dame Academy. “I taught at a school that closed prior to becoming a Catholic school principal, so I know how hard it can be.”



Photo courtesy of the Rundle family

He added, “Our goal at Notre Dame Academy these past few weeks is to help bring as many families into our school family as possible so that their children can continue to grow and flourish in a faith-filled Catholic school environment.”

Eric Reid, Notre Dame Academy’s vice principal and athletic director, described the importance of the school’s faith and family-centered values. “One of the things that has always made our Catholic schools

so special is the sense of family that is built by being part of a community of faith. That is why it is so difficult when any of our schools close,” he said. “At Notre Dame Academy, we are working hard to make sure we can keep these children in Catholic schools and welcome their families as new members of our family.”

On Aug. 11, the Rundles received the excellent news from Notre Dame Academy that all three of their children were

enrolled to start orientation week for the new school year on Sept. 8.

“We are pleased with the way everything worked out,” said Tom. “My sons know some of the other students enrolled, which makes it easier for them to start a new school year at a brand-new school. My wife and I also already know several parents, and this support has been helpful. It was just such a relief during this transition that we were able to place all three of our kids in the same school.”

Their older son, Thomas, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of their situation. “I feel happy about my new school and excited to make new friends and meet new teachers. It’s also great that some of my friends from St. Joseph’s Academy are also going

to be able to graduate from eighth grade with me.”

Mona explained that as sad as they initially felt after hearing the news about St. Joseph’s Academy, they now are excited to begin a new school year. They are grateful that Notre Dame Academy has welcomed them with open arms. “We put our trust and faith in the Lord’s hands. After a lot of prayers, we are relieved and blessed with the outcome,” she said. “God is good!”



Photos courtesy of St. Joseph School
St. Joseph School in Oradell sponsored a safe, socially distant outdoor ice cream social ahead of the new school year. Students and their families had the opportunity to meet their teachers and classmates while enjoying a sweet treat.

New principals prepare for school year during ever-evolving pandemic

By Melissa McNally
Editor

Gearing up for a new academic year is stressful for any new principal. This year in particular, the administrators are tasked with keeping students, faculty and parents safe in the middle of a global health crisis.

Glenn Clark, former principal of the Academy of St. Therese in Cresskill, is now heading St. Peter Academy in River Edge, which reopens Sept. 9.

"We put a lot of work in to reopening with our students in the classrooms," he explained.

Several preventive measures were put in place by Clark and his staff. Students and faculty will have their temperatures checked before entering the building each day. Dismissal will be staggered with dif-

ferent entrance and exit points. All the high-traffic areas in the school will be disinfected three times per day with another deep cleaning every night. All students are required to wear face masks and will avoid changing classrooms for each subject.

Each class will also be livestreamed for students opting to stay home. The school held a test-run of its technology capabilities before reopening.

Out of the 173 students enrolled for the fall, Clark noted that only 10 percent of them will be exclusively learning remotely. Preschool and kindergarten students, however, will not have classes available online.

"The parents and teachers are all on board with the adjustments," Clark said. "We are beginning the school day earlier so that everyone can have their temperatures checked, which means that teachers have to be here even earlier."

He expressed confidence in the school's ability to flourish during these uncertain times.

"Through this pandemic and at all times, St. Peter Academy is committed to the ministry of Catholic education and in supporting our students' faith formation and development," Clark said. "We

want to celebrate each child as an individual creation of God. We can deal with COVID-19 together."

Our Lady of the Lake School in Verona, with around 217 students enrolled, has adopted a hybrid model.

The students are separated into two groups, alternating between remote and in-school learning. On Wednesdays, all students will participate in at-home learning. When students are home, they will join the classroom through synchronous, livestream instruction via videoconfer-

ence.

According to the new principal, Jim Carlo, the hybrid schedule is better suited for the larger school. Formerly principal of Transfiguration Academy in Bergenfield, he had to quickly adjust to the larger setting.

"It's been challenging to get to know the school and teachers in such a short period of time," Carlo explained. "We [kept] the parents' considerations in mind and everyone seems to be comfortable with this plan."

Parents who chose to exclusively have their children attend school remotely can opt to switch to in-person learning on Nov. 25. Parents with children in school can also decide to change to remote learning at any time, Carlo said.

"I want everyone—the students, parents and staff—to feel safe and secure. If everyone is afraid to be in school, it can be a blockade for learning," he noted.

Carlo believes students are quite adaptable and that they are excited to see their friends again.

"In the spring, it was exciting for them to be at home. Now, I really think the kids

want to be in school. We're trying to retain as much normalcy as possible," he said.

Joel Castillo, principal at St. Bartholomew Academy, is the former principal of Academy of Our Lady of Peace in New Providence. He also jumped right in to create a reopening plan.

The re-entry committee he assembled over the summer in-

cluded Assistant Principal Janet Ramos, three faculty members and two parents with experience in the medical field. The team consulted various state and archdiocesan guidelines along with several medical journals.

"We want the faculty and staff to feel safe along with the children," Castillo explained. "We want to put the faculty at ease so that they can focus teaching the kids."

Some of the new protections include a COVID-19 triage on every floor, a full-time nurse, masks and shields provided to all faculty and a protective barrier between the teachers' desks and the students.

About 15 percent of the 235 children enrolled at St. Bartholomew Academy will attend remotely. Castillo explained that the teachers will be "doubly focused" on both methods of learning.

"In this new normal, we can still have some of the school's traditions and sense of community, but we have to be creative," the principal said. For example, he plans to have the annual Halloween celebration outside and tents are being constructed so some of the students can eat lunch outdoors.

Castillo and his staff have been flexible to the ever-changing rules to begin the academic year. He calls it a "team effort" aided by the "blessed donations" of families.

"[Catholic education] is a ministry—that's why we are all here," Castillo said. "We want to be an example for the children so they grow up in faith and when they leave, they will continue to be faithful Catholics."



Joel Castillo



Glenn Clark



Jim Carlo



Photo courtesy of St. Joseph Regional High School

St. Joseph Regional High School in Montvale recently welcomed students back to campus for the first time in almost six months. With a detailed plan in place, the school is guaranteeing that in any 15-day period, students will have 10 face-to-face instructional days and be with their classmates at multiple points in the cycle. "While we certainly do not have all the answers, our goal is to work to the best of our ability to ensure both the safety and most sound educational experience for our students," said President Kevin McNulty.

New Principals (2020-2021)

Academy of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Franklin Lakes.....	Leo Conwell
Corpus Christi School, Hasbrouck Heights.....	Jason Feliciano
Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Park Ridge	Michelle Powrie
St. Peter Academy, River Edge.....	Glenn Clark
Aquinas Academy, Livingston	Eileen O'Neill
Our Lady of the Lake School, Verona.....	James Carlo
St. Aloysius Elementary Academy, Jersey City	Jorge Rivera
Our Lady of Czestochowa School, Jersey City	Thomas Keating*
Academy of Our Lady of Peace, New Providence	Kelly Hart, Ed.D.
St. Joseph the Carpenter School, Roselle	Patricia Cymbaluk
St. Bartholomew Academy, Scotch Plains	Joel Castillo

*interim

Holy Angels reopens with hybrid instructional model

DEMAREST—After many months of collaboration with a special task force, the Academy of the Holy Angels' administration opted to reopen the campus on Sept. 9. The Academy's new hybrid instructional model blends in-school and at-home learning to emphasize COVID-19 health and safety measures and maximize student engagement.

"I believe Holy Angels is well positioned to begin the 2020-21 school year," said President Melinda A. Hanlon, expressing the importance of personal responsibility among every member of the school community. "We look forward to a successful partnership with students and their families."

Every other school day, 50 percent of the students attend in-person classes on campus and 50 percent receive synchronous learning from home via Google Meet or Zoom. Students are assigned to Team Theresa or Team Caroline, so they know which days to report to campus. Team Theresa is named for Blessed Mother Theresa Gerhardinger, founder of the School Sisters of Notre Dame who sponsor the school. Team Caroline is named for Mother Caroline Friess, director of the School Sisters in America.

While they are on campus, students are able to establish working relationships with teachers, receive critical services and can socialize with classmates. When stu-

dents study from home, they are able to maintain a consistent schedule and remain engaged for the full school day.

"The plan to return to in-person classes is aligned with New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's and the NJ Department of Education's guidelines shared in mid-July," Principal Jean Miller explained. "The plan also follows the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for health and safety. Our task force, comprised of administrators, teachers, staff, parents, doctors, nurses and maintenance personnel, worked throughout the summer to evaluate schedule possibilities and safety precautions that would best serve our community."

The academy's classrooms were outfitted with plexiglass partitions and reconfigured to permit appropriate social distancing of at least six feet. In addition, air conditioning was installed in the main school building.

Holy Angels has also implemented a cashless dining option. Students and staff can go online and load funds onto their

ID badges to make purchases. A boxed lunch service is available, and spaced seating is offered inside and outside the building.

AHA's 2020-21 theme also reflects the importance of taking responsibility for others' well-being.

"'Sharing our love, faith and hope' is from the School Sisters of Notre Dame Constitution," Hanlon said. "We chose this theme at a time when we are recommitting ourselves to build greater equity and inclusivity within the Holy Angels community."



Photo courtesy of Holy Angels

Principal Jean Miller (left) and Dean of Academics Francesca Tambone-Puzio (right) welcome students back to the Holy Angels campus.



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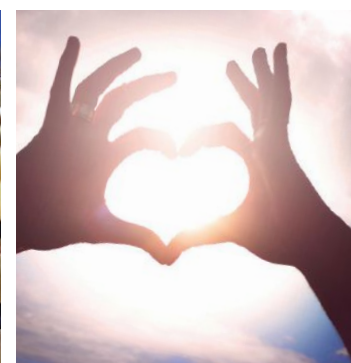
Photos courtesy of Aquinas Academy

Aquinas Academy in Livingston recently held a "Blessing of the Backpacks" with Msgr. Robert J. Fuhrman, pastor of St. Philomena Parish. "I felt it was important to bring our school community together in a positive way to prepare for our next year together. I appreciate the opportunity to make the student connection with our pastor, as he plays an integral part of our Aquinas community," Principal Eileen O'Neill said. Msgr. Fuhrman prayed for the students' health, safety and success in their academic studies. "At Aquinas, we believe strongly in learning with purpose, leading with character and loving one another," O'Neill added.

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Due to the health crisis, open house dates are subject to change. Please visit the high school's website for further information.

BERGEN COUNTY **OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE 2020-2021**

Academy of the Holy Angels holyangels.org	4 October 11 November
Immaculate Conception High School ichslodi.org	15 October 25 October
Saint Joseph Regional High School saintjosephregional.org	27 September 4 November
Bergen Catholic High School bergencatholic.org	20 September 27 October
Paramus Catholic Regional High School paramuscatholic.com	27 September 27 October
Don Bosco Preparatory High School donboscoprep.org	24 September 25 October
Saint Mary High School stmaryhs.org	27 September 20 October 27 April
Immaculate Heart Academy ihanj.com	25 October 29 October 29 April

HUDSON COUNTY **OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE 2020-2021**

Hudson Catholic Regional High School hudsoncatholic.org	11 October 24 January
Saint Dominic Academy stdominicacad.com	18 October 21 October
Saint Peter's Preparatory School spprep.org	18 October 2 May

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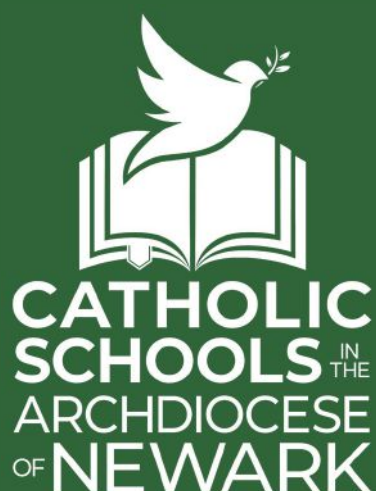


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UNION COUNTY OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE 2020-2021

Mother Seton Regional High School motherseton.org	25 October
Roselle Catholic Regional High School rosellecatholic.org	18 October 24 January
Union Catholic Regional High School unioncatholic.org	7 October 21 April
Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child oakknoll.org	Visit Website for Dates
Oratory Preparatory School oratoryprep.org	4 October 29 October
Koinonia Academy koinoniaacademy.org	Contact School for Dates

ESSEX COUNTY OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE 2020-2021

Mount Saint Dominic Academy msdacademy.org	1 October 25 October 15 April
Immaculate Conception High School ichspride.org	Contact School for Dates
Saint Benedict's Preparatory School sbp.org	10 October 14 November 12 December
Saint Vincent Academy svanj.org	7 October 18 October 1 November
Seton Hall Preparatory School shp.org	1 November
Lacordaire Academy lacordaireacademy.com	18 October 4 February

Koinonia Academy transitions to a new model of education

PLAINFIELD—After evaluating its academic approach over the last two years, Koinonia Academy, a pre-K through 12th-grade school, has transitioned the curriculum to a Catholic classical liberal arts model for in-person instruction this fall.

A 2017 Hechinger report states that, “The vast majority of public two- and four-year colleges report enrolling students—more than half a million of them—who are not ready for college-level work.”



Photos courtesy of Koinonia Academy

According to the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Yale Child Study Center, 50-75 percent of high school students said they are either stressed or very stressed, and an average of 75 percent reported being bored.

Koinonia aims to eliminate “busy-work” and allow students to learn to think and learn in an academically rigorous program that proceeds at a natural pace.

A Catholic classical liberal arts education goes one step further by ensuring that students are not only formed academically but they are also formed emotionally and spiritually, meaning the whole person is being educated.

A classical education is the term developed for the form of education developed during the Renaissance, and was influenced by St. Thomas Aquinas. It’s called a liberal education because students learn about the breadth and depth of education—from literature to the arts and the sciences, from mathematics to logic.

A classical liberal education asks students to learn to think for themselves. By discussing and learning to ask the right questions, students can develop a deep understanding of their subjects and the issues facing our world today.

The classical model is founded on a three-part process of training. In grammar school, students absorb facts and learn to explore history, science and lit-



erature. In middle school, students learn to think through arguments and begin to study logic as they read, hear and experience more challenging materials. In high school, students learn to express themselves and communicate effectively in writing, logic, the arts, mathematics, science and speech. This three-step process is called the *trivium*.

This process also means that students with special needs can be immersed in a subject and be challenged while not being overwhelmed with materials they might struggle to follow.

For more information about the new curriculum, contact Burk Ohbayashi, director of Admissions, at admissions@koinoniaacademy.org.



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Oak Knoll unveils options for fall

SUMMIT—Investing more than \$600,000 in hygiene and facilities upgrades, Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child has been committed to returning to campus in a safe and appropriate manner.

Oak Knoll is offering students and families a choice. The in-person option comes with highly detailed safety protocols, while the remote option offers students opportunities to attend classes live from home.

Families will be able to choose the learning method they prefer for several five-week sessions throughout the year.

"I wanted to organize the learning options in more manageable periods, because our now COVID-19 world keeps pivoting and changing, which means we need to pivot along with it," said Head of School Timothy J. Saburn.

Saburn, who appointed a school reopening task force in May, explained that it is highly possible that Oak Knoll may have to move from the hybrid in-person/remote model to the all-virtual model and back again before achieving a fully face-to-face program with precautions.

"Our families understand that this has been an incredibly fluid situation since March and the conditions and circumstances are constantly changing," Saburn said. "They know that we are continuing to abide by CDC and NJDOE recommendations and requirements, and we will be aligned with Governor Murphy's regula-

tions in order to keep them safe."

Over the summer, Oak Knoll made several improvements to the school campus, including the addition of classroom cameras, touchless sinks and toilets, touchless hand-washing stations, UV light sanitizers, HVAC enhancements to control air quality and plexiglass dividers to separate students.

"We have spent countless hours and resources developing these plans, having them reviewed by the school doctor and counsel, conferring with area colleagues from the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools and Holy Child Network on their procedures and protocols, all to ensure the safety and health of our students, faculty, staff and administrators," said Saburn.

Oak Knoll's small class sizes have enabled the school to remain open on a full-day schedule while providing a safe environment.

"Our already small community has afforded us the flexibility to still open while larger schools have to be on split days for partial weeks," said Jennifer G. Landis, associate head of school. "Our goal has been to ensure the space we have is as safe as possible for our students to return and to also provide our teachers with working spaces that protect them. Our unique schedule limits transitions and provides for sustained periods of instruction that we know is conducive to an engaging and productive learning experience."

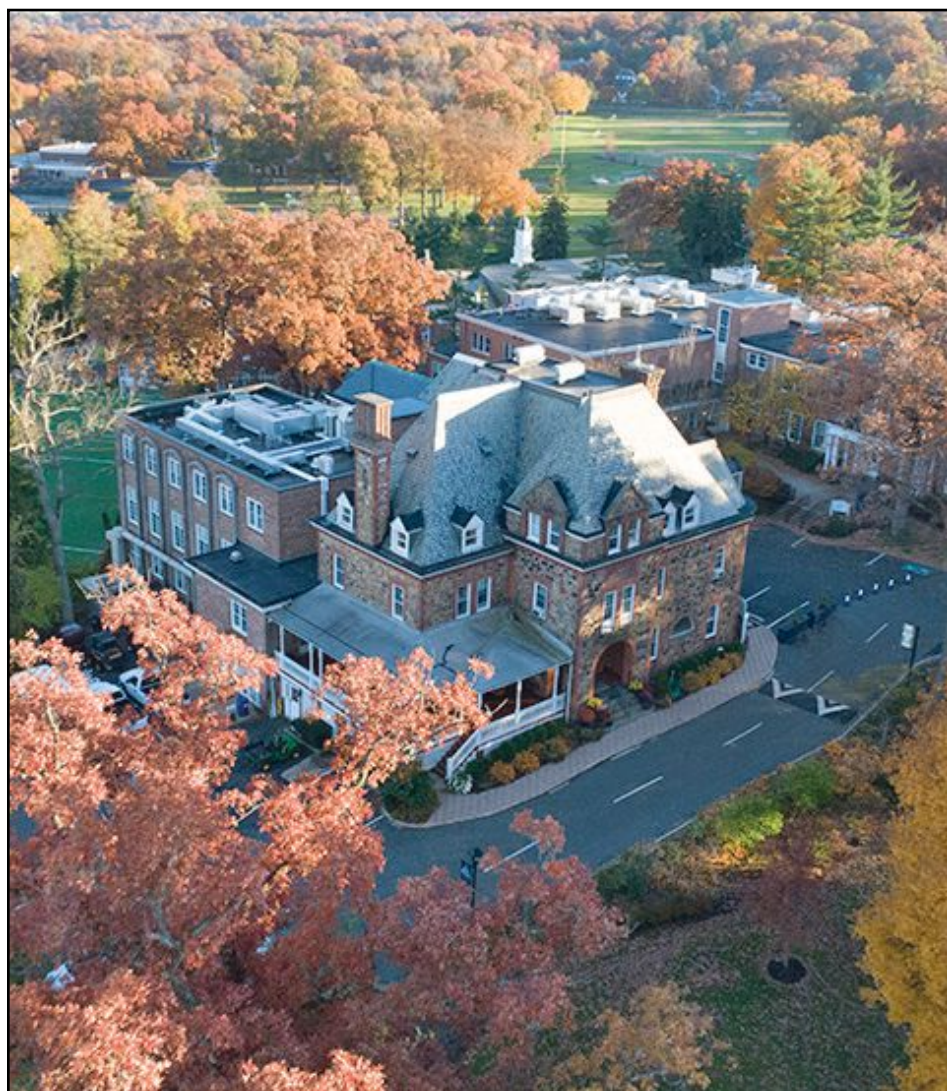


Photo courtesy of Oak Knoll



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Photos courtesy of Oratory Prep

Oratory Prep School hosted an orientation for new students on Sept. 1. Located in Summit, the all-boys high school has 71 freshmen enrolled. With a total of 386 students, it is the largest overall school enrollment to date. During orientation, students were briefed on new COVID-19 protocols; met student ambassadors, who answered questions and provided tours of the buildings; and had technology training sessions. Upper classmen had their orientations on separate days. The school will operate in-person five days a week with about 10 percent of students opting for remote instruction for the first quarter. Classroom desks will be spaced six feet apart, and the school will use its gyms for additional class space.

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PC Strong: Paramus Catholic welcomes students back to campus

Paramus Catholic High School faculty, students and families are returning to school amid the challenges of the pandemic with “PC Strong” spirit.

Preparations for the new school year started early. “Suspecting that something was coming, our administrative team got together for a day right before the state-wide shutdown in March to begin plan-

ning for virtual learning,” said Principal Dr. Stephanie Macaluso. “We then began developing our detailed plan in June after the New Jersey Board of Education issued its reopening guidance.”

According to Macaluso, herself a mother of four children, “I considered how I and my own children would want to go back, and as we put our plan together, our focus was on ensuring that students, families and faculty returned to our school with ease and comfort.”

After a survey of the school’s families in July revealed that nearly two-thirds preferred in-school instruction but that some felt some level of discomfort with that option, “we knew that if we put a thoughtful, robust reopening plan together, we could help make them more comfortable,” she said.

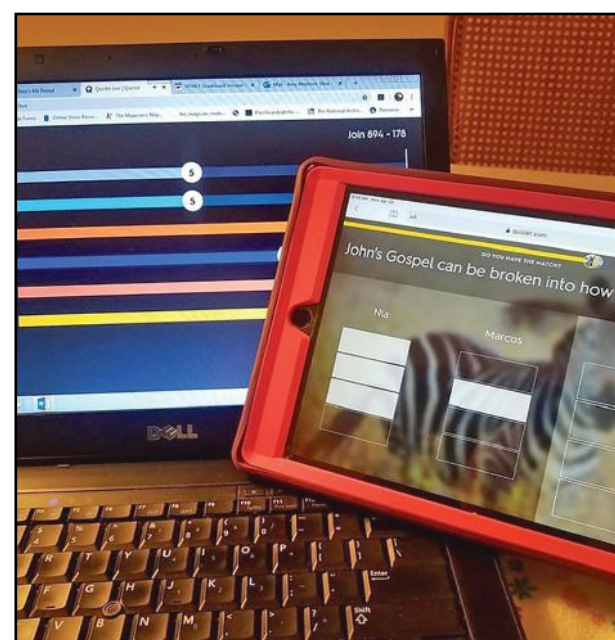
In response, the team developed its plan by conceptually walking through the whole day as a student. “It begins with a three-tiered temperature check process: the first screening occurs at home, the second happens on the bus and the third happens as students and faculty enter the school building,” Macaluso explained.

The reopening plan was designed to limit exposure and curtail communal activities, like sharing cell phones, in the students’ best interests. Supplies of face shields and N95 masks will be available to faculty members who request them.

Based on the school’s large student body of more than 1,100 students, along with its 126 faculty members, Paramus Catholic is offering a blended plan that rotates students between in-person and virtual instruction every three days.

“For example, half of the students will come to school for three days while the other half learns virtually and then vice versa. [It] was the only way for us to distance desks six feet apart with this many students and faculty,” Macaluso said, noting that families can also opt for a 100 percent virtual curriculum enabled through camera access within a secure system. The entire school will work remotely for the first four Fridays.

“We have an amazing team of faculty members who have a passion for education and we offer a high-quality education virtually or in-person, based on the strength of our curriculum,” she said, noting that the school is fully prepared to go all virtual in a heartbeat should the need arise or state executive orders dictate.



Photos courtesy of Paramus Catholic

As a former biology teacher, Macaluso said she is excited about the start of the new school year following the challenges of the past few months.

“It will be so nice to see our students in the building and out on the playing field again,” she said. “We know that we’ve met all of the requirements necessary to reopen with enthusiasm and confidence, and we can’t wait to see young people on our campus again. They illuminate everything.”



Principal Dr. Stephanie Macaluso



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As one senior class heads to college, the next one gets ready

NEWARK—There really is no rest for the college guidance counselors at St. Benedict's Prep.

While COVID-19 disrupted or halted college guidance at high schools across the country, the team at St. Ben-

edict's Prep doubled down. Dean of College Guidance/Seniors Didier Jean-Baptiste and College Placement Counselor Jacob Drill split the 134-member senior class in half and, for 2 1/2 months via Zoom and Google Meets,

accompanied the Class of 2020 to final college decisions and other post-graduation plans.

College acceptance letters were rolling in when the pandemic closed everything down in mid-March. It is a

very critical time in the college application process, especially since finances factor greatly into student decisions. "Usually we review the financial aid award notification letters in person," said Jean-Baptiste. "We did it all online this year to make sure students understand the difference between things like direct and indirect costs. We want to make sure they make the smartest decision for them."

The fact that many colleges and universities extended decision day to June 1 meant the

college guidance team was conferring with one class of seniors while gearing up for the next.

St. Benedict's Summer Phase program, where seniors begin preparation for the college application process, began virtually on July 6. The class is taught by Jean-Baptiste, Drill, history teacher Susanne Mueller and Managing Editor of Advancement Publications Noreen Connolly. In small groups or one-on-one meetings, Mueller and Connolly work closely with students on the application essay. Drill consults with seniors on developing a list of best-fit colleges to apply to, and the long to-do list that accompanies it.

The one setback so far is college visits. Seniors typically visit four or five colleges during Summer Phase, with more scheduled in the fall. "It's going to be hard for the kids who don't have a lot of exposure to college to get a sense of the schools without visiting them," said Jean-Baptiste. "Nothing makes up for the ability to step on to the campus."

In the meantime, the team is planning to bring college representatives to the students through online meetings. Jean-Baptiste noted, "It's good for students to get practice with an admissions official, even if it's virtual."



Didier Jean-Baptiste

Photo courtesy of St. Benedict's Prep

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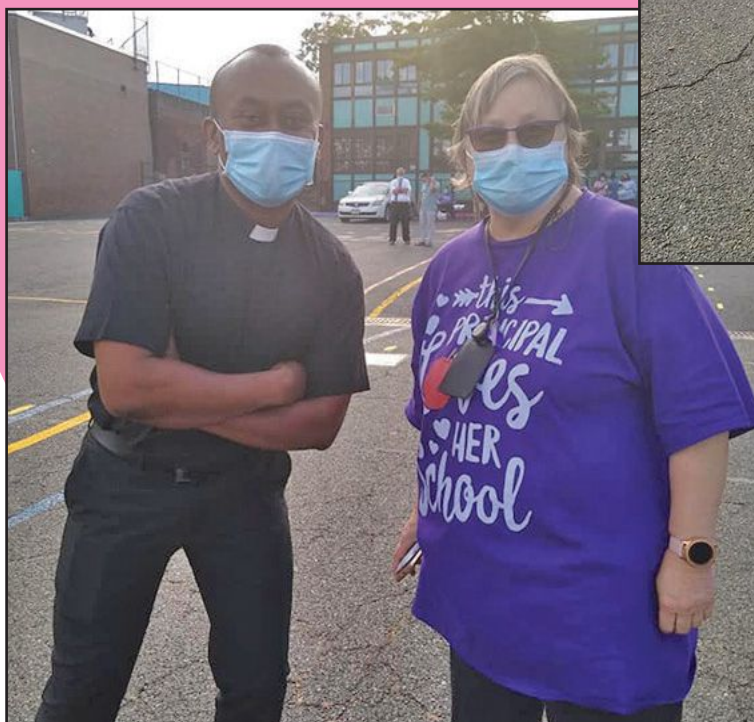
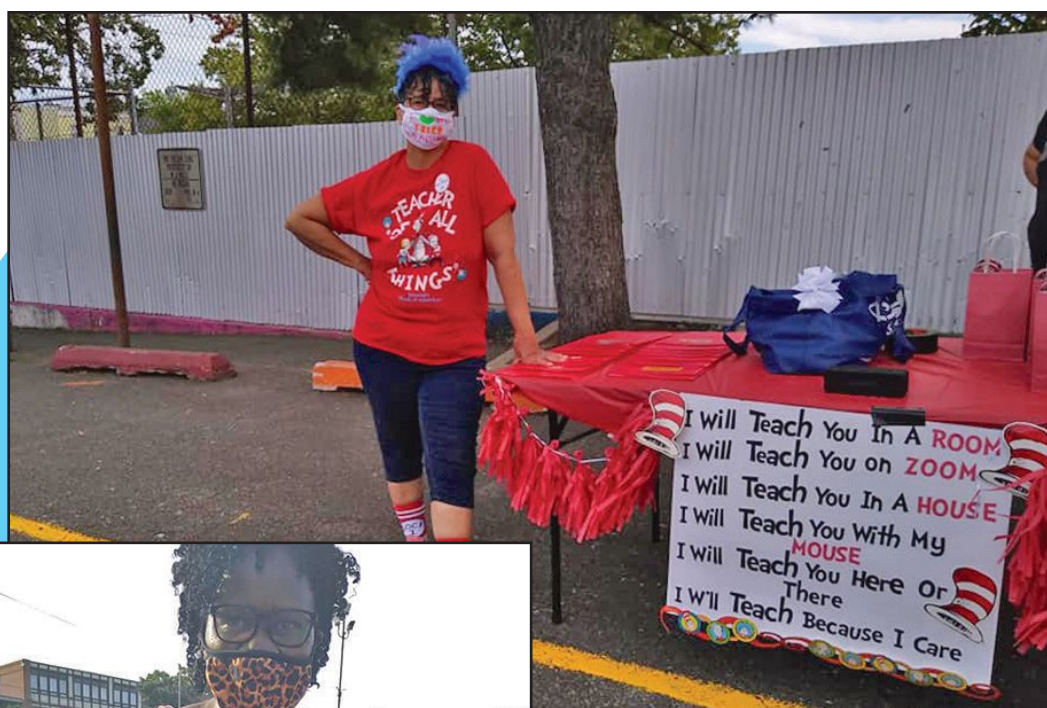
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St. Michael School in Newark held a "Beep and Greet" on Aug. 26, welcoming students and faculty back to school while staying safe. Children had a chance to meet their new teachers, including third-grade teacher Maribel Cruz, who dressed up in her Dr. Seuss finery. School Principal Dr. Linda Cerino and Father Stephen Ehiaturike, S.D.V., pastor of St. Michael Parish, also joined in the festivities.

Photos courtesy of St. Michael School



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OLC prepares for fall classes

Our Lady of Czestochowa School in Jersey City has implemented major modifications to prepare for the new school year during the pandemic.

Shortly after quarantine began last spring, a committee was formed to research and plan the safest and most responsible way to reopen. The committee included the administration, teachers from both the upper and lower schools, the school nurse, members of the maintenance and support staff, as well as parent representatives. The committee has been closely following all the best practices that have been developed to keep students and employees safe.

The administration and faculty spent the summer building upon everything they had learned in the spring about remote learning. This year will begin with a hybrid model with many of the students exclusively learning from home. Students reporting to class will split into two cohorts, attending in-person every second week and participating virtually during alternate weeks. All students will have full days, whether they are physically in the school building or attending online.

No visitors will be permitted into the building, and all students and faculty must wear masks. Everyone will have their temperature checked and hands sanitized before entering the building. Each student will be assigned a particular door to enter and exit the school. Students will not be

going from room to room. The nurse's office has moved to a new, larger room, with an adjoining isolation room.

Our Lady of Czestochowa is working cooperatively to maintain its strong sense of community. Administrators said that although morning prayers will now be done in the classroom rather than together in an assembly, everyone will still be united in spirit.



Photos courtesy of Ashley Brombauer

Before the start of the new school year, Immaculate Heart Academy in Washington Township hosted "Rookie Camp" for the incoming freshman class. Peer mentors welcomed the new students to campus while finding creative ways to maintain social distancing.



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Felician alum now Cedar Grove's newest mayor

The nursing profession offers a wide range of career specialties for those who feel called to serve.

One Felician University nurse who knows this well is Kerry Peterson, who was sworn in as the mayor of Cedar Grove on July 3. Peterson, who had been a member of the township council, succeeds Robbie Vargo as mayor.

A nurse for 26 years, Peterson graduated from Mountainside Hospital School of Nursing in 1994, then earned a bachelor's from Felician University, graduating magna cum laude in 2015. For 22 years, she was a nurse at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Paterson.

She switched gears five years ago and is currently a care coordinator for Atlantic Healthcare System doing "transitions of care" work with patients who have been discharged from the hospital. "My role is to ensure patient's health and well-being and to avoid hospital visits and readmissions. I promote more health and education," Peterson explained.



Photo courtesy of Cedar Grove

Mayor Peterson works from home and calls her care coordinator job a perfect fit for her because it gives her the flexibility and autonomy that makes it possible for her to serve as mayor.

She said both her work as a clinical nurse and government official are informed by values she learned at Felician University. "I love the Franciscan values, especially when dealing with patients and stressful situations," she said. "It's like a centering, a matter of calming yourself, taking a breath and not reacting and diffusing the situation, and yes, the classes and education I received at Felician prepared me to handle those situations."

Peterson was pressed into service in March when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and Atlantic Healthcare became one of the first places to do swabbing tests for the virus out of a tent in Morristown. Her department opened a hotline and started a surveillance program to keep a steady watch over discharged COVID-19 patients who would look forward to her calming calls to check on how they were doing through-

out the day. "That's the whole thing with this pandemic, everyone was just hit with it so fast," she said. "People were waiting for my call and they were so happy to hear from me because they knew I was there to ask, 'OK, what's your oxygen reading today? How do you feel? How is your cough? OK, let's do this or let's call the doctor.'"

Now, whether calming patients as a nurse or addressing the concerns of residents as mayor, Peterson remains grateful for her Felician education. "It was a great program. I made great friends there, friends I am still in touch with today. I had a great experience at Felician."



Photo courtesy of Mayor Kerry Peterson

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We may need to learn how to adjust for the time being, but in due time, we will once again return to a world where we can gather, grow, and celebrate life once again.

Stephanie Macaluso
Dr. Stephanie Macaluso, Principal

Caldwell receives grant for youth program

Caldwell University has received a grant to start a new program called “Disciples on the Way” that will encourage high school students to look at what it means to be a disciple in today’s world. Thanks to a five-year \$222,000 Lilly Endowment grant, students will have the chance to explore questions about their faith and the moral dimensions of contemporary challenges.

In 2015, Caldwell University received a four-year grant to establish a residential summer program, the Spirituality and Leadership Institute, on campus for high school students and Caldwell’s undergraduate spiritual mentors. The major focus was to study theological works and to examine how their faith calls them to lives of service. The Institute has introduced high school and undergraduate students to spiritual disciplines as leadership practices and helped them develop as young citizens who promote public justice and seek the common good.

With the new “Disciples on the Way” program, participants will be immersed in intellectual, spiritual and practical

ways of living as they focus and build on different aspects of discipleship, such as leadership, arts and spirituality and prayer methods. All programming will be aimed at helping young people have a greater understanding of their ability to be disciples in today’s world and to have an initial full experience experimenting with and using the suggested discernment tools. The program will help youth intensify connections to their faith in areas of interest and envision how they can become faith leaders in their community, school, church, family, workplace and even online through social media.

Colleen O’Brien, Caldwell University’s director of Campus Ministry and a seasoned youth minister in higher education, will lead this effort supported by an array of university spiritual mentors and an assistant youth minister. O’Brien said she hopes it will help students deepen their faith. “We are working to engage current and future faith leaders in our community and help them discover the many ways God is calling them to live and be in the world,” she said.



Submitted photo

C. Lynn Carr, Ph.D., professor of sociology at Seton Hall University in South Orange has been awarded a Jack Shand Research Grant from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. Founded at Harvard University in 1949, the society is an interdisciplinary academic association that promotes social scientific research about religious institutions and experiences.

Professor Carr received a \$5,000 award to support her research on “Shiva in a Jewish Reconstructionist Community.” The qualitative sociological study investigates *shiva* among those affiliated with Reconstructing Judaism, a small yet

well-established American Jewish movement/denomination. “Sitting” *shiva* is a custom traditionally engaged in by Jews upon the death of an immediate family member. During this time, community members traditionally comfort the bereaved with food and company and gather for prayer in mourners’ homes.

“I focus on *shiva* because it has been suggested that it is a site of growing importance in non-Orthodox Judaic practice, and because I believe it to be a well-placed window in understanding contemporary Jewish identification—highlighting themes of belief, disbelief and community,” Carr said.



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Brother Ralph Darmento, F.S.C.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Aug. 18 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Brooklyn for Brother Ralph Darmento, F.S.C., 68, who died Aug. 14.



Brother Ralph was a native of Brooklyn who entered the Christian Brothers in 1974 at the Novitiate in Ontario, Canada. He received the habit on Sept. 29, 1974, and pronounced final vows in Providence, R.I., on Jan. 5, 1982.

He served as deputy superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn. Before that, he spent more than 15 years working in the Archdiocese of Newark's Schools Office.

Brother Ralph was also a lifelong teacher, working at schools across the country.

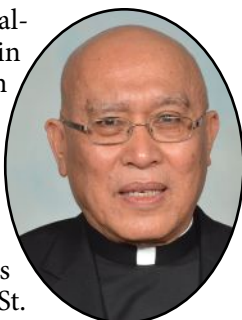
**Father Edito S. Gamallo**

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in Cavite, Philippines, for Father Edito S. Gamallo, 69, who died Aug. 14.

Father Gamallo was ordained in the Philippines on April 29, 1975, and was incardinated in the Archdiocese of Newark in 1997.

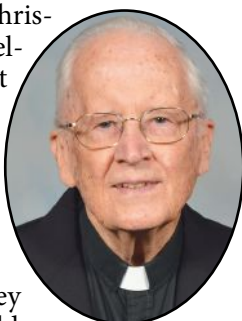
He served as parochial vicar at St. John the Baptist Parish, Jersey City; St. John the Evangelist, Bergenfield; St. Aedan: St. Peter's University Church, Jersey City; St. Anthony of Padua, Newark; and Our Lady of Victories, Jersey City.

Father Gamallo also served as chaplain at Bergen Regional Medical Center in Paramus from 2015-2017.

**Msgr. Thomas G. Madden**

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Aug. 24 at Queen of Peace Parish in North Arlington for Msgr. Thomas G. Madden, 91, who died Aug. 20.

A native of Jersey City, Msgr. Madden was ordained a priest on June 4, 1955.



He served as pastor of Queen of Peace from 1978 to 1999. Earlier, he served as a parochial vicar at St. Teresa of Avila Parish in Summit and St. Casian Parish in Upper Montclair.

Msgr. William C. Harms

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Aug. 31 at Our Lady of Peace Parish in New Providence for Msgr. William C. Harms, 80, who died Aug. 27.

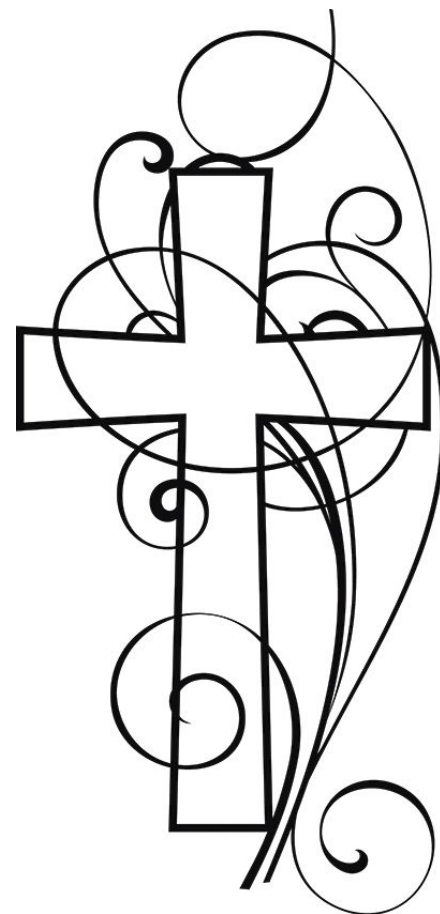
A native of the Bronx, Msgr. Harms was raised in North Arlington. He attended Seton Hall University in South Orange; received his master's degree in city and regional planning from Rutgers University; earned a Master of Divinity from Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington; and received a doctorate in ministry from Drew University in Madison.

Msgr. Harms was ordained in May 1965. He served as parochial vicar at St. Michael Parish in Elizabeth and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oakland. He served as pastor of St. Helen in West-



field from 2000-2011.

Msgr. Harms also served as director of Research and Planning in the Archdiocese of Newark and was a faculty member at Seton Hall University.



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Couples finding ways to wed despite pandemic

By Jai Agnish
Communications Manager

It's not easy getting married during a worldwide pandemic, but couples are rising to the challenge. They're rebooking venues in record time while shrinking their guest lists and navigating social distancing requirements. Masks and hand sanitizers are the fashionable party favors of the day.

Indoor dining restrictions have resulted in couples scrambling to find adequate outdoor reception space. Meanwhile, travel restrictions and health concerns are keeping friends and family away, while complicating honeymoons.

"It's been a difficult time," said Debra Loprete, the weddings administrator at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

Typically, the cathedral will host about 65 weddings a year on Fridays and Saturdays. This year, the coronavirus lockdown wiped away the entire wedding calendar from mid-March to July and Loprete has been rescheduling for couples ever since.

"They're experiencing a range of emotions," she said. "Some of them are angry. They're frustrated. They're sad, disappointed. And I get that. It's something you think about as a little girl. You dream about the day. It's hard."

The first post-lockdown wedding at the cathedral was on Aug. 1 followed by two more on Aug. 15 and Aug. 29. Three weddings in August is far from normal, Loprete said, and while the first ceremony hit the maximum allowable of 100 people, only 10 people, including the bride and groom, were at the second. The couple married on Aug. 1 opted to keep their wedding date and tented their backyard for the reception.



The Vazquez's engagement photo.

"There is such a variety of how people are handling this," Loprete said. "It's very personal depending on their family situation."

Other couples have rescheduled into 2021 and Loprete is already filling dates for 2022. Still, other couples have opted to wed sooner rather than later and have postponed their reception into next year.

Despite a slew of pandemic-inspired obstacles, one New Jersey couple managed to successfully overhaul their wedding and rebook their honeymoon, only to have to postpone it for 10 days when a close family member tested positive for the coronavirus.

"Luckily, they didn't have many symptoms," said Rebecca Vazquez. "It was just very mild. We wanted to wait to give them time to recover."

Rebecca and her husband, Agustin Vazquez, were married in Lyndhurst at Sacred Heart on Aug. 24. For the young couple, both in their early 20s, the road to their wedding took many last-minute twists and turns, but they were determined to make it happen.

"From August last year when I proposed, everything looked smooth," Agustin recounted. "We started putting together a small blueprint for the wedding and then March hit. The word 'pandemic' wasn't around, so I'd say the scare came around."

When the lockdown arrived in mid-March, the wait began. The couple had just booked a venue for their reception the month before and made two deposits on it.

"We were thinking, 'Oh, OK, this is going to be a lockdown for two weeks' like everyone thought. 'Everything is going to get back to normal,'" Agustin said.

And besides, they thought, the wedding was several months off.

"We definitely didn't think our wedding was going to be affected by it at all," Rebecca said.

Then the lockdown went from weeks to months. And suddenly, Agustin, who works for a video and photography company, began seeing wedding shoots canceled.

"You see the world begin to shift after month two," he said. "I'm seeing all these couples canceling their weddings. All these events I'm supposed to shoot are being canceled. That's when I think it hit me personally."

This is when Rebecca and Agustin took a hard look at their guest list. They formulated several backup plans based on potential capacity scenarios for the ceremony and the reception. They were also in regular communication with their banquet hall.

"I think that's when the madness began—about three months ago—for us personally when we had to argue with the venue and the venue kind of just said, 'We're in the same boat as you guys,'" he recalled. "We were firm on not rescheduling."

Once they convinced the banquet hall to offer a refund, the race was on to find a suitable outdoor alternative for the reception. The space needed to be large enough to accommodate their 60 guests, down from 120, while allowing for proper social distancing.

"We were looking for anything that would be safe for everyone that would follow all the protocols," said Rebecca. "I was

looking for anyone who had a big backyard. Maybe we could do it in somebody's house. We were just looking everywhere."

The reception was ultimately held at Our Lady Mother of the Church in Woodcliff Lake where there was plenty of outdoor space. They rented a tent, tables and chairs. There were no capacity issues for the ceremony at Sacred Heart where pews were already roped off and social distancing protocols were in effect.

Some of Agustin's elderly relatives, who live in Ecuador, including his grandparents and aunts and uncles, were unable to attend the wedding because of health concerns surrounding travel. An aunt and uncle on Rebecca's side from out of state also did not attend because of concerns about crowds.

"It's hard," Rebecca said. "We understand. These are sacrifices that you have to make. Originally, our list was 120. Small weddings are the thing now. There's nothing wrong with it."

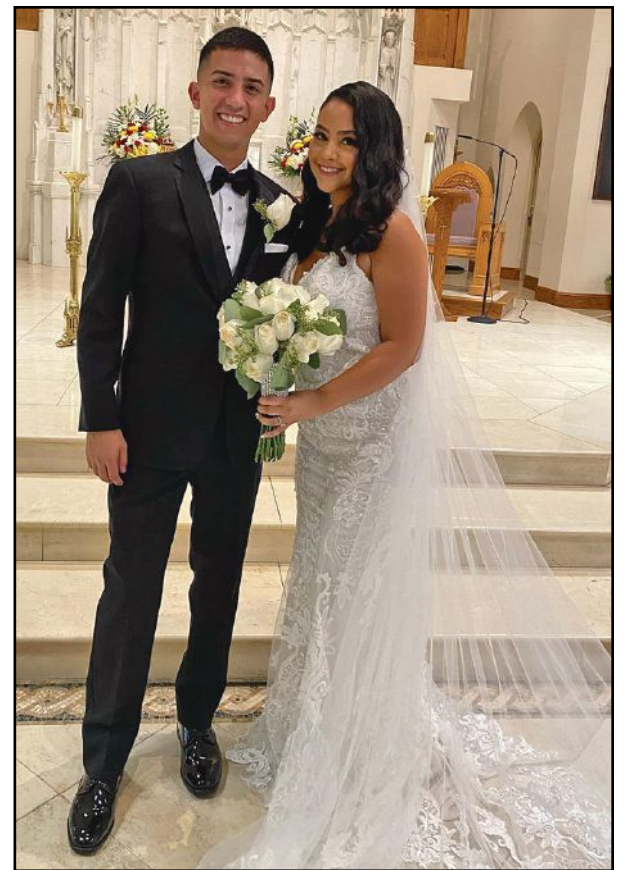
Rebecca and Agustin were determined to celebrate the sacrament of marriage in August despite knowing it would take a lot of hard work. There were moments of uncertainty, Agustin admitted, but they saw it as an opportunity to grow in their faith and strengthen their relationship with each other.

"It wasn't only the realistic things," Agustin said. "It was also from the faith side. Realistically, everyone is saying, 'OK, well just reschedule.' But our faith tells us, 'Is this a moment where God is asking us to look to Him?' And I think we both firmly believe it was. We went into prayer realizing, 'What is being presented to us? What is God's plan in all this?' What took a year to plan, literally, by the grace of God and praying and understanding that He has the wheel in all of this, we were able to plan the wedding in two months."

It's encouraging that couples are choosing to get married now despite all of these difficulties, said Brian Caldwell, the director of Family Life with the Archdiocese of Newark. Caldwell and his office help prepare couples for the sacrament of marriage through Pre-Cana and "God's Plan for Love" courses.

"By not deferring their marriage, they are choosing to enter into the sacrament and receive the accompanying grace now in the midst of the uncertainty we face," Caldwell said. "That is a hopeful sign to me that they want God at the center of their marriage in a time of great distress for our world. After all, the goal of sacramental marriage is to guide one another (and any children you have) to heaven."

Local parishes and archdiocesan staff have been making every effort to work with couples to plan their weddings. For example, Caldwell's office has been conducting



Photos courtesy of Rebecca Vazquez

Agustin and Rebecca Vazquez on their wedding day at Sacred Heart Parish, Lyndhurst.

marriage preparation through Zoom video conferencing.

And the outdoor reception for Rebecca and Agustin was something unusual for Our Lady Mother of the Church. "We've had an outdoor reception once before a few years ago, but it's an anomaly," said Father Sean Manson, the pastor of Our Lady Mother of the Church. "I knew them when they were kids and I know both sets of parents well. They were scrambling like everyone else, so I said, 'Sure, come here.'"

At the cathedral, staff relaxed the calendar and Loprete has booked ceremonies for Labor Day, Thanksgiving weekend, Sundays and even a Tuesday.

"Everyone here has agreed that we're just going to try to accommodate any day," she said.

The cathedral staff has developed "Guidelines for Weddings During COVID-19," which is guided by New Jersey's pandemic regulations. Guests are capped and masks are required to be worn by everyone in attendance, including the bride and groom. If the priest allows it, the bride and groom may remove their mask once they reach the sanctuary after processing down the aisle.

Loprete said that masks are a dealbreaker for some couples.

"It varies," she said. "Some of them get stuck with the idea of wearing masks down the aisle. And I get that. That's really hard for them. Some of them are not as concerned with that. Some are really tied to what this memory is going to be for them. I had one bride say to me, 'I'm going to look at these pictures and I'm just going to see that mask and that's going to be my memory.' And then another bride conversely will say to me, 'I'm going to look at these pictures, I'm going to see that mask and I have a story for my children and grandchildren.' It's very personal."

U.S. bishops, archdiocese support 'Moms in Need' initiative

By Melissa McNally
Editor

In response to the need of improved pastoral responses to women facing unexpected or challenging pregnancies, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, chairman of the committee on pro-life activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), invited fellow bishops and their parishes to join the nationwide effort "Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service."

The Year of Service, held from March 25, 2020, to March 25, 2021, was announced last November at the annual plenary meeting of bishops.

"The challenges can be immense for women in difficult or unplanned pregnancies. Seventy-five percent of women who choose abortion are low income," Archbishop Naumann said. "Pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and our neighborhoods. Women facing challenging pregnancies should see the Church as a place where they can find help, especially with its myriad of social services."

The archbishop encouraged parishes to identify local pregnancy resources for those in need. "The parish community is uniquely positioned to encourage a col-



laboration of resources at the local level and to increase awareness of help available to mothers and families in need," Archbishop Naumann explained.

The Archdiocese of Newark is home to several organizations that help expecting mothers, including Good Counsel in Secaucus and Several Sources Shelters in Ramsey. The Respect Life Office of the archdiocese has been at the forefront of ministry to mothers since opening Mercy House in 2018. Located at 620 Clinton Ave. in Newark, the facility is a local resource and referral center for individuals and families in need.

"Every mom has a right to keep and care for her child," said Cheryl Riley, director of Mercy House and the archdiocesan Respect Life Office. "This is not always easy for a mom to do. Walking with these moms in need is a way for us

to give them love and support. When we provide resources for these moms, it means we are providing love. To me, that's what it's all about—having a heart that can love."

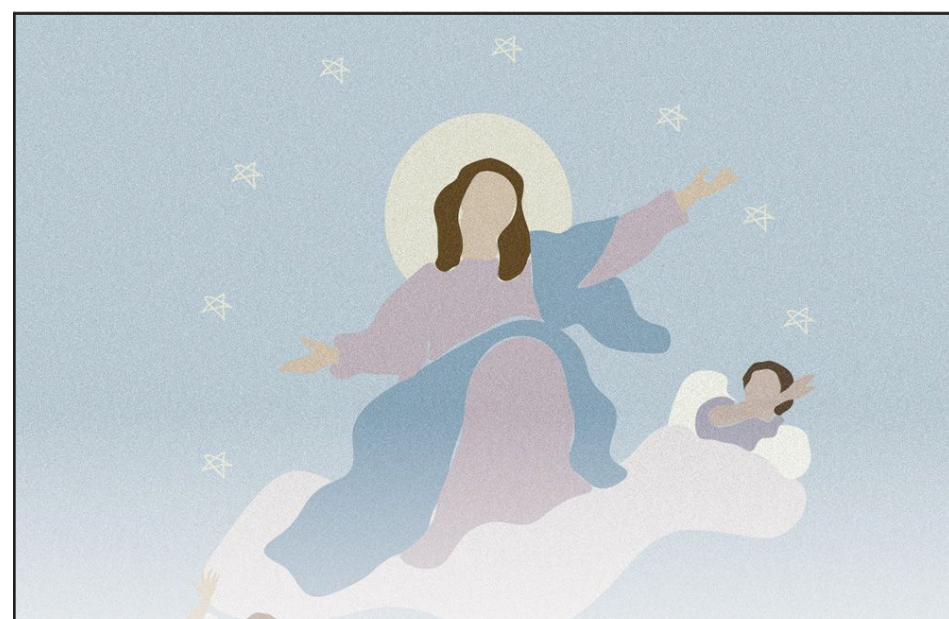
Jada Fortunato first visited Mercy House in July 2018 when she was pregnant with her son, Giovanni.

"Mercy House helped with important needs during my pregnancy and they continue to help me after," she explained. "They were so loving and welcoming. They make you feel comfortable."

Fortunato said she regularly visits the facility for diapers, wipes and other essentials for her young son.

To learn more about Mercy House, including needed items, visit www.rcan.org/mercyhouse.

More information about the USCCB initiative can be found at www.usccb.org/moms-in-need.



A prayer for pregnant mothers

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties.

Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.

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Special indeed not in need

By Father James A. Worth

I think about the man born blind, the woman who endured 12 years of bleeding, the young boy possessed by demons and so many others in the Bible who had disabilities that kept them from mainstreaming into the community. It must have been so difficult for their family and friends to watch them endure the challenges and loneliness of being different and reminded of it on a daily basis. We as a people have always been uncomfortable when people and things are not how we want them to be.

Being special is usually thought of as having gifts and talents that many do not have. It also can mean those whose abilities are not seen in this light but felt to be burdens and crosses to bear. Pope Francis has, on several occasions, spoken of the importance of inclusion. He reminds us of treating everyone we meet with kindness, respect and compassion. It sounds great. It is great. But it seems that we need much more work when it comes to living that command of integration into our community.

When it comes to going to Mass, it is important to remember that when

Jesus gathered the crowds on the side of a mountain, some were noisy, unruly, messy and odd. They weren't just people who were acting the way everyone thought they should. Even the disciples questioned their behaviors at times. But what did Jesus do? He didn't chastise them, He embraced them with great patience. He allowed them to be present to the best of their abilities.

When those with special needs attend our liturgies, the last thing they need is our pity. They do not want to be pointed out and made to feel like they are odd. They are looking for inclusion and acceptance, as are their loved ones. They want to worship to the best of their abilities, not how we deem them to do so. They want to blend into the assembly just like everyone else. I would imagine that's what the rest of the congregation wants as well.

So how do we do this? We do it with kindness, respect and compassion. We truly welcome them unconditionally. We exercise a greater level of patience for the times that things may not be as they should. The Eucharist is a celebration and it should be treated

Living Our Faith



Photo by Fred Golz

as such. We enter fully and try to praise God with the abilities that we have been given. It is really not complicated at all. In fact, it comes naturally when we are spiritually minded and seek unity.

In my parish, there are many with disabilities that can be seen and heard. These individuals are treated with equity. We give them what they need but do not overwhelm them. We smile when they smile, we share our peace,

we sing with them and pray with them. Sometimes it can be quite eventful and sometimes not. Either way, I feel blessed to be part of such a welcoming community. Let's be like Christ and less like so many in our hurried and anxious society. Let's love them, let's pray for and with them. Let them be who God called them to be.

Father James A. Worth is the pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Maplewood.

The Staff and Parishioners of Saint Anthony of Padua, Elizabeth are grateful to have two wonderful priests who support and guide our community.

May God continue to bless them abundantly.

Rev. Oscar Martín Domínguez

Rev. Marco T. Marroquin



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who have devoted their lives
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warmly thanks and appreciates



Fr. Marc A. Vicari

Msgr. Anthony Kulig

Deacon Robert Demetillo



for their love, leadership and guidance.



*May our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,
continue to bless you and
your pastoral ministry.*

*Saint Cassian Church,
Upper Montclair, NJ*





Priestly duties and reporting

By Kelly Marsicano
Associate Publisher

"It's a rewarding ministry. I love serving soldiers and their families."

As a member of the U.S. Army Reserves Chaplain Corps, Father Andrew De Silva is required to report for duty twice a month and for two weeks during the summer.

"I'm a captain in the U.S. Army Reserves. I've been in for seven years, always in the Chaplain Corps," he said.

Currently, he's the head chaplain for the 8th Medical Brigade on Staten Island.

Part of his responsibilities include supervising the other chaplain teams in the brigade and providing spiritual support and guidance for the soldiers. Due to the pandemic, this year has proven to be much more challenging.

"We've been busy setting up or preparing teams to set up field hospitals. A lot of our work has been to train soldiers to set up field hospitals," Father De Silva explained.

In April, when hospitals were nearing capacity and fear was high, Father

De Silva was on the road in New York and Pennsylvania tending to two different teams of soldiers preparing to be mobilized.

"There was a lot of stress and a lot of fear—fear for the future, fear for their families. The main difficulty was the uncertainty. I was there for celebrating Mass, hearing confessions and counseling soldiers," described the parochial vicar from St. Agnes in Clark. "As a chaplain, you're also the go-to person when things get tough. I conducted a few classes on suicide prevention and stress management during the training."



Photo courtesy of Father Andrew De Silva

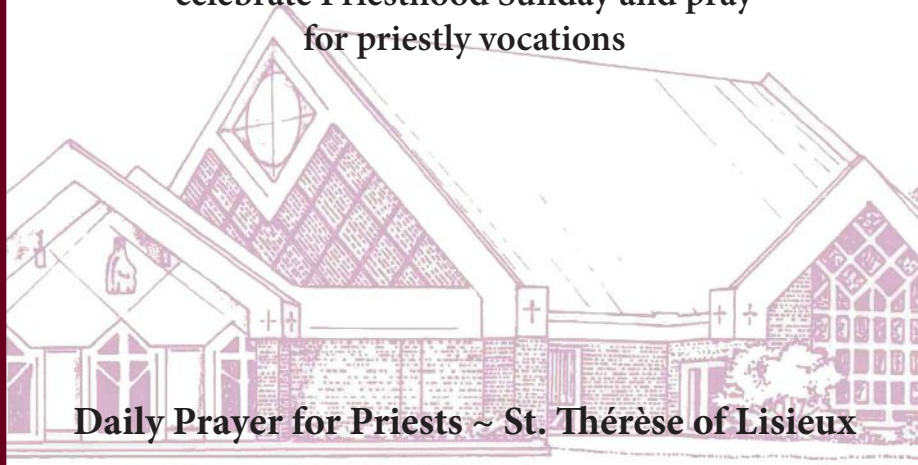
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Daily Prayer for Priests ~ St. Thérèse of Lisieux

O Jesus, I pray for your faithful and fervent priests;
for your unfaithful and tepid priests;
for your priests laboring at home or abroad in distant mission fields;
for your tempted priests; for your lonely and desolate priests;
for your young priests; for your dying priests;
for the souls of your priests in Purgatory.

But above all, I recommend to you the priests dearest to me:
the priest who baptized me; the priests who absolved me from my sins;
the priests at whose Masses I assisted
and who gave me Your Body and Blood in Holy Communion;
the priests who taught and instructed me;
all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way.
O Jesus, keep them all close to your heart,
and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity.

Amen.

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Rev. Joseph A. Ferraro – Pastor

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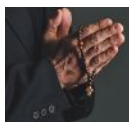
Newly Ordained Parochial Vicar Rev. John P. Ginty

We are also grateful for

Rev. James Chern, Rev. William Cook

And Msgr. Anthony Ziccardi

who assist at our parish.



for duty during a pandemic

I was there as a confidential person who people could talk to when things were going badly.”

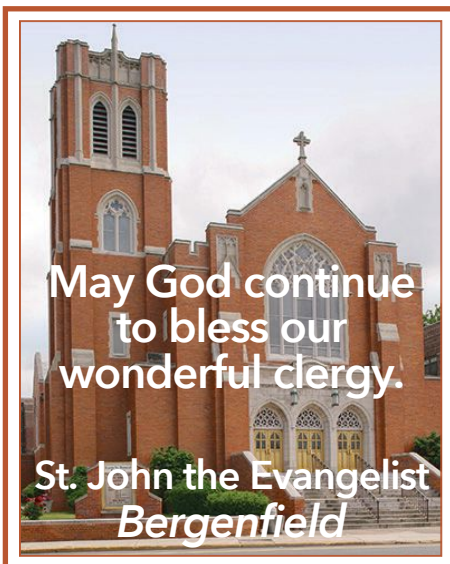
Father De Silva noted that the timing of his absence from the parish worked out well since public celebrations of Mass in the Archdiocese of Newark had been canceled at the time. “I was able to celebrate the Triduum with soldiers who were away from families. But because of our online nature at the parish, was still able to be somewhat present to St. Agnes.”

Father De Silva also pointed out this was his very first Triduum as a priest—he had been ordained less than a year prior in May 2019. He said he wanted to help out as much as possible during this important time for his parish, so he and the pastor, Father William Sheridan, recorded a small retreat for parishioners before he left for duty. Father De Silva was also able to livestream a few Masses from his location in New York back to the parish.

Joking that it was like being in two places at the same time, he said he was grateful for the sense of support St. Agnes provided. “It was good to have Father Bill and the parish there praying for this other flock that I was ministering to,” he admitted. “They were incredibly supportive. That was really beautiful to see. They’re a great community at St. Agnes.”

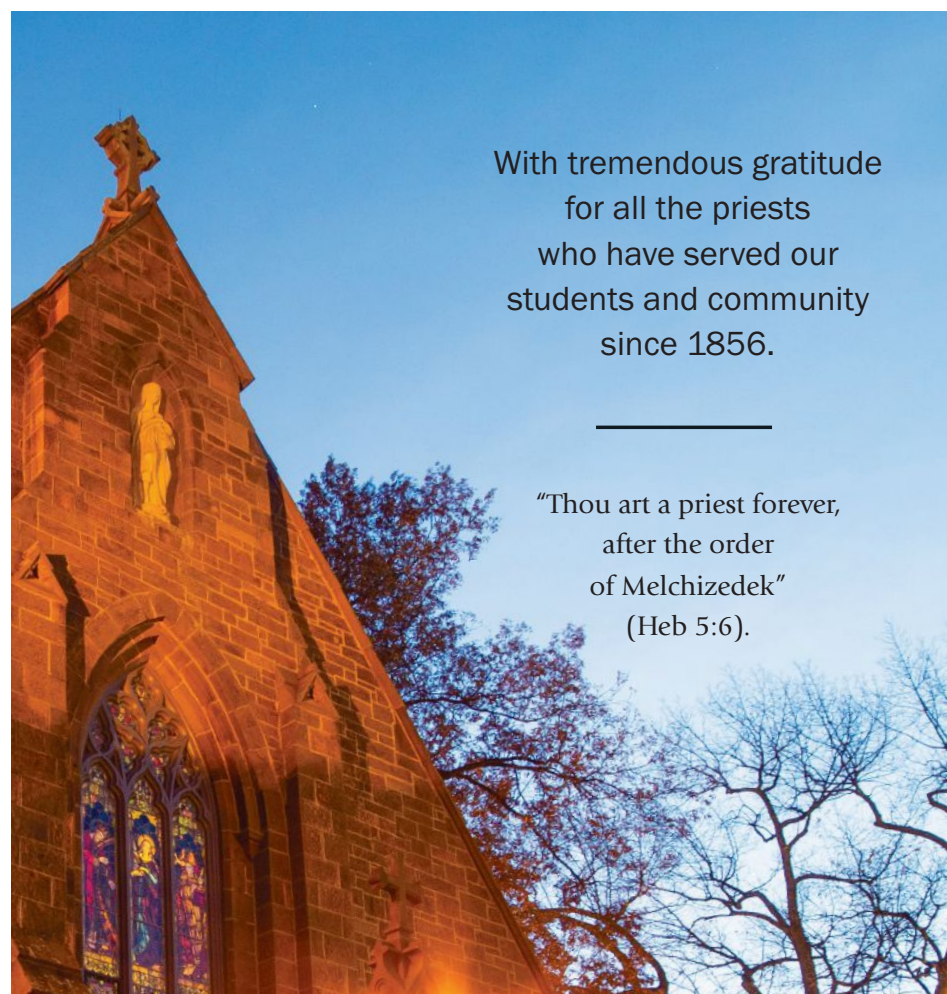
Father De Silva said sharing his time between these two ministries doesn’t feel like a conflict. In fact, he said each one influences the other.

“I feel blessed to be able to be a parish priest, but at the same time, to be there when I’m needed for that community that is ready to put everything on the line for their country,” he explained. “My ministry in the parish impacts or benefits my ministry to soldiers and vice versa: My parish ministry helps me bring spirituality to soldiers; my [time in the Army] brings leadership and professionalism to the parish ministry.”



May God continue
to bless our
wonderful clergy.

St. John the Evangelist
Bergenfield



With tremendous gratitude
for all the priests
who have served our
students and community
since 1856.

“Thou art a priest forever,
after the order
of Melchizedek”
(Heb 5:6).



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“You did not choose me, I chose you” John 15:16

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Fr. Leo J. Butler

and

Fr. Timothy Graff

For your continuous and sincere efforts
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