



Parish Times

Special Edition
Catholic Schools Week

JANUARY 2023

Living the Faith Together

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A Force for Christ

By Chuck Short

Happy new year! I pray the peace and love of Jesus fills your hearts and inspires your faith in 2023.

I'm inspired by the life of Jean Brady, a dear friend and member of St. Rose in Germantown. Jean returned to God in November. Her life as a servant-Catholic is a notable example of genuine Christian discipleship. For many years, Jean was an irrepressible force for justice and compassion at St. Mary's in Rockville. She devoted her life to Christ's simple command-



Chuck Short

Continued on page 10

Let's Keep It Going

By Fr. John Enzler

It was great seeing you!

I may not have seen you personally at Christmas, but I say that on behalf of my fellow priests and your fellow parishioners. In talking to a number of pastors, I've heard great excitement that so many of us were once again able to celebrate the birth of Jesus with our parish families.



Fr. John Enzler

The early Christmas Eve Masses were full

Continued on page 26

Let's Take a Ride

By Patricia McGann

Parents today face so many challenges as they raise their children in a dangerous world. There are so many things to protect children from today - and there are many things from which we do not need to protect them. It can be difficult to decide.

Many kids today are protected from boredom - sometimes called "downtime" or "inactivity". Parents argue that their children need to be "busy all the time", and "need to



Patricia McGann

Continued on page 26

From Holy Redeemer to Togo with Love: Parishioners Travel to Togo for Dedication of Holy Redeemer Mission Church

By Ann Enkiri

This February, Holy Redeemer's pastor, Father Mark Hughes, will lead twenty Holy Redeemer parishioners on a week-long visit to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Atchanve, Togo. Bishop Mark Brennan of West Virginia, a friend of Father William Ryan who founded the mission church in 2006 will join the group. Father Ryan, who grew up in Holy Redeemer parish and attended Holy Redeemer School, has worked for over seventeen years to bring both the "living water" of Jesus Christ and accessible, clean water to the people in this large, rural area.

In 2018, Holy Redeemer became the sister parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe mission church and parishioners engaged in supporting the Church's evangelical work in the three dozen villages of the mission. Father Hughes visited the Togo mission in February 2019 with parishioners Paul Kuzma and John McKenna. That fall, Holy Redeemer gathered and shipped a container of household goods and essentials along with bronze statues of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego to Togo.

"February is a great time to visit this area as it is the dry season," Father reported. That makes travel over the very rough dirt roads a little more navigable, though still challenging. "It will be hot," Father Ryan informed the group via email, "but don't



Father Ryan greets villagers after mass.

bother bringing your bathing suits. We don't want you swimming in the dirty Zio River!"

The Holy Redeemer cohort, with members from ages twelve to seventy-eight, will depart on Monday, February 13, from Dulles International Airport on a direct flight to Lome, Togo's capital city and the region's primary seaport. This intergenerational group includes several parents traveling with their children to share this

amazing experience—the trip of a lifetime.

Upon their arrival in Lome, at around noon on Tuesday, they will be welcomed by mission representatives and begin the almost three-hour journey northward in a convoy of three vehicles and a truck. At Our Lady of Guadalupe, a traditional African welcome awaits them. "Please tell people to watch the 3-minute video of

Continued on page 22



Varsity Division All-Tournament Team. Pictured are Leisl P. of Holy Redeemer, Caitlyn M. of Holy Redeemer, Charlotte H. of Little Flower, Madeline M. of Mary of Nazareth, Dania L. of Mary of Nazareth, Kaylee B. of St. Elizabeth, Victoria N. of St. Elizabeth, Gianna C. of Blessed Sacrament, Chase H. of Blessed Sacrament, Keira K. of Blessed Sacrament (MVP), Aubrey P. of St. Jerome, Taylor L. of St. Jerome. Not pictured is Olivia A. of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Holy Child Hosts Annual CYO Basketball Tournament

Holy Child hosted its 14th Annual CYO Tournament over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend after a two-year hiatus due to Covid. It was an exciting three days of basketball as 16 teams (eight teams in each division) played for the Junior Varsity and Varsity championship

titles with over 150 athletes – including six Holy Child middle-school students – playing for their parish teams.

Each team played hard in the hopes of making it to the final, but it ended with close contests of St. Elizabeth over Our Lady of Good Counsel for the Junior

Varsity title and Blessed Sacrament over Saint Jerome for the Varsity title. At the end of the tournament, the All-Tournament teams were announced for each division. It was great to have everyone back on the court and congratulations to all the teams!

OPT

2023 Maryland Legislature is a major life challenge

You can help, it's easy and quick

By John Naughton

In Maryland, abortions can be performed throughout pregnancy. Maryland is a haven for full-term abortionists. Maryland Right to Life, which for decades has advocated for protection of life measures in the Maryland Legislature, is asking for your help to defeat horrendous anti-life legislation – an abortion constitutional amendment and legalizing suicide.

Laura Bogley, Acting Executive Director of Maryland Right to Life, recently commented [quote has been edited due to space limitations]:

“You might think we would be disheartened, but that is not the case. We are determined to defend life this session more powerfully than ever before. We are reorganizing and growing to meet the challenges because this is OUR TIME to bring great glory to God and save precious lives in Maryland.

“We have built an incredible network of pro-life partnerships and have an over 80 percent success rate in defeating bad legislation. While we celebrate the past, we know that our challenges will be even greater in 2023.

“First, pro-abortion lawmakers

have once again pledged to pass an Abortion Amendment putting the ‘right’ to abortion on demand through birth into our State Constitution. This amendment, if passed by the Legislature and enacted by ballot in the next election, could close pro-life pregnancy centers and deny medical providers their rights of conscience. We have defeated this amendment in three previous sessions, but Governor-elect Wes Moore and the pro-abortion extremists have proclaimed this amendment their top priority in 2023.

“Secondly, Physician Assisted Suicide will be voted on again. We defeated this bill in five previous sessions. We are working with a coalition of partners to defend the elderly, sick and disabled from the culture of death that steals time from God’s precious gift of life.

“And finally, we will be opposing legislation crafted to destroy families by undermining parental rights to make medical decisions for their children. We are already speaking with parents’ rights groups across the state to help defeat such legislation.

“Maryland Right to Life stands as THE voice for the voiceless. During countless encounters with

your legislative representatives and at bill hearings, we are often the lone testimony to oppose abortion and abortion funding. That voice is amplified by our stalwart army of pro-life members who provide prayer, advocacy and the critical financial resources necessary to fund successful lobbying efforts.

“Truly, this is a do-or-die year in the history of the pro-life movement in Maryland. With the Constitutional guarantee of the right to life under assault this is our time to actively defend life. *Can we count on you as we face the evils before us?* As always, we are incredibly grateful for and blessed by your unwavering support. Thank you and God bless you!”

Julie Biasotti, Director of Administration of Maryland Right to Life, offers ways to help [quote has been edited due to space limitations]:

“Maryland Right to Life member advocates sent an incredible 77,000 messages to legislators in 2022. When your representatives

held hearings on abortion legislation, MDRTL was there to provide effective testimony in defense of LIFE. But before we even walked into the room, legislators had received thousands of emails and phone calls. When it comes to being a voice for innocent children in the womb, the elderly, sick and disabled, the MDRTL TAKE ACTION (www.mdrtl.org/takeaction.html) page is one of our most effective tools.

What can you do to defend life?

1. Send messages to your legislator through the TAKE ACTION tab at MDRTL.org. It is very easy and takes only a minute. Click on the TAKE ACTION tab, enter your email and zip code, click on the item you wish to send an email on, add any other comments you wish and click to send the email to your representatives. Your representatives are identified and addressed based on your ZIP code. Stay tuned for emailed Action Alerts to follow because as bills move through the legis-

lature they are heard by committee members in the House and Senate. Voting on the same bill often occurs several times so we TAKE ACTION as needed.

2. Share the TAKE ACTION tab with your church and other contacts. We have provided a pdf flyer to share at the RESOURCES tab or you can write a bulletin notice for your church.
3. Join us at the MARYLAND MARCH FOR LIFE (www.mdmarchforlife.com) February 27th. Please attend so that we can show Maryland legislators the strength of our movement.
4. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper borrowing language from the TAKE ACTION summary and your pro-life point of view.

We are here to help in any way! Email julie@mdrtl.org for assistance.

Thank you. Together, we can move mountains!”

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By Melissa Montealegre Egan

Every Mass is a symphony of human talent, with clergy members, lectors, ushers, altar servers, choir members, musicians, and gift bearers offering their collective gifts to celebrate the liturgy. As the Mass for All God’s Children returned to St. Francis of Assisi Church on January 8, young adults and teens with special needs showed the gifts they have to offer the church – themselves, just as God made them.

Celebrated on the Feast of the Epiphany, the liturgy showcases the contributions of people with special needs and developmental differences in the Mass and celebrates them as part of Jesus Christ’s beloved flock. Individuals with special needs filled nearly every liturgical role, from playing the piano, to singing in the choir, to proclaiming Scripture to bringing up the gifts.

Jenn Lynn, executive director of Upcounty Community Resources,



Teens and young adults attending the Mass for All God's Children at St. Francis of Assisi Parish on Sunday, January 8, pose on the altar after the liturgy. The Mass celebrating the contributions of people with special needs and developmental differences took place for the first time in three years since the outbreak of COVID-19.

attended the liturgy, watching with pride as more than 30 of the young adults who participate in the nonprofit organization’s social

programs and therapeutic offerings had liturgical roles. The mother of a young adult son with autism, Lynn

Continued on page 23

Index

Christ the King..... 26	Senior Services 30	St. Martin of Tours..... 5
Holy Cross..... 37	St. Bartholomew 13	St. Mary - Barnesville 28
Holy Redeemer..... 11	St. Bernadette 15	St. Mary - Rockville 19
Mary of Nazareth..... 9	St. Elizabeth..... 17	St. Michael..... 31
Mother Seton..... 35	St. Francis of Assisi..... 33	St. Patrick..... 7
Our Lady of Lourdes..... 24	St. Francis International School..... 23	St. Paul 8
Our Lady of Mercy..... 12	St. Jane de Chantal 25	St. Peter 18
Our Lady of the Visitation..... 34	St. John the Evangelist 16	St. Raphael 29
Our Lady Queen of Poland..... 4	St. John Neumann..... 21	Woods Academy 14
Resurrection..... 22	St. Jude..... 20	

Black Catholics on the Way to Sainthood

by Amy Sapeoff Hamm

Celebrate Black History Month and dig deeper into your Catholic faith by learning about Black Americans on their way to canonization. These men and women provide unbelievable examples of how faith in God makes it possible to confront injustice and to experience true freedom. All you holy men and women, pray for us!

Venerable Augustus Tolton

Venerable Augustus Tolton was born in 1854 in Brush Creek, Missouri. Like many Black men of his time, he was born into slavery. He spent his early years as an enslaved person, working for a Catholic family. He and his mother were both baptized, and he was raised in the faith. According to Toltoncatholic.org, “Despite adversities, human cruelties and hatred by his fellow man, Augustus Tolton had the love of Jesus Christ in his heart”. In 1862, he escaped into freedom with his family by crossing the Missouri River and entering Illinois. At the encouragement of his mother, he looked at this moment as one of great grace and mercy, compelling him to seek a deeper relationship with the Lord. Despite continued racial prejudice, he was able to attend St. Peter’s, an all white Catholic school with the help of Fr. Peter McGirr. He flourished in Catholic education, eventually attending college and entering the seminary, seeking to glorify God in all he did. In 1886, at the age of 31, he became the first Black priest born in the United States. His own experience inspired his famous words, “Follow not the well-worn path. Go instead where there is no path, and blaze a trail”. The priesthood eventually brought him to Chicago, where he became known for serving the poor and witnessing to God’s great love. He died at the age of 43 while on a priest retreat. For more information visit toltoncatholic.org



Venerable Augustus Tolton

Servant of God Thea Bowman

Servant of God Thea Bowman was born in 1937 in Yazoo City, Mississippi. Raised in a Protestant household, she was inspired by the Catholic sisters who taught at her school and asked her parents to become Catholic when she was nine years old. Thea faced the injustice of racial discrimination and violence during her youth, but only became more convinced of the promise of redemptive suffering and of God’s love for the oppressed. When she was 15, she left her family to enter the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. She became a teacher and eventually earned her doctorate, teaching English at the university level. Sr. Mary Thea experienced Vatican II as an opportunity to dig deeper into her African American history and culture, seeing a new opportunity for an integration of her Black heritage into the broader life of the Church. This awareness shaped much of her work over the next several decades. In 1984 she was diagnosed with breast cancer, dying six years later. She



Servant of God Mary Lange

offered her suffering each day, seeking to always do God’s will. Her legacy and impact on the American Church is only now coming to light. She made sense of her own personal suffering, as well as the racial suffering of so many Blacks in the United State, saying “We unite ourselves with Christ’s redemptive work when we reconcile, when we make peace, when we share the good news that God is in our lives, when we reflect to our brothers and sisters God’s healing, God’s forgiveness, God’s unconditional love.”. For more information, visit sistertheabowman.com

Servant of God Mary Lange

Elizabeth Clarisse Lange immigrated to the United States from Cuba when she was a young woman in 1813, settling in Baltimore. Having likely come from a family of means, she was in a position to offer education to the children of her fellow Caribbean immigrants and refugees. Lacking resources, she used her own money and home to provide schooling. Her efforts gained attention and in 1828, she



Servant of God Thea Bowman

was tasked by Archbishop James Whitfield to open a more formal school for Black girls. But Lange had a greater vision for her life. With the support of her spiritual director, she asked the Archbishop for assistance in starting a religious order for Black women. He agreed. The Oblate Sisters of Providence were born, the first religious order open to Black women in the United States. Elizabeth, taking the name Sister Mary, served both the role of founder and superior. The path was not easy and she experienced poverty, racism, and spiritual darkness in her vocation. No matter the obstacle, she never lost hope in God’s divine Providence. She lived until 1882 and her faith bore many fruits. In her long life, she would go on to open orphanages, widow’s homes, provide night school for Black adults, provide home visits, vocational training, religious instruction, and spiritual direction. Her life was defined by charity and deep faith. For more information, visit motherlange.org.

OPT

Rosaria Community: a History of Subsidiarity in Action

by Amy Sapeoff Hamm

Subsidiarity is one of the guiding principles of Catholic Social Teaching. It is the idea that problems within society should be addressed at the lowest, most personal, level possible. Large, rigid, bureaucratic entities aren’t capable of respecting the dignity of a person in need the same way that a local community can.

It is this principle that animates Rosaria Communities, an organization that, according to its mission statement, works to, “foster the construction or renovation of housing to provide independent living opportunities for people with physical and intellectual disabilities” and to “assure an environment of comfort and care in which the needs of our residents will be supported by an involved Catholic community”. Rosaria Communities now operates five homes affiliated with Catholic parishes in Montgomery County, with a sixth home in the works. Each home is a residence for several adults with various forms of intellectual disabilities as well as a resident care provider.

Tom Welch, founder and current board member, was inspired to begin Rosaria Communities after reflecting on his experience



The home at St. Rose of Lima was the first Rosaria Community home.

with two of his daughters. His oldest daughter, Kyle suffered from brain damage during her delivery and his daughter Colleen was born with Down Syndrome. Colleen has passed away, but her memory lives on in one of the Community’s annual fundraisers. “When you have kids with special needs, you become an advocate,” Tom explained. “First you advocate for your child in the schools, but then as they become adults, you have to think about the transition into work and possible independent living”. The question of independent living became a provocation for Tom. He knew that his family had the support and resources to care for Kyle into adulthood, “but what about families

that didn’t?”.

What might happen to young people with intellectual disabilities who don’t have families with the means and resources to care for them through adulthood? Thinking of Kyle and Colleen, Tom knew that rather than an institution, or a program, they would need a home where they would be cherished as a son or daughter of God.

The next spark of inspiration also came from Tom’s experience. “In becoming an advocate, you begin to see all the places and people that care for and share your children and their particular needs. The parish was one such place for us. Kyle and Colleen served as altar serv-



Residents at the St. John the Evangelist house enjoy a gathering with fellow parishioners.

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Continued on page 28



The Bethlehem Peace Light at OLQP, Silver Spring, MD. SK Franklin Morton, SK Bob Dowlut, Alice Marie Beard, PSO-ZHP Scout leader Bozenna Buda, Jennifer Morton, Shon Morton (in back).

Bethlehem Peace Light comes to OLQP

By Bozenna Buda, ED

On December 18, 2022, the Bethlehem Peace Light arrived in Silver Spring, MD, at the parish of Our Lady Queen of Poland and St. Maximilian Kolbe. It was brought to the altar by representatives of the Polish Scouting Organization “Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego” (PSO-ZHP) from Council “Hufiec” Podhale and the Knights of Columbus St. Maximilian Kolbe Council 16634. The Peace Light had traveled from Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, to New York City, where it was received by our PSO-ZHP Council

Podhale and made available for sharing with others, including our local PSO-ZHP in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

The Peace Light represents the light and truth of Jesus Christ. It is a symbol of hope, intended to promote global peace and harmony (<https://PeaceLightNorthAmerica.org>). In sharing the Bethlehem Peace Light, we were reminded that, “In giving this Light to another person, you will see that nothing will be lost...because values such as faith, hope, and love -like light- when you share them, they multiply.”

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St. Nicholas “Sw. Mikolaj” arrived at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish on December 4, 2022, to bring gifts to the parish children (and adults).



Parishioners pose in front of Our Lady Queen of Poland & St. Maximilian Kolbe church at Christmastime, where two angels stand near the entrance.

Gifts for Baby Jesus

By Bozenna Buda, ED

On the Feast of the Epiphany, OLQP parish children presented home-made gifts to Baby Jesus in the manger “szopka” in church. These were not the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which the Three Kings brought thousands of years ago. Instead, these were presents from the heart and they were written on heart-shaped paper notes. They consisted of the good deeds that the parish children had been doing and collecting since Advent.

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Above: Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych, S.Chr., reads the good deeds from the parish children as they were written on the heart-shaped notes to Baby Jesus.

Left: OLQP parish children at the manger of Baby Jesus, where they placed their heart-shaped good deed lists on the Feast of the Epiphany.



Left: The cast of the Polish School Christmas pageant.

Below left: OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych prays and blesses the “Oplatek” wafer at the Polish School “Jaselka.”

Below right: The visit of “Sw. Mikolaj” at the “Jaselka” Christmas pageant.



The OLQP Polish School Nativity Pageant – Jaselka

By Bozenna Buda, ED

Each year, the Our Lady Queen of Poland Polish School puts on a Christmas Nativity pageant, called “Jaselka” in Polish. This year, the Jaselka took place on December 17, 2022. The students had roles ranging from shepherds to angels to the three kings, to those of Mary and Joseph. They were helped in their preparations by Principal Ewa Chlebowska and teachers Urszula Kolodziej and

John Armstrong as well as parents and grandparents. OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych was there to pray and to bless the “Oplatek” Christmas wafer, which all present shared. The parish hall was transformed into the site of the first Christmas for the pageant and the students rose to the occasion beautifully. One of the parents provided accompaniment for the Christmas carols “koledy” on his guitar. Even St. Nicholas “Sw. Mikolaj” visited at the end!

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St. Martin's Parish held a Living Nativity on December 21, 2022. The different scenes from the infancy narrative leading up to Christ's birth were sponsored and recreated by various groups within the parish. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's Parish.



St. Martin's Celebrates Catholic Schools Week

Each day, during Catholic Schools Week we honor different contributors to our school community and celebrate what makes Catholic schools so extraordinary. Through these events, we focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church and our community. We look forward to a wide array of exciting activities planned by our faculty, parents, and students.

Parish Appreciation Day – On Sunday, January 29, St. Martin's will host an open house for prospective families from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Register at smsmd.org

Community Appreciation Day – On Monday, January 30, St. Martin's will celebrate with an all-school mass and the start of its Lenten Food Drive.

School Appreciation Day – On Tuesday, January 31, it's Pajama and Stuffed Animal Day! Students will also enjoy a math and science game show. The school's 24-hour of giving campaign starts.

Student Appreciation Day – On Wednesday, February 1, students will enjoy Wacky Tacky Day and bingo.

Family Appreciation Day – On Thursday, February 2, staff will surprise families with special treats and students will cheer on as the 8th graders take on the staff in an exciting volleyball game.

Teacher Appreciation Day – On Friday, February 3, students will finish off the week with Spirit Wear Day, a Living Rosary, and early dismissal. Teachers and staff will be treated to a fabulous lunch.



St. Martin's students learn together. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.

Eighth Graders Share Their Love for St. Martin's School

The Community by Aeribella Cajigal

St. Martin's is a wonderful learning environment to take part in. As a student who has attended for a couple of years, I would say what I like the most is the community. St. Martin's reminds me of a family. It is a small community, creating an environment where everyone knows everyone. When I first came, I was immediately greeted and welcomed by both the students and faculty. When I think of St. Martin's, I consider it to be my second home. At St. Martin's everyone belongs, no matter what race, faith or background. You are absolutely adored here! Knowing that I am graduating soon, I feel comforted that I'm always welcomed back home. On multiple occasions, alumni have returned to visit, some even coming back to teach. I am so glad I have been able to attend and become a crusader. Knowing that I will be going to high school, I will always remember, once a crusader, always a crusader!

Supporting Young Faith by Autumn Burkett and David Mensah

St. Martin of Tours School comes with many opportunities for students to get involved with and explore their faith. Those opportunities include weekly Mass, morning and afternoon prayers, and Bible buddies.

Every week, whether it be on Wednesday or Friday, we attend Mass with our class. The Masses are led by our local priests and assisted by our student altar servers. These gatherings are a great way for students and staff to practice their faith.

A normal day at our school begins and ends with prayers over the speakers led by

our student council. Fourth through eighth graders that are members of our student board have a chance to do prayers and assist the younger grades in leading.

As eighth graders, we are partnered with Pre-K as our Bible buddies. Once a week we go down to their classroom and guide them in religious activities to help them understand and appreciate God and what He has sacrificed for us.

All of these things that our school does helps to strengthen our faith in not only God but ourselves.

Academics by Isabella Montalvo and Mollie Alexander

Saint Martin of Tours is a wonderful place for gaining amazing opportunities in a student's academics. With everything that this school provides, each crusader leaves with an advanced mindset and is prepared for the challenges high school will bring.

Academics are a crucial factor at our school. Saint Martin's is a place that aims to provide the highest standards to prepare students for the future. Our teachers are here to help us succeed in all subjects and provide us with the assistance we need in our studies.

Being a student here at Saint Martin's is a wonderful experience, we get along with fellow classmates from other classrooms. Being in a small school, every student knows each other and embraces their diversities, which not only strengthens our academics, but our relationships with others. Each student knows each other and despite our diversity, we strengthen ourselves not only as a group, but in also our academics

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St. Martin's students enjoy their friendship and treats on St. Nicholas Day. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's School.



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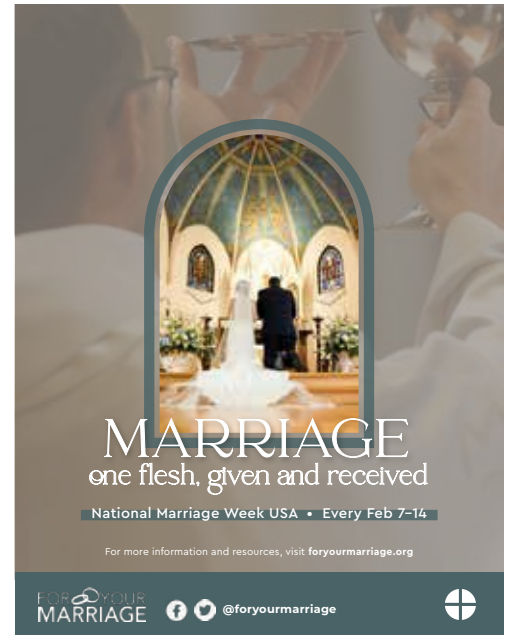
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At Home Marriage Retreat for National Marriage Week 2023

The observances of National Marriage Week (Feb. 7-14) and World Marriage Day (Sunday, Feb. 12) are an opportunity to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with supporting and promoting marriage and the family. This year's theme, "Marriage...one flesh, given and received" highlights the one-flesh union of husband and wife that is willed by God. It also indicates the personal self-gift of each spouse, one to the other. These concepts point to Christ who gives Himself under the appearance of bread and wine—as real flesh and blood.

In honor of the week-long celebration which recognizes and affirms the Sacrament of Marriage, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has released a seven-day At-Home Marriage Retreat for couples to deepen their couple prayer and enrich their marriage. Each day's retreat may be as short as a half-hour or it may become a day-long dialogue. The outline for each day begins with a short reflection on a different habit proposed for the couple to develop. Each habit is then reviewed first from the perspective of the couple's relationship with Christ and then through the lens of the couple's own relationship.

The retreat is a perfect opportunity for couples to unite in prayer and reflection. Praying together as a couple can strengthen the bond between husband and wife as well as increase trust and intimacy between one another. More important, it is an intentional way for spouses to invite the Lord into their



marriage and acknowledge God's presence in their relationship.

For couples who may not be praying together, this year's At Home Marriage Retreat provides a perfect opportunity to begin.

To download the 13-page At Home Marriage Retreat, go to: www.parishtimes.com/marriage-retreat-2023.html

The 2023 At-Home Marriage Retreat is an adaptation of "Building a Eucharistic Marriage" by Greg Schutte, MSW, LISW-S. For more information, visit: www.eucharistic-marriage.org

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St. Patrick's Christmas Pageant

St. Patrick's was finally able to hold our first Christmas Pageant in two years after Covid forced us to pause the tradition. The night did not disappoint! Our students reminded us of the real reason for the season by celebrating the birth of Jesus through song. Classes prepared beautiful

renditions of some of our favorite Christmas carols, such as *Silent Night*. The second-grade class portrayed the Nativity and sang with their eighth-grade buddies, which is always a special part of the evening. What a wonderful way to gather as a community to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

OPT



Our student singers helped to set the tone for a beautiful Christmas season.



The sixth-grade elves pose for a photo with Santa.

A Special Morning with Santa!

Our students and families enjoyed a wonderful morning at the beginning of December getting ready for the holidays with a favorite tradition, Breakfast with Santa! Our sixth-grade families planned and hosted this event, which included a delicious breakfast, fun games, and of course an opportunity to take photos with Santa. The sixth-grade students transformed into elves and helped to lead games, serve food and gave our younger students and families a morning full of smiles, laughs, and great memories to start our Christmas season. Thank you to everyone who made this such a special day!

OPT

St. Patrick's Parish
4101 Norbeck Road
Rockville, MD

Rev. Msgr. Charles J. Parry
Pastor
301-924-2284

St. Patrick's School
Ms. Christie Anne Short,
Principal
301-929-9672

Parish Editor
Crystal Schmittlein



At top, the fifth-grade class spent a special December afternoon visiting the residents of Grace House, an assisted living residence in Silver Spring.

Above, our students spent time playing games, singing Christmas carols, and getting to know the residents. There was lots of Christmas spirit in the air and fun was had by all!

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week!

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we are reminded why our families choose Catholic Schools for their education. St. Patrick's prides itself on faith, service, and academics, which is evident when you walk through the doors. During this special week we will recognize many in our community while also giving back. We will be collecting socks and toiletries for So Others Might Eat (SOME) Students

can create bags that will be delivered to SOME in order to help others in need. We will also take time to appreciate our clergy, Msgr. Parry and Fr. Holmer, our wonderful teachers, and the parents who help to create this wonderful community. It's a week for us to come together and appreciate all those individuals who make a difference everyday in our school, a week we look forward to every year!

OPT

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FOCUS: Not Maintenance but Evangelization

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

The tactics of education that helped young people grow in their faith in previous generations simply do not work today, according to Curtis Martin, who founded the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), a missionary outreach to college students, in 1988. This year, one young woman from St. Paul's is working with FOCUS.

Christine Johnson graduated from the University of Maryland in the spring of 2022 and went straight into FOCUS. She made a two-year commitment to offer support and encouragement to Catholic students. After her training, she was assigned to Ramapo College in New Jersey. It was considered a tough assignment, because the campus does not have much institutional support for religion – no chapel, no chaplain – just thoroughly secularized students. So who gets the tough assignments in missionary work?

Christine was an altar server in the parish for six years. Training altar servers today often focuses on mechanical details; we have generally forgotten that the “acolyte” was the fourth step in “minor orders,” after porter and lector and exorcist. The acolyte is supposed to be a visible invitation to prayer, a task that is shared by inanimate objects like candles or incense but also by – ahem – angels. Christine was an effective acolyte. When you looked



Christine Johnson (middle) learned about active Catholic life in a Bible study with members of the marching band at The University of Maryland. She is among the musicians and missionaries “made in Maryland.”

at her, you felt the invitation to see what she saw, not to focus on her, but rather to focus with her on God.

In an OPT interview, Christine said that the way the Catholic Church supported college students in their faith in previous generations does not work today. We need a whole new approach, “not maintenance but evangelization.” Students need active support on campuses, not just the address of the nearest church. So FOCUS offers real friendship and Bible study.

She said she joined FOCUS because her time with active Catholics at the University of Maryland was so wonderful. The Bible Study with members of the

marching band there was formative for her, different from all her previous relationships. It challenged her to grow in her faith, to look for what will “make me a saint,” which is everybody’s real goal.

The fruits of FOCUS are clear in the sacramental life it inspires and the many young people taking part. For the students that Christine works with, there’s Mass for the students in a classroom and people are going to confession. The national FOCUS conference in St. Louis in January drew 1,700 students, including eight from Ramapo. Four are in Christine’s regular Bible study; three have said yes to active discipleship. Pray for her work.

OPT

A Book that Shapes the Pastor’s Mind

By John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe

Daily Mass at St. Paul is not rushed, but it is to the point – the readings from Scripture, the Eucharist, some quiet, some prayers for the church and the world, and a short homily. In his homilies, Msgr. Filardi explains the readings of the day, and sometimes the saint whose feast we celebrate. He uses stories about simple life experiences, and insights drawn from what he’s reading – which includes, prominently, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. He’s been plowing through it, a page or two a day. So what is this thing that shapes his thinking and his teaching so often?

Catholics often need a smidgin of history to explain ourselves.

Since Pentecost 2,000 years ago, the leaders of the Church have all gathered 21 times to pray together and make decisions together. The most recent of these world meetings was the Second Vatican Council in 1962-1965. St. John XXIII summoned the Council not to change teaching, but to update it (in Italian, “aggiornamento”). St. John Paul II devoted his life to implementing that Council.

After the breakup of the Soviet empire – a huge change in world history that started in Poland, encouraged by the Polish Pope – John Paul II met with the bishops of each continent to pray and prepare for evangelization in the third mil-

lennium, following the Council. What does Jesus ask of the Church in a changing world? In the first millennium, the work of the Church was especially vigorous in Europe; in the second half of the second millennium, America heard the Gospel. What now, in the third millennium?

In their reflections on evangelization, they decided to prepare two tools. First is a new catechism – not replacing the Bible, of course, but explaining the thought and practice of the Catholic Church in a single organized volume. The Church has done this several times – notably in the 1st, 13th, 17th, and 19th centuries – and it was time for a new version for a new age. (The new tool is the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.)

It’s ambitious:
The what: explain the teaching of Jesus and his Church
The where: the globe
The when: third millennium

The structure of the new catechism is simple, with four parts. It explains the Apostle’s Creed, the seven sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Our Father. The explanations start with the Bible but include the insights of the Church through the ages – ranging from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, to the Pope’s careful teaching in the encyclicals of the past century or two.

And that’s what Msgr. Filardi uses so often.

OPT



GOOD COUNSEL 2023 SUMMER PROGRAMS

ATHLETICS

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Field Hockey
- Football
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- Soccer
- Volleyball

SPECIALTY

- Archery
- Circus
- Dungeons & Dragons
- SPARK Business Academy
- Yoga

SCIENCE & TECH

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- Python Coding
- Robotics
- STEM

ARTS

- Culinary
- Handwork Fiber Arts
- Theatre
- Visual Arts



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The Christmas season at St. Paul this year included a celebration of Saints Lucy and Nicholas, with 60 people eating together and singing in the parish center. The two saints made grand entrances, followed by long lines of excited and hopeful kids, and then settled down to explain themselves. Here, St. Lucy, with candles in her hair, tells her story (as edited by Kimberly Morrison). The saints were presented by Dominic and Natalie Flynn, with grace and dignity and ease.



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John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe
OPT Editor
cavanaughokeefe@gmail.com



Eight graders assemble for a group picture in New York

Eighth-Grade Trip to NYC

Another Mary of Nazareth tradition has returned after a brief hiatus due to Covid. This year the graduating class of 2023 was able to go on their eighth-grade trip to NYC. Following the High School Placement Test (HSPT) and before Christmas break, our eighth-grade students depart for a special visit to some of New York's most iconic places. They started with a tour of the 9/11 Museum and Ground Zero. Afterward, they explored Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, followed by a night tour on the top of Rockefeller Center where they could take in the incredible views across the city. Before returning to Maryland, stu-

dents were dazzled at the 'Christmas Spectacular Show' at Radio City Music Hall and celebrated Mass together in St. Patrick's Cathedral. This trip is always a highlight of the student's time at MoN and gives them a memorable experience with lifelong friends. This trip is also a way that MoN honors its students before they graduate and help them celebrate their hard work before they are off to high school. The whole community looks forward to congratulating our eighth-grade class in the spring as they start their futures!

OPT

Christmas Festivities at Mary of Nazareth

Breakfast with St. Nick is a Mary of Nazareth Tradition and Family Favorite

Mary of Nazareth's Home and School Association (HSA) had another successful Breakfast with St. Nick. This Event is a MoN family favorite and a fun, festive way for the community to spend time together before the Christmas break. Every year through the help of parent and student volunteers, the school is transformed into a North Pole dream which gets everyone into a Christmas mood. MoN parent volunteers provide a delicious hot breakfast while children

write their wish lists to Santa, who receives them personally when he stops for a visit. There is even a Christmas shop where guests can purchase gifts for loved ones. There were so many ways to have fun, from creating your own Christmas crafts to spending time with friends, to meeting the big guy himself! As always, our school is deeply grateful to the HSA, especially those on the decorations committee, for helping to continue this tradition!

celebrations! Christmas is right around the corner, and the students and faculty always have fun with Christmas Bingo and Christmas parties, thanks to parent volunteers and the HSA. Every year the classes play bingo for prizes like out-of-uniform days or toys. Doughnuts were served as a little pre-party treat and afterwards each class celebrated with treats and games. We

Continued on page 25


Christmas Bingo Celebrations and Keep Christ in Christmas Winners

The day before break is full of



Families enjoy a festive breakfast!

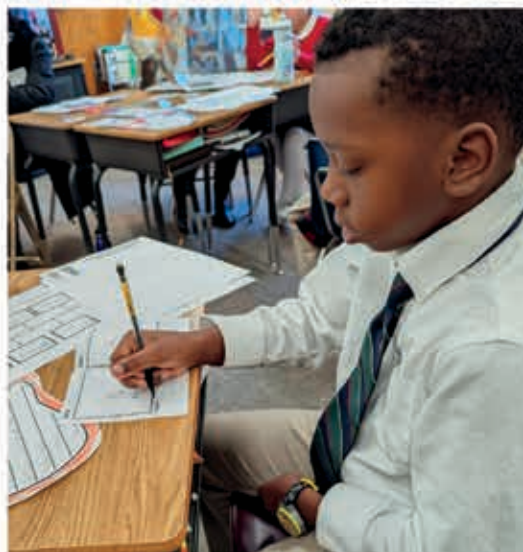
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SHORT

Con't from page 1

ment to love and serve others, especially the vulnerable and poor. For twenty years, she led parishioners at St. Mary's in preparing meals for vulnerable people at **SOME (So Others Might Eat)**; regularly volunteered for the **Coalition for the Homeless**; and established a mission to serve frail elderly people with modest incomes. Jean told me that she saw the face of the living God in the people she served.

Among her most significant contributions (besides her loving family) was the creation of **Victory Housing, Inc** with fellow genuine disciple, Fr. Ralph Kuehner. They began by converting the vacant

convent at St Mary's into a caring, assisted living home for frail elderly people. They went on to establish several other homes including at St. Raphael's and St. Bartholomew's. Today, Victory Housing has thirty-five homes serving over 2000 people. Jean lived her faith according to St. Francis Assisi's simple, stern directive, "Preach the Gospel, use words if necessary". She reserved her words to speak truth to government and faith leaders, forcefully demanding justice and care for the vulnerable and poor. She gracefully chose the Cross. I consider her a true "Street Saint".

January is a busy time for this column because of three important annual events. During the last week of the month, parishes honor Catholic education, particularly our

devoted parish schools. The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday is a special time to reflect on our nation's responsibility to social justice and service for the poor. And, of course, the annual Mass and March for Life, urging national leaders to protect life from conception to natural death.

When pro-life forces won the long-sought victory in June with the Dobbs decision by the Supreme Court, there were celebrations. Advocates for life and unborn children exhaled and with their next breath asked, "what now?". More needs to be done to promote the dignity of life. Vigorous pro-life efforts will continue at the state level. At every level, forceful attention is required to assure that the lives of all children are bestowed

with basic human rights. With a victory for life won, hard work ensues to assure lives of safety, opportunity and respect for every child and needed support for their families. The undeniable truth is millions of children suffer unjustly with hunger, poverty, abuse, illness and disability. Now is the time to create an irrepressible moral force on behalf of all our children. I suggest for our reflection between now and next OPT issue, we think and pray about a **bill of rights for all Christ's children**, including what each local Catholic community can do to advance it. We begin with life. What then does the Lord ask of His disciples to assure lives of value and dignity? I welcome your ideas via email.

In 1983, President Reagan estab-

lished a holiday to commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Having endured historic struggles for civil rights in the 1950s and 60s, most felt that Constitutional rights and social justice had been secured by 1983, and honoring Dr. King as a national hero was intended to honor Dr. King's work. Yet, today, the struggle to end bigotry and injustice continues. As with the recent Dobbs case protecting unborn children, Dr King's victories, while transformative, have proven to be the beginning, not the end, of an arduous trek to the mountain top. Dr. King's legacy has relevant and urgent meaning today. With hate crimes and bigotry on the rise and institutional bias entrenched, even here in Montgomery County, we must continue the journey Dr. King and his followers began, assuring equity, respect and justice for all. This holiday is a time to honor Dr. King's past contributions and reflect upon his forceful words and actions as a clear path toward building God's Kingdom on Earth. Like Jean Brady, Dr. King was a genuine disciple of Christ who chose the Cross.

A practical way to honor and learn from Dr. King is to study his 1963 **Letter from a Birmingham Jail**. Here's a link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATPSht6318o>. In his letter, Dr. King describes the history and remaining challenges to achieve the dream of justice, freedom, and opportunity for all. In it, he takes Christian and Jewish leaders who criticized him as being disruptive to Christ's woodshed for a lesson in faith, hope, love, and genuine discipleship.

In the pages that follow, you will read of the remarkable work being done in parish Catholic schools. Catholic Schools Week occurs during the last week of January and many schools will welcome parishioners and others to visit and witness the vital mission of Catholic schools. I urge you to visit your or any parish school. I'm inspired to know Catholic school teachers, principals, and staff. They are passionate about their chosen mission to prepare students as a force for the Church's future. These dedicated individuals are living Christ's call to grow our faith by preparing the next generation of leaders.

Thanks for reading. It feels like the work of genuine discipleship never ends!

God Bless!
 Chuck Short
 (cshort5@verizon.net)

OPT



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Caroling Cardinals visit Arden Courts in Kensington, MD



Holy Redeemer students sing carols for seniors

Sharing Christ's Light throughout the Christmas Season

Holy Redeemer School focused on preparing students to share Christ's light in preparation for Christmas and in anticipation of Epiphany. Across the curriculum, homeroom and specials teachers integrated faith and cultural lessons on Christmas observations around the world. Older students found a great way to combine service learning with Christmas fun and younger students both learned and taught through dramatic play.



Welles the innkeeper tells Charlie as Joseph about the room in the stable

parish's beautiful Nursing Home Ministry one afternoon in mid-December to carol at four locations: Arden Courts, Kensington Park's four facilities, Modena Reserve and Manor Care/Pro Medica Health. Thirty-five students gathered after school and practiced with music teacher Jeannie Breitenbach before heading to their assigned center. Six parent volunteers delighted in the collaboration and excitement among the girls as the four groups prepared their selection of songs. With the support of the parish ministry, the parent volunteers were able to coordinate a way to safely

Continued on page 29

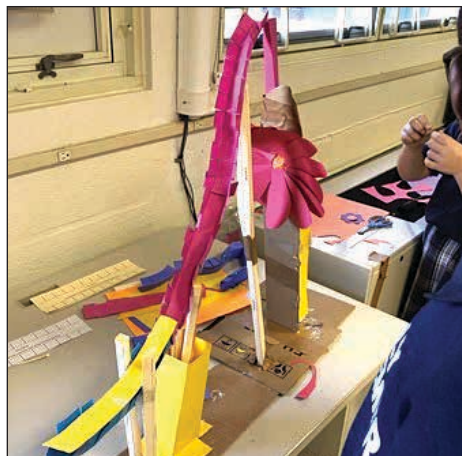
Service to Seniors

Holy Redeemer students served as singing ambassadors for the

Catholic Schools Week: Spotlight on Excellence in the Computer Lab at Holy Redeemer School



Student works on balloon-powered car



Paper roller coaster built by team of sixth graders

Marianne Green is Holy Redeemer School's computer science teacher and technology coach. Ms. Green's rigorous and engaging lessons challenge students to question, problem-solve, and collaborate. With Catholic Schools Week's focus on excellence, let's spotlight the learning experiences in the Computer Lab.

Recently, middle school students went full-STEM ahead to build and test innovative robot hands, looping paper roller coasters, and speedy balloon-powered cars. Thanks to Ms. Green's active posting on Holy Redeemer's social media sites, the Science Buddies organization reached out for information on how she was using STEM resources in her computer lab classroom to connect computational thinking, computer science, and engineering.

Ms. Green is all about community building. Project-based learning activities provide exciting opportunities for creative and collaborative work. "These activities are also a way for me to connect younger computer science

Continued on page 39

Holy Redeemer Parish

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A special, and very sweet, visitor roamed the halls of Mercy, surprising teachers and students!

Mercy celebrates Catholic Schools Week 2023!

Mercy students and staff are planning for a fun and meaningful CSW 2023 with many traditional activities along with a few new surprises. On Student Day, the Student Council will greet students with pom poms, posters, and bells at carpool, followed by a parade of blue and white hats, and a volleyball game between the 8th grade and teachers. Prayer Partners will assemble packets of food for SOME on Community Day in support of the homeless in our local community. On Parent Day, students will share a special gift with their parents following

the school Mass. A night of no homework is always a gift to our students and their parents! On Thursday, February 2, Mercy will host a school Open House event beginning at 8:30 a.m. Guests will be led on tours by student ambassadors, parent tour guides, and members of the school leadership team. Closing out the week on Friday, February 3, students will come to school dressed like one of their teachers! Members of Mercy's school choir will participate in the ADW Choral Arts Showcase at Good Counsel at 7:00 p.m.

OPT

New learning opportunities for Mercy students

Mercy middle school students have a new resource for additional support in math. Mr. Andrew Miller has joined the staff and will be on campus five days a week to support middle school students in math, following classroom methodology modeled by Mercy's middle school math teacher Mrs. Marquita Patterson. Mr. Miller is an engineer by training, but found a calling to the teaching profession.

Mercy's Educational Extension Program has recently been expanded to include "Mercy Great Reads." Mrs. Maribeth Hayzlett (Grades 3-4) and Mrs. Mary Katherine Comeau (Grades 5-6) will begin the new enrichment program during lunch/recess one day a week. As students read and discuss a novel, instructors will tap higher level thinking skills by incorporating the inquiry-based model following the Socratic method.

OPT

Over \$1,000 Raised for Hurricane Relief

Mercy's Student Government held a bake sale and dress-down day in December, raising \$1,050 for Hurricane relief in Florida and Puerto Rico. Half of the proceeds went to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Venice, Florida and the other half to eXtra Bases of Puerto Rico.

OPT



Mercy students performed a beautiful Christmas pageant in-person for the first time in two years

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9200 Kentsdale Drive
Potomac, MD

Fr. Charles Antonicelli, Pastor
301-365-1415

Our Lady of Mercy School
D Engel, Principal
301-365-4477

Gerry Burgess, OPT Editor
301-330-5676

More Our Lady of Mercy News on Page 38

A full court press for the Mercy CYO Basketball Program

The CYO Basketball Program at Our Lady of Mercy is having a very successful season under the guidance of Mr. Jason Knecht, CYO Director and Mercy School Assistant Principal. There are 20 basketball programs active this season, offering teams for ages 5-18 years old. At this time, 213 athletes are registered, which is higher than Mercy's pre-pandemic numbers! About 80% of the registered athletes are Mercy students. It is the first year for the 5U co-ed program, which exposes the PreK and Kindergarten students to basketball.

OPT

St. Bartholomew's "Christmas Treasure" Delights

The St. Bart's Christmas pageant is one of the school's most beloved traditions. Each year, music teacher and school alum, Daniel Villar, writes an original script and accompanying music with his students in mind.

This year's pageant was inspired by the popular 90's film, *Home Alone*. While many of the school students have never heard or seen the film, the audience quickly picked up on the nods to the Christmas classic. The story begins with a family on board a ship, traveling to spend Christmas with their family across the ocean. On their travels, the children were told a tale about a pirate named Ol' Captain Marley, who claimed to have found the greatest treasure he had ever seen on Christmas day many years ago, one that could be shared by all, as promised by God. Stories of the Christmas treasure that Ol' Captain Marley found were told

by sailors and pirates around the world for decades, but somewhere along the way, the true meaning of the Christmas treasure was either misunderstood, forgotten, or completely lost.

The ship ultimately finds its way into the path of a storm, leaving the family shipwrecked and separated. When one of the daughters wakes up on a totally different island from the rest of her family, she panics and searches endlessly, hoping she could take back all her unkind treatment towards her parents and siblings. She eventually finds her way to a Church, where of all people, she finds the legendary Ol' Captain Marley, who then shares the original Christmas story (the nativity). Eventually the family is reunited, and the Christmas treasure is found—the promise of God's endless love and the love of family.

The pageant delicately balances an original play with nativity clas-

sics, and intelligently weaves both artistry and tradition. Bravo to all St. Bart's students, ages PK3 through the starring eight graders, for a top-notch performance, and many thanks to all of the teachers who supported and guided them along the way.



OPT Student performers come together to sing about the true meaning of Christmas.

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week

Since Saint Bartholomew School's founding 60 years ago, the students and their teachers have gathered to worship, pray, and learn. Through regular Mass services, daily religious instruction, and service to others, St. Bartholomew students engage with the big questions in life: Who am I? Who is God? How can I get into Heaven?

Part of Catholic Schools Week is affording the opportunity to reflect on these big questions, while also having a little fun. Teachers and administration plan various activi-

ties and assemblies to celebrate our parish school, the richness of our diverse community, our families, teachers, and vocations. Why? Because each of these helps to provide the well-rounded, lifelong education we so greatly desire and value.

As a Catholic school where the rich tradition of Catholic Education lives on in 21st century classrooms,

Continued on page 24



Our students love being part of a strong, faith-filled community.

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Passport to the World in the Montessori Spanish Class

By: Senora Rina Bados, Spanish Teacher

I will never forget speaking my first words in English while I was in kindergarten in Mrs. Robertson's class: "To the right, to the right, to the left, to the left, one step forward, one step backwards, open, shut!" (opening and closing our eyes). That was Mrs. Robertson's way to get our attention at the beginning of her lesson.

I have to give you a little bit of my background. I am from Honduras and my native language is Spanish. When I was five years old, I lived in a small village up in the mountains (literally) built by American and Honduran engineers who worked for

The Rosario Mining Company. This mining corporation also built a hospital and one school (K-4). My father was hired at the hospital as a young 30-year-old medical doctor. Half of our school classrooms were designated to the American children and the other half to the Spanish speaking children who lived in the village. Both groups of children had an American and a Honduran Kindergarten teacher who taught Spanish to the Americans and English to the Honduran students.

Here comes the interesting part of my story: American and Honduran five-year-old Kindergarteners had recess at the same time of the day. I vividly remember all of "us" and

all of "them" coming and running outside to try to communicate with each other in our opposite languages the first weeks of school, trying to fit into each other's worlds. Finding any means to communicate and connect with each other was a common goal we all had even at that young age.

Our Kindergarteners are taking their first steps towards becoming global citizens through a tongue that is different from their own. For our young ambassadors, the French or Spanish native speakers, it's an opportunity to express themselves in their native language and feel connected with their own identity.

One of the biggest tools for self-expression, fluency, building communication skills, and confidence in their abilities to speak a world language is through MUSIC! And as I reflect on those early years, the most poignant and vivid memories that come to mind are those in which we learned those childhood songs in English.

Visit our website to see the video clips of our Montessori students signing in World Language: www.woodsacademy.org/about-us/news/.

OPT



The Woods Academy Montessori preschool students begin taking World Language classes in our Owl program for Pre-K students.



The Woods sixth-grade students developed an experiment to determine how the force or stretch distance impacted the launch distance of a beanbag.

The Importance of Play

By: Mrs. Megan Mullally, Science Teacher, Grades 5-6

Most people acknowledge the importance of play for young children. However, it is still important for middle schoolers. A recent article on Edutopia, a popular teacher site, titled "Playing to Learn in Middle and High School" discusses the benefits of learning through play. According to the article, "Play-based learning can help older students remember new material and transfer their learning from one context to

another." In sixth-grade science, students are constantly playing to learn. When learning about force and work, students developed an experiment to determine how the force or stretch distance impacted the launch distance of a beanbag. They then went to the back field and launched beanbags to collect data. Two years later, the eighth graders still remember conducting this experiment. They may not remember the exact formula for how to cal-

Continued on page 36

The Woods Academy
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 Bethesda, MD 20817
 301-365-3080
Head of School, Joseph E. Powers
OPT Editor, Caitlin Chalke
 Director of Marketing and Communications
www.woodsacademy.org

First Lego League Qualifier Success for The Woods Academy!

By: Mrs. Megan Mullally, Fifth and Sixth Grade Teacher

On Saturday, January 14, The Woods Academy Robotics teams, B.O.B. (Best of Bots) and Clickin' Chickens, participated at the FIRST Lego League (FLL) Qualifier held at

Universities of Shady Grove in Rockville, Maryland. Twenty-four teams competed. Clickin' Chickens was one of only six teams to survive the Qualifier and advance to the FLL Maryland State Championship, which will be held on Saturday, February 25 at UMBC in Catonsville. All are invited to

attend and cheer on the Clickin' Chickens!

The Clickin' Chickens won first place in Core Values, which is given to a team that best demonstrates the FLL Core Values of Inspiration, Teamwork, and



The Woods Academy's Clickin' Chicken team Soraya F. and Megan H. practicing their innovation program at the FLL Qualifier.

Continued on page 36



What one is called to do she is called to do with all her might.
 -Cornelia Connelly

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The Family/School Connection and the Student Outcome

By Caitlin Chalke, Director of Marketing, Communications, and Alumni Relations

According to years of research, having a child's family engaged with their school will result in positive outcomes for the child's academic achievements and socio-emotional development. This engagement can be posi-

Continued on page 36



The Woods Academy families are welcomed in the classroom for birthdays, book readings, and so much more.

St. Bernadette School Celebrates Catholic Schools Week

St. Bernadette's will be once again celebrating our wonderful school community with all sorts of activities for Catholic Schools Week, January 30-February 3. The week will kick off with our open house on Sunday, January 29 where we get to show off our awesome school to prospective students and their families. This year's celebrations even include events for parents such as the parent paint night with SBS alum "Art by Megan" on Tuesday, January 31. On

Wednesday, February 1 we will once again have a favorite St. Bernadette's tradition, International Night. Enjoy an international potluck as you fill your "passport" with the rich cultures of our students and families. Students will certainly look forward to Thursday's "No Greater Love" tag day. The week concludes on Friday, February 3 with a noon dismissal and HAS sponsored ice-skating outing. It's sure to be a great week!

OPT

Serving Others with a "Greater Love"

Students had the opportunity, as part of the Greater Love Service Project, to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with an act of service on MLK Day. Participating families prepared bagged lunches and casseroles to donate to Shepherd's Table, whose missions is to

"who's mission is to improve quality of life, create a pathway towards self-sufficiency, and inspire hope for the most vulnerable in our community." Students then gathered early on Tuesday, January 17 outside of school to collect and deliver the donations.

OPT



Left; Students peruse of the offerings at the SBS Christmas Store.

Below: Student performers prepare for the telling of the Nativity story.



Left: The school band added beautiful music to our Lessons and Carols.



A Wonderful Advent and Christmas

December was a festive, fun, and faith-filled month as we enjoyed the Advent and Christmas seasons. Students learned about St. Nicholas and all of the ways that he witnessed to Christ's love and charity. Some of our youngest students participated in a daily Jesse Tree prayer, one of the oldest Catholic traditions for the Advent season. One particularly special event took place when the SBS community celebrated the return of Lessons and Carols. The event included performances by every grade. Students sang traditional Christmas carols while also reflecting on Scripture about the birth of Christ. The evening also included a performance by the school band. It was a beautiful event and a great way to prepare our hearts for Christmas.

OPT

St. Bernadette Parish

70 University Blvd., East
Silver Spring, MD

Rev. Msgr. K.
Bartholomew Smith,
Pastor

301-593-0357

St. Bernadette School
Mr. Ted Ewanciw, Principal

301-593-5611

Erin Fridley,
OPT Editor

301-593-5611

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Our first First Friday Mass of the new year was held on January 6. It was a beautiful way to begin 2023! Thank you to all of our student readers.



At left: CYO basketball season is underway. All our teams are working hard and having fun. Go Eagles!

Above: Our new sign is up on Georgia Avenue, just in time for our upcoming Open House. Looking good out there SJE!

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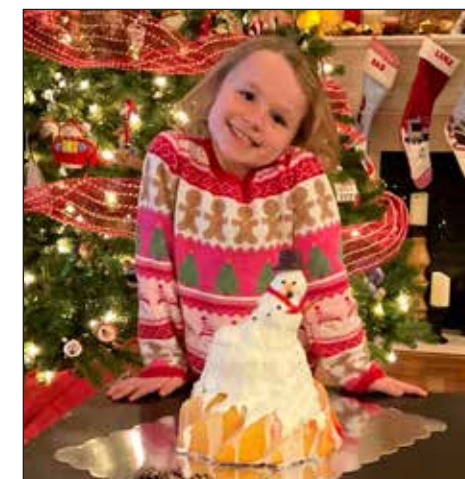
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The SJE Online Dessert Auction made for a Sweet Event

Following the success of previous auctions, SJE once again held their popular Christmas Dessert Auction. Photos of desserts made by many bakers within the St. John the Evangelist community were posted to the schools Facebook page. Bidders could scroll through the images and descriptions of all sorts of scrumptious desserts and post their bids in the comment sections. Contributions ranged from cinnamon rolls to elaborate cakes, with everything in between. Bidding closed on Thursday, December 22,

just in time for winners to serve their delectable prizes at their own Christmas party or dinner. Some of the desserts were auctioned for as much as \$50! The Online Dessert Auction was certainly one of the tastiest ways to support SJE.

OPT



The Pasietas, a father-daughter baking team, donated a Vanilla, almond, and white chocolate melting snowman double layer cake!

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St. John the Evangelist School
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Our Parish Times Online

Many Happenings at St. Elizabeth's!

Students of all grade levels been busy the past few weeks at St. Elizabeth's. From science projects to Christmas celebrations, our school community continues to engage in fun, educational, and faith-filled activities.

OPT



Dr. Gluodenis' 6th grade science students took a deep dive into the study of the Sun-Earth-Moon System. They created models and examined rotation, size, distance, composition, and orbit. When the models were complete students made videos to demonstrate the system they constructed.



Above: Winter is the perfect time to study animals in the Antarctic. Our Preschoolers and Junior Kindergarteners especially love Penguin Day!



At left: This year 5th graders got in on the fun and participated in penguin games, trivia, and snacks!



We rounded out 2022 with a beautiful Christmas Mass lead by our staff and a pageant featuring the 8th grade class. This event is always one of the highlights of our year!



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301-881-1380

St. Elizabeth School Principal
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301-881-1824

A Joyful Christmas Season at Saint Peter's

By Jane Bornhorst

Saint Peter's School celebrated the Christmas season with several events that spread holiday cheer throughout its community.

In mid-December, a cookie exchange and staff breakfast were provided for school faculty and staff by parent volunteers.

That same evening, the Saint Peter's Christmas show was presented at the Performing Arts Center at Our Lady of Good Counsel High School. The evening began with the school choir performing several Christmas songs, followed by this year's show, "A Christmas Yarn." In a nod to the classic tale, "A Christmas Carol", the musical follows workers at Unique Gifts from Luxurious Yarns (U.G.L.Y.), the world's leading supplier of ugly Christmas sweaters. Through the



Above: Saint Peter's choir perform a selection of holiday songs



Right: Families kick off the holiday season at the school's Christmas tree lighting

course of the story, the workers overcome obstacles and discover the true meaning of Christmas. Music teacher, Mr. Peter Nguyen, directed the show. The lead performers and stage crew in the pro-

duction were the 6th graders, and students in grades K through 5 performed musical numbers throughout.

The following week, Saint Peter's held a family-favorite event, the

school's second annual Christmas Tree Lighting, complete with hot cocoa, cookies, festive music, and a craft for the kids.

Following the tree lighting ceremony, guests headed out to enjoy

the annual Christmas Lights Tour, featuring 41 school families' festively decorated houses. Maps of multiple tour routes were provided to the community so that families

Continued on page 37

Celebrating 65 Years on the 65th Day of School

By Robin Vanderpool

During the 2022-2023 school year, Saint Peter's School is celebrating its 65th anniversary with a host of activities, including commemoration of the 65th day of school on December 12, 2022. The 65th day celebrations paired fun and creativity with prayers of remembrance.

In the spirit of "Saint Peter's Through the Decades", students and teachers enjoyed a costume-themed tag day by wearing costumes representing each of the six decades since the school opened (1950s to 2000s). Anson (Fourth grade) and Ela-Lucia (Sixth grade) Shish enjoyed the day in their colorful and vibrant 1970s apparel. Two of the fourth-grade teachers, Mrs. Morgan Moshovitis (1970s) and Mrs. Eunice Pak (1980s), also joined in the costume fun. In addition to the tag day, students enjoyed cupcakes and classroom scavenger hunts. When asked about the spirit of the day, Ela-Lucia recalled: "It was cool to think about all the students at Saint Peter's over the past 65 years and dressing up in a decade outfit was a fun way to celebrate the anniversary!"

Classrooms also prayed a decade of the rosary, one representing each of the 65 years of the school's his-



Anson and Ela-Lucia dress in colorful 1970s attire.



Fourth-grade teachers join in on the costume fun.



A group of students represent the 1950s.

story. In reflecting on the celebratory festivities, Principal Nelson Abreu summed up the day by saying "It was a great honor to be a part of celebrating the 65th anniversary of Saint Peter's School. There was joy in our classrooms as we honored our amazing school community. Throughout the day we prayed a decade of the rosary for each of the 65 graduating classes. The most rewarding part was

praying the final decade of the rosary for our current Eighth graders, the 65th graduating class of Saint Peter's together as a community."

More 65th anniversary activities are planned for the remainder of the school year, culminating in the graduation ceremony for the 65th class of Saint Peter's School in June 2023.

OPT

WINTER HAPPENINGS



Above: On January 6, Father Nicholas and Father Peter along with students representing the Magi, visited each classroom to offer a blessing in celebration of the Epiphany. Students wrote down the gifts they will be working to give Jesus this year and placed them in a basket.



Right: A new gaga pit was installed for the parish by Teddy Byrde as part of his Eagle Scout project.



Left: Members of the Saint Peter's Youth Ministry took part in Wreaths Across America at Arlington National Cemetery



Right: Saint Peter's Youth Ministry enjoyed a trip to the Basilica during the Christmas season.

St. Peter's Parish
2900 Sandy Spring Road
Olney, MD
Rev. Thomas Kalita, Pastor
301-924-3774
stpetersolney.org
St. Peter's School
Mr. Nelson Abreu
Interim Principal
301-774-9112
stpetersschoololney.org



Members of the Kindness Club delivered handmade cards to the residents of Sunrise Assisted Living in December. St. Mary's loves the residents of Sunrise and wanted them to know they are always in our prayers.



Kindergarten created their own peace tree as they learned about and celebrated the life of Martin Luther King Jr. The students recognized each other for their acts of kindness to promote peace in their community. St. Mary's School is a place where kindness grows!



Father James started the New Year with a blessing at our all-school morning meeting and then blessed each classroom.

Our Parish Times Online

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 520 Veirs Mill Road Rockville, MD
Msgr. Robert Amey, Pastor
 301-424-5550
St. Mary's School
Mrs. Debby Eisel, Principal
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Photo collage by Becky Sella.

St. Jude Regional Catholic School Celebrates Catholic Schools Week Beginning Jan. 28; Open House on Jan. 29

St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJRCs) will celebrate Catholic Schools Week (CSW) 2023 beginning with the opening mass at 5 p.m. on January 28.

Open house will take place the following

day on Sunday, January 29, from 11:30-2:00 p.m. Tours will begin in the Thaddeus room where teachers, parents, and students will be present to provide information, answer questions, and guide the tours. Please note that tours will be provided in English, Spanish, and Amharic. Come and catch our spirit!

Throughout the week-long CSW celebration, SJRCs will honor its teachers, students, and parents. Students will also be entertained by Eric Energy, have lunch with their family, and enjoy ice skating at Wheaton Regional Ice Rink. The highlight of the week will take place on Friday, February 3, with the annual International Day event—a day to celebrate the SJRCs community and its rich diversity through music, dance, and food. SJRCs faculty and staff are looking forward to another wonderful Catholic Schools Week.

OPT

Shrine of St. Jude Parish
12701 Veirs Mill Road Rockville, MD
Fr. Paul D. Lee, STD, Pastor
301-946-8200

St. Jude Regional Catholic School
Jeanne Donatelli, Principal
301-946-7888

Maureen Martin, OPT Editor
MaureenCMartin@verizon.net



OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

11:30 – 2:00



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International Day Returns on February 3

By Katharine Balog, Assistant Principal and 4th Grade Teacher

International Day is coming soon! St. Jude Regional Catholic School will celebrate its annual International Day Festival on February 3, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the Thaddeus Room of the school. This wonderful tradition celebrates the school's great diversity and culture as it educates students who come from all over the world.

Every year each class studies a country. Together, students learn about that country's geography, history, art, cuisine, music, and culture. Students create various projects in their individual classes and also learn about their country in art and music class.

On International Day, parents set up tables representing the class country as well as tables representing the country from which they came. Each year, more than 20 countries are represented at this event. It is so wonder-



St. Jude Regional Catholic School's International Day is set for February 3. Be sure to stop by the Thaddeus Room to join in the celebration. Photos by Becky Sella.

ful to see students and parents talking about the country they are from and learning about other countries as well. Students get to visit the various tables as well as try food and see art and artifacts from the many different countries represented.

Mid-way through the celebration, Mrs. White, SJRCs music teacher, will lead the students in a Multi-cultural performance. Each class will

sing songs from the country they learned about and perform dances. This is such a great day and always so much fun.

Please consider volunteering to represent your country at this year's International Day. If you are interested in learning more about International Day or volunteering, please contact Mrs. Balog at Katharine.Balog@stjuderockville.org.

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St. Jude Youth Group Advent Canned Food Collection Project a Great Success!

The Shrine of St. Jude Youth Group Advent "YES WE CAN" drive collected more than 1,000 canned goods for the St. Stephen's Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude. The generosity of parishioners helped stock the shelves of

the pantry with canned soups, fruit, vegetables, tuna, and sauces. In addition to the canned food, packaged and boxed food items were also collected. The St. Stephen's Food Pantry serves around 200 clients weekly with each food bag containing from four to six canned goods. Thank you to all who donated and supported the SJ Youth Group's effort to assist parishioners and neighbors in need.



Hathway Brothers Band Highlight Feb. 25 World Village Fundraiser

The St. Stephen's Food Pantry at the Shrine of St. Jude is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Fundraiser in support of longtime archdiocesan priest Fr. Dan Leary and his international mission, **World Villages for Children**. The popular local band *The Hathway Brothers* from St. John the Evangelist will be the main entertainment for the event. Come enjoy the local sensation and dance to their wide array of Motown, Oldies, and Country Rock selections!

Please join us on Saturday,



February 25, at the Shrine of St. Jude (12701 Veirs Mill Rd, Rockville, Md. 20853) from 7–10:30 p.m. There will be light fare, adult beverages, and other fun activities, including videos from

Fr. Dan and the Sisters of Mary. Tickets are \$35 per person and can be purchased online at <https://www.worldvillages.org/StJudes> or scan the QR code below. Note that 100% of all ticket sales and donations go directly to the care of the students in World Villages. Last year, we were able to raise more than \$30,000 to help Fr. Dan and his efforts to care of the poor. To learn more about Fr. Dan's ministry to educate 21,000 children, go to worldvillages.org.

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Advent 2022: Preparing for the Greatest Gift of All

By Marisa Stoolmiller

Advent began on November 27, nearly four weeks before Christmas. These four amazing weeks help us to prepare, before being caught by the joy of the Incarnation. At St. John Neumann, following two years of COVID-related, scaled-down events, we were back in full swing and had many opportunities to prepare and wait for the coming of our Savior. I believe it allowed us to enter into Christmas a little more joyfully than in recent years.

Aside from the beautiful Advent wreath in the sanctuary, we held an Advent wreath-making workshop. Participating families made their own wreaths and had them blessed, to carry on this tradition in their homes. The families each received an Advent prayer book and were served dinner. It was a beautiful time of parish fellowship. This was a new event for our parish and one I hope that we continue for years to come.

Early in Advent, Msgr. Robert Panke led us in a beautiful reflection to help us prepare our hearts for the coming Christchild. In his reflection, *The People in Darkness Have Seen a Great Light*, Msgr. Panke spoke on the meaning of Advent and how to live Advent well. The night included a few Advent hymns, Adoration, and the opportunity for confession.

We were blessed to celebrate two Marian Feast Days - The Immaculate Conception and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our parish celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe in style. Children re-enacted the story of



Saint John Neumann Sanctuary during Advent. Photo Courtesy: Rodney Harris



Among the many events during advent was a Christmas Bazaar with Christmas and religious items.

Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe. A Mariachi band played while everyone enjoyed tamales and hot chocolate. It was a great joy to celebrate this feast of the Patroness of the Americas with our entire community

Praying Vespers as a parish community and spending time with Our Lord surrounded by soft candlelight was an amazing and deeply spiritual experience that should not be missed. Fr. Stefan and our choir, directed by Mr. Patrick Jekanowski, led us through some of the Church's most beautiful musical treasures. Vespers and Candlelight Adoration will

return during Lent. Please check our website - www.sjncatholic.org - closer to Lent and plan to join us for this worthwhile event.

Additionally, we held several other events to help connect both with Christ and with our Parish community. Our monthly parish rosary, Breakfast with St. Nicholas, children's coat drive, and an Advent online scripture study through Formed all allowed us to connect with the lives of the saints, our fellow parishioners, and the Greatest Gift of all - Jesus at Christmas.

St. John Neumann Parish
 9000 Warfield Road
 Gaithersburg, MD 20882
Msgr. Robert Panke
 Pastor
Kimberley Rice
 OPT Editor

Work Continues on St. John Neumann Parish Expansion

By Rodney Harris

Construction continues at Saint John Neumann Catholic Church in Gaithersburg. In December, crews from Forrester Construction worked on the new Sacristy, Confessionals, and Lay Minister spaces.

In a newsletter, the company thanked the parish's Building Committee and Design Team for helping to resolve issues as they arise.

Work on the exterior of the Church is still pending a necessary permit. Work will begin in January on the foundation system and utility installation.

When completed, Saint John Neumann Catholic Church will have a new entrance, a larger narthex, an adoration chapel, a new sacristy, and added parish offices and meeting rooms.



Work is being completed on the new Sacristy. Photo Courtesy: Forrester Construction



Exterior of Construction Site at St. John Neumann Parish. Photo Courtesy: Forrester Construction

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Keep Christ in Christmas

Msgr. Pennington Knight of Columbus #9808 Council Grand Knight, Ron Hopkins, presents certificates and a \$25.00 Target gift card to parish winners, Arielle Rivette, Elisha Lawson, Eric Jose. Winner Evan Vogt was not available for the presentation.

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Holy Redeemer

TOGO

Con't from page 1

our welcome in 2019 on the Togo Mission homepage," Father Hughes urged (<https://togomissionparish.org/>). "That short video is worth a thousand words." In a recent email to the cohort, Father Ryan described the "buzz" surrounding this visit, "Here the villagers consider it a true honor that you will have come all this distance and are actually spending a week with them in their poor village. The people are very excited and will go out of their way to make you feel at home."

The primary purpose of Holy Redeemer's trip to Togo this year, is to be present for the dedication and blessing of the mission's seventh church in the village of Abelebe on Saturday, February 18. This church will be named Holy Redeemer, in glory and praise of Our Lord and Savior, and in thanksgiving to Holy Redeemer parishioners. Last year, in just about six weeks, Holy Redeemer raised over \$85,000 to cover the cost of constructing the brick-walled, tin-roofed church. Father Hughes explained that this structure is the latest of nineteen built since 2006, "thanks to the diligence of Father Ryan, the inspiration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the power of the Holy Spirit."

At a special Mass on Saturday, with the Archbishop of Lome, Nicholas Barrigah presiding, Bishop Brennan, Father Hughes and the Holy Redeemer parishioners will share the Holy Eucharist with their Togolese brothers and sisters in Christ. Holy Redeemer eighth-grader, Liam Grant who is traveling with his father, Chris, will share in the

honor of presenting a relief depicting "Jesus Welcoming the Children" as a gift to the new Holy Redeemer Church. Choirs from several villages will also present a concert at the mission.

The American guests have a full itinerary during their six-day sojourn, arranged by Father Ryan and his assistant pastor, Father Jonathan. It begins on Wednesday with a tour of the Our Lady of Guadalupe



Father Ryan with one of seven mission churches built in Togo

mission's church, convent, rectory, Rosary grotto, schools, student dormitories, medical clinic, and water system. Thursday and Friday feature an overnight trip to the Divine Word priest's mountain-top mission near the border with Ghana. There will be limited vehicle transportation, requiring hiking by most of the visitors. Sunday morning Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe will feature several choirs with folkloric dancing afterwards at the rectory.

Father Hughes invites the prayers of everyone for God's blessing on the Holy Redeemer cohort and on Father Ryan's work and the people of the mission.

OPT



Birds-eye view of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission

Shrine of St. Jude

CBN Names St. Jude Couple as Catholic Schools Volunteer of the Year

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Alex and Catalina Lopez-Chavarriaga for being honored as Catholic Schools Volunteers of the Year by the Catholic Business Network (CBN) of Montgomery County at its 2022 Gala. The Lopez-Chavarriagas truly live out the gospels by bringing Christ to others with their time and talent, benefitting the students, parents, and faculty of St. Jude Regional Catholic School (SJCS). SJCS is truly blessed with all its dedicated parents who volunteer as each one is an intricate part of St. Jude. Congratulations, again, to Mr. and Mrs. Lopez-Chavarriaga. Photo by Becky Sella.



Students in the SFIS Choir Share their Gifts!

The students in our school choir, led by Christian Leanos, keep very busy sharing their beautiful gifts. They enhance the sense of worship at our weekly school Masses. On December 10 they sang at the Shrine of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception for the Mass associated with the “Walk with Mary” event. On Sunday, December 18, they sang at St. Camillus, one of our sponsoring parishes, for a Mass where Cardinal Wilton Gregory presided. As they were singing a particularly lively song, he could be seen with a big smile on his face!

The choir performed Christmas carols at a school concert and sing-along. At the St. Camillus Christmas Eve Children’s Mass, our students once again brought their beautiful voices to begin the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child!

Christian Leanos, who is also the school music teacher, said about his work, “It’s a blessing,” and about the students, “they bring such joy to my life!” Fourth-grade student Noah said he fell in love with music



Noah singing solo at a school Mass.

when he was a baby and that he is able to express himself in the choir. His is amazingly talented and he frequently sings solos!

OPT

Our Franciscan postulants are a blessing from God!

Saint Francis International School is on the same property as Holy Name College where the Franciscan House of Formation is located. Each year a new group of men arrive to begin a year of discernment and service. Our school is truly blessed to have some of these postulants serve with us. This year we have Matthew Junker and Jason Peterson working three days each week with our students.

They have already helped in many ways. They performed a skit for St. Francis’s feast day, taught a class on relics, help with music classes, dressed up for the All Saints’ Day parade, and led an All Souls’ Day liturgy for students to remember their loved ones. Recently they helped prepare an Advent penance service and taught our students about Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Nicholas. Each week they train students to lector for the weekly school Mass. Brother Matthew says, “I love working with these students to overcome their nerves, build their confidence, and develop a deeper appreciation for Scripture as they proclaim the Word of God to their classmates.” He continued, “I pray that my time with the students will also bring them to a deeper love of God while knowing that sometimes it takes years for seeds to sprout.”

Brother Jason says, “I’m doing exactly what I’ve always wanted to do with my life. Ministering to people and helping the kids to feel seen and heard, to let them know that they matter and will make a difference in society one day. It is truly an experience I feel blessed to have.” Our school is blessed with their presence and the talents they share!

OPT



Brother Jason telling the story of Saint Francis of Assisi and the Wolf.

St. Francis International School
www.saintfrancisinternational.org

Sam Chapa, Principal

St. Camillus Campus
1500 Camillus Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20903

St. Mark Campus
7501 Adelphi Road
Hyattsville, MD 20783



Open House

Saint Francis International Students sharing information about our Open House: Raina Chellia (third grade), George Bokally (second grade), Bearpaw Francisco (first grade), and Crystal Arevalo (kindergarten)

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MASS

Con't from page 2

expressed her gratitude for the Mass’ return.

“It is my hope that our participants, Catholic or otherwise, will start internalizing the fact that they are created with greatness and uniqueness on purpose,” Lynn said. “Feeling loved and accepted is not only our God-given right, it is exactly what Jesus did for all of God’s children.”

Established in 2013 by former St. Francis of Assisi Pastor Fr. David Beaubien, the Mass for All God’s Children has been celebrated continuously except in 2021 and 2022 when organizers cancelled it amid the COVID-19 pandemic. On January 8, people filled the church, including those who typically attend the 5 pm Sunday Mass and those who wanted to participate in this liturgy.

Fr. John Dillon, pastor of the church, celebrated the Mass, assisted by Deacon Jim Datovech and Deacon Will Garcia. In his homily, Deacon Datovech, who has an adult son with special needs, emphasized that Jesus Christ came for every child, not just

those who are Catholic or Christian.

“We’re all unique, we’re all different, we’re all precious in the eyes of God,” Deacon Datovech said. “Every person has been created for a purpose, regardless of what abilities and disabilities we have.”

Just before giving the final blessing, Fr. Dillon acknowledged by name the young people who had participated in the liturgical roles of the Mass. Following the Mass, attendees gathered in the church’s Gathering Space for a light reception organized by Special Events Ministry Coordinator Sylvia Jones.

Annabel Hunter, who served as the pianist for the Mass, said she was attending her first Mass for All God’s Children. Hunter works as an administrative assistant at the National Institutes of Health and serves as an accompanist for the Howard County Community Choir.

“I loved that we could play and sing Christmas carols for an extended time,” Hunter said. “I was delighted to play, particularly the prelude.”

OPT



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Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

On Sunday, December 11, 2022 Our Lady of Lourdes hosted a parish-wide celebration of the Feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Parishioners participated in a beautiful and moving procession. Mass was celebrated in Spanish by Fr. James to honor our Blessed Mother and her apparition to Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill in 1531. To the left of the altar, the tapestry depicting the image left by Our Lady on St Juan Diego's cloak was surrounded by a shrine of flowers. Traditional hymns were sung, and an offering of roses were brought for the shrine. Following Mass, parishioners enjoyed wonderful music, delicious food, and festivities. This was yet another community-building opportunity for those blessed to be a part of the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.

OPT



Celebration of the Mass for the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Our Lady of Lourdes students prepare to sing the Christmas Concert finale

Our Lady of Lourdes Christmas Concert

While the three o'clock bell on Friday, December 16, marked the beginning of the Christmas break for OLOL students, it did not signal the end of the Christmas spirit shared throughout the Lourdes community during the Advent season.

That same evening brought all the students, families, faculty, staff and extended OLOL community back to the Church for a wonderful celebration of traditional

Christmas songs woven between specially selected liturgical readings. The church was standing room only, and the choir loft filled with OLOL graduates back to support their former classmates. The story and miracle of the birth of Jesus was brought to life in the hearts and minds of all in attendance through the children's voices.

The school choir led the concert with three beautiful songs, followed by each individual class singing

and the eighth-grade students presenting Gospel readings from St. Luke and St. Matthew. As a finale, the whole school gathered at the front of the altar and sang "Joy to the World," inviting the audience to sing along as everyone exited the Church to officially start the Christmas break with hearts and minds turned toward the birth of Jesus Christ.

OPT



OLOL families collected toys for Dr. Bear's Closet at Children's National Hospital this past Christmas. The eighth grade elves loaded cars full of presents for this special delivery. Below: The annual winter coat drive for Catholic Charities was another great success. Coats, socks, gloves, and winter hats were collected for those in need this season.

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Breakfast with Santa

Left: Our Lady of Lourdes Students enjoyed hot chocolate, carols, crafts, and breakfast with Santa in December 2022. Photo credit: Katie Crandlemire photos.



Our Lady of Lourdes Parish
7500 Pearl Street
Bethesda, MD
Fr. Walsh,
Pastor
301-654-1287
Mr. David Long
Principal
301-654-5376

ST BART CSW

Con't from page 13

we believe that the spiritual development of our students gives meaning to all their endeavors. Whether in the Church, in the classroom, on stage, or on the field, building a strong moral and ethical foundation is an integral part of a St. Bartholomew experi-

ence. Faculty, staff, parents, and volunteers support students as they learn to lead lives of dignity, and respect. It is through our graduates and alumni that we know this to be true. To kick off Catholic Schools Week, all are invited to celebrate in the Opening Mass on Sunday, 1/29 at 10am, followed by a 60th Anniversary reception and Open House.

OPT



Dominican Br. Luke leads a fire pit Gospel Reflections outside the rectory.

Men's Ministry Means Growing in Faith

Parish men meet monthly to boost their journey in faith

By Matt Flynn

By 6:30 a.m., the stop lights along Old Georgetown Road no longer blink yellow and are back to their normal routine. It is still dark outside, and the roads show few signs of life. Things are quiet and still on a cold Saturday morning in December. However, nestled beneath the church of St. Jane de Chantal, work has already begun. The men of the parish gather to share fellowship, grow in faith, and strive to bring Jesus to their homes and their world.

For ten years, men from St. Jane de Chantal have come together on their journey to follow and know Christ in a more personal way. What started with *That Man Is You!* program has led to a formula of socialization, presentation, and discussion that works well. They open each morning with refreshments and then pray as a group. The main program could include an author speaking on his book, a testimony or presentation

from one of our own, or a video. They are currently following *The Search*, available on Formed.org. Finally, they discuss what was presented, how it applies to their own lives, and leave reenergized to bring Christ to their families, community, and the world.

Once a year they hold a men's half-day retreat on campus, which is always widely attended and often a highlight of the year for many. They might also be found around the firepit in the spring and fall, listening to a reflection from one of several Dominican Brothers serving the parish. The group meets in Caulfield Hall on the first Saturday of each month and all Catholic men are welcome. During Lent, they move to a more frequent weekly schedule and confession is available. Many thanks to their pastor Fr. Samuel Giese, Tim Gleeson, and Mike Veneri for doing so much to lead and foster this wonderful program in the parish. For more information, find them here:

OPT



Congrats to the winners of the Keep Christ in Christmas poster contest

FESTIVITIES

Con't from page 9

even had some alumni come back to volunteer!

After the new year, we also celebrated the school winners of the Keep Christ in Christmas poster contest. This year the winners were: Alvin Tilakaratne (1st place), Inuli Tilakaratne (1st place), Liam Gosselin (2nd

place), and Mackenzie Laffey (3rd place). Their posters highlighted the importance of Christ in the Christmas tradition and allowed them to show off their artistic talents. Our art teacher, Mrs. Laura Schneider (pictured with the winners), helps all the students in their creative endeavors and is an integral part of Mary of Nazareth's STREAM program, which emphasizes science, technology, religion, engineering, art, and mathematics.

OPT

Winter Highlights Include International Exchange Program and Local Recognition at St. Jane de Chantal School

School Welcomes New International Visitors and Bethesda Picks Mrs. Hamilton as Best Area Principal

By Catherine Tomsbeck

The De Chantal International Student Exchange Program has welcomed our first French students. Two eighth grade boys from Saint Denis International School in Loche, France arrived at the end of January to spend a month attending school at De Chantal and experiencing life and culture in the Washington DC area. Two De Chantal Families have graciously offered to host the boys and share with them many of the cultural and athletic events in our area. As part of the reciprocal exchange, Saint Denis International School will welcome De Chantal students in Grades 7 and 8 to attend their school for a month during the academic school year or during one of their summer sessions.

The De Chantal Community is also very excited to share that our very own Elizabeth Hamilton was a finalist in the Best of Bethesda reader's poll for *Readers Pick, Finalist, Best School Principal*. The magazine highlighted our principal in the January Issue with an article entitled *The Test of Time*. During Catholic Schools week, students will take time to celebrate their beloved principal and recognize her lifelong commitment to educating the children of De Chantal. St. Jane de Chantal School was also a finalist in the Bethesda Magazine *Readers Pick, Finalist, Best School with Religious Affiliation*. This recognition is a reminder



It's official, Mrs. Hamilton is the best principal around!

that teachers, students and parents create a caring academic community where children Think, Believe and Become.

OPT

St. Jane de Chantal Parish

9601 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD

Fr. Samuel C. Giese, Pastor
301-530-1550

St. Jane de Chantal School
Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton
301-530-1221

Michelle D'Amour Flynn
OPT Editor

Advent at Christ the King

By Liz Weiss, parishioner

Advent began at Christ the King with the annual Giving Tree. Each year parishioners take an ornament and give donations to help needy families. This year, 179 children were given gift cards and their 46 families received grocery gift cards for a Christmas meal. A big thank you to the volunteers and to the generous parishioners who helped make this project successful. A special thank you to Ludys Mendoza, our church secretary who made sure everyone received their gifts.

The parish celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the weekend of December 10th with special activities. We also held the Church Bazaar that weekend. The Bazaar featured local artisans who sold their work. The day was fun-filled with plenty of Hispanic food, raffles, and



The Giving Tree loaded with ornaments



Our Lady of Guadalupe statue in the front of the church

shopping. The money collected was donated to go towards the fund for a new HVAC system. Thank you

to Katie Ward for her coordination and thank you to the other volunteers who helped that day.

OPT



Father Steve celebrating Mass on Parish Feast day

Feast Day at Christ the King

By Liz Weiss, parishioner

The last weekend of the liturgical year is the Feast of Christ the King. The parish celebrated our fellowship. The choir put in extra effort and sounded so beautiful. The church was decorated in gold and white for the special occasion. Father Steve wore the vestment given to him by parishioners for his fortieth anniversary as a priest, celebrated in October.

OPT

ENZLER

Con't from page 1

in every case I heard about. The later Masses were also well attended, often with the beautiful singing of our parish choirs. Early Christmas morning Masses had a smaller attendance, as they always do, but the later Masses on Christmas Day were packed.

All your priests and fellow Catholics love the energy and spirit that burst forth when we gather as a parish family to worship. You may not realize what it means to both your priests and those next to you in the pews to have people packed in the church and actively participating in Mass.

The joy of celebrating Christmas in person, the anticipation that comes with waiting for the birth of Jesus (and Santa Claus for the children), the meals and family gatherings – these bring us joy and happiness. At the

same time, we remember and support those who may not have those same experiences and find Christmas a time of nostalgia and even loneliness. Jesus was born for them, too.

Do me a favor: Keep up the good work on Mass attendance – for yourself, your family, your parish and your priests. It makes a difference. You make a difference.

We lost some of our regular participation during the pandemic for understandable reasons. For those who can safely do so, let's focus on continuing our Christmas participation and bring it back better than it was before. It is critical that the Eucharist be central to who I am, what I want to be, and to my life as a baptized Christian.

Wouldn't it be great if we looked back at the end of this year and saw how we regularly participated in Mass, received Jesus in the Eucharist, and made that time of prayer and thanksgiving the most important part of our Sunday and even our whole week. I think the primary New Year's

resolution for all of us should be to draw closer to God this year (and every year), and the Eucharist is a great way to do that.

As American author and clergyman Henry Van Dyke encouraged us, let's "keep Christmas" all year long. We can do so by keeping up our attendance and participation in Mass. Van Dyke wrote:

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world – stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death – and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem ... is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always?

But you can never keep it alone.

Let's keep Christmas together as we make Jesus the center of our lives, especially through the Mass. I wish you much happiness and God's peace, love and blessings in 2023. May it be a year in which we all draw closer to the Lord.

OPT



A parishioner praying at the Nativity

Christmas Season at Christ the King

By Liz Weiss, parishioner

The church was beautifully decorated for the Nativity. Father Steve gave some wonderful sermons about the love of Jesus. The season ended in early January with the Epiphany and Gifts of the Magi. On the feast, several of the Religious Education students role played the Kings during the service. At the end of the Sunday Mass, they handed out gifts to the children who attended Mass. Now we prepare for Lent.

OPT



The Three Kings and one younger brother

McGANN

Con't from page 1

be entertained". I would argue that kids need more boredom - more downtime.

Consider a car ride to the beach. It can take three or four hours to get there on a busy Friday afternoon. Mom and Dad pack snacks, drinks, iPads loaded with videos and games, headphones, fidget toys, and more to keep their little ones occupied. For themselves, earbuds, books on tape, more snacks, drinks and of course, cell phones loaded with Solitaire, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. This is a lot of preparation, a lot of entertainment!

Now, consider what the ride would be like without any of those things - well maybe keep the snacks and drinks. Some of you are beginning to feel very uncomfortable. Your hands might be perspiring, and your heart might be racing as you consider the misery that would ensue.

But wait! When you were kids, you took trips to the beach without

any of these props. How did you survive? What did you do with yourselves? What did your parents do with themselves?

Well, your parents talked quietly in the front seat, catching up on things that they hadn't had a chance to cover during the busy week. Every once in a while, your mom passed back a drink-in-a-box, and a bag of chips. Every once in a while, she twisted her left arm back to swat someone who was annoying someone else. She could never actually reach you, but you got the message.

And you? What did you do for four long hours in the car? You looked out the window at tiny little houses along the road, at cows, and horses, and boys and girls playing in front of ramshackle barns. You imagined what it might be like to live on those farms or in those tiny little houses with the bench seat from an old car on the front porch. It looked like it might be kind of fun. You wondered what the inside of the barn looked and smelled like, and you thought about how it would feel to climb up on one of those horses

for a ride.

You played Twenty Questions and License Plate Bingo. You sang with the radio when your Dad turned it way up to hear the Miracles or the Supremes. You poked your sister, you dozed off, you thought about all the fun stuff you would do at the beach. You asked, "How much longer?", and you even said, "I'm bored". That was usually right before your Dad pulled into that place that made the huge milkshakes and the delicious hot dogs, and it didn't even have Golden Arches.

So, next time a road trip is on the agenda give it a try. Give yourselves time to talk with one another and tell stories. Give your kids' imaginations a chance to exercise. There will always be time for iPads and iPhones, video games and movies. Before you know it, though, your kids will be driving themselves to the beach, and you will miss playing Twenty Questions and License Plate Bingo. You'll even miss hearing them say, "How much longer?"

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Christ the King
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The women of the Parish enjoyed an evening of reflection and dinner.



Fr. Vinh of Our Lady of Bethesda joined the ladies for dinner before his reflection.



Chloe Casella and Mara Trainor enjoyed the many Advent and Christmas crafts to help them prepare for the season.



Members of the congregation gathered after each mass for coffee and donuts. There were many activities for fellowship available.



Our Mother Mary surrounded by her Angels.



Children recreated the Gospel at Christmas Eve Mass.

Prepare a Way for the Lord

St. Mary's Faith Community began their preparation for the birth of Jesus on the first Sunday of Advent. Once a month,

parish youth host a mass. For Advent, the sixth grade read the Word and the younger children led the congregation in song from the altar. From the choir loft, St. Mary's student cantor and musicians assisted. The Jesse Tree in the Sanctuary contained dozens of tags with names of needy families and patients at Springfield Hospital in Sykesville, Maryland, St. Michael's in Washington DC, and local families through WUMCO. Donations were accepted for the 25 baskets that were prepared this year.

The Pavilion was a-buzz with activities for Advent, which created an environment of faith and service.

The Sodality sponsored service activities to support the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center. Monetary donations and gently used baby items were collected. The Annual Cookie Bake Sale proceeds also went to the Center. The Haiti committee supported our twinning parish with Christmas Cards, Haiti Ornaments and Coffee sales.

The children were provided a variety of Advent and Christmas

crafts. The craft theme offered a spiritual reflection to assist the children on their path through Advent. The children had a wonderful time during these activities. Donut Sunday coincided, and is always a special treat!

The women of the parish participated in an evening of prayer, reflection, and dinner at "Advent by Candlelight." The room was lit from the glow provided by each table's unique Advent Wreath. A spiritual reflection was provided by Father Vinh, from Our Lady of

Bethesda.

Sunday Scriptures with Fr. Kevin was offered each Tuesday morning.

Each week during Advent, all of the religious education classes had an Advent Wreath at their Prayer Station. As the weeks progressed, all prepared for our program Pageant. The class Pageant was performed for parents and families during the last class in December, followed by a reception. Children who were available participated in the Pageant at Christmas Eve Mass.

OPT

ROSARIA

Con't from page 3

ers and found other ways to participate in parish life. Noting this, it became clear that any program to serve young adults with intellectual disabilities would need to nourish their whole person, physically and spiritually."

At this point, back in the early 2000's, the Holy Spirit intervened to take Tom's desire and make it a reality. Monsignor Kuehner, known for his work with Victory Housing and So Others Might Eat (both of which continue to serve the local Church and are highlighted in various ways in this issue of *Our Parish Times*), had been contacted by parishioners at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church asking for suggestions about how to support members of their community with special needs. He was serving as the

ADW Director of Social Concerns at the time. Connections were made and by 2008, the first Rosaria Community home opened within St. Rose of Lima's parish boundaries in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Msgr. Kuehner is considered to be one of Rosaria's co-founders.

Before St. Rose of Lima welcomed their first three residents; there is a whole history of community and local support for Rosaria's mission that must be acknowledged.

The involvement of the Montgomery County Council, facilitated through the help of Chuck Short and the third co-founder, Mary McGinnity, was critical for funding to offset building costs. Half of the initial building expenses are provided through loans made available by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. The Archdiocese also provided institutional support by sponsoring the Rosaria Community homes,

making them eligible for insurance coverage and resolving an early roadblock. They also provided additional guidance through the Office of Disabilities Ministry.

More importantly, the Archdiocese has provided the support of prayers over time. Cardinal Wuerl personally consecrated two of the Community's homes, Bishop Knestout consecrated the others.

After determining the initial parish location and securing funding from the county, the next step involved interviewing different organizations to help provide residential support services within the homes, such as addressing hygiene and nutritional needs. The Jubilee Association, a Mennonite organization, whose mission statement reveals a deep affinity for the mission of Rosaria Communities was brought on board.

Rosaria Communities now had a structure in place to provide for the

physical needs of their residents, through both housing and medical support. The last piece would be the support of the parish community.

Since 2008, Rosaria Communities has expanded from St. Rose of Lima to St. John the Evangelist in Silver Spring, St. Peter's in Olney, St. John the Baptist in Gaithersburg, Resurrection in Burtonsville, and will soon be opening a home at St. Jude's in Rockville. Together, these houses have provided true homes for dozens of young adults.

The community support looks different at each of the parishes. As Tom describes it, each parish is "affiliated and involvement in the homes is determined in a very grassroots way. We only ask that the parish be a good neighbor to our homes and promise that we will be a good neighbor in return".

Concretely, that means that some of the parish pastors cook dinner and eat with the residents. Other

homes have Knights of Columbus councils that mow the lawn and take care of the landscaping. Many parishes hold cookouts for residents and are sure to invite them to parish functions and parties. Over the years this has included everything from carving pumpkins to helping the residents decorate the homes for Christmas.

In looking at what has emerged in the past 20 years, Tom is adamant, "everything has been provided". The land, the homes, the volunteers, the institutional support, the financing, and most importantly, the residents are all gifts from God. Recognizing this gift has become a true expression of subsidiarity, using the parish community to respond to the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our Catholic family.

OPT

SRS Christmas Events

By Catherine Pulse

The St. Raphael School Community was blessed to have an innovative, fun, new series of events integrated into our December. During the pandemic, Sabrina Colaianni- former HSA president, and extremely creative and active parent volunteer, developed a new tradition: The Twelve Days of St. Raphael Christmas.

The series of events began with an afternoon of Advent Wreath making in the Trumpet Room, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Prayers were said, greenery was gathered, and candles were arranged and lit to start the Christmas season. The



Above: Students and parents sing Christmas carols for the residents at Raphael House as part of the school's 12 days of Christmas. Photo by Laura Long.

Left: Students from the choir perform at the annual Christmas Concert led by music teacher Ms. Jamison. Photo by Tom Carrington.



nursery school board was instrumental in creating a special way to celebrate with families and parishioners alike.

With our community's sense of giving, parents and students came

together to set up decorations outside Raphael House. Bright lights and festive decorations created a beautiful outdoor backdrop for the residents to enjoy. Gifts and bingo prizes were given by the

school community to bring fun and Christmas spirit to the residents' weekly activities. The event brought together the school and assisted living community with holiday cheer in the mix!

St. Raphael School is blessed to have the talent of Ms. Flannery Jamison, a gifted music teacher, who is creative and develops new and fun ways to enjoy events in which she is involved. She led the student choir in beautiful and festive Christmas songs for our

traditional concert. The school band was very impressive with a range of instruments, and beautiful songs could be heard throughout the room. All in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the event and left feeling excited about the Christmas season, now in full swing.

Gingerbread Sunday brought students and teachers together as participants joined a Zoom call to view the creations. Participants competed to win three awards: most creative, most school spirit, and best non-

gingerbread structure (using other materials such as waffles, etc.). Beautiful structures, towns, churches, Santa, and a nativity were all created as part of the contest. The Grinch destroying Christmas, made of gingerbread, put a truly creative twist on the classic gingerbread house!

During the month of December, students celebrated with classroom Christmas parties. Crafts and activities were arranged, and children enjoyed festive holiday snacks, coordinated by parent volunteers. Middle schoolers celebrated with a gift exchange event, laughing all the way! The HSA members joined principal Teri Dwyer, Fr. Mike Salah, and Fr. Tom Morrow for a Christmas celebration. After enjoying a lovely dinner, Fr. Mike led attendees in his favorite Christmas song, "Oh Holy Night."

The Christmas Pageant is perhaps the most anticipated event in our Twelve Days of Christmas series. Several students showed their instrumental talents with lovely Christmas melodies playing in the prelude. Then, each grade performed a Christmas song, made more creative by Ms. Jameson. The highlights included the second grade reciting "The Night before Christmas," and the kindergarten's reenactment of the Nativity. "Happy Birthday Baby Jesus," was sung to conclude the event, as students danced along in loving memory of the birth of our Savior. It's a blessing to be part of the SRS Community.

OPT

LIGHT

Con't from page 11

bring the residents Christmas cheer during the Covid/flu season. Many of the facilities were memory care units with some nonverbal patients. "I will never forget when a woman who is no longer able to speak, started mouthing the words of the

Twelve Days of Christmas," Jen Farkas shared. Some residents enjoyed the carols from their rooms and others were able to join in a sing-a-long. What a wonderful to begin the Christmas season!

Wee Three Kings

The Feast of the Epiphany was celebrated in PreK at Holy Redeemer on January 6 with lots of very special dress-up clothes, performances of the Nativity story, singing, and thoughtful discussion. All three classes of PreK 4's students got to perform in at least one of multiple show performances, complete with music and a narrator, in front of their small audiences of teachers, co-op parents and administrative staff. There were also performances given for classes of appreciative PreK 3's students, who were delighted to see the story they had learned so much about as it was brought to life. What a wonderful way to wrap up the Christmas season!



Giving gifts and worshipping Baby Jesus

OPT

Catholic Schools Week

By Laura Long

For many years, St. Raphael parent, Ginger Browning has provided the school with spiritual and creative direction for Catholic Schools Week. Ginger selects a divine theme that influences the décor and appreciation activities during the weeklong celebration. In addition, Ginger pens a thoughtful and inspiring Annual Reflection centered on the theme, which is shared with the school community. This year, the inspiration for Catholic Schools Week is St. Faustina and the message of Divine Mercy. The colors in the Image of The Divine Mercy will be incorporated in the campus's decorations, and topics such as trust, love, mercy, art, and nature will be interwoven throughout each activity.

Per tradition, St. Raphael School celebrates each day of Catholic Schools Week with a unique focus. For example, parents are gifted with a token of gratitude for their continued commitment to a Catholic education on Parent Appreciation Day, as the partnership between educators and parents is essential for students' development of faith

and reason. Teachers and staff are showered with love and appreciation by students and their families on their dedicated day. They receive personalized letters and pictures from students that are compiled into commemorative booklets. These booklets are presented along with gift bags during the Teacher and Staff Dinner, which is sponsored by a very generous school family.

Community and Clergy Appreciation Day is celebrated in partnership with Catholic Charities. Students participate in *Cup of Joe*, a program that serves Catholic Charities' shelters. Students package hundreds of meals and supplement the food with handwritten notes during this school-wide service project. In addition, the St. Raphael clergy receive their own letters and pictures of appreciation from the student body.

On Career Day, students in grades K-3 get to dress like a profession of their choice, while students in grades 4-8 are treated to presentations by school parents. During these Career Day presentations, parents are able to share their passion and talent with the older students while speaking about their

profession.

The culmination of Catholic Schools Week is Student Appreciation Day and Family Fun Night! Students are treated to a special activity (Teachers' Choice) during school and an early dismissal, but return in the evening for a terrific event. The event changes each year, but it's always a memorable evening with dinner and entertainment for all ages. Catholic Schools Week is always a highlight of the year for the SRS community.

St. Raphael Parish St. Raphael School

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If you're a highly motivated student seeking real-world biomedical research skills, it's time to apply for the NIA Intramural Research Program's Summer Training in Aging Research (STAR) Program. Over the program's 30-year history, NIA scientists have mentored more than 1,350 summer interns, many of whom have gone on to have robust careers in aging research.

STAR, part of the wider NIH Summer Internship Program (SIP) in Biomedical Research, attracts a diverse cohort of applicants for eight-week, paid internships with the NIA Intramural Research Program located in Baltimore and/or the NIA and NIH Center for Alzheimer's and Related Dementias labs and facilities in Bethesda, Maryland. STAR is open to high school, college, medical school, and graduate students.

STAR can be a great experience, whether or not you're sure you want a career in research. Through this program, NIA researchers teach scientific and lab techniques that connect to multiple biological fields. The STAR curriculum also features scientific seminars, research poster presentation skills, and NIA staff career mentorship, including help preparing professional (medi-

cal, dental, public health, etc.) and graduate school applications. Some participants may even have the opportunity to coauthor a peer-reviewed journal article.

Last summer, 52 students participated in STAR through a hybrid program of onsite and virtual internships. The 2023 program is currently scheduled to be held in person.

Praise from previous STAR students

The STAR experience can all add

up to a valuable step in your career development. Let's hear from some summer 2022 participants:

- "My experience at NIA has blossomed not only my scientific intellect but also my communication with others, mental wellness, and self-confidence." — Sarah Zoeteman, Florida Gulf Coast University
- "Working at NIA has been a wonderful opportunity to confirm what I already enjoy about science, while also introducing

me to new ideas and research skills that I will carry with me throughout the rest of my life." — Daniel Gai, Washington University in St. Louis

How to apply

- Apply online through the NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education website: www.training.nih.gov/programs/sip.
- After students submit their online applications, to ensure they are placed in the NIA appli-

cant pool for consideration they must contact Arlene Jackson, National Institute on Aging at: Arlene.Jackson@nih.gov.

To participate in STAR, students must be enrolled at least half-time in an accredited U.S. high school, college, or university, and must be at least 17 years old by June 15 of the internship year.

Application deadlines are:

- Feb. 1 for high school students
- March 1 for college, medical school, and graduate students

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Young parishioner, Ivan, portraying Juan Diego, presents the tilma with the beautiful image of our Lady of Guadalupe and the roses to Father Carlos.

St. Michael's Celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Helder Hernandez

After a year of shutdowns because of COVID-19 and with more people vaccinated, parishioners of St. Michael the Archangel Parish gathered for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12, 2022. Our Lady of Guadalupe, who has been a source of hope for many Catholics and recognizable to non-Catholics, appearing on candles, shirts, flags, and murals—represents the presence of God in the Americas, North and South, making us one society.

The evening celebration initiated with the gathering of 400 parishioners for a beautiful Mass in which a young parishioner by the name of Ivan, portrayed Juan Diego who brought the roses to the bishop. When Juan Diego was at

the bishop's presence and presented him his tilma with the roses that our Lady was sending to him, the bishop not only saw the roses but also a beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe imprinted upon the tilma.

During the homily, Father Carlos de Rodrigo Gutiérrez stated that "although 492 years have passed since the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe, there is no time to despair." Rather, we should continue walking by her side and asking for her intercession as she is always interceding to her son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to come to our aid. Following the reenactment and Mass, parishioners continued the celebration with fellowship, Mariachi serenades, and poems recited to our Patroness of the Americas.

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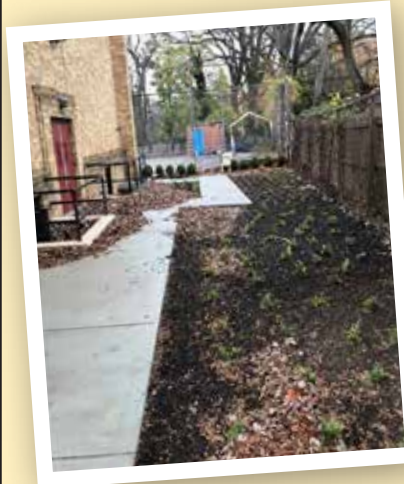
Completion of Phase I of St. Michael's Green Project

By Jason Giovannetone

The Green Project currently underway at the Parish Center of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church was originally proposed to reduce the flow of water leaving the property during a rain event. This water would flow into



Above: The installation of a 1,750 square foot rain garden at the location of an old playground.



Left: Asphalt removed and replaced with a walkway surrounded by native plants.

Wayne Avenue and then downhill into Sligo Creek, which is prone to flash flooding due to the high amount of asphalt and other hard surfaces located just upstream in downtown Silver Spring. Restorative measures that were proposed as part of the Green Project were divided into three phases and included the replacement of asphalt with natural ground cover that includes native plants, the installation of

a rain garden that will collect and absorb large amounts of rainfall coming from behind the Parish Center as well as from the building itself, and the replacement of asphalt throughout the Parish Center parking lot with stones that allow water to soak into the ground between them.

Phase I of this project included the installation of a 1,750 square foot rain garden at the location of an old playground on the northeast side of the property (see photo 1 below). The gutters from the building were re-routed to direct all water falling on the Parish Center roof into the rain garden. In addition, the asphalt that previously

existed behind the building was removed and replaced with a walkway surrounded by native plants (see photo 2 below). These native plants, as well as those located in the rain garden, represent plants that are accustomed to the Maryland climate and therefore are much more resistant to drought, flooding, and changes in temperature. They will also help to absorb rainwater more quickly than plants that are not native to the region. The ground behind the Parish Center was also re-graded to direct excess water away from the building and into the rain garden. Future phases have been proposed to address the remaining restorative measures mentioned above.

OPT

St. Michael's Sodality was Busy During the Christmas Holidays Helping Families

By Cheryl Chesser

The Sodality of St. Michael the Archangel donated over 225 food items to fill boxes to help five families in need over the Christmas holiday. Along with the boxes of food, gift cards of \$100 were included in each box to help the families purchase fresh vegetables, dairy products, and meats. This initiative was in conjunction with the Sodality Union's efforts to help families with children over



Donation of diapers, wipes, and children's clothing for The Gabriel Project.

the holidays to ensure that children had access to meals they would lose because of school closure. This effort by St. Michael's Sodality is expected to become an annual event helping more families throughout the year.

In addition, the Sodality, in collaboration with St. Michael's Knights of Columbus, also participated in a drive to collect much needed items for The Gabriel Project. The Gabriel Project is a volunteer organization supporting needy women facing crisis pregnancies and their children. Last year, the Gabriel Project helped over 260 low-income women and their families. The Sodality collected and delivered boxes of diapers,

wipes, and clothing items to the Gabriel Project. This is an ongoing initiative to help the Gabriel Project help mothers, babies, and their families.

OPT



The St. Michael's Marriage Ministry prepared nine engaged couples for marriage in its October Transformed in Love class

St. Michael's Marriage Ministry

By John Webster

The Marriage Ministry of St. Michael the Archangel Parish continues to offer multiple programs to support Catholic marriage and family life. In October, the ministry completed its second Marriage Preparation Class of 2022. Offered in partnership with the Archdiocese of Washington Office of Family Life, these classes use the Transformed in Love (www.transformedinlove.com) program to help prepare engaged couples for receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. The ministry helped prepare

nine engaged couples for marriage. The October class included a panel discussion on parenting and raising children in the Catholic Faith. This panel was well received by the engaged couples, who offered a multitude of questions for discussion.

In addition to marriage preparation, the ministry offers monthly online Gospel reflections for married and engaged couples and an online book discussion group. The book currently under discussion is *Sacred Marriage* by Gary Thomas. For more information, please email the Marriage Ministry on smacc.marriage@gmail.com.



Sodalists Cheryl Chesser and Alex Adino of the Hispanic Community preparing for delivery to the five families.

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Pope Francis Names Two Auxiliary Bishops for Washington

Local priests Msgr. Juan Esposito-Garcia and Father Evelio Menjivar to be ordained bishops in February

Pope Francis has named two priests of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington as new Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese.

Monsignor Juan Esposito-Garcia, 48, currently serving as an official in the Dicastery for Bishops at the Vatican, and Father Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, 52, pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Landover Hills, Maryland, will be ordained as bishops on Tuesday, February 21.

In announcing the news, Cardinal Gregory said: "Holy Father, Pope Francis, has blessed the Archdiocese of Washington with the appointment of Bishop-Elect Juan Esposito-Garcia and Bishop-Elect Evelio Menjivar-Ayala as our new Auxiliary Bishops. They have been selected from a zealous and generous local presbyterate, and now they are appointed as bishops to serve all of Christ's flock in this local Church. They represent the goodness of all of our people, and both will dedicate themselves tirelessly to the promotion of the Gospel and the mission of Christ in serving with me and all of our clergy and faithful."

Bishop-Elect Esposito was ordained to the priesthood for The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington on June 14, 2008. He was born January 10, 1974, in San Luis,



Argentina. After obtaining a law degree at Catholic University of Cuyo in San Luis, Argentina, he came to the United States, where he completed his ecclesiastical studies and earned a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Moral Theology from Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg. He holds both a licentiate and a Doctorate in Canon Law from The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Bishop-Elect Esposito's assignments in the Archdiocese of Washington have included positions as parochial vicar at the Shrine of

St. Jude in Rockville, St. Mark the Evangelist in Hyattsville, and the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda, and as pro tem parochial vicar at Ascension Catholic Church in Bowie. He also was adjunct professor of canon law and assistant spiritual director at Mount St. Mary's Seminary.

Bishop-Elect Esposito also served in Archdiocesan roles in the Metropolitan Tribunal, on the Seminary Admission Committee, as an instructor for the Marriage Preparation Program and as a member of the Committee for the Archdiocesan Synod. He has served since 2018 as an official in the Dicastery for Bishops in Vatican City. He speaks English,

Spanish and Italian. He is thought to be the first native of Argentina named to be a bishop in the United States. He was named a Chaplain of His Holiness, with the title of monsignor, in 2020.

Bishop-Elect Menjivar is believed to be the first bishop for the United States who was born in El Salvador. He was ordained to the priesthood for The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington on May 29, 2004. He was born August 14, 1970, in Chalatenango, El Salvador. He came to the United States with his brother in 1990.

Bishop-Elect Menjivar attended St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami, Florida, receiving a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy. He attended the North American College in Rome and obtained a master's degree in Theology from the Saint Thomas Aquinas University "Angelicum" in 2002. He pursued licentiate studies at the Pontifical Scalabrinian Institute for Pastoral Theology for Human Mobility in Rome before his ordination.

Bishop-Elect Menjivar's assignments in the Archdiocese of Washington have included posts as parochial vicar at Mother Seton parish in Germantown, St. Bartholomew parish in Bethesda, and yjr Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, and as administrator at Our Lady Queen of the Americas parish in Washington. Since 2017, he has served as pastor of St. Mary's parish in Landover Hills. He speaks English, Spanish, and Italian.

He serves as dean of Middle Prince George's County deanery, is a member of the Priest Personnel Board, and is a member of the Archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board. During his ministry, he has actively supported workers and promoted social justice for immigrants.

They will join Auxiliary Bishop Roy Campbell and Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville in serving the Catholic Church in Maryland and Washington alongside Cardinal Gregory.

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Women's Bible Study Offers Sanctuary to Grow, Share in Faith among Peers

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

As more than two dozen female parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Church have plunged into a new calendar year, they are finding community and sanctuary in a women's Bible study group that allows them to reflect on Bible teachings, share lessons, and find new friendships with one another.

The women are taking part in the Walking With Purpose Bible study ministry, a program that offers Scripture study opportunities for women of all ages and teens alike. Specifically targeted to Catholic women, the program brings together Bible teachings, reflection, discussion and sharing for participants to form their faith in a small group setting.

Longtime St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Eileen Grams brought the program to the attention of Fr. John Dillon and Director of Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick last year after her daughter completed a Walking with Purpose inde-



On January 12, small group facilitator Lita Silva leads a discussion on the Letter to the Ephesians during the Walking with Purpose Bible study group, which meets weekly in the Kuehner Room at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Derwood, MD. About two dozen women at the parish are taking part in the Bible study, which is targeted to Catholic women.

pendent study with St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Rockville.

"I wanted something that was practical and suitable for beginners," Grams said. "[Walking with Purpose] had an imprimatur from Archbishop William Lori (from Baltimore). And I liked that the

small group leaders don't teach – they facilitate."

A group of 30 parish women began meeting in the church's Kuehner Room on November 3 for the first six-week session, titled, "Ordering Your Priorities," which pulled from readings from

the Old and New Testament. Then, on January 5, about two dozen women began meeting for an 11-week session focused on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

During their meeting on January 12, two groups gathered around tables in the Kuehner Room and in the church's adjoining Gathering Space. With Grams facilitating one group and parishioner Lita Silva facilitating the other, participants took turns reading aloud reflections from their study guides and then discussing questions about the material, sharing their musings, observations, and what lay in their heart.

The atmosphere was welcoming and comfortable, as the women sipped on coffee provided by the hosts and felt safe within ground rules stating that sharings remain within the group and cannot even be shared with spouses.

Parishioner Ruth Chite has participated in several parish-sponsored Bible studies and said this one is "very user-friendly" in contrast to other studies that have

been more intellectual. Chite said taking part in an in-person Bible study after living in isolation during the pandemic has been a special blessing.

"We are asked to keep everything in confidence, so the participants really share their hearts, their vulnerabilities, and their deepest hopes," Chite said. "It inspires us to strive more faithfully to walk with our Lord."

Grams said she likes the study's practical format, particularly the end-of-session invitation for each participant to develop a resolution that is personal, possible, measurable, and action-oriented. Over the past few months, she has also seen the participants grow more trusting of and comfortable with one another.

"The women have been very open and have taught me a lot," Grams said. "To share collective wisdom and experiences, it makes the study so much richer."

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Recording, Posting Adult Faith Formation Talks Expand Their Life and Reach

By Melissa Montealegre Egan

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced pastors in March 2020 to cancel in-person gatherings to safeguard against spread of the virus, some parish staffs pivoted to offering faith formation opportunities online to continue some semblance of communal spiritual growth. Nearly two years after in-person gatherings have resumed, the director of Adult Faith Formation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish hopes the hybrid offerings of both in-person and online offerings are here to stay to expand the reach of evangelization.

Over the past two years, the suburban parish has used both recorded events on Zoom and the parish's own camera equipment to extend the life of faith formation events that would have otherwise been one-off gatherings. While recording and posting these events were initially crucial to having parishioners attend during the pandemic, they are now documented to allow these gatherings to live beyond a single day in time, said Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick.

"It's a real benefit, not just to the parish, but because we don't know how many outside the parish are watching," Bosnick said. "When a talk influences [what suggested content might come up in their feeds], it's a benefit to the church and the parish beyond our parochial boundaries."

When parish leaders were unsure



On December 6, Dr. Anastacia Wooden, center, speaks to two attendees after her Advent talk on "What Child Is This?" in the Kuehner Room at St. Francis of Assisi Church. The talk, which was attended by 30 people, was also recorded by the parish's Communications Ministry and posted to the parish's YouTube Channel; it has since garnered about 72 views.

of how long the pandemic would last, Fr. John Dillon asked parishioners for donations in the summer of 2020 to purchase camera and lighting equipment for the Communications Ministry to continue recording the weekly Sunday Mass. At the same time, the parish invested in Zoom licenses for multiple staff members and ministry coordinators to use that tool to host online gatherings and meetings.

In the spring of 2021, Bosnick decided to offer the parish's Lenten Mission over Zoom, recording all four sessions so they could live on for others to partake of those topics. These sessions were also loaded

onto the parish's YouTube Channel, enabling interested viewers to see on their own time the topics on St. Joseph, the Bible, saints, and helping our neighbors in need. Those videos have individually garnered between 42-129 views on YouTube. See the videos at <https://www.sfadw.org/lenten-parish-mission>.

Since then, the parish's Communications Ministry and Adult Faith Formation ministries have worked together to record and post 50th anniversary talks by Catholic University of the America professors Dr. Susan Timoney and Dr. John Grabowski; a 2022 Lenten series by Fr. Tom Weinandy, Catholic

University of America professor Dr. Anastacia Wooden, and Fr. Dillon; and an Advent talk on December 6, 2022, by Wooden that has since garnered 71 views on YouTube.

"As we push these out, I hope it encourages people to embrace the Church's general teachings as well as Catholic social teachings,

which helps us engage with society," Bosnick said. "It will help them have a livelier faith and help them on their journey with Jesus."

View Adult Faith Formation talks on the parish's YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6uP6iX4cmY_6dzOI-KuP_w.

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On November 27, St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Wanda Canino, center, hands out Miraculous Medals after the Mass in Spanish at St. Francis of Assisi Church on the Feast Day of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. It is believed that wearing the Miraculous Medal will bring special graces from the Virgin Mary.

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Sharing a "Route 28 Christmas"

For the second year, Our Lady of the Visitation joined other Christian churches located along Maryland Route 28 to share the joy and wonder of the birth of Jesus Christ. A collection of more than 1,100 nativities was divided among the four participating churches, which also included Darnestown Presbyterian, Fairhaven United Methodist, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At Our Lady of the Visitation, the collection of nativities was on display from December 16-18. Parishioners from all the communities were invited to share in events at each of the participating churches. Our Lady of the Visitation shared their annual Christmas Pageant, presented by the Faith Formation students. This year's Pageant, held on December 18, included thirty-five students. In the retelling of the Christmas story, Baby Jesus was portrayed by six-week-old Henry Clark. Music Director Jyoti Hench led the students and attendees in Christmas carols during the event. Following the Pageant, our Parish provided a cookie reception giving everyone an opportunity to view the diverse nativities while sharing a treat.



Above left: Faith Formation Christmas Pageant



Above right: Students enjoy the many nativities as part of the Route 28 Christmas

The more than 1,100 nativities collected from countries all over the world were accumulated by Sam and Carol Raines during their 52 years of marriage. They married in 1969 and began a life together filled with remarkable experiences. Sam's career in the US military meant both travel and being stationed in many countries on different continents. The nativities they collected provided them with a cultural and spiritual connection to the artists and individuals who constructed them, often with materials

only found where they lived. They were fascinated by the different representations of the birth of Jesus Christ and sought to share their collection wherever Sam's military career took them.

In early 2021, the Raines sold their entire collection to a family in Maryland. The family promised to share the collection with their community in an effort to bring people together through the cultural uniqueness and spiritual symbolism of the nativities. It is this collection that is on display in the churches of the "Route 28 Christmas".

Below: Parishioners and guests come together at the cookie reception



OPT

Faith the Size of a Mustard Seed

As noted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, small group communities are "powerful vehicles for adult faith formation, providing opportunities for learning, prayer, mutual support, and the shared experience of Christian living and service to Church and society" (Our Hearts were Burning within Us, USCCB, no. 106). With this principle in mind, Our Lady of the Visitation parishioners have been invited to become involved in a small faith group in 2023.

Starting Small

The parish began with several faith groups, including the weekly evening Scripture study, the Women's Sodality, as well as the Women's and Men's Groups. Pastor Fr. Greg Shaffer has now invited attendees of those groups to begin their own small faith groups. This natural expansion begins to enable more outreach. The parish utilized a grant to purchase copies of selected resources: the *Navarre Bible* which includes helpful commentary, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as well as Jeff Cavin's book, *Walking With Christ*. These books were distributed to those interested

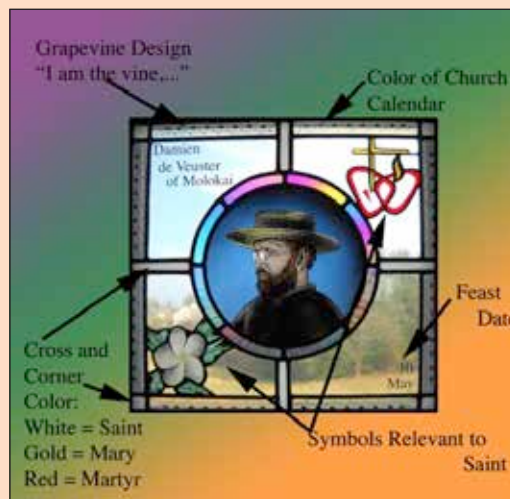
in leading a small group. Imitating Jesus Christ, who personally invited and accompanied a small group of Apostles, those leaders were encouraged to share Christian friendship and community by starting a small faith group with six to ten people they knew. A yearly guideline of topics is available to interested leaders, but flexibility in how the group would function is left up to the individual leader.

Growing Big

While utilizing different formats, the purpose of every small group is to help each person grow in holiness and discover how God is calling each person to live as a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ. One of the first small groups that is just forming will be led by Sara Adams. She has stated her small group will be "a Christ-centered fellowship applying the spiritual principles and concepts of the Twelve Steps to our everyday lives. Everyone is welcome to attend no matter what their life issue or addiction." It will be located in the Quince Orchard area. Another group, which has begun meeting is led by Diana Hurley. It is following Fr. Mike Schmidt's "Catechism in a Year" Podcast. Group members listen to the daily podcast independently, then meet weekly to share their questions and comments. The focus is on integrating the fullness of Catholic teaching into group members' daily lives.

Those who haven't been personally invited to participate in a group yet are encouraged to notify the parish office. Additional leaders and groups will continue to be formed into the new year.

OPT



Explanation of stained-glass symbolism in the Saints windows series



Our Lady of Guadalupe saints window

Stories in Stained Glass at Visitation Parish

By Tony Glander

Stained Glass has adorned churches for centuries. It is a form of decoration, but its main intent was to educate. The stained glass at Visitation Parish is no different. The church's main nave has 16 windows that teach about the American saints and Mary. The Our Lady of the Visitation Women's Group, "Ladies of Visitation", was treated to a presentation at their December 17 meeting by Tony Glander from Fitzpatrick Glass Studios. They learned all of the panels are leaded stained-glass windows, meaning they are fabricated using colored art glass that has been cut to the design,

Painted and then assembled using lead in between the pieces to construct the window.

The "Saints" windows run along each side of the main Nave

of the church in sets of two. These windows were designed by Fr. Ray Fecteau, founding pastor, in collaboration with Tony Glander. The center portraits of each saint were painted by glass artist J. Kenneth Leap in New Jersey. The "footprint" of each window is a square border with the center circle of the Saint along with one-inch strips of glass that run top to bottom at the center and across the middle of the window from right to left, forming a cross. The cross for Mary is gold and for Martyrs is red. In the upper left corner is the saint's name and in the lower right is



St. Kateri Tekakwitha saints window

Continued on page 37

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MSP parishioners visit the Daughters of Charity

MSP parishioners visit the Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg

By: Dorrette Paulin

My thanks and gratitude to Leo, Chris, Marilyn, Joan, Barbara, the parents, and the videographer for a successful and enjoyable event for the sisters.

The performance was a collaborative effort and for me, a miracle. Yes, I was all set to do the program after the lockdown and Covid, but I needed musicians, performers, VIRTUS trained individuals and supportive parents. I asked and everyone responded. The children who participated serve our community as altar servers, youth choir members, and the youngest participant even comes to recite

the Divine Mercy Chaplet when he is on school vacation.

Leo immediately responded to the request to play for us, and my dear Sister Marilyn, who is from a family of musicians asked if her 95-year-old mother, a retired school musician, could help. A miracle? Yes. Ms. Balaan came to rehearsals with her keyboard, and she entertained us with her accordion. Marilyn assisted with the music, directed for us, and sang. She brought in hand-made ornaments for the children.

Thanks to Barbara for coordinating the visit, managing the gifts from the Giving Tree, gifts for the sisters, food, the table

Continued on page 39



Singing Carols



The Magnificat Choir

French Christmas

By: John Gunn

On Thursday December 29, 2022, Mother Seton hosted the inaugural French Christmas performance organized by the Magnificat choir and Elikya group. The Parish Center was filled

with members of the parish as they showed support for the event. Most of your cherished Christmas songs were sung as well as some African Christmas selections. We look forward to another event next Christmas. Thank you all.

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Left: The Three Magi Kings visit Mother Seton Parish

Below: Children ask the Magi questions about their journey



Left: The Magi's camels

The Epiphany of Our Lord

By: Mario Espinoza

On January 8, the children of Mother Seton Parish celebrated the Epiphany of Our Lord with a visit from the three Magi (and their three camels!).

The children received a catechesis about the feast day and greeted the Magi with songs. The Magi answered questions and graciously agreed to take letters prepared by the children to the Christ child.

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Mother Seton Pledges 2,001 Rosaries Commemorating the Feast of the Holy Rosary, and the 105th Anniversary of the Miracle of Fatima

By: Nancy Fazio

Members and friends of Mother Seton Parish surpassed their original goal of offering 1,000 Rosaries to Our Blessed Mother by offering 2,001 pledged Rosaries to be recited from the Feast of the Holy Rosary through the 105th Anniversary of the Miracle of Fatima. These prayers are an answer to Our Lady of Fatima's call to pray the Rosary for Conversion, Reparation, Salvation of Souls, Peace and Unity.

We are most grateful for Father Lee Fangmeyer's support for this event. It was heart-warming to see the outstanding, generous response, throughout each day, of all the public and private rosaries being recited and offered in response to Our Lady's Fatima call and intentions, especially to bring each person, each family, our Church, our country, and our world back to and closer to God. We are praying for the restoration of God's spiri-



MSP Rosary pledge drive

tual, physical, natural and moral order, to live lives in obedience to God's holy commands, especially the protection of the unborn and all life, traditional marriage, purity, God's creation of male and female, protection of our religious freedoms, renewal within our Church, the return of our country back to

"One Nation under God", and for our own holy personal intentions.

In God's grace, we surpassed our Rosary Goal with 2,001 rosaries pledged and prayed. We thank all who fulfilled their Rosary pledge, including the priests of our parish who offered their rosaries with us to achieve and surpass our goal. We pray that many blessings may abound from this event, and we encourage all to continue to pray and trust in the power of praying the daily rosary.

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Doubled our Rosary pledge

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Maryland Catholic Conference Supports Prospectively Eliminating Statute of Limitations for Civil Suits

In response to inquiries regarding the Maryland Catholic Conference's position on legislation that is expected to be introduced during the 2023 Maryland legislative session regarding statutes of limitations for civil litigation involving cases of child sexual abuse, the Conference offers the following statement:

The Catholic Church in Maryland will support legislation that may be introduced during the 2023 Maryland General Assembly

session that prospectively eliminates the statute of limitation in civil lawsuits involving cases of child sexual abuse. Similar legislation was recently signed into law at the federal level. That bipartisan federal legislation also allows individuals an unlimited amount of time to file civil litigation in future cases of child sexual abuse.

For some victims of such crimes, it may take decades before they are able to come forward to report their abuse. In the past, the

Catholic Church in Maryland has supported efforts to extend the age by which victim-survivors may file civil suits. Currently, the law in Maryland allows victims until the age of 38 to file such claims, an extension that was supported by the Church in 2017. Fortunately, in Maryland, there currently also is no statute of limitations on the criminal prosecution of child sexual offenders, meaning perpetra-

Continued on page 38



OUTCOME

Con't from page 14

tive on different levels for the child, for the teacher, and for the parent.

For the child, family engagement can help:

- Improve grades
- Improve scores on standardized tests
- Inspire children to have higher aspirations and more positive attitudes toward school and homework

For the teacher and parents, an enhanced relationship with each other can:

- Help reinforce school teachings at home
- Increase the teacher's understanding of the child's life outside of the classroom

So what does a successful family/school connection look like? The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) identified six principles to guide effective involvement of parents in their child's education.

- Decision Making. Invite families to actively participate in decision making and goal setting via joint collaboration with teachers.
- Communication. Employ strate-



Families at The Woods love to visit the school and watch their children's performances and big milestones.

gies that encourage timely and continuous two-way communication between parents and teachers.

- Teaching practice. Work closely with families with the goal of gaining deep and genuine understanding of students' lives, families, and communities to integrate parents' unique knowledge and skills into the curricula and teaching practices.
- Home learning. Provide practical ways to support parents' efforts

to enhance their children's learning at home and in the community outside of school.

- Design. Invite families to actively participate in the decision-making process of the engagement program itself.
- System change. Institutionalize engagement practices and policies such that teachers have the support necessary to fully engage families. (NAEYC, n.d.)

Here at The Woods Academy, there are many ways to build the

family/school connection and continue to build trust between parents and the school. Director of Guidance and Counseling Dr. Andy Rhein and Assistant Head of School Jodie Schoemaker hosted a few parent/coffee events this past month and discussed various ways to continue to build the family/school connection, such as:

- Read communication from the school and your child's teacher; engaging with the communication if necessary
- Check your child's homework folder and planner each night to see what they're learning and making sure they're staying on track
- Join your child in their learning experience, for example:
 - Read the same book as your child! You can ask them questions about different characters.
 - Practice what they're learning like doing math in the grocery store or practicing poems/lyrics in the car while you drive
- Ask your child about their school day. Some questions could be:
 - What is something new you learned today?
 - What was the funniest thing

that happened today?

- Who made you smile today?
- What was something you did today that was helpful?
- What was the nicest thing someone did for you today?
- Tell me something you saw today that was out of the ordinary.
- Volunteer to help at school and/or in the classroom to get to know your child's classmates and teachers better
- Become involved with WAPTO
- Attend parent/teacher conferences
- Come prepared with questions
- Be receptive to teaching strategies and feedback
- Attend school events, including athletic games, the auction, science fairs, Mass

According to a Brookings Institute paper, "building trust between families and teachers is foundational for successful ongoing dialogue. In schools, trust between parents and educators can result from high-quality and consistent interactions between these stakeholders and can manifest as receptivity to mutual input and suggestions, which is imperative for constructive communication and co-creation."

OPT

LEGO

Con't from page 14

Gracious Professionalism throughout the Qualifier.

Each year the teams are presented a unique challenge facing today's scientists. The 2022 Superpowered Challenge compelled teams to focus on energy. They researched and presented their own innovative solutions for a way to improve the storage, distribution, and/or usage of energy. The Clickin' Chickens developed a bus powered by compressed air and shared their idea with the judges in an entertaining skit. B.O.B. (Best of Bots) conceived of the *Worminator 3000*, an improved composter that would use worms, water, and warm air to compost food scraps, and the chemical energy from the food would be used to help plants grow. In addition, they spent numerous hours using LEGO MINDSTORMS technolo-



The Woods Academy students Drew C. and Kye D. during their second match in which the B.O.B. team scored an impressive 170 points.

gies to design, build, and program autonomous robots.

OPT

Science students in the Upper School at The Woods have been creating mini chain reaction machines that incorporate incline planes and levers. The only rule...their machine must include simple machines.

PLAY

Con't from page 14

culate work, but they will always remember that the more force used and the greater distance stretched increased the launch distance.

During our study of simple machines, sixth graders have been creating mini chain reaction machines that incorporate incline planes and levers. The only rule... their machine must include sim-



ple machines. According to the Edutopia article, "the use of manipulatives in play, over traditional assignments, is more abstract, which leads to conceptual or higher-level learning that may result in students asking more questions, seeing where their understanding could be muddy, or endeavoring to make a cross-curricular connection for a deeper knowledge."

Throughout the first trimester, sixth graders have taken advantage of "free build Fridays" when

they have access to bins of Lego bricks, robotics pieces, K'Nex, and Minecraft. The only rule...they must build something. "This openness to explore and play with thinking by creating something...is an invitation to unearth new ideas and questions, to explain knowledge in a conceptual and unique manner, or to simply make personal connections that may help to better define themselves as learners."

OPT

Holy Cross Celebrates National Native American Heritage Month

On November 1, Holy Cross School hosted an assembly to celebrate National Native American Heritage Month. The event came together through the planning and coordination of faculty member Lori Kellam, whose relative is Dennis Zotigh, a Cultural Specialist and a writer at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. Their family are members of the Kiowa, Santee Dakota, and Ohkay Owingeh tribes. Dennis Zotigh was accompanied by his father, Ralph Zotigh at the school event.

Dennis Zotigh shared a story from his childhood that emphasized the need for cultural understanding: as a young student, he was punished for refusing to make eye contact with a teacher when speaking, which is considered a sign of respect in his community. Ralph Zotigh entertained students with an oral retelling of a Native American folktale about the origin of the Big Dipper. Students were also invited to participate in two dances with the accompaniment

of a hand drum. A question and answer segment rounded out the event.

“It was a beautiful and eye-opening experience,” recounted one teacher, who was moved by Mr. Zotigh’s experience as a young boy at school. “I am so grateful to Lori and her family—not only for sharing their time, and helping us understand and celebrate their heritage, but to emphasize our role as teachers to honor different customs.”

Principal Mrs. Kane explained “We celebrate the rich cultural diversity of our school family throughout the year, no matter the month; but the designated heritage months gives us a special opportunity to showcase different cultures. We come away with a better understanding and appreciation of what makes us unique, but also our



Lori Kellam, standing far right, posed with the Zotighs, principal Mrs. Kane, standing on the left, her daughter, Mia, and some younger students after the presentation.



Dennis Zotigh, Cultural Specialist and writer at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, speaks to students at Holy Cross School at an event on November 1. His father, Ralph Zotigh is seated in the background.

shared humanity.”

With Mrs. Kellam’s help, and the contributions of the Zotighs, Christine Zalewski, Director

of Development at Holy Cross gathered and distributed resources for teachers in order to make the National Native American

Heritage Month celebration at Holy Cross a vibrant event.

OPT

STAINED GLASS

Con’t from page 34

their feast date. The color of the edge border of glass represents the church’s time of year the feast date falls in, green for ordinary time, purple for Advent or Lent and white for special feasts. This border also has an image of grapevines painted on them to remind us that, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” The glass that borders the center portrait is a dichroic glass. This glass will change color depending

on the ambient light. If it is daytime and the light is coming through the glass it can look blue. At night when the light from within the church is “bouncing off” the glass, instead of coming through, the same blue glass will look magenta or gold. This repeats other dichroic glass elements already in the church when it was built. Finally in the upper right and lower left are symbols that are representational of each saints’ lives. For example, Saint Damien de Veuster of Molokai has a tropical flower in the bottom left of his panel to represent

Hawaii. Nancy Briggs commented “From the presentation, I have a greater understanding and appreciation for the complexity and artistic considerations required to create a stained-glass window.”

At Our Lady of the Visitation, “the stained glass adds a rich and beautiful new layer to my experience of simply sitting in church, particularly during quiet moments,” expressed Patti Goochs.

The windows can be viewed on line at olvp.org under Faith Formation, Youth Faith Formation, Resources.

OPT

Welcome to Holy Cross School, Mrs. Osborn!

In October, Holy Cross School was delighted to welcome Sarah Osborn as our new school counselor. After earning a BA in Sociology with a minor in Social Work from Augusta State University, Mrs. Osborn received a Master of Social work from the University of Michigan. She is certified in TF-CBT (trauma focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy).

Mrs. Osborn was instrumental in establishing therapeutic group homes for foster children with mental health challenges in New York City where she provided individual therapy and support for children, ran weekly groups and provided individual therapy, and acted as an expert witness and advocate in court proceedings. Later, she worked as an off-site therapist with children and adults in various home, community, and school settings.

“I am thrilled to be at Holy Cross School this year working with this vibrant and diverse community,” shared Mrs. Osborn. Her background in Trauma-Informed Care and her strengths-based approach to counseling will “empower children to build communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills” for a variety of needs including classroom performance, family changes, stress, anxiety, and peer relations. “It is my priority to ensure all students make use of their God-given potential,” she shared.

“Mrs. Osborn is a wonderful addition to our staff. Her back-



Holy Cross School welcomed Sarah Osborn as their new school counselor in October.

ground and personal commitment will ensure our students have exceptional support. We are extremely fortunate that she has become a member of our school family,” said principal Mrs. Kane.

OPT



Sixth graders take the stage as leads in “A Christmas Yarn”

SEASON

Con’t from page 18

could drive by with their children to enjoy the twinkling displays.

“It has become one of our family’s favorite holiday traditions, says

Susan Whelan, mother of Delaney, a fifth grader. “It’s our third year participating as one of the homes on the tour. We always have so much fun decorating our home, but we get even more excited about driving around to see everyone’s fun and festive displays! We grab our mugs

of hot chocolate, put the windows down, blast and sing Christmas tunes while we drive the routes that are so well organized by the volunteers,” she says. “It’s a wonderful experience all around and one that I hope continues for many families for years to come.”

OPT

Holy Cross Parish
4900 Strathmore Avenue,
Garrett Park, MD
Fr. Robert Buchmeier, Pastor
301-942-1020
Holy Cross School
Lisa Maio Kane, Principal
301-949-0053
Lurana Hogan, Parish Editor
l.hogan@hcross.org

Seton Shrine Celebrates Feast Day with Call to Remain Seekers of God

Feast day mass launches year in which the shrine will open new museum to herald the life, history and living legacy of America's first-native born saint.

The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg celebrated the feast day of its patroness Jan. 4, with an eye to the past and her consequential role in American history and a view to the future with the opening this year of a new museum dedicated to her life and legacy.

Seton Shrine Chaplain Fr. Theodore Trinko, IVE was the main celebrant at the Mass in the shrine's basilica in Emmitsburg. His homily highlighted how Mother Seton was a seeker of God her entire life before she found Him in heaven.

"Seeking was a notable feature of Mother Seton's life," he said. "She sought after souls gone astray. But most especially Mother Seton was somebody who sought after God and after the Truth. Her passionate pursuit of God was one of her most remarkable attributes."

Her life shines as an example for all Catholics today, he said. "Just as Mother Seton's seeking didn't cease once she entered the Church, nor should we who already form part of the Church desist from this endeavor," he said. "Through our entire lives, like Mother Seton, there is a need to continuously look for God. As long as we are on our earth, we are on the way. We are not home."



Highlighting Elizabeth Seton's journey as a seeker will be a prominent focus of a \$4 million fully renovated and redesigned museum and visitors center that is scheduled to open in September. The modernized museum will bring state-of-the-art and interactive techniques, aimed at strengthening knowledge of and devotion to Mother Seton and her message of faith, hope and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Plans call for the reconfiguration of the original grand entrance near the Basilica into a spacious and welcoming visitor center that will lead people into the new museum. In the museum, visitors will see artifacts such as her iconic bonnet, her rosary and

crucifix, her daughter's christening gown, the Commonplace Book that her daughter used as a student and her miniature wedding portraits and brooch. The museum also will highlight the efforts to have Seton formally declared a saint and the legacy of her work that continues to this day.

Visitors to the shrine also will be able to participate in ministries such as its Seeds of Hope retreat program for the poor and marginalized, in-person and virtual living history tours, an online book club, the annual Sea Services Pilgrimage and the popular Back from the Dead program that was recently featured on Salt + Light TV's "Behold" program.

OPT

Our Lady of Mercy



Mrs. Claus read some of her favorite Christmas stories and brought special treats to Mercy students.



PreK 4 had many questions about the change of Father Joe's chasuble today. As always, he found a way to explain a big lesson to our littlest learners!



Mercy PreK 3 and 4 students treated fellow students, staff and families to a sweet version of the nativity story.

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CIVIL SUITS

Con't from page 36

tors can already be held criminally responsible until the day they die.

The Maryland Attorney General has concluded, in multiple advice letters, that legislation that seeks to retroactively revive claims currently time-barred in Maryland would be unconstitutional, another reason the Catholic Church supports prospective legislation.

The Catholic bishops serving Maryland reiterate their commitment to policies already in place to protect children and to advance healing for those harmed, and again offer heartfelt apologies to those harmed at any time by a representative of the Church. The bishops pledge their continued support of efforts that promote healing for victim-survivors, protect young people and hold abusers accountable.

OPT



Father/Son Camping Trip becomes New Staple at The Avalon School

By Glencora Pipkin

Two Avalon fathers, Michael Chandler and Miguel Leonardo, who love Avalon's emphasis on nature study, wanted to create an experience for Avalon fathers and sons: time in nature to bond with other fathers and their own sons. Having worked with another father/son club, Allview, Chandler and Leonardo saw a perfect opportunity to begin a group for Avalon.

Their father/son weekend at Calvert Cliffs in Maryland, would focus on simple activities in nature, allowing for an introductory talk about the father/son club, highlighting the modeling of virtue and char-

acter for their sons. When arriving at the park, they set up tents and had unstructured time, allowing the boys to explore the outdoors, play games, and use their imaginations. Later in the evening, Chandler and Leonardo gave a short talk, stressing the unique role a father has in forming his sons' characters.

"Our goal was to send a message to fathers that we can't give what we don't have and fatherhood is not accidental. To be good can be something tangible, not just an ideal. We wanted to flesh this out through the character talks, starting with the cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance—and the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and love," Leonardo stres-

sed. Leonardo mentioned that camping was a way to refresh each person—father and son—while also creating new connections. Kids told stories around the campfire; the fathers exchanged tips on parenting. "So much happened, creating great memories, with such a simple background—nature. It's changed my idea of leisure: instead of leisure meaning 'being lazy,' leisure is actually about creating joy through a break, giving life and abundance."

Avalon looks forward to having more opportunities to help build character in our fathers and sons with this new group.

OPT



St Jude Girls 12U Soccer Has Great Season

The St. Jude Girls 12U Soccer team had a very successful Fall season. The team, which qualified for the CYO City Championship tournament and finished as the tournament runner-up, showed great sportsmanship throughout the season. Picture front row (left to right): Leah Nguyen, Lydia Rueth, Emme Price, Ayla Barish, Isabella Araniva, Margaret Moynihan, and Jenifer Rosales. Back row (left to right): Coach Kim Santoro, Amalia White, Viviana Cortez, Ajak Parek, Angelina Santoro, Karina Deja, Maggie Marcolin, Sophia Garrido, and Coach Rich Barish.

COMPUTER LAB

Con't from page 11

learners with my older students," she shared.

Sixth grade's featured STEM activity introduced the engineering design process to younger learners for the first time. As part of a 'Creative Communicator' unit in Computer Science, the students designed a paper roller coaster. While the seventh grade's 'Computational Thinker' unit began with building balloon cars. These students then explained to first graders how they used troubleshooting and critical thinking in the engineering design process. Eighth graders rose to the challenge of the

'Robot Hand' activity after having learned how to use Tinkercad's 3D platform. Ms. Green explained the main intention of this advanced project was "combining how 3D designs connect with bioengineering, specifically with prosthetics."

Middle school students have Computer Science classes twice a week, for a total of eighty minutes. For STEM activities, Ms. Green maximizes this time by having students work in small groups, providing opportunities for team building and problem solving. By choosing projects that are engaging but not overly challenging, the students are able to successfully complete the activities over four to five class sessions.

OPT



Celebrating Christmas Together

DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

Con't from page 35

servers, and everything else that she does for a successful and enjoyable visit to the sisters. She pours her heart into caring for the sisters and everything else that she does for Sodality.

Thanks to all the Sodalists who came to sing, serve,

and visit with the sisters. We had a videographer this year! Thanks for recording and sharing the video with us. We also had two of the Knights with us and the dads.

Again, thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to all. Let's not forget the bakers and drivers who arranged carpools. All helped with this successful and enjoyable event.

OPT

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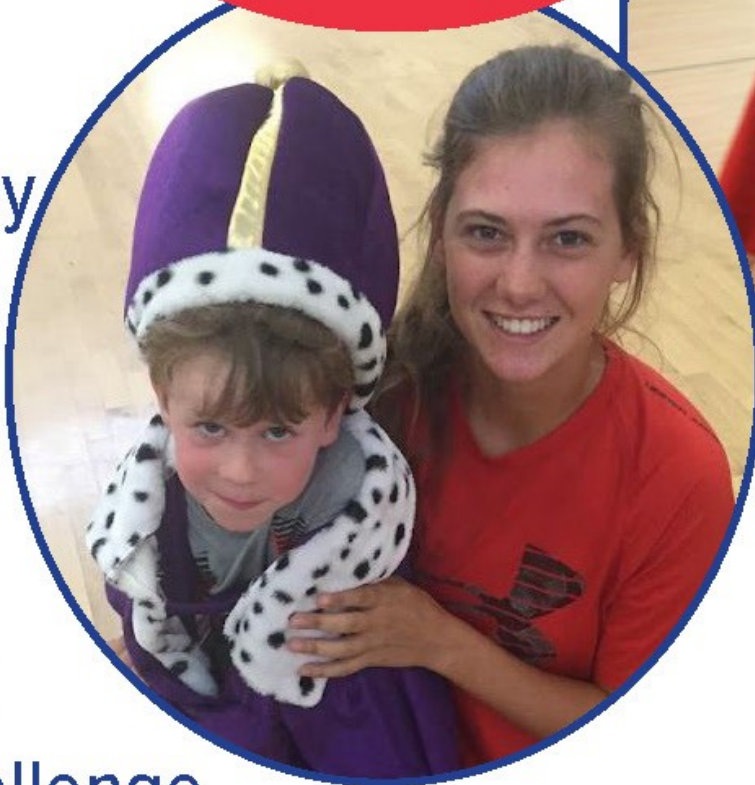
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