

The NEWS FROM Inland See

October 2–8, 2021

FOR THE DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

Catholic school superintendent's prayer: *'hope-filled joy that flows from authentic peace'*

Jeanne Gearon, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Burlington, was recently interviewed about the past and current school years by Vermont Catholic Managing Editor Cori Fugere Urban. Here is their Q and A:

Q: For the 2020-21 school year, how did Vermont Catholic schools adjust for the pandemic safety protocols?

A: The principals worked collaboratively with the Office of Catholic Schools to draft a guiding document titled: "United in Faith, Returning with CARE: Communities and Academics Reimagined Effectively." This document provided a framework for responding to the pandemic that each school in turn used to craft its local protocols and procedures.

I cannot say enough how the efforts at the local level from the principals, teachers and school staffs made it possible for our students to experience in-person learning on a full-time basis. The support they received from the pastors/priests who minister to our schools as well as from the students' families and all members of each school community was phenomenal. The work they undertook and the sacrifices they endured were not easy, and it only happened because everyone worked together to place the needs of the students at the forefront.

Q: How did the pandemic affect enrollment?

A: Preschool through grade 12 enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year in Vermont was 1,908. For the 2020-2021 it was 1,835, and the projected enrollment for 2021-2022 was 1,990.

Q: To what do you attribute this change in enrollment?

A: As a Diocese, last year we experienced an overall enrollment decline of around 4 percent. I believe that this was largely due to families opting to home school due to concerns regarding the pandemic.

For the upcoming school year, diocesan-wide, we are projecting around an 8 percent enrollment increase. There are many reasons for this, one of which may have been our ability to

provide consistent in-person learning last year. Our schools welcoming students back full-time and remaining full-time throughout the year may have sparked interest within the community to explore more deeply what we have to offer.

Q: According to "Data Brief: Catholic School Enrollment and School Closures, Post-Covid-19" from the National Catholic Educational Association, a report released in February, the Covid-19 pandemic can be seen as one of the most transformative catalysts for educational change in the United States. Schools of all types — public, charter, private, parochial, online or homeschool — have been significantly impacted as a result of the pandemic's disruptions to communities and society. What is your comment?

A: While the pandemic is certainly not something anyone wanted to have occur, nor, I suspect, do any of us want it to reoccur, there is the reality that it forced us to think outside the box. We discovered things about ourselves that we did not know before both as individuals and as a community. Schools are made up of people, and as each of us learns more about ourselves, our schools are changed. We have to look for the positives from this pandemic, and if one of those positives is that we have learned how to provide education in more meaningful ways for students, then this is indeed a blessing.

Q: Why are Catholic schools needed in Vermont today?

A: Catholic schools are one of the options Vermonters have who are seeking a faith-based education for their children. Many parents value this, and they sincerely want their children to be educated within a spiritually rich environment. If the Catholic schools were not in Vermont, then the Vermonters seeking this for their families would have far fewer options.

Q: What is your hope for Vermont Catholic school students, teachers, staff and families for this school year?

A: I pray daily for our school communities, and just as this past year was a year like no other, I pray that the upcoming school year is also a year like no other. During this year of St. Joseph, we have no one better to turn to who can teach us how to journey through hardship with grace and come out of it with a renewed sense of hope-filled joy that flows from authentic peace. That is my prayer for each school community, each principal, each teacher, each staff member, each student, each family — hope-filled joy that flows from authentic peace.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Burlington are supported by the Bishop's Annual Appeal.

VTC • Cori Fugere Urban



Upcoming Events



10|13, 27, 11|10 WED
Living Joy Discussion Group
Online • 7 pm

Join us for Chris Stefanick's Living Joy: 9 Rules to Help You Rediscover and Live Joy Every Day. This virtual event explores one rule every other week. Offered by members of the Diocesan Evangelization Committee. Contact pturnley@aol.com for more information.



10|16 SATURDAY
Roast Pork Supper

Our Lady of the Angels Church • 5 - 6 pm
 Drive-thru take-out. Limited seating at 5pm.
 Adults \$15, Kids \$7. Reservations: 802-728-5251



10|17 SUNDAY
White Coat Mass

Blessed Sacrament Church, Stowe • 10:30 pm
 Mass for healthcare professionals and their families. Bring your white coats! Bishop Christopher Coyne and Fr. Jon Schnobrich. Talk and refreshments to follow.



10|26 TUESDAY
Saints & Sinners

Online • 7 pm
 Join us each month to learn how a particular saint has influenced the life of our guest speaker. October: Fr. Curtis Miller presenting on Ven. Br. William Gagnon. For more info: vermontcatholic.org/saints-and-sinners.



10|28 THURSDAY
"Not just heartbreaks and honky-tonk: Country Music and Sacred Space"

*Holy Family Parish Hall, Essex Jct.
 7 - 8:30 pm*

Join us for an engaging event presented by Fr. Richard Berube, SSE, retired St. Michael's College Religious Education Professor and Jeff Firlirk, music minister. Please wear a mask so that we have a safe environment for all to participate.



11|06 SATURDAY
Our Lady of Fatima Devotions

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 am
 Beginning with Rosary at 8 am,
 Confessions, and followed by Mass at 8:30 am.



11|13 SATURDAY
Annual Women's Retreat

*St. Catherine of Sienna, Shelburne
 8:30 am - 2:15 pm*

This year's theme is: The Heart of Prayer: Our living relationship with God. Check-in begins at 8:30 am. The key not speaker is Sister Barbara Cline of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist. Limited number of attendees, deadline registration November 6 with \$30 payment. There will be a waitlist in event of cancellations made prior to retreat. Contact Terri McCormack at tmccormack@vermontcatholic.org or (802) 658-6110, Ext. 1451



OCTOBER 10 - 16, 2021

CHALLENGES TO GROW YOUR MARRIAGE

Consider the Rich Man in the scripture reading this week. Reflect on the non-material wealth you have in your relationship and how you can share this with others. Pray together with the Litany of Trust.

vermontcatholic.org/marriagechallenge



As of Sept. 29, 2021: **\$1,687,620**

To learn more or make a gift visit:
vermontcatholic.org/giveonline



ROMAN CATHOLIC
 DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

The Heart of Prayer

Our Living Relationship with God

Annual Vermont Catholic Women's Retreat

Saturday, November 13 • St. Catherine of Siena, Shelburne

9 am - 2:15 pm, check-in begins at 8:30 am • Key Note: Sister Barbara Cline, Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist
 Limited number of attendees, deadline registration November 6 with \$30 payment.
 There will be a waitlist in event of cancellations made prior to retreat.
 Contact Terri McCormack at tmccormack@vermontcatholic.org or (802) 658-6110, Ext. 1451