

# Connections

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE  
DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Worcester  
William J. Mulford, Interim Superintendent  
**WINTER 2009**

## Catholic Schools Celebrate Service

### Elementary Schools

*St. Mary, Clinton*  
*St. Anthony, Fitchburg*  
*St. Bernard, Fitchburg*  
*Our Lady of the Rosary, Gardner*  
*Sacred Heart, Gardner*  
*St. Anna, Leominster*  
*St. Leo, Leominster*  
*Milford Catholic, Milford*  
*Assumption, Millbury*  
*St. Bernadette, Northboro*  
*St. Mary, Shrewsbury*  
*Trinity Catholic Academy, Southbridge*  
*Our Lady of the Valley Regional, Uxbridge*  
*St. Anne, Webster*  
*St. Joseph, Webster*  
*St. Louis, Webster*  
*Our Lady of the Angels, Worcester*  
*St. Mary, Worcester*  
*St. Peter C.C., Worcester*  
*St. Stephen, Worcester*  
*Venerini Academy, Worcester*  
**High Schools**  
*St. Bernard C.C., Fitchburg*  
*Holy Name C.C. Jr.-Sr., Worcester*  
*St. Mary Jr.-Sr., Worcester*  
*St. Peter-Marian C.C. Jr.-Sr., Worcester*  
*Notre Dame Academy, Worcester*  
*Notre Dame Jr.-Sr., Fitchburg*  
*St. John, Shrewsbury*

All around the country, Catholic schools are focusing on one common theme: service. For schools in the Diocese of Worcester, Catholic Schools Week—January 25 through 31—is a time to shine a light on that call to service and celebrate our heritage and future as a unique ministry of the Church.

Amidst the varied celebrations and activities taking place in each school, the unifying purpose of Catholic education comes through: faith formation coupled with academic excellence.

Among the many special events, the foundation for the week is set in schools throughout the diocese by celebrating Mass together as a faith community and honoring those who are called to religious service. Bishops McManus and Rueger are travelling to various schools to celebrate Mass and participating in follow-on celebrations.

At St. Anne School in Webster, the Student Council is preparing a Liturgy that closes Catholic Schools Week.

St. Mary Jr./Sr. High is holding a Confession service and St. Peter-Marian Jr. High students are touring St. Paul Cathedral after attending a televised Mass.

Our Lady of the Valley Regional School is inviting the Franciscan Nuns of Warren, MA to bring awareness of their vocation to the student body. St. Joseph, Webster is hosting both vowed religious and lay guest speakers to discuss their vocations, while Holy Name CC Jr. High students are researching the history and background of the Sisters of Saint Anne who founded the school.

The impetus for all the good works of service this week flow from the motivation to model Christ. Feeding the poor, caring for women and children in need, visiting the elderly, honoring those who served our nation in the military, as well as our teachers and families, are themes and activities that run through the agenda on every campus.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Gardner is reaching out locally and globally by supporting the Heifer Project and St. Vincent de Paul Pantry. Our Lady of the Valley is collecting cell phones to donate to a battered women's shelter and St. Mary Jr./Sr. High, Worcester is reaching out to women in need through a baby-bottle fundraiser benefitting Visitation House.

Holy Name CC Jr./Sr. High's Respect for Life group is sponsoring a collection of baby items to donate to Problem Pregnancy in Worcester and the school's Teens Against Poverty group is sponsoring a charity bake sale. Holy Name also is hosting an annual coat drive.

Holy Rosary, Gardner is holding a food drive for Hope House and grades 7 & 8 at St. Joseph, Webster are volunteering at Webster-Dudley Food Share.

Many schools are honoring veterans and senior citizens with acts of kindness and service in appreciation for all the contributions they have made to our community and way of life.

Residents of the Holyoke Veterans Home are visiting St. Joseph, Webster, while Our Lady of the Valley, Uxbridge, students are collecting items for soldiers serving in Iraq. Students at both Sacred Heart of Jesus, Gardner and St. Mary Jr./Sr. High, Worcester are writing letters of appreciation to active-duty soldiers. In Webster, the St. Louis School community is holding a school-wide assembly to honor local veterans, including a luncheon hosted by grades 6, 7, & 8. St. Stephen Elementary is honoring and supporting veterans who reside at the Massachusetts Veterans Shelter in Worcester.

Our schools also are reaching out in service to the elderly among us who often live out of sight.

St. Anne Elementary, Webster grades 1 & 2 are visiting Oakwood Nursing Home to sing and recite speeches, while St. Mary Elementary, Shrewsbury students are giving greeting cards and handmade yarn-stitched bookmark crosses to residents of Notre Dame Long-Term Care Center in Worcester.

As a way to pass the torch and focus attention on the privilege of a Catholic education, St. Peter-Marian senior high students are presenting to junior high students a panel discussion on what a Catholic school education has meant to them.

Spelling bees, ice cream socials, book fairs, talent shows, game days, and curriculum nights further showcase the gifts our students have been given and the spirit of community they share during this week-long celebration.

May God bless our Catholic school students, families and faculty members who participate in this marvelous mission!



# Assumption Partnership Buoy Diocesan Schools

Catholic colleges and universities have played an important role in the life and development of our elementary and secondary schools nationwide. Locally, Assumption College is a brilliant example—enhancing the life of our schools and the academic prospects of countless students.

Simply in terms of sharing resources and assets, Assumption opens its doors to local Catholic schools for our Science Fair, Technology Fair, board meetings of the Catholic Schools Board and for the new superintendent search now underway.

Assumption has offered scholarships to Adopt-A-Student—a merit and need-based scholarship program of the diocese—and offers favorable tuition to Catholic school teachers pursuing advanced degrees.

“The college has been generous in so many ways and there is no doubt that their support makes the entire Catholic education system in the diocese stronger,” said William J. Mulford, Interim Superintendent.

Assumption and St. Peter-Marian CC High School have joined to pilot a program held on the SPM campus for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders to help them get into college and stay in college successfully. Taught by Assumption faculty, the 14-week session includes ACT and SAT preparation, as well as courses to give students skills and tools to be more successful in college. Critical reading, writing and research techniques—all precursors for college success, are taught by professors who understand college-level performance.

An initiative with St. Peter Central Catholic Elementary helps teachers better serve students with differentiated learning styles—giving teachers new skills and tools to impart information in broader and more creative ways.

Assumption special education specialists observe classes and offer techniques that address detectable needs. A solution can be as simple as recommending a different type of notebook for students or changing the location of a white board in the classroom. SPCC teachers are eager to learn new models that offer students with auditory-processing challenges or mild forms of dyslexia a better chance for academic success.

## Welcome New Principals

**Donald Cushing** brings decades of classroom experience to his new post as principal at St. Joseph School, Webster having taught English and social studies and having served as an athletic director, guidance department head, and assistant principal for the Town of Webster Public Schools. After retiring from his service to the Webster school system, he served from 2001 to 2007 as alumni development officer at Worcester State College. In 2006 he also was guidance director at St. Mary Jr./Sr. High School in Worcester, concluding that position last spring.

Mr. Cushing considers himself very fortunate to have inherited an outstanding teaching staff, including members of the Felician Sisters. He aspires to “promote and nurture a positive climate that encourages self-confidence, personal discipline and a strong sense of Catholic community” at St. Joseph.

**Joan Barry**, the new principal at St. Mary Elementary, Shrewsbury, grew up in Worcester and is the product of 12 years of Catholic education. A graduate of Teachers College at Columbia University Graduate School of Education, she remained in New York for twenty years as a classroom teacher, then returned to Central Massachusetts to an associate principal post in the Wachusett School System.

Ms. Barry opened and ran her own day school in Westford and eventually took an executive post at a Wellesley education consulting firm. The sounds of happy children across the street at St. John the Evangelist School seemed to beckon her “back to school.” Shortly thereafter she saw the job posting in the St. Mary Parish bulletin where she had been a member for 18 years and felt this may just be “God working His ways.”



**Donald Cushing, St. Joseph School, Webster; Joan Barry, St. Mary School, Shrewsbury; Danielle Colvert, St. Anna School, Leominster.**

She is proud that St. Mary students have a strong sense of self. “The children here allow each other to be unique,” she remarked. Going forward, Ms. Barry is committed to making St. Mary a “professional learning community” and building up the student assessment capacity to further improve student performance.

**Danielle Colvert**, the new principal at St. Anna Elementary, Leominster, was raised on the West Coast and attended Catholic schools right through her graduation from Santa Clara University – a Jesuit school. She earned a Masters in Educational Psychology from the University of Toronto and taught special education in Toronto.

She and her husband moved to Worcester over 15 years ago and became involved in St. Bernadette Parish in Northboro, where she shared a vision with other parishioners to start a school. Ms. Colvert became intimately involved in the development of the school in both teaching and parenting roles, teaching various grades that tracked her own children’s development through the school. When her last child graduated from St. Bernadette, Ms. Colvert felt that perhaps it was time for her to graduate, too.

“When I heard about the opportunity at St. Anna I felt I was being called to this and to join the next generation of school leadership in the diocese,” she remarked.

The Catholic Schools Office also welcomes Dr. Rita Bernard to her new post as principal of Assumption Elementary, Millbury from her prior post as principal at St. Anna.