

NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

2022

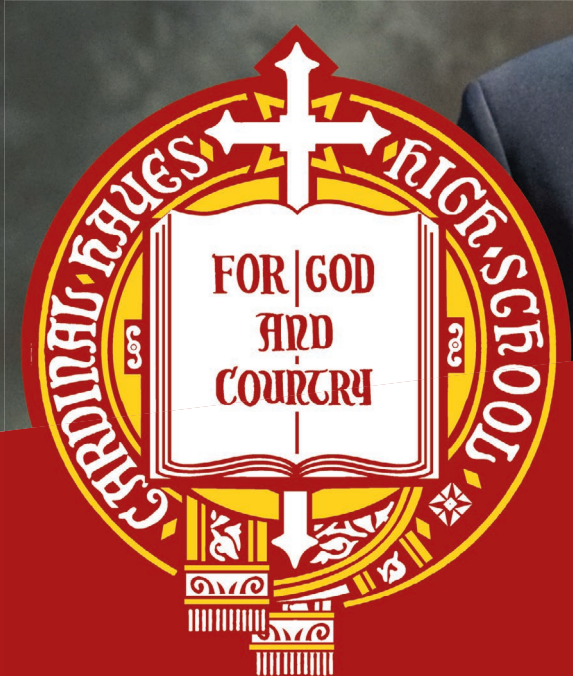


National Catholic Schools Week will be observed Jan. 30 to Feb. 5. This year's theme is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service." Schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to the Church, communities and nation. This special pullout section spotlights stories about Catholic elementary and high schools across the archdiocese. Features include Maria Regina High School in Hartsdale becoming the first school in the archdiocese to offer a Catholic Relief Services club; a senior at Fordham Prep, the Bronx, who raised \$67,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and a Latino Outreach Program of the archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools Office that helps Hispanic families navigate the Catholic school application, enrollment and financial-aid processes, in Spanish and English.

EAGER LEARNERS—Students of St. John School in Goshen, above, fold their hands in prayer last Sept. 24, the day Cardinal Dolan celebrated Mass and visited the school. Pupils at the Academy of St. Paul and St. Ann in East Harlem, bottom, show their focus and joy as the new academic year began Sept. 8 at Catholic elementary schools in the archdiocese. That day, the school received a visit from archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools Michael Deegan.



PHOTOS BY JOHN RAIOLA



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Fordham Prep Senior Is Top Student Fundraiser for St. Jude's Hospital

By DAN PIETRAFESA

Charlie Reilly's life is filled with self-driven success that he's using to help others in need.

The Fordham Prep senior has raised \$67,000 for the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., raising more money for the organization than any other high school student in the country.

The parishioner of Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Our Lady in Tuckahoe collected the funds in several ways: sending an email blast to Fordham Prep students and faculty, knocking on doors and handing out fliers at the Bronxville train station to people heading to work in Manhattan.

"I did everything possible to get the word out about St. Jude," he said. "Once the ball was rolling, it just kept going."

Charlie, 18, said his grandmother, Ann Reilly, has been an advocate of St. Jude and his mother, Patricia Reilly, has done fundraising for St. Jude. He also watched videos from St. Jude that touched his heart and wanted to do more for the children.

Last year, Charlie was selected to serve as a member of the St. Jude Leadership Society, which is a group of students from across the country seeking to raise awareness of St. Jude. This year, he's a peer adviser for St. Jude.

"Every penny goes to the kids," he said. "It was really cool. I did a virtual tour and saw the playrooms. It does not look like a hospital now. They make it feel like home for the kids."

"I wanted to make sure these kids feel like they're still loved and they don't feel like they're dying. They feel every day is a new day and they're happy to wake up and be at St. Jude."

For his efforts on behalf of St. Jude's, Charlie was invited on an all-expenses paid trip to Cape Canaveral in Florida in September to see the launch of SpaceX's first all-civilian spaceflight. He met U.S. Space Force Brigadier General Stephen Purdy.

"It was one of the most incredible experiences of my life and I will never forget it," he said. "I was

about three miles away from the rocket. I felt that whole explosion go through my body."

Charlie is the fourth of five children to Charles and Patricia Reilly. He's currently living with his grandparents, Bernard and Ann Reilly, in the Bronx.

Charlie attended Eastchester Middle School before beginning his studies at Fordham Prep, where he's taking Advanced Placement courses and is a member of the volleyball, crew and squash teams.

"Fordham Prep was a big step for me, going from Eastchester Middle School," he said. "Fordham Prep al-



ways had that reputation of being academically rigorous, having great sports teams and having a great alumni network.

"It was really an easy choice for me to just take that big step and go to Fordham Prep. Every year has been a challenge academically. They always challenge you in every way. You have to do a certain number of service hours every year."

"Every aspect of Fordham Prep has prepared me for what's to come next in college or just helped me have the knack for fundraising and helping others."

Joseph Petriello, the principal of Fordham Prep, is also a graduate of the school, which has 945 students and 222 members of its senior class.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHARLES REILLY

LIFTOFF—Above, Fordham Prep senior Charlie Reilly was treated to a trip to Cape Canaveral, Fla., in September to watch the launch of SpaceX's first all-civilian spaceflight. Left, Charlie Reilly was honored by the St. Jude Leadership Society for being the top fundraiser in the country for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

"What's impressive about Charlie is his self-starting nature, his drive and his initiative," Petriello said. "He's an impressive young man and we're very proud of him at Fordham Prep."

Charlie is hopeful of being accepted to study at either the Air Force Academy to pursue a career in the Space Force or the United States Military Academy to work toward a career as a U.S. Army intelligence officer.

Basic training at both academies will begin right after Charlie's grad-

uation from Fordham Prep.

"It would be a huge honor to be offered an appointment to either academy," he said.

Charlie also is planning to continue his work for St. Jude.

"In college, I hope to start a club or a chapter for St. Jude because the St. Jude Leadership Society goes through college. I hope to continue my fundraising," he said.

Information:
<https://fundraising.stjude.org/>
 and search for Charles Reilly under find a participant

Latino Outreach Program 'Like Talking With a Relative,' Says One Parent

By ARMANDO MACHADO

At the archdiocesan School Superintendent's Office, the Latino Outreach Program helps Hispanic families navigate the intricacies of school application, enrollment and financial aid procedures, in Spanish for parents and guardians who are not fluent in English or simply feel more at ease with their native language. The outreach efforts include the use of social media.

"We encourage Latino families to learn more about the difference of a Catholic school education, find a school nearby and apply," program director Maria Zamorano told Catholic New York last week. "We are here to assist Spanish-speaking families with information, answer questions and provide assistance with the admissions process."

Ms. Zamorano said the Latino Outreach Program provides families with a bilingual parent call center, (646)794-2885, open Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"We are celebrating Catholic Schools Week Jan 30 to Feb 5," she explained. "Prospective parents are welcome to schedule a phone call or visit (after school hours), at any time, with the school or schools of their choice." They should visit <https://catholicschoolsny.org/school-finder> On the main page, www.catholicschoolsny.org click Español on the upper-right corner.

"We promote the schools in various ways, including social media. And families can do the entire application process in Spanish," Ms. Zamorano said. "We use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in English and Spanish" to promote the grade schools and provide information.

She said the Latino Outreach Program began five years ago, and the social media component started two years ago. Use of social media by Hispanic families has grown since the schools' office introduced that facet, Ms. Zamorano said.

"And they can call the parent call center if they have any questions or if they need some sort of assistance," she said. "Like how they can apply for financial aid or how they can enroll their children the next year; they can always call us, and we'll

assist them...Everything that comes from the Superintendent's Office (such as letters mailed to families) comes in Spanish as well as English."

Ms. Zamorano, citing the availability of financial aid, noted, "We try to spread the word about Catholic schools in any way we can. We spread the word to parents through the parishes that Catholic school is a possibility...It is essential for Latino communities to be able to have access to information about Catholic schools in Spanish, in their native tongue. It makes it easier for them to navigate the information, to learn more about our schools, and to know that we are trying our best to assist them in any way we can."

The families of prospective students are encouraged to also visit these information website links of the School Superintendent's Office, found in the Español section:

Bilingual Enrollment Handbook: <https://catholicschoolsny.org/welcome/> , <https://catholicschoolsny.org/bienvenidos/>

Strong reasons to consider a Catholic school education: https://catholicschoolsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ARCH-21906-Inserts-1-Visit-Us_FINAL_10-08-21.pdf

Information on finding a school and applying for admissions and financial aid (available at most schools for grades K-8) https://catholicschoolsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ARCH-21906-Inserts-2-Welcoming_FINAL_10-08-21.pdf

Bertha Mercedes, a parent at Santa Maria School in the Bronx, said she and her husband Juan are grateful to Ms. Zamorano and Spanish-speaking school staff who have helped them navigate through Spanish-language informational material related to their two daughters' education.

"We have a daughter in eighth grade and one in sixth grade," Mrs. Mercedes said. "We are very content with the school; our daughters get good grades. "She (Ms. Zamorano) has helped in many ways, such as with the financial aid process, mainly by telephone and emails. She sends us information in Spanish and English."

Mrs. Mercedes, who was born in Ecuador, cited the significance for her in having an academic official help her understand the various school-related procedures in her native Spanish. "It is very important; she has helped us a great deal.

"It's like talking with a relative," she said. "It makes a big difference."



COURTESY OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS OFFICE

CNY SCREEN SHOT

IMPORTANT AUDIENCE—A smiling student, below left, is among the photos and other information featured in the Español section of the archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools Office website. Above is a photo of a school family taken outside the Academy of St. Ann and St. Paul in Manhattan. The Latino Outreach Program of the Superintendent's office helps Hispanic families navigate the Catholic school application, enrollment and financial-aid processes, in Spanish and English.



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Maria Regina High Launches First School CRS Club in Archdiocese

By CHRISTIE L. CHICOINE

Maria Regina High School in Hartsdale has bragging rights, having become the first school in the archdiocese to launch a Catholic Relief Services Club.

CRS is the humanitarian relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic bishops.

Aisling Molloy, a senior, serves as CRS Club president at Maria Regina, a college preparatory school for girls founded by the Sisters of the Resurrection.

“I really like CRS,” she told CNY last week, “how it’s providing opportunities to serve our community globally.”

Many people want to help out, she said, “but they don’t really know where to look. CRS definitely provides the resources to do so.”

Headquartered in Baltimore, CRS assists the poor and vulnerable overseas, motivated by the Gospel to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching.

The agency promotes human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies, and serves Catholics in the United States as they live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.

Aisling, a member of St. Paul the Apostle parish in Yonkers, said she learned from a young age through the generosity of her parents the importance of stewardship and service.

“It makes me feel good, just to help people,” she said. “It’s a humbling experience just to see what



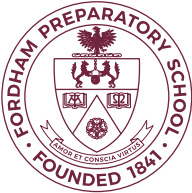
COURTESY MARIA REGINA HIGH SCHOOL

BREAKFAST RUN—Four CRS Club members of Maria Regina High School in Hartsdale are shown preparing meals in the kitchen of the high school dining hall which were later distributed to the homeless in Manhattan as part of the school’s Breakfast Run program. They are, from left, Sophia Conroy, Jordyn Bryant, Hailey Manzo and Cyanna Shirley.

people have gone through.”

An upcoming initiative of the club—in keeping with its mission to be in solidarity with and help the poor and vulnerable both locally and globally—is the Lenten CRS Rice Bowl campaign.

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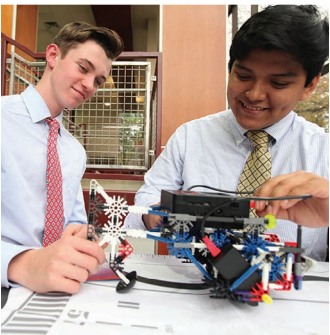
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COURTESY MARIA REGINA HIGH SCHOOL

GIVING—CRS Club members participate in the Thanksgiving Food Drive at the St. Peter-St. Denis parish food pantry in Yonkers alongside two Yonkers police officers at far left and, at far right, CRS Club adviser Dr. Valerie Torres.

across the country unite to put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Through CRS Rice Bowl, they learn about those across the globe who overcome hardships such as hunger and malnutrition and how, through Lenten alms, the world can be a better place for all.

An early highlight of the CRS Club for Aisling was visiting the St. Peter-St. Denis parish food pantry in Yonkers in November and meeting recipients in person.

“We were able to see the people and talk to them, and ask their experiences about what they’ve gone through and how they’re here now,” Aisling said. “It makes you just realize how much you have and how much you’re able to give back to others.”

Dr. Valerie Torres, a theology teacher and campus minister at Maria Regina, serves as the CRS Club adviser. The group, which operates under the auspices of the school’s Mission Outreach Club, has a membership of more than 100.

“The gift of this place is that the students are hungry to serve,” Dr. Torres told CNY. “It’s just amazing. If anything, we can’t do enough because they want to do so much.”

She hopes the CRS Club members learn “that along with doing the good, that it’s Good News, that it’s joyful.” Having “that openness to know the other and to embrace the other” are key to serving those

in need, Dr. Torres said. “And to know that Jesus is in the center.”

Alyssa Palmer, a senior, coordinates public relations for the CRS club. She signed up, she told CNY, because of her belief in the power of unity and human kindness. “I think it’s really important to recognize that we’re all human and, especially as Catholics, that it’s our duty to help provide our brothers and sisters with the necessities they need to live comfortably.”

Sharing with peers photos of the club’s outreach endeavors through the school’s Instagram account has brought in more members, according to Alyssa. “So many people have joined the club just because they see what we do and they realize they can be a part of it. A lot of it is just us telling our friends about it.”

The CRS Club, she said, “shows how the Church is a part of our everyday lives...You have to incorporate everywhere you go what you learn through church. What church is, is something that you want to take with you everywhere.” Alyssa belongs to St. Barnabas parish, the Bronx.

That the CRS Club began during a global pandemic is apropos. “During Covid, I feel a lot of people can be distracted—there’s so much going on,” Alyssa said. “It’s important to remind yourself that there are people who have it a lot harder. We’re really blessed to have what we do have, and it’s important to give back.”

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Her Job Is to Help Schools Understand Their Catholic Identity Makes Them Unique

Linda Mele Dougherty said she is old enough to remember when many Catholics identified where they lived by their parish affiliation. In her family's case, the parish was Our Lady of Mercy in Forest Hills, Queens.



JOHN WOODS

Editor's Report

"I'd like to see that again," she said last week during an interview about her responsibilities as the associate superintendent for Catholic identity in the archdiocese.

The lessons she learned at home from watching her parents "living their faith" by helping their neighbors, friends and relatives made a big impression on her and her two siblings, who all actively practice their Catholic faith today.

"I saw their faith and beliefs in action," she said. "That spoke to me and made me want to continue that in any way I could. I chose teaching."

Since taking over her new post last August, Mrs. Dougherty has already met with newly named principals and those in a couple of school regions around the archdiocese.

One of the first things Mrs. Dougherty often asks principals is how someone just walking in would know that their school is Catholic. Follow-up questions might include: "Who greets them?" and "What is the culture of your school?"

The queries are designed to start a discussion about "what makes their school Catholic," she said.

During a long career in the classroom and as a school administrator, Ms. Dougherty served at both Catholic and public schools. She was principal of three Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn, including Our Lady of Mercy School, before she came to the archdiocese in 2016 as regional superintendent for the Northeast/East Bronx schools region.

Along with education and administrative degrees, she holds a master's degree in pastoral ministry from Boston College. In Brooklyn, she also served as chair of the diocese's Catholic identity committee.

Her interest in Catholic identity

is sparked by "a desire to maintain the strength and uniqueness of our schools."

She encourages administrators and teachers to look at their school's "charism," realizing the word is normally associated with religious communities. Essentially, she is asking them to answer this question: "What's special or unique about your Catholic school?"

Discussion points can also look at the religious community or pastor who founded the school. Mrs. Dougherty said she has been meeting regularly with Sister Joan Curtin, C.N.D., the new vicar for religious in the archdiocese, to explore these avenues.

Such questions coincide with society's great interest in ancestry, and Mrs. Dougherty believes that the schools' own histories offer a compelling story of their own.

"Let's hear about what makes this Catholic school distinctive," she said.

Rediscovering a school's charism and sense of its own history is more important since members of the religious communities who founded them likely may no longer be present today, she said. In many cases, the traditions and practices they instilled remain present in the life of the school.

A school's Catholic identity is not a cookie-cutter approach, and the key is "how do we discover the uniqueness of each school" and continue to do the good things inspired by the vowed religious women and men, even if they are no longer present, she said.

"We still have great stories about our Catholic school students, and what they accomplish and bring to the world," Mrs. Dougherty said.

A successful program she inherited is Prayer Buddies, in which administrators and staff of the Superintendent of Schools and Regional Schools offices are linked with personnel in each of the archdiocese's Catholic elementary schools. Mrs. Dougherty is connected with two schools: Immaculate Conception on East 14th Street in Manhattan and Blessed Sacrament on Staten Island.

The program provides a link so that "we can raise one another in prayer, to practice what we say we are," she explained. Occasions for



BOB REERS



Linda Mele Dougherty

CHURCH MISSION—Cardinal Dolan offered Mass last September for students of St. John's School in Goshen. Linda Mele Dougherty is the associate superintendent for Catholic identity in the archdiocese.

prayer may be a feast day of the school patron, or a name day of the superin-

tendent personnel.

In December, Mrs. Dougherty visited Immaculate Conception School, which was beautifully decorated with many projects for Advent and Christmas. The atmosphere offered a contrast from the bustling New York City streetscape just outside its doors.

"You are transferred into the most peaceful, life-giving place," she said. "The children were lovely, they were friendly."

Part of her job, as she sees it, is to build up the schools and give them suggestions for improvement. "They're doing great jobs in their buildings," she said. "I want to support them in any way I can."

She also understands that not all teachers are in exactly the same place in their depth of understanding and ability to teach religion. For some, the courses they take for their catechist certificate is their first religious training since they prepared for their own confirmation. Others may have a strong background in teaching religion.

She said one of the best tools any Catholic school teacher possesses is his or her own faith in Jesus. "If we start there, we can only move forward and go up."

Approaching her responsibilities in developing Catholic identity across the archdiocese, Mrs. Dougherty said she counts on the steady support of Superintendent Michael Deegan and the other associate superintendents and regional superintendents.

And they know they can count on her to help create and prepare prayer services and liturgies for meetings as well as presentations for special topics such as Advent and Lent.

Having many non-Catholic students in some Catholic schools is both a challenge and an opportunity that makes strengthening the school's Catholic identity even more important, she said. While society offers a "secular spirituality," Catholic schools are able "to offer the real person of Jesus."

"We have many dedicated teachers and staff members who work tirelessly to show the students and their families that this is our faith and this is how we live it," Mrs. Dougherty said.

Catholic Schools Issuing Covid-19 Home Test Kits to All Families, Staff

Archdiocesan schools plan to distribute tens of thousands of Covid-19 home test kits in the coming weeks as municipalities and health organizations struggle to stock up on these sought-after resources.

Catholic schools in the archdiocese announced Jan. 5 that after much work between the Health and Safety Task Force of the archdiocesan Office of the Superintendent of Schools and government officials, they will be able to provide every family and staff member with a Covid-19 home test kit.

Test kits have been delivered to all Catholic school communities in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island. Planning continues between school officials and Gov. Kathy Hochul's office in anticipation of distribution to all remaining Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

The test should be used by any student or staff member who exhibits Covid-like symptoms or

has been in a classroom where a positive case has been identified. School staff will reach out to the student and their family with direction on when and how to use the test provided. A flier with testing guidelines and information will accompany the kits.

"We are very thankful to Dr. Ted Long, the executive director of the New York City Test and Trace Cops, for securing these kits for our staff and families, and we are confident that Governor Hochul and the State of New York will come through for our schools as well," said Michael J. Deegan, superintendent of schools for the archdiocese, in a statement.

"Our number one focus," he said, "continues to

be offering an excellent academic program in a safe and nurturing environment. These kits will go a long way in ensuring our students and faculty have access to proper testing should it be needed."

Deegan concluded he remains grateful to the principals and teachers who continue to implement health and safety protocols "so we may maintain the same bubble of protection for our students and staff that we created nearly two years ago."

The experts of the Health and Safety Task Force of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools evaluate all the new guidance and information about quarantine, isolation, close contacts, testing and the associated timelines for each on an ongoing basis.

Virtual Engineering Lab Offered to High School Students Feb. 3

High school students in the archdiocese will have the opportunity to celebrate engineering during Catholic Schools Week with a virtual lab being offered by Engineering Tomorrow on Thursday, Feb. 3.

Students have the chance to learn about various engineering fields through virtual labs. Students will study engineering as a vocation to use a systematic method with science to solve big and small problems.

The program will begin with prayer and an introduction to engineering at 9 a.m. The remaining schedule will include introduction to electric vehicles, 9:30 a.m.; building an electric vehicle, 10 a.m.; engineering as a vocation, 11:15 a.m.; question and answer session with college engineering students, 12 noon; finish electric vehicle models, 12:30 p.m.; and wrap up, 1 p.m.

Students will learn the history, development, design and different ways of giving electrical energy to vehicles in the electric vehicles lab before using a solar cell to build an electric vehicle.

An expert panel of presenters and college mentors will give students "a unique perspective into how their faith has shaped their path in engineering." The presenters and college mentors are all connected to Catholic education.

The three presenters—Joanna Caudle, Kelsey Farr and Olivia Jaenicke—are all professional engineers. Ms. Jaenicke, a 2016 graduate of Notre Dame Academy on Staten Island, previously was an Engineering Tomorrow intern, and she and Ms. Farr are graduates of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind. Ms. Caudle holds bachelor's degrees in physics from the University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn., and mechanical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.

Three college mentors—John Sexton, James Venditto and Maria Krug—are all engineering students at the University of Notre Dame. Venditto, a college senior studying electrical engineering, is a 2018 graduate of Moore Catholic High School on Staten Island.



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Alumna's \$1 Million Gift to Benefit Generations of St. Catharine Academy Students

Valerie Saputo Puglisi, class of 1968, a long-time supporter of St. Catharine Academy who is a resident of Larchmont, presented the Bronx high school with a magnificent Christmas gift. In anticipation of her 55th reunion in 2023, she made a \$1 million gift, the largest single gift in the 132-year history of St. Catharine Academy.



Valerie Saputo Puglisi

With the gift, Ms. Saputo Puglisi initiated the Valerie Saputo Puglisi '68 Scholars Program, a unique effort to make a St. Catharine Academy education possible for those with demonstrated financial need while inspiring multi-generational giving.

"Valerie has never hesitated in being extraordinarily generous to St. Catharine's," said Sister Patricia Wolf, R.S.M., the president of St. Catharine Academy.

"Her steadfast support in gifts for financial aid over many years, as well as major gifts to SCA's first ever capital campaign, are a testament to the meaning and value of a St. Catharine Academy education."

The Valerie Saputo Puglisi '68 Scholars Program will provide 75 percent financial aid to seven SCA students annually, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

A unique feature includes an acknowledgement by student recipients that they have a responsibility, if their eventual financial position permits them to do so, to help future students of St. Catharine Academy. This understanding of a long-term commitment to financially support the academy in a meaningful way is meant to inspire an ongoing, multi-generational effort to provide an SCA education for students in need.

Each Saputo Puglisi Scholar will be asked to sign a letter reflecting her understanding of the scholarship and her future financial responsibility to support future students at St. Catharine Academy.

"It is my hope that the Valerie Saputo Puglisi '68 Scholars Program can lay the framework for St. Catharine Academy students in the coming years to be successful—and ultimately continue this tradition of impactful gift-giving for future generations of Catharinites," Ms. Saputo Puglisi said.



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Youths Urged to Rely on Holy Spirit to Fight Fear, Transform World

By JOHN SHAUGHNESSY

In the middle of one of his powerful, pulsating songs that rocked Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis Nov. 18, Lecrae suddenly stopped singing to talk to the nearly 11,000 youths from across the United States who had come together for the National Catholic Youth Conference.

“I just wanted to say something to all you,” said the Grammy Award-winning singer as the raucous crowd went silent. “God wants to use you in this stage of your life now. There is a zeal inside you. Use that passion to change the world for the Lord. Go crazy for the Lord now, and go crazy for Him for the rest of your life.”

Lecrae then shared a story about a woman he encountered on a bridge in New York City, who was getting ready to jump from it until he held onto her.

“I said, ‘What are you doing?!’ She started kicking and screaming, saying, ‘Let me go! I’m trying to go meet God!’ I said, ‘Sweetheart, you can meet God on this side of the bridge.’”

That line from Lecrae resulted in a roar of approval from the youths in the stadium, and more cheers followed when the singer added, “The thing I wanted her to know is the same thing I want you to know. Let me tell you all, if God

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



CNS/JOHN SHAUGHNESSY, THE CRITERION

ON THEIR FEET—Grammy winner Lecrae performs during the opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis Nov. 18.



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Youths...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

woke you up this morning, He's not done with you yet. So if you got things that God needs you to do, you need to keep going. If you're going through some tough times, just fight a little longer, my friends."

"You may be battling the storm," he continued. "You may be feeling you don't have what it takes. But I promise you, God is speaking in this moment. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and He's saying something like"—which led Lecrae back to singing a song that begins, "Fight a little longer, my friend. It's all worth it in the end."

In a few minutes, Lecrae had set the tone for the evening and the three-day conference.

As he ended his part of the opening program

with one last song, a number of youths rushed toward the stage, jumping and dancing while many in the stands swayed back and forth as the flashlights from their cellphones lit up the darkened stadium.

The scene marked the transition for the mood that enveloped the stadium for the rest of the night. Storming toward the stage gave way to a theme of calming the storms that rock the lives of teenagers—and of people of all ages.

As a huge, towering image of a dove was projected above the stage, the rest of the night focused on the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome fear, doubt and heartbreak and lead people to their true identity as children of God who have a distinct purpose in life to change the world and the people they encounter.

Readings from the Bible echoed that theme. So did a series of soothing, calming songs whose lyrics called upon the Holy Spirit to descend upon the crowd, to let His spirit fill the youths.

"Holy Spirit, come rest on us. You're all we want. You're all we want."

The evening's keynote speaker—Chika Anyanwu—continued that theme in her presentation.

She shared her own story of saying "yes" to the promptings of the Holy Spirit—even though it took her away from everyone and everything she loved.

The Catholic evangelist initially turned down an offer to move from her California home to work for Vagabond Missions in Pittsburgh, an initiative that strives to support inner-city high school youths and bring them closer to God.

She said no because it would mean moving away from her family, her friends and the warm weather she loved. She was also afraid of making the move.

"I had a lot of fear," she told the youths, adding that she talked to God in this way, "What if I fail? What if I mess up? What if I just want to move back home? God, I'm scared."

Yet she made the move after she visited Pittsburgh and saw the need of the youths and how she could help them.

"A lot of us are living in fear," she told the crowd. "Whether it's the fear of the unknown, a fear of someone, a fear of a virus that's unknown. But God is with us. He always will be."

"The Lord has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Everything that we need to do His will, to do His work, to do it well, He's given it to us. We are moving forward. We are focusing on our faith over fear. We are focusing on Jesus who says He is the way."

Ms. Anyanwu told the youths that it all comes down to one question that seemed to inspire nearly every aspect of this year's National Catholic Youth Conference: "Are you ready to be transformed by the Holy Spirit?"

She provided her own answer to that question.

"The Holy Spirit has a plan, a purpose for you," she said. "Wherever you are in your relationship with the Lord, it doesn't matter. Today, you can choose to be an open vessel to the Holy Spirit, who will take you places that you never thought you would ever go. This Holy Spirit has a plan for you, if you say yes."

"The Lord has not given you a spirit of fear, a spirit of timidity. The Holy Spirit has given you a spirit of courage."
—CNS

Shaughnessy is assistant editor at The Criterion, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

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Cathedral High School Receives Computers From BlackRock

Cathedral High School in Manhattan received a donation of 28 Dell computers from BlackRock Global Fixed Income.

The donated computer equipment will replace outdated gear in the library. The girls' school has a successful relationship with BlackRock, the host of an annual summer internship program in which two CHS students participated virtually.

"As we prepare our students for 21st-century careers, the latest computing technology becomes a critical tool for our students who are interested in business, science, or engineering," said Maria Spagnuolo, the school's principal.

"We are grateful to BlackRock for their generous donation, and we look forward to sending more of our students to their prestigious and competitive Summer Excellence Internship program."

BlackRock is a global investment manager and a leading provider of financial technology.

Cathedral High School is a Catholic college preparatory school of the Archdiocese of New York. The school educates young women of all faiths and expects them to behave with religious and moral integrity in the pursuit of social justice. The school participates in seven varsity sports.



COURTESY OF CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL

HARD AT WORK—Two Cathedral High School students work on the new Dell Computers from BlackRock Global Fixed Income.

Mount St. Mary Students Begin Walden Savings Medici Program

About a dozen students at Mount St. Mary College in Newburgh recently kicked off the Walden Savings Bank Medici Scholars Program, becoming the sixth group to take on the initiative since its inception in 2015.

The competitive program, open to a handful of Mount Business students each year, is made possible through an endowed gift to the Mount from Walden Savings Bank. The program is overseen on the Mount's campus by Anthony Scardillo, Medici faculty advisor and assistant professor of marketing.

The collaborative Medici program prepares students for leadership and principled corporate citizenship. The program introduces undergraduate business and accounting students to the world of arts and nonprofits to foster a better understanding of the important role the business community plays in supporting them.

This year, the Mount Medici students will be working with the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley, which serves more than 1,000 member agencies in 23 counties from the Canadian border to the border of Westchester County. The students will use their business insight to help the food bank to achieve its philanthropic goals.

At this year's kickoff event, held at the Mount's School of Business, Walden Savings Bank President and CEO Derrik R. Wynkoop addressed the new Medici students.

"Business people are invaluable for not-for-profits," noted Wynkoop, who added that the Mount students would prove very helpful to the food bank.

Jason N. Adsit, president of Mount St. Mary, said, "The Food Bank of the Hudson Valley, Walden Savings Bank and Mount St. Mary College is an amazing partnership."

The program is named after the House of Medici, a banking family from 15th century Italy whose contributions involved sponsoring art and architecture.

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Pope Encourages Young People to Be Society's 'Critical Conscience'

By CAROL GLATZ

Pope Francis told young people that, with Jesus, people can find the courage to swim against the current, to be free and authentic, and to stand up for their dreams and ideals of truth, love, justice and peace.

"Be the critical conscience of society. Don't be afraid to criticize. We need your criticism," he said, citing for example, the disapproval coming from many young people about environmental destruction. "Be passionate about truth, so that, with your dreams, you can say, 'My life is not cap-

tive to the mindset of the world. I am free, because I reign with Jesus for justice, love and peace!'"

Celebrating Mass on the feast of Christ the King in St. Peter's Basilica Nov. 21, the pope directed much of his homily to the world's young people. This was the first year that the world's dioceses were celebrating World Youth Day on the local level on the feast of Christ the King rather than on Palm Sunday. Pope Francis had announced the change last year.

As the Church begins its journey toward the next intercontinental celebration of World Youth Day in Lisbon in 2023, the pope asked young

people to reflect on the image in the day's Gospel reading of Jesus standing before Pontius Pilate and declaring, "I am a king."

"We are struck by Jesus' determination, His courage, His supreme freedom," the pope said, because He could have tried to defend Himself or compromise to avoid being condemned to death.

Instead, Jesus did not hide His identity and He took responsibility for His own life and for His mission to testify to the truth, he said.

Jesus came without duplicity to show His kingdom is different from the kingdoms of the world, the pope said. "God does not reign to increase His power and to crush others; He does not reign by force of arms. His is the kingdom of love," a kingdom of people who give their lives for the salvation of others.

Pope Francis encouraged young people to let Jesus' freedom "resonate within us, to challenge us, to awaken in us the courage born of truth." He encouraged everyone to look for and face the truth about themselves: what they are ashamed of, the ways they may be deceitful or duplicitous and the ways they displease God.

"It is good to stand before Jesus, who is truth, in order to be set free from our illusions," to see life as it really is, "and not be deceived by the fashions of the moment and the displays of consumerism that dazzle but also deaden," he said.

Pope Francis urged young people not to be "enchanted by the sirens of the world, but to take our lives in hand, to 'take a bite out of life,' in order to live it to the full!"

With the freedom of Jesus "we find the courage we need to swim against the current," which is "not the daily temptation to swim against other people, like those perpetual victims and conspiracy theorists who are always casting blame on others," he said. It is going against "the unhealthy current of our own selfishness, closed-mindedness and rigidity that often seeks like-minded groups to survive."

One swims against the tide "so as to become more like Jesus. For He teaches us to meet evil only with the mild and lowly force of good. Without shortcuts, without deceit, without duplicity," the pope said.

"Our world, beset by so many evils, does not need any more ambiguous compromises, people who move back and forth like the tide—wherever the wind blows them, wherever their own interests take them—or swing to the right or left, depending on what is most convenient, those who 'sit on the fence,'" he said.

"Thank you above all, because in a world that thinks only of present gain, that tends to stifle grand ideals, you have not lost the ability to dream! This helps us adults, and the Church as well," which also needs to dream and be filled with youthful enthusiasm to be witnesses of the God who is always young, the pope said.

During his Angelus address with visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square, the pope was joined by two young people from the Diocese of Rome.

—CNS

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St. Albert Initiative on Science and Faith Aimed at High School Students

By KURT JENSEN

Science education aimed to interest Catholic high school students can be wonderfully informal.

Peter Dodson, a paleontologist at the University of Pennsylvania, introduced himself at lunch at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., by plopping down a resin replica of a dinosaur skull.

"Dug up the original myself in northwest China!" he announced.

Karin Öberg, a professor of astronomy at Harvard University, who was lecturing on cosmology and extraterrestrial life, found herself beset by questions about whether alien life exists on other planets.

She took it in stride: "Maybe they're just looking at us with wonder and curiosity (and asking) 'What's wrong with you?'" she speculated.

The first St. Albert Initiative, sponsored by the Society of Catholic Scientists, drew more than 100 high school students and educators. It was co-sponsored by the Science and Religion Initiative of the McGrath Institute for Church Life and

the Lumen Christi Institute, with funding from the John Templeton Foundation.

It is named after St. Albert the Great, bishop, scientist, philosopher, theologian, teacher and patron saint of natural science and scientists.

Stephen M. Barr, president of the Society of Catholic Scientists—he's an emeritus professor of theoretical particle physics at the University of Delaware—described the recent event as tightly targeting education and an event removed from any culture war issues.

"We're upstream of the culture," he said in an interview with Catholic News Service. "We're not interested in getting into...political matters. The need is very great."

The gathering also was intended as one small way to show young people that their Catholic faith and scientific inquiry are compatible. A 2016 survey by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University indicated that Catholic youths were finding the faith incompatible with the science they learned in high school and college.

Barr himself finds no conflict.

"Both science and faith are ways of explaining how the world works," he told the group. "Science explains how the world works. Faith explains what the world means."

"Our faith," Barr added, "tells us things that make factual claims about the world."

Barr told CNS that by getting young people to

meet scientists in person to freely ask questions, he hoped "to inspire kids to seek careers in science."

Other topics ranged from earthquakes, dinosaurs and the Church's treatment of scientist Galileo Galilei, put on trial by the Roman Inquisition in 1633 for espousing his belief in heliocentrism—the sun as the center of the solar system.

Galileo was seen as a threat to the authority of the Church at a time when it was under challenges from emergent Protestant beliefs. In 1992, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and St. John Paul II announced that Galileo had been correct all along.

The relaxed atmosphere allowed Öberg to wan-

der into a discourse about whether alien beings are possibly rational beings who have not "fallen" from sin and are therefore invisible to human eyes, and to segue from there to the existence of angels.

"It's a quite different universe if every planet is a garden," she observed.

One of the more serious lectures, "What is a human being, and when does life begin?" by Maureen Condit, an associate professor of neurobiology at the University of Utah School of Medicine, also found a way to work in a light note.

"Because development is continuous from one cell up to birth, many people set arbitrary points for when life begins and for when humans have rights," she said.

For brain maturation, Ms. Condit likes to say, "It's 25 years past birth!" —CNS

The gathering also was intended as one small way to show young people that their Catholic faith and scientific inquiry are compatible. school and college.



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Stepinac Honors Academy Renamed for Generous Alumnus



COURTESY OF ARCHBISHOP STEPINAC HIGH SCHOOL

GENEROUS GIFT—Susan and Dan Mahoney, center, met students from the Stepinac Honors Academy, from left, Calvin Lindo, Nathaniel Alvarez and Lachlan McIntyre at Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains. Dan Mahoney, a 1967 Stepinac graduate, and his wife donated \$1 million to the school, which will rename its honors academy the Susan and Daniel P. Mahoney Honors Academy.

Daniel P. Mahoney, Class of 1967, a longtime supporter of Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains, recently returned with his wife, Susan, to again give back to his alma mater, which he credits for shaping his success.

His \$1 million gift is the single largest donation in the 73-year history of the boys' Catholic high school. Recognizing the contribution it will make to the school's mission to provide students with the skills they will need to be globally competitive, the groundbreaking Honors Academy will be renamed the Susan and Daniel P. Mahoney Honors Academy.

Launched four years ago, the Honors Academy is a learning program for academically top-performing students that provides college-level studies focused on real-world applications in four disciplines—engineering, finance, health sciences and law.

During their visit, the Mahoneys met with three seniors who gave them an overview of the advanced studies they were pursuing in the Honors Academy— Calvin Lindo of Yonkers and Lachlan McIntyre of White Plains, both Law Academy, and Nathaniel Alvarez of Ossining, Engineering Academy.

The Mahoneys also toured Stepinac's cutting-edge learning spaces including the new STEAM Center and Finance Center. The former Wall Street executive was impressed with the Finance Center's real-time LED ticker displays and Bloomberg Terminal and Bloomberg Market Concepts features.

Father Thomas Collins, Class of 1979, president of Stepinac, said: "On behalf of our truly grateful Stepinac family, especially the students, I extend deep appreciation for your very generous gift. It truly reflects your abiding faith in the school's tradition of shaping tomorrow's leaders. Thanks to your investment, you will help assure that Stepinac remains strong as a preeminent leader in secondary education."

Mahoney grew up in an extended Stepinac family. His older brothers, Walter and Jay, are graduates, as are his cousins Bob Silbernagel and Kenny Silbernagel.

After graduating from Boston College, where he majored in finance, Mahoney enjoyed a successful career spanning more than 30 years on Wall Street as a New York Stock Exchange specialist. He served as a senior partner at CMJ Partners, a leading NYSE member firm.

The Mahoneys, now living in Jupiter, Fla., were longtime residents of Rye. They are the parents of three children, one of whom, Ryan, died at age 31 from Hodgkin's lymphoma. They are the grandparents of 10.

Mahoney was inducted into Stepinac's Hall of Fame in 2001.

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