

Catholic institutions shine at Light City festival

A Baltimore parish and a Catholic university are getting in on the fun as colorful lights brighten neighborhoods throughout Baltimore City at the third-annual Light City festival that kicked off April 6.

At St. Leo the Great in Little Italy, the streets were illuminated by multicolored, eye-catching lanterns.

“The lanterns visually connect the church to the other activities in the neighborhood,” said Laure Drogoul, the artist who created the display. “St. Leo’s is very active in the neighborhood, so the lights might give more visibility to some of their other community work.”

Drogoul was the resident artist in Little Italy last year, and hung similar lanterns on High Street. A local restaurant owner and resident discussed the display with Pallottine Father Bernard Carman, pastor of St. Leo, about creating a similar display on the streets outside the church.

“St. Leo’s is the heart of Little Italy,” Father Carman said of the parish, which has participated in the festival previously.

Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore hosted “Luminous Loyola” April 10, a celebration that was complete with cotton candy on glow sticks, student performances and a lantern craft for children.

A Light City favorite made a special appearance at the Jesuit college when “Charlie the Peacock,” a large, brightly illuminated artistic creation, visited the Evergreen

campus. The peacock has been traveling to neighborhoods throughout Baltimore since April 9, and WJZ-TV in Baltimore has been giving clues as to his location daily.

At St. Leo, parish leaders want to maintain the Light City lanterns as a long-term installment past the end of the festival April 21.

The community surrounding the traditionally Italian parish is one of the few remaining neighborhood-based parishes in the city. Father Carman and his parishioners work hard to welcome new members into the church and to show them the advantages of incorporating parish life into their everyday routines.

“The fact that the Lord calls us together,” Father Carman said, “makes us a community and sends us on our mission.”

During St. Leo’s two annual festivals – for St. Anthony in June and for St. Gabriele in August – he takes to the streets with a chair and a sign that reads, “Ask, pray, talk,” to encourage attendees to learn about the church on a personal level.

“They are designed to inspire sustainability and environmental awareness,” Drogoul said of the lanterns crafted from repurposed milk and water jugs.

The artist has a special connection to St. Leo the Great – in her home state of New Jersey, she attended a Catholic school bearing the same name.

“It was interesting to work with another St. Leo’s parish after all these years,” Drogoul said. “St. Leo’s in Little Italy is such a beautiful church.”

For more information about Light City, click [here](#).

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