

Justice & Advocacy Council of Montgomery County

Take the Bishops' Quiz and See for Yourself that "Everything is interrelated"

By Anthony Bosnick

The Bishops of the United States have a twenty-question quiz on their website which is intended to help us test our knowledge of issues facing us as citizens. It is also intended to help us consider in light of Catholic social and moral teaching those public policy issues that challenge Catholics as we act in the public square.

Pope Francis says "Everything is interrelated"

Pope Francis, in his "environmental encyclical" *Laudato Si*, calls (perhaps we should say "challenges") Catholics to recognize that "everything is interrelated." By this he means that Catholics (and all people, really) will understand life



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and our existence better when we consider and respect the unity and

interrelationship in the way things function and interact. So, for example, in his challenge to Catholics to faithful citizenship, he would have us understand that "concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion" (*Laudato Si*, 120).

Pope Francis states eloquently and persuasively (in LS, 120) his belief that if we can ignore the value and dignity of new human life, we can easily ignore the value of anything. Thus, we in the Montgomery County Justice and Advocacy Council of the Archdiocese of Washington are called to embrace the full teaching of the Church when we advocate for issues. This also applies to all Catholics as we decide on those for whom we will

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Catholic Coalition for Special Education Awards *Believe in Me!* Program Grants

Three Catholic Schools Awarded \$81,000 for Inclusion Programs

More schools are recognizing that inclusive education benefits the whole classroom – the children with disabilities and the children without, the faculty and the broader school community. If our Catholic schools welcome the body of Christ, then they must also embrace the same teachings and ultimately show the wider community how to build a just society.

The three Catholic schools receiving grant awards this year are



examples of schools that have embraced inclusive education and children of all abilities.

"The continuing efforts by our grantee schools to provide quality, inclusive education are admirable and hopefully their success will demonstrate to other schools that they can welcome children of all abilities too," said Fernand Lavallee, Esq., Board Member and Chair of the Grants Committee.

This year, CCSE has awarded

nearly \$81,000 in *Believe in Me!* program grants to three schools in three different Maryland counties. The 2016 recipients are:

The Academy of the Holy Cross in Kensington: This grant will continue to help fund the salaries of the special education teachers serving the Moreau Options Program. The program, created two years ago, provides its students with inclusion in regular classes along with small group instruction. CCSE commends the Academy of the Holy Cross, which has grown its program to 10 students this academic year.

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Ursuline Academy Class of 1966

The Ursuline Academy Class of 1966 held a three-day reunion on September 16, 17 and 18 to celebrate its 50th anniversary of graduation from the school. Although the school has been closed since 1976, the '66 class planned a weekend reunion with dinners, picnics, mass and a tour of the French International School, which was originally Ursuline Academy. Many of the alumnae returned to celebrate memories of the fun times that they had together and to continue the spirit of sisterhood that they have maintained for many years. The highlight of the weekend was the celebration of mass together at St. Jane de Chantal church and the singing of a favorite hymn of the school, "Let All Things Now Living." This song brought back many happy memories and a few tears were shed. Fr. John McKay celebrated the mass and



touched upon the fact that his sister also attended Ursuline Academy. On Sunday the former classmates had a tour of their old school and

ended their reunion celebrating a brunch together.

OPT

October is Respect Life Month



The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle of human rights; it is this principle that leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace. Society suffers when we fail to respect human life at any stage, whether it is an elderly woman in need of medical care she can't afford, a teenager in a coma, an unborn child in her mother's womb, or a

tiny embryo in a test tube. Respect for Life considers issues affecting the inherent value and dignity of human life at all stages. Personal Respect for Life topics include issues affecting pre-born human life,

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Kathleen & Lawrence Hamm
PUBLISHERS

Danny Gannon
Michael Roseleigh
DISTRIBUTION

Prepress by Electronic Ink
www.eink.net



Parish Community Services, Inc.

5212 Goddard Road Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: 301-706-9684

OurParishTimes@gmail.com

PUBLISHED IN ALTERNATE MONTHS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.



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GRANTS

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"As we enter our third year with now 10 students in the Moreau Options Program, I am thrilled to observe our upperclasswomen in the program emerging as leaders for the new students – helping them feel welcome, teaching them how to use technology, and sharing with them all their favorite aspects of Holy Cross," said Emily Montgomery, Director of the Moreau Options Program.

St. Louis School, Clarksville (Howard County): St. Louis is a new CCSE grantee school. It first spent the past year with CCSE planning, attending faculty workshops, receiving technical assistance and preparing the faculty and community to welcome its new students. The

school is using its grant to help fund the salaries of one special education teacher and one paraprofessional in the establishment of its new St. Louis IX Program.

St. Philip the Apostle, Camp Springs (Prince George's County): Another new CCSE grantee school, St. Philip is using its grant to help fund salaries and expand its current inclusion program. Lavalley said, "This is St. Philip's first request to CCSE for grant funding. St. Philip's establishment of a program on its own to serve students with intellectual disabilities is both commendable and an inspiration."

Many Catholic schools would like to serve all their families and educate all their children, but don't think they have the resources or staff to educate students with devel-

opmental or intellectual disabilities. For the past eleven years, CCSE has been there to provide professional development, technical assistance, public awareness, family support and to help fill the funding gap at schools, granting nearly \$900,000 to 29 schools in eight Maryland counties.

Through CCSE's *Believe in Me!* program, Catholic schools located in Washington, D.C. or Maryland may receive seed grants to expand or create sustainable programs enrolling two or more students with cognitive disabilities. Funding may be used to hire and train special educators, purchase equipment and materials, or provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.

OPT

LOVE

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one penny at a time. The mission of the program is based on John 15:13, "Greater Love has no one than this, that one lay down one's life for their friends."

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Greater Love social outreach efforts of our students and school families completed 22 activities raising a combined total of \$3,144.31 supporting 22 local and national partner organizations. In addition to the collection of funds through tag days and bake sales, our students donated 100 pounds of candy for a local homeless shelter and for our service men and women fighting bravely abroad. They built

30 Thanksgiving dinners for families in distress in the DC area. They delivered 154 warm coats to those in need. They prepped 250 bagged lunches for Martha's Table and packed 3,700 diapers for new mothers and assembled 130 bags of food through The Parish Lenten Food Drive.

As for the pennies, the St. Bernadette students contributed \$332 or 33,200 pennies to the available funds for The Angel Network. Rodgers says, "We love the energy that we see surrounding the students' commitment to our Angel Penny bucket. It is a clear demonstration that it is often the smallest contribution that makes the biggest difference." St. Bernadette School is proud to help spread so much Greater Love!

OPT

BURNEY

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enjoying themselves, and so on. Moreover, everyone is experiencing the joys and sorrows that come with our lives.

Wherever we are, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and his ministry in Bethesda is the same as his ministry in my hometown of Hollywood, Md. He has called me to preach, to teach, and to lead his people to him through the sacraments. I'm humbled to baptize, to celebrate the Eucharist, and to reconcile his people to him in his name, so that our Lord Jesus may use me for the salvation of souls here, as he does through his priests throughout the world. I'm so thankful to the people of the parish for their warm welcome to me, and for their constant prayers, which with God's help, I may fulfill the great task he has entrusted to me.

OPT

NATIONAL MERIT

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as the initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. Finalists are selected from the Semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship competition and will be notified in February.

Every year, the National Hispanic Recognition Program recognizes approximately 5,000 of the 250,000 Hispanic/Latino juniors who take the PSAT/NSMQ.

National Merit Commended Students placed among the top five percent of students who entered the 2017 National Merit competition. Although Commended Students do not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships, some of these students do become candidates for special scholarships sponsored by corporations and businesses.

OPT



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