

## Faith in Action

**MAY** brings us the colors of spring and the promise of warmer days. Trees are beginning to blossom, flowers have begun to make their annual appearance, as nature sheds its winter coat, donning the bright colors of spring. As the Scottish poet, James Thomason, eloquently stated, *Among the changing months, May stands confessed. The sweetest, and in fairest colors dressed!*

How appropriate that in all of May's splendor, we choose to revere important individuals, individuals who have brought color, hope and love into our lives.

We honor mothers, especially Blessed Mother Mary, and everything that they represent our lives. From giving us life, providing guidance, and being someone we can turn to when we need encouragement and a gentle reminder that we are loved. We not only honor our own mothers, but also honor those women who are or were mother figures in our lives and whatever that may mean to each of us.

This is also a time of remembrance, when we acknowledge the sacrifices others have made in order to guarantee our freedom and way of life. We pay tribute to those women and men who put others first, whose selfless act ensured our countries freedom and freed others from the oppression and tyranny they lived with. On Memorial Day we find cemeteries cloaked in flags, serving as reminders that *"There is no greater love than this, then to lay down one's life for a friend."* (John 15:13), and that nothing should be taken for granted.

This is a time for celebrating, not only the rebirth that follows the darkness of winter, but also all that we cherish and treasure in our lives. It is a time to be proud of what you have accomplished, how far you have come, and to realize that you have overcome so many obstacles in your own personal journey.

In a special way, we honor YOU are volunteers, who not only serve others selflessly, but are "mothers" to those in our programs. Who tirelessly give, so others can have more. Who selflessly put the needs of others before their own. Who choose to fight for the rights of those who no longer have the strength to do it for themselves. Who speak out and become the voice of those who have been silenced. You are the mothers, the soldiers, the freedom fighters who go above and beyond to serve those who come to us seeking help, looking for hope, in need of encouragement and to know above all else—that they are loved! Thank you for being a mother figure to those in need. For those who served our country, we thank you for your service!



"Tis like the birthday of the world, When earth was born in bloom;  
The light is made of many dyes, The air is all perfume:  
There's crimson buds, and white and blue, The very rainbow showers  
Have turned to blossoms where they fell, And sown the earth with flowers."

- Thomas Hood



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Volunteers:** Make sure we have your updated CORI forms. Email: [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org) or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.
- **Happy Birthday** to all our volunteers who celebrated a birthday in April and will be celebrating in May. We would love to honor and recognize YOU! Email your name and birthday to [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org) or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.





**Reception Area coverage—answer and direct calls, general office duties—Fall River & New Bedford locations.**

**Administrative/Clerical help to assist staff in Legal Dept. in Fall River. This role requires basic computer skills. As well as Portuguese speaking interpreters/translators.**

**Volunteers to help with miscellaneous tasks at our shelters—Cape Cod & New Bedford locations.**

**Dedicated volunteers to serve at our Meal Center in New Bedford.**

**Food Pantry Volunteers to help assemble and prepare food items for our guests in New Bedford.**

For more information about these or other opportunities contact Rose Mary Saraiva, Volunteer Coordinator at 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111 or via email at rsaraiva@cssdioc.org



## YOU AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

May is Mental Health Awareness month. We often exercise, choose healthy meal options, and take care of our physical well-being, but we also need to take care of our mental health as well.

To often our mental health is overlooked, and for those who are experiencing mental illness—it is silenced. According to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness each year.

### General Facts:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year, and less than half of them receive treatment.
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience a serious mental illness each year, and less than two-thirds receive treatment.
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth experience a mental health condition each year, and only half of them receive treatment.
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.
- The average delay between onset of mental illness symptoms and treatment is 11 years.
- 55% of U.S. counties do not have a single practicing psychiatrist.

The pandemic's silver lining (if there is one), is that we have become more aware of our overall mental health and the need to reach out to others. We are more willing to share our frustrations, our feelings and so much more. With that in mind, it is time to shed light on the needs of those suffering with a mental illness. We need to recognize that some of us struggle with depression, various disorders, and a host of other mental



health issues that can be treated. The key is to reduce the stigma about seeking help, to acknowledge that we all struggle from time to time, and that we are not defined by our illness, but rather by who we are.

I remember the first time I sought counseling, I was made to feel ashamed, that it was a sign of weakness that I could not handle my situation on my own. The truth is—it takes much more courage and strength to ask for help.

During May, and throughout the year, let us give a voice to those who have been silenced for far too long. Let us be the advocates, not only for those we love, but for all who experience mental health issues. Mental health is the key to overall health, let us strive to let others know—**“They are not alone!”**

### Celebrating a May Birthday:

**Robert M.—May 13**

**Mary S.—May 20**

**Beverly T.—May 17**

**Taylor C.—May 21**

**Eleanor U.—May 30**





## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

In March we shared the story of a young man, Elija Lucas, who chose Catholic Social Service as the site of his community service project in preparation for his confirmation. When he had finished, he asked "What else can I do?" Unlike others his age, who would have simply walked away saying—well, that's done, Elija chose to do more.



Armed with flyers, Elija asked the school he attended if he could place a collection box. They did not allow it. That did not deter Elija, and he decided to ask if he could set up boxes at his parish—and they said yes!

According to his dad, Rob Lucas, "He made a couple boxes and placed them at St Teresa's and St Christopher's Church in Tiverton." Rob said that, "boxes are being filled and Elija gets very excited when he

sees how much he's getting of crayons, markers and coloring books."



This young man is proving that all it takes is a willingness to be the difference, to have the persistence to find a way even when life shuts the door on you, and that volunteering is truly "ageless."

Thank you Elija for recognizing the need and going above and beyond to brighten the lives of others. In keeping with his pledge to serve, Elija delivered the items on May 7th—which is the day of his Confirmation. Congratulations Elija on your Confirmation.

*"Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness." — Dalia Lama XIV*



## FACTS ABOUT MAY—

- ◇ May 1 - May Day or Lei Day for our Hawaiian friends.
- ◇ May 5 - Cinco de Mayo - *a la victoria!*
- ◇ May 8 - Mother's Day
- ◇ May 21 - Armed Forces Day
- ◇ May 22 - National Maritime Day
- ◇ May 30 - Memorial Day



### "Just for Fun" Days:

- ◆ May 1 - School Principals' Day
- ◆ May 2 - World Tuna Day—pass the tuna melt!
- ◆ May 4-11 - Root Canal Awareness Week - a whole week—that's deep.
- ◆ May 8 - No Socks Day—oh yeah, bring on the sandals.
- ◆ May 14 - Dance Like a Chicken Day - Who knew the Chicken Dance had its own day.
- ◆ May 28 - Slugs return to Capistrano Day—well that explains all the birds.

### More About May:



The Birthstone is the Emerald.  
The birth flowers are Hawthorn and Lily of the Valley



### Some Folklore:

*A dry May and a leaking June, make the farmer whistle a merry tune.*

*A snowstorm in May, is worth a wagonload of hay.*



*Oh! fragrant is the breath of May  
In tranquil garden closes,  
And soft yet regal is her sway  
Among the springtide roses.  
—William Hamilton Hayne,  
American poet (1856–1929)*





## Community in Action -

### *Easter Baskets:*



We could not have done this without the help of so many. We want to especially thank:

**Santo Christo & Maria Pimentel**

**Cecilia Ferrao**

**St. Gabriel Parish, New Bedford**

**St. Mary School, Mansfield**

**Bishop Stang High School, Dartmouth**

**Texas Roadhouse, Dartmouth**

**Bishop Connelly High School, Fall River**

**All Saints School, New Bedford**

**Polish Women's Club, New Bedford**

As well as a few donors who wished to remain anonymous.

## Team Effort -

When the call went out for Easter Baskets, the Shamrocks, Bishop Feehan High School's Football Team in Attleboro, rose to the challenge. They immediately strategized and came up with a game plan to tackle the need. Led by coach Bryan Pinabell, the team rallied around the call and began collecting the baskets for the children in our Emergency Assistance Family Shelter Program.

These athletes dug in and scored the winning touchdown with the children in our program—collecting over 70 baskets. Thank you Shamrocks for showing us the true meaning of team work, and how simple gestures of kindness can have a lasting impact on others. Go TEAM!

