



DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

ANNUAL BISHOP'S APPEAL

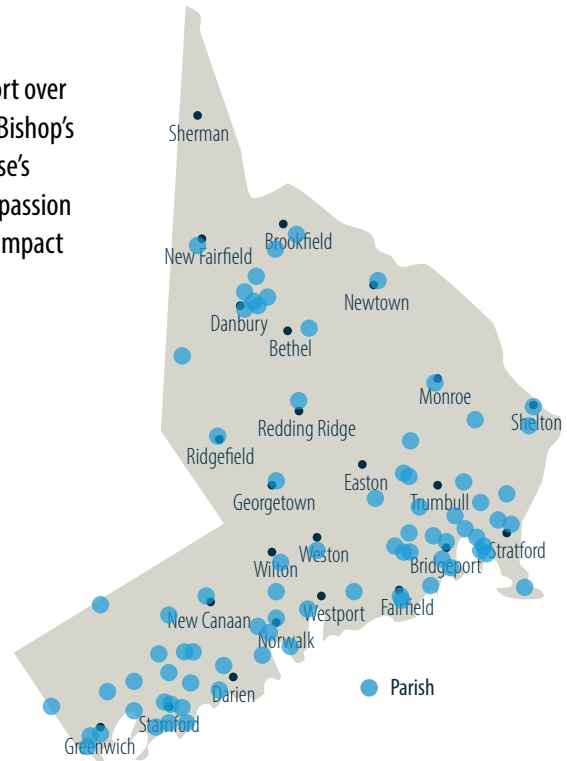


REPORT

— 2024 —

YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE

Thanks to your generosity, the Diocese of Bridgeport is able to serve and support over 385,000 Catholics in Fairfield County's population each day. Through the 2024 Bishop's Appeal, your contributions have made a transformative difference in our Diocese's work, from nurturing faith and providing Catholic education to extending compassion and support to those in need. Each statistic on this page reflects the profound impact you have on lives and communities across Fairfield County.




74
PARISHES


208
PRIESTS


104
DEACONS


33
SEMINARIANS


11
LANGUAGES
OF MASS


3,163
Baptisms


3,182
First Communion


3,842
Confirmations


16,353
Students in
Faith Formation


1,300
Scholarships
provided for
Catholic school
students each year


\$3.49
MILLION
Invested in faith
formation, education,
and leadership training


\$2+
MILLION
Dedicated to
charitable outreach


400+
Young Adult Events
hosted last year,
3,000+ Young
Adult attendees

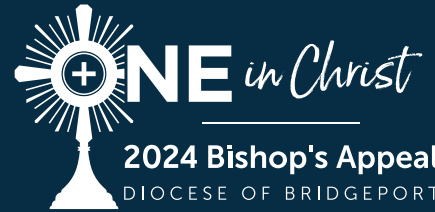


1,000,000+ MEALS
served through Catholic Charities

2024 ANNUAL BISHOP'S APPEAL

How your gifts went to work

Through the 2024 Bishop's Appeal, your generosity fuels essential programs that uplift lives, nurture faith, and strengthen our community. Each gift directly supports ministries and initiatives across Fairfield County, allowing our Church to serve, teach, and inspire in profound ways.



Teaching and Preaching the Gospel

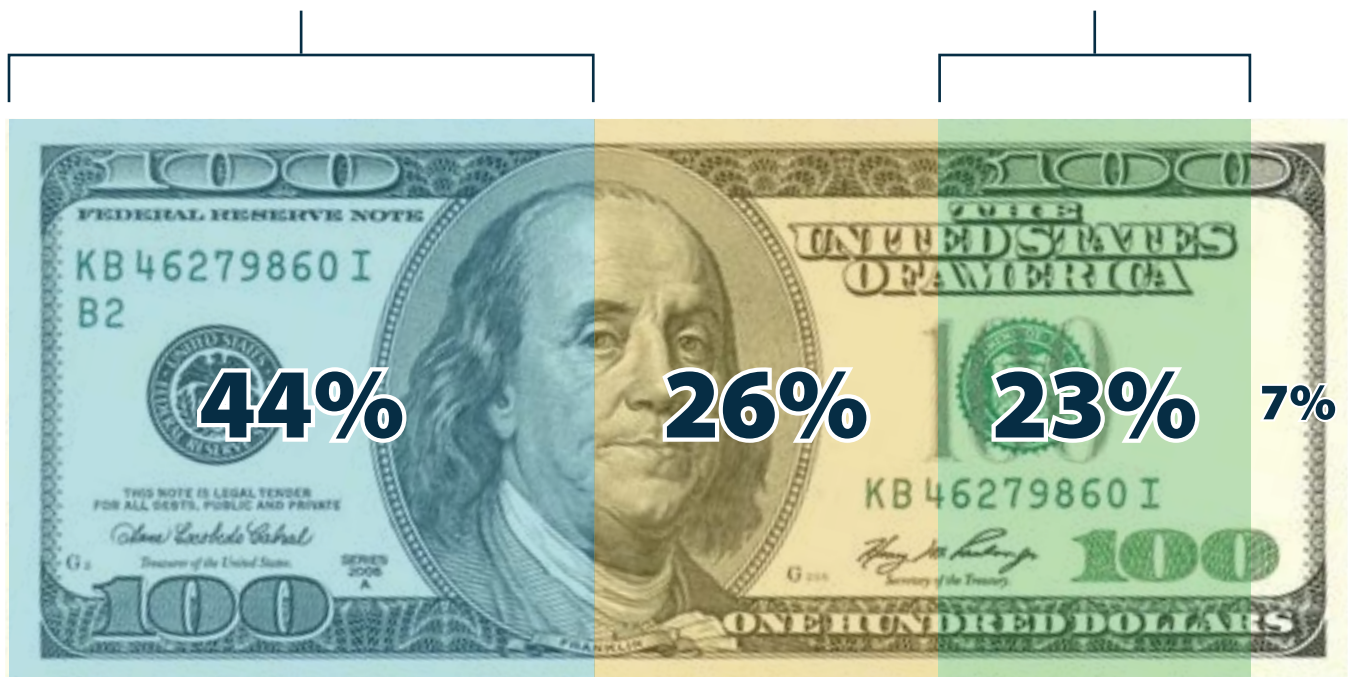
\$3,490,500

Your gifts support Catholic formation at every level, providing scholarships, strengthening faith education, and preparing seminarians and deacons for service.

Together in Faith

\$1,877,000

You help our Church grow and thrive, supporting retired priests, young adult ministries, and vibrant parish communities.



Serving Our Community

\$2,057,500

From feeding families to special needs support and pastoral care, your contributions bring Christ's love to the most vulnerable across Fairfield County.

Fundraising Expenses

\$575,000

Ensuring every dollar is used effectively to sustain these vital programs.

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

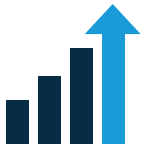
Our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport blend faith with education, fostering strong Catholic identities and academic excellence. Our strategic plan has driven significant gains in student success and enrollment, reinforcing our commitment to education grounded in Catholic faith.



**DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
FORMING hearts. INFORMING minds. TRANSFORMING lives.



9,028
DIFFERENCE MAKERS
ENROLLED IN OUR SCHOOLS



5 YEARS
OF CONSECUTIVE
ENROLLMENT INCREASES



1,319 students awarded
\$2,851,855 in tuition assistance

Through the Bishop Scholarship Fund

5,101
Students enrolled in our
20 Elementary Schools
and
1 Special Needs School

1,501
Students enrolled in
4 Diocesan Sponsored
High Schools

2,426
Students enrolled in
6 Independent
Catholic Schools



“Catholic Academy of Stamford (CAS) has allowed me to send my child to a safe, nurturing, environment. In a world where our values as Catholics are being torn apart, CAS does the vigilant job of teaching the foundations of our faith as a part of their learning. I am grateful for the work of my child’s teachers. I especially thank Mrs. Duddie, Mrs. Valenti and Mrs. Carpanzano. They have taught my child to approach life according to the teaching of our faith. They also taught him to build confidence, have an open heart, and a curiosity for learning.

Throughout the last three years, all CAS teachers have all helped our son in different ways to become a confident student. All have been proactive to help him achieve their classroom goals. His teacher’s lines of communication are always open. They utilize all tools in their toolboxes to achieve their high expectations with plenty of positive support. I cannot find words to express thanks, we are truly blessed.”

— **Kristen Delmonico, Parent of a Catholic Academy of Stamford (CAS) 2nd Grader**



Our schools exist so that our students and their families and you and me will one day enter the glory of heaven."

— **Bishop Caggiano**



100%

The percentage of students who graduate from our high schools.



99%

The percentage of our high school students that go on to college or vocational programs.



100%

The percentage of our schools that are fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.



6%

The increase in Catholic school enrollment over the last 4 years.



More than **\$107M** in college scholarships were awarded to over **900** graduating seniors from our diocesan high schools.



The Bishop's Scholarship fund has impacted my life in ways I never thought imaginable. I have not only learned the importance of education and the role it plays in my future endeavors, but I have also been lucky enough to have received spiritual guidance in my years attending Catholic schools. It is because of the support of this scholarship fund that my family had the ability to continue sending us to schools that would give us this dual reward of a nurtured mind and spirit. In my years attending Catholic school, I have not only made some of the deepest connections with students and teachers because of the close knit community that is naturally formed in a smaller learning environment, but I have also been able to feel closer to my faith as well. The teachers not only ensure we are exposed to the best learning tools possible, but they ensure we are guided on a just and moral path. I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to learn and grow as an individual in my years receiving a Catholic education, and I truly owe it to the Bishop Scholarship Fund for all their endeavors to ensure my siblings and I could continue to receive this education. I am forever grateful for this opportunity, and deeply appreciative to have received such dedicated support over the years."



— **Lorenzo Porzio, recent Notre Dame High School Valedictorian and Assumption Catholic School Alumnus, received help from the Bishop's Scholarship Fund**

THE INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC FORMATION

Cultivating Ministry Excellence

Since 2015, the Institute for Catholic Formation has enriched the Diocese's sacramental and ministerial life by equipping clergy, lay ministers, and catechists for meaningful parish leadership. Through a blend of online learning, in-person workshops, and independent study, the Institute offers diverse, accessible opportunities for ministry personnel and all Catholics to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. Serving as a comprehensive resource hub and virtual library, the Institute provides anyone in the Diocese and beyond, tools to grow in faith and contribute to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Ministries of the Institute include:



The Institute for Catholic Formation

Diocese of Bridgeport

The Institute for Catholic Formation offers opportunities for those who wish to serve in liturgical ministries in their parishes to participate in formation. Last year, more than 1,100 adults receive a mandate from Bishop Caggiano to serve as liturgical ministers.



689 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



593 Readers

In addition, more than 120 high school students received formation to serve as EMHCs.

For those over the age of 18 who lack only Confirmation (having been baptized and received Holy Communion), the Institute offers formation. Last year, 187 adults received formation and were confirmed in their parishes.



“For years, I wanted to be able to serve Holy Communion at my parish. I have been going to Mass all my life and always look for new ways to get involved. Helping our priests distribute Holy Communion during Mass and taking Communion to the homebound and those in nursing homes is a wonderful way for me to live out the call to be a missionary disciple. After a conversation with my pastor, I enrolled in formation online with the Institute. The only formation was comprehensive and really insightful. Once I finished and attended a face-to-face session, I received a mandate to serve from Bishop Caggiano. I am so excited to be a part of this ministry and to help bring the Body of Christ to others who cannot join us on Sundays and Holy Days.”

— Rosa, St. Thomas the Apostle



The Face of Prayer

Celebrating 40 Million Prayers and Counting

Launched in 2017, **The Face of Prayer** is a transformative initiative that uses social media and text alerts to bring our community together in daily prayer. Have you joined the nearly **24,000 daily subscribers** already part of the Face of Prayer?

How to Join:

1. **Text PRAY to 55778:** Send the word PRAY from your smartphone to 55778.
2. **Confirmation:** You'll receive a confirmation text (standard rates apply).
3. **Daily Prayer:** At 3 pm daily, get a text with a prayer intention and an invitation to say a Hail Mary.

Catechist Formation 2.0

Inspiring a New Generation of Saints

What if every catechist saw their role as shaping future saints, priests, religious sisters, deacons, or faithful Catholic adults? Dedication and good intentions are not enough—we must equip catechists with the tools to pass on the truth of our faith effectively.

Reimagining youth faith formation is central to The One initiative. In a secular world, we must inspire transformation by fostering authentic discipleship rooted in the teachings of the Church.

The Institute for Catholic Formation is leading this effort through:

- + **Personal:** Nurturing a catechist's spiritual strength and relationship with Christ.
- + **Intellectual:** Enhancing theological knowledge and understanding of the faith.
- + **Practical:** Building skills essential for engaging youth effectively in faith formation.

Catechists now undergo personalized training every six months, ensuring they are spiritually strong, theologically prepared, and practically skilled to guide our youth toward Christ.



LEAD™ Learning Management System

Reimagining Formation for Today's Church

The Diocese of Bridgeport's LEAD™ is a cutting-edge Learning Management System crafted for today's Church. It offers flexible learning journeys through on-demand, Zoom, and in-person options, connecting you with peers via specialized forums. With LEAD™, you can easily manage assignments, download certificates, and track your progress — even if you change parishes. LEAD has more than 12,000 online learners enrolled!



Catholic Charities of Fairfield County: *Transforming Lives with Compassion*

Catholic Charities of Fairfield County is committed to improving lives by aiding the needy and vulnerable, regardless of faith. These efforts reflect our Catholic faith by embodying Christ’s love, compassion, and dedication to the well-being of all.



1,000,000+ MEALS
provided by our food service programs combined



5,786
Mental health counseling sessions

FAMILY CENTERS: A NEW STRATEGIC MODEL

The Thomas Merton Family Center is pioneering a transformative approach to charitable ministry. As the first of four planned Family Centers, it embodies a new model that combines immediate assistance with long-term empowerment, making critical services more accessible to those in need. The center provides essential support, such as food and shelter, while emphasizing self-sufficiency and dignity, in line with Catholic Charities’ mission to offer a hand-up, not just a handout.

A New Approach:

The Family Center Model offers wrap-around services including:

- + Healthcare
- + Job Readiness and Vocational Training
- + Financial Literacy Education
- + ESL Courses
- + Parenting Classes and Support
- + Housing Assistance

Future Expansion:

Building on this model, additional Family Centers will open in:

- + Danbury
- + Norwalk
- + Stamford

Commitment to Change:

This innovative model showcases the Diocese’s commitment to social justice and the teachings of Christ. By focusing on long-term empowerment, it aims to break the cycle of poverty and support individuals in achieving their full potential.



Furniture Ministry

The Furniture Ministry embodies compassion and support by providing well-loved, gently used items such as beds, tables, chairs, bookcases, and decor. It also offers essential household items, from sheets to kitchenware. Whether assisting those transitioning from homelessness, comforting survivors of domestic violence, or supporting recovery from natural disasters, we keep our doors and hearts open to all in need.



Tiyaira, from the Sacred Heart University Community Engagement Team, delivered 200 pillows to our Furniture Ministry!



\$110,000+

in emergency financial assistance to over 500 families



2,000

Winter coats distributed



6,200

Pairs of socks distributed



3,500

Toiletry bags distributed

The Family Loan Program of Danbury

The Family Loan Program of Danbury offers small, low-interest loans to qualified applicants, complemented by Financial Education and Budget Counseling. Loans range from \$500 to \$10,000 at a 5.5% interest rate, helping with needs such as car purchases, repairs, security deposits, and childcare costs. This program is a holistic partnership designed to break the cycle of poverty. It includes:



A recent financial seminar for the Family Loan Program in Danbury.

- + One-on-one budgeting advice
- + Comprehensive financial education
- + Application assistance and ongoing support
- + Flexible repayment options
- + Referrals to additional social services

Partnering with organizations like Newtown Savings Bank, the Family Loan Program supports families throughout our communities.

THE DIOCESAN HOSPITAL MINISTRY



Compassionate Care in Hospitals and Nursing Homes

The Hospital Ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport focuses on providing compassionate spiritual care across hospitals and nursing homes throughout the Diocese.

Chaplains offer comfort, sacraments, and spiritual support to individuals, helping them reconnect with their faith during times of illness and vulnerability. Their work extends beyond hospital walls to nursing homes, where they provide essential support and serve as a vital presence, especially during challenging periods like the COVID-19 pandemic.

This ministry exemplifies the Church's dedication to the Corporal Works of Mercy and to meeting the spiritual needs of those in distress.

“They say hospital walls hear more prayers than church walls. We see a lot of transformation, especially of Catholics who have not been to church in years. They see us, they talk to us, they receive Communion, and tell us they will return to church.”

— **Father Paul Sankar, chaplain at Norwalk Hospital**

EMPOWERING COLLEGE STUDENTS THROUGH CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Diocese of Bridgeport's Campus Ministry is committed to the spiritual formation and evangelization of college-age students throughout the diocese. This ministry plays a crucial role in nurturing the faith of young adults as they navigate their college years and prepare for their future. Currently overseeing the following campuses:

- + Western Connecticut State University
- + UCONN - Stamford
- + University of Bridgeport

And collaborating with:

- + Sacred Heart University
- + Fairfield University



Campus ministry at these institutions is poised for a new direction. The focus is on reengaging students and forming a cohesive Catholic community that grows in fellowship, faith, and zeal.

The Campus Ministry team is dedicated to creating vibrant, supportive communities where students can grow spiritually and be prepared to evangelize in their personal and professional spheres.



YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

400+
events hosted in
the last year

3,000+
young adult
attendees

Local Communities

Throughout the Diocese, from Danbury to Bridgeport to Stamford, diverse communities of young adults (ages 18 to mid-30s) come together to support one another on their spiritual journeys. These ministries address a wide range of needs, including those entering college or the workforce, discerning vocations, and young couples navigating dating, engagement, marriage, and family life.

Events

Local and regular events are central to building community and faith in young adults. Effective events show young adults the truth, goodness, and beauty of our faith, giving them opportunities to encounter God and enjoy fellowship with each other.



Launched in May 2023, **Catholic203** is a hub designed to connect Catholic young adults with local communities, utilizing a website, social media, newsletters, and text updates to keep young adults informed about events and gatherings.

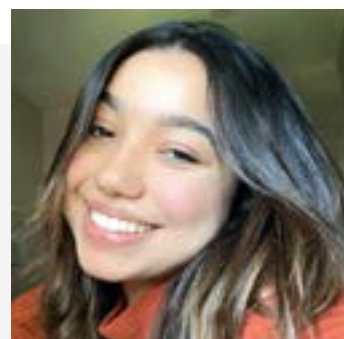
Since its debut, Catholic203:

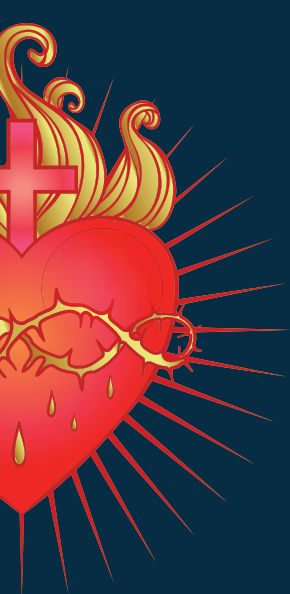
- + Over 4,600 website visitors
- + More than 26,000 emails sent
- + Significant social media growth
- + The young adult Mass hosted by Bishop Caggiano has garnered over 7,000 impressions



I really want the young adults of our community to be able to call the Church 'home.' I want them to be able to have a deep connection with God, and with that build strong friendships. We need to show the importance of having that relationship with God."

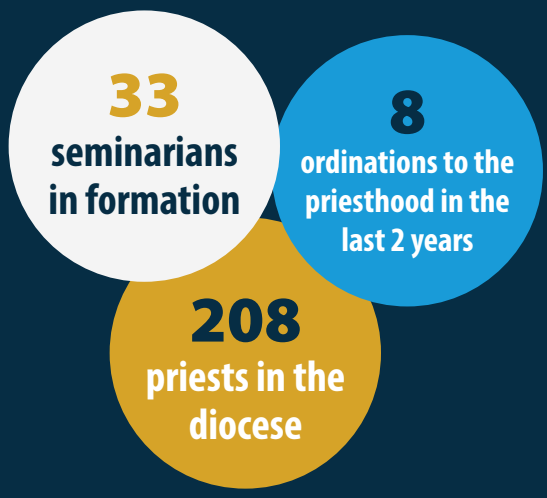
— **Carlane, Danbury**





INVESTING IN VOCATIONS AND SEMINARIANS

Our diocese is witnessing an extraordinary blessing—a remarkable surge in vocations. Over the past decade, our number of seminarians has more than doubled! This remarkable growth in vocations underscores the dynamic work of God within our Diocese, and puts us on track to achieve **50 seminarians by 2035**



Forming a Seminarian:

The USCCB released a new model of priestly formation, focusing the education of a seminarian less on book studies and more on the growth of spiritual journey and how to be a better shepherd of his future congregation. Priestly formation has four pillars:

Human Formation: A seminarian learns to become a bridge to Christ, so that he can be an effective witness to the Church.

Spiritual Formation: Seminarians work to develop a strong prayer life through the liturgy and daily community and personal prayer.

Intellectual Formation: A seminarian learns to help the Church know and love God by learning and teaching the Truth of the Faith.

Pastoral Formation: Learning how to be a “shepherd of souls” is a crucial part of helping parishioners draw closer to God.



SUPPORTING OUR DEACONS

104
deacons

11
men currently in formation
for the Diaconate

11
men actively discerning
Diaconate formation

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate is responsible for all aspects associated with vocations to the permanent diaconate, the formation of men and the ongoing formation and coordination of the Diocese’s permanent diaconate community.

The permanent diaconate is a ministry of service that is open to married and single men throughout our many cultural communities in the diocese. Deacons work in our parishes, hospitals and schools. Permanent deacons know the difficulties of balancing faith, family, and career, which gives them a unique ability to help bridge work, family and leisure with Church life through their sacramental service in Holy Orders.



HONORING OUR RETIRED PRIESTS

Your Gifts in Action

Our retired priests have devoted their lives to serving our faith community. Thanks to your generosity, we're able to ensure they receive the care and respect they deserve in retirement. Each gift to the Bishop's Appeal helps provide essential health, housing, and pastoral support for these beloved priests.

The Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford offers a peaceful and supportive home for our retired priests. Here, they live in community, participate in daily Mass, and enjoy fellowship with one another.



Through your contributions, \$1 million each year is directed to the health, housing, and care needs of our retired priests. This support allows them to live with dignity and security.



Our retired priests remain deeply involved, offering prayers for the faithful, supporting local parishes, and providing spiritual direction. Many continue celebrating Mass and offering pastoral guidance as they accompany parish communities in faith.



Your support helps us provide essential medical care, wellness programs, and pastoral care for retired priests, covering physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.



With your generosity, we honor the priests who have faithfully served us. Each gift ensures they live with the dignity and care they deserve in retirement, a testament to the shared values of our Catholic community.



68
"retired"
priests





The Seton Collaborative is a dynamic support network within the Diocese of Bridgeport dedicated to fostering growth and innovation in schools and parishes. Its mission is to drive transformational change through expertise, creativity, and resources.

Work in Our Schools

In schools, the collaborative's focus is on improving efficiency to build stronger learning environments.

- + **Service to Mission Schools:** Optimizing school operations to better align with Catholic values.
- + **Finance and IT Support:** Streamlining budgeting, accounting, and technology integration to reduce administrative burdens.
- + **Talent Management:** Recruiting and retaining dedicated educators and staff, and providing professional development to maintain high standards of excellence.
- + **Data Analytics:** Utilizing data to improve decision-making and to track and enhance student and institutional performance.

By providing these critical services, Seton Collaborative helps schools focus on their primary mission of providing a quality Catholic education while ensuring long-term sustainability and growth.



Work in Our Parish Ministries

Seton Collaborative is deeply involved in supporting parish ministries by fostering collaboration and enhancing the quality of pastoral care and community engagement across the Diocese.

The Collaborative is currently piloting four regional programs:

- + Norwalk + Stratford
- + Fairfield + Danbury

Current Ministry Pilots focus on:

- + **Regional Faith Formation Programs:** Initiatives like the Norwalk Regional Middle School Program and Stratford's collaborative Confirmation process are creating new opportunities for youth and adults to grow in faith.
- + **Youth and Adult Ministry Development:** Programs like Hispanic Ministry in Danbury and High School Outreach in Fairfield bring together diverse parish communities to explore faith in dynamic and engaging ways.
- + **Collaborative Strategies and Vision Development:** By assisting parishes in creating collaborative policies, mission statements, and shared events, Seton Collaborative helps build cohesive communities that can work together more effectively.

These pilots serve as models for how parishes can work together to innovate and expand their ministries, providing richer faith experiences and strengthening the Catholic community's fabric.



Rooted in Gospel values that affirm the dignity of every person, The St. Catherine Center is dedicated to promoting the educational, spiritual, and social well-being of individuals with disabilities.



A student and instructor for St. Catherines.

Saint Catherine Academy (Founded 1999):

- + Offers a state-approved education program for students with disabilities, ages 5 to 21.
- + Focuses on fostering academic achievement, interpersonal skills, and vocational experiences.
- + Staffed by state-certified educators and skilled instructional assistants.

Adult Services Program (Started 2015):

- + Provides continued support for young adults who have completed their schooling.
- + Serves 26 adults from 14 towns with an individualized approach.
- + Tailors schedules and goals to meet each participant's needs in collaboration with their families.

Both the Academy and the Adult Services Program work to enhance faith formation and inclusion within the Diocese of Bridgeport's parishes and schools.

THE JPII CENTER

The **St. John Paul II Communications Center (JPIIC)** officially launched on April 27, 2024 to enhance collaboration among diocesan communication channels, such as *Fairfield County Catholic*, Veritas Radio, and digital platforms.

Key Plans:

- + **Reaching Young Audiences:** Focuses on engaging young adults and young families through modern digital and multimedia channels.
- + **Multimedia Infrastructure:** Establishing a radio studio, video production studio, graphic arts studio, and collaborative office space.
- + **Expanded Spanish Outreach:** Developing Spanish-first content specifically for Spanish-speaking audiences, rather than translating from English.
- + **Apologetics events** and offering apprenticeships in media production for young adults.

JPIIC will execute a new strategy to support "The One" initiative, encouraging deeper encounters with Christ and promoting missionary discipleship.



12,000+
Facebook followers



51,000+
Follow Bishop Frank on social media



98,843
Homes receive *Fairfield County Catholic*



**DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT**

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*Thank you for being a vital part of our mission.
To explore the full impact of your generosity and see a comprehensive overview
of all ministries supported by the Bishop's Appeal, please visit:*
www.bridgeportdiocese.org/bishops-appeal